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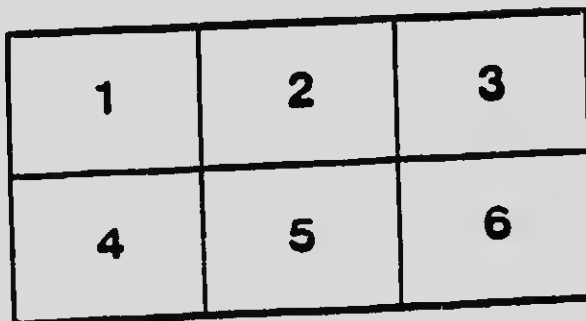
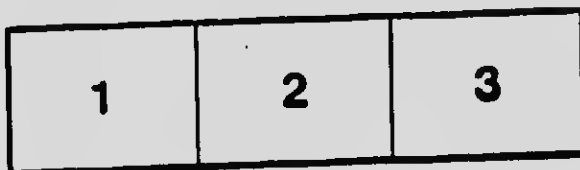
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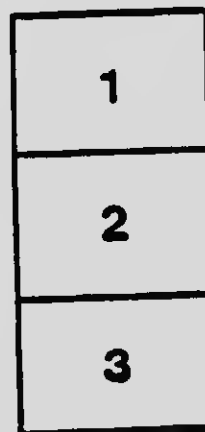
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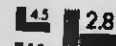
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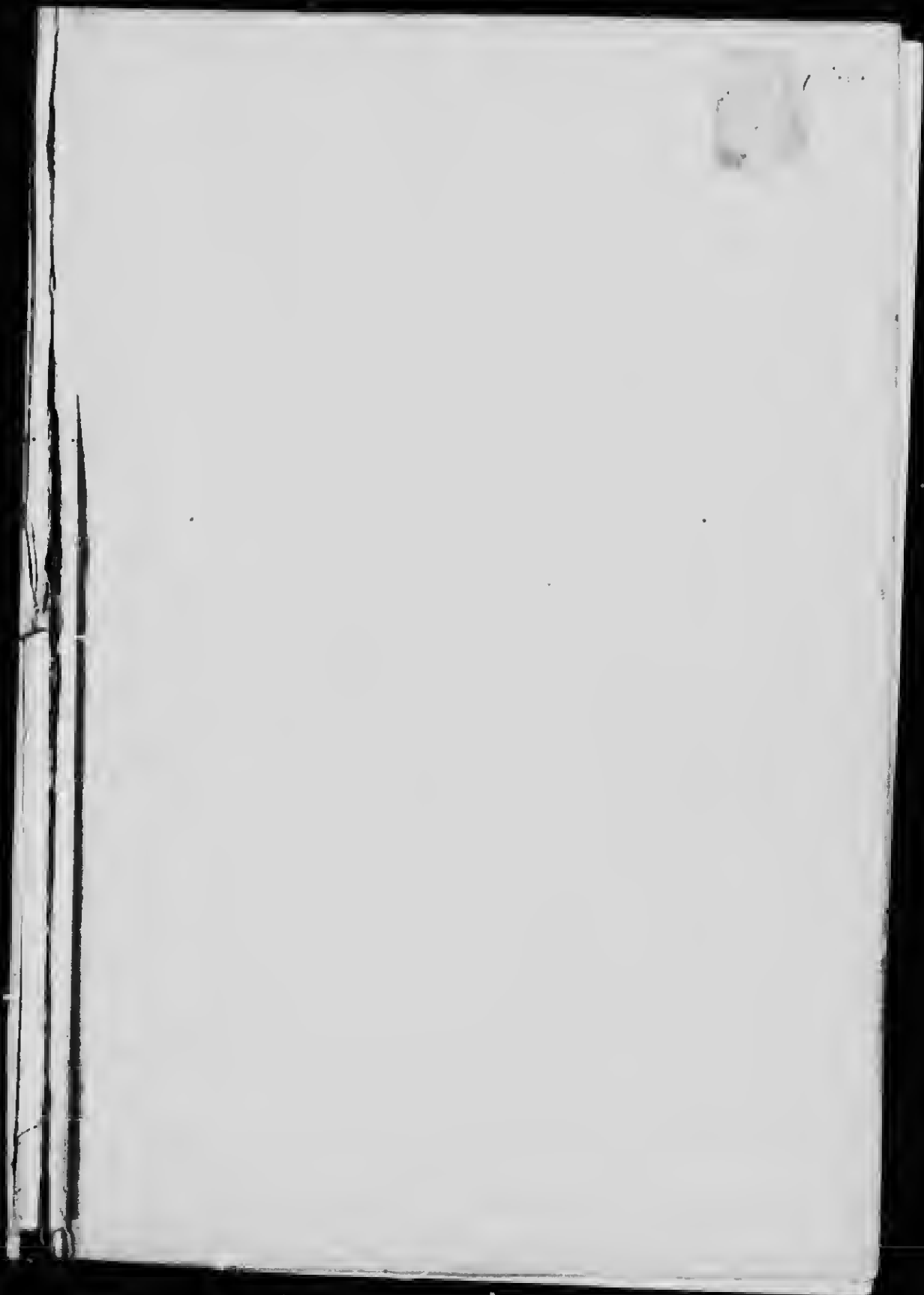
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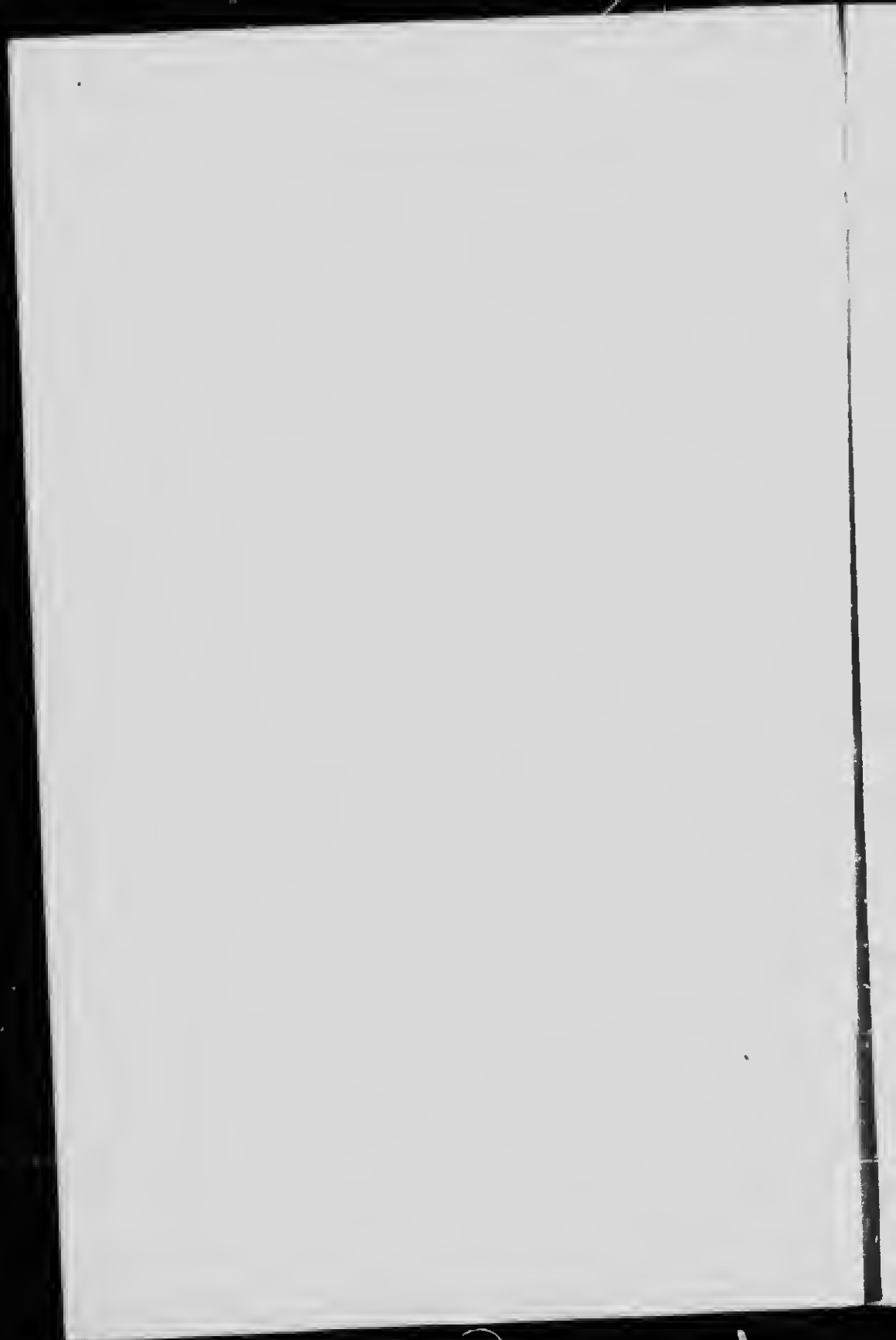


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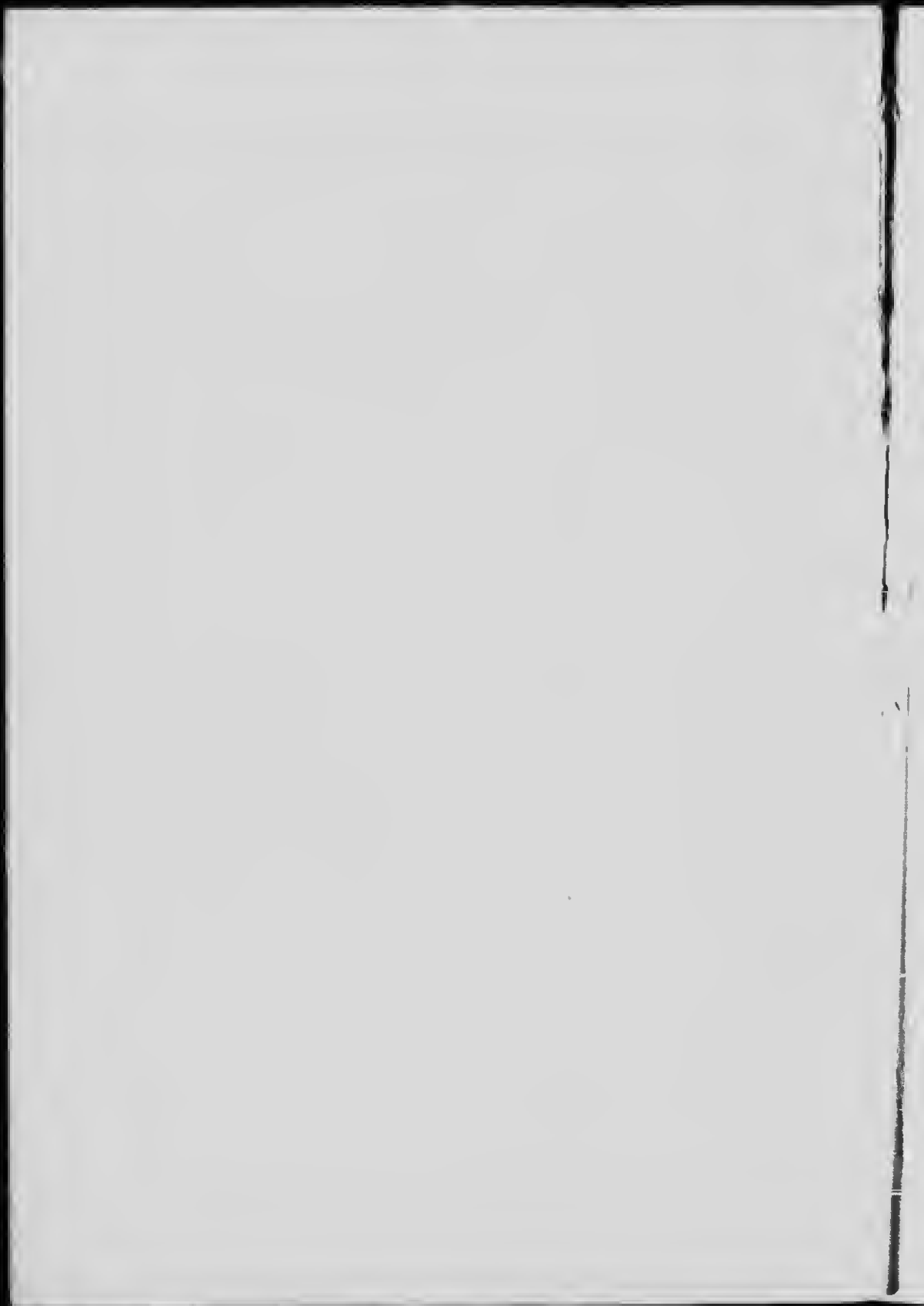
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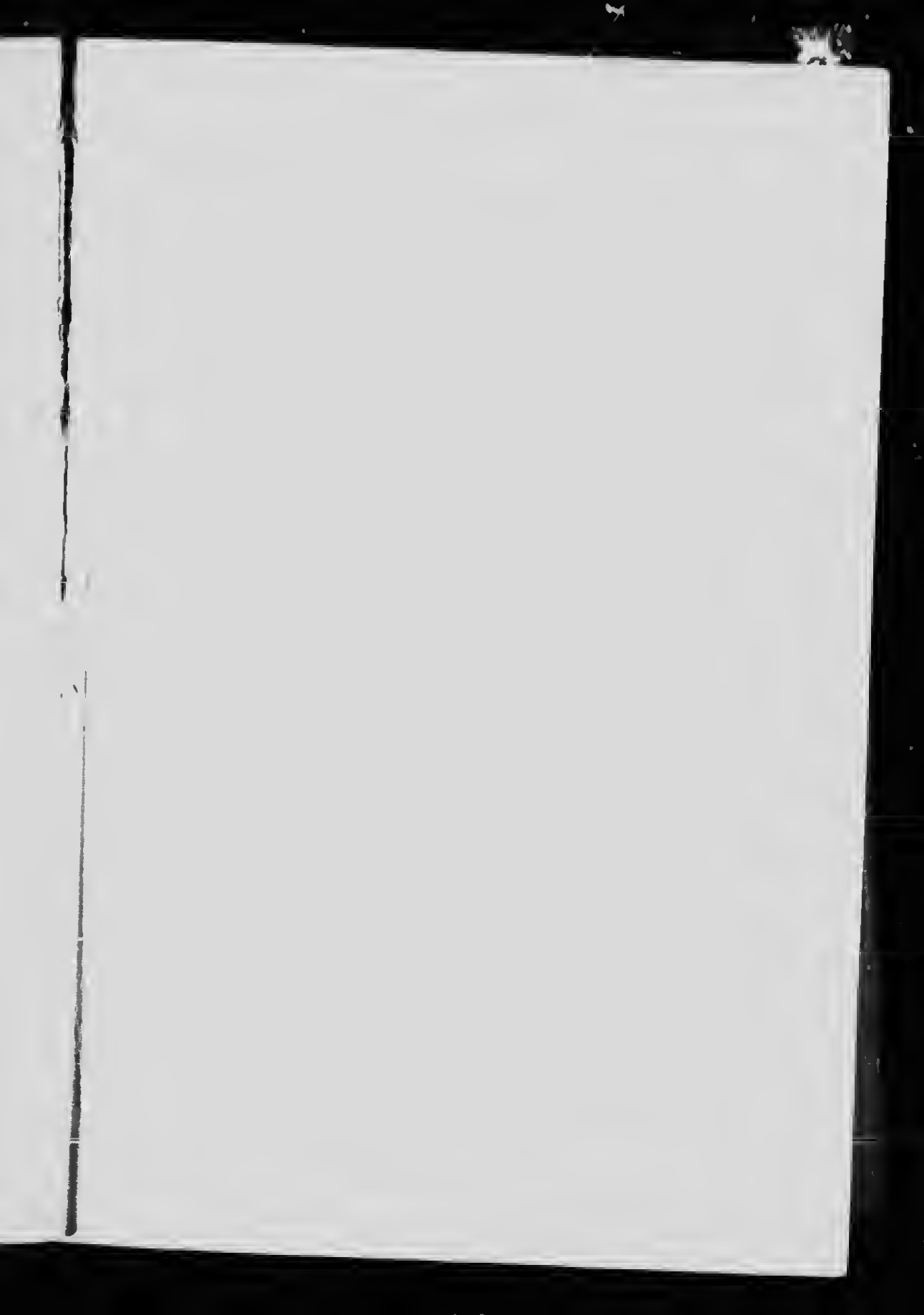
**BEHIND THE
BOLTED DOOR ?
ARTHUR E. McARDLANE**





BEHIND THE BOLTED DOOR?







The little butler was still trying to fight them off. "Let me die, I tell you! Let me die! Ain't it no proof to you—that—that I'm 'ere to die?" (Page 86.)

BEHIND THE BOLTED DOOR?

BY
ARTHUR E. McFARLANE

ILLUSTRATED BY
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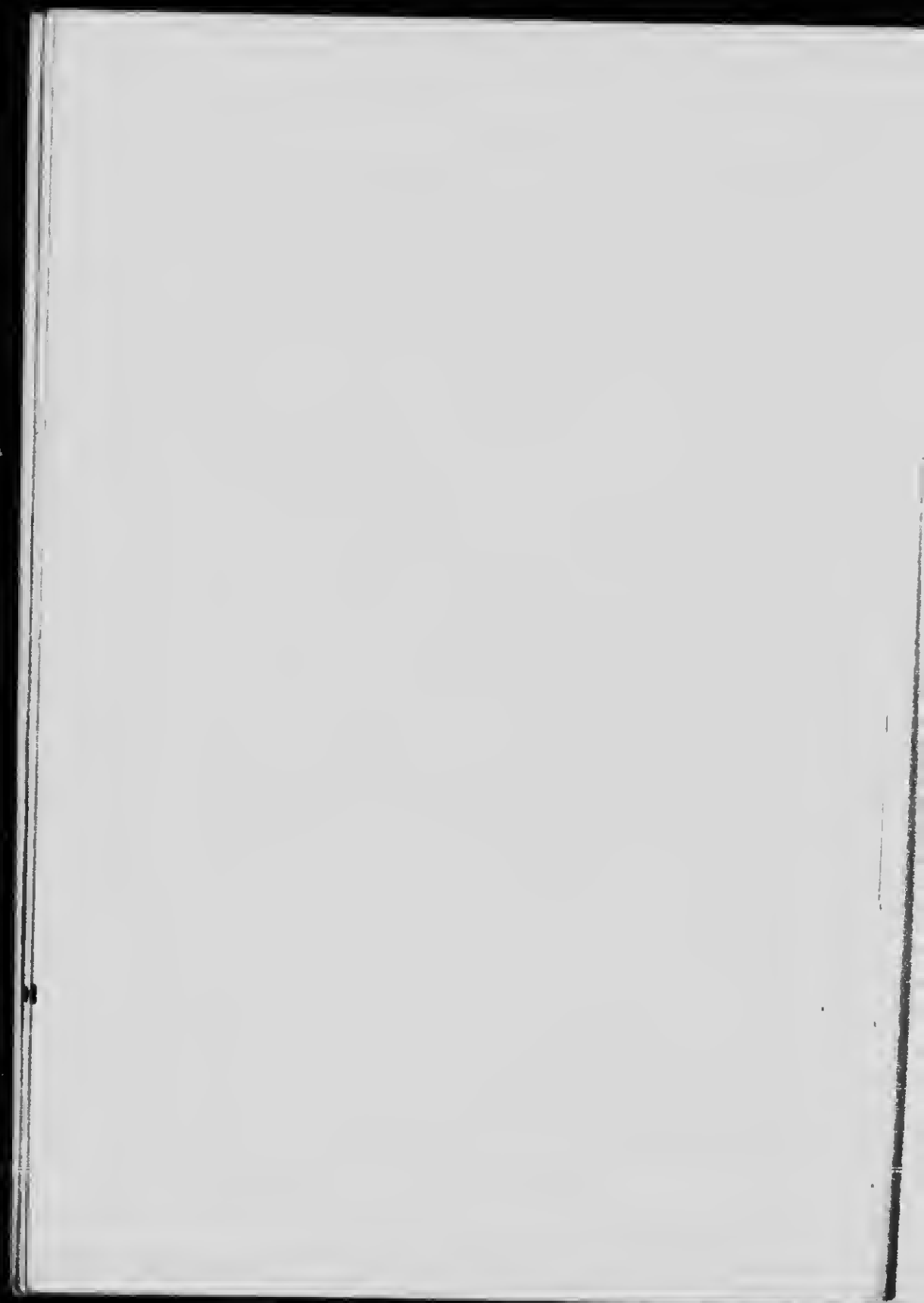
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To Dinnie, who is always making people happy; to Harrison, where at least one or two of the murders in this story were committed; to Benjamin, in his bathing suit; and to those other worthy Jones Streeters and Greenwich Villagers, who likewise did their part in making the above-mentioned murders thoroughly enjoyable, this book is dedicated with respect, appreciation, and affectionate regards.

Greenwich House, January, 1916.



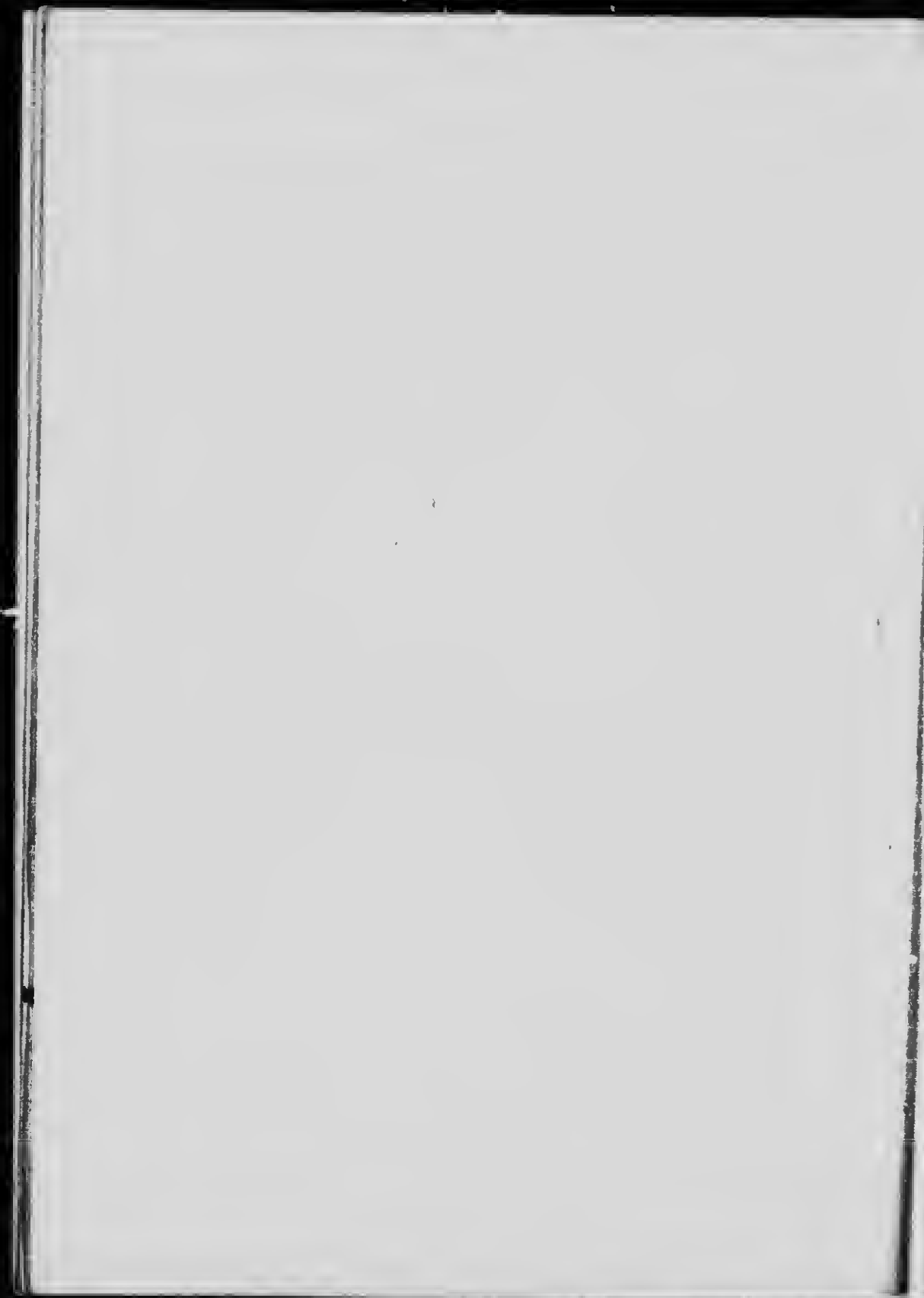
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CHAPTER I

PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND A RIDE UP-TOWN

"Wonderful, Holmes, wonderful! Sherlock, you astonish me!"

The Judge was a big man. He spoke and looked like Tom Reed. And he laughed like him.

Laneham grinned the tight-lipped grin of challenged battle, and worked the car through into snow-pyramided Broadway.

"Take Zancray's postulate, too," he said; "Zancray says that practically never does any friend of the victim tell everything. Either for his own good, or for the good name of the gentleman murdered, the helpful friend will always hold out something. Learn what those hold-outs are, Zancray shows, and five times out of six you will have the solution of your mystery."

"All right! All right!" Again the Judge haw-hawed hugely: "Bring on old Doc Zancray, and we'll give *him* a job."

2 BEHIND THE BOLTED DOOR?

In their professions both were big men. Laneham, alert, trim, crisp, professionally Vandicked, possessed among neuropaths a name fast becoming international. The Judge, smooth, dewlapped, benign, was Judge Fulton Bishop, lately of the Appeals bench, at present of the notable firm of Bishop, Potter, and Bishop, and soon—with the morrow and the New Year—to be the Greater City's new District Attorney. They were both big men. But being old friends and Americans, their manner to each other was almost exactly that of two sophomores "on the josh." They were on their way up to Laneham's winter bungalow in Westchester to see the year out fitly, playing Kelley pool. And the Doctor had seized upon the occasion as a chance to explain once more why the "new medicine"—the "newest medicine"—psychoanalysis, must in the scientific future become the sole and logical medium for the detection of crime.

With determination, and in the face of Bishop's joyous scoffing, he resolutely continued, too.

"Did you ever stop to ask yourself," he

inquired, "why people are sent to medicos of my particular sort at all?"

"Often. Often."

Laneham grinned anew.

"They're sent because, while not crazy in any ordinary sense—most of them are a good deal *too* keen—they have morbid psychoses: from certain troubles in their bodies their minds are kinked. And when we've had 'em under observation for a while, they begin to hang out signs which tell us all about it. Well, your criminal—at any rate at the moment of his crime—is simply a Johnny with a kirk. For the competent psychoanalyst he leaves his signs behind him. And any of us worth his salt ought to be able to take those signs and reconstruct him."

"As to how?"

"Why, tell you police and lawyer bats, for example, how he'll most likely try to make his getaway, and whether he's going to come back again; how he'll try to cover up, and what sort of evidence he's going to destroy. That alone, now: with us, the sort of evidence destroyed—'the evidence in the destruction of evidence'

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—is one of the things that begin to differentiate morbid kinks at once.”

“Huh!” said the Judge, “as a good criminal lawyer, destroying evidence is my strong suit.”

“Take the detective-bureau examination,” Laneham persevered. “In place of a bullying, elephant-footed third degree, some time you may come to realise the possibilities of the ‘confrontation’—the French are using it already—of auto-suggestion, of hypnosis, or even of a well-controlled trance and medium.”

Bishop raised his legal hands and waved as if for aid.

“Or go back again to the arrest. When the regulation, present-order detective makes it, in general he knows from the prisoner’s actions in the first half minute whether he is innocent or guilty. But could he offer a jury any valid reasons for his belief? I suppose I could offer you half a dozen, and every one of them cleanly and basically scientific.”

“Laney,”—and the Judge gave in—“there’s only one thing for it. The first dark, bloody mystery of crime that comes *my* way—that is, providing it’s sufficiently dark and bloody——”

"Well and good!" Laneham smiled with a grim brightness. "And granted the leisure, I think I'd just about take you up."

"Gad, too," said Bishop, falling back into fat reflection. "We might easily find use for you, at that. For it looks as if we'd surely have to get rid of McGloyne."

"McGloyne?"

"Our chief of detectives."

"Oh, yes. . . . Crooked?"

The Judge heaved his Tom Reedian dewlap from his collar points, and blew. "Oh, no. Just more than humanly stupid. And he tries to get away with it by playing Hell-roaring Jake to the gallery."

"Naturally."

"But Boyce—the Police Commissioner, you know—is greasing the ways for him right now. And we won't mar the hour by dwelling any more upon *him*."

He looked up into the high, blue, popcorn-clouded sky, and filled his lungs luxuriously with ozone that was still clean-washed from the morning's snow.

"It's some day, old man, some day!"

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Laneham missed a five-ten truck by half an inch. And his face showed that it was a thing he liked to do.

"You say you've got to stop and see Mrs. Fisher," he said. "Why that?"

"Heaven knows. I didn't get her note till three. And when I 'phoned her apartment, no one seemed to be there to answer. But it'll only be some trifle; I've always had her private business. The Casa Grande is right on our way and I won't let her keep me for more'n a jiff."

"It's all right. It's all right. And I'll have to run in to 390 to make sure I'm clear myself."

"If it hadn't been Miss Daphne Hope's afternoon off," said the Judge, again, still half apologising, "I'd have had *her* go up and take care of her."

"Ah, Miss D. Hope!"

And thereupon and with obvious pleasure they began to talk of her.

"Has she enough law yet for suffrage purposes?" Laneham asked.

"Enough? She's running the whole office now. We just stick around to make things legal."

"And has she ever told you exactly why she left Atlanta?"

"Old man a malefactor of great wealth or something, isn't he?"

"He's merely the boss employer of child labour in those parts. And when the said D. Hope awakened to that, she gave him his ultimatum, disinherited herself between lunch and dinner, and came on here to live on a dollar a day at the Hudson Street Settlement. Spirit of the century, my son, spirit of the century!"

Then they found themselves stalled behind some five hundred other cars by the snow-cleaners' wagons and the new subway work at Fourteenth street. And for a time they could not even talk of Miss D. Hope.

What they didn't know was that less than an hour before, the young woman herself had been seeing a young man into the old Subway station at Fourteenth street. And if she herself was not going up to Mrs. Fisher's and the Casa Grande, the young man was.

He was thin and dark, with the long under jaw of war and humour. And he wore a pair of large, round, black-rimmed glasses which,

from his boys' club in that Hudson Street Settlement, had promptly won him the name of "Owly." His other name was Willings, Walter Willings.

As for Miss D., or Daphne Hope—it was as "D. Hope" that she always signed herself—she was, first of all, exceedingly good to look at; but all details of that sort can be left till later. She was, secondly, and obviously, of the new or muscular type of femininity. To be born to tennis and golf and motoring and surf-bathing and mountain-climbing may, as is well known, damage you fearfully in some ways. But it likewise leaves you with a physique which cannot be seriously injured, even by a year of Hudson street. Thirdly, she was, at the present moment, very much in earnest. It was clear that Mr. Owly Willings had some more than ordinary mission with Mrs. Fisher. And with anxiety D. Hope was giving him her final counsel.

"And don't, above all things," she entreated, "feel that you're asking too much."

"No danger. I intend to be very firm and direct with her."

"Firm and direct!" And, knowing Mr. Willings, her tone immediately became that of suspicion.

"Precisely. Something like this: 'Madam,' I hiss"—he began to throw it into melodrama, and a young patrolman on the corner turned and gaped—" 'Madam, we must have one hundred thousand dollars and at once!' 'What, one hundred thousand dollars! But, my Gawd, if I cannot?' 'If you cannot? Then, *death-th-th*'—business of choking and death rattle—'and your justly famous azur-r-re pear-r-rls!' "

"Mr. Willings!" She looked at him half like a baffled big sister, half with the expression of the woman who sees again in a man the thing that made her like him first. Then she noticed the young patrolman. And giggling a little, she could only drop her voice and whisper:

"It'd just serve you right if you suddenly got nervous aphasia, or whatever it is, and found yourself actually saying something like that up there."

"Oh, I'm nervous enough now, inside."

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And at that she promptly became serious and intense again.

"Well, then, you needn't be. I know from the way she's spoken a dozen times that she's going to do it. All she'll ask is, Are we sure we're asking for enough?"

"And you're making me go alone to give me all the glory of it."

"I'm not. Believe me, I'm not."

But already he had stayed too long. And with smiling one more good-bye, he went on down the Subway stairs.

And, very briefly, the meaning of the foregoing was this:

For more than a year that same very wealthy Mrs. Fisher on whom Judge Bishop was to call had been one of Hudson Street Settlement's most generous supporters. She had been brought to it by D. Hope. Under her guidance and that of Mr. Owly Willings, she had been learning what it really needed most, which was money. From the beginning she had been paying a regular quarterly subscription of \$500. And now, with these last weeks of the year, it was increasingly evident that she was going

to do much more than that. Willings had spoken in his burlesque of \$100,000. But that was the actual amount, as Mrs. Hansi Fisher knew, that that Hudson Street Settlement needed for a really adequate endowment. And, within the next hour, there was every probability that he would have her check for it.

Meanwhile Dr. Henry Lancham and Judge Fulton Bishop had entered the triple traffic lines of the rippling, gonging avenue. And they, too, were still talking of Mrs. Fisher.

"But I hadn't any idea," said the Judge, "that she'd ever been one of your patients."

"And she never has. More than that, it's years since I've seen her. Changed a good deal lately, I believe?"

"Changed! No one more so. But it's merely your woman evolution in another phase, and this time a woman who at last has found herself."

He waggled return salutations to some one in a taxi.

"A few years ago it was jewelry."

"Oh, yes, the pearls, and such like outbreaks.

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And she's incorrigibly romantic still. You never know where it'll take her next. But now, thanks largely to Miss Daphne Hope, she's spending the large amounts on 'the cause,' and factory improvements and tuberculosis homes and fresh air funds."

"Hasn't arrived at prison reform yet?" asked the Doctor mischievously.

"Prison reform? Son, that's right where she lives. Both her servants, as I understand it, are Prison Gate. Sbe has only the two just now—the Casa Grande house service takes care of almost everything. But, English man, and Italian maid, I believe they've both done time."

"Good enough," said the Doctor. "Sounds like the real thing."

"It is. And, by the way, you'll *have* to come in with me, if it's only to meet Jimmy."

"Jimmy?"

"The man. A sort of general-utility butler, a little Cockney. He's not only undersized, but he wears a moustache, and he calls me 'Judge, your lordship.'"

"Ha!"

"Then, too, there's the new swimming pool. You'll have to see that."

"No," said Laneham, "I won't go in even to see the new swimming pool. My only call is here." They had swung across town, turned into West Seventy-second street, and stopped at 390, the Doctor's city house.

He let himself out. "There's always the chance," he explained again, "of something having been sent on at the last moment from the office."

And, evidently, something had been.

The Judge could see that, even from the car. For Miss Hunt, Laneham's secretary, had come out to meet him with her call book.

And when he turned back, it was with an expression of the oddest. He waited, too, for the Judge to speak.

"Well, Laney?" asked Bishop, wonderingly.

"Well?"

"Bish," said the Doctor, "it's a call, all right. But I'd give you one million guesses, and then feel safe."

"Not—not Mrs. Fisher?"

"No one else!"

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"No?—And, Lord, it was a hurry, too, wasn't it?"

"Oh, *that*—you mustn't let *that* trouble you. They're all hurries, over the 'phone."

He jumped in again.

"Well, at any rate," said the Judge, still puffing, "you're going to see her now, after all. There were no particulars?"

"No. But Miss Hunt didn't get the call direct. It was sent up from my Thirty-fourth street office."

He sent the car swiftly into the snowy Drive.

"What's Fisher himself doing now?" he asked abruptly. "He's quit practising, I understand."

"Long ago. And 'managing the estate' I believe he calls his present work. But Lord, with that patent-medicine face of his!"

"Seen much of him lately?"

"He's been down in our offices all day. And he's taking Potter back with him to dinner."

In the falling dusk they sped on up to the big Riverside block containing the towering Tudor-Gothic façades of the Casa Grande, and the Casa Reale, its annex.

CHAPTER II

OF DOORS THAT WERE LOCKED, OF A VOICE, OF
KNOCKINGS, AND WHAT WAS FOUND BY THE
SWIMMING POOL

THE Fishers had seventeen rooms on the ninth floor, or more accurately, on the ninth and tenth; for their apartment was "duplex." And stepping from the softly clashing elevator, the Doctor followed Bishop down fifty yards of the padded, French-grey corridor which led to the right.

They stopped at the Fisher door and rang. And they heard some one pass the door on the inside. Yet minute followed minute, and their ring remained unanswered.

It was Laneham who pressed the button a second time.

"Considering that after all," he said, "*it was* a hurry call."

Again, on the inside, some one seemed to ap-

proach, and again to turn back or to go on again.

“Really!” This time Bishop rang again.

And this time, too, the door was opened.

It was opened by the admired “Jimmy,” a pale, nervous-looking little Britisher. And even in the half darkness of that inner hall the reason for his delay seemed plain enough. He had been changing into his street clothes; and, at the last moment, he had apparently been trying to choke himself into his tie. It was still awry. And he was still swallowing whitely and spasmodically.

“I beg y’ pardon, Judge your lordship,” he gasped. “But I thought as the maid—— It’s rightly ’er afternoon on the door——”

“All right, Jimmy, all right. So long as we’ve scared you *a-plenty*. And how’s the good lady?”

“I’ll see, sir. If you’ll just go in, I’ll see.” And taking their cards, he went hastily on up to the mezzanine, or floor above.

“I should say there’s nothing very much to be anxious about,” the Doctor said. And they turned to the windows.

They heard themselves announced. Jimmy came down the stairs again—as they thought, to switch on the lights. For the dusk was deeper now. Outside another snow squall, black as a thunder cloud, was blowing up. And the big, beamed, Jacobean living-room was fast becoming like night itself. But the man went on past their door, and back to the service rooms beyond.

“After candles, no doubt,” Bishop explained. “Mrs. Fisher’s always had a pretty taste in things like that.”

And they waited again.

But two, three, five minutes passed, and no candles came. Nor did Jimmy return. Nor did any maid come down to bring a message from Mrs. Fisher. In a darkness every moment growing deeper, they still waited.

“Well, Jove,” said Laneham, “if this is a sample of your prison-gate service——”

The Judge took it a bit sheepishly. “I suppose I can find the switch myself,” he said.

But he could not. And finally the Doctor rose again, and walked with a certain sharpness back to the windows.

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"It would seem, too, from the silence," he said, "that every one has gone to sl——"

And then his voice changed wholly. "Well, by the Lord! Bishy, will you look here?"

He was pointing out of the window and downward. On the other side of the street a man, carrying an overcoat and suit case, was half running towards the boulevard. And even at that distance and through the snow, the figure was unmistakable. It was that of their little Cockney butler!

There is this in the sinister: It speaks at once. But for a moment the Judge tried weakly and instinctively to evade the truth.

"Well," he said, "he told us it was his day off."

Laneham looked at him. "With or without the silver?"

"Nonsense, man, nonsense. But I'll go up myself and try to locate the lady."

First, though, he again attempted, and Laneham with him, to locate the switches. But the Fisher wiring was concealed wiring, and it still kept its secret.

"Bother it!" And, half groping, the Judge mounted the stairs in the darkness.

"Mrs. Fisher!" he called. "Mrs. Fisher!"

There was no answer. And, continuing to grope, he laid his hand upon the nearest door.

Even as he touched it, from the inside it was quietly and smoothly locked.

That was all. There was no more than that. But despite himself Bishop let his hand drop, and he felt himself grow suddenly cold.

"Mrs. Fisher!" he called again. "Mrs. Fisher! It's I—Judge Bishop."

Again, in a silence now death-like, he went unanswered.

But, a few steps further on, he could make out a second door.

He stumbled on to it, reached it, lifted his hand—and then its lock clicked fast.

"Doctor!" He could not now control his voice. "Doctor! Will you come up here? Or no, first find a 'phone, and get the house!"

"I'm just doing it." Laneham was somewhere below. "Meanwhile," he called up, "I've been doing some exploring myself in the servants' hall, and I can tell you that both your

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English Jimmy and your Italian maid have cleared out bag and baggage!"

But the Judge scarcely heard him. In the creeping darkness at the end of that little upper hall, his eyes had made out still a third door. And, his skin rising in goose flesh, he had stretched his hand to it.

He stretched his hand to it. And, a third time, there came that same soft and horrid click. The third and last door was locked!

"Mrs. Fisher!" Then in a sheer nervous reaction he threw himself violently against it. "Mrs. Fisher! We're right here," he cried. "We're right here, and we'll be inside in a moment!"

He was no longer muscular, but he was a big and heavy man. And he put all his heaving weight behind his drive. But the door was of solid, bronze-set oak. And his first attempt told him that in that way he could do nothing.

By then, too, somewhere below, Laneham had found a telephone, and could be heard speaking at it.

"Yes . . . Yes . . . The Fisher apartment . . . On the ninth, I tell you. . . . Are you

deaf or foolish? And get an officer—a policeman!”

Meanwhile, again, and yet again, cold sweat beading him, the Judge hurled himself against that furthest door. “Whoever you are,” he shouted, “I warn you now that at least you can’t get out! Doctor,” he called pantingly over his shoulder, “will you watch the stairs? It’s his only way. Lord, if we only had a *little* light!”

But help was coming now. At the end of the long outside corridor, elevators were stopping. And to the Doctor’s voice there were adding themselves half a dozen more.

Yet among them there rose the voice of a woman, and a woman half hysterical.

“I knew it! I knew it!” she iterated. “And how I could ever be such a *fool!* But I told myself it might be just some sort of argument, as you might say, with a servant, and you know how it is if you go shoving into a thing like that!”

“Laneham!—Laneham!”—It came from the Judge in a falsetto—“Will you come up here—at once?”

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And then at last the Doctor seemed to get himself away.

"It's all right, old man," he answered. "We'll be with you now, in a shake. Some of you boys find the light switches. Two of you—*you* two—stay down here at the foot of the stairs. And the rest of you——"

"Boss," a hall-man was speaking, "we cain't find the switches! Mrs. Fisher, suh, the way she had these here lights connected——"

And then the hysterical woman began again:

"I couldn't hear what *she* was saying. But the other person, whoever it was—and I never heard any voice like that before—just kept saying, '*See! See! See!*' to raise your hair, and after that, '*No, no, no!*' so fast like they was dying of it!"

"Doctor," cried Bishop again, "for *God's* sake! Never mind the lights. Never mind anything else. But get those boys up here and help me force a door!"

"We're comin', boss, we'll be right there!"

And soon, tripping and jostling, half a dozen West Indian hall-men and elevator boys were

putting themselves against all the doors at once.

They moved them no more than had the Judge himself.

"I guess, boss," one of them gasped, "we sure got to have some *tools* for it. It's a job for the Sup'intendent, or the Engineer."

"Get *them*, then, get *them*!"

And, in his turn, the Doctor began to call.

"Mrs. Fisher! Mrs. Fisher!"

But no longer now did they hope to be answered.

Outside, another elevator was stopping. And this time a new voice made itself heard, panting and troubled:

"Why, only an hour ago. . . . And I've just found that an envelope—some money she'd left for me—for our Settlement—has been tampered with. But I'd—made up my mind I'd come back, anyway. Things were queer then,—only I wouldn't let myself believe it. I never saw her. And just when I was leaving I heard some crazy, unaccountable sort of knocking—as if some one, up there in her room——"

"How long? How long? How long?" In

his nervousness the Judge went to the head of the stairs. "And will you, whoever you may be down there, will you please be quiet, for a moment? . . . Laneham—all of you—listen. Can you hear anything in there now?"

All alike, they fell unbreathingly to silence. And then, halting them where they stood, from far within, and as if given by the muffled, bony hand of death itself, that "crazy, unaccountable knocking" could be heard again. . . .

There could be no doubt of it. And, following it, came a sound of some one, or something, that moved stealthily, and of a door that opened.

"Good Lor——"

"Hush! *Please!*" For from nearer, that hand in cerements had begun to knock a second time.

Even while they listened, too, a third time, and still nearer it sounded. And then—hollowly, sighingly, moaningly,—one would have said a soul being led already to everlasting torture, there breathed out to them, "Oh, God! Oh, my God, my God!"

At the foot of the stairs the woman in hysterics uttered shriek on shriek.

"Down with those doors!" cried Bishop; "down with them, some way!"

But as, qualmy and quivering, once more he hurled his flaccid bulk against the nearest, a suddenly wafted reek of oil and engine grease came up the little stairs to them. And,—“All right, Cap,” called some one, thickly; “Comin’! Comin’!”

It was the Casa Grande engineer.

“Here’s an ‘E. P.’ man, too,” he puffed, “an Electric Protection officer. They’ve just had a wire alarm—from the inside. Some one’s been tryin’ to crack the Fisher jew’lry box, that’s all.”

The “E. P.” man—he looked like a bicycle patrolman—was lighting the way with a pocket flash.

“But have you—have you a weapon with you?” Bishop asked him.

For answer he turned the flash upon his other hand, and showed his gun.

“Good. And we’re all of us backing you—all of us backing you!”

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The man of oil and grease had brought his ten-pound sledge with him. "Now, just hold your glim steady, Cap," he said, "on that there lock."

He swung. And with a snapping crash of bolt and casing, the door fell open.

"Some of youse coons stay outside," said the engineer.

And they were very willing to.

Meanwhile, following the miniature wheeling searchlight, the others found themselves looking here and there in Mrs. Fisher's morning room.

But, clearly, it was empty and deserted.

"All right, Bill," said the "E. P." man.

"Come on to the next."

The next room was a little library.

"Nobody here."

From the library there opened—the last of the suite in that direction—a tiny panelled writing-room.

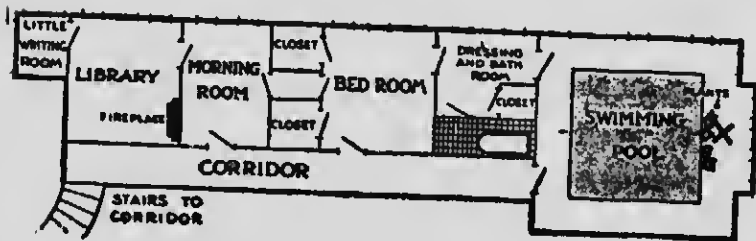
"Nothin' doin' here, neither. Nor no place for him to hide!"

They took hold of themselves again, and turned back to the rooms on the right.

"You boys stay on the door now. An', Colonel, ready with your little joker!"

The first room on the right was the bedroom, the second was Mrs. Fisher's dressing-room. And both alike were ordered and undisturbed, sweet and delicate and fragrant.

The third, and in that direction the last, was



the big "two-floor" room which contained the swimming pool. Its door was closed.

"All right, bo's, he's in there. By G— he's *got* to be!"

"Ain't no other way out?"

"Only to the hall. An' it's covered now, twice over."

"Then come along."

The "E. P." patrolman opened the door just wide enough to admit his weapon.

"Come out of it, now, friend. For we've got you lined!"

There was no answer, and he pushed inside. For once, too, there was a switch button at the door. And he threw it on.

Above the pool itself—about which the remainder of the room was merely a frame and setting—hung a great, closed, moon-like alabaster bell. Its light shone softly down through the quiet water, bringing out every blue and white tile of floor and walls, and throwing a heavy shadow from the lip-like marble brim of the pool, the edge of which rose some two feet above the floor itself.

To the right, the alcove of a big bay window was screened by a wide green stand of plants. The "E. P." man turned to the left, and started around the pool in that way.

But he had scarcely taken three steps when he stopped.

"It's here, anyway"—it came in a jerk—"wherever he is that done it!"

He began, indeed, to back away. For at his feet, and almost beneath that creamy, marble brim, was one great iridescent, crimson blot.

And more of that terrible crimson led them on and around those screening plants.

On a low rattan sun couch in the alcove lay the body of Mrs. Fisher, clothed and girdled in her bath robe. Her temple had been crushed in by some round knobbed instrument. The hole was almost an inch in width. Her throat was blue-black, banded, and horribly tumid. Upon the whiteness of her left arm, where her sleeve had fallen back, were other markings, only too clearly made by fingers. And she had been dead, Laneham told them, for probably two hours.

But that was only a part of it.

The door from that swimming pool to the hall was locked. The key was on the inside. Every door of the apartment was locked; every window. And no detailed searching, taken up again and again, from doors to windows, and from windows to every closet and corner where a man might hide, revealed either murderer or madman, or any way in which he could have made his escape.

CHAPTER III

OF A MURDER NOTE, THREE SPECIAL DEPUTIES,
AND ZANCRAV'S POSTULATE AGAIN

"Good! Sit down, now. And we're going to stay here for an hour if need be—till our nerves are right again!"

It was the Doctor who was speaking. Taking the Judge with him, he had returned and sought a haven for a time at least at his house and office in Seventy-second street. But all the horror of the thing was still upon them both.

"And, Bishy," Laneham continued, "you ask if, after all, it mightn't in some way have been an accident? Then, before we go further, I'll have to show you this."

He took something from his wallet.

"I hadn't intended to bring it out till later. But I guess you'll have to get it *here*. I picked it up behind the desk in Mrs. Fisher's little writing-room."

It was a three-inch square of greyish bond, such as is often made up into memorandum pads. And it bore a memorandum now. For beneath a death's-head in red ink, drawn like a school-boy's caricature,—and somehow the more horrible for that,—somebody had written, with the same pen apparently, the following:

We have now reached the point where it must be either murder or suicide.

And beneath that, in black ink and in another hand:

Couldn't it be made to look like an accident?

“Do you know the writing below?” the Doctor asked.

“Laney!” Bishop was a strong man and in his eventful life he had experienced much. But at that moment he was only the murdered woman's family lawyer and confidant. “Laney,” he said, weakly, “it's—it's Mrs. Fisher's own!”

“I thought so. But you don't know the first writing?”

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"No." The Judge's fat round face looked sick and grey. "But it's murder—murder, even if she believed she was consenting. And the cruel devil seems to have written without a tremor!"

"Well, there's this: the writing at least is recognisable enough."

It was. The script in red ink at the top had the fine, Elzevir-type distinction seen in old manuscripts, and, sometimes, in the label-writing of old druggists.

Bishop had let himself shakenly down into a chair.

"Old man," he said, "is there any part of this that we'll ever be able to understand? Even my note from her—why should she have sent for me on this day of all others? And have you learned yet who sent the hurry call that took you to her apartment?"

"No. It went first to my Thirty-fourth street office, you remember. And it's closed now for the night."

"And the woman from across the court in hysterics—who heard the 'argument,' and some one crying 'See, see!' and 'No, no, no!'"

"I had her show me where her windows are. She couldn't have heard anything within ten rooms of the swimming-pool. It's the Fisher servants' quarters that look on hers."

"And that alarm to the Electric Protection people from the jewel safe?"

"They're blocked, too, absolutely. So far, they haven't even been able to locate the safe! The thing is worked into the wall, and probably covered by the built-in furniture somewhere. They always hide them now. And until the E. P. diagram boss gets back from Baltimore——"

"I know, I know. But, Lord, Lord, at bottom, what has all that to do with it? Wall safes and pearls, and a cheap, every-day attempt at robbery! All that is outside—utterly beside the mark!"

Once more Bishop got to his feet.

"I—I don't know what that knocking—that knocking alone—seemed to say to *you*. But it took me straight back to stories my nurse used to tell me of people who'd sold their souls, and then, at the dreadfully appointed hour——"

"Yes, yes! That is the very feeling it put in me."

"And then, the *voice!* If that was not the voice of the lost man's spirit— But—lost *man's?* After *that*, Doctor, after *that?*" And he pointed to where, before him on the table, there still lay that little memorandum of murder. "Shall I not rather say lost *woman's?*"

"Easy, now, Bishy. Easy! You know, in a few minutes we'll have to be going back again. Tell me about Fisher. It was you who had to meet him, wasn't it?"

"Yes—and that, too." He tried to smoke again. "Laney, you know they never hit it off—no woman could with a man like him. But, at times like this, I think it's sometimes hardest on the man when he hasn't—when he hasn't played the game."

"No doubt of it."

"I've always detested him, and said so. Even when he comes to the office on business, I make Potter take him. And he'd been at the office all to-day—since morning. I heard him 'phoning her at noon. Daphne Hope was speak-

ing to her, too. And he tried to reach her again when I did, about three. It seems he'd been getting himself in bad somehow only yesterday. . . . She'd threatened to leave him. . . . And he kept telling me about it, over and over again to-night. I couldn't get away from it. . . . But they'd made it up, he says. That's how he came to be bringing Potter home for dinner. And afterward they were all going to 'Carmen'!"

"Could he tell you anything that might offer any light?"

"He wouldn't believe the half of what we had to tell him—any more than the police would. But would any one? Think of how it sounds. The doors bolted. Some one—or something—still there, and yet not there—and the poor woman dead perhaps for hours!"

He turned and smiled at Laneham, unhappily.

"Do you remember, too, what our talk was about, on the way uptown to-day? Crimes and mysteries! You were *asking* for one."

"No!—no, thank you!" The Doctor shuddered and drank again. "I prefer something more human and less——"

The telephone was ringing. He crossed to the desk and answered it.

"Yes. Yes, speaking. . . . Why, D. Hope! . . . Oh, it's the Judge you want? No? Both of us?— Then I'll put him on at the other receiver."

He motioned to Bishop that there was a second instrument behind his chair.

"I'm at the Casa Grande,"—the girl's strong young voice came to them, poignantly and achingly,—“and I was one of Mrs. Fisher's friends, you know.”

“Yes—yes.”

“But it isn't only *that*. They—the police—the head detective—are holding Mr. Willings.”

“Mr. Willings?”

“He's in our Settlement. And he called here to see Mrs. Fisher just before you, this afternoon. He came back while you were here. You must have seen him—the young man with the big glasses?”

“Oh—oh, yes. Now we know. But the police holding him? What for?”

“Why, just because he *was* here, and because no one saw him leaving again—and some money

has been taken. And there's something else, too—something *absurd*—that they can twist into looking a great deal worse!”

“We'll be up there immediately.”

“Well!” said Laneham, thoroughly puzzled.

“But we'd have been going back very soon in any case.”

And in a few moments they were in their great coats.

Once more it was storming—a wild drive of sleet and snow. But, with an officer, D. Hope was waiting for them, coat open and wide of eye, at the crowded curb.

“Come in—this way.” And she hurried them to an elevator. When they pushed out again, she led them straight down the corridor, through more reporters and patrolmen and plain-clothes men, to the big Fisher reception-room.

Police officers half filled it. At a table in the centre sat Inspector McGloyne, Chief of the Detective Bureau. Boyce, the Commissioner, was present too. But, plainly,—for the time, at any rate,—he was leaving full authority to

the Inspector, the Judge's "Hell-Roaring Jake."

And because Bishop was to be the new District Attorney, the man lifted his big blue jowl in a half-greeting as they entered.

"Glad t' see you, Judge, glad t' see you."

Then he turned back, jaw out, to young Willings, who stood, white and very quiet, in front of him.

D. Hope had taken her stand again at Willings' right. Her hand seemed feeling out for his.

"An' now, young people, now maybe we can start again."

McGloyne's hand was big and puffy and red-haired and toad-freckled. He kept lifting it from the table and, in a sort of punctuation, dropping it again. "We won't say anything about *this*, Mr. Willings,"—he picked up a large blue bank envelope. "By your own say-so, Mrs. Fisher had likely put \$500 of nice new money in it for your Settlement house. An' yet, when you look into it the money is gone and there's only this." He spilled out its contents, a dozen sheets of bill-sized,

blank grey paper, upon the table. "An' we won't say any more about just when an' how you left this apartment an' apartment-house when you were through. No more, at present, about that. I'll just ask you and the young lady to repeat your pretty little good-bye talk at the corner of Fourteenth street. All just jokin', of course—just pure jokin'."

"Any decent person would know that it was!"

That from D. Hope; and she flamed it.

"Please!" Willings tried to stop her. "You can see what a rotter he is."

"Oh, sure! Sure!" And suddenly Hell-Roaring Jake began to live up to his name.

"Oh, sure you can! An' sure you were just jokin'! That's why you two smooth little silk-stockin's never bothered mentionin' it yourselves. An' now, Meehan,"—he swivelled about to a young patrolman standing at his left,—“will you just repeat said talk for us again?”

"Why," began that young patrolman worriedly, "I've got to say, Chief, that I took it for kiddin' myself. An' I only brought it up——"

"Now, kill that—see—kill that! All you got to repeat for us is your evidence."

"Well, they"—pointing to Willings and Miss Hope—"they were talkin' about Mrs. Fisher—anyways, *some* Mrs. Fisher——"

"Sure. Sure. *Some* Mrs. Fisher——"

"And she—the girl—asks him how he was goin' to get somethin' from her—from Mrs. Fisher—money, it was. A hundred thousand, he mentioned. And he says he'll ask her first, and then, if she doesn't give up, he—but, Chief, now, it was just kiddin', and nothin' *but*—he makes out he's goin' to choke her for the pearls."

Both Laneham and the Judge started forward together. And then they saw that Boyce, the Commissioner, was intervening, too.

"McGloyne," he was saying, "I asked you at the start—and I had your promise——"

"Mr. Commissioner," said Bishop, "Miss Hope is my confidential secretary. And if it's any crazier to suspect the boy!——"

"I know, I know." Boyce was a lean, clean, grey ex-army man. "McGloyne, will you let

me have a moment with the young people alone? Judge, and Dr. Laneham——”

He got no further. Cursing and crying out inarticulately, some one was forcing his way out of another group of police officers in the rear.

It was Professor Fisher himself. And even a first glance would have shown them that the man was beside himself.

He *had* what Bishop had called a “patent-medicine face”—the eyes too large and magnetic, the richly curling beard, the too exotic good looks—of the face of the physician printed with the typical yellow-journal remedy.

But now, with his wife’s body lying in that room beyond, his eyes were bloodshot and his cheeks pastily colourless. More than ever, too, did his German accent come out.

“I desire to ask,” he cried, shaking his hand at Willings—“I desire to ask if, after all, you are going to led him go? He vas here. He came—he came to demand money from my wife for his Settlement. He vas the last one to see her alive—— And you are going to led him

go! And the girl—bei Gott, the girl—is lid-
dle better!”

“They’re dismissed on my recognisance,”
Bishop answered him. “It was unpardonable
ever to attach suspicion to them.”

“Unpardonable! Unpardonable!” he
foamed; “then I gif you notice right away now,
if you think all law and justice can be stopped
in the first hour——”

“Professor Fisher——” The Commissioner
tried to calm him, “if you will merely trust in
me——”

“I will not! I will not!”

Boyce waited for no more.

“Judge, will you bring your friends this
way.”

He opened the door to the big dining-room.
And when they were alone at last, he turned
to Bishop again.

“I’ll have them both dismissed on your re-
cognisance——”

“Thank you.”

“But as for preventing publicity——”

“Oh, no escape now from that!”

“Or even from the implication of guilt——”

"Oh, not a doubt of it. Not a doubt of it!" said the Judge again. "And McGloyne will believe in it most firmly of all. Boyce, tell me, aren't there any reliable private detective agencies?"

"Certainly. But hardly for *us*, you know."

"Then cross out the *agency*. Supposing some competent private individual, working largely *sub rosa*——"

The Commissioner laughed and snapped his teeth on it.

"Bring him to me. He's some one we've long been looking for."

Bishop turned to Dr. Laneham.

"Laneham, I remind you again of what we were speaking of on the way uptown to-day. You see how much these youngsters are in the need of help. I can give it only indirectly, for to-morrow I'll be District Attorney and virtually their prosecutor. But you—you have long wanted to put your psychoanalysis to the test. And here is your opportunity. The thing can't be wholly supernatural—and I ask you to make this case your own."

"Bishop!"—again the Doctor put it from

him, with a sort of horror: "Im-impossible!"

"Oh, you must! You will!"

It was D. Hope who was appealing now. And she had all but thrown herself upon him. Yet from the first one could see that it was not of herself that she was thinking. "You've so often told *me*, too, of what you believed that you—that a little modern science——"

"My dear girl!" The Doctor still resisted, and turned to Willings.

"You'll have the good will of Judge Bishop, you know, and the Commissioner——"

"Yes, Laney," repeated the Judge; "but they must have your help, first of all." He shook him by the shoulder: "Come, come, old man, you might as well give in at once."

And in that moment Laneham did give in. He turned again, and his consent came in the form of a question.

"Both you children live at that Hudson Street Settlement of yours?"

"Yes."

"And, for a time at least, it'll not be very comfortable for you there?"

"Oh," cried D. Hope, "it'll be awful!"

"Very well. Then I engage to do what *I* can if you two will do this for me—pick up your traps and come up and stay and work along with me."

"Dr. Laneham!"

"Why not? Can you give me one good reason? We'll all be amateur detectives together, and no two people are in a position to help me more. As for the chaperonage, as long as Mrs. Neilson is on her job, no possible chance to cavil at that!"

He looked at the Judge again: "I'll be taking away your confidential secretary, you know."

"I give you both my blessing."

"Very well." And then the Doctor addressed himself to Boyce. "I suppose if you can take on one special deputy, you can take on three——?"

"I can give you your papers within an hour."

"Done!"

And, a moment later, the Commissioner had gone back to McGloyne and left them alone.

It was Laneham's first intention, too, to take both young people down to his car, and send them home at once. He was very soon to regret that he had not.

It was the Judge who prevented him. Bishop had continued to pat D. Hope's shoulder reassuringly.

"When you see," he told her, "what the Doctor can really produce from his bag of tricks——!"

"I hope so," said Laneham; "I hope there'll be something, anyway."

"Let's see," Bishop went on. "Some of those basic principles you were laying down for me this afternoon, what were they again? That Zancray lad, now, what was *his* method of getting at the truth?"

"Zancray? Zancray's postulate?" Laneham could hardly put the question aside, and he explained the allusion to the others. "Why, Zancray is a French psychologist who's been making a study of crime and criminal investigations. And he bases his work most largely on a theory that in general no friend of—of the victim ever tells everything. Either for

what they imagine are the victim's best interests, or for their own, they always hold out something.'

At the moment he was looking at Willings; and it was *his* expression that began first to bring him to a halt. "They always hold out something," he repeated, "and if you could only get all those hold-outs and fit them together——"

He did not really finish at all. For from Willings' face he had turned his eyes incredulously to Miss Hope's, to the Judge's. And upon all three—it was absurd, it was impossible, but it was there—upon the faces of all of them there was the selfsame betrayal. In the psychological laboratory he had heard it given a name—"the Zancray look"! Next moment, indeed, seeing one another, all three had realised that it was there.

The Judge was the first to give the preposterous situation a sputtering and indignant denial.

"Well, really, Laneham, really! When, for years, I have been Mrs. Fisher's personal attorney!—and when every professional man is intrusted with certain confidences—certain se-

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crets, if you like—if you can imagine for one moment——”

“Bishy!”

But by then young Willings, as white as he had been an hour before, was speaking:

“Dr. Laneham, if I give you my word of honour that anything *I* may be ‘holding out’——”

The Doctor could only wave at him imploringly to stop. And, for that matter, it was at D. Hope that he was looking now. For if ever nerves had plainly reached their breaking point——

“Doctor,” she began quiveringly, “when I tell you that the incident in my mind—the thing I’m holding out—was the merest trifle——”

“D. Hope,”—he made it an order—“you go home. And, Willings, you go too! I’m so thoroughly ashamed of myself and Zancray and his postulate! Just say we’ve decided to forget it—or to file it for future reference—or anything you please to get it buried!”

Absurd and impossible! It was more than that. And once more he had to assure them all that, so far from doubting them, his only

feeling was one of anger against himself. Only then did he realise that had the affair been that of any of his patients, in no case could *he* have told everything.

“Let me send you off in the car,” he said. And, Bishop with him, he took the young people down to the street.

“Everything comfy? And you’re going to forget, really? For that’s only fair to me, you know. Then back to your Settlement with you, and be up at Seventy-second street as early as possible to-morrow for our real beginning!”

CHAPTER IV

OF THE EVIDENCE THAT MAY LIE IN THE DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE—AND A HANDFUL OF ASHES

“LANEHAM,” began the Judge again, “allow me to say once more——” Again he stopped to gulp his indignation.

“*Please* put it out of your mind,” asked the Doctor. “*Please* be like the youngsters, and forgive and forget it.”

“Oh, if you say so. But it seems to me, as a beginning——”

“There are other beginnings we can make.”

And, at that moment Boyce, the Commissioner, joined them again.

“Doctor,” he said, “wouldn’t you like to take a preliminary look around at once?”

“Do,” said Bishop, “by all means.”

“I should like to, very much,” said Laneham.

“Good. For the present it’d be just as well to stay away from McGloyne.”

“Of course.”

“And I’ve promised Professor Fisher——” he pointed up the stair—“his private rooms are up there, to the right,—that he’ll be left untroubled. But, otherwise, you can go anywhere in the apartment.”

And in a few minutes Laneham and the Judge were walking through it together.

Its general arrangement was one that, to anybody familiar with the big, modern, two-story apartment de luxe, revealed itself at once.

Above, to the right and left, were the suites of the master and the mistress; below, their common rooms. And in the wing on the court were first the service rooms and then the living quarters—the maid’s above, the butler’s below—of the servants themselves. All was perfectly simple. There were neither unlooked-for doors, nor unsuspected passages. The swimming pool alone was out of the common. And the Doctor began by leading the way to it.

It was as they had seen it first. The corner’s physician gravely pointed out to Laneham that death would have resulted from the blow on the temple alone; and that though the

markings on the throat were, in a sense, almost identical with those often caused by asphyxiation or even electric shock, the finger marks on the arm made it needless to go so far afield. All of which had been seen and said before. Nor was any new light given, Bishop told himself, by that great, moon-like electric hanging above the pool. The Doctor moved about the swimming pool for a few minutes longer. Then they went on to the rooms beyond.

They could now see Mrs. Fisher's little private suite from end to end. And it, too, told no more than it had told at first. It had shown no slightest evidence of disturbance then, and it showed none now. It was a small tragic vision of lovely old rose and dull blues and egg-shell white. And two "E. P." men were still searching for the hidden wall safe. By the old French fireplace in the little library some Central Office men were turning out the drawers of a fine old Washington desk. "The boss," said one of them—he meant Professor Fisher—"told us to make it thorough—no bars up anywhere. An' we are."

Another had again opened the window of

the tiny writing-room, on the theory, perhaps, that even without a fire-escape or connecting balcony, some one might have entered from the apartment next door. But the snow on the outer sill was a soft crust of sleet that had not been broken in weeks.

They descended the stairs again to the common rooms. And then they went on through to the service quarters. Nowhere was there anything out of the unusual in any form whatever.

There still remained the servants' private living rooms. Each of them had two. And if both those servants had fled, their rooms at least established this difference.

Maddalina, the Italian maid, must have had her warning. The events, whatever they were, of that day had not taken her by surprise; the proof being that she had removed all her belongings to the last old shoe. And to do that, it was a fair inference, she must have been "getting out" for the week before.

But in the rooms of Jimmy, the little English butler, on the contrary, everywhere lay the indications of flight without warning. On all sides was the litter of rejected possessions

left by a man who has had to pack frenziedly and get away in a matter of minutes.

Here, too, more Central Office men were at work, thumbing their way through the contents of a disordered dresser.

“Have you found anything in the way of torn paper, or the signs of anything having been burnt?” asked Laneham.

They looked at him doubtfully. But the Judge’s presence gave them sufficient authority for answering, and one of them produced a piece of stamped paper.

“It ain’t tore or burnt,” he said, “but it gives us a look at the fist he writes.”

It was a duplicate deposit slip—the small mutual receipt one has to make out when depositing without a pass-book. It was on the West Side Bank for Savings. It showed that forty dollars had been deposited on December the second preceding, that Jimmy’s name in full—as given there—was James H. Higham, and that the “fist” he wrote was quite as scrawling and characterless as might have been expected. It bore no remotest resemblance to the unknown writing of the murder note.

"Nothing else?"

"Not a thing."

In the corridor they again encountered Boyee. And, though he let the Judge go on, he stopped Laneham for a moment to speak to him.

"Nothing so far, Doctor?"

"Nothing so far."

And then they, in their turn, were interrupted by some one coming down the stairs beside them. It was Professor Fisher. He passed on, hat in hand, to the outer hall.

His leaving, too, seemed to give Boyee an idea.

"I barred you out of those rooms up there before," he said, "but now that the Professor's no longer in them, and if it'll only take a minute——?"

"Oh, never mind. Never mind."

"Better go. For our friend Jimmy would above all have the run up there."

So Laneham mounted to the master's suite.

There were four rooms altogether. And he was about to leave the second, a sort of lounging and gun room, when his eyes were drawn

to the fireplace. There were ashes in it, a little fluttering heap, seemingly the ashes from some burnt magazine. But it was where it ought to be; and, though he turned back to it, he did so incuriously.

Incuriously at least until, kneeling he bent down over it, looked more closely, and then put his hand out.

From the way in which he withdrew it one might have thought that he had been burnt. And, two minutes later, he was with Boyce again.

"Tell me, Mr. Commissioner," he asked at once, "have the E. P. people located the wall safe yet?"

"No. But it's only a sort of hidden pigeon-hole. The Professor himself doesn't know where Mrs. Fisher had it placed."

"And therefore you can't even say yet that the pearls were here at all?"

"Why, n-no. No."

"And, that being so, can you have the newspapers *print* just that, and nothing more: "The pearls were supposed to have been kept in some sort of hidden wall safe, but so far it

has not been found.' Can you hold it at that till further notice, too, even if everything should be found in the next half hour?"

"Why, *Doctor*——!"

But Lancham took his acquiescence for granted. And he hastened on to find the Judge.

"Well?" asked Bishop. "Well?"

"Bishy, I was speaking of something besides Zancray this afternoon—the thing we chaps call 'the evidence in the destruction of evidence.' "

"Yes, I remember!"

"The honest man makes no effort to cover his tracks. But the criminal—or the homicidal maniac—will go so far out of his way to cover them that right there he may tell the beginning of the story."

"Yes? Yes? But the application here?"

"Don't ask me to tell you now. And in all probability I'm wrong. But at any rate I have the sense of having made my commencement."

Yet even then the Doctor knew that he had in his pocket, loose wrapped in a handkerchief, his "evidence in the destruction of evidence" in the shape of a few fragments of brown and flimsy paper ash.

CHAPTER V

AGAIN D. HOPE, AND OWLY WILLINGS; SOME COMPARATIVELY ANCIENT HISTORY; AND A BEGINNING AT "390"

IN Hudson Street Settlement House Miss Daphne Hope was what is known as a part-time worker. She lived at "The House." But during most of the day her work was in Judge Bishop's law office. It was her evenings that she gave to the Settlement. And she had "junior cooking" and a dramatic club, and the girls' athletics. She could pitch a baseball, too, almost as well as any man or boy on Hudson street.

As for Mr. Owly Willings, he was a "full-timer," and he had boys' athletics, and the editing of *The Hudson Street Whoop-her-up*, and the work of turning certain very bad gangs into at least the beginnings of good clubs by way of a basket of six-ounce gloves and a thoroughly professional ring in the basement. And

for these things he received his board and lodging and about five hundred dollars a year. Five hundred dollars a year means a check for less than forty-two dollars a month. And when Miss Daphne Hope came to Hudson street, and Mr. Owly Willings learned that she was the only daughter of a gentleman worth anywhere from five to fifteen millions, in those checks for less than forty-two dollars per mensem lay the secret of an attitude on the young man's part which for long puzzled Miss D. Hope greatly.

In those first weeks, Mr. Willings kept about as far away from her as it was, in politeness, possible to keep. He displayed an aloofness which at first, in her simplicity, she mistook for something that had come from his college and fraternity standing. Then, when she discovered that he had long ago forgotten all about his college and fraternity standing, and that in Hudson street he was loved most of all for his eternal boyishness, and an inexhaustible capacity for inventing new forms of nonsense, Miss Hope gave it up. Or rather, she went tightlippedly to her mirror, and tried to learn from it just *exactly* what it was in her that made

him dislike her so particularly. She thought a great deal about it, too, at night.

And the thing that had brought them together was this: One evening about half-past eleven she was returning alone to Hudson street from a performance in the old Garriek, when she found herself walking straight into one of those gang fights—and knifings—for which that part of the lower West Side has long been famous. She didn't know what she was looking at, at first. All she saw was a young rough suddenly burst his way out of a surging, yelling crowd. And she thought he was wearing a red neck-tie. But it wasn't a neck-tie. And two other young gentlemen were after him. And others were behind them, yelling at them to "make it a job," and "get him good!"

But before they could "get" him that young rough ran into a store, a delicatessen store. And then Miss D. Hope found herself thinking very rapidly—and acting almost more rapidly than she was thinking. In the first seconds she told herself—like any carefully brought up young lady—that she must get

away at once, that she mustn't even dream of interfering. And then she told herself: "Yes, run away! Run away!—Do exactly the thing that has made women an *inferior* sex, and we have been, since the beginning of time!"

By then, too,—and she had taken the step in about three jumps—she was inside that delicatessen store. She had seized the biggest ham knife from the counter. She had leaped back to the door. And she was still holding it against all comers—when Mr. Owly Willings had arrived upon the scene.

After that, of course, and on the way home, there had been explanations.

Miss Hope said that she had been at the theatre.

So also had Mr. Willings. And he added, later on, and quite unnecessarily, that he had been in the gods.

Unnecessary though the remark was, it had this result. Miss Hope promptly followed it with the statement that she also had been in the gods.

She also? And the mere look on Mr. Owly

Willings' face was a question that had to be answered.

Why, of course, the gods, she told him. And if he would look up the pay of women law clerks he would never need to ask her why.

Then, on the remainder of that walk home, there had been further explanations, from which Mr. Willings had gradually come to understand that, compared with Miss D. Hope's present financial position,—however self-imposed—his own was one of affluence. He learned, too, that if there had been a hundred millions waiting Miss Hope in Atlanta, there was no earthly possibility of her going back to it till she could go with her head up, and on her own terms. By then he had discovered that he had liked her from the beginning, and liked her very much indeed. And it was shortly after that that they had gone to the theatre again, and sat in the gods together.

It was about that time, too, that they had begun to know Mrs. Fisher.

Mrs. Fisher had first been D. Hope's friend. Then they had taken her about together. They had shown her the meaning of the tenement

dark room, of the street playground, of tene-
ment labour. With them she had seen chil-
dren stringing beads and making artificial
flowers for fourteen hours a day. And from
them she had begun to learn some of the things
that money could do.

She had begun to learn it. It had been a
lesson of months. . . . And now, in a few
hours, or a few days more—! Who, or what,
they asked themselves again, had done the deed
that had brought everything to an end?

At the Settlement there were already re-
porters waiting to interview them. And even
had they not arranged to leave Hudson street
at the earliest possible moment they would
have done it then. Every effort was made to
keep them. From the dircetress to the door
boy there was a loyalty which almost forbade
them to go. But they had no real ehoice. Dr.
Laneham had offered them a ehancee which
for the sake of the Settlement itself must not be
lost. Both spent half the night packing. And
in the morning they were on their way together
to Seventy-second street.

For days, perhaps for weeks, they would be under the same roof, working and living in an intimacy greater even than that of "The House." But neither of them was thinking of that now. Who had killed Mrs. Fisher? And why? And why did it seem so horribly mixed with the impossible and the supernatural? And why had chance drawn *them* into it?

At "390," Jacobs, Lancham's man, received them.

The Doctor himself was still dressing. He had been up most of the night. For one thing he had had to arrange, so far as was humanly possible, to free himself of all professional duties for the next ten days. Fortunately, he had been able with an almost easy mind to turn things over to McMaster, of his Wardsdale sanatorium. And now he was soon welcoming his special deputies in the breakfast-room.

"Well! We're here. And how did your Settlement people take it?"

They told him.

"And your pater?" he asked D. Hope.
"What of him?"

"He's in Japan somewhere. All my people are. And they won't hear of it for another month."

"So much the better. And now to business at once. Willings, I want your story first of all. I can understand that nonsense at Fourteenth street. You needn't go back over that. But tell me everything that occurred after you reached the Casa Grande."

And Willings told him.

It must have been about four, he said, when he reached the Fisher apartment. He had waited, expecting every moment that Mrs. Fisher would come down, for almost an hour. But in the end he had given up and left again. Why had no one seen him leaving? Because he had walked down the stairs. There was some tie-up in the elevators, and he had waited another five minutes at them. And if no one had seen him, as he remembered it now, he hadn't seen any Casa Grande people, even in the lower hall.

The knocking? He had heard it just as he was leaving; but at that time there was no voice. Had he seen Jimmy—Mrs. Fisher's

Cockney servant? Yes, and the little chap had been acting queerly then.

More than that, it was Jimmy who had brought him out the big bank envelope. He hadn't opened it at once, because he had taken it for granted that he knew what it contained—Mrs. Fisher's regular quarterly subscription to the Settlement. Yes, five hundred. She'd paid it before like that, and in actual cash. He hadn't opened the envelope till half an hour later, and then he had discovered that instead of bank-notes there was blank paper. It was in part that discovery that had brought him back again.

So much in explanation of lesser things. And then he and D. Hope together told again of what, that day, he had really gone to Mrs. Fisher's for.

“And—no doubt it's against all reason and logic,” the girl broke in again, “but from the first I've had the feeling that it's as if some hateful, evil demon had simply resolved to prevent her doing all that good—and if once we could discover everything that's behind her death——”

"It may be so, it may be so," said Laneham, solemnly. "At any rate we're at work now. And I've had something over the 'phone myself this morning."

"And what is that?"

"I've just heard from Miss McCollum—in my Thirty-fourth street office, you know—to which that Fisher hurry call for me was sent. And it's practically certain that the voice that cried out so terribly in those rooms after the murder was the same that sent my call."

"Doctor!"

"Little question. The words used were simple enough: I was merely to come at once. But Miss McCollum remembered the voice the moment I asked her about it. She said she'd know it again if she heard it anywhere. And she imitated it for me."

He turned away to his desk, and added a few lines to a page of notes he had already scribbled on his office pad. Then he brought those notes back to his special deputies.

It was much as if he had been classifying the ghastly data of the morning and the night before for some sort of hospital record.

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"I'll read it to you as I have it," he said, "and if either of you can add to it, or suggest any changes, speak up now."

What he read was this:

(A) *Facts apparently explicable, and criminal in the ordinary sense.*

1. Body found by Judge Bishop, self, and others at about 5:15, in Mrs. Fisher's private suite, near swimming-pool. Death had taken place between one and two hours previously.

2. Italian maid, Maddalina—prison record—had already fled.

3. English butler, Jimmy—also prison record—showed great nervousness, and fled after admitting myself and Bishop to reception-room.

4. Blank paper had been substituted for genuine notes in bank envelope left by Mrs. Fisher for Willings.

5. Even after Bishop and myself had begun our attempt to gain an entrance, some one was still trying to break into the small wall safe in Mrs. Fisher's rooms, containing her famous pearls. This is proven by the time record of the Electric Protection Company.

(B) *Facts apparently inexplicable, and, on the surface, more than natural.*

1. All doors of Mrs. Fisher's private suite were locked on inside—no access by windows—and *last* doors were locked from inside even as Judge touched their handles to open them.

2. Following this a thrice-repeated sound of rapping or knocking was heard from within, and a voice crying in great spiritual agony: "Oh, my God, my God!" Voice extremely deep and broken. It was this voice, it is almost certain, that sent my hurry call. (The rapping or knocking was also heard an hour earlier by Willings.)

3. Cause of death not apparent—bruises and markings on arms and throat, and temple crushed in—weapon, if any, gone.

4. Though murderer (?) was still plainly in rooms on arrival of Judge and myself, and all doors and windows were locked, upon our entrance he had gone; and his method of escape was wholly inexplicable.

And then, as a final note, the Doctor read:

For the present, absolutely disregard all the seemingly supernatural. And begin by making every effort to find Jimmy the butler, and another copy of the burned magazine.

"The burned magazine?" asked Willings.

He told them about it, but he offered no explanation of the importance he attached to it. And while he spoke he seemed to narrow his eyes half professionally, half friendly wise, and scrutinise them both anew.

Both looked very quiet and pale and businesslike. The girl, deep-breasted, supple, free

of limb, was almost the larger. But in Willings' face there was all the pluck and spirit needed. And with them there was all he needed of clean-tanned muscle and sinew.

"We'll leave Jimmy for the present," the Doctor ended, "and I'll ask you two to go after the burned magazine. If I could tell you more I would. But the word in the upper right-hand corner—in good big advertising type, at that,—and the only word not ashes—was 'mund'—'m-u-n-d, mund.' It was probably the back of the magazine. And because 'mund' is a German word—the word for 'world' of course—you'd better try the German book-stores first."

He was just finishing when Bishop was shown in.

The Judge waited till the young people were gone. Then: "Well!" he said, "well! At any rate you *sound* like the real thing. And what's the answer?"

"Bishy," the Doctor put him off, "as I answered you last night, I don't believe I'll tell you. Because quite probably I'm wrong. At the start at least I'll probably be wrong four times out of five. And since, from this morn-

ing, you're District Attorney, it won't help a lot to gum you up along with me."

"All right. Whatever *you* think."

And they went up to the Casa Grande together.

CHAPTER VI

A HOUSEHOLD FILE, AND A PURSUIT AT MID-NIGHT

THEY went, first, because it was the hour set for the coroner's inquest.

It was the customary inquest, too. It called attention to the obvious and shut its eyes to all that was not. But it at least made it possible for the poor body to be removed. The funeral was to be on the morrow, from the Fisher country place at Greenwich. And after the inquest Laneham and the Judge again moved out in silence to the corridor.

"Well, Laney, what now?"

"I must try now to put myself right with McGloyne."

"McGloyne! The saints help you! Now that he knows you have official credentials, he'll eat, sleep, and live to keep you from getting anything."

"Maybe so; but I must play the game."

"You mean, for example, you're going to show him that murder note?"

"If he shows even the first signs of reciprocity."

"All right. As for me, I must get back to my office. I'll see you again to-night."

And seeking out the big Chief of Detectives, with all the taet that was in him, the Doctor began to explain himself.

He told McGloyne that he had been asked to help in the case simply because of special medical and psychopathic knowledge. His only desire was to be useful; perhaps they might be able to help each other. And, for his part, he wanted to ask first if the Identification Bureau records had as yet yielded anything—on either the Fisher hutler or Maddalina, the maid?

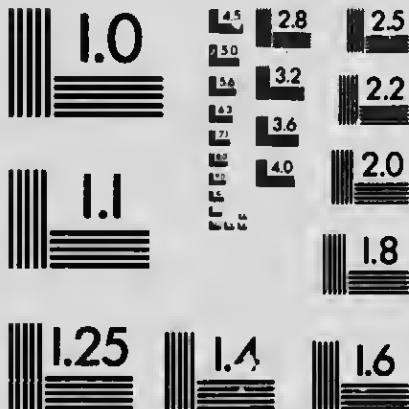
It was rather a long speech. And McGloyne waited, half staring at him, till he had finished. Then, without answering, he laughed sourly, turned away, and began to talk to one of his lieutenants.

The insult was gross enough, but only as a last resort did Laneham intend to go over his head to Bishop or the Commissioner. It still



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remained for him to learn just how far the big Inspector's powers extended.

Before an hour was over he might well have decided that for him they amounted to something very like complete blockade.

He wanted a set of floor-plans, both for the Casa Grande and the Casa Reale, its annex. Though without either door or elevator connections, both were simply halves of the same building. And he made his request at the renting office.

He was refused, absolutely—"under orders just issued by the Detective Bureau."

He tried to talk to one of the house men. Did he know, the Doctor asked him, whether Jimmy, the butler, had any friends? Would he recognise them if he saw them?

The man would not answer. He, too, had had his orders. And they were orders that had mentioned him, Laneham, in particular.

He went to the woman across the court, a Mrs. Dercmeaux. It was she who had heard the voice crying "Sec! Scc!" and "No, no, no!" Would she know, he asked her, the voices of the Fisher servants?

But Mrs. Deremeaux also had been warned against him.

There was still the matter of tracing his hurry call. And, visiting the local telephone exchange, he showed his credentials and asked to see the record. They *had* it, of course?

"Oh, certainly. But they were very sorry, there was an order against it."

"An order?"

"Yes, and it had just been repeated. But no doubt he could get the information he wanted by going where the order had come from."

"Which was——?"

"Why, of course, the Detective Department."

"All right," he told himself. "It's about time, in any case, that I was trying something else from what Bishop calls my own bag of tricks."

And, once back in the Casa Grande, he went first to those private rooms of Professor Fisher's. Apparently he wished only to look again at the fireplace where he had found the paper ashes. But the ashes were gone now; and all had been swept clean.

He turned, and, following the corridor, went on to Mrs. Fisher's rooms. Whatever his object there, it took him through the library where, the night before, the two Central Office men had begun turning out the drawers of Mrs. Fisher's old Washington desk.

They were now working at it again. They were opening bundle after bundle of her correspondence. And at one side they had piled the yellow indexed boxes of what was evidently a sort of little household-accounts filing cabinet.

It was that, indeed, which brought the Doctor to a halt.

"If you're after stuff on the high cost of livin'," said one of those "C. O.'s,"—and there was a jeer in his voice which said that here, too, Laneham had been expected,— "there's a bunch o' evidencee there."

"Thanks." And picking one of the yellow files from the heap, he began to leaf it over.

It contained what any one would have looked for in it—the receipted bills of butcher and baker, of florist and decorator.

Yet, when he put it down, he took up an-

other. Then, on a sudden, his face seemed to change and fill. He looked at those Central Office men. They were no longer observing him. And he began to go swiftly back over those files.

Five minutes later he was at an outside telephone.

He got Jacobs, at "390." He gave him orders that when next either Miss Hope or Mr. Willings called up—as per instructions—he himself should be put in touch. And he had not long to wait. Before another half hour had passed, he was speaking again to Willings.

"Our butler, Jimmy," he said, "was employed last by a Mrs. Morson Dillin m, now living at the Sorrento, in East Eighty-fourth street. He was everything from chauffeur to houseman. She was very fond of him, and he is almost certain to go back to her. In fact, he may have gone already, but I think not. And if not, he will probably call to-night or to-morrow night. In any case, I want you and D. Hope to leave your burned magazine for the present, and from now on to cover the Sorrento every minute. I'll be up there myself,

as soon as possible, to see how best I can place you. And I'll see that you have the runabout, in case it should come in handy."

About eleven that night, too, he was repeating the above, in substance, to Judge Bishop. The Judge pushed back from the library fire, and swung his chair around with a sort of fixed bewilderment.

"And *how*, Laney, *how*? If you'll just begin with the explanation——"

But at that moment the telephone broke in on them, and Laneham turned and answered it.

D. Hope was speaking: and "Doctor, Doctor!" she was crying, "he's here! He's here! And Mr. Willings is up at a garage with the car. But I've called him, and he's coming now."

Ever since afternoon, the day had been clouding up for more snow. And by evening the snow had begun to come. But the Doctor had arranged cover for his watchers. Directly opposite the Sorrento is a little French millinery, "La Belle Bergère." Though apparently it was closed and deserted for the night, ac-

tually it was not. East Eighty-fourth street is not a wide street. On both sides of the Sorrento entrance are big pillar lights. And from the curtained window of "La Belle Bergère" one could watch that entrance almost as well as from the street itself.

For the last fifteen minutes, too, D. Hope had been maintaining the watch alone. This was because Willings, who had a mechanic's instinct for motors, had got the idea that the Doctor's runabout was not responding as it should; and to get it a professional look-over, he had just taken it three blocks north to the Lexington Garage. And, not two minutes after he had gone, D. Hope, at that window of "La Belle Bergère," gave a great start, and caught her breath, and rushed to the Belle Bergère telephone.

It was Jimmy! He had shaved off his moustaches, but that had changed him little. And he was approaching the Sorrento from D. Hope's side of the street. Had that window been open, indeed, she could have touched him.

"He didn't *do* it! I know he didn't!" she

kept telling herself vehemently. "But if he can help us learn who did——!"

And, at the 'phone now, she got Willings first. Next, she sent her message to the Doctor. And then, as if determined, if need be, to make the capture alone, she hurried to the street.

She kept her own side of the street, because she knew she must not attract attention. She forced herself to walk first to the Avenue corner; then, against the drive of snow and wind, back toward the elevated, and then—but never really losing sight of that Sorrento entrance—once more toward the Avenue. And, just as again she came opposite, Mr. Owly Willings and the runabout arrived.

She had only to nod. "He's in there now." The car turned sharply. In the snow-cleared space at the curb another car, a big limousine, was waiting. But there was room for the runabout behind it.

"Better get inside and cover up," said Willings, "and let me talk to him alone."

They waited—two minutes—three—four—ten. And then, suddenly, Jimmy came out.

Now, though Willings' heart was beating fast, at no time was he the sort of young man who acts without a plan. From the Doctor, moreover, he had received advice as to certain things he hadn't thought of for himself. And as the little butler started to pass him, "Jimmy!" he whispered, "Jimmy!"

But there was one thing that neither the Doctor nor Willings had thought of; and that was the one thing Jimmy did.

At the first sound of his name he had jumped back, his eyes staring. Then, as he recognised Willings, "H'all right!" he cried—"h'all right! But I'll never be took alive!" And he threw himself upon him. From the mere impact, Willings was overbalanced; and the little Cockney, getting his foot behind him, was able to tumble him headlong into the snow-piled gutter.

From the big limousine ahead there leaped a big chauffeur, in bearskins.

"Hi, what's the exeitement?"

"An' you too, by Gord, if *you* come in, you too!"

And on the word Jimmy flung himself at him.

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“Cripes, what you *at?*” The man fell hastily back into the Sorrento doorway. Seeing him do it,—even as if he planned it so,—the little butler jumped to the empty driving-seat of that big limousine, threw the power on, and was away. No time to call for help. Willings, once more on his feet, could only pitch himself to the wheel of the runabout, and launch it in the big car’s wake.

Behind him there dwindled the shouts of the bear-skinned chauffeur. In Willings’ face was a whirl of snow that was fast becoming a blizzard. But, ahead, the big car had now whipped south into the Avenue. How to stop it? That was the only question. He knew already he was gaining. The runabout had the speed. But would mere speed be enough? The big limousine turned and again shot eastward into the dark and tunnel-like narrowness of a side street. Then Willings, suddenly remembering, dropped his hand into his side pocket, into which the Doctor had slipped a little blue-steel automatic. At the same moment he felt a soft weight press his shoulder. It was D. Hope drawing herself perilously over, and letting

herself down into the sea' beside him! And, as if her mind had been a part of his, "Shoot at his rear tires," she said—"as seen as you're near enough again. And let me drive!"

The limeusine passed under the elevated, skidded from a glacier of ice and snow, shot south for a block, and turned riverward again in another empty, storm-swept side street. But that side street was at least lighter. The little car closed up through the flying spindrift. D. Hepe's hands came down upon the wheel, and unyieldingly took charge of it. And, with a queer feeling of being in the movies, Willings brought his gun into play and began to shoot.

From a group seen blurrily in a doorway as they flicked by, there came a yell.

But he shot again.

This time, too, the driver of the big limousine heard him. And under the next electric he turned back a face of sick-white desperation. Moreover, it was evident he was in a part of the town he didn't know. For, following his present course, he must soon run into a cul-de-sac and trap himself between the river and the new market.

Again Willings fired. Another yell from a lone pedestrian, head down against the gale. But they were a block nearer the dock-front. If, now, their man did not turn south again——

He did not. Even after he had seen the trap before him, he still kept crazily on. Along the whole water-side no soul seemed to be moving save themselves. The runabout closed up once more. D. Hope held them steady by the wheel, and again Willings fired.

It was as if the explosion of the bursting tire had drowned the report of the gun itself. The big car dropped, slewed to the right, and finished, snow-stalled against a lamp-post. But, as the little butler threw himself out on the other side, the light from that lamp again let them see his face. And they knew then why he had taken them almost straight for the river.

“You’ll never!” he cried wildly as he ran, lurching and swaying, and no longer did he seem to know them. “Gord, ’e knows I’m h’innocent. But I done my seven years ’ard for being h’innocent once before. An’ never—I’ll never be took to be sent back to *that!* Not till you can stop me drown!”

He had reached the string-piece of the nearest pier. And there he turned again.

"Keep h'off, now, keep h'off!"

But, when Willings still came on—"H'all right!" Jimmy cried—like some wretched animal to its torturers. "I'm done!" And he plunged over.

It was not till afterward that Miss D. Hope knew why Mr. Owly Willings halted for the bare two seconds that he did. But it was only to get his glasses off. Then, poising the diver clear. The girl herself was ready to follow. But she still kept a feminine clear-headedness which made her first pause at least one second to use her eyes. And then she saw that almost directly beneath them was a doek ladder. As if there had been no such thing as skirts, she dropped down it. Hand over hand she went, till she was waist-deep. Between two big pieces of slush ice, but within seizing distance, Willings had come up again. And she caught him by the shoulder, even as he had just managed to catch Jimmy.

Yet the little butler was still trying to fight them off.

"Let me die, I tell you! Let me die! Ain't it no proof to you—that—that I'm 'ere to die?"

"Yes, Jimmy; yes, indeed it is!" gasped D. Hope. "And I never *believed* you did it, from the start!"

And, by then, she had got her arm around him.

"We're not the police, you know," choked Willings, getting his arm around him from the other side. "They're accusing *us*, too. Come back with us now—and we'll all of us—help each other."

Persuaded or not, he no longer had the strength to resist. Indeed, he was fast falling into complete collapse. But they got his feet upon the steps; and, foot by foot, they thrust him up.

Over the string-piece there now leaned a staring bargeman.

"Gosh!" he said. "Gosh! What's the racket? Was he drivin' tanked?"

"No," panted Willings. "He just wanted some ice for his exhaust."

"Say!" said the man. "Well, he sure wanted it dang bad!"

Bedraggled, and with their oozy garments already beginning to freeze, they got Jimmy back to the runabout and lifted him in.

"Now *you*," said Willings, turning to the girl.

"No," she cried. "No, *you*. I'm going to drive. I look all right, up above; but you'd be stopped by the first policeman. The engine'll keep me warm, too. Get in, and cover up—both of you—up to the chin."

And, in the end, when he had seen to it that she herself was wrapped in the biggest robe, he let her drive. Meanwhile, half a dozen other gaping longshoremen had come up.

"But, hell!" one of them demanded, "who owns the other car?"

"An old friend of ours named Dinnis," answered Willings, without batting an eye. "Just tell him we'll see him later."

Meanwhile, behind the wheel, D. Hope was waving at them in entreaty and command. "*Please*. You're in our way, you know."

And, with one long, triumphant hoot, the little runabout was on its way back through the storm to 390.

CHAPTER VII

JIMMY'S STORY, AND A FIRST "RETURN"

"I'm h'innocent, Judge your lordship," passionately repeated Jimmy. "That I can tell you now. But who *did* do it, and 'ow to account for the things that 'appened afterwards, that I can *never* tell you—if there's any one alive that can!"

Outside, the storm was now blowing harder than ever. But the three—Jimmy, Willings, and Miss Hope—were in dry clothes again—Jimmy in one of Doctor Laneham's old suits. Laneham had had coffee and bouillon made for them. And now, warmed back to speech and confidence, the little butler seemed almost hysterically eager to tell his story.

"Oh, h'all I want is to tell it," he said; "for then you'll know for yourselves if I'm tellin' you the truth!"

"Good," said the Doctor. "But, Jimmy,

this is our first chance to talk to any one who was there in that Fisher apartment from the beginning. And before you begin, I want to ask you one or two questions."

"There's nothink you can h'ask, sir, but what'll be as quickly answered."

"Good again. Then, from breakfast on, the day of the murder, was any one in those rooms, to your knowledge, except you and Maddalina, the maid, and Professor and Mrs. Fisher themselves?"

"No, sir; and h'after breakfast the Professor he went out."

"Yes," Judge Bishop put in; "he was down in our office, with Potter, all through the day."

"I know, sir. And I 'eard 'im say 'e was going to bring Mr. Potter back for dinner."

"Exactly," said Lanchan. "And, now, Jimmy, did you at any time, during the afternoon, hear a voice that you could not account for?"

Jimmy paled a little. But, "No, sir," he said; "no."

"Very well. And now there's something that I want to show you."

From one of his desk drawers the Doctor produced the murder note.

He showed it first to D. Hope.

"It'd have been kinder," he said, "if I'd let you see it in the beginning. But I kept telling myself it mightn't be necessary."

The death's-head in red ink. The two lines in that heartlessly fine and beautiful Gotbic script: "*We have now reached the point where it must be either murder or suicide.*" And then that last line, written by Mrs. Fisher herself: "*Couldn't it be made to look like an accident?*"

For a moment the girl could not speak. She could only knot and twist her handkerchief between her fingers.

"I suppose it means," she breathed, "that there was—was what they call a suicide pact?"

"It would seem so on the surface."

"But there wasn't! There wasn't! S' 'elp me, there wasn't!"

It was Jimmy who was crying out the denial. He was standing over the bit of paper, with mouth and eyes a-gape. "It's 'er writing, the bottom part of it, that's sure. But Gord 'e

knows Mrs. Fisher was the last woman that would ever do for 'erself!"

"I would think so too, Jimmy," said the Judge. "But, tell us, have you ever seen that other writing anywhere before?"

"No, sir; never, sir!"

"Nor I," said D. Hope. "Nor I!"

"None of us have," said Willings.

"And now," said the Doctor, "will you go ahead, Jimmy, and tell your story? You told us yesterday, when we found you in the rooms, that it was your day off. Tell us first how it was that, in that case, you were there at all."

"I will, sir; I will. It was my h'afternoon h'off, and I'd started h'out, too. But I didn't get anywhere. I'd only walked a square or two when I found myself fairly blown through with the cold in the light great-coat I'd put on. An' I went back to get a 'eavier one."

"Yes?"

"Dr. Laneham, if you can lay your 'ands on that Eyetalian trollop Maddalina, there's a black deal that *she* can tell you. She didn't do the murder. She couldn't 'ave. To that I'd 'ave to swear, myself. But if she didn't, she 'as

the guilty knowledge of it on 'er soul! . . . I say, I'd come baek. And, as I h'entered, Mrs. Fisher came down from Maddalina's rooms,—right above mine, they are, you know,—an' that she'd been 'aving trouble with Maddalina I could see at once. She 'eld 'er 'and at 'er throat, and she was white and gasping with it, and she beekoned me to follow her.

“She didn't make no explanation. ‘Jimmy,’ was all she says, ‘I know it's your day out, but will you take the door again for just a few minutes—till I've time to pull myself together? I think I'll have to take a plunge.’ A great woman she was, you know, for settin' herself up in that way. And all I said was that as always I was at her serviee. ‘Another thing, too,’ she says. ‘In case Mr. Willings calls, and I have to keep him, will you just give him this while he is waiting?’

“It was a big blue envelope that she 'ad there on 'er library table. But that was nothing to make a mystery of. She'd left the same sort of envelopes for 'im before. An' I gave it to 'im, too, as 'e 'imself will tell you.”

“You did,” said Willings. “But, Jimmy,

had you any idea what was in that hig blue envelope?"

"Bank-notes, wasn't it, sir," he answered simply, "for your Settlement 'ouse? But, Mr. Willings, sir,"—and his voice changed and trembled,—“think twice as 'ow you use them. For Mrs. Fisher—Gord rest 'er—was dead before ever that money reached you!"

"Dead *then!*" exclaimed Willings. "But you——"

"Oh, not that I *knowed* it then. And not that I'm even sure yet that I 'eard 'er end. All that got to me was the sound of something falling, and at that distanee it might only 'ave been a 'eavy hook. I 'eard it just as I was goin' in to announce you. I'd gone as far as the library to get that envelope; and she didn't answer. But I took it that the water must be runnin' in the pool and she didn't 'ear my voice on that aaccount—it 'ad 'appened so before. So I just pressed 'er hell. She could always 'ear that. I knew she'd know what it meant, too. And then I went on hack again to my own quarters.

"Well, there I sat, 'earing Maddalina mov-

ing about above me, and thinking, 'Well, whatever devilment you've been h'up to, you vixen, this is a precious note, me doing your work an' you just as busy as ever on your own!' For ten, fifteen, twenty minutes I sat there. And then it came to me that although by now Mrs. Fisher 'ad 'ad time to dress, I 'adn't 'eard 'er come out to Mr. Willings, an' maybe, after all, she 'adn't 'eard the bell. So I went to look.

"She wasn't in the drawing-room. She wasn't in 'er library. I listened. The water wasn't running in the pool. And I rang again—I rang a dozen times; but she didn't answer. . . . Judge your lordship, I began to get the fear and chill of it then, if it was only because everything was that quiet! And I pushed on into 'er bedroom, 'er dressing-room, and then on to the pool itself. An' there"—his eyes widened again—"oh, Gord, the blood alone!—there I found 'er! . . ."

"Jimmy," said Bishop, ending the silence, "what I want to ask you is this: Why didn't you tell Mr. Willings? Or why didn't you cry out at once and rouse the house?"

"Yes, Judge your lordship, why didn't I?"

For that's what any h'onest man would 'a' done. And for that first minute, while I was still trying to make my tongue speak and my limbs move at all, that *was* my first thought. I, too, was thinking of myself as a h'onest man. And *then*—

“Judge, I've a record. I've done my seven years 'ard in Dartmouth. And that's the only thing that counts in *my* life. I served it for killing a man I never saw or 'eard of. But no matter for that. That's neither 'ere nor there. I've got my murder record. And, Judge, there's no man who 'as ever done his seven years 'ard in Dartmouth will ever, this side of 'ell, take h'even a 'undredth ehance of being sent *that* road again!”

“But, Jimmy,” asked D. Hope, her eyes wet, “why should they think that you had done it?”

“And who but me could 'ave done it? From where I was I could see that nobody 'ad come in through the 'all. I couldn't 'ave let any one think, could I, that it might 'ave been Mr. Willings? And it couldn't 'ave been Maddalina. As I've told you, up to then I'd 'eard 'er moving about above me. That is, up to my

going to look for Mrs. Fisher she 'ad been. But now, as I got back to my own room again, and sat down, water-knee'd, to try to think where I should run for first, I realised I *didn't* 'ear 'er any more. Minute followed minute, an' I didn't. Then I crep' up the stairs to see. Her doors were open. She was gone, and everything stripped clean.

"So much for 'er! She'd been warned ahead, and was prepared enough. But she couldn't 'ave done the thing 'erself. That wasn't 'umanly possible. And who could 'ave done it, Judge? No one came down the 'all that afternoon, but Mr. Willings! All the windows were locked! Who was it? Who did do it?"

For a moment he halted. And the Doctor asked another question:

"Jimmy, were you in the Professor's rooms that afternoon? Did you burn any paper there?"

"Burn h'any paper—in the Professor's h'apartment? No, sir, no. Nor any other time. But, gentlemen, there's more to come, and worse. It's—it's sticking in my throat."

Behind them at the windows, the wind whined and rose to long howlings that almost shook the house. And the little butler seemed now to be shaking with it.

"I 'adn't the nerves left to go out to Mr. Willings again. About fifteen minutes more, maybe, an' I 'eard 'im leaving. An' then, at the same moment, I—I—'eard something else."

"Jimmy, old man," said Willings, "was it a sound of some one knocking?"

"It was, sir—it was. Oh, sir, so you 'eard it, too! An' then, after that, you 'eard the *ring?*"

"The ring?"

"What ring?" asked the Judge.

"You mean some one on the 'phone?" demanded Laneham.

"No, gentlemen, no. There was no one at the 'phone, either calling or ringing, at any time. The ring I mean was some one ringing in 'er rooms—maybe from that swimming-pool itself. It was 'er private bell, and it was sounding h'up above, for Maddalina."

"You're sure?"

"If I dreamed it, it's a dream I'm never

likely to forget! And the ring didn't come h'only that once. It came a second, and then a third time. And by then it'd got me sort of crazed like. An' I says to myself, 'Well, Gord 'elpin' me now, whoever you are, ghost or devil, I *will* face you! I will, if it's only that it might 'elp me, some way, to clear myself.'

"Judge your lordship, and you, Dr. Laneham, that was just before you came, and I 'ad to take 'old of myself to let you in. And after I'd answered your ring, all I wanted was to get away.

"But what I'm going to tell you now came first, between Mr. Willings' ring and your coming, while I was there alone. And, as you'll remember, night was falling then. In corners and in the closets it was dark. But I looked everywhere. I was 'alf out of my wits. If I'd found any one, it would 'a' been, Kill me or I kill you. But I found no one. What I found was something else, an' different, and I began to find it from the start.

"Judge your lordship, when I left those rooms after first I'd come on Mrs. Fisher's body, I closed every door behind me coming out

—three doors closed tight. It seemed like I 'ad to, or it'd follow me. We'll, the first thing I saw now was that the door to the bedroom, and the next door to the dressing-room, and after that the next one, to the swimming-pool itself, all were open. An' *more*—an' *more* than that." Again, with a shudder, he stopped.

"You're going to tell us, aren't you," asked the Doctor quietly, "that in the meantime the body had been moved?"

D. Hope jerked in her chair. In a sense, they all did. And Jimmy cried out:

"It 'ad!—I don't know 'ow you knew it, but it 'ad! I found 'er this second time as the papers describe it—lying on the rattan couch, be'ind the plants. But she 'adn't been there at first. She'd been 'anging in 'er bathrobe, 'ead down, over the outside of the pool. It was there that she'd been killed. An' *more*"—he stopped with a jerk—"Dr. Laneham! What was that?"

They all sat unmoving. At their own door some hand had knocked.

"Why, it's only Jacobs, I imagine," said Laneham, "only Jacobs."

And it was his man Jacobs, knocking to call the Doctor to the telephone.

The message was from the night operator of the Electric Protection Company.

"Dr. *Henry Laneham*?" he asked.

"Yes."

"We promised to let you know if we received any further alarms from the Fisher apartment. Well, we've had another from there just now."

The Doctor came back and repeated the message to the others.

This time the Judge himself fairly cried out: "Laney, in the name of heaven!"

"Gentlemen, it's the thing that murdered her," cried Jimmy, his lips white. "It's come again for the body, and it'll take it, too!"

"No, no," Laneham quieted him. "No, no, Jimmy. The body isn't there: it was taken away after the inquest. It's in Greenwich now."

"Thank God," said Willings.

And D. Hope merely moved her lips as if to try to moisten them.

"But we must go over there," said the Doc-

tor, "and find out for ourselves." He looked at Willings first. "Will you come?"

"Surely."

"And you, Bishop?"

"No." The Judge refused absolutely, though no one would really have taxed his stout person with any actual fear. "I've been in this thing too much for my office already. I'll stay here with D. Hope and Jimmy."

And the Doctor and Willings went alone.

Just inside the entrance to the Casa Grande stood the Electric Protection patrolman who had responded to the murder alarm itself. It was easy to see that he was very much excited. With him was the E. P. "diagram boss" whom every one had been seeking the night before. He introduced himself:

"Grady, my name is, Doctor. They told me from the office to be expectin' you. I don't exactly know your line, but if you're helpin' that McGloyne outfit, God knows they need it. This is Carney"—he beckoned to the excited man in uniform. "An' friend yegg anyways came *near* to gettin' him!"

"Came near to getting him?"

“Sure. Didn’t the office tell you that? Hell, the knife’s stiekin’ in the wainscot yet! But come on up an’ I’ll show you!”

But for a moment the Doctor kept him where he was.

“Just a minute,” he said, “just a minute till I get this straight. Do you mean to tell me that, with all these policemen of McGloyne’s on duty in the halls, some one got into the apartment and sent an alarm from the safe to your office—and was still inside when your man arrived?”

“Sure. That’s just what I’m tellin’ you.”

“Sure!” echoed Patrolman Carney; “and the son-of-a-gun must ’a’ been workin’ dark as well as quiet. But he heard my key all righty. For I’d just got that first inside door open to Mrs. Fisher’s rooms when—zim, whizz, zowie—it come!”

“Friend yegg *threw* his stabber at him,” explained Mr. Grady.

“He cert’inly did!” said Carney. “An’ the next minute I was losin’ my step an’ goin’ down them stairs baekward. An’ them two McGloyne bulls, they takes me for the yegg, o’ course, an’

jumps on *me*. An' by the time we can sort ourselves out again an' get some lights turned on, why, o' course yeggsy's made his get-away!"

"But come along," said Grady, "and get it for yourselves."

In the outer halls of that Fisher floor there were now half a dozen of those McGloyne "bulls." And their faces were the faces of men who feel that they have left themselves open to criticism. When Grady asked leave to take his friends in with him alone, they merely backed away and let him. And once more Laneham and Willings found themselves mounting that little stairway down which, in the murderous darkness of the evening before, there had sounded that never-to-be-forgotten voice.

"I'll admit," said Grady, "that I don't just see how he made it. Two cops on the hall, one on the elevators, one on the doors, an' the doors locked! You can excuse the poor boobs for swearin' it ain't human. Maybe not. But, if it ain't, show me the ghost that carries a knife like that."

And, jerking his thumb toward the left, he turned on another light.

“My Lord!” said the Doctor, and for a moment fell back. For, driven into that oaken wainscoting a good inch was one of those long, angular, pointed blades—greasy black of handle and heavy as a cleaver—that are used in Italian butcher shops. Carney stood up beside it, and it touched his Adam’s apple.

“If it’d caught me square it would ‘a’ gone right through,” he said.

“No doubt of that,” said Grady. “An’ now, friends, just come inside. First I’ll show you that long-lost little hidy-hole.” He threw on more lights ahead of him and went straight on through to Mrs. Fisher’s little library. In the chimney-breast, on the right side of the fireplace, there had been set into the brick a small brass-and-silver “shield” of Bikri work. Grady put his thumb against its lower edge. What they, or any one, would have taken for a solid inset, was simply a hinge and hanging mask. Within it was a steel door—now with its lock broken. And inside of that again was

a steel "combination door" and the little safe itself.

Grady looked at them, and spun the clicking gears baek and forward pleasantly.

"And you can be absolutely eertain," Laneham asked, "that your alarm to-night was genuinc?"

"Well, if the wind did it, it had to lift both these covers an' make a battery contaet! In fact, I take it that friend yegg wasn't just ready with his soup or his can-opener, or to-night he'd sure have made his blow."

"But, of course," said Willings, "the pearls aren't in them now?"

Mr. Grady laughed.

"Why, followin' a personal request to the press—from some one now present, I understand, the newspapers say we haven't even learned yet where this little hidy-hole is hidden. You might say"—he grinned—"that nobody knows, except friend yegg himself! But there *was* somethin' in there, fast enough, two nights ago. An' they say tear drops like them are worth their six an' seven thou' apiece. Well, proof enough of the value the yegg puts

on 'em, ain't it, that he'd chance comin' back a second time, even after it had cost him a murder to make it a flivver the first?" He snapped the Bikri shield back into place again.

"An' now let me show you somethin' else. Some one has been callin' this a ghost job from the start. A ghost job! Say, stand a minute where you are. What do you see? Doors everywhere. Get-aways enough for a killin' in Chinatown! An' when you add to that dark *halls*—well,"—suddenly he turned off all the lights at once,—“just get it for yourself!”

It was so sudden, indeed, that it was wholly unnerving. If the darkness was not complete, it was worse: it was a darkness filled glidingly with spectres.

And, in part simply to break the silence: “Mr. Grady,” said Willings, “there’s at least one person besides your friend yegg who knows about this wall safe.”

“An' who?”

“The man who put it in.”

“What? Tut, tut, tut. That for you. Even if he was around, you might as well look slant-

ways at the Chief himself. Ain't that right, Carney? Not old Throaty!"

"Old Throaty?"

"Oh, that's the name we used to give him, from his voice. You'd say he fetched it from the bottom of a well. Regular Hamlet's-father stuff. Once you heard it, you'd remember it for life."

Grady still kept them in that haunted darkness.

"I helieve he done some other work for Mrs. Fisher, too, off his own hat. An' then, somehow, he got sore on her an' quit."

He hegan to feel his way hack to the fireplace.

"And your man Throaty," asked Laneham—"where is he now?"

"Where is he *now*? Well, say, I guess I ain't made myself just clear. The old geezer croaked in Bellevue less'n a week ago!"

CHAPTER VIII

A NEW BEGINNING AND THE WRITING ON MADDALINA'S WALL

“WELL?”

“Well, to say the least, it doesn't seem to be getting a great deal simpler.”

Willings said that. But neither had spoken till they were almost back at 390. There they told the others.

As if from sheer spinal coldness, the Judge got to his feet and threw more wood upon the fire.

“It's—it's *all* just uncanny horror,” shivered D. Hope. “All just one mixed-up blur of it!”

Jimmy had gone a grim-grey again. “You'll never get to the bottom of it, gentlemen—never in this world!”

“And the question is, Laneham,” said the Judge, “what do you now propose to do?”

"I propose to go ahead exactly as before."

"What?"

"If the man Throaty is dead, he is dead. If from the beginning there has been much that has seemed to be more than natural, I am going to leave it to prove itself so. In the meantime, there is enough that is purely and simply criminal. And it will be sufficient for the present if we try to deal with that."

"Oh, naturally! If one could find anything to take hold of, or anything to base a theory on."

"I have found something to take hold of, and I have my theory—at any rate, in part."

Bishop, now walking the room, rounded to a halt.

"And is it anything that you can share with us?"

"No, Bishy, not till later. You must allow me my reservations for the present." Laneham spoke in a sort of self-defence. "As you know, I went into this as a psychologist and a psychoanalyst. I can only follow the methods and principles of my profession most applicable to criminal work. But to any one else they

would in many ways be absolutely misleading.”

“For example?” Bishop pressed him.

“Yes, I’ll give you an example, though only a distant one. Take this: After every crime, we say, there will enter in the ‘law of dispersal.’ The crime is a kind of exploding bomb. It scatters the innocent with the guilty. All people want is to get away from it. And we reason that the guilty may try to get away under cover of the innocent. Well, up at the Casa Grande,—and in the Casa Reale next door too,—tenants are already giving notice: the Van Ziles, Glasbury the playwright, Colonel Hackett, and others. And, under the ‘law of dispersal,’ theoretically I must keep my eyes on them. But have I any earthly right to give it out, even to you, that I’m doing so?”

“Oh, no, no, no. But, Laney, what about that m-u-n-d, mund?”

“Just this. If I can find the magazine, or whatever it was, that had that word on the back of it, I should say that the purely criminal part of our mystery would come very near to being solved.”

And then he turned to Jimmy.

"Jimmy, for the time being, we're going to keep you here. But it's late now, to-night." He rang for Jacobs. "And I'm going to put you away till morning."

Jacobs came, received his charge, and the Doctor followed them to the landing. Then he came back to the others.

"Listen," he said. "I think I've talked too much as it is. And I hope, after to-night, it'll be mainly action. But let me say this now. I've made no pretence of any sort of superhuman methods, but such as I'm using are beginning already to work out—a little. We went after Jimmy, and we got him. I had reasons for believing that somebody or something—whatever or whatever was in the apartment the afternoon of the murder; call it Grady's 'friend yegg,' if you like—or call it old Throaty—would come back again if we let him believe that his treasure was still there. And to-night he did come back. If we feel that we've a problem that in some ways may be insoluble, the more reason why we should be content to take it step by step. And for me to-day has meant just this: A first step has eliminated

Jimmy as a suspect. But so much the more does his story convince us that our next step may come through the maid Maddalina."

"Little doubt of that," said the Judge, "when we can find the girl."

"I think we can. I think I've already been able to make the initial move. Oh, no, no! I'm not going to go into it to-night. It's as late for us as it is for Jimmy. Come in for breakfast and I'll tell you about it to-morrow."

But neither Laneham nor the Judge was at the breakfast-table. When Willings and D. Hope came down, they found that, in spite of all the Doctor's professional arrangements with McMaster, he had been called from his bed to an urgency case at his Wardsdale sanatorium. And he had had time only to leave them a scribbled note. It read:

I want you two to go up to the Casa Grande, and to Maddalina's rooms (the Commissioner or Judge Bishop will have fixed it for you; I'll 'phone them both), and look everywhere and thoroughly for anything that may look like writing on her walls.

Writing on Maddalina's walls? The thing had the flavour of the purely theatrical. And

what should she write on them? And why? And if she had written anything, would it not have been found by McGloyne and his men in the first half hour after the murder? But the Doctor's instructions were explicit, and they must be followed.

At the last moment, however, Willings tried to keep D. Hope from going with him.

"In last night's work, in that chase after Jimmy," he said, "you've been through enough for awhile, at any rate."

"And wasn't I of some use last night?"

"You were all the use in the world. If any woman ever showed more pluck and brains——"

"Very well. Then maybe I'll be able to help again to-day."

Yet even then, he still tried to put her off.

"But, tell me," he asked, "do you realise what it'll mean to you to return to those Fisher rooms?"

"I know. But it'll only be to Maddalina's. I know I'm good for that."

And they went together.

At those ninth-floor exits from the Casa

Grande elevators, Central Office men and uniformed patrolmen now barred the way in every direction. But the Commissioner had "fixed it." The doors were opened to them. And one Lieutenant Hooley, McGloyne's right-hand man, came heavily and gloweringly out to pass them through.

"The Commissioner is bail that you leave things exactly like you found them. Does that go?"

"Certainly."

"Well an' good, then. But you've sure got your nerve with you, young feller. You've sure got your nerve!"

As has been said, Maddalina's two rooms—or three, with her bath—were at the extreme end of the upper floor of the servants' wing. And a first glance showed that Mrs. Fisher had provided the girl with quarters little less dainty than her own—rugs and matting of a soft-piled stone-blue, furniture all of light wicker and cheerful chintz, and walls rough-washed in restful old ivory. To associate such walls and such surroundings with what had been done, seemingly with Maddalina's guilty

knowledge, at the swimming-pool seemed impossible. Again, too, it was hardly less absurd to conceive of her as writing on those walls.

But they were there to look. And, taking hold of themselves, they set to work to do it thoroughly. They began with the sitting-room. First they examined the exposed surfaces. Then they moved out the furniture, piece by piece, and looked behind it; and, before they put it into place again, they looked for anything that might have been written on the back of the furniture. They did that even in the case of the pictures.

Then they took the second room, the bedroom. So far they had scarcely spoken. Those Fisher rooms were rooms in which, for months, no one would wish to talk aloud. And they did not speak at all.

From the bedroom Willings went on into the bathroom. And he even moved a little copper kettle and gas ring so that he could kneel and, from end to end, go over the outside of the bath.

Meanwhile D. Hope was at work in Maddalina's empty clothes closet.

"Have you any matches?" she asked at

length. "The outside light doesn't reach to the back."

"That makes it pretty certain, doesn't it?" he asked, "that no one has been doing any writing there."

But he brought out his matches, and they finished examining the clothes-closet together.

Maddalina had evidently used the lighter part of it as a place to black her shoes. Everywhere upon the floor there were greasy smears of polish. And other smears and finger-marks soiled the walls as high as the woodwork of the hat shelf. But nowhere was there any writing.

"Where else?"

They returned to the sitting-room. From its windows they could look into the snowy court. And for a moment they stood there, looking out side by side.

Neither of them believed in their quest. But they intended to carry it to its end.

"Would you know her writing if you saw it?" Willings whispered.

"Why, I've never seen any of it. I've hardly seen *her*, you know. Don't you remember how I used to tell you we both had the same 'Thurs-

day off'? But maybe"—and her shoulders drew together in a little shivering start—"maybe we've been wrong to take it for granted that it's *her* writing we're looking for at all."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"According to the Doctor, it must have been either in these rooms or Jimmy's—and we know now it wasn't in his—that that Mrs. Dere-maux, somewhere across the court there, heard her 'argument.' "

It was so. In all probability they were at that moment standing where that person had stood who had kept crying out, "See! See!" and "No, no, no!"

"Ah!"

They both turned convulsively, and saw that some one stood behind them now.

But it was no unearthly shape of fear. It was Professor Fisher.

It was Professor Fisher. And yet, after their first moment of recovery, both felt something in the look and attitude of the man that was almost as unnerving as an actual apparition might have been.

He was dressed wholly in black, save for an incongruous white evening tie. His face was cavernously and cadaverously pallid. His eyes glared at them with the set fixity of the demented, or the drugged. And he was gesticulating crazily.

"I'll call one of the policemen," whispered D. Hope. And skirting the wall, she began to move around Fisher toward the door.

He paid no attention to her. He looked only at Willings.

"What are you toing here?"

"I'm here—I'm here for Dr. Laneham."

"You lie! You lie! I know what you are here for!" And next moment he was whipping out a pistol.

The thing was so sudden that Willings could only stand staring at him.

"You haf killed my wife"—he continued to come straight on—"and *now—now—*"

The time was short. It was a moment for action, not thinking. And it was D. Hope who acted.

She acted, too, with a swift directness which for an instant left nothing to Willings himself.

With one rush, much like that of Jimmy the night before, she fairly leaped upon the man, but from behind. With her right hand she caught Fisher's pistol hand. Her left she clapped across his forehead. She got her knee into his back. And by the time Willings reached him, she was bringing him crashingly down.

The pistol, a poor silver and mother-of-pearl affair, went clattering over the floor. Willings kicked it to the other end of the room, and took charge of the rest of the situation himself.

A minute later, roused by the noise, half a dozen police officers came tumbling in to help him.

"It's all right," he said. "It's all right. Thanks to Miss Hope, here, there's no harm done. But I think you'd better get the Professor back to his quarters."

And, still breathing hard, they were alone again.

At least they were alone till Sergeant Hooley, already mentioned, came back to Willings for a final word. It was entirely unabashed.

"Well, he pretty near got you, didn't he?" he asked. "And the question is, are you *findin'*

it? Are you *findin'* it? There's some swell big spots o' candle grease on the floor over there. You might look anunder them."

And then he took himself off again.

Willings turned and looked at D. Hope.

"I can't stand much more," she said, misunderstanding him. "I think we might almost as well go now."

But next moment she saw that he was hurrying back to the bedroom.

She followed him puzzledly.

He had entered the clothes-closet, and there he was lighting another match.

"There's more candle grease here, too," he said. "Maybe I was wrong when I said we needn't look for writing."

"But we did look."

Yet already he was giving her his answer. He was holding a second match to the unpainted wooden support of the hat shelf, and to the biggest smear of shoe polish left on it. Only now, examined more closely, that particular smear wasn't shoe polish but the smudge made by a wet thumb blurring out something in lead pencil!

"Let me look at it from the side." And he laid his cheek against the wood. "Good enough. It's sunk right in. Wash off the wood, and we can read it all."

And they did. The graphite itself had been smudged out. But almost every letter and figure remained, sunk in the soft pine as if by a stylus. And, burning match after match, they could spell out and copy down three several addresses:

654 south river street, patersone.

1106 twelt street, pasaic.

489 cristie street, city.

But it was several hours before they could tell their story. When they returned to 390, they learned that the Doctor had come home and gone again. Not till mid-afternoon did he come in a second time. Only then could they make their report at last.

"I thought so," he said, as once more he re-read those three addresses. "And I think we're safe in saying that we'll find Maddalina at one of them."

CHAPTER IX

A FIRST VISIT TO CHRISTIE STREET

“BUT why,” repeated Willings, “why should those addresses have been there at all?”

“The answer is perfectly simple,” the Doctor answered. “A mere matter of racial psychoanalysis. But, if you don’t mind, that, too, is something we’ll leave till later.”

“And I think I know that Christie street address,” said D. Hope.

“I, too,” said Willings. “At least I know the block it’s in. And it’s a mighty bad one—what the police call a bomb block. Dynamite in almost constant use as the knife itself.”

“That’s the place!” D. Hope took it up again. “And, Doctor, if those other addresses are like that, how can you hope to get her out of any of them without going directly to the police for help?”

“Why, I don’t know”—he considered it a

moment—"but I've been thinking there may be something for us in the way in which an ambulance orderly can go anywhere, and do anything. It seems to me that the right young gentlemen in white ducks and uniform caps could go in, tell the proper story, and carry the lady off as a small-pox or diphtheria suspect, without a suspicion from the worst bomb block in the Greater City."

"Yes, but," the girl persisted, "how are you going to find her?"

"Yes, that's where the trouble is going to be. Those big tenement rookeries are like whole towns in themselves. And we've got to be quick. It all depends on that. Or by the time we've located her, she may have flown again."

Meanwhile Willings had gone back to their experience with Professor Fisher.

"In a sense," he asked, "doesn't his case come first of all?"

"No question." And Laneham looked at them troubledly. "In fact, if I had had any idea whatever that I was asking you two to take *that* chance——"

"Won't they—won't they have to do something with him for awhile?" asked D. Hope.

"Oh, I think not. No, I think I can give you my professional word that he won't be like that again, now—not after to-day."

"You mean," said Willings, his voice falling, "that it's the funeral?"

"That would be one explanation. It's this afternoon, you know. He was up at Greenwich early this morning. Indeed, I don't know why he should have come back. But no doubt, when he came upon you, he'd just been getting ready to go up there again——" He broke off. "Well, we'll forget about it. Or better, we'll go out for an hour in the car, and get a little fresh air, and try to devise the easiest means of locating Maddalina."

But it was not till they were on their way back that D. Hope really joined in the talk again.

"Doctor," she said then, "when we've found her, and have to get her out, wouldn't nurses be almost as good as ambulance orderlies?"

"Why, yes, in a way."

"Then will you let me run back to Hudson

street for awhile—perhaps to stay for dinner?"

He looked at her wonderingly. "You're not thinking of swearing in any of the Hudson street nurses to assist us?"

"Oh, no, not at all."

And he took her down in the car.

She had not been sure that she would stay for dinner. And, a few minutes before dinner was called at 390, Willings 'phoned the Settlement to make sure. She was no longer there. And he and the Doctor prepared to wait for her.

They waited for more than half an hour. Then Laneham had Jacobs take word to the butler's pantry. And they dined, a little uncomfortably, without her.

After dinner Laneham himself called up Hudson street. But Hudson street had not seen or heard from her again. And the Doctor, partly to fill in the time, went back to Maddalina. He called Jimmy down again, to tell them what he could tell about her.

He could tell very little. It seemed to be a point of pride with him, indeed, how little he knew about the girl.

"H'all I can say," he said, "is that I could

see plain she was a bad one from the first. But Mrs. Fisher, Gord rest 'er, wouldn't be warned. She knowed that Maddalina 'ad 'ad 'er run-in with the pollee. A matter of being mixed up in some kidnapping business, she'd 'eard it was. But she wouldn't be warned. And the girl didn't come to her from no regular Prison Gate, either. Mrs. Fisher had gave 'er 'er chance on some private recommend."

For the rest Jimmy knew neither Maddalina's friends—to his knowledge none had ever visited her—nor her correspondents, nor where she went on her days off.

"H'all I can tell you personal," he said, "is that she's a she-devil of she-devils for temper. An' she's as strong as h'any man!"

By then it was nine o'clock. And D. Hope was still away. Half-past nine came, and then ten.

They called up the Settlement again—to learn that Miss Hope had herself 'phoned back to it about an hour before; and she had left a message for the Doctor and Willings, if they should inquire for one. They were not to worry, even if she did not return that night!

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Laneham pushed away the instrument, and they sat looking at each other.

"A bit out of character, isn't it?" the Doctor asked.

"So much out of character," said Willings, "that I'm going down there at once to learn who saw her last!"

And in another half hour he was in Hudson street.

But he came back knowing as little as he had before. Laneham, too, had been out, and was just entering the door. In silence they mounted the stairs together.

In the library they could hear Mrs. Neilson talking to some one, a stranger. And, once in-
troduced, they saw it was a woman in a nurse's uni-
form. But, because she herself was not speak-
ing, they did not really recognise her till she
had turned to meet them.

"D. Hope!" For she it was.

"My dear girl! Where *have* you been?"

"You—you said that a nurse"—her voice still seemed very uncertain—"would be as good as an orderly, when we found her. And when I got down there—to the Settlement—and saw

Miss Stewart—in her uniform—and remembered the things she's had to do—I couldn't see why a nurse, if she went about it right, wouldn't be the one to *find* Maddalina." For a moment her voice failed her again. "I—I had a feeling that she was in that house on Christie street—and it would be only a matter of going from one room to another—and pretending a little. And she *was* there—she *is* there—on the fourth floor—back. And I think we can get her, any time!"

CHAPTER X

MADDALINA AND "IL MALOCCHIO"

"OH, we won't be able to do anything now, of course, until to-morrow," said the Doctor; "and if we're to make a thorough job of it, it'll probably be to-morrow evening before we're ready to go ahead."

But early in the morning he set to work to make his initial preparations.

They consisted, apparently, in making several small and wholly enigmatic purchases—a gas tube and ring, a little copper kettle that might well have been a replica of the one in Maddalina's bathroom; and a big blue bank envelope!

"But these are only details," he said, "and they won't enter into it till later. The one thing that counts is that we're going to *kidnap* Maddalina. If she's been in that line of business herself, that should be perfectly in order.

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And there's nothing better suited for such a purpose than, item one, a good up-to-date ambulance."

He went into explanations. It appeared, too, that he had already arranged for the said ambulance through his friend Dr. Schumacher of Riverside Private Hospital. And he had obtained an Italian orderly from the Ospitale Garibaldi to serve as interpreter. He himself knew some Italian, but a good deal might be needed.

Did he want D. Hope? Yes, since she had already been able to make an identification without being identified herself, he would be very glad to have her come along with the proper precautions and do it again. As for Willings, as Maddalina didn't know him at all, in the proper white ducks he should make an excellent orderly. And again the Doctor, though he had now provided automatics all round, assured them that there needn't be any danger.

Above all he showed he was determined that this, his own party, should do the thing alone. He would ask the Commissioner to post two

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plainclothesmen somewhere within call in Christie street. And when he, himself, was quite finished with Maddalina, he might 'phone to McGloyne to come and get her. But, for the first hour after the capture, he wanted a chance to deal with the young woman without any outside witnesses whatsoever.

Clearly he had confidence enough. And he assured them that they really were taking no risks whatever.

"Because," he said, "we're going to do only what is being done in Little Italy every day; what Maddalina and her friends have grown accustomed to from their first hours on Ellis Island. When cases of diphtheria, or 'typhoid Mary's' are reported from Christie street, certain gentlemen in white ducks and a nurse or two in blue arrive, they get at once to business, and in general those diphtheria cases and 'Typhoid Mary's' first know that they are wanted only when they find themselves on the stretchers. No health officers ever stop to explain down there. They just say 'Come!'"

And, about eight that night, as they got under way, he was adding some final remarks

from the orderly's "bench" inside the ambulance itself.

"I've explained a little to Virgilio," he said—Virgilio was the orderly from the Ospitale Garibaldi—"but, once more, no explanations in Christie street! We're after a lady who is reported, say, to be suffering from pellagra. Maddalina herself may feel that we're making a mistake, and may cut up a little. But after all why should she—or her friends—worry more than is called for? She'll tell herself that at any rate we're not the police; and the mistake will be discovered at the hospital. Very likely she'll be in the car, here, two minutes after we've told her to put her hat on."

And fifteen minutes later they were in Christie street.

Number 489 was the typical Italian tenement. Flight after flight, they climbed its foul and narrow stairs, till they were on the fourth floor. Then they felt their way down an unlit narrow hallway to the "fourth floor back."

There came out to them a smell of garlic and *minestra*, and a clucking gabble of Sicilian.

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"That's the door, over there," breathed D. Hope.

"All right," said the Doctor. "Remember, too, all *you* need do is nod your head. After that, you keep out of it."

And Virgilio gave the orderly's peremptory double knock.

Instantly the gabble fell dumb. And then in an old crone's voice came a halting "*Che vuole?—What do you want?*"

For answer Virgilio merely drove his heavy official toe against the door, and shook the knob.

"Open, *nom' de dio*, open!"

And it was opened.

They were looking into a middle room, half bed-, half dirty living-room. And the old woman with two thickset, and very ill-favoured, gentlemen were all backing furiously to the further wall.

Then seeing the hospital uniforms, all three snarled their relief.

"*Nessuno!*" they cried. "*Nessuno—no one is seek here. You have meesteck!*"

But the Doctor had already pushed on into the next room. It was another bedroom. And

like little animals two very dirty children had jumped to the high bed in a big-eyed, frightened clump.

Laneham went straight on over to them, and, taking hold of them in turn, he pulled down their chins between thumb and finger and examined their throats.

"All well, all well," the old woman kept nervously parroting. "*Bene, molto bene!*"

"Yes, yes." And then, going on, the Doctor reached the door that led to the kitchen.

The girl within it must have had her eye at the keyhole. In an instant, as the door swung back, she must also have recognised D. Hope. For, barely had D. Hope recognised *her* when, spitting her rage and fury, Maddalina—for she it was—seized a huge Italian table knife and sprang forward.

"Look out!" cried the Doctor. And they all fell back through the door together.

Which, obviously, was exactly what Maddalina had reckoned on. For, with another leap, she had flung herself to the window, had jerked it open, and was dropping down the rear-court fire escape.

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Next moment, too, Virgilio, hot with battle, was following her.

And at first the Doctor was for following in his turn. But the fire escape was slippery with sleet and ice, and Willings pulled him back again.

"We can make it from below," he said, "through the lower hall." And he stayed only to catch D. Hope by the hand. She let him, and they flew down the stairway side by side.

Once at the bottom, though, he rushed her to the door.

"Now you just beat it out to the car!" he ordered her, and waved to the ambulance chauffeur.

Then again, and on the run, he turned to follow Laneham.

By then the Doctor was in the yard. And Maddalina and her pursuer had wholly disappeared. But there was no need of asking where. Almost at the foot of the fire escape there opened a narrow cellar-way. Already other tenants from 489 were pouring into it as if into a hopper. In his turn, too, the Doctor was plunging after them. And, tripping and stum-

bling, Willings dropped down after *him*. He had just reached the bottom when he felt some one catching at his coat. He turned and knew, rather than saw, that D. Hope had stayed with him after all!

“Lord! And what did you *do* it for?” he asked her. “What did you *do* it for?”

“There’s no more reason why I should stay behind—than you.”

And there was nothing for it now. Gripping hands again, once more they started on together.

So far they were in a long, irregular wood-house. Here and there a lantern hung. And endless bundles of limey kindlings were piled high on either side. But soon they were in the cellar beyond. And in it, surrounded by bins of potatoes and crates of beets and cabbages, Maddalina stood at bay.

It was their first real chance to get a look at her. And she was handsome enough, with the lithe and vivid swiftness of a gipsy. But it was not a moment now when any one would think of that. When first surprised she had spat like a cat. And now, as she swayed blaz-

ingly to and fro, wild-animal gutterings seemed to choke her throat. She seemed on the point of throwing down her knife, and striking at that Garibaldi orderly with her teeth and claws.

"*Via! Via!*" she cried, with grindings of her teeth: "Keep off! Keep off!"

Yet this, too, was gradually becoming evident: whatever accomplices she had had at the Casa Grande, none of them was with her now. Even the two men who had been in the same rooms up above did not seem really to know her. They, and fifty more, had followed fast. "*Che cosa?* What is the matter?" they kept shouting. Apparently they were prepared to offer help if needed. But in the meantime, with a sort of sporting spirit they were merely widening the circle to give her knife-hand room.

Again Virgilio tried to close.

"Let her be!" the Doctor commanded him.
"Let her be!"

"But no! But no!" Being a man, and an orderly of the Ospitale Garibaldi, Virgilio could not conceive of that. "She has a *maldia!*" he harangued the crowd. "The city has

commanded that we take her to the *ambulanza!*”

And, fainting, he made a first swift try for that hand, which held the knife.

He did not get it. And only by dropping knee-down did he escape it on the come-back.

There was a yell of delight, and other knives began to show themselves.

“*Will* you stop, you fool?” the Doctor cried again. Willings, too, tried to halt him.

But Virgilio’s Sicilian eyes were blazing now. And he *twisted* away from them. “I will get her! The *roba*—the baggage!”

And, catching up an empty basket, he ran at her with it.

He used it almost exactly as the Roman *retiarius* used his entangling net. In half a minute he had caught the blow as he wanted it. The knife went through, stuck, and amid cries of anger, Virgilio was about to make his victory good when some one threw the girl a second knife.

It was all that was needed—in every way. The Doctor jumped forward only in time. He saved Virgilio. But the blade doubled back

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and cut the buttons from his sleeve. Next moment, too, a hairy hand was jerking him away. And, from behind, some one was jumping upon Willings. He tried to cover D. Hope with one arm while with the other he reached for his automatic. Anything might have followed then.

But the thing that did follow was the one thing that no one could have looked for.

The first note of it came from Virgilio, himself. He had managed somehow to get possession of Maddalina's second knife. And he was trying to pinion her upon the floor, when with a sudden yell he scrambled to his feet again.

"*Il malocchio!*" he cried, goggling at her.
"*Il malocchio!*"

And in a moment, with a horrified urge forward, and a wild surging back again,—"*Il malocchio! Il malocchio!*" all the rest of them began to cry!

What did it mean? Willings and D. Hope only knew that no longer was any one troubling them, that the Doctor was pushing through to Maddalina's aid, that as she lay there gasping,

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her body had begun to arch, her jaws to set, and her eyeballs to turn terrifyingly backwards. But none of her own people had stopped to help her. "*Nom' de dio!—Madonna!*" they yelled. And, Virgilio leading, they fought for the nearest way to the street and daylight.

And the meaning of it all was this: "*Il malocchio*" is Sicilian for "the evil eye." And, while any "evil eye" is bad enough, no Sicilian not prepared for death itself will stay to face the awful "evil eye" of epilepsy!

Meanwhile the Doctor had continued to give a little first aid.

"Oh, I don't know what they're running for!" he said jerkily, and a little hysterically. "But she's all right. Don't you worry about her a little bit. It'll only take some of the demon out of her. More than that,—if anything could be better for what I have ahead—! But, come, we must get her out."

Already, too, one might have thought that she had only fainted. And he motioned to Willings to take her by the shoulders.

The ambulance driver was waiting for them at the sidewalk. Two minutes more and they

had her inside. And in another two minutes they were on their way uptown.

Virgilio was nowhere in sight. But Laneham manifested no concern for him. Again he began to work over the girl. A bit of soiled, much-folded paper dropped from her dress front. It was a letter, a love letter. And he ceased his professional intentions, and used his Italian to decipher it as they rode. It assured Maddalina that now, without doubt, the writer's passion would endure forever; and that she should have two of them—whatever *they* might be—for herself, alone.

"All right!" he said. "We'll file *that* for future reference. And, Willings, as soon as we make Seventy-second street, I want you to help me upstairs with her, and to the library. I've made my preparations there."

"Preparations?"

"I'll explain in a moment."

The car swung in and stopped. And Willings could only give him the help he needed in silence.

On the stairs, too, Laneham spoke quickly to Jacobs.

“That kettle and the boiling water—and the envelope and paper!”

And it was only then, indeed, that they realised that the Judge had been waiting for them.

Laneham merely nodded. And as the Judge rose from the big reading chair, in his turn the Doctor put Maddalina into it, and began to prop her up with pillows.

“*Laneham,*” Bishop demanded, “in the name of all that’s unholy!—what are you going to do?”

“What am I going to do? Easy, now. And, Willings, will you ’phone the Commissioner that he can send for her at ten? What am I going to do?” His face was lit by a sort of professional ruthlessness. “I’m going to try to obtain a little evidence by methods not yet admissible in police departments and courts of law: which is why I insisted on going after Maddalina myself. And her present state could not be more receptive to the business if I’d worked and planned to have it so. I’m going to try the effects of a few minutes of scientific hypnotism.”

CHAPTER XI

AN EXPERIMENT UPON MADDALINA, AND A "SCRITTO"

MEANWHILE Jacobs had nervously brought in the "preparations"—the kettle and boiling water, and the envelope and paper.

The kettle was the little copper kettle which Laneham had bought that morning, the duplicate of the one in Maddalina's bathroom. And with it was a gas tube and ring, which he rapidly attached and lit and set up on a pipe-stool at Maddalina's knee.

The envelope was practically a replica of the big blue envelope from which Mrs. Fisher's bank-notes had been taken. And the paper might have been that bill-sized blank paper which had been substituted for them. To make the thing complete the Doctor had drawn forth his wallet and was filling that big envelope with genuine bank-notes of his own, and gumming it down on them.

Then, and then only, did he turn to the girl herself.

With long, broken sighs, with eye-flutterings, and troubled pickings of the fingers she had begun to come to. He waited for another moment, as if watching the effects of an anesthetic, until, plainly, he decided that the moment had come.

“Now!” And, placing himself directly in front of her, he pressed her hands down into her lap, began to smooth and palm her temples, to draw her opening eyes to his, and to put her under the modern enchanter’s spell.

“One of the minor details not yet explained,” he whispered to Bishop, “is how, and by whom, that substitution was made.” He slipped the big envelope into Maddalina’s hand. “Possibly, as a beginning, she may answer that.”

And, while they looked, she had begun to answer it.

Into her eyes there was coming a kind of consciousness, a kind of comprehension—and then memory. And then—it halted their breathing to see it—with a furtive, twitching eagerness she was stooping over. She was lay-

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ing the gummed wrapper of that big envelope against the now steaming kettle spout. She was holding it there till it was soft, and opening it, and slipping Laneham's genuine money out, and thrusting in the imitation. Then, swaying with emotion, she sealed it down again.

"Gad!" said the judge.

"It isn't legal evidence," Laneham repeated.

"But I think it's tolerahly convincing, and we know now where Mrs. Fisher's money went to *first*. The stolen bills were fifties. From a love letter I read a few moments ago, I should say that Maddalina is still waiting for two of those fifties that were promised to her. And now we'll see if we can take another step."

He spoke to D. Hope. "Will you do something to help? Come here and stand in front of her, for just a minute?"

"Oh, Doctor—I can't!"

"For just a minute. And it may be the one thing needed."

And when she had let him place her, he turned to Maddalina again.

"Maddalina, Maddalina!"

"*Si, si, signore.*"

"This is the Signora Fisher. Do you see her? The Signora Fisher."

"*Si, si*, the Signora."

"And she says she doesn't trust you any more—that you are dishonest—a bad girl—and she must send you away. Do you understand? You are a bad girl—*molto cattiva*—very bad."

From the first instant the girl's fierce eyes had begun to change—to narrow and to blaze again.

"No, no, no, no!"

"You have been spying—trying to find where she keeps her jewels, her pearls."

"No, no, no, no!" Again those furious wild-animal gutterings seemed to choke her throat.

And, more than that, by those thick, burstingly repeated "No, no, no's" they were all alike horribly though vaguely reminded of something.

"Laneham!" asked the Judge, "tell me—where have we heard just that before?"

"I'll tell you. It was one of the things which Mrs. Deremeaux, from across the court, heard in that 'argument.' The 'argument' took place between Mrs. Fisher and Maddalina, here. It

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was then that Mrs. Fisher last saw Maddalina before her death. And Jimmy met Mrs. Fisher, as, white and holding her throat, she came down from the girl's room, after it. Well, perhaps we can now bring out another word or two."

And once more he went back to the girl.

"Maddalina," he told her, "I don't believe you."

"Ma, *si, si!*"

"You are plotting something. I know it."

"No, no, no, Signore!"

"You will not deny it if I bring in the police."

"Ma, *si—Si!—Si!*"

"*Si!—Si!—Si!*" — or "See!—See!—See!"

Again, it was merely that, the Italian word for "yes"—though raucous with fear and rage—which Mrs. Deremeaux had heard!

In part at least the Doctor had been able to reproduce that scene. And if any further confirmation had been needed, a moment later Maddalina herself was supplying it.

"Take care!" cried Bishop suddenly;

"*Daphne!*"

For, whatever the actual scene had been be-

tween Maddalina and her soon-to-be murdered mistress, the virago was now giving them a horrid picture of the end of it. She had sprung at D. Hope, sunk her fingers into her arm, and was making attempt after attempt to reach her throat and throttle her!

They pulled her off, and thrust the shaking, gibbering creature back into her chair. But again—and it made them sick—all were thinking of the same thing; upon the death-white arm of Mrs. Fisher, too, there had been the marks of fingers.

The Doctor himself was strainedly and exhaustedly wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

“Can we hope for anything else?” asked the Judge.

“I doubt it. And in any case I’ll have to take her out of the hypnosis now. She won’t stand much more. . . . But first, these little guarantors of peace.”

And he snapped a pair of handcuffs upon her wrists.

“*Ah-h!—Madre de dio—!*” That wakened her! And it was as if, in her first waking mo-

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ment, she realised how fully she had been made to betray herself. For a time all four men were not too many to hold her in her chair.

Then, falling back spent and flagging, she would only and ceaselessly deny.

She knew nothing of Mrs. Fisher's death, she said. She had not heard of it till next morning when she had read of it in *Il Telegrafo*. She knew nothing of her jewels, her pearls, or of any stolen money.

Again the Doctor showed her that big blue envelope. For an instant she gaped, blenching. But, next moment, again came her denials. If money had been taken *she* had never heard of it.

What, then, Laneham asked her, was the meaning of that letter she had been carrying?

In spite of herself, her hand went to her breast in one jerking catch. Then, as before, she clenched her hands, and denied and again denied.

From the street below there came up the sound of a gong. The Doctor went to the window. It was a Headquarters' patrol wagon.

"Oh, well," said Bishop, "let them have her

now. We'll get no more from her in any case."

"Possibly not," said Laneham. "It would anyway appear so."

Jacobs came back from the door. "Shall I tell the officers to come up?" he asked.

"Just a moment," the Doctor held him. "It'll do no harm to let her know, first, that at any time we can talk to Jimmy."

And he sent for him.

Before the little butler entered, she had recognised his step!

"*A-i-i——!*" She shrieked her recognition. They had believed her physically spent. But now, at the sight of Jimmy, such pure beast fury seethed up in her as she had scarcely shown before.

"Liar! English dog! *Delator' e traditore!* Spy and traitor!" And next moment, while she shook her handcuffs together, she was crying out such things as, clearly, Laneham himself had never looked for.

"Let them ask their questions of *him*, too," she screamed. "Let them ask him, first about that *scritto*—that writing—which the Signora Fisher had had them sign, and that only a few

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hours before her death! If it was thieves who killed her—jewel thieves from Italy—let Jimmy say what it—what that writing meant!

“Let him tell, too, about a certain quarrelling they had heard! Oh, si, si, si!” she went on. “He had heard it as well as she! Let him tell about that, and say if *it* had had nothing to do with the killing of the Signora!”

It was coming now, the full flood, one would say, of all that had been pent up in her denials!

“And let them ask him, too, about the *voice* he had heard so often! Let him tell of that! Many times he had heard it, and so had she. In that voice was the devil’s work!” The corners of her mouth were slavered. She seemed about to have another seizure. “Let him tell of *that*—of *that*—of *that*!”

And, as all turned to him, clearly and for all to see on the face of Jimmy was that betraying “Zancray look”—the confession in *his* case, of evidence held back.

But by now three of the Commissioner’s men were standing in the door. Maddalina had been promised to them when they should call

for her. It was not possible to keep her longer, even had any one really wanted to.

Furthermore, it was necessary that some one from 390 should go along with her, if only to make the called-for and formal report.

"I'll go," said the Judge. "It's only right I should, if merely because of my official position."

Would he be back again? He doubted it, for he could not know how long he might be kept. And, five minutes later, Laneham and Willings and D. Hope were facing Jimmy alone.

"Well," asked the Doctor, "how about it, Jimmy?" And no psychoanalyst was needed to say that once more; it was a case of "Zancray." "You gave us to understand, you know, that you were telling us everything. And if you're not——?"

The little Englishman still stood unspeaking. Perspiration streamed from him, and his eyes were round with a kind of piteousness. But he made no answer.

"How about it? Supposing we take the *quarrel* first."

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"Dr. Laneham, don't h'ask me, for I can't tell you."

"Very well. Maybe we can get at it through the *voice*. You know, Jimmy, we, too, heard a voice. And you told us before that you didn't hear it."

"And I didn't. I didn't. You were speaking of some 'orrid, fearful voice that you and Judge Bishop and Mr. Willings 'ere 'eard when you broke in after the murder. *That* I never 'eard. On the day of the murder I 'eard no voice of any kind!"

"Jimmy,"—Willings entered into the cross-examination. "Jimmy," he said, "supposing for the time we leave the voice. There's still that third thing—that *scritto*—the writing. We all want to keep our belief in you. Are you going to keep back everything about that, too?"

"No, Mr. Willings,"—it burst out of him. "Not when you put it so, I won't. And that *scritto*—you'll know anyways why I didn't speak of it before. For, gentlemen, that *scritto*—that writing was a will, that's what it was!"

"A will?"

“That’s what it was, sir. The vixen Madalina, *she* didn’t know—she ’adn’t the learning to—— But I knowed. And Mrs. Fisher had written it out ’erself that morning!”

“Jimmy! But why—knowing, knowing what that must signify—surely you could have told us about that before? And why didn’t you?”

“Because well I knowed you’d take it exactly as you’ro taking of it now!”

“As we’re taking it now?”

“I mean that you think she could only ’ave made ’er will like that, and in such ’aste and ’urry as to ’ave two servants witness it, because by then she ’erself knowed what was coming, and *intended* it! You’re thinking h’already of the words she wrote in that murder note! And you take it now that was consenting! But she wasn’t! She wasn’t! I said it before, and knowing ’er as I did, I’ll always say it!”

“Yes,” said D. Hope fervently, “and so will I!”

And, half to get away from that at least, Laneham once more went back to the voice.

“Jimmy, listen. You spoke of the voice *we*

heard as 'fearful.' You mean that the one you heard was not?"

"Why, sir, why"—he seemed again to be evading—"I never thought of it as so. It wasn't loud enough."

"Wasn't *loud* enough? Good Heavens!"

"No, sir," he whispered, "no. I—sometimes I was 'ardly sure I 'eard it at all."

"Jimmy!"

And then once more, because for the moment the Doctor could not go on, Willings took up the questioning.

"Jimmy, was it the voice of any one now living?"

Again the white perspiration mottled out in great drops upon the little Cockney's temples.

"Mr. Willings, I—I don't know."

"I'll ask my question in another way. You know that the only clue we've had so far—if the ghastly idea could be called a clue—lies in something Mr. Grady of the Electric Protection service told us last night. And that would make the voice we heard the voice of one of his workmen—'old Throaty,' you remember, his nick-name was—the man who installed the

jewel safe. And old Throaty, as you know, Jimmy, is dead. Tell me, did you ever think that it was *his* voice you heard?"

"Yes, sir, yes!" The answer ran high in a shaking tremolo. "I did, sir, I did!"

For a moment Laneham had to leave them to speak to Jacobs.

"And, Mr. Willings, sir," Jimmy began again, "if, because I'm still 'olding something back, you're going to feel from to-night that you can't believe in me—if, when it's not two days since you and Miss 'Ope, 'ere, were h'offering your lives for mine— —!"

"No, no, if you want we won't feel so at all."

"For I'm a man, too, for h'all I've been at service, an' I tell you, sir, I'm feeling sick to the soul not to be *h'able* to speak!"

"I know you are, Jimmy. But, no more, no more. I guess this is another night when you might better just get away to bed."

CHAPTER XII

A REVIEW, AND A VISIT FROM MCGLOYNE

WHEN the Judge returned, it was after eleven. But had it been hours later it would still have been not less out of the question for any of them to think of sleeping. And Bishop seemed to take it for granted that it was.

"Well, Laney," he said, "first it was Jimmy—though we didn't seem to get all of him at once—and now it has been Maddalina. Who is it to be next? After all, will it be old Throaty?"

"Never," Laneham answered without even raising his voice. "Not till everything else is exhausted."

"But you can't quite put him out of your mind, I take it?"

"I have the ordinary human weaknesses. But I can make up my mind not to yield to them."

"Very well."

"And if it can help to make it plain that it pays to keep one's feet upon the ground—and that there *really* may be something in the psychoanalyst's bag of tricks,—I'm ready right now to tell you exactly how I've arrived at the results I've achieved so far."

"You are——?" At that Bishop's expression changed at once. "Fine. Fine! In that case, I'm here for the night!"

"Oh, it won't take long to tell. And I can tell you at the beginning that you'll find it so simple as to leave you with the feeling that it isn't worth the listening to."

"Go ahead. And I'd like to hear first about your fragments of ashes, and your M-U-N-D, MUND."

At that the Doctor stopped at once.

"But so far that has not come into it."

"Why——! But you told us——"

"I said what I believe. Working from the pure theory of mental analysis, I said and I say again that if we can find the magazine burned that day by some one, in Professor Fisher's own fireplace, our mystery ought, the-

oretically, to be solved. But that does not say that the mystery is not a highly complicated one. We've had proof enough that it is! And, step by step, we're at least feeling our way through the outer circles of the labyrinth."

"You are. That's evident."

"Two days ago we knew nothing. Now we know what, for most crimes, would be enough to offer us their full solution. But leave that aside. In as few words as possible I'll do my reviewing."

He clipped a cigar.

"First, the locating of Jimmy. And that was ridiculously simple. There was nothing to do but follow the most rudimentary logic. For one thing, at the very beginning I could see that he was innocent."

"I always believed he was," cried D. Hope.

"Yes, but there was evidence for it, and it was this: He had stayed to give Willings that rifled money letter. He gave it to him, and then remained there for another half hour, when there was every probability that Willings would open that letter and discover that the money had been stolen, at once. Is there any

criminal, or the accomplice of criminals who would take a chance like that?

“Jimmy was innocent. Yet he had run away! Why? No matter. The question was, where would he go to? If he had been guilty, and had had his share of those stolen fifty-dollar bills, the question would have been a different one. As it was, the one piece of written paper—that duplicate deposit slip—that he left behind him, supplied a first finger-post.

“It said that nearly a month before he had deposited \$40, presumably his wages or his wages minus the amount of ready cash he would naturally keep out to carry him along till next pay day. Next pay day—his last being nearly a month before. How much, then, would he likely have left on that, the day of the murder? Almost nothing, if there is anything in probability. We have then, Jimmy fleeing, inferentially without money, and without any warning or preparation, as the litter of clothes in his room made plain. Also he had a prison record, and must have resolved to take no chances with the police. Very well, where would he be fleeing to? In mere everyday hu-

man nature to friendship—to some one who would give him haven and protection, perhaps the wherewithal to flee further. But how find the names of any of his friends?

“In a sense it was chance that told me—but only in so much as chance gave me the answer very quickly. I could, of course, have used the Commissioner’s influence to get me access to the police records. But they were not needed. In Mrs. Fisher’s library, you may remember, two Central-Office men had been set to go through her papers. And at the start they had laid aside the thing that was to tell everything—one of those modern, up-to-date household card indexes. These Central-Office men might look for dark secrets in the depths of Mrs. Fisher’s personal correspondence. But was there not every likelihood that the facts about Mr. James H. Higham, otherwise Jimmy, would simply be waiting for any one to find, in Drawer Three, Letter H?

“They were there. He had come to Mrs. Fisher from Mrs. Dillingham of the Sorrento. In Mrs. Dillingham’s letter of recommendation she said that she was letting him go only be-

cause financial reasons compelled her to; that she had never had a better servant; and that if ever he needed a friend she had made him promise that he would come to her the first. Well, he did. Since then, I may say that our Central-Office friends have arrived at Drawer Three, Letter H. They have also been to Mrs. Dillingham. But—one more case of that mental blind spot in the psychology of the regulation detective—the thing which refuses to look for the solution of mysteries in something squarely before the eyes—I had been one day ahead.”

He walked the length of the library, and back again.

“Now come to Maddalina, and the writing on her wall. Again it was no case of any second-sight neeromaney on my part. As I’ve told Willings already, the thing I used there was a mere application of racial psychoanalysis. One of the facts recently brought out by Goddard of Yale is that no Italian, or any other Southern European with little education, can remember our five- and six-number American addresses. ‘654 South River street,’—‘1106

Twelfth street,' '489 Christie street'—those were the addresses of Maddalina's friends. They are typical addresses—and they frighten the Angelo's and the Esposito's to death. Remember them? They won't even trust them to paper, for the paper might get lost or burnt. They write them on their walls. Go down to any four-room flat in Little Italy, and you'll find such an address-book somewhere. Accordingly, there was every probability that Maddalina would have one. Only, because she did not appear to be the sort of young lady to wish to advertise her particular friends, *her* address-book would probably be kept somewhere where it would attract the least possible attention. Willings and D. Hope found it in the back of her clothes-closet. She had made an attempt to erase the said memoranda, but, fortunately, the softness of the wood prevented that. And so we arrived at Christie street, and Maddalina.

“Third, there was the matter of the first attempt to steal Mrs. Fisher's pearls. It was sufficiently evident that it was not successful. It was also sufficiently evident that the gentleman

—or spirit if you like—that made it had some method of entering the Fisher apartment peculiarly his own. How find that means of access? No tapping of walls seemed to offer anything. Very well, why not persuade him to give us another chance by encouraging him to come back again? What bait could we offer? One, at least—the pearls themselves. If he had failed to get them the first time, obviously he knew where they were. Under the Commissioner's sanction I let the newspapers say that we didn't know where they were, which at the time was true. 'Friend Yegg,' as Mr. Grady of the Electric Protection Company would call him, obviously reads the papers. Obviously, too, he believed he had a way of getting back into those Fisher rooms which no amount of regular patrol work would interfere with. Supposing, he asked himself, he made another attempt? And that same night he made it, and left his knife. If we didn't get him then, that is at least not the fault of 390 West Seventy-second street. Maybe if he comes back again——"

"Comes back *again?*" the Judge demanded.

“Why not, Bishy? He still hopes for those pearls. And he still has what he believes is a safe and open door. Well, maybe when next he tries it——” He broke off, and looked at the two young people. “But I think for the present we can leave what is to come. We’ve had enough, too, for this one night. Thank the Lord it’s ended!”

Ended! Even while he spoke, the street bell was ringing again. And a minute later the downstairs man came up to say that Professor Fisher, with Inspector McGloyne and two policemen were in the hall.

What did Professor Fisher and the Inspector want? That downstairs man couldn’t rightly understand.

But McGloyne had heard the question from below. And with his foot already on the stairs, he himself was answering it.

“I’ll tell you what I want! I want to know right here an’ now who’s runnin’ the Department! I want to get to the bottom of that Maddalina steal! An’ while I’m here, by-y G——, I’m just going to have your Jimmy butler lad!”

Ended? That night ended? They were to feel afterwards that, at that point, it had only begun. And with the hours to follow, the mystery of those bolted doors in the Casa Grande was to enter upon a chapter wholly new.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONVINCING OF INSPECTOR MCGLOYNE

FIRST,—and at the time it seemed the only thing—how were they to answer that demand for Jimmy?

It had come suddenly. It was from a clear sky. And no less immediately must it be met.

Even at that minute's delay McGloyne had begun to mount to them.

“I'm makin' no threats. I don't want to say nothin' to be took back afterwards. But by the Lord, unless my job's a joke——”

The Doctor walked out to the landing.

D. Hope, however, was the first to speak. “You'll never, Doctor?” she cried, “you'll never give him up? You won't so much as think of it?”

And for a moment he turned back. “At any rate,” he said, “there'll be some questions to



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answer first. . . . Jacobs, you might call Jimmy. . . . And, Inspector, will you just come up, and bring Professor Fisher with you."

They came up. The big detective had evidently come from the Bureau in a single raging burst of speed. And his lips, his fingers, his very body still trembled with that insult suffered by the man who finds, or believes he finds, that he is no longer held to be fit to do his work. For all his hard-shell brutality, too, one could not but feel in him a sort of honesty and sense of honour.

"Dr. Laneham," he said, "I don't know what the Professor here has got to say to you. He was in the Bureau to-night when we heard of Maddalina. An' if he feels like I do——"

"I haf this to say," broke in Fisher, "and only this. If you haf Jimmy here you shall gif him up and that at once!"

At that moment Jimmy himself came down to them. He could never have gone to bed.

"Professor!" he cried. "In the name o' Gord! *You* don't believe it was me that done it? You can't! You couldn't!"

"You say you dit not. But it may be the po-

lice know more! That iss he, Inspector, that iss he!"

The man was absolutely hard. On this, the first day after Mrs. Fisher's funeral, he was no longer acting like a maniac. But he would have been more lovable if he had been.

McGloyne himself now gave no heed to him.

"It's got to come to a show-down," he said, "an' nothin' more to it! Whether the Commissioner is with you or whether he ain't, the kind of stuff that's been put on me to-night, when I'm supposed to be coverin' the job as detective head——"

Again in his passion, he could not go on.

"I know," said Laneham, "I know. But, Inspector, will you let me ask you just one thing. If you're covering this job as it ought to be covered, how was it possible, two nights ago, for the thief or murderer to come back again?"

"How was it possible? How was it possible?" The veins on McGloyne's big neck swelled and knotted. "Because there wasn't any come-back, see, there wasn't any!"

"I have only the 'E. P.' evidence for it."

"Yes, by cripes, that's *all* you've got! A

fake alarm an' a planted knife! Any way that they can find to do *me* dirt! It's about in the same class as your ghost voice an' spirit rappin's! A come-back! In all my twenty years I've never had one, an' I never will have, an' any one knowin' only how I've placed my boys up there at the Casa Grande will know that, by the Livin', there *couldn't* 'a' been!"

"I can understand your believing that there wasn't."

"I believe it, an' I know it!" He struck his hand down upon the table—"an' if you want to go up there right now I'll prove it to you!"

"And what of Jimmy? What of him?"

"Yess, yess," cried Fisher. "What of him?"

"I'll tell you what about Jimmy. If you or any man can show me where I been leavin' holes, by G—— you can keep Jimmy, see, you can keep him!"

The turn came as quickly as that. Fisher began at once to mouth his protests. And to quiet him it was agreed that McGloyne's two patrolmen should be left in charge. D. Hope also stayed with Jimmy.

Willings for his part turned back with Laneham to get his great-coat.

"Doctor," he said, worryingly, "*we* know we're right. But how are you going to *prove* it?"

"I think the condition of those wall-safe battery contacts and the inside door should be enough. If not, then there'll be something else." He would say no more.

And presently they were all on their way together in McGloyne's low green police car.

As they neared the corner of the Casa Grande block, the Inspector turned around.

"To show you if I'm verin' this joh," he said, "I'll begin right here, outside."

And dropping from the machine he lightly whistled.

Immediately a big figure, clearly a plain-clothesman, stepped out from the shelter of a doorway.

McGloyne waved him back again.

"That's number one. An' I got his fellow up above."

He spoke to the driver, and standing on the running-board, had himself carried on to the

great apartment house's southern service entrance.

"Here's a second place where a hole might be."

This time he tapped on the high iron grill-work gate.

And again a sentry showed himself at once.

"Same peg-post work at the north side," he said, "an' I'd like to see what your friend Grady could put again' that!"

"How about the Casa Reale?" Laneham asked.

"There ain't any connection between the two houses. You can't even get from a Casa Grande to a Casa Reale winda'. If you could, I'd have things screwed down there, as well. Now we'll go inside."

And he opened the door for them, and pushed on through to the big main entrance hall.

Yet even in the rotunda he stopped again, to point with his blunted thumb to the little room behind the telephone desk.

"An' I've got another plainclothes right in there!"

Then he turned back to an elevator.

The house was already asleep. Those upper floors were as quiet as they might have been at two in the morning. And though he abandoned little of his emphasis, McGloyne himself dropped his voice as he led the way down that soft, grey-padded corridor.

"They tell me Grady said he could 'a' walked in on his hands. Well, things is exactly now as they was a-Thursday night—unless you want to put me down a liar—an' you'll see for yourselves how far your hands would take you! Big as it is, this here apartment has just two outside doors, an' only two. There's one." He turned the corner, and a sentry stepped out to meet them. "What's more it's locked." He showed them that it was. "And here—" he turned another corner,—"here's the other."

At it one more patrolman stood on guard.

"Grady an' his hands! An' now come in."

He opened. The deep-piled hall "runner" of the inside corridor took their foot-falls muffledly. And, pulling out the clicking key, the big Inspector had turned towards the little inner stair—when he stopped.

He stopped, and they all stopped. And once more Willings at least had that sense of his heart stopping. From above them, and from the rooms that had been Mrs. Fisher's, there had come what might have been the echo of that clicking key.

But it was not an echo. They all of them knew it was not. And while they stood there it came again.

"Well, what the——" and in a moment McGloyne's eyes were on the Doctor. But it needed no second look to see that Laneham knew as little as he did himself.

And it was the click of door metal. For, next moment, once more a hand was knocking!

"What the——" The big man whispered it. The patrolman from the door moved toward him galvanically as if asking him for orders. But he only lifted his hand unevenly to hold him dumb.

Laneham was looking at Fisher. But he, clearly, had nothing to tell them.

"What iss it?" His voice was dry with fear. "Ah, Gott, what iss it?"

As if the thing were drawing nearer to give

them its answer itself, the knocking came a second time.

Beyond any question, too, it was that same knocking they had heard in the hour of the murder. It came from the same bony hand, if hand it was. And once more—there could be no doubting it—those doors in Mrs. Fisher's rooms were opening to it.

Scarcely an hour before, Willings had been telling himself that if ever again he should experience anything of the sort, he would try better to note and analyse what it was he felt and thought he heard. But now——! Once more he could only stiffen himself there, blood-chilled, his very pulses listening.

Beside him the patrolman kept crossing himself and again crossing himself.

Then, as before, it came a third time. And with that third knocking came the voice.

“My God!” it moaned, slowly and horribly, as from the damned: “My God! Oh, my God!”

None stirred. None could stir, till the last sighing echo of it had died away. Now McGloyne, too, was crossing himself. Nor could

any one have believed that so much colour could have left that purple jowl.

"You've got me, Doctor," he said huskily. "But I guess you'd better look first to the Professor there."

Fisher was holding to the jamb of the corridor door. Without it, he plainly would have fallen.

"I haf an aneurism—my heart iss bad," he said thickly. "Let me get outt."

Laneham took him by one arm, and McGloyne lifted him by the other.

"You ain't ever heard it before, Professor?" he asked.

"No, no! No, neffer!" Again he had no need to say it. "Let me get outt. Help me outt."

They helped him into the big Jacobean reception room, turned on the lights and left him with the patrolman who had been at the other door.

Then they returned to the white-faced officer who had been with them.

"Call up Hines from below," McGloyne commanded, "an' we'll go through. I'll say now

there'll be nothin' for eyes to see or hands to touch. But it's in the line o' duty an' we'll make the inspection."

They mounted the little stair. Again, even as when Laneham and the Judge had tried to break in after the murder itself, all three corridor doors to that private suite were locked. Again, when they had thrown on the inside lights, they could see at a first glance that those little rooms were empty.

McGloyne crossed to the windows. "We left them locked," he said, "an' they're all locked now."

"Can you tell me," Laneham asked, "what walls abut on other rooms or apartments?"

"What walls abut? Doctor, to-morra I'll see you get them floor plans—or as soon as we can get out duplicates. But so far as that goes, I can tell you now. There's only that little writin' place at the end there, an'—God save the mark, the swimmin' pool itself."

"Well, we'll look again at them."

They looked at the little writing-room first. Its windows, like the others, were still locked. But they were only the narrowest lancets; not

even a boy could have entered by them. Then they examined the wall, and even the paneling. With his heavy policeman's clasp knife McGloyne tried the baseboard and then pried at the oaken strips which formed the panel frames. They were solid and immovable.

"They've never been touched since the house was built," he said.

But even with that he did not rest.

"Hines," he ordered, "you an' Benny take your night sticks an' go over the walls everywhere an' sound them."

Then he returned to Laneham.

"I'm goin' through all the motions, Doctor. But you've heard that knockin' and that voice before, an' you know if night stieks are goin' to locate it. Tell me, have you been able to get anything that'd even seem like a line on it?"

"The best we know is that the voice seems to be identified by Jimmy, the butler, as that of the workman who put in the wall safe. And he is dead."

"I believe you! I believe you!" Again the big man crossed himself and his voice dropped.

"The Virgin defend us!"

"There's this to learn yet," said Willings,—
"if there was an 'E. P.' alarm."

"I'll call them up," said McGloyne, at once,
"an' ask."

A telephone stood beside him, and he made the call. "I know there ain't been, though," he said. "It was no *wall safe* that thing was lookin' for to-night!"

And a minute later the E. P. operator answered. There had been no alarm.

"*That's* the way it was goin'," went on the big Inspector, and he pointed towards the pool.

One of the patrolmen had already stepped in upon the white-tiled floor, and had switched on the big, bell-like lighting dome. As they followed him, the same tranquil radiance shone down upon marble and tiles and water as had lit their first search, and revealed the horrors of the murder itself. There was the same deadly stillness, too.

Once more they examined walls and windows, the bank of plants, now beginning to wither, the very pool itself.

They found nothing. If any one, or any-

thing had made a midnight visit there, neither sign nor trace had been left behind.

After all, too, they had only *heard*. All their evidence had come through one sense alone. And Willings, at any rate, was again almost ready to ask himself if after all he had really heard at all, when suddenly McGloyne's shoulders gave a great heave.

"The doors, Doctor," he said. "I never noticed them before. The doors!"

"The doors?" But if Laneham had remembered all of Jimmy's story he would have known what the big man meant at once.

"Between them other rooms an' this, the pool. When I left at six, all of them was closed an' shut. But when we came in just now—after *hearin'* that voice—every one of them—you saw it, too—was standin' open!"

"Yes," said Willings, "and Jimmy told us——"

"Inspector——"

The second patrolman was trying to speak to him from the dressing-room.

"Yes, yes, Hines. What is it?"

"Will you come out here an' look at this!"

He was pointing to the dressing-table, and to something which, had it not been so directly under their eyes, they must all have seen on their first entrance.

Upon a tiny lace handkerchief, spotted with dried blood, and marked "G. F."—Mrs. Fisher's initials—lay a bit of funeral palm, and a freshly cut white rose.

CHAPTER XIV

OF AN ELEVATOR OPERATOR, AND AN ELEVATOR SHAFT

As Willings looked back upon that night, it seemed to divide itself into scenes and chapters. There was the capture of Maddalina, and the Doctor's hypnotising her. That had proved one thing at least. It was Maddalina's fingers that had left those marks on Mrs. Fisher's arms—perhaps the marks upon her throat. That was one clue they could depend upon. But what did it signify? Where did it lead them? An hour after they had discovered it, there had come this new alarm from the Casa Grande. Somebody or something had penetrated to the Fisher apartment again, through and in spite of all McGloyne's patrolmen. Whatever it was, too, man or thing, it was no newcomer; it had been in those rooms before. And, as McGloyne had said, it had been no visitor this time who was seeking wall safes

and pearls. Again their listening ears had heard those dreadful rappings, those soul-moving cries to the Creator. Last of all, man or thing, it had left behind that rose and palm and tiny blood-flecked handkerchief.

A transfixing, wordless horrible message! And from whom? Was the hand that had left it the same that had struck Mrs. Fisher down? And, if so, why should it not have been the same hand, too, that had hurled that murderous knife? The hand that had locked the doors against their entrance on the murder day?

Of all the silent group it was McGloyne himself who now seemed the most overwhelmed.

"Boys," he said, "you'll take those things to Headquarters, an' have them marked as exhibits. But don't ask me to touch them. An' no more newspaper talk, either, till all this is cleared up some way." He turned away with Laneham. "But that'll be never. That'll be never. Doctor, what opened them doors will open them again, an' keep on openin' them, if we had them chained an' barred!"

All his Irish memories from an island storied

and haunted with banshees and leprechauns seemed to breathe and quiver through him.

“But come,” and he pulled himself together. “We’ll get the Professor away again. He won’t start till some of us start with him. An’ we’d best see him all the way down an’ to the door.”

Fisher was still half crouched, half hanging over the side of one of the great oak chairs in the reception room.

“You might better be gettin’ back to your hotel, Professor,” McGloyne told him bluntly. And he took him by the arm.

They all walked together toward the elevators. And it was then, in the Doctor’s first words since the discovery of the rose and palm and bloody handkerchief, that, for Willings, that night’s next chapter had its commencement.

“Inspector,” Laneham asked, “can you tell me this: How was it that the Casa Grande servants were allowed to enter the apartment after the crime and do their regular cleaning work?”

“What——? What’s that?” The nerves of

the big man seemed to jump. It wasn't merely that the question was a startling one. It seemed to say, too, that Laneham had already put out of his mind all they had just come through.

"I—I don't know as I get you?"

The Doctor repeated. "Or at any rate," he said, "it's evident that cleaners were allowed to work in the rooms of the Professor, here."

"Nothin' to it!" answered McGloyne at once.

"No, no, you've got that wrong."

"No, I'm right. And they took their cleanings with them."

No elevator was up, and they stood there waiting for one.

"The hell they did! An' you mean that they took away somethin' that might count?"

"If nothing else, they took some ashes—from the fireplace in Professor Fisher's study."

McGloyne turned to Fisher himself. "How about it, Professor? Was it while you was in?"

Apparently Fisher had not heard them. He was holding, and supporting himself by the metal work of the elevator shaft, even as, a

few minutes before, he had been holding to the door jamb at the threshold of Mrs. Fisher's haunted rooms.

Laneham raised his voice. "It appeared to be the ashes of a burned magazine—probably a German one, because I could make out the word '*mund*,' the German word for 'world,' in big letters on what seemed to have been the back of it."

Willings was ready to believe that he had not heard aright. What the Doctor was now speaking of freely—and before Fisher—he had said, only a few hours before, might be at the very heart of their mystery.

But the big Inspector for his part seemed merely to be reassured. "Well," he said, "a little ashes—it wouldn't be so much, would it, Professor?"

And turning he dropped his hand upon Fisher's shoulder.

"*What iss?*" Fisher started, with a jerk of nerves that was like an explosion. "What iss it?" And when McGloyne repeated,— "Ashes?" he cried angrily. "I know nothing of ashes. If, too, anybody hass been in my

rooms, it iss your men, Inspector, who should know it."

But an elevator was stopping. Stepping into it, they started down.

And as they started down, the Doctor began to speak again.

"This, too. How was it that these elevator men were able to make it appear that they could have seen Mr. Willings as he went out, just after the murder, when, as a matter of fact, none of them was in the lower hall at all, and at least two were looking out from the scuttle of the roof?"

Again Willings had that feeling of not having heard aright. Had the Doctor suddenly lost his senses? But he had made the speech, made it aloud. And that being so, in this present case, there was only one inference, that he had made it deliberately and for the benefit of the youth beside them at the levers.

And, in point of fact, that young West Indian was already offering the best proof that something in the speech had gone home. On the instant his colour had sickened to a sort of café-au-lait. His hand slipped from the safety.

clutch, to get back to it only when they were bounding upward again. Finally, when the boy had at last got them down, his hand fumbled again and again before he could get the door open. Then, once free of them, he waited for neither passengers nor starter's call. In the same sick panic, he clashed the door to, and ran up empty.

Fisher alone seemed to have noticed nothing. He was groping heavily at the front of his waistcoat.

"I haf left my glasses behind," he said, "and I must go up again."

McGloyne paid no attention to him. As the Professor entered a second car, he, McGloyne, turned back to the Doctor. And, despite everything the big man had been through in those rooms above, now filling his whole mind and heart there was, plainly, only one mixture of emotions—wonder—exasperation—inability to believe! All the old detective in him seemed to wish to cry aloud.

"Doctor!" he cried. "*Say*—! That ashes an' elevator boy an' roof scuttle stuff—what's it all *about*?"

He pushed him ahead of him into the little alcove room behind the telephone desk, and turned out the big plainclothesman there on post, and closed the door. Then and then only was he able to speak again.

"Now, tell me about it, Doc," he whispered. "Tell me. An', my Gawd, to begin on it in the car! Have you gone dead off your nut?"

Laneham merely shook his head. "No. I wanted that lad to hear."

"Well, cripes, he sure did! He got it, all right! An' now, what's the answer?"

"For the present I'm afraid there isn't any."

"There what?"

"I'm not half sure of what I know myself."

"Then, Lord, why did you need to go tip-pin' the little squirt your hand like that?"

Again Laneham would not answer. "I'm sorry," he said. "But I shan't be able to tell even Willings, here."

"Say!—but look here—look here——" Obviously the big detective was attempting to speak with self-restraint—"you know, don't

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you, that them damn' Jamaica chocolates are just goin' to run for it now!"

"I don't think so. But if you want, you can put a spotter on them."

"Put a spotter on them! Say, listen. Listen to me. You tell me you ain't got all the information yet you want yourself. Let me take hold of them an' put 'em through down at Headquarters for about three hours!"

"No," and the Doctor spread his hands—"that's exactly what I don't want. It'd lose us everything."

He opened the door and looked out.

"Don't think any more about that, to-night," he said. "For that matter, I'm going home, too, now, almost right away. But I'd like, first, to take a little look about upstairs."

He let Willings and McGloyne go with him. It was another elevator man who took them up. Nothing more was said before him. And Laneham himself did not speak again till they stood in the Fisher inner hall. Then he explained that he only wished to "dig about a little on the floors above and below."

"I'd like to get the stair and elevator con-

nections clearer in my mind," he said. "There seems to be some irregularity on the tenth, at any rate."

He insisted, too, on being allowed to go alone. What was there that could harm him?

In the modern skyscraper apartment house, one common stairway is called for under the law. But it is not to be confused with the little private flights of stairs which, inside, connect the first and second floors of every big "duplex" two-story apartment. In a bare, fire-proof "wall" of its own, this necessary, legal stairway mounts from floor to floor beside the elevator shaft. Its smoke-tight doors give it access to every floor. But it is only an emergency exit. And save by the house service, it is practically never used.

But the Doctor used it now. And he descended first to the floor below.

Under the law a stair-well light should have been burning on every landing. And, far beneath him in that narrow shaft one *was* glimmering, even as another glimmered far above. But about him all was shadow.

He found the door to the tenth floor corri-

dor, opened it, and looked out. On the other side an elevator shot smoothly up, with its lubricated tick-a-lick. But whatever he looked for, obviously he did not find it there. He shut the door, turned back, and started to mount again.

About him on all sides there was almost the silence of those spectral Fisher rooms themselves. His nerves were still sufficiently shaken to make him believe, at times, that the echo of his footsteps on the slaty treads was the sound of other footsteps following him. He would not have owned to it, but he was glad enough when at the tenth floor he could feel for the door and once more let himself out into the good brightly lit hallway.

There, too, he found the irregularity of corridor arrangement that he had been looking for. The very fact of the Fisher apartment being "duplex"—that is, having rooms on two floors—and the fact that it had access to the elevators only on the ninth floor, left this end of that tenth-floor corridor a blind, or "dead" hallway. Two elevators opened upon it. But they could have nothing to stop for. The in-

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The whole weight of that unknown, silent, furious
attacker fell upon him and heaved him outward



diators had been removed from the grill work, and, indeed, so little attention had of late been given to that unused cul-de-sac by the Casa Grande management that a section of wired glass which had been broken out of one of the elevator doors had been left hanging, unmended, where it was.

The hole allowed of Laneham's putting his hand through and opening the gate. And not knowing himself what he expected to find, leaning far over the shaft, he looked down. Nothing to be learned there, though a descending ear stopped as if to observe him wonderingly, stopped again on the floor below, and then dropped on to the bottom. Raising his head, he now looked upward.

Merely from the light of the storm-chased moon a thin, flickering line showed the position of the roof scuttle. It was this elevator, then——

From behind came the sound of a swiftly opened door. With a snap of the switch button the little hallway was in surging darkness. And, through it, while he, Laneham, still struggled to regain his balance, came a rush of leap-

ing feet. A clutching hand spread itself upon his mouth. A second broke the grip of his own left hand upon the upright of the shaft. And then the whole weight of that unknown, silent, furious attacker fell upon him and heaved him outward.

He had no time to turn, to resist, to catch himself. He threw his free hand back. It grasped clothing of some sort, which instantly was torn away again. Then his fingers struck the other upright, tried to hold to it, slipped down, slipped more, and slipped again, as his feet plunged vainly and in that fearful void, fought desperately to find a holding place. Through it all, too, his ears caught a kind of panting, crying laugh. He heard that stairway door close again. He even heard an unknown hand deftly putting the inside latch upon it. . . .

The sharp metal was now cutting him to the finger joints. His body seemed to have a weight of tons. His wrist was twisting off. Yet, even so, for another moment he held, while once more he wrenched himself lurchingly upward. And at that last moment his left foot

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found the floor again. Then his right heel caught. He pulled himself gradually, dizzily, to the level, rolled himself inward, and was safe.

And of that night's story one more chapter, the last at the Casa Grande, had come to an end.

CHAPTER XV

A FACE IN A LANDAULET

HE found Willings in the Fisher outer hall. And, still gasping, he told him all that it was necessary to tell.

“But, *gad*, Doctor,” gasped Willings in his turn, “*gad*, you—you invited it, you know—talking like that before those lads themselves!”

“Perhaps I did.”

“Have you seen McGloyne yet? And are you going to have him grab them all?”

“I haven’t seen him—and I don’t intend to——” by then he was rapidly being overtaken by the weakness of the full physical reaction —“and I’ve no intention of having him grab any of them.”

“What? Look here,—but, of course, if you still want to keep this part of it from me——”

“I’ll have to, son, for a while at any rate.”

“All right. But at least why did you want that elevator thug to know you knew?”

"Maybe because I—wanted to learn something myself."

"Well, I guess you've learned it now!"

"Yes,"—and Laneham swallowed anew—"I think I have."

"And yet you're going to let things stand at that? But all right, all right. And what comes now?"

"Why, for my part—I guess I'll have to make it home and bed."

"I should say so!" Then Willings looked towards the Fisher door. "Do you want to say good-night to McGloyne?"

"No. Because that, and the condition of my hands would call for explanations. We'll go along right now. I'll 'phone him from the house."

At 390 McGloyne's two patrolmen were still on guard—the two brought for the arrest of Jimmy! But the big detective chief was already calling for them—which also gave the Doctor a chance to make some partial explanation. And, then, when Jimmy had been sent up to his bed, they told D. Hope.

"And you're not going to make an arrest?" Her indignation and her complete inability to understand surged up like Willings'.

But her protests were of no more avail than his. And, "Well," she said, giving up at last, "at any rate we know we've gone another step. First it was Jimmy, then it was Maddalina, and now it's those elevator beasts!"

"It's only a matter," added Willings, "of knowing where the step will lead us to."

"It will probably lead nowhere," said the Doctor. "And I doubt very much if it is the next step."

It was not? When the first hint to that young Jamaican that he was suspected had brought that murderous response!

"Then if it isn't, in the Lord's name," demanded Willings, "what will the next step be?"

"I don't know yet myself. But we'll know it when we make it," was all that Laneham answered. A speech that he himself was later to remember.

It was the Doctor, too, who proposed the thing that was to bring the night's record to

the full. Though it was now after midnight, sleep was still out of the question. And, "Supposing I call up Collett and a car," he suggested, "and we go out, as we've done before, for a little freshening night air?"

They went gladly, and they took the limousine. Though not an open car, with its windows down it was almost the same thing. And it gave them full freedom to talk without their chauffeur's overhearing them. In a few minutes they were speeding to the Park.

They talked very little. It was enough just to sit quietly and try to forget things. The wind was again snow-laden. And as it washed their temples gust on gust, it seemed gradually to carry away all the obsessions of the day upon its cooling streams. They went north around the reservoir, skirted the lake and the ponds and the new plantations, and came back down the east drive to the Plaza gate. They would sleep now. The Doctor's prescription had been good. And, turning west along Fifty-ninth street, they started homeward.

They had reached the Circle when they found themselves stalled in a crush of theatre supper

traffic. There was the usual starting-and-stopping tangle of other limousines and taxis and landaulets. D. Hope was looking out of one window, and Willings out of the other. But Willings at least was hardly conscious of looking at anything in particular, until suddenly his eyes were halted. They had fallen upon the face of a young man in the last landaulet to draw alongside him. His first thought was that he had seen that young man somewhere before, his next that in any case he would remember his face now for a long time to come.

It was a fine face, a good face, a face pale and aquiline and slenderly intellectual. But in every feature there was a haggardness, and in the eyes a seared hollowness which sent Willings' hand to the Doctor's knee—to draw his attention to him, too.

Just at that moment, however, the landaulet drew ahead again.

“What was it?” Laneham asked.

“Oh, nothing. Only a poor devil that I guess has had *his* smash, all right.”

“In the grey car?”

"Yes, I was thinking he'd make a case for you."

And then, next moment, their own car came abreast again.

"Why," the Doctor whispered, "it's Glasbury."

"Glasbury?"

"The playwright, one of the tenants who moved out of the Casa Reale. Don't you remember my 'law of dispersal'? Lord, he *has* had his smash, no doubt of that!"

Meanwhile D. Hope was still gazing quietly from the other window. And both had resolved tacitly not to trouble her, when something in their very silence stirred her attention. And she, too, turned and looked.

Next moment Willings and the Doctor were looking, startledly, at each other.

They had seen, first, that Glasbury was known to her. She recognised him. And, as she did, her face seemed to fill and grey with premonition. The landaulet moved on again.

And then—"Who—who is it?" she asked, her voice barely audible.

"Who is it?" repeated Laneham. "Why, but D. Hope,—you *knew* him!"

"I—I don't know his name." That grey fear upon her face every moment grew. "And—and he didn't look like that before."

Again the two men could only stare at each other bewilderedly.

"What—what *is* his name?" asked D. Hope. There was a dry, nervous catch in her voice.

"It's Glasbury, the playwright," Laneham answered. "And until two days ago he was living at the Casa Reale, the Casa Grande annex. You didn't know that?"

"No." Her lips had fallen apart, and she appeared to be unable to bring them together again. "But I know it can't matter—can't have any connection with anything, no matter where he lived."

Once more both men sat wordless.

"D. Hope," said the Doctor at last. "Tell us—we don't understand. You mean that there's no connection whatever between your knowing him—and—and poor Mrs. Fisher?"

"Oh, I didn't say that. I meant no connec-

tion with her death. There *couldn't* have been! Why, it—it'd be perfectly frantic!"

Laneham leaned forward to the chauffeur's speaking tube.

"Collett," he said, "will you keep that grey landaulet in sight?"

And the rest can be told very rapidly.

The grey landaulet had turned west again. And not one of the three but knew instinctively that Glasbury was on his way back to the Casa Reale now—or it might be the Casa Grande itself.

Two minutes more, indeed, and he was dropping out at the Casa Reale entrance.

"I thought,—they told me——" said the Doctor, "that he had moved."

In the same moment D. Hope was speaking out again.

"Oh, and isn't his face enough? Could a man with a face like that have anything, even remotely, to do with such a thing?"

But now he was coming out again. And once more they could study his face for themselves. But this time, at their first glance, all three perforce drew in their breath. The man's lips

were frozenly parted. His cheeks were drawn. And his eyes were wide with newly encountered, or newly remembered *horror*. Horror, too, to abide with him both in the light of day and in the nightmare of dreams!

"Willings," said the Doctor quietly, "will you take the first taxi, and go home with D. Hope. I must keep track of Glasbury now, till I learn at least where he is going to-night. But I hope I shan't be long."

And, a few minutes later, the Doctor was following the grey landaulet alone.

It took him to the St. Hilaire, one of the small bachelor-apartment hotels off Longaere Square. And, when Glasbury had had time to take his elevator, Laneham went on to the desk.

He spoke to the night clerk.

"I want to leave Mr. Glasbury a note."

"He's just come in. You can telephone."

"No, a note will do." And picking up a card and envelope, he was stepping aside to write it when the clerk spoke again.

"Oh, I say, maybe this is meant for you. I remember him saying some one was to come in." And he slid a letter across the glass.

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It was addressed to a Courtney Jones, "to be called for." But the name was of no account. It mattered neither then nor later. It was the writing which, from the first instant, held the Doctor's eyes. If six words could offer any proof, he had that night, when little expecting to himself, taken his third step. For the writing on that envelope was, line for line, the writing of the "murder note."

CHAPTER XVI

GLASBURY, THE LITTLE BROWN STUDY, AND AN INTERLUDE

MEANWHILE D. Hope and Owly Willings were on their way back to 390.

A big fire still blazed in the library, and a smaller one in the little study at the end of the passage behind it. Without really knowing what they did, for their thoughts were on nothing around them, they went on into the brown little room, and threw their out-of-door things upon the lounge.

D. Hope let herself tremulously down in the Doctor's leather inglenook.

"Now, if you don't want to," said Willings, "don't tell me another word."

"Oh, I might have told you this, at the beginning: it is that Zancray thing again—the thing I was holding back—back there at the very first."

"I thought it was."

"And I'm only holding it back because it was a *promise* to Mrs. Fisher."

"A promise?"

But, for the moment, she broke off at that, and began to talk again about Glasbury.

"You do feel that he couldn't have done it, don't you?" It was a plea.

"Yes, yes, indeed, I do."

"Of course he had that look when he came out, there at the Casa Reale. But how can you say that that proves anything?"

"No one would say it."

"When it's *days* after her death, too! And even—even *suppose* him capable of killing a person—I mean in the sense that the Doctor says we all are, under passion or anger enough—could you possibly think of him as stealing from a money envelope, and trying to rifle a jewel safe, and—and intriguing with some low fury of an Italian lady's maid?"

"Of course you couldn't. I don't know any more about him, personally, than you do. Before to-night I've seen him only once. And I've never spoken to him at all. But we—we

all know about him as a dramatist. He's about the wholesomest and finest and cleanest in the whole new school. And I've heard people say how fine he is as a man as well."

"Yes, and I have, too, often. Oh, I don't mean Mrs. Fisher——!" For she had seen the look of puzzlement which, in spite of him, had again begun to come into Willings' face. "You're not going to think *that*? Not when you knew her almost as well as I did?"

He caught her hand. "Hardly, hardly. I'm not altogether a rotter. And if you say another word——"

"But I will, I will!" she continued quiveringly. "If it's only for *her* sake—and the poor dear woman hardly cold in her grave! There are some people you *know* are good. Most of us you can't tell about. Maybe we're good and maybe we're not. I know Mrs. Fisher was romantic. I know she'd do perfectly crazy things—never caring how they'd look to other people. But that she was ever anything but—but——"

"I know."

"And if there was any way I could make you understand *without* telling you——" she

was half hysterical. "It was a promise, the last word, too, that she said to me on earth. That's why I feel that, unless it is simply to keep some one innocent from being convicted——"

"I know. And *please*——" He caught her other hand.

"And yet do you know, it was just a sort of joke, when she said it, just a sort of joke. That's why I know it couldn't possibly matter!"

"And it can't."

"If you could have seen her eyes, and heard her voice, as she asked me——! And yet I know what the Doctor will think! I know what he must be thinking already—that for some reason I'm simply trying to cover Mr. Glasbury."

"D. Hope!"

"But you'll never think that, will you? Never for even the merest, merest little minute? Oh, tell me *now*, just what you think of me?"

He did not misunderstand her. And, up to then, in all the months they had known each

other there had been no word of love between them. He knew that she wanted him to tell her how thoroughly he believed in her, and that he would keep on believing even if the Doctor did not. It was the language of friendship she wanted, or believed she wanted. But with his first word, he knew, and she knew, how much more than friendship was speaking from him—like something long pent up.

“You know what I think of you——!” He dropped down beside her. “It’s the thing I’ve thought from almost the day I met you. And I’ll think it—I’ll feel it till I die!”

It was as sudden as that. And, from the first moment, all memory of Glasbury, of Mrs. Fisher, of the Doctor, went out of both of them.

“Why—why, Mr. Willings——!” He thought at first that she was trying to draw her hands away. But she was only folding one of his into hers: “Oh, what do you mean?”

“Oh, nothing that—that——” and she could feel the tremor run through him—“that I have any right in the world to say.”

And then, for a time, it was Miss D. Hope who could not speak.

“But—but you have a right,” she whispered at last,—“any man has—to say—say anything.”

“I haven’t. I haven’t. But I’m going to say it.” Her hand tightened swiftly over his anew. “And then afterwards if you want to consider it unsaid——” He had to begin again.

“Oh, say it,” she murmured, “say it.”

“Then I will, and it’s this, that even from the first time I saw you—before I’d even spoken to you—I thought you were the finest girl I’d ever seen. I—I kept away from you—for reasons. And I oughtn’t to be—be saying things now. But I—I cared for you all the time—and always more—and now—Oh, I love you, that’s all, and I always will—and if you’ll only give me a little time—I feel every minute how crazy and absurd it is of me to be speaking now. You know what my income is—or was—at The House,—about six hundred a year—and residence! And now I don’t know that I can go on taking that. In a sense I haven’t any future at all——”

“You have. You have. Every one knows you have.”

“Not but what I’d make one soon enough, some way, if only—if only you——”

“I love you,” she said, and now she had both *his* hands in hers. “I always have—and I always will.”

“Oh, you can’t—you couldn’t!”

“I can’t!” She laughed at him. “Little you know!”

“And I’ve no right whatever to say it now. Look here, when I *have* made my future——”

“Maybe,” she said, “you *have* made it. Anyway, you’ve made mine.”

“Oh, D. Hope—Daphne! Love!” And his arms were around her.

But even then she caught his fingers again, and imprisoned and enlaced them within hers.

“Oh, you’ve said it now. And you can never get away from it.”

“But I must. And listen—when I have made my future—really—won’t you let me just come to you and say it then? It—it isn’t just the question of money, you know——”

“I told you long ago that you have more than I have.” And she laughed again.

“Well, say you have. But there’s—there’s the very position I’m in now—I mean if McGloyne had had his way I suppose at the present moment I’d be in the Tombs.”

“Yes, and I. I’d be with you! Even there——”

She stopped. Some one was opening the street door below.

It was the Doctor.

“Oh, I can’t see *him* again, now,” she said, “not to-night.”

From the little study a door gave access to the rear landing, and, still holding Willings’ hand in hers, she slipped out to it.

“Tell him about it for me—I mean about the promise—and that it was just that Zaneray thing again. I’ll—I’ll talk to him, myself, in the morning.”

And, a few minutes later, Willings was listening to the Doctor’s story alone.

“I’m very glad D. Hope has gone to bed,” he said. “With her belief in Glasbury I don’t know how she would have taken it.”

“And you think,” Willings asked him, trying to keep his mind on what he said, “that

there can be no possible doubt about the identity of the handwriting?"

"Oh, there's always doubt in an absolute sense."

He went to his desk and once more brought out the murder note itself. And they looked at it together.

They had described that writing—the upper and—at first—unknown writing—as Elzeverian; as having the beautifully diminutive, delicately upright Gothic of old manuscripts and old druggists' prescriptions. There had been all of that in the writing on that addressed envelope. And now, as if Laneham had it in front of him, he saw it again.

We have now reached the point where it must be either murder or suicide.

"If Glasbury did not write that," he said, "no one did."

Then, in Mrs. Fisher's hand:

Couldn't it be made to look like an accident?

And then, like a seal, that little death's head. It, too—there could be no doubt of it—had been

drawn by Glasbury's pen. And, for the matter of that, in the drawing of it, there was a sort of gaiety!

There were other things which Willings might well have been thinking of in that hour, but he could not.

We have now reached the point where it must be either murder or suicide.

They went back over it again.

"In one way," said the Doctor, "it admits of an interpretation absolutely simple and innocent."

"Simple and innocent!"

The younger man still saw the expression—that memory horror—which had looked out from the hollowness of Glasbury's young face.

"Simple and innocent. And yet we both of us feel how much the man must *know!*"

"Well, I suppose we may call this the third step."

"Yes, and once more we'll get really to work in the morning."

CHAPTER XVII

AN ELEVATOR OPERATOR, THE MATTER OF A WILL, AND ANOTHER "RETURN"

BUT the first development next day, as it came to Willings, seemed to have nothing to do with Giasbury whatever. D. Hope was late for breakfast. So was the Doctor. And as he waited, from the Doctor's office Willings suddenly began to hear a new voice.

It was a voice which he knew at once was either that of a negro or a mulatto. It was steadily rising—from terror apparently. And presently it was pleading for mercy!

"Sure, boss, sure we done that! Was it true?" And now there was a note of cowering evasion: "Lord a' mercy, boss, ain't I tellin' you that, true or not, it didn't go to *hurt* nobody—not nohow it didn't! Them police officers, they was a-*at* us, an' a-*at* us, an' befo' Gawd, I couldn't rightly say now jest what we

did tell them! But *they*'ll tell you—they'll tell you we sure didn't have nawthin' to do with that—that thing up there in the Fishers'! . . . Boss! Why, befo' Gawd, don't you-all remember I was one of the boys what done hailed you an' the Judge to break in? An' if I sure had knowed what was waitin' for us in there, could I 'a' done *that*, now, could I 'a' done *that*?" The voice was now running up into cracking arpeggios.

"You heard what I told the Inspector," Laneham answered. "And all I can tell you more is that you're being watched now, every minute, and every one of you. If you try even to go to the roof again——"

"Which we won't, boss! No more o' that! An', befo' Gawd, if we could ever 'a' knowed they'd be puttin' it on *us*——!"

"Another thing: If you start talking again—even to the police——"

"We won't! We won't! H'avens above, didn't we take our Gawd's oath at the start-off that we wouldn't?"

Then, next moment, he was trying to take that back.

"Yes," said the Doctor, "I know quite well that you did!"

And, with his early-morning visitor bursting into new promises and protestations, Laneham showed him out and started him down the stairs.

As he passed the breakfast room, goggle-eyed, his colour a muddy paste, Willings saw him plainly, and as he had already guessed, it was that Casa Grande elevator man, or "boy," who had taken them down in his car, when the Doctor had talked so amazingly the night before. . . . Presumably, it was he, too, who had attempted, the same night, to hurl Laneham down the open shaft!

In the present, however, the Doctor had nothing more to say of the matter.

"When the time comes," he said, "I'll let *him* talk. Till then, son, you just forget about it, too."

What was more, a few minutes before he had received another urgency call from the sanatorium at Wardsdale.

"I'll have to leave within an hour," he explained, "and before then I must get in touch,

if possible, with the Judge and McGloyne."

"And *our* first work?" asked Willings—meaning that of D. Hope and himself.

"If, by the time you've had your breakfasts I could have the contents of Glasbury's office wastepaper baskets, I could answer that at once. As it is, I think you'd just better go out on that 'mund' search again, and not think of anything else till noon."

Before he had drunk his coffee he was in touch with the big Inspector. He told him of Glasbury, without reserve. And, though, as in the case of the elevator men, he persuaded him not to make any immediate arrest, he arranged to have Glasbury thoroughly shadowed,—on the street by a regular Headquarters' man, and inside the St. Hilaire by an officer lately assigned to special service in a big hotel across the way. Also he told McGloyne that Glasbury had his working office in the Savoy Building. And he asked him to have one of his "pigeons" get him the contents of Glasbury's wastepaper baskets at once.

Finally, McGloyne himself again remembered the floor plans he had promised Lane-

ham; the blue prints would be ready by evening, he said, and he should have them then.

Then McGloyne, in his turn, reported on Maddalina.

“She’s sure the original hell-in-petticoats!” he said. “Hard through an’ through! There’s no third degree invented that’ll ever get anything out of her. An’ her friends are huntin’ her yet in the hospitals.”

“Good. And you’ll have to keep them doing that. For if once it gets out that she’s in police hands, I tell you again it’ll undo about everything we’ve done so far, and that in half a minute!”

Again McGloyne promised.

“But Fisher heard of it some way,” he added. “He knows we’ve got her. And he was around to-day just as crazy eager to see her put through, as he was when I thought we could put it up to hutler Jimmy! You’d say, wouldn’t you, that last night would ‘a’ shook him out of all o’ that? But, hy gee—it turned me kind o’ sick—I helieve he’d volunteer to strap her in the Chair himself! Lord, I don’t know how he’ll act when he hears of Glasbury.

Well, so long. An' I'll get after that wastepaper—whatever you want with it—P. D. Q!"

Meanwhile, the Judge was still to see. He arrived just as Laneham was getting into his car. And he took him with him to the station.

He told him in the fewest possible words of that new "return" the night before; of the attempt to kill him in the elevator shaft; of Glasbury, and what they now knew of that murder note. And, then, leaving him no time for comment, he turned and asked him point blank:

"Bishy, you have always been Mrs. Fisher's legal confidant. You knew more of her affairs than any one else. Will you tell me why almost her last act on earth should have been to make her will?"

"Good God," said Bishop, "do you tell me that?"

"You heard Maddalina speak of a writing, a 'scritto' she had had to witness. That was what it was. Jimmy told us last night, after you had gone."

"My heavens!"

"And now, old man, will you say to me that

she had never, within the weeks before, spoken of making a new will to you?"

Again it was the Judge's expression that made his answer.

"Is it Zancray once more?" asked Laneham. "Is this the thing, of no importance, that *you* felt justified in keeping to yourself?"

When Bishop replied at all, it was only after slowly taking hold of himself. And then it was with another question.

"Laneham, if there was such a will—if Mrs. Fisher attempted, that morning, to make one for herself, what was her reason for such haste as *that*? You remember her call for me to come and see her in the afternoon."

"I remember."

"And more. If she made such a will—if that sort of melodrama is to enter into it—where did that will go to?"

"I don't know. The police search was thorough enough, and it revealed nothing. Furthermore, there are wills and wills, just as there may be different sorts of suicide pacts."

"Laney!"

"By this time, too," Laneham continued lev-

elly, "you must have noticed that there have been two distinct species of return visits."

"Stop it! Stop it!" Bishop threw himself back, and twisted in his seat. "You ask me to think that your—your spectre, or your demon, has been making his accursed returns for *that?*"

"I ask nothing, and I suppose nothing. I only know that Mrs. Fisher made a will, or something that Jimmy believed was a will, in all haste and not three hours before her as yet inexplicable death. And we've got a long way now past believing that we've been following any mere attempt to steal her pearls."

"Enough!—Laneham, for Heaven's sake!" The Judge made a motion to stop the car and get out. "Is this your psychoanalysis? Man, you start my hair! . . . And if there was any such document, all I hope and pray is that your devil friend may soon find it and be satisfied!"

In the afternoon the Doctor called McGloyne again from Wardsdale.

He learned first that Glasbury had apparently been away from his office since the day of the

murder. Anyway, since then his waste-baskets had been empty. And according to the people at the St. Hilaire, on the day of Mrs. Fisher's funeral, he seemed to have been out of the city.

"I'm takin' new measures, too," said the detective chief, "in the matter of coverin' them Fisher rooms. I'm not dependin' any longer on bars an' bolts. O' course, I'm keepin' all that, an' my outside men as well. But in addition I'm puttin' two inside, Sergeant Hooley an' a plainclothesman. It ain't the job I'd like myself—but it's got to be done. An' if need be I'll take my turn along with them."

"I know it, Inspector. And perhaps to-morrow night we can watch together."

He did not get back from Wardsdale till after midnight. And at about half past one he was awakened by the telephone. He had the feeling, too, of knowing, at least in part, what was coming. For, since the day of the murder, had not every night call been a sort of notice, or a new warning and portent?

It was McGloyne who was speaking.

"Dr. Laneham? . . . I'm callin' you from my house, where a call has just come in for *me*."

Your man, or whatever he is, has been back in them devilled rooms again. He's killed Hooley—done for him with the same smash on the temple that killed Mrs. Fisher. And they don't know yet but what he's finished my other man along with him. . . . Did he get away again? Oh, sure he did! An' no more trace of him than ever! But get up there, won't you, the quickest you can, an' learn anything you can yourself."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECOND MURDER

HE tapped only on Willings' door. Willings answered at once. And it was in the limousine that they really finished dressing. At the Casa Grande a police car had arrived just ahead of them. It held a detail under Captain McGowan of the Central Bureau. And McGloyne had given him orders to look for the Doctor. Another physician had also been called—one Hammerling, from the Drive. And they all went in together.

Running their elevator was the self-same young West Indian operator who had visited and pleaded with Laneham that forenoon, and now his twitching countenance showed a degree of terror that, once seen, kept them from looking at him again. But he took them up in some way. The police officers gave him little heed. For, by then, was there any one in the Casa Grande who *was* calm? And they pushed out

into the crowd of tenants moving fearfully about in the corridor.

There, one of the patrolmen left on outside guard that night took charge of them and led them through.

McGowan asked him only a single question:

"The locks were right again?"

"Not a one of them touched, Cap'. We had to use our keys to get in ourselves. That was what kep' us, or we'd 'a' been in there the moment we heard Hooley go down!"

"Where is he?"

"Right in beyond, where the devil got him. We left him so for evidence."

Hooley was lying diagonally across the front of the fireplace in Mrs. Fisher's little library. Almost directly above his head, indeed, was that inlaid Bikri shield which masked the tiny wall-safe itself. Two patrolmen were stooping over him.

"It's no use, Cap'," said one of them. "He was dead, you'd say, before he hit the floor. He likely never knew what killed him."

But the two physicians could at least verify

the cause of death. It was what McGloyne had said it had been, a blow that had crushed in the temple even as Mrs. Fisher's had been crushed in. Once the blood had again been wiped away, too, there was visible exactly the same clean, inch-round hole as had been left in the side of Mrs. Fisher's brow.

"No bullet wound, of course," said Dr. Hammerling; "for it goes in only about an inch. It was enough, though."

"And made by the same instrument."

But McGowan was hurrying them on into the middle room, where lay the wounded plain-clothesman.

"How is it with you, Grogan?" he asked of him.

The man did not answer. He was still unconscious. He had lost much blood. And from his lips there still came the heavy, stertorous breathing resultant upon shock.

A basin of water stood near. And while Laneham bathed his head with it, his fellow physician felt along the suture lines for a possible fracture.

"I don't find anything," he said at last. "A

little concussion, maybe. But I doubt if there's even that."

Calling for a hand mirror he made an eye test. The pupils were almost normal.

"Right. Nothing the matter whatever."

And next moment, with a sudden throwing out of his hands, and a first starting stare, Plainclothesman Grogan had begun to come to again.

Plainly, though, he was still living in the moment when he had received his blow.

"*Get him!*" he cried. "*Get him!* He went that way—to'rds the swimmin' tank!"

"Now, now, now," said McGowan. "Just you sit tight a little. We'll get him, all right, in time!"

"Turn them other lights on! Turn them—*Ah-h!*"

And with that there came the first words of real consciousness.

"Where am I? An' where—where's the Sergeant?"

"You're where you got your crack, Grogan. An' the Sergeant, don't you ask us about *him*. You just go ahead an' tell us what you know."

They propped him up against a chair, and he looked now this way, now that, like a child that has just fought itself awake, but only half awake, from night-mare.

"An' he's gone, *now?*" he asked. "He's gone?"

"Oh, gone this half hour, the devil."

"An' devil he was! Captain, you've named him. Devil he was in all the meanin' of it. But have you called the Father? For I say to you that I'm worse hurted than I look!"

"You're all right, I tell you," and McGowan gave him another drink. "Now, out with it, Billy, and set us right on this."

"Set you right! Set you right! There's no man'll ever do that. But I'll tell you all I seen an' know, if that'll help."

"Get to it. First, where did he come from?"

"He came from nowhere, an' he went nowhere, if he ain't in the room there with the swimmin' tank, where the first murder was done. But I'll be honest with you, Cap', from the beginnin'; I couldn't lie with the Sergeant layin' dead in there. It's like we both were sleepin'."

"Sleeping?"

"It don't sound likely *now*. An' I wouldn't have thought, meself, that I could ever have slept—not in these rooms. For I was feared of the post, *feared*. The stories I'd heard—even if I'd only believed the half—had put the dread in me. An' I doubt if the Sergeant, for all his joshin', enjoyed it any too well himself. But we were both of us dog-weary when sent in. An' what with the heat bein' left on, an' every winda' tight down, an' the dark an' all——"

"You had no lights burning?" Laneham halted him.

"*Not a one!* Accordin' to the Inspector's orders. What good, indeed, to be lyin' hid there, with a lot of electhrics goin'? But we were both of us close by switches so that, if the time come, we could have light enough with a thumb twist. . . . Well, I didn't have the time even for that!

"Doctor"—he seemed to know Laneham—
"I've said I was likely sleepin'. But if I was, I began to *dream* it before I woke! An' I'll never tell you whether I was dreamin' or wak-in' when I seen him first."

“Where did he come from?”

“From nowhere, I’ve told you, unless it was that swimmin’ place, where he done his first murder. An’ where else *would* he come from? An’ he was all in white—savin’ his face. If there was no lights, too, there was the shadows from the moon, which were light enough for him. An’ when I got my eyes on him, he’d just spied the Sergeant, an’ was swingin’ clear to do for *him!*”

“Cap’, did you ever have the feelin’ in your sleep that you *must* wake—an’ you thried to wake, but you couldn’t wake? Did you ever thry to call out, an’ all the sound you could make went sand-dry inside your throat? An’ did you ever thry to move, an’ not a limb, not a muscle could you move? An’ if that could come to me *wakin’* could it come from anything but a devil’s spell laid on? I don’t know what he hit the Sergeant with. His back was to’rds me. But he didn’t strike him till he’d swung once an’ twice an’ *three* times, like some goff player offerin’ at a ball! An’ then, with the Sergeant’s death cry, he give a kind of deep-down little

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"He lepped, an' leppin' he struck me as he passed.
I'd got to one knee, an' had one arm to guard
with"

laugh, and jumped away, an' ran for this room here.

"He ran for this room here, an' then I knowed that, up to then, he hadn't knowed of me—or, if he had, he had forgotten. For at the sight of me he went back a pace. But it was only a pace. An' then he lepped, an' leppin' he strook me as he passed. I'd got to one knee, an' had one arm to guard with. It was that an' that alone that saved me. An' after that I kep' my senses long enough to see him once more as he passed through to that swimmin' pool—yes, an' through the *wall* of it, for the door was closed *then!*—like the way he'd come. An' the boys from outside were in that room while I could still see him passin' through!"

In the next room Father McLean, the Department chaplain, was now praying over Hooley. And there was silence till he finished. Then the dead man was carried to the outer hall, and Grogan was helped after him.

"If you want to know more," he said, "ask the Sergeant there."

But the patrolmen who had been on post in

the corridors were still to question. Had *they* seen anything? Either before they had burst into the rooms, or after?

Nothing at all.

Grogan had said that Hooley's slayer had passed through the wall of the swimming pool after they were inside. Hadn't they seen even a shadow?

"We weren't lookin' for any then," said one of them. "But it might be so. We'll believe anything now. And Grogan—we had run first to him—he was screechin' 'He's in there! He's in there!' But when we'd got the lights on and could look, nothin' was changed in that swimmin' place by so much as a dust spot!"

Laneham made sure of that for himself. Then he walked back to the little library and the fireplace, and lifting the Bikri shield looked at the outer door of the miniature safe. It seemed not to have been touched. But he called up the Electric Protection night office again. As on the previous night, there had been no alarm.

At that moment McGloyne himself arrived.

"What are you going to do this time?" the Doctor asked him.

"You may ask it!" he answered. "For I've got Hooley's blood upon me, now. Do?—what can I do? But no doubt I'll go the same old circuit, tappin' walls an' lookin' at windows." He called one of his aides. "Send Grogan in again. There'd ought to be at least a little more that he can tell us."

"Grogan," he asked the wounded man, "you say he was all in white?"

"Like a sheeted ghost," Grogan answered, and he himself was still almost as pale as one. "Always, o' course, exceptin' for his face."

"Yes, and what do you think yourself he was, ghost, man or devil?"

"Does a ghos' carry annything he can strike a man dead with? An', Captain, would he laugh, too, when he done it?"

"Then you think," said McGloyne, with a shake of his jaw, "that he's just plain devil?"

"Nor I didn't say that, neither."

"Then what is it you do think? Oh, go ahead, tell us, tell us."

"Captain,"—and at that first note in Gro-

gan's voice, now a whisper again, once more they had that feeling of knowing what was coming,—“have you ever heerd tell, in the Old Coountry, of men that, tempted of evil, have sold their souls to the evil one himself?”

“Well? Well? And if I have?—”

“To clench your bargain, as they say, you've first to kill the one you should by rights be lovin' best. But, once you have, it's settled. An', in the hours when you ain't soul-wrung with penitence, more killin' is all your pleasure. As for the rest, you can go annywhere, you can do annything. An' to pass through a wall is nawthin'—nawthin' at all!”

“All right,” said McGloyne. “We'll say that your man is blood-paid an' Devil-bought. What kind of *figure* of a man would you say he was?”

“I'd say he was a yoong man.”

“Yes?”

“And I'd say he was slim an' slender, an' light on his feet.”

“Yes?”

“For a minute I thought I could see his eyes. An', oh, the depth they had! An', for all he

was joyin' in his killin' then, oh, the misery he'd been through to win to it!"

"And you heard him laugh?"

"That I did! That I did. And it was a kind of voice so hollow deep you'd say it had come from the Pit itself!"

Five minutes later the Doctor was calling up the St. Hilaire, Glasbury's apartment hotel, and was speaking to a new house detective there on duty.

"It's Doctor Laneham calling. Have you anything to report now?"

"I have, sir."

"And what?"

"Mr. Glasbury went out about two hours ago, at one-twenty. An' it's only just now that he's come in again."

"Did Morris trail him?"

"Every minute."

"And where did he go?"

"He went to his office, in the Savoy Buildin'. Morris saw him in an' out o' there."

"Yes, and did Morris notice anything about him when he came out?"

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“He did. An’ I noticed it, too, when he come back here to the St. Hilaire. If we hadn’t knew where he’d been, we’d ‘a’ said that he’d just come back from croakin’ some one!”

CHAPTER XIX

SEEN FROM AN ELEVATOR, AND THE CONTENTS OF A WASTEPAPER BASKET

"WELL, Doctor," asked Willings, "what now?"

A question already asked and answered many times that week. Yet now no answer seemed humanly possible.

But Laneham did answer. Even then he still lifted his face, four-square and unyieldingly, to all the powers of darkness.

"We keep on as before," he said. "If we have to do with the devil-world, the more-than-natural, once more that must prove itself. In the meantime all we really know is that between one and three this morning Glasbury was in his office in the Savoy Building——"

"Yes, but that alone——"

"I know. I know. But there is nothing supernatural in his being there at such an hour. And if at the same time we are to believe that some secondary 'blood-paid' devil-image of him

was here in the Casa Grande killing Hooley, that must be told me from the lips of the man himself. Till then there is enough for us to work upon in other ways."

And next morning brought them, among other things, the first contents of Glasbury's office waste basket.

What did the Doctor hope to find amid such mere debris of the man's every-day working life? Apparently nothing, with any certainty. It was only one means among a dozen. But it was at least a possibility. And the fact that, after being away from his office for days, Glasbury should return to it at such an hour, to tear up anything whatever, seemed at least to promise something.

The Central Bureau "pigeon" who had rifled the basket might well have been the uncombed and dirty son of one of the Savoy scrubwomen. But he knew all he needed to know.

"Your guy's come back in this mornin', too," he told Laneham. "So this bein' a Sata'-day, see, an' only half a day, maybe I'll be switchin' youse some more this afternoon."

What he had "switched" this first time he

had carried to Seventy-second street in a battered, dog-eared old suit-case. And when they had opened it, they seemed to have proof enough in its contents alone that Glasbury must have spent the entire two hours that night in his office and nowhere else. For that old suit-case was half filled; and every sheet of paper and envelope had been torn and return till scarcely a piece was to be found larger than a postage-stamp.

"I must leave you two to work on it alone," said the Doctor. "You know what we have to look for. In the first place,"—and again he brought out the murder note,—"we must make absolutely certain, word for word and letter for letter, of the identity of the writing. In the second place, here you have Mrs. Fisher's writing, too. You must look at every scrap for anything that even remotely resembles it. And after that, somewhere, by chance or luck, there may be something else."

He left them, and they went to work.

Laneham's big flat-topped desk stood behind them. Willings cleared it off, and spread out handful after handful of those tiny fragments,

so that there might be as much as possible under their eyes at once.

"I know," he told D. Hope, "that this is mighty hard on you."

"No," she answered, "it isn't. Because *I* know that the more we learn, the sooner we'll prove Mr. Glasbury innocent."

But it became evident almost immediately that at least half of that torn paper had once been merely the manuscript, or the successive manuscripts, of a play! It established the identity of Glasbury's writing. He had penned the murder note—there could no longer be any doubt of that. But a play? Why should any man, however haunted, go to his office at one in the morning to destroy a play? Certainly there was little hope of getting an answer from any internal evidence in the play itself. It would have taken weeks to piece *its* thousand shreds and tatters together. Meanwhile they faced a blank wall.

As far as they could, they put the bits of manuscript aside, and began to sort out everything that looked like the remains of correspondence.

There was little difficulty in getting the pieces of individual letters together. There were many of them, for they represented the accumulated mail of several days. But it was only a matter of matching paper with paper.

But in no case did any of those letters tell them anything. Not one that could by any stretch of imagination be taken for the writing of Mrs. Fisher. Most of them were business letters. The only puzzle was why they should have been destroyed at all.

Outside the manuscript, or manuscripts, of the play, there were only two examples of Glasbury's own writing. Both were the beginnings of letters. And because his stationery, a heavy, hand-laid bond, was as distinctive as his writing, they also were comparatively easy to put together.

One of those beginnings read:

DEAR HARRY: I should have answered you at once. But, without going into it now, ever since Saturday . . .

Saturday was the day of the murder.

244 BEHIND THE BOLTED DOOR!

The other:

GENTLEMEN: I very greatly regret that owing to circumstances not under my control, I have not been in my office for several days and therefore . . .

And it, too, had ended there.

In both there was a something about the writing—a rigid tremor, a sort of quivering powerlessness—that seemed of itself to show that the hand could go no further.

“It’s as if his will power had suddenly been snapped,” said Willings.

But that they had known, or felt, before. Again they had learned nothing that was new.

They went back to the first business letters and began to work through them a second time.

Meanwhile, the Doctor had gone directly to the Savoy Building.

In a sense, he had gone only to get its general topography, and, even as in the case of the Fisher apartment in the Casa Grande, to study the arrangement of the doors and corridors on Glasbury’s particular floor.

But he had hardly reached the Savoy ele-

SEEN FROM AN ELEVATOR 245

vators when some one touched him lightly and spoke to him. It was Morris, McGloyne's "outside man."

"He ain't come down yet," he said, "but if you'd like to go up and take a little look around in the halls?"

And, since Glasbury would not know either of them even if they came upon him face to face, Laneham told the man to lead ahead.

The Savoy was an old building, the typical flimsy seven-story fire-trap of the 80's. It had only one entrance, with an open stairway mounting from landing to landing around the elevator shaft. They walked up.

Glasbury's office was on the fourth floor. His door was almost exactly across the hall from the further elevator. A postman was just entering. And passing quickly, they started on up to the floor above.

But when, on the halfway landing, they came opposite again, and could look through the elevator shaft, Laneham saw that Glasbury's door was topped by an old-fashioned fan-light. From the ceiling level, therefore, an observer in the further elevator could command at least a

part of his rooms. In the same moment Morris had the same thought.

“Could you get the use of an elevator?” Laneham asked him.

“Sure I can. I got in right with the starter, as my beginnin’. I can run a car, too, at that.”

And, two minutes later, they had their own car, and were going slowly up alone.

To give himself a possible opportunity of observing Glasbury, himself unobserved—that had been the Doctor’s only thought. And as their car came gradually to a stop half way above that fourth-floor level, he found, by standing well over to the left, he could see, through the fan-light and an inner open door, the young playwright’s desk, his shoulder, and then, as he moved, more and more plainly his half-averted face.

Again, what did it say? What story, what explanation of hideous mystery, spoke from it? At that moment it held only a suffering blankness, a hunted misery to wring the heart.

But as Laneham still watched, the man’s shoulder moved again. His hands went out. He seemed to be opening his mail. And next

moment that blank misery in his face had changed again—to horror, and to the same horror it had worn that night as he came from the Casa Reale!

The look was there, and Laneham was half prepared for it. But for what followed, nothing had prepared him. On Glasbury's desk a letter fluttered, held in a hand that shook and shook. Then on a sudden that shaking stopped, and the hand went blindly into an open drawer. It came out again. At Glasbury's right temple there flickered the swift, level glitter of polished nickel. A click, then another. And Laneham, powerless even to move, knew that Glasbury was trying to shoot himself.

He was trying to. But, because of some merciful defect, the weapon refused to serve him. And next moment he let it drop heavily to the desk again. Once more, too, his look was changing—to the expression of the man who believes, harriedly, that he can not die, and tells himself that in death itself there would be no escape for him. Then, trembling and shaking, he got to his feet. Standing over his waste-basket, he was tearing that letter—whatever it was—into

such shredded bits as the Doctor had already seen. Somehow he steadied himself. His every feature now said desperately that, whatever must be faced, he would still endure and face it through!

