

The Blue Lamp

"Uncle Amos, there's
a man been found dead
out at the Harmon
house—"

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*Murder complicates
the mystery at the
old Harmon house*

The Story Thus Far:

MARY HARMON, a wealthy heiress, disappeared from Boston during a strange lethargic illness. Count Briskow, her fiancé, believed she had been abducted by a Dr. Hawkins with whom they had dined the night before the disappearance, but no trace of her could be found. Lights were seen in the closed Harmon house at Echo Fork, between Paris and Wickford, Vt., but investigations revealed only a caretaker, Wrightson, making alterations previously ordered by Miss Harmon. Only one important clue, a letter from the missing girl alluding to mysterious spells, was found.

Twenty years later, rumors of a ghost of an old woman in this house sent Jimmy Battles, a Boston reporter, back to his home town of Wickford and to the house. As he searched the dusty blackness he heard a sound of wheels, then thuds and the body of a man fell down stairs. At the head of the flight where there had formerly been another staircase Jimmy saw an aperture and inside a beautiful girl asleep. He awoke her. When he described the man she was alarmed and told Jimmy to see to him. He found the man gone. Hurrying back, he was amazed to discover the aperture had given place to the familiar stairs. He started for his uncle, Amos Crummett, the sheriff.

HE LEFT the residence by the side veranda door that opened from the sitting-room.

He got through the tunnel of trees. He mounted the grade. The road swung southward at the top of the hill—a three-mile arc till the Morrow place was reached. No car came along to offer him a ride. And the Morrow house was darkened: no chance of getting a machine or a rig. From the Morrow turn a couple of miles of level

country wound westward through a valley. The mountains rolled around like blackened tents of gigantic size, pitched against jeweled heavens.

Such a lengthy journey under studded stars, with the night gale blowing the flavor of the Harmon place from his garments, the boy might have welcomed at any other time. But now he realized the importance of time. Much might happen in that haunted pile before he got back with his uncle. Other persons besides the phantom elderly lady were now mixed up in the plot. The girl he had aroused might even suffer physical injury if somehow she had come there against her will. He walked as swiftly as he could contrive, on the down-grade stretches accelerating to a dogtrot.

Once—just once—as he lagged, leg-weary, in Merritt's Hollow, the fancy struck him that he was being followed. He even waited a few moments, losing valuable time, to see if someone came along while he paused. But no one passed, and the lack of moonlight prohibited a view of much distance behind.

Striking a match by District Three schoolhouse, he was astounded to note the hour—only ten minutes after eight o'clock. It seemed as though he had been in the Harmon house for hours and hours. Once a machine came from a distance in his rear, but it curved off on another road before overtaking him. It was five minutes to nine o'clock when he saw the lights of Paris across "the Flats," and twenty minutes after when he had emerged from the covered bridge above Green River, crossed the

railroad tracks and started down East Main Street.

Boland's cigar store, he perceived, was closed. He remembered his uncle—who owned a half interest in the shop and kept it open evenings—usually locked the place on the dot of nine except on Saturdays. That meant another half-mile walk to the house where his uncle boarded across the town, up Prospect Street hill.

He turned into the gate of this place at twenty minutes to ten. With a sinking in his vitals, he saw that the house was darkened also. Had his uncle gone to bed? Was he absent elsewhere on legal business?

Again and again Jimmy pulled at the bell.

"Who's there?" came a voice.

"Uncle Amos—is that you? Come down and let me in. It's Jimmy."

"F'r Gawd's sake!"

AT LENGTH the Vermonter descended the stairs. He was stuffing his nightshirt into his trousers. His huge feet were bare; his doughty head tousled. He shot back the bolt on the weather-beaten door.

"Jimmy, m' son!" he cried in gruff delight. He gripped the lad's arm and did everything but kiss him.

"Uncle Amos, you've got to come with me—at once—tonight—out to Echo Fork!"

"Eh? What's th' trouble?"

"I've come up here on a newspaper assignment, Uncle Amos. You know—the Harmon Mystery. I've almost solved it."

"You've what?"

"I think I've seen Mary Harmon. I found her in some sort of trance in a secret room in the campanile!"

"Th' hell you say!"

"And not only that, but I ran into another man out there—a queer, lanky, pink-faced man who pitched down the stairs and then disappeared."

"Come into th' sittin'-room."

He led the way into a room at the back. Lighting the table lamp, he pulled down the shades.

"I'm all alone here t'night," he explained. "Will's folks have gone t' Rutland. Now, what's the story 'bout seein' Mary Harmon?"

Jimmy told his story while the uncle filled his corn-cob. When he came to a recital of the stranger's plunge down the flight, the uncle stopped smoking. He stared wide-eyed.

"So you heard somethin' that sounded like rusted wheels turnin' just before his exclamation? Must have had somethin' t' do with them stairs. I allus did think the insides o' that house ain't been measured as they should be. More'n that, f'r twenty years I ain't

been satisfied 'bout that little crippled Wrightson—an' what he was ever doin' t' th' place after Mary Harmon vanished. Well, go on!"

The boy told of the mysterious blue light, the aperture and what he saw therein. He recounted his converse with the girl verbatim.

"Durned funny!" growled the sheriff as the narrative concluded. "Lots o' things need explainin'! Mebbe we'll find out if we get in that compartment. What'd the girl look like? Would you recognize her fr'm a picture, providin' you saw one?"

"I'm positive of it."

"I got an old newspaper upstairs with a picture o' Mary Harmon in it! Dunno why I saved it. Must be some-thin' told me th' day'd come when I might need it."

HE LEFT the boy and was gone upstairs.

"That her?" he demanded, returning.

"Great Heavens, yes!"

"Sure of it?" the sheriff asked awesomely.

"I'd swear to it on a stack of Bibles."

"Good glory, boy—can't be possible Mary Harmon's been a sort o' Sleepin' Beauty in that tower-room through twenty years!"

"I don't care. That's her picture!" Then Jimmy had a thought, a stupendous thought: "Uncle Amos—you don't suppose—?"

"Well, well, suppose what?"

"You don't suppose Mary Harmon's been off somewhere all these years, in amnesia or something, and taken this method to come back to her home?"

Uncle and nephew stared at one another.

"Well, there's somethin' in that too," the old man admitted.

Then the pullbell jangled. Both of them started.

"Who wants me at this time o' night?" the sheriff cried aloud.

Still barefoot, he answered the door.

"Evenin', sir," said a voice from the porch. "Sorry to trouble you, but I'm after information. Is this the house that a young feller turned into a few minutes back?"

"Mebbe. What of it?"

"Was he out to Echo Fork tonight—in the house that stands out there—what they call the Harmon place?"

Jimmy heard this plainly and appeared behind his uncle.

"Who wants to know?" he answered for the sheriff.

"Oh, there you are!" said the voice in the dark. "Say, could I talk with you a minute?"

"Come inside."

The speaker moved up in the line of the light.

Jimmy saw the man who had vanished from the landing!

He was a person of painful leanness in a nondescript suit, scarlet necktie, and yellow shoes. Though Jimmy's glance was glued on his features, the boy did not miss that tie or those shoes. And he wore a gray derby hat.

As a face the caller's countenance was peculiar—there was small doubt about it. The man's whole head, in fact, was peculiar. It was round like a cheese, an Edam cheese, and about the same color. His flesh seemed afflicted with that queer skin malady that turned

his epidermis pink. The hair, prematurely white, was parted on the top of this pinