

will not appear at all sensational. And think what a good joke it will be on your father."

"Oh, dear, I can't help but laugh! Papa would simply have a fit if he should read it, and he thinks he has it all hushed up."

"It will be the best joke of the year."

"Don't bring me into it. Don't say anything to let him know that I have even spoken to you."

"Your wishes shall be observed in every particular, Miss Goddard, and I want to thank you very much."

"Good-night."

"Good-night."

When Thorne dropped the 'phone I laughed uproariously for several minutes, while he sat with a complacent smile on his countenance.

"There's your story," he said at length.

"Mr. Thorne," I said when I could get my breath, "where did you learn that trick?"

"That was not in our bargain," he replied. "Perhaps I will tell you after another game of chess."

And there was in his voice a faint note of irony which left me wondering, as I rushed for the office, just who and what he was.

BY THE ENEMY'S WILL.*

BY BURFORD DELANNOY.

The fearsome experiences of a new tenant, involving the strange solution of a dark mystery.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

GOOD NEWS.

HOW long I sat stonily staring at Watson Ward I know not. It seemed hours—was probably moments.

When the room came to a stand-still, the detective was smoking as quietly and smiling as pleasantly as if we had been discussing a future tense of the weather: the possibility of a fine day on the morrow.

My feelings?

It is useless to attempt to describe what they were. His words seemed as if placed on an anvil with half a dozen blacksmiths hammering them—my brain the anvil.

He had discovered—knew then? In all the fear, I somehow thought of the cigar and sanctum; wondered what he would do. Gave voice to my thoughts, saying:

"You know that?"

"Fortunately for you," he replied quietly, "I not only know that, but much more."

"More!"

Starting to my feet, about to step forward, I was restrained by a gentle

hand. The detective pushed me back into my seat.

"Sit down—and simmer down, too. There is no reason for a scrap of excitement. You have nothing to fear."

"But—but you have found this out," I said, somewhat incoherently. "All through a dead cat with a ribbon round its neck."

He laughed; it was the first time that I had heard him laugh really heartily. He was a man more given to smiling than noisy mirth.

Perhaps he had both office manners and a sanctum style; possibly I was experiencing the latter.

"I dismissed that cat from my mind very, very early in the investigations."

"Do you," I inquired, "imagine that I am guilty of the murder of that man?"

"Oh, dear, no! Not for a moment!"

Something seemed to break with a snapping sound in my head.

"And of course you believe that I placed the body in Kane's chambers?"

"Not for a moment."

I was really aghast. He had discovered, and yet not drawn the apparently inevitable inference from his discovery.

*This story began in the January issue of THE ARGOSY. The six back numbers will be mailed to any address on receipt of 60 cents.

Truly he was a man of miracles. I stammered:

"You d-don't b-believe it!"

Watson Ward appeared to be chewing the cud of an inward satisfaction. I never saw a man look more thoroughly content: more supremely pleased with himself. He said quietly:

"Never have done so."

"I can't tell you," I cried, "oh, I can't tell you how much—much easier you have made me in my mind."

Which was quite true. A dictionary of words would not have sufficed to describe the sense of relief I experienced.

"Oh," he remarked cheerfully, "I shall make you even more easy before you leave."

"Do you mean," I said, acting a gray lie, "that you have discovered—will tell me how the girl was killed?"

"No." An enigmatic smile curled his lips as he answered. "I don't mean that, because"—he leaned down and fixed me with his steely eyes—"you know quite as well as I do the method adopted in killing her!"

"H-how?"

I stammered the one word; my tongue refused to serve me further.

"Just as clearly as you know by whom she was killed! That, however, is not altogether what I meant when I said that you would be more pleased by other tidings I should give you."

"Then I stand in no fear," I went on, my heart in my mouth, "of being arrested for the man's murder?"

"Not the shadow of a chance of it."

"Thank God!"

"I told you," he said, still smiling, "that you needed to have no fear."

"But if it is found out that the man died in my rooms, and that I carried him away——"

"It would be considered," he interrupted, "a very senseless piece of work on your part! And distinctly it was. You have an idea of your own that the truth is not always the best card to carry up your sleeve. I am bound to admit—by the manner in which you won the game with the jury at the Central Criminal Court—that there is a certain strength in your argument."

"But I saw——"

"I have seen a lot more of crime

and a deal more of life than you have. Believe me, when it's possible to plank down the card of truth it generally rakes the pool. You ought—in this instance—to have told the truth. Any way, to have acted up to it. Then you would have experienced none of the worry through which you have been, nor submitted Mr. Kane to the annoyance and trouble to which he has been put."

"But——"

He stopped me; or rather my interruption did not stem the even flow of his talk. Just a raised hand and he proceeded:

"I know perfectly well that, personally, you intended him no trouble. But your foolish action led to its falling on him. Fortunately, he's a light-hearted—if I may say so—devil-may-care sort of man. Apart from the horror of the thing, I believe he really revels in the notoriety into which it has brought him; so that no great amount of harm has been done. Had you, in the first instance, called in the police, I assure you that you would not have suffered a moment's annoyance: the case spoke for itself."

"If you only knew," I said, "what I endured; the agony of mind during the time I was waiting trial in the other case——"

"Yes, yes. I know. I realize all that perfectly. Personally, I can't find it in my heart to blame you for what you did. I was only saying what, if ever the affair gets into the newspapers, other people will be inclined to call you: every kind of fool they can lay their tongues to."

"However, we need not discuss that. If the thing can be kept quiet, so much the better for all concerned; I am hoping it will be. There has been no crime committed, because the man was dead. You have heard, I suppose, the result of the coroner's inquest? The man had a diseased heart and came to quite a natural death; probably due to over-excitement."

This was welcome news to me; I had not heard a word of it. It was a further relief to my anxiety. I said:

"Of course, I see the point of all you say. At the same time, don't mind my

remarking that it is so easy to be wise after the event."

"Well, let us dismiss that part of it, and come to another phase of the affair. One which I think you will find still a further relief. You don't seem curious about it. Don't even ask me what it is I have to say to you that can be of a cheering nature."

"During the last few weeks," I answered, "so few cheering elements have come into my life that I have almost forgotten the meaning of the word. If I tell you that I was so downcast, so utterly hopeless, that when the jury acquitted me I fainted—not so much from joy as from sheer, absolute weakness—you will not wonder perhaps at my thinking you can have very little to say to me that can cheer."

He smiled. Again there came that pleased expression on his face. After a moment's pause he observed:

"You think not? Well—so much the more, perhaps, will you relish the news."

"If you know," I answered, "the nature of a step I have taken since my acquittal, an irretrievable step, one which I can never undo, you would realize that my future can't have any very great pleasure left in it."

"Don't be too sure," he said kindly. "I told you that I should have cheering news for you, and I think you'll find it so."

"Tell me—what is it?"

"Well," he bent down and spoke impressively, "what should you say now if I told you to consider yourself a free man?"

"Oh," I answered carelessly, in the fulness of my misunderstanding, "you told me that a little while ago: that I had nothing to fear."

"I don't mean of the danger of arrest. I mean freedom in the stricter sense of the term. There are other—harder, more binding—links forged, you know, than those steel ones a policeman carries in his coat-tail pocket."

It interested me, this mysterious way he had of breaking the news to me. But I had no suspicion of its import.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, for instance, there are such things as marriage fetters."

Still I could not grasp it all. But there was so grave a manner about his utterance, there seemed such a kindly intent, that I knew he must mean something for my welfare.

"If it is good news," I said, "of whatever nature, for God's sake don't keep me on tenterhooks longer. Tell me what it is."

"Very well. I will. When I said you were a free man I meant it. Meant that you need expect no scrap of trouble to arise from the marriage ceremony you went through with the strong woman of the Hippodrome."

"No?"

"You need not say that interrogatively. If I may be allowed the seeming contradiction, it is a positive negative: The woman Zairbeni will never trouble you again."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WATSON WARD TAKES UP THE STORY.

I—WATSON WARD, private detective—have been asked to put the finishing touch to this narrative.

I am afraid the varnish should be applied by a more skilled hand than mine. Following the trail of the pen is but little in my line: I am more sleuth-hound than scribe.

Beyond saying that I know very little of what has gone before, I will make no apology, but at once dip pen in ink, set the machinery in motion, and trust that—in the interest excited by clearing up—the penman's defects will pass unnoticed.

There was but little publicity over what came to be looked on as the second edition of the Gray's Inn affair; the result of the coroner's inquest killed the excitement.

I put the whole matter before the authorities; when I had found it out, and the proofs of it. They treated the whole thing in the usual pill taking manner: made a face and swallowed.

Death having taken so large-sized a hand in the game, it was resolved by the powers that be that no good purpose would be served by publication of details. I got the usual lecture about interference in the administration of jus-

tice, but that is such a usual form of receipt for the information I am at times able to give the Scotland Yard authorities that water on a duck's back becomes a poor sort of illustration of its effect on me.

When Mr. Kane instructed me to clear up the mystery, I did so. It was not a very lengthy job, but his payment was made with a three-figured check. Coupled with the government reward which—much to the chagrin of Scotland Yard—has been paid to me, I have not found it a profitless task. Nor, I am pleased to add, a thankless one.

It is not often that I allow sentiment to interfere with my playing of the cards I hold in a game. A cold business attitude in detective work is one of the all-wool-warranted-not-to-shrink kind—wears well.

In this case I made an exception. Because just as the speech made by the prisoner on trial for murdering the girl fetched the jury, so it fetched me. Excuse the slang, please, but I can't lay pen to a more expressive word.

People nowadays laugh at a suggestion of inspiration, and scoff at the idea of a hand of Providence. But I am inclined to think—old-fashioned as it may be so to do—that there was something more than human in the way those convincing words of the prisoner's dropped from his lips in the dock.

However, I don't want to raise or discuss any theological question. Let it suffice that I thought the man inspired—whether he was or not does not matter—let us leave it at that.

I mention it as an excuse for the departure I made from my usual lines: the allowing of sentiment to creep in; the feeling of a desire to help the falsely accused man.

What made me think there was any link between the murdered girl and the finding of the man's body? Well, I don't know, unless you are prepared to admit the existence of such a thing as detective instinct. If you can do that, without hurting your reasoning powers too much, we shall travel through what I have to say on pneumatic tires.

The two things occurred within a few weeks; on two top floors, but one house

dividing them, and at both inquests medical examination revealed the existence of diseased hearts. Link them? Yes; I did.

Sometimes a detective starts on the wrong road. That is bad for him, because he is usually a long while getting back in the right way again. Going back in your traces is as bad as going up hill. I don't say that I have never done this. I don't want to pose as a bulky-sized, egotistical ass.

In the Gray's Inn affair, however, I struck the right road at once. Walking on it was as easy as motoring; there was scarcely a concealed bump on it.

I don't think that a detective's work is like a phrenologist's—but there, you don't want to know what I think, do you? You want to know about the Raymond Buildings business.

How I found out the use to which Mr. Kane's skylight had been put was an easy matter.

Naturally, I thought of that means of reaching the roof in connection with the tragedy at No. 1. cursory examination excited the belief that there was no other way of reaching it.

I had thirty minutes to spend in the No. 1 suite of rooms; a superficial glance revealed nothing to me.

We are all creatures of habit, and it is one of my weaknesses, when in doubt, to walk with lowered head, hands behind me, up and down the chamber I may be in, widening my track, as it were, at each turn.

So I did in the rooms of No. 1, seeming to think better that way. In one of the strides I came on a creaking floor board.

Halting, I mechanically pressed and shook it with my feet. I claim no credit for cleverness: any man deep in thought might have done the same.

Had there been anything else to handle—the phantom of a clue to occupy my attention—perhaps I might have disregarded that gentle squeaking hint. As it was, I went on one knee and turned the corner of the carpet back: as a result I found myself looking at a loose board.

Nothing uncommon about that in these days of incomplete electric light installations, when the men need to

look after the connections so often. But—well, great events from little causes spring.

Lifting the board, I started at what I saw—it is sometimes the unexpected which happens—and then knew that that luck of mine which never seems to desert me was working in the same good old way in my favor again.

Luck? I must have been born under the star of it!

There was a coat tucked down between the joists. I recognized it in a moment by a description of the pattern of the waistcoat and trousers which I had read.

The latter had been on the body of the man found in Mr. Kane's rooms. Even a detective finds assistance from the columns of a newspaper, you see.

To search the pockets of the coat was the work, to my practised hand, of a moment. I drew blanks in each, except the breast pocket.

There I found pinned together at the top corner some sheets of paper.

A glance at the first determined me. I put them in my pocket, and, finding nothing more in those of the coat, replaced the garment, put back the board, and flung the carpet over it.

Then I left that room and walked to the one in which was the bed. Paused there—it was the one with the skylight in the roof—and gazed up at it fixedly.

I knew now—by reason of the coat—that that had been used in connection with the dead man.

It made me pause—wondering. It was most unlikely that any person other than the tenant would have known of that floor board hiding place, or have secreted the coat there. That rather jumbled up my idea of things.

Yet, if that were so, a perusal of the first of those sheets of paper I had taken from the coat pocket and put in my own would surely have shaped things differently. I concluded that in putting the coat away—perhaps hurriedly—the pockets had not been examined.

The room with the skylight forming part of its roof was a bedroom. It behooved me to make more careful examination this time: because I felt sure, where before I had only suspected.

The coverlet showed on it a square-shaped dirty patch. Closer examination revealed that it had been caused by water.

Water? That set my wits at work. Why should the bed be damp at all, and why the square patch?

Up went my eyes, and the theory was at once formed—from the shape of it—that the skylight had been left open and rain had come in.

That filled me full of thought. Eyes as well as brain were busy. I was taking in everything in sight and trying to fit things: ladder shape. I had a problem to solve. How was the light reached?

CHAPTER XXXV.

AT THE POINT OF THE KNIFE.

FLOOR and roof—what was the medium employed for linking together the two? That was what I was puzzling to find.

A careful scrutiny of the furniture, article by article, revealed to me boot marks on the top of the chest of drawers: some one had stood on it.

That was, perhaps, a half-way explanation of the difficulty.

I looked at my watch; ten minutes had gone. There was need to work quickly if I proposed finishing within the half hour.

Running to the outer door, I slipped the bolt. Then back in the bedroom, wheeled the bed away, and pushed the chest of drawers in its place.

Even then it was not high enough to enable a man to climb out, especially if burdened with a dead body.

How had the man who carried it worked? Or had the owner of the coat been alive and able to help himself through the skylight?

No. There would not have been need for hiding the coat in such a case.

Every man has his pet methods—I have mine: I adopted one then. Put myself in the other man's place, and adjust my considering cap.

Human nature is much of a muchness: less variety about it than is usually supposed. What should I have done under similar circumstances? A look round and I decided.

Put something on top of the drawers. There was a box in the corner; in another moment it was in the middle of the room. Examining it, I found more boot-marks.

In another minute I had the box on top of the drawers, had climbed, pushed open the skylight, and was standing on the roof.

Examination showed that one of the panes of glass had been taken out of the frame. It had apparently been lifted and replaced, kneaded bread being used instead of putty in the process.

That substitute looked only a day old, the dryness of the bread told me that. Had it been there a longer time, the rain of the preceding two days would have washed it soft.

Rain! Standing on top of my scaffolding, I looked down at the bed: the square patch.

The thing was explained: the skylight had been thrown back, and so the bread had been protected from the weather. That gave me another idea.

Hurriedly examining the roof, I traced footsteps along it not only to No. 3 but away on to No. 6. This took some little time.

At No. 6 I cautiously peered through the skylight, and noted that there were steps—apparently often used steps, to judge by the absence of dust on them—leading down to the room, similar to those in Kane's chambers.

I said absence of dust—if a man had used them that would have been apparent in the middle only. Here they were clean at the sides, too. That told me another story: that the swish of a woman's skirts kept them clean.

The old French proverb occurred to me: Look for the woman.

I came from the roof, closing the light after me, and replaced the furniture. So far I was satisfied.

Next minute I had shot the bolt of the outer door, and was waiting the return of the two men who, thirty minutes before, had left me.

They were disappointed when I told them that, although I undertook the case, I could tell them nothing then. I promised to write, and then, having an urgent appointment at the office, bade them good-day and departed.

Pressing as was the nature of the case which was awaiting my attention, I found time as I left the Inn to drop in at the porter's lodge.

"Top floor of No. 6," I said. "Can you tell me who lives there? There was no name on the side of the entrance-way."

I had looked for it in passing, and noticed that where names of tenants are usually painted the space allotted the top floor was vacant.

"North or south side, sir?"

"North."

The porter scratched his head—I know that scratch: it comes from the regions of doubt.

"I don't exactly know her real name, sir; I know what she plays under."

"Plays?"

"Well, yes. I suppose you'd, in a manner of speaking, call it a sort of play-acting. Zairbeni. She's the strong woman at the circus."

I have cultivated control of my features, which enables me to keep them well in check: I exercised the power then.

I hurried back to the office, kept my appointment, and, concluding the business of the day, determined to call on the strong woman.

I went again to Gray's Inn, for the second time that day; although, to be quite correct, it was evening now.

In response to my knocking at Zairbeni's door there ensued the deep bay-ing of a hound. That surprised me a little; I thought a big dog a strange occupant of a flat.

The second knocking had no better result; no human sound came.

I am in a measure wrong in saying that. My repeated knocking brought the servant to the door of the opposite flat. She volunteered an explanation:

"She always goes out at this time, and won't be back till a good bit after eleven o'clock; she's a hactress."

Having thanked the maid, I went down-stairs slowly. A strong woman and a big hound—to judge the latter by its mouth.

It struck me that that was a combination needing something to meet it. With that object in view I sought a gunsmith's.

Entering the shop, I acquired that something. It had six little mouths which could bite as well as bark. Having slipped cartridges into it before leaving the shop, I felt equal to quite a liberal supply of strong women and dogs.

A cab took me to the Hippodrome.

The program told me that Zairbeni did two turns. An exhibition of strength in the first part, and a knife throwing performance in the latter half of the show.

There was a foot-note on the program concerning her cutlery display.

In deference to the expression of opinion of the licensing authorities on the danger attending knife throwing displays when the target is faced by a human being, the management has eliminated that element from Mme. Zairbeni's marvelous act. Although the skill of this accomplished artiste is so great that the element of risk is reduced to a minimum in her knife throwing, yet a dummy figure is used instead of the human being who was in former exhibitions pinned to the target board.

On Monday night next Mme. Zairbeni will introduce for the first time in Europe the extraordinary feat of hurling with both hands fourteen sharp-pointed knives into the air, which knives will descend around her, and bury their points in a circle in the board upon which she will stand with her trained hound Boris. This is admittedly the most extraordinary display of skill ever attempted by any living artiste.

Watching the display of her strength, I realized the more completely how easy the lifting of the skylight and frame had been!

In the arena, Zairbeni raised a grand piano with four grooms clinging to it, and apparently did not turn a hair.

Strong? It is an ordinary, commonplace word: does not describe the extraordinary strength the woman exhibited.

I sat out the other turns on the program, watching for Zairbeni's second appearance.

A board was put up, easel fashion, and the dummy figure of a man propped against it. Then, in the midst of a flourish of trumpets from the band, and limelight from the roof, Zairbeni entered.

With her knives she picked out the figure on the wooden target, throwing the weapons from the other side of the ring.

In a moment it flashed on me—the removed pane of glass, the girl lying on the bed beneath, the skill of the knife thrower!

When Zairbeni retired from the arena, I retired from the auditorium.

Lighting a cigar, I waited at the stage door for her coming out. She told her cabman to drive to Raymond Buildings, Theobalds' Road.

So spake I to another cabman. I pulled my man up a hundred yards away and alighted, was walking on the pavement as she got out of the cab at the Inn gates.

By the time she had rung the bell and the porter opened the gate, I was close to her; we passed in one after the other. The porter probably supposed we were together, seeing that I had a few hours prior inquired about the woman.

Any way, he asked no questions nor made any demur at my entrance.

Once in the Inn, I walked ahead of her, just a few paces, till I reached No. 5. Then, in drawing my handkerchief from my pocket, I carelessly pulled out some coppers with it.

Most stupid of me—because I had so often done the same thing before!

As I had intended, Zairbeni passed me as I stooped to pick up the coins. She entered No. 6 and started the ascent of her three flights of stairs.

It cost me twopence-halfpenny, that little ruse, for I could not see to find the coins in the dark.

When I, too, entered No. 6, she was a flight ahead of me.

We went up-stairs. She quietly, I humming a coon song.

Coon songs are so downright soothing if you feel at all excited, and I admit that my nerves were tingling a little as I seemed to be reaching my goal.

By the time she had the key in her lock and the door was swinging on its hinges, I had reached her side. Lifting my hat, I said politely:

"Mme. Zairbeni?"

In the dim light of the landing gas, I saw her face harden.

It was not, possibly, the first time

that a man had followed her home. I inwardly smiled as I thought of the combined reception the man would be likely to receive, should she decide that she did not care to make his acquaintance; were he not to her liking: a strong woman and a dog! Courage would be needed to face that combination. Noticing the look on her face, it became my endeavor to efface it. I said:

"Pray don't—I beg of you—let there be any misunderstanding. I came here purely on a matter of business."

That wrought a change; an immediate change. She had been barring the way: she barred it no longer.

On the contrary, opened wider the door; she stood aside, signifying that I should enter. I did so, she following and closing the door.

In an inner room a twist of her fingers changed a gas light the size of a pea to that of a fish tail, and in the full light we stood looking at each other.

Neither seemed to care to break the silence, and we remained so—taking each other's measure—for a full minute.

Did I say in silence? That was not quite correct. There was distinctly audible the whine of pleasure which came from an animal sniffing at the crack of the door in the adjacent room.

The mistress had come home; the hound's growls were reserved for the reception of unaccompanied strangers.

Zairbeni slowly took from her hat the spikes with which she impaled it to her head; just as slowly ran them into her hat again when she held it in her hand. Still maintained silence—evidently she wanted me to speak first.

It is rude not to oblige a lady, so I spoke.

"Zairbeni," I said, dropping the prefix, and perhaps with it a degree of politeness, "I have an unpleasant task to perform."

She looked up. Seemed to gather from my tone rather than from my words that there was something not altogether right. Inquired sharply:

"Who—vot are you?"

"A detective."

My description was intended to fall as a miniature bomb-shell, scattering her self-possession.

I was not disappointed. My announcement had the desired effect.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A BOW DRAWN AT A VENTURE.

SHE started but slightly, controlling herself by pressing her teeth into her under lip.

She did not look pretty that way. All the same I was glad to see the action; it told me all I wanted to know: that she feared.

The movement was momentary. As she regained her composure I saw that the teeth marks were deep to bleeding point; that there was no need for the playing of a covert game.

"You guess, of course, the reason for my being here? You murdered the girl at No. 1 by dropping a knife through the lifted glass of the roof straight into her heart?"

She went very pale, but otherwise betrayed no emotion. I am always willing to give the devil his due: the woman was no coward.

"Naturlich, mine husband—mine husband half told you zis? Eh—vot?"

Married! That startled me. Girl murdered in a man's rooms not for robbery—then for what? First answer and last: jealousy.

So then there was a possible explanation: she was married to the man who had been tried for his life. And this strong woman had been in court watching him during his trial.

I remembered seeing her there: she was not a woman easy to forget.

I must know more. So I answered:

"He did not tell me a word of it."

"You lie!"

"Sometimes," I answered, with a good humored smile—cruel, perhaps, but business thickens our skins. "Not now. If he knows you were the murderess I did not know he knew it."

"Ze dog!"

"Perhaps. Lots of husbands are. But he did not bark that out."

"Mine husband!"

"You don't seem to be burdened with a large-sized approval of him."

"Approval! I marry him for refuge!"

"Ah! Sort of union that does not last long or wear well."

"Long! Ve vere marry but zis morning."

I did not whistle, although I should have liked to. Things were growing so clear. She asked:

"How did you——"

"Find out? That is my business, you know—I am a detective."

"You are von devils!"

"Minus horns and tail. But don't let us waste time in compliments. Let us get to business."

"You zink you can arrest me?"

"Why ask? Do you suppose that I am not big enough? For all that, I think I could if I tried."

She smiled contemptuously, and, as she made a swift movement in the direction of the room where lay the dog, she said:

"Efen the strongest of strong vomans haf need of a protector. You know not vot a powerful friend I haf here."

"Stop!"

I spoke that one word in a staccato, top note just as her hand rested on the handle of the door.

It sounded sharp enough to make her turn her head, and, if possible, her face went a shade paler when she saw the revolver in my hand.

"You love your dog?"

I asked the question, and then, not waiting for her reply, continued:

"If you allow but his head to show in this room, it will be the signal for me to put one of these bullets in it. Don't think I can fail," I continued, seeing her hesitation. "I am as skilful with the pistol at a target as you are with knives."

Her hand fell away from the door handle: the whining sound beyond alone broke the silence. Sensible of her nearer presence, it grew louder.

Stooping, her mouth close to the door, she called through in tones scarcely audible to me something in Austrian to the animal.

"Be wise," I continued, as the whining ceased. "Sit down and don't attempt foolishness. I have four men waiting on the landing outside, and three on the roof. At the first report of this revolver, they would be inside this

room, and before your hound had quivered his last death throes."

A neat lie, on occasion, does not come amiss to me.

Of course I had not any men on hand. As a matter of fact, I always work single-handed: if I make a mistake then there is only myself to swear at. On this occasion my inventive effort served its immediate purpose. She sat; said slowly:

"Zis means my arrest? Eh—vot?"

"I suppose so," I answered, shrugging my shoulders. Then, having my own end in view, added significantly: "But not by me."

The tone made her look up in astonishment. I could see in her face what she was thinking: that perhaps, after all, I knew nothing, and was but trying to bluff her into an admission.

She committed herself to the simple inquiry:

"Not?"

"No. I am employed, as a matter of fact, by Mr. Kane. The regular police step on the scene after I leave."

"Mr. Kane?"

"Yes. What made you rip up his roof and dump the body down into his chambers rather than those of any other of your neighbors?"

It was a bow drawn at a venture. My luck stood me in again.

Watching her intently, I saw her doubts give way to a despairing certainty. She walked right into the trap.

"It was ze only von of ze seex houses—save zis—viz ze steps leading down into ze room."

"I thought perhaps you might have some sort of ill-feeling toward Mr. Kane?"

She shook her head; it was plainly evident that she had not. Then she said inquiringly:

"Ze game is lost—vot is galled all up? Is it not so? Eh—vot?"

"I am afraid so. Sooner or later things are always discovered—murder will out. I am glad there was no ill-feeling against the gentleman who employed me."

"Kane?"

"Yes."

"I do not know him efen from sight."

"Any way, being a woman, you know what a thing scandal is. Would you mind putting into writing that you were a stranger to Kane?"

She laughed bitterly. In her mirth there was a certain amount of contempt as she said:

"A gonfession?"

"Well—not quite that."

"Gome," she said suddenly, "bargains for bargains. I will write you a gonfession out of it all from ze fairst to ze last and sign it—on condition."

"The condition?"

"Zat you not try to arrest me zis night—make until to-morrow night no attempt."

"That you may escape?"

Again she laughed contemptuously. I think, could I have read her mind, that I should not have found myself rated very high in her opinion.

"Look I like a vool woman? Am I—with my big shapes—a voman who gould hide herself vith ease?"

She drew herself up as she spoke, in unconscious pride of her magnificent physique.

Truly, she would have had difficulty in disguising herself. The nobility of her carriage, the Amazonian breadth of shoulder and length of limb, would have attracted attention wherever she might go.

As she stood before me in her monumental grandeur, she seemed not so much a woman as the type of womanhood: woman glorified, exalted, uneclipsed.

"I pledge you mine vaird"—she raised her hand in a solemn, majestic gesture—"I vill not attempts to leaf Londons."

I thought a moment. That suggestion of a confession—coming from her—got me out of a little difficulty. I said:

"I agree. Write."

She was not a fool; she understood. Saw in my face that I meant to play straight.

For many minutes there was no sound in the room save the scratching of the pen on the paper she had drawn toward her, and that other made by the dog in the adjoining room; he had begun to whine again.

She signed and handed me the document. After reading and folding it I put it in my pocket.

"Show me the way out," I said.

And then, impelled by some sudden impulse, strangely foreign to me, I added: "Such a woman as you are must be a divinity or a devil; you have chosen your part, and the pity of it is great."

She saw me to the door.

I had accomplished my purpose. Arrest? Oh, that is the business of the regular police. They had the same ground to work on as I had. If they failed—well, they failed.

I was acting really for Mr. Kane. Arresting people is no business of mine.

"Your mans on ze rooves?"

"Will not trouble you. They leave it when I leave the building. Your place, for the present, will be undisturbed."

She opened the door, and I passed out. On the landing I turned once again to look at her.

She had got her color back, some of her self control. As a matter of form I said:

"Till to-morrow."

She understood, signified it by a nod. Her verbal answer was:

"Goot-by."

At home I put the confession with the papers I had taken from the coat. The first one of those pinned-together documents was a letter from the murdered girl to her father. It read:

MY DEAREST FATHER:

I received the two keys and will do your bidding. But oh, I do wish you had not asked me to do this! The papers are yours, you say, and surely if you applied to the person who purchased the desk he would let you have them. I quite understand the push of the secret drawer which you describe, and will, one night when the offices are closed, enter and get the papers out, and send them to you.

You need have no fear, father, because when you were clerk in the offices there, I came to see you twice, you will remember, so I know the rooms and the desk quite well. I do so wish—

But there, that is enough of the letter. Sufficiently far as it affects this history.

Papers concealed in the desk—whether rightfully or wrongfully mat-

ters not—father desired the daughter to procure; with a result which has been described.

Poor girl! She suffered for another's sin. That is unfortunately more frequently the case than that the evil-doer reaps the consequences.

In the morning I went to the registry office and parish church.

Both husband and wife living in Raymond Buildings prior to marriage, there was no difficulty. I came away with a copy of the certificate of marriage.

That, I think, clears up everything? No, there is one other matter. And that is best explained by an extract from the *Star* published on the day following my midnight visit to No. 6.

This morning, before the opening of the Hippodrome to the public for the matinée, a fatal accident of a peculiarly unpleasant nature occurred.

It is the custom with the performers to rehearse their performances in the ring in the morning before the Hippodrome opens, so that they may get used to their surroundings. Mme. Zairbeni—the well-known Austrian artiste—who was recognized in this country and on the Continent as the champion strong woman of the world, was practising an act which preliminary announcements foreshadowed would be given to the public on Monday next.

Alas, that performance will never take place! The peculiar feat Mme. Zairbeni was practising was that of standing on a board, with her hound Boris, the animal's forelegs being on her breast. In that position the artiste hurled into the air, with both hands, fourteen sharp-pointed knives. These were thrown so as to fall and bury their points in the circle in the board, around Mme. Zairbeni and her dog.

From what the attendants say, the talented artiste had been rehearsing this extraordinary feat for some weeks past, success always attending her efforts—she never sustaining so much as a scratch. But at this morning's rehearsal there happened that which has thrown a gloom over all engaged in the building.

Three of the knives failed to reach the boards; one went into the brain of the dog, the two others into the woman, one in her breast and one in her head. The death of both woman and dog was instantaneous.

There was more in the report, of course—gruesome details which would not be pleasant reading here, and a leader in the paper founded on the Dangerous Performances Act. It does not, however, affect this matter at all. I knew, as I read, why she had said "Good-by."

Yes, I think that clears up everything.

THE END.

A FAIR FISHER MAID.

WITH ribbons and rings and fluffy things
 She strolls on the sand slopes brown,
 As trig as a yacht and without a spot
 On the folds of her creamy gown.
 'Tis scarce the dress of a fisheress,
 Yet thus to be arrayed
 Is parcel and part of the subtle art
 Of this fair young fisher maid.

With the tenderest looks she bates her hooks,
 With a seeming sweet and shy,
 With the cunning wile of a loving smile,
 And a half withheld reply.
 For she hopes to land when he's well in hand,
 And she thinks that he cannot flee,
 The biggest fish (oh, modest wish!)
 In the matrimonial sea.

Clinton Scollard.

THE HAWKINS CRANO-SCALE.

BY EDGAR FRANKLIN.

Some experiences in a coal-bin, with an account of the resolve born of the ignominious method of deliverance therefrom.

I HAD intended it for a peaceful, solitary walk up-town after business on that beautiful Saturday afternoon; and had in fact accomplished the better part of it. I was inhaling huge quantities of the balmy air and reveling in the exhilaration of the exercise.

But passing the picture store, I experienced a queer sensation—perhaps “that feeling of impending evil” we read about in the patent medicine advertisements.

It may have been because I recalled that in that very shop Hawkins had demonstrated the virtues of his infallible Lightning Canvas-Stretcher, and thereby ruined somebody’s priceless and unpurchasable Corot.

At any rate, my eyes were drawn to the place as I passed; and, like a cuckoo-bird emerging from the clock, out popped Hawkins.

“Ah, Griggs!” he exclaimed. “Out for a walk?”

“What were you doing in there?”

“Going to walk home?”

“Settling for that painting, eh?”

“Because if you are, I’ll go with you,” pursued Hawkins, falling into step beside me and ignoring my remarks.

I told Hawkins that I should be tickled to death to have his company, which was a lie and intended for biting sarcasm; but Hawkins took it in good faith and was pleased.

“I tell you, Griggs,” he informed me, “there’s nothing like this early summer air to fill a man’s lungs.”

“Unless it is cash to fill his pockets.”

“Eh? Cash?” said the inventor. “That reminds me. I must spend some time this afternoon.”

“Indeed? Going to settle another damage suit?”

“I intend to order coal,” replied Hawkins frigidly.

He seemed disinclined to address me

further; and I had no particular yearning to hear his voice. We walked on in silence until within a few blocks of home.

Then Hawkins paused at one of the cross streets.

“The coal-yard is down this way, Griggs,” he said. “Come along. It won’t take more than five or ten minutes.”

Now, the idea of walking down to the coal-yard certainly seemed commonplace and harmless. To me it suggested nothing more sinister than a superheated Irish lady perspiring over Hawkins’ range in the dog days.

At least, it suggested nothing more at the time, and I turned the corner with Hawkins and walked on, unsuspecting.

Except that it belonged to a particularly large concern, the coal-yard which Hawkins honored by his patronage was much like other coal-yards. The high walls of the storage bins rose from the sidewalk, and there was the conventional arch for the wagons, and the little, dingy office beside it.

Into the latter Hawkins made his way, while I loitered without.

Hawkins seemed to be upon good terms with the coal people. He and the men in the office were laughing genially.

Through the open window I heard Hawkins file his order for four tons of coal. Later some one said: “Splendid, Mr. Hawkins, splendid.”

Then somebody else said: “No, there seems to be no flaw in any particular.”

And still later the first voice announced that they would make the first payment one week from to-day, at which Hawkins’ voice rose with a sort of pompous joy.

I paid very little heed to the scraps of conversation; but presently I paid considerable attention to Hawkins, for