A few minutes more and he moved quickly to the door, took an elevator, and was in the street again. And Laneham, following, was telephoning to McGloyne.

"Yes, yes," he repeated; "for Glasbury's own sake—to save his life—though I think there is no more danger now. But watch him every moment. . . . Yes, and make absolutely certain of getting me everything from this morning's basket."

About two o'clock the contents of that second basket reached 390.

It held little compared with the first, but it held enough: again the three cleared the big desk and went to work. The Doctor said nothing as to what they might expect to find. He merely laid out that murder note once more, and once more began to match tatter against tatter.

But it was no matter of hand-writing, but of

paper itself that first brought his hands to a halt.

"Willings, look here," he said jerkily. He was holding a tiny strip of that water-lined, almost transparent foreign note-paper known as onion-skin.

"Well?"

"Where have you scen *that* before? You don't recognise it?"

In the meantime he had found a second strip, this time bearing a line of writing.

"But at any rate you recognise the pen work? You don't? But I see. Of course the other was in Italian."

And as Willings and D. Hope stood waiting, he crossed to his desk and brought back the letter, the love letter he had taken from Maddalina in the ambulanc.

He translated parts of it: "You are an angel of heaven. . . . Of a surcty my love wiil now endure forever. . . . And you shall have at least two of them for yourself."

"We decided some time ago," he said, "that the 'two of them' referred to two of those fifty-dollar notes which our precious Maddalina took

from Mrs. Fisher's money letter. Well, it would seem that her lover friend has now been writing to Glasbury. But let us get the whole letter together."

A thing that promised to be easy. Small though they were, those bits of "onion-skin" now seemed to stand out from everything else.

Again they went to work. And they had scarcely begun—Laneham had just spread himself out a second little pile—when, looking again, he suddenly put his hand over it, and spoke quickly to D. Hope.

"Without asking why," he said, "will you just let Willings and me finish this alone?"

And, to give her something to do, he asked her to go out for the rest of the afternoon, and go on with the search for that lost magazine with its clue-word "mund."

"Try some of the scientific publications," he said, "the German chemical journals, and that sort of thing."

Not until she was gone did he lift his hand again.

Beneath it lay three scraps of that slippery

“onion-skin”: on each piece were smears and blotches of fresh blood.

“My Lord!” cried Willings.

Neither spoke again till the last terrible little shreds had been fitted into place, the whole letter was together, and it could be read.

It ran as follows:

The signore Glasbury,
Sir

This is twise I rite and I will not rite again. we can not dare now to go back again to try get them pearls so now *you* must pay. last nigt the police leave two guards. they will not guard again. We too, can kill in those fisher rooms. we need 5,000\$. You get it for us tonigt. We come at ten. After that we troble you no more. I give you the marks from him I kill last nigt, so you will know.

And the entire bottom of the letter was one daub of what—there could be no doubting it—was the life-blood of Sergeant Hooley.

CHAPTER XX

A MEETING IN GLASBURY'S APARTMENTS

It was a second murder note, and one more ghastly, almost, than the first. For a time neither could touch it again. But, blood-smeared and dreadful, the thing was there.

"The—the beast must have written it," said Willings, "as soon as he got back to his diggings."

"Little question. He can hardly have needed to re-moisten his fingers! . . . Well, so much for poor Grogan's ghost-demon. So much for his apparition from nowhere that passed through the solid walls!"

Willings read the hideous screech again.

"But, Doctor, what does this mean?—'We, too, can kill in those Fisher rooms'? It's perfectly evident that the Italian devil believes that Glasbury did it. If he didn't——"

He was stopped by a warning in Laneham's

face. And at the same instant the Doctor covered everything with a newspaper.

D. Hope had come back again.

She had come back again, and her eyes were shining. "Doctor," she cried with her first breath. "This is twice I've been a good detective. I've found it!"

"Found it?"

"Found your 'mund' magazine. It's a medical one, in German. Here is the name in full, with the date: it's an old number. . . . They had it at Koelble & Scheuer's."

"But where is it? Didn't you bring it with you?"

For all his habitual repression, he was this time by far the most excited of the three.

"They had only one copy left, and it had just been ordered."

"Well, we can get another somewhere. In the meantime there'll be one in the Physicians' and Surgeons' Library. And I'll go down there at once. Oh, don't mistake me. There mayn't be anything in it at all. But if there is!"

"But what about to-night?" Willings was ready to believe that Lancham had already for-

gotten the existence of those blood-daubed paper scraps beneath the newspaper.

“Oh, I’m not forgetting to-night. And, Willings, old man, before I go, for a minute I must talk to you.”

He did. Then, by telephone, he got McGloyne and his man Morris and made certain arrangements with them. If, at ten that night, those Italian jewel thieves and murderers expected to be in Glasbury’s rooms at the Casa Reale, he, Laneham, was clearly going to do everything in his power to prepare for them. And he did not leave the house until he had.

But, having gone, hour after hour went by before he returned. Five o’clock passed, and six. He called up to say that he could not be home for dinner. They did not see him again, indeed, till after eight. And then—a first glance at his face told the story: they knew that he had taken one more step—and that again he had found the thing he sought! It was unmistakable.

But not less obvious was it that he had no thought of going into anything then.

“There’s only one thing we must do to-

night," he said; "we've a little ambush to fix up. And we've barely time for it as it is. Willings, we'll get back first to the Casa Grande."

He told him, on the way, that Glasbury was still at the St. Hilaire; Morris had just made sure of that. And Morris was to warn them too, when Glasbury left to meet his blackmailers. For it was evident that he intended to meet them.

"And now, son, a second time: you've volunteered to take the main risk to-night. But if you feel that you'll be running uncalled-for chances?"

"Not for a moment!"

At the Casa Grande they found McGloyme, in plain clothes. He had with him, at last, those promised floor plans.

"I'd have done better just to have turned you over the originals," he said; "for everything was tied up while the blue-printers kept us waiting."

"It's all right," Laneham told him; "and I guess we know by now a part of what we're going to learn from them!"

He carried the rolled sheets into the room be-

hind the telephone-board and spread them out.

"There you have it. The Fisher apartment in the Casa Grande, here, and Glasbury's bachelor rooms, here, in the Casa Reale adjoin. They abut at Mrs. Fisher's little writing-room." McGloyne stifled an exclamation, and the Doctor turned to him. "But, right now," he said, "whatever the appearances seem to be, I ask you to take my word for it that never for a moment has there been anything that could lie against the honour of either of them."

McGloyne dropped his hands. "As you say, Doctor, as you say. Only it's brought them death an' hell. Well, now to business." He handed Laneham a latch-key. "There's one thing you'll be needin'."

"Good."

"It's for Glasbury's middle room. When are you going over?"

"At once. For Willings and I would like to get a preliminary look around."

They all walked around the block to the entrance of the Casa Reale together.

But McGloyne got no further than the entrance. A message had just come in for him.

It was a warning from Morris. Glasbury was on his way.

"No time for any lookin' around!" said the Inspector. "But my men are placed. Payton's planted on the inside. You'll find him there. An' if Mr. Willings is still wantin' to make a second?"

"I am," said Willings. "That was my first thought."

"Well an' good. Get in then, get in, the quickest you know how!"

In another minute Willings and the Doctor were in Glasbury's rooms.

"Officer Payton?" the Doctor called.

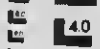
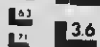
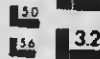
"Right here." Payton, a lanky "special," showed his head from behind the curtain of the trunk closet. "And you'll find more cover," he said, "back of a big desk in a den place at the other end."

They hurried through to it. The desk was an old-fashioned, low-bodied, high-backed secretary. It had been placed across the corner by the window; and nothing could have offered better concealment. Willings slipped behind it, and pulled it in again. And once more he had



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an automatic in his pocket. Laneham made him take it.

"But never fear," he reassured him; "you won't need to use it. Remember, though, try to see Glasbury first, and then give them time to talk." And he was gone.

He could hardly have left the elevators before Glasbury was entering. It seemed to Willings that they must have met. But he was alone. And, throwing on the lights, he came slowly through to the little study. "Try to see Glasbury first"—it was as if Glasbury had known he was there! While Willings still crouched uncertainly, the young playwright crossed to his desk and began to write something. He rose from it, with a face once more filled with a white but resolute despair—and Willings showed himself.

"Who—who are you?" With his first backward leap Glasbury's hand went to his own coat pocket; "and what are *you* doing here?"

Yet it was not what he said nor the words he used that struck through Willings' memory.

He tried to explain his presence in a single

sentence. He said that he was a friend, that he knew why he, Glasbury, was there, and that he would find a second friend and ally in the further room.

"We've seen the letter they sent you," he whispered rapidly; "and we're here to meet them, too. You weren't going to *pay* them?"

"No, no. Never that!"

"Then what were you going to do?—You have a gun, haven't you?"

"I have. And this time one I can depend upon. There—there'll be two of the fiends. I was going to try to do for both of them—and then"—he whispered it dryly—"then finish with myself."

It was what Willings had thought. And at that very moment from the hall there came a sound of footsteps.

"But you won't do anything now, will you? You'll just leave everything to us?"

And, in another minute, what was to follow had begun.

From his "cover" of course Willings could at first see nothing. He only knew that Glasbury's visitors had let themselves in with their

own key. They seemed, in fact, to be entirely familiar in his rooms.

“*Allora—now!*” said one of them, the Italian, doubtless Hooley’s murderer. And the other, suspecting an ambush, went straight on through to the rooms beyond. He went directly indeed to that trunk closet where the “special,” Payton, was lying and discovered him!

With a stumbling rush, Payton leaped out. But he was not quick enough. Even before he could raise his voice, a black-jack did its work, and he went down like the dead.

Instantly, as though by a kind of reflex action, the Italian whirled back to the hall doors and shot their bolts: for the present, at least, no one could interrupt from outside. Next moment both blackmailers were fleeing towards the little room where Willings was concealed.

He jumped for them. And before they could use their weapons—almost before he knew himself that he was using his—he had put a bullet through the shoulder of the man with the black-jack.

“Hands up!” he shouted.

"The hell I will!" And, "winged" though he was, the man tried with his other hand to pull his gun.

Outside, with curses and shoulder-drives, McGloyne and his detail could be heard trying desperately to burst their way in. "What the devil! What's gone *wrong* with them locks! Put yourselves at 'em again!"

The time was short. And now the young Italian had sprung for Willings.

"*Nom' de Dio*, but I get you anyway!" he screamed, and pressed his weapon squarely against his side.

"I guess not!" Willings twisted it away again, even as the explosion came. With a second wrench and jerk, the gun went through the window. "Not this time, I think!"

In all his life before, Mr. Walter, or Owly, Willings had never engaged in even an imitation of a gun-fight. But now it seemed to him to be something wholly natural and eminently satisfying. That he might be killed did not worry him at all. If he was, there was a Daphne Hope, who would know just how it happened. Also he was there to take care of Glasbury;

and through it all he manœuvred to keep Glasbury behind him.

He was down on the floor now—they all were—but he was still fighting. He had some one by the throat. And in some way he managed to get hold of the winged man's black-jack. Then suddenly he knew that Laueham and McGloyne and McGloyne's men were inside. Another burst of shots, and the thud, thud, thud of subduing night-sticks. And when, amid smoke and the salty smell of powder, Willings again found himself sitting up and looking around, he became gradually aware that Glasbury was still behind him, and some one was working over him.

It was the Doctor. In almost complete collapse the young playwright was passing from one fainting fit to another. And, "*Oh, my God!*" he was crying, "*Oh, my God!*"

The Doctor looked up and caught Willings' gaze fixed on him. That voice—would they ever forget it? It was the lost-soul voice they had heard twice before in the Fisher rooms. And, "*Oh, my God, my God!*" it came again.

"Well, at any rate," said Willings, "it was a

human voice." Then he turned back to help the others.

Ten minutes later two would-be jewel thieves and blackmailers sat trussed and ready for the patrol wagon. But in the little room of the high-backed desk, Laneham was having a last word with McGloyne:

"You must leave Glasbury with me. For the next few days he'd have to go into hospital in any case."

"As you say."

"Till further notice, too, I'll ask you not to try to talk to the two worthies out there, either. And, if possible, keep it absolutely quiet that you've even caught them."

"You mean keep it even from Fisher?"

"Fisher? Oh-h. Oh, if you want, tell him. But no one else."

"But, Lord," McGloyne protested, "when you might say we've got the thing cleared up!"

"Cleared up? Inspector, once more, who killed Mrs. Fisher? Those two thugs in the handcuffs don't know. Why, and *how*, was she killed? Do you know that? And how did the murderer get in? Has any one of those ques-

tions been answered? Has any part of the real mystery been solved? No. But, if you will give me the opportunity, to-night I think we can at last begin."

McGloyne shook his head uncomprehendingly. But the matter was in Laneham's hands. "Doctor," he said, "what do you want to do?"

"Several things, one of which will again convince you that I've lost my senses. But first of all—and nothing could be gained by letting any one else know this—first of all I want a chance to take Willings and go back to Mrs. Fisher's rooms, and be free if need be to spend the entire night making another search."

"Another search? An' what *for*?"

"A certain tiny pellet of fused white metal," Laneham answered, "which should still be somewhere near or in the swimming-pool."

CHAPTER XXI

FOUND BY THE SWIMMING-POOL, AND MORE OF ZANCRAV

A TINY pellet of fused white metal, somewhere near, or in, the swimming-pool! Not a bullet, obviously. But, if not, what could it be?

Laneham offered no explanation. McGloyne did not know nor Willings. And yet, as Willings stood there looking straight before him, one might have said that already, at the bottom of his soul, he half suspected.

Meanwhile he waited in the Casa Grande till the Doctor had taken Glasbury to 390. But within half an hour Laneham was back again.

"Jacobs can take care of him quite well now," he said. "Judge Bishop is down there too—with D. Hope and Jimmy. I've told them, if they'll wait, we may be able to report on *something else.*"

And again they went up to that murder-haunted swimming-pool room.

Once more they had only to throw on the electrics in the great alabaster bell hanging above the pool to have light enough. But the Doctor had also brought along a pocket flash.

He closed and locked both doors, so that they would not be interrupted. On one of the dusty green flower benches lay a long-handled brush. He picked it up and handed it to Willings.

"I want you to sweep around the edge of the pool with this," he said. "But wait a minute; I think we can make our first verification from the water itself."

He stepped back to the pool, bent far over its barrier-like brim, and took up a little in his palm.

"If what I believe to be true is true," he said, "this water should be salt."

And, after holding back a moment, each in turn dipped a finger in and tasted it.

It was salt.

"But mightn't it—isn't it just sea salt?" Willings asked.

"No; this is common salt. And there's all the difference in life—or death—between them here. Well, now to our real work."

Willings followed him, and took up his brush again.

The Doctor explained roughly.

According to McGloyne, no matter what might have been done in Fisher's own rooms, no cleaning work of any sort had been done about the pool since the hour of the crime. Therefore, anything that had been on the floor then, if not so small that it could be carried out on some one's shoes, should still be there.

"It may be only the minutest globule," he said, "like a droplet from a plumber's iron. But we must try to find it. At first, though, my own work will be higher up."

"How do you mean?" Willings asked him.

"I'm going to look first for some place where a file, a very small file, has been in use."

And crossing to the other side of the room, he began to run his eyes along the walls.

For a moment Willings himself stood awaiting further instructions. And while he did he followed Laneham. It was evident, moreover, that he was working according to some definite plan or course. If his eyes had started at the

wall, they had moved rapidly to the ceiling, then along it to that great, whitely-radiant, moon-like bell. But there he looked again at Willings, and the younger man took up his brush, and turned away to his own work. He saw only that the Doctor had mounted the flower stand. And next moment he gave a little triumphant gasp.

"It's here!" he cried. "Oh, no, never mind about the details now. I'll just go to work again with you, and maybe we'll get everything!"

There was no second brush. But, dropping almost face down, Laneham laid his flashlight in front of him upon the tiles, and began to sweep them levelly with its little searching beam.

"It's an even chance our drop of metal is in the water," he said. "But, at least we must look outside first. Up there near the faucets and the nickel work——"

He got no further. A second time his search had ended before it really had begun. To the right of the faucets was a small marble step. In the corner between it and the side of the pool,

some dust and fluff had gathered; and there, in the midst of it, was something that glittered faintly.

The Doctor picked it up. It looked exactly as he had said it might look. One would have said it was some little solder globule left by plumbing work. But, handing it to Willings, "What do you notice first?" he asked.

"Why, its weight! The thing's as heavy as gold."

"Yes; it's platinum."

"Platinum!" Willings stared at him.

"Yes, platinum. But in itself there is nothing in that."

"Oh, no; not in itself." Willings' voice had fallen to a whisper, and into his face there had come a look never brought to it by any mere droplet of heavy metal. "Doctor," he said, "I want to tell you something."

"Well?"

"It's the evidence—the Zaneray stuff—that I've been holding out. I believed implicitly till this minute that it couldn't matter, and my only idea was to protect the innocent. But I've got to tell you now."

And, still standing by that grisly swimming-pool, he did.

"Willings! And you didn't see the importance of that at the beginning?"

"How could I? But it means, doesn't it, that the thing will be cleared up? That the cloud will—will be lifted from me?"

"Oh, surely, surely!"

"Very well. Then, when we get back to 390, before you ask anything else of me, may I speak for a moment to D. Hope?"

And what he had to say to her he again said in the little brown study.

"I thought you'd want to be the first to know," he began. "It's at least different with me in one way now, from what it was yesterday."

"Do you think," she asked, "that anything can make things different with me—unless you want to change, yourself?"

He caught her in his arms again. "But you know what I meant. I can anyway feel a little nearer to you now."

"Can you?" She laughed up into his eyes

with the joy of it. And he clasped her closer.

"Oh, I love you, love you!" he whispered.

"You do? Only you don't want to say as yet that you're engaged?"

"No, not till—till——"

"Till you have about a hundred times more money than you really need. Is that it?" she asked him. "Oh, very well. For I can wait. But now we must go to the others."

And, in another five minutes, they were once more with the Doctor and Judge Bishop and Jimmy in the library.

The Doctor went to his point at once.

"Willings, here, has just been telling me something," he said, "and something to the last degree important. No, I won't say what it was; but it was his 'Zancray evidence,' the thing he felt justified in holding back at the beginning. And all three of you have confessed to doing the same thing; you have your hold-backs, too. Now, once again, to prevent the martyring of some one who may be guiltless, I ask you to speak before it is too late. In a few hours Glasbury may confess; but until he does——"

A look that seemed to ache in the eyes of D. Hope turned him first to her.

"You told us," he said, "that you were keeping silent because of a promise given Mrs. Fisher. If in these last hours you feel, for any reason, that morally you are now released from it——?"

"Oh, I do! I do!" she cried. "But, Doctor, may I—just for the present—can't you let me tell it just to you?"

"By all means. It may be better so." And he drew her with him into his office.

Minute after minute passed; they could hear her sobbing. Then for a long time the Doctor seemed to be asking questions. And when he opened the door again D. Hope was still crying, but with a sort of happiness.

Laneham asked his last question in the doorway:

"And you'd never suspected *that?*"

"No. Oh, I knew she was ambitious. I could feel that marriage hadn't satisfied her——"

"I should think it hadn't."

"——And that she wanted to lead some sort of bigger life. I felt at times that she'd begun.

But—even then—I didn't suspect that it was *that!*"

"No, I suppose that no one could have." The Doctor himself was greatly moved. "Poor woman! Poor, poor woman! And Glasbury—! D. Hope, if you still pray, won't you say something to-night for him?"

He turned away to Jimmy.

"And now, my son, isn't there something coming from you?"

"Doctor Lyneham, don't hask me! I can't! An' it eyn't any matter of protecting the h'in-nocent. For I don't know who did it and who didn't, no more now than hever! I'm only trying to protect a good nyme—the nyme of one that's dead, too, and that I'd go to 'Ell for!"

"Jimmy," said D. Hope, taking his hand, "if you mean Mrs. Fisher's name, it needs no protection now. And if you can only add something to what the Doctor knows already, maybe everything will be understood again."

"You think so, Miss?" And even then he hung back. "Your—your 'and on your 'eart, you can promise that?"

"I can, Jimmy; I can!"

“Very well, then, Doctor, I’ll go in there with you, too.”

And a second time, confessor and confessed were still talking when they came out again.

“You h’understand, now,” Jimmy was saying, “about that voice. I wasn’t lying. *Hafter* the murder I ’eard nothing. What I was speaking of was the voices I’d ’eard before.”

“I know,” said Laneham. “But, old man, if you’d just told me at once—what you’ve told me now——!”

“That’s true. Hif I ’ad! But anyways, I’ve told you now.”

And if that famous Frenchman and psychologist Emile Zancray had never made his claim that the friends in the case always conceal something which, being known, would make all clear, he would have made it then!

Meanwhile Laneham was looking at the Judge.

“And now, Bishy, there’s only you. I’ve had three contributions, and put them together. All that is lacking is the fourth.”

“Laneham!” Bishop began again to put him

off. "I—I—I—I give you my professional word——!"

"Yes, and in a way, so did all the rest of them."

"I tell you it's absurd—as crazy as—as some of your dream theories."

"All right," the Doctor answered quietly, "supposing we try it on the basis of those crazy dream theories."

"And what do you mean by that?"

"Just this, that since Mrs. Fisher's murder, at least once and probably twice, you'd had a certain dream. Well, instead of making *your* confession, supposing you simply tell me *it?*"

"What?" The Judge's hands lifted themselves almost in a posture of defence. "Laneham, this—this is no time, and no occasion, for—for foolery!"

"What I propose is very far from being foolery. It's the soundest of sound psychology. All I ask now is that you tell me that dream. But, of course, if you *fear* the test?——"

"Fear it? Fear it? Why, if it's a challenge, then, in the Lord's name, come along! I'll take my turn in the confessional!"

Ten minutes afterwards he came out again, and his face was that of a man in awe.

"Laneham," he said, "I would never have believed it, never!"

"Well, you *know*, now."

"I do!" One might have thought that he had just stepped down from the criminal bench, after pronouncing a death sentence. "And now I know, too, why she sent for me. But to get at it in *this* way——!"

"Oh, we mustn't believe it absolutely, even now. In every legal sense, it is still to be proven."

"Proven! The only question remaining is how did they get in?"

"If they did get in. Well, I think that, too, should be demonstrable."

"Demonstrable?" Again Bishop repeated the word.

"The proof of guilt must come the first."

"Oh, the courts will be equal to that."

"Oh, no, Bishy; as you know yourself, in these cases it's exactly the thing they're not equal to."

"And you propose to establish it yourself?"

"I believe it possible."

"But how, how?"

"Say, if you like, by one more psychoanalyst method that I mentioned to you on our ride up-town a week ago—trance and medium."

"Trance and medium?" Once more Bishop could only echo the phrase.

"In fact, I am going to McGloyne in the morning to ask if to-morrow night he will let me hold, in Mrs. Fisher's rooms, and if possible midway between the rooms where the two murders took place, something that you could only call a spiritualist séance."

CHAPTER XXII

A SÉANCE IN THE CASA GRANDE

"I TOLD you, Inspector, that you'd say again that I'd lost my senses."

"But, hell, Doctor, hell! And what do you expect to get out of it?"

Laneham had found McGloyne in Mrs. Fisher's library, where Hooley had been killed. They were standing almost on the spot itself.

"Perhaps we may hear the voice again, or be able to produce some further knocking."

"Voice an' knockin'! Dr. Laneham, you've got a long way beyond that. Now tell me your idear. What is any séance goin' to do? Come, now—speakin' man to man?"

And, "speaking man to man," Laneham told him:

"I hope it may do this: give us Mrs. Fisher's murderer. In fact, I hope it may even make our murderer convict himself."

"All right—go ahead. I give you my blessing. An' who do you want to have there? Glasbury, first of all?"

"If he's physically up to it by to-night."

"An' if he's not? You'll postpone it?"

"Yes, for a day or two."

"Good. You'll be wantin' those elevator-boys, too?"

"Both of them. Will you see to that?"

"They'll be there!"

"And I'd like to have Grogan—your patrolman who was with poor Hooley when they got him. Then, of course, there will be yourself and Willings and Judge Bishop and myself."

"What about Fisher? Oh," McGloyne hastened to explain, "I don't *want* him. He's got to be too much for me. No more mercy in him than the death-house itself. I've been fightin' him off of Glasbury ever since he heard of *him*. You can leave him out for all of me. But, o' course, when you're goin' to hold it in his own apartments——"

"Yes, of course, we must have him. I'd have asked him myself."

But the Doctor offered no further explanations to any one. If what he proposed to do now was unusual beyond anything that had gone before it, it was evident that his reasons and his justification were to be offered with the end alone. He asked Willings to help him make his preparations. But he did not tell him what, this time, those preparations were to be. Later that afternoon Bishop sought him out in those Fisher rooms themselves. But Laneham had as little to say to him.

For the matter of that, after the first minutes, the Judge, like McGloyne, confined his remarks almost wholly to the question of Professor Fisher.

"I've nothing more to ask as to just *what* you're fixing up here," he said. "Maybe you *will* get something out of it——"

"I trust so."

"But I think you've made a mistake in letting the Professor even hear of it. For he's coming, all right—don't worry about that. Not that he can get it clear what you're up to, any more than the rest of us. But he's been told that Glasbury hasn't really confessed as yet.

He figures, no doubt, that your séance is to do that part of it. And he insists that Glasbury shall be present no matter what his condition, and the thing go on to-night. In fact, the man's eyes gloat at the thought of it. I—I—damn it, Laney, making every allowance, I could hardly keep my hands from him!"

"Well," said Laneham, after a minute of silence, "if Glasbury can go through it at all, I think we'd better make it to-night."

"If he can! Why the man's condition is pitiable enough as it is. And, as a physician, you know the strain a séance can put on the nerves of even the normal healthy man."

"I know."

"Well, if he suffers a second collapse, I'll merely say that I'll never allow anything he may say or do to be used against him in the courts!"

"That's as you say, Bisby," the Doctor persisted. "But if he *can* go through it to-night——"

And he turned back to the west window, where Willings was awaiting his preliminary orders.

He had decided in the end to use the morning-room, the room between Mrs. Fisher's bedroom and the library. But in practically every room he was doing something.

First of all, he had brought in half a dozen full-length mirrors.

"We'll hold the séance in this room," he said. "But we must be able to command the whole apartment. And we can do it in this way—by leaving all the doors open, and putting these mirrors where they ought to be. You'll have noticed that in the door leading to the pool there's one already."

At the same time he was making every window absolutely dark. "It's necessary," he explained, while he himself began to hang the first lengths of some heavy black "mourning cloth." "And I believe the medium will also wish to control all inside lights."

So far this was his first real mention of the medium.

"Where are you getting her?" Willings ventured to ask.

"Through Petersen and the Psychological So-

ciety," he answered laconically. "She's done a good deal of work for them."

But no one except Laneham really saw that medium until the night, when they were taking their places for the séance itself.

And at first they did not see her then. For that middle room, like the whole apartment, was in almost absolute darkness, and the medium was still in her cabinet. The Doctor had made that for her by simply cutting off one corner of the room with another curtain of black. In front of the cabinet they could make out the lines of a table, and of the chairs which awaited them about it. The Doctor was still going and coming between the table and the open door.

Willings and the Judge arrived first, with Glasbury. And Bishop began at once to make a last protest.

"Laneham," he whispered, "once more you see the shape the man is in. And if he were a thousand times guilty——"

"I know," the Doctor said, "I know. But the thing must go on now."

Fisher came next. He chose a chair directly opposite Glashury's, and his gaze seemed to feed and hatten upon him.

Then Patrolman Grogan, very white, was brought in. And after him, in McGloyne's keeping, were the two West Indian elevator-men.

For another moment Laneham waited. Then he closed the door, found his way to his own chair,—the one nearest the cabinet,—and the last light went out. There was a sort of rustle of the sable curtain. One could feel, rather than see, that the medium had come forth. And next moment she was lighting some kind of dim and tiny lamp.

It merely made the darkness visible. It did not even let them see her face. Apparently she was wholly covered by a kind of grey-white cowl, pierced at the eyes. But even of that Willings could not be certain. He only knew that she was motioning them to place their hands upon the table. Then, when they had done it, as if with the mere passing of her own hand that little light began gradually to die down. It died and died, so slowly that they

did not really know when it was wholly gone. And, while the darkness seemed tangibly to creep upon them, all sat silent, rigid and unmoving.

For a minute they sat so—for two, for three; ten minutes, indeed, it might have been. And then——

Slowly at first, then more quickly, the table itself was moving.

It was not rising from the floor, as tables are supposed to do at séances. It was not "turning," or moving from side to side. It was as if its surface had become charged and wavelike, as if it were rising and pushing itself against their palms in waves of living power. Willings knew, from the little out-breathed gasps of those about him, that the others felt it also. And he looked again at the medium. In one sense, he could not see her. In another he could see her with a distinctness more than earthly. For the outline of her head and shoulders seemed pricked out in a species of wavering, shifting phosphorescence. And, at the same moment, from the direction of the library and the little writing-

room, he heard a sound, a sound of knocking.

It was the knocking that had followed the murder. And, even as then, it seemed to stop his heart. He knew, too, that the same shudder was going through the circle from end to end.

He looked back at the medium. That phosphorescence was gone. Save for a moving greyness, one could no longer have said that the woman was even there.

And then the next thing followed. The Doctor, after placing his mirrors, had closed all the doors and locked them. But now—there could be no doubt of it—slowly, without the help apparently either of hand or key, one of those doors was opening.

From the nearest mulatto elevator-man came a long, shuddering whine of terror.

“Oh, h’avens above, boss,” he said, “h’avens above! My Lawd, let me out!”

“If you go out now,” breathed Laneham, “you go alone.”

At the same moment the knocking had come again. And the fellow dropped back into his

chair in a new reaction of fear. "Boss," he began, "I—I—I——"

"Gawd!"

It was Grogan who spoke then.

For something was moving and swelling out the curtain of the cabinet. It was more like an emanation than an actual presenc. The medium was still there. But next moment they all felt that the door from the library was opening. And Willings, his skin lifting like fur, knew that some one, or something, was passing through the room.

The thing, whatever it was, was passing through to the doors that led to the bedroom and dressing-room and swimming-pool. But at the first door it stopped. It knocked again—with the very hand of death—and, "Oh, God! Oh, my God ay God!" it cried.

They were Glasbury's words, and it was Glasbury's voice. And yet, beside him, Willings could feel the man himself. He put out his hands and touched him—a touch that came back to him in an answering shudder.

But the medium now was speaking:

"Whom do you seek?"

"Him who knows," the answer came.

"And how will you know him?" she asked again.

"By what he will know—the signs of death and the things of death."

For a moment there was silence again, silence almost more unnerving than the horrid sing-song of the dialogue itself. Then:

"And what are the things of death?" the medium asked.

Again one of the elevator-men tried to get to his feet.

"Sit down," whispered the Doctor, "or it will be the worse for you."

"What are the things of death?" the cowed figure asked again.

The tiny lamp was apparently alight again, and moved by the medium's hand it threw a disk of light upon the table.

Again the answer came:

"The first is this."

Willings put out his hand as if to guard himself. But there was no need. What was falling from nowhere upon the centre of that table was nothing that could harm. At first—

in that half darkness—it seemed a liquid. Then, as it piled itself up, they could see that it was merely common salt!

Yet, at that same moment, there was a sound as of some one getting jerkily up from his place, and then forcing himself back to his seat again.

“And the second is this.”

Again from nowhere there dropped into that disk of light a tiny wire. It was not gold. It did not seem to be silver. In a curling, springing spiral it danced before them elfishly, then was gone.

“And the third is this.”

Once more the table was clear. Then, where the salt had been, there appeared first a green-covered magazine, and then—in its place—a little pile of grey-brown, fluttering ashes.

Again some one had tried to rise, with the gasp of one who tries to breathe through a throat dried gaggingly.

But, at the moment, no one gave heed. For—all could hear it plainly—the door began to open to those rooms behind them, to the bedroom and the dressing-room. There remained

only the door to the swimming-pool itself. And then, from the *other* side of that door came a third sound of knocking.

"Hell!" choked McGloyne. "Hell!"

"She must come out!" The thing in that middle room was speaking again. "She must come out." For a moment the voice waited, then it spoke again. "The woman who is dead is seeking some one. He, and only he, must open to her."

Again, too, came the knocking. Yet still no one stirred.

"Then," continued the voice, "then *I* must open to her!"

But that séance, if séance it could be called, got no further.

"Let me go! Let me go!"

The cry was bursting from some one in endless shrieks. Chairs were falling, too, one over another. A whole group of figures, indeed, seemed to reach the door together. And a moment later pursuers were mingling with pursued. Willings saw only that one figure had disappeared into the central stairway—the stairway up which the Doctor had all but

gone to his death two nights before. And, like Laneham, that figure burst through the fire-door that led to the elevator landing on the floor above.

The hole where the wire-glass had been broken out was still there. And therefore it was still possible to reach in through it and open the elevator door. It was what the Doctor had done. It was what that figure was doing. But, having done it, with one more shriek, ending only in eternity, it was plunging to the bottom of the shaft!

CHAPTER XXIII

GLASBURY'S STORY

"ALL I desire is to tell you everything. I feel equal to it now. And it's the least that I can do."

It was Glasbury who was speaking. And they heard once more the voice that cried out in Mrs. Fisher's rooms after the murder. The scene was Dr. Lancham's library. And Glasbury was half sitting, half lying on the big brown leather couch. On a little table beside him was a worn seal-leather portfolio. About him were the Doctor, Judge Bishop, D. Hope and Willings, Jimmy and Inspector McGloyne. In the room below, too, a certain yegg in handcuffs was waiting to be brought up to tell his part of the story when the time should come.

In the meantime the young playwright, his brow grey and damp as with the greyness of a mortal illness, had made his beginning.

"My only comfort is my knowing that I am in no way responsible for the death of Mrs. Fisher. How heavily that of Hooley must rest on me you will judge when I have finished. I have been such a moral coward as I did not believe existed in this world. I know, and Dr. Laneham knows, that a little more and my mind would have gone. Yet so far from having any knowledge of Mrs. Fisher's murder, my own relationship to her was solely that of a man who tried to help her, and who, for weeks, had been working by her side."

"Workin' by her side?" repeated McGloyne.

"Yes, we had been writing a play together."

"Oh," cried D. Hope, "was that it?"

"Yes, that was it. I remember you, Miss Hope. You came upon us one evening in a Casa Grande corridor. And, following her first impulse, Mrs. Fisher hurried back to beg you, I think, to say nothing about it till you, and every one, would understand."

"She did. She did! I didn't know then who you were, and she didn't tell me. She only said--and her eyes were shining so--that I would understand some time--'when she was

famous.' I promised, and that was what I kept from Dr. Laneham."

"We were writing a play together," Glasbury went on. "I met her first nearly a year ago at an Arts and Letters dinner. And I could see at once that she was an unhappy woman. She had just begun to find herself. And she had been trying to find happiness in the usual things, old furniture, rare jewelry—the famous pearls, for example, that we've heard so much about—and your Settlement-House work. From *that* I knew she was getting a lot. But she had never found any real expression for herself. And almost the first thing she asked me was whether I thought she could ever write anything. Above all, she said, she had always longed to try to write a play.

"I made all the usual evasions, too, till I learned first that she was in earnest; and then, by degrees, that she was the sort of woman who would do what she set out to do. She had thought of a play, she said, because there were so many things that she had always wanted to say; and she felt somehow that she could

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"I met her first nearly a year ago at an Arts and Let-
ters dinner"



say them in a play. And in the end it came to her asking me, or half asking me if I would help her.

"The best tribute I can pay her is to tell you that I found myself only too glad to. But even by then I had begun to see how big she was. Dr. Lancham, Mrs. Fisher was in many ways a very unusual woman. There was something Elizabethan about her—or, if you like, *really* of this century. And she had something to say; that, too, I began to feel. She had none of the technique, but she had the heart and brain. And very soon I was proposing that we work out something together from the beginning.

"It was not till then, I think, that she fully realised what one of her real difficulties was going to be. Judge Bishop, you knew her private affairs. And from the first you've known Fisher. Well, I am going to say now the thing that he must answer later. If Mrs. Fisher did not act openly, and normally, with a man like that, it was simply impossible that she should.

"I suggested, naturally, that she should come to my office to work. But I soon found that

that was out of the question. Then I went twice to her apartment; and on the second occasion her rotter of a husband insulted us there. I took it for granted, myself, that that ended everything. But the very pride in her anger apparently made her determined that, come what might, it should *not* be ended so; what we had planned should be done in some way. And the way was found.

“We had already discovered that our apartments adjoined—at those little writing-rooms, with only a thin, soft-tile partition between. And I believe it was the presence of your Electric Protection workman ‘Throaty,’ putting in her wall safe, that did the rest. It came just when I was leaving for a week in Chicago, to put on ‘The Butterfly.’ And I know only this. She suddenly asked me one day, just before I went—and I can see her face burn yet, though with a fine, defiant bravery,—she asked me if, in case it could be managed, I would wish to dare it. I didn’t believe myself it could be done. If I had believed it, I think I’d have prevented it, if only for her own protection. But it was merely those little writing-rooms that

adjoined; they could be cut off on both sides from all the other rooms. 'Throaty' knew how it could be managed quite easily. And when I came back the door was there."

"Door?" McGloyne almost shouted it.

"Yes, a door," the Doctor answered him. "For there is a door there, though it isn't visible from the Fisher side. But Glasbury, for the present I'll ask you to leave those details. The door was there,—and is there. And in one of those little writing-rooms you went to work at your play again?"

"We did. And generally we worked in Mrs. Fisher's. When she had closed the door of her library, too—which next adjoined it, we worked in a room that was practically sound-proof."

"But it wasn't! It wasn't!" It was Jimmy who this time had broken in. "I 'eard you! An' so did Maddalina. Doctor, *that* was the voice I 'eard. Mr. Glasbury, you know, yours is a very unusual voice. We 'eard it, though we never 'eard Mrs. Fisher's. And when never did h'any gentleman come out of those rooms, as none had h'ever gone *in*, there were times when it fair made my 'air raise!"

"Yes," said the Doctor, "and the fact, Glasbury, that your voice, and that of old Throaty, and that of one of our jewel thieves as well were all much alike has given us some of our most baffling hours in the entire mystery."

"Well," said Glasbury, "at any rate Fisher never heard mine. She had to protect herself from him, and she did it. He was practically always out in the afternoons between four and six, and it was in those hours that we worked. It was difficult at first, and, I confess, rather a shamefaced business. But that passed off in time as we got into the thing, and the play began to build itself up again. . . . It did, too, and very rapidly. I don't think any one could ever have learned faster than Mrs. Fisher. At all times her ideas came faster than I could put them down. I used the pen, and sometimes she could dictate me a whole long speech at once."

"But you both came with memoranda?" asked Laneham.

"Why, yes. Yes, we did. But how did you know that?"

"Because I have one of them. But go on."

Glasbury took a sip of water.

"Every day when we had finished we used to put everything we'd written into that,"— he pointed to the seal portfolio beside him,— "and *it* we'd lock in her desk. But I can leave that till later, too. I may as well speak at once of the day of the murder.

"I think, now, that I had a feeling of evil, that afternoon, of something impending, from the first. That may have been because, for the first time, she was not there waiting for me. I was late myself, and everything was already growing dark. Yet the portfolio lay on her open desk. And when I had waited for half an hour, and she had not come, I seemed to know, if only from the silence, that there was something wrong. I resolved to learn what the matter was for myself.

"I entered the library first. There was no one there. I did not know the arrangements of the rooms; I had never before been beyond the little writing-room. I had a very natural diffidence. And even at the chance of having to explain myself, as I went from room to room I knocked."

“Yes,” exclaimed Jimmy. “Yes; that was the first time! An’ I ’eard that.”

“I went on, knocking, from room to room, till I came to the pool. And, gentlemen, by the time I had reached it,—you will not believe me, but already I was asking myself, ‘What if I should find her dead!’” His lips opened and closed. He sipped from the glass again and went on.

“But I did not find her as she was afterwards found.”

“No,” cried Jimmy, “she was in ’er bathrobe, she’d just stepped into the pool, an’ she’d fallen back again over the brim. I’d been in there just before you, sir. And, oh, sir, was it you that rang, an’ that moved ’er body?”

“It was. Dr. Laneham, I have roughed it enough to know death without any test of heart beat or watch crystal. And when first I ran to raise her I knew she had been dead for probably half an hour.”

“Yes,” said the Doctor, “and when she fell she struck the side of her head against one of the faucets. It was that which caused the

rounded hole in her temple. There's a fleck of blood upon the faucet yet."

"It was *that* that killed her?"

"Oh, not at all!"

"But in Heaven's name!" cried Bishop, "then where does your murder come in?"

"It comes in, be sure of that. She was murdered, and most deliberately murdered. But let Glasbury continue."

"I took it for granted," he went on, "that she had been murdered. I lifted and carried her to a rattan sun-couch in the bay window. And there, though I knew how useless it was, I went through the forms of trying to revive her. It was then, too, in the midst of the horror, I first came to realise what my own position would be if I were found there—and the connection were discovered between our rooms. Believe me, too, oh, believe me, I wasn't thinking only of myself. I was thinking of her. I told myself it was necessary to protect her in death as I would have protected her in life.

"And how could I do it save by getting away at once, and leaving no possible trace behind. It was easy to do, too. Everything we had

written was in the portfolio. I had only to pick it up as I ran through. And a moment later I was back in my own room, with the door between fast closed again. I found that I was still carrying one of her handkerchiefs, a mere sop of blood. As I'll tell you, I returned it later. In the meantime, I had begun to play the coward. I knew that I ought to telephone for a physician. Yet I did not dare telephone from my own rooms. But as soon as I could get back any kind of command over myself, I hurried out and around the corner to Stryker's. I told myself that when I had done that, I had done all that could be asked of me! Well, once back in my rooms again, I soon found what was really to be asked of me! For by the one hellish chance in a million those two—two devils who did the rest were waiting for me then and there!"

"I've got one of them downstairs," said Inspector McGloyne. "An' he's talkin' a-plenty *now*, at that. But let's hear your part of it the first."

"There's part of it that I can only guess at. I'll never know how the pair learned about the

door. I suppose they learned of the wall safe and the pearls through Maddalina. One of them was an Italian, you know. And he was the beast who seemed to be the professional. I mean the professional safe-breaker. But the minute I stepped inside my door both of them jumped me—I don't even know yet how they got a key to my rooms—and they weren't long in letting me know what they were after. From the first they kept their guns at my head, and they simply shoved me through to my writing-room, and then demanded the key to the door between. I've wished often enough since that I'd let them kill me then. But even that mightn't have helped much. The mischief had been done. They knew the way. And while the American stayed and covered me, the other went on through.

“And here, again, I can tell only the part of it. The devil that went in must have gone straight to the wall safe. And then something must have disturbed him.”

“You, Willings, most likely,” said the Judge.

“No, you and the Doctor, probably,” Will-

ings answered. "You remember I was leaving just when Mr. Glasbury's knocking came—or his first knocking. You *did* knock a second time, Glasbury?"

"Oh, yes, yes. And I'll tell you about that soon enough. I say something must have disturbed the beast, for he came back to my rooms for a minute to listen there. And then when he thought the coast was clear, he went in again. Only then, too, did he go right through to the swimming-pool, and find the body. I could see the effect it had on him when he came back to us. But he told his fellow that he had anyway taken time to lock all the doors to the corridor. By then, I take it, you were out there trying to get in."

They had been. And would they ever forget it?

"We heard him turning the bolts," said the Judge. "He was just ahead of me at every door! As I touched each knob, the lock inside was turned. And the thing seemed absolutely supernatural! But you—you say it was you who, immediately afterwards, knocked again. Why did you do that?"

"Doctor," asked Glasbury, "do you think you could get me a little brandy?"

The Doctor brought him a flask and glass.

And only when he had drunk did he answer.

"I doubt if I could really tell you, intelligibly. . . scarcely understand that part of it myself. I only know that when that Italian hound came back, I could see in a moment that he believed that I had done the murder. And they both exulted in it! From that first moment I know they felt they had me in their power completely. For the matter of that, there on my very desk was that bloody handkerchief. The Italian picked it up and daubed it on my face! '*Ecco! Ecco!*' he kept crying. And they told me they'd be back to talk more about it later on. . . . Doctor, shall I go on with that part of it now, or tell things in their proper order?"

"In the order of time. I'd like to get everything from the beginning."

And Glasbury went on again.

"I think, for the minutes immediately after they had left me, I was, temporarily, iusane. I know I had some crazy idea of making

amends to Mrs. Fisher, of making my peace, or something like that. I wanted to be found standing by the body. I felt already that I was the murderer I would be taken for. Indeed, I was ready to believe that it was through my rooms that the murderer had got in. I wanted to approach her again to beg forgiveness. And yet I found myself halting at every door, and knocking on them as if to ask permission. I believe I cried out, too, on the Creator who alone could know."

"Yes," said the Judge. "We heard you. It was that that set us to making every effort to break in."

"And it was the sound of you there, trying to break in, that drove me out again. When the test came, I could not wait and face it. I slunk back like a dog to my own room, once more made the door fast, and that night, for the first time, I slept in the St. Hilaire.

"It did me little good. The newspapers said that the wall-safe had not been located. Accordingly those two fiends believed that they had only to come back again to make their haul. And I believe they actually came back twice."

"They did, by gad," swore McGloyne. "They did. And we'll hear it again from the lad below. But, Mr. Glasbury, you came back again yourself?"

"Yes," he said simply, "though I could hardly say so of my own knowledge. Remembering it now is like a remembered dream, or nightmare. But one thing I remember almost clearly. It was after Mrs. Fisher's funeral. I could not attend it. But afterwards I went to the grave. I took a rose and a bit of palm from it. I had been trying to nerve myself to put back the bloody handkerchief. And when I did, that night, as a sort of offering to Mrs. Fisher, I laid that rose and bit of palm beside it. You will feel that those are not the actions of a sane man? Well, I do not pretend that I was sane. . . . But I must tell you now of the portfolio."

"The portfolio?" asked McGloyne.

He pointed to it again. "The thing we kept our play in. The portfolio was mine, so no suspicion could attach to *its* being in my possession. But I felt that I must get rid of the play. It was every line of it in my writing. What mem-

oranda she brought to it, day by day, she destroyed afterwards. But none the less it seemed to me that every line of that play spoke with her mouth, and denounced me. And late one night I went to my offices in the Savoy, and tore it up. I could not burn it. There was no way; but I tore it into pieces so small that I knew there would never be any betrayal there."

"And there was not," said Laneham. "But next morning your waste-basket was in my rooms. And a few hours later we had the fragments of that blood-smeared blackmail note."

"I know. I know. But there is more to tell of that portfolio. When I opened it I found in it more than the manuscript of a play. Gentlemen, I swear to you that that day Mrs. Fisher must have been in the *fear* of death——"

"Leave that, leave that," said Laneham. "That, too, we may come back to, in its own time. Simply tell us what you found."

"I found a will. She had written it herself, that morning, and had had it witnessed by the servants."

"Yes, sir," cried Jimmy, "we witnessed it — me an' that she-devil, Maddalina!"

Glasbury put his hand into his wallet pocket. "I have it here."

"Exactly," said the Doctor. "Bishop, shall we look at it now, or leave it till later, with the rest?"

But the Judge was already looking at it. And next moment he was turning strangely to Willings and D. Hope. "Tell me," he asked, after a pause, "have you two youngsters any idea of what there is in this?"

"Why, no, no, indeed," the girl answered. "And what do you mean——? But if it's anything for the Settlement House——?"

"There's a great deal for the Settlement House—an endowment that should carry it for all time to come." He was still reading. "And, so far as I can make out, though it quashes everything before it, she's made it perfectly sound and legal. . . . Ah-h——!" and again his eyes turned wonderingly to the two "youngsters"—"Ah!—I think you had better read this together."

"But *why?*" asked Willings. "We are cou-

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cerned only so far as it concerns the Settlement."

"You may believe so. But if you will begin to read here—— Or, no, take it with you into the study for a moment, and look at it alone."

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CHAPTER XXIV

THE WILL, AND THE STORY OF ONE OF THE JEWEL THIEVES

THERE was only a single page. Bishop handed it to them, saw them down the little passage to the study, and closed the door upon them.

"You read it," said Willings. "You knew her best."

"No, you."

And then, after a moment, they did as the Judge had told them, and read it together.

Mrs. Fisher had made them, with the Settlement directress, joint executors and controllers of her endowment. And to each of them, for so long as they remained in social work, she had given a yearly executor's fee of \$2,500.

There was no reason now why two people should not marry—and at once.

But at first neither could speak.

"Oh!" cried D. Hope, at last, "if we had

only known in time—so that *she* could know how much we—we——”

“I suppose,” said Willings, “that was one of the things she was going to tell me that afternoon.”

“Very likely. And do you think she knew about—about *us?*”

“Why,” he asked, “how could she know?”

“She might have known in this way, dear. I—I often spoke of you. And there are some things that another woman always seems to guess at once.” She drew his arm about her. “Shall we go back to the others?”

“You don’t *want* to, do you?”

“Want to? If we could just blot out all that hideous part of it, forever! Or if we could even let her know the happiness she’s giving!”

“Maybe she will.”

“She will! She will! We must make her feel it!”

She dropped down into the little leather inglenook, and Willings found his place beside her.

“We needn’t go back, need we?”

"If they need us, they will send for us. Until they do——"

And from this point Dr. Laneham's two special deputies enter the tale no more.

Meanwhile, in the library, McGloyne was asking why that will had been made at all.

"That's the question to be settled now!" he said.

"It is," said Glasbury, "it is! And though I had only intended to go into it later with Judge Bishop, I'll say now that it wasn't by chance she made that will. I realise more and more, from things she said, even to me——"

"You're quite right," said the Judge. "Laneham, do I tell them here? God knows——"

"Better not. It'll come out soon enough. Glasbury, if you'll finish your story now, we'll hear the man below."

And Glasbury finished.

"There's little more to tell. For the killing of Hooley I take as much blame as if I myself had done it. There is only this to say: Those two devils themselves had not really intended

murder. Till that last night they believed the pearls were still there—that they alone knew where they were, and that even then three minutes at the little safe might turn the trick. It was the Italian who killed Hooley. And then, when the game was up—when they couldn't get the pearls—it was he, I think, who had the idea of making me pay instead. And had I been anything but the most miserable of cowards at the beginning——!”

“We can gain little from vain regrets,” said Laneham. “Say no more. Say no more. McGloyne, shall we have up Horsley?”

“Right away.”

The big inspector called down from the landing. And a moment later Horsley, the jewel-thief who had been ready to tell his story, was, with two patrolmen, on the stairs.

They were on the stairs, and they reached the landing. But at the topmost stair he suddenly wheeled. In some way he managed to get one of his hands free. He was a big and powerful man. His bandaged shoulder seemed to trouble him but little. And with one backward thrust he sent the patrolman on his right

headlong down. He swung the chain and manacle like a sling and brought it home across the face of the second policeman. And then with a terrific lunge he dove straight for the landing window.

The fact that he had to do everything with one hand lost him perhaps two seconds, and it was Jimmy who stopped him. He caught him by his foot as he went through, and was dragged after him. But he still held on. They went out and down together, in the deep snow of Laneham's garden. And there, battered but unspeaking, Jimmy got a better grip. He was still holding on when McGloyne and the others reached them, and carried the man in again.

"'S all right, frien's, 's all right!" he said, quite philosophically. "That's *all* I was savin' up. An' if it ain't come off, no harm done—any more than I've been hurted myself. Now, if you want, I'll talk till fare-you-well!"

Laneham looked him over professionally. "I should say," he said, "that there's not a whole lot you can tell us."

"But, by-y gee," swore McGloyne, "he's goin' to tell us that!"

“In the first place,” said the Doctor, “to go back to the beginning with *you*, what part did Maddalina play in it?”

“A good fat part, considerin’ she was a skirt an’ all. She went an’ hired to Mrs. Fisher only because we’d heard about them drops o’ milk. Her and Lotufo—that’s my guinea friend—they always been strong pals. An’ she was put in to make the inside lay. One thing she learned pretty soon, too, was that there was a chanst for a double lift. She got onto it that, every three months, Mrs. Fisher was in the habit of havin’ one of them big blue envelopes full of yella-backs waitin’ on the premises for your friend Willin’s. An’ when *we* were fixin’ for the pearls there didn’t seem to be no good reason why we shouldn’t have Maddalina make *her* get-away with the money. Only a matter of *timin’* the job right.”

“Yes,” said McGloyne, “you timed it right. But how did you know you could get in through Glasbury’s rooms?”

“Maddalina again. If she was keen enough to find where that little safe was planted, you can bet yours she wasn’t believin’ long in any

spooks causin' them *voices*. An' one afternoon Lotufo decided to lay up in Glasbury's dump an' learn for himself. He learned all right. How did he get in first? With a key. An' where did he get it? Sho, what's a key? Any one can fix up for a key! The thing I'm tellin' you is that he found out about that door. An' after that it was only an argyment as to *when*. That was for Maddalina to tip us to.

"An' she tipped us wrong. She'd got the idea that Mrs. Fisher was goin' to be out that afternoon. She'd heard her 'phonin' to Mr. Willin's; an' as Maddalina got it, the money was to be there for him, but she, Mrs. Fisher, would have to be away. An' as it was Jimmy the butler's day off on top of it, what more would any two ginks want for an open door?

"Howsomever, Maddalina was all wrong. An' she went wrong in somethin' else, too. That day around noon she made a play that give Mrs. Fisher at least the cold beginnin' of a hunch; an' there was a plenty row in Maddalina's room. Only Mrs. Fisher didn't suspect enough—an' *act*.

"All right. Come on to *our* part in it. But,

mind you, an' I'm tellin' you straight, I wasn't in that part of it no more'n to be adviser. Lotufo, he was the only one was ever in them Fisher rooms. It was him went in that day. We'd found signs that Glasbury was at home,—an' we'd gone in, as it happened, just about two minutes after Glasbury'd gone out again."

"Yes," said Glasbury,—“after I'd found the body and gone out to telephone!”

“You know about that, friend. An' maybe this part of it has all been told before. What we didn't know was that frien' Glasbury here was going to choose the same day, an' that for croakin' the dame!”

Every one started, save Laneham. “I see,” he said quietly. “You still believe that Mr. Glasbury did it?”

In his turn the man gaped at them. “An' who else? Say, where you gettin' to now?”

“Never mind about that. Go ahead and tell the rest.”

“Well, once we'd got that, and once we'd learned from the papers next day, too, that the jewel box was still a-waitin',—*fine! fine!* We made up our minds to come again, an' keep a-

comin'. No reason why frien' Glasbury shouldn't have callers every second night. We was both swell dressers, too. So no need for him to be ashamed of us.

"Only, when it got out that it was a spook job, we decided that *we'd* have to spook it, too. That explains why Lotufo ghosted himself the night he went in an' had to put it over Sergeant Hooley. An' no use denyin' he did. When he's had time to think it out, he won't deny it himself. An' what, you'll ask, did he belt him with? Why, there again, we thought we'd play Mr. Glasbury into it. Since he'd hit Mrs. Fisher with somethin' leavin' a round smooth hole about an inch across, that was the weapon to use in case another job'd have to be done in there. An' to make the weapon, all was needed was to do a little bendin' an' hot-forgin' on a pipe end. There you are again. You'll find that little golf stick up in the dump we have in East a Hundred an' Twenty-ninth street. Anything else you want to know about? If there is, now's the day, while the tellin's good."

Laneham looked at the fellow and turned

away. "You can send him down again," he told McGloyne.

And the Judge asked the next question—speaking to the Doctor himself.

"And now, Laneham, about the secret of that damnable and murderous door?"

"If you'll wait ten minutes," the Doctor answered, "I'll take you up to the Casa Reale and let you see it for yourself."

"Good enough!" said McGloyne. And then he, too, had a question to ask: "But, Doctor, there's this. As *I* understood it, at the start, you were goin' to have this story told in its right an' regular order. If so, how was it you've left out the first thing of all, the enterin' in of the man who went into that swimmin'-pool room, an', as we know now, really did the job?"

"I'm having the story told in its regular order," Laneham replied. "Mrs. Fisher's murderer was never near her body, nor even near the pool, until hours after she was dead."

CHAPTER XXV

THE DOCTOR'S STORY

"In the name o' Gawd!" said McGloyne.

"Laneham!" exclaimed the Judge. "Then you mean that he had another do it for him?"

"No, nothing of the sort."

But only when he had repeated that could they believe that he was speaking literally.

"Well," said McGloyne, impatiently, "well, go ahead an' tell us."

And the Doctor began his explanation.

"There were, broadly, three questions to be answered: 'Who killed Mrs. Fisher, how he did it, and how access was obtained to the apartment.'

"For most of you the first question is already answered. If under the influence of a séance that I may now tell you was largely hocus-pocus—if after a performance which to every one else was almost meaningless, a man

rushes forth and seeks only the nearest opportunity to commit suicide, that alone would appear to be evidence enough. I believe it's even an old legal maxim that suicide is confession. I knew when I arranged that séance it was Fisher who was our murderer. I had every suspicion of it the night of the murder. And every day since then has simply furnished me new confirmations.

“In every crime the psychoanalyst looks first for the man morally capable of committing it. And Fisher was morally capable of it. I felt sure of that. But against that, his character, there seemed to be something that absolutely guaranteed his innocence, the fact, I repeat, that he was not in the apartment either for hours before or for hours after a murder which seemed to have been one of brutal violence. Nor was he the sort of man who would ever run the risks of hiring an accomplice.” He turned to Bishop.

“Judge, *you* will remember that when I took up the case, the first thing I set myself to look for was what we call ‘evidence in the destruction of evidence.’ The criminal will half the

time betray himself, if you look closely enough, by his very determination to be sure he has left no trace behind. He destroys evidence which to no one else could possibly be evidence. And the first thing our Professor Fisher did after he came home that night and found that his wife had been most foully murdered, was to slip away to his own rooms, and burn a magazine.

“We have another saying about crime psychology. It is this: If you are looking for clues, look for the unusual. Well, *there* was something which I think was a bit unusual. When I found the ashes of that magazine—and was still able to decipher the one word in large letters on the back of it—‘mund’—its ashes were still warm. It was a virtual certainty that no one else but Fisher could have burned it. But if I had needed further confirmation there, I was given it next day when I found that even the ashes themselves were gone. I pretended in his hearing that I believed the Casa Grande house men had removed them. But I may tell you now, Inspector, that I knew you well enough to be sure

there wasn't any chance of your allowing that. I made up my mind that if I could get hold of another copy of that magazine, I would have at least a beginning of knowledge. Miss Hope was able to find another copy for me. And what it contained I'll tell you in due course. In the meantime many other things had taken place.

"For one thing, we had found Jimmy. From the first I believed him innocent, for reasons you've already heard. You've already heard, too, how I was able to learn where to look for him.

"Well and good. We found Jimmy. He told a straight story. At any rate, he didn't hold back any more than every other 'friend in the case' felt the same moral need of doing. Of that more in *its* place. And Jimmy clearly indicated the guilt of the maid Maddalina.

"But now, before going further, let us see what our problem really was.

"The mystery was seemingly inexplicable simply because it contained so many elements that appeared from their nature to be mutually contradictory.

“There was, first of all, murder, and murder apparently *without motive*. For if you will recall the order in which the incidents followed one another that day between half-past four and six, the second entry, and the attempt upon the wall safe did not take place for at least fifteen or twenty minutes after Mrs. Fisher's death!

“Second, there entered some one else. Was it man, or apparition, or some sort of demon-ridden soul? We did not know. We knew only that he had, apparently, been in the apartment *before* the would-be safe-breakers, that he was there *after* they were; and that he knocked crazily upon the doors and cried out upon his God. Could he, conceivably, have been employed to kill Mrs. Fisher? Not for a moment. Think only how Fisher's every look and motion when first he heard that voice and heard that knocking showed that it was something he understood as little as the rest of us. Again, was it the voice and the action of any conceivable jewel thief? And to add to that, it was equally plain that Fisher knew of no secret means of access to the apartment. In a word, every

new thing we discovered seemed to make everything else impossible. Yet if the known elements of the case did not hang together, how explain their *presence* together? In one way only, by pure chance and coincidence. We had a drama whose actors did not know one another—or had met only at the hour of the commission of their crime or crimes. Obviously, I could hope to get further into the mystery only by getting hold of one of the criminals themselves. And—again by a method and clue I've already told of—I was able to get hold of Maddalina.

“Good again. And, in half an hour a little opportune hypnosis was telling us much of what Maddalina had to tell. What was it?

“First, that it was Maddalina who had extracted the bank notes. Second, that Mrs. Fisher had suddenly become suspicious of her. Also, Maddalina's love-letter showed clearly that she had at least one accomplice: The inference was that she had been doing the ‘inside’ work. Finally, through Maddalina and Jimmy together, we learned that the very morning of the murder Mrs. Fisher made a will.

In her haste she had Jimmy and Maddalina witness it. And, since at the same time she sent a note to the Judge, here, asking him to call in the afternoon, it was reasonable to believe that she wanted to see him about the same thing. And so we reach our next step.

“For why this sudden—this ghastly sudden feeling on her part that she must make a will—or rather make haste if she was to make a new one? What did she fear? And why? The facts are these. As Judge Bishop can tell you, she made her former will when she married Fisher. She then believed herself in love with him. In that former will she made him practically her sole inheritor. As the Judge can also tell you, she had been intending to alter all that for some time.”

“She had,” said Bishop. “And that was the thing I was holding back. She hadn’t merely come to find life intolerable with the man; she had grown vaguely to fear him. I don’t mean that till the last day, perhaps, she could actually believe she was in danger from him. But she had at least taken a resolve that he should

not profit by her death—and I think she had let him know it. Oh, I know. I should have told all that. But it would simply have been to accuse the man, without a tittle of evidence, when he had been away the whole day of the crime, and when, obviously, he expected to find her alive when he came home that night. For he did, Laneham, he did!”

“No question of it,” said the Doctor. “And to tell you now, he did not expect her to meet her death until the morning!”

“Good Lord!” gasped Glasbury.

“Man,” said Bishop, “what are you going to tell us next?”

And, as before, even the big Inspector seemed to shudder and shrink in upon himself.

“But get on with it,” he said, “get on with it!”

“We have not finished with the will,” said Laneham. “What was it, that morning and a few hours before her death, that made her suddenly resolve to make that new will, and at once? That is something we can never know. But just as the man in the death cell can pick out among a dozen the keeper who is to kill him,

so, I'm satisfied, she read the thing in Fisher's eyes. So far as Jimmy knows, though they had quarrelled the day before, she had had no quarrel with him that morning. Fisher himself assured us that they had 'made things up' after their last. And accordingly he was bringing Potter home for dinner and the opera. Doubtless the devil had parted from her with the best expressions of affection he could summon. But can you arrange murder without betraying at least some vague, heart-chilling shadow of it to the victim you have marked? It is enough that after the murder Judge Bishop here twice *dreamed* that Fisher had killed her. It might be against all the evidence, he might believe he didn't believe it, but it came to him—as Freud points out such things do—through his very subconsciousness. And, when I put it to him, he had to own that he had."

"That is true," said Bishop. "It is perfectly true."

"And in some way, by some instinct," the Doctor continued, "Mrs. Fisher had half guessed. She had time to make the new will. But Fisher's arrangements were already made.

By then, as I'll show you in due course, his trap was set.

"First, come back to all I had to work upon, his actions after the crime.

"I say again he showed clearly that he knew nothing of our safe-breakers, or of any secret access to the rooms, or of the owner of that terrifying voice. At the same time he was making great demonstrations of affection for his murdered wife. Though it was well known to all their friends that for long enough there had not been even tolerance between them, he felt it necessary to act like a young man crazed by the loss of his well-beloved. He must needs prove it to Miss Hope and Willings by making a sort of maniac's attack on them. Yet within a few hours he was wholly himself again.

"Again at the first suspicion he was for having Willings railroaded to the chair. A little later it was Jimmy. And later our man was quite as ready, in due course, to give an exhibition of believing that Maddalina and Mr. Glasbury in their turn were guilty. No psychiatrist on earth was ever fooled by such flimsy pretences. But meanwhile, I had re-

solved to test him out in another way—by letting him feel, for a little while at any rate, that he was himself suspected.

“Till then, naturally, he didn't know of my giving any thought to those ashes. He had burned his magazine; the ashes he had gotten rid of also. He believed firmly that all had gone unnoticed. Well, as you'll remember, Inspector, as we were going down in the Casa Grande elevator on a certain occasion, I decided to speak of them.

“It nearly knocked him over. It was just after he had heard the voice. One who didn't know could easily attribute his collapse to that. And, of course, when he could get words to answer at all, he denied. He knew nothing of any ashes. He did not believe there had been any. But I had got what I wanted. He knew himself suspected. And then in order to make sure I hadn't overdone it—to give him the feeling that I merely suspected him among others, immediately afterwards, and in his hearing, I proceeded to bring suspicion, and unworthy suspicion, upon those two unfortunate West Indians of the Casa Grande elevator staff.

“They really got themselves into their trouble, and allowed of my making use of them by their own ill behaviour in the beginning. For while they cannot be accused of having even the remotest knowledge of Mrs. Fisher’s murder, both, at the start,—and with them all their fellows—united in a fine case of wholesale perjury.

“At the hour of the murder, or just after it, you’ll recall that Willings very suspiciously walked down the stairs instead of using the elevator, because, as he said, the elevators were not running. And they were not. Both young gentlemen supposed to be in charge of them were just then interested in something else. I early inferred that they must have been. And I set to work to learn what it was. Well, merely by consulting the police records, I found that substantially at that moment a pigeon thief was being chased and arrested on the roof opposite. There was only one place from which our friends could watch the excitement, the Casa Grande roof. And it was a safe guess that to remain unseen themselves when thus neglecting duty they would keep in cover of the scuttle.

"My guess was right. The shot went home. Only, instead of confessing at once to the lesser sin, they tried in their terror to stick it out. In their turn they became new stalking-horses. And Fisher might well have believed that he was suspected only in a secondary degree.

"Well, if he did, at least he took no chances. For it was he who tried to kill me by throwing me down the elevator shaft."

"He?—*Fisher?*" demanded McGloyne.

"No one else. But, for that matter, he gave you one kind of proof by rushing at once to the same death hole, for his suicide. It was he! He had gone back to the ninth floor, that day, you remember. And no doubt he saw me enter the stairway. It was dark enough for his purposes. I suppose he felt that my death would be attributed to the same demon-apparition to whom his wife's death was already being attributed. I take it he didn't know he would be given his chance by that open shaft. Probably he had some sort of weapon with him. At any rate, he it was; for, if anything else were needed, I recognised his step.

"But the story is already too long, and I

must go more rapidly. There is much detail that I must leave till later. It will be enough for the present to give you the main lines. And, first, from the beginning, I had resolutely rejected all explanations that admitted of the more than natural. I do not say that I was not myself affected by some of our experiences. I was. But, always, next morning and in the light of reason, I determined anew not to be influenced by them. There seemed to be no possible way by which any one could get into those rooms—or get out of them again—but we knew that not only had the so-thought apparition done so, but those jewel thieves as well. And there was little about them that was supernatural! Well and good. I worked accordingly. And, by pure chance, almost at once came Miss Hope's recognition of Glasbury.

“The next step suggested itself. If you want to learn about a man, his actions are one source of information, his correspondence is another. His correspondence in this case gave me, first, that blackmailing letter—and, incidentally, the gentlemen responsible for the attempt on the jewel safe and the death of Hooley. Second, it

gave me my first guess at the common interest by which Mrs. Fisher and Glasbury, here, had been drawn together."

He walked to his desk, and came back with a bit of paper half hidden in his hand.

"Glasbury, you told us that in your collaborating Mrs. Fisher let you do all the actual writing, but you both brought memoranda and suggestions to work over side by side. You believed that you destroyed them all, but I think not. Is not this one of them?" And Laneham produced that first "murder note."

"Yes, yes, it *is!*" The young playwright thrust it away from him. "But some other time, Doctor," he said faintly. "If you will—not—not just now. I wasn't expecting that."

"I know, and I want to ask you only this: Isn't this the explanation of the note—that there was some one in the play you felt must die? 'We have now reached the point,' you wrote, 'where it must be either murder or suicide.'"

"Yes."

"And Mrs. Fisher added: 'Couldn't it be made to look like an accident?'"

"Yes," shuddered Glasbury, "that is her writing. She felt I was making it too horrible."

"But the death's head?"

Glasbury again put it away from him. "Doctor, that was a *joke!* I had found it funny to be putting such a subject down for an afternoon's discussion, so I decided to add an illustration. We often laughed together over things like that."

"I see. And naturally, naturally. Well, I shan't trouble you again. Only this: From the moment I learned that you had destroyed that play, I suspected the explanation might be there."

And then Laneham turned back to the others.

"Two things still remain, the unknown door, and the actual method by which the murder was committed. To get to that we must go back to the scene of it. For the present, I think the Judge, the Inspector and I had better go alone. And we'll go first, Glasbury, to your rooms in the Casa Reale."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE END

A FEW minutes more and they were on their way. And, as they went, Laneham took up his story again.

"We are going to the Casa Reale. But from there we shall enter the Casa Grande through the door itself. And in that there is the explanation of everything not yet explained. We examined the walls often enough and carefully enough on the Fisher side; but we never examined them on the Glasbury side. From the construction of apartment houses, apartments, or sections of apartments, correspond. I suppose it was the arrangement of the halls or something which said that both those little rooms—both used as writing-rooms or studies, too,—should be almost counterparts of one another. And when the interior decorator decided that both should be panelled, he did the rest. We tested the panelling in the Fisher

room. Every oak strip was solid. Not a one had been tampered with. That any door, or the edges of any door, could be hidden behind them seemed impossible—till you remember that a door may open only in one direction. There is the same panelling in Glasbury's little study. We are now going to examine *it*.

“But, first, here, too, there is something else. If there were a door, would not its very thinness, as compared with the rest of the wall, betray it when sounded from the Fisher side? Doubtless, if it were of the materials of which ordinary doors are made. Gentlemen, I have as yet to see the thing myself. I have been proceeding by pure logic, if you like by mathematical certainty. But we are now here, and need talk no more.” And stepping into a Casa Reale elevator, they went on up.

It was McGloyne, indeed, who really made the demonstration. Walking straight through Glasbury's little suite, he went to the panelling of that little writing-room, and began to try it with his hand. The third strip opened as on a hinge. In truth, a second look showed

that it was hung on *three* tiny hidden hinges. And when the strip was turned back, it showed not merely the door edge but the lock and bolt. Two feet to the right another upright strip hid the pins of the door. And at the top and bottom the horizontal strips, likewise hinged, did the rest. The door was still unloeked. And, taking hold of a sort of countersunk latch, the big Inspector swung it open.

"Well, by the Livin's!" he said. "An' whose work is this?"

"Why, Glasbury told us that. It's the work of 'old Throaty,' the safe man."

"Right you are!"

"He'd been putting in hidden work all his life—and heavy door and metal work at that. What easier than to do a job like this? As you see, he simply cut the section out. With his tools he could go through such soft-tile stuff like old cheese. And when he had hinged it up and fixed his panelling as a cover, he simply used the said section as the door itself. That is why—considering the safe-like solidity of the bolt work—no amount of sounding told you anything. But we'll be coming back to this.

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In the meantime, we'll go on through to the Fisher side, and the swimming-pool, and learn the rest."

Once more, however, Laneham had an explanation to make on the way.

"In a sense, all our mystery has been the mystery it has been, simply and solely because of the joint and several facts the various witnesses—with the best intentions and against all warnings—kept to themselves. And the one thing of that kind still to tell is this: Two days before the murder Willings saw Fisher buy a length of fine platinum wire. It was in an electrical supply house; it was a perfectly legitimate thing to buy; there was no reason why Fisher shouldn't have bought it. Yet simply because he showed some uncalled-for agitation at being seen buying it, Willings must make up his mind to say nothing about it. There was evidence, as he believed, that made it certain Fisher could have had nothing to do with the crime. Therefore, why put in as evidence something that could only throw unjust suspicion on a man perfectly innocent?

"Well, in a sense, I wasn't circumstantially certain myself that Fisher was the murderer. And I arranged the séance. But if I had known of that platinum wire, I don't think I should have needed to look for that German magazine. But, again, come and see for yourselves. And—just before we enter—let me again point out that the dressing-room door contains a full-length mirror—which explains, I think, Policeman Grogan's belief that his spectre passed through the wall."

And he led them through to the swimming-pool.

"The platinum wire was attached here." He mounted the plant stand, and pointed to a discoloration just barely discernible on one of the thick, insulated wires that ran out to the big, central lighting bell. "Thence it was carried under the stand here, and along the floor to one of those metal fittings beside you—that nearest fancet, probably. And the fineness of the wire would make it practically certain it would never be noticed. Now, if you will try the water still in the pool you will find it salt. And that salt, also put there by Fisher, was

one more needed preparation. Once it was there—without going into any electrical technology—Mrs. Fisher had only to touch the water, with her hand upon one of those metal fittings, something she was morally certain to do when stepping either in or out, and her death was certain. In fact, it was the voltage shock which caused the swelling and discolouration about her throat. Then, as she fell, she struck the faucet with the side of her head, and received what seemed to be the real wound. The platinum wire? Oh, it naturally fused and left no trace—save the little pellet of metal which we found two days ago.”

“And the magazine?” asked Bishop. “Where does your magazine come in?”

“That magazine,” answered Laneham, “contains an account of a similar crime committed in lower Austria. I have no doubt it was what suggested the whole devilish plan to Fisher. And the fact that it is the most obscure of German medical journals, with not ten subscribers, I suppose, in all America, made it seem to him that he was perfectly safe to take the chance he did.”

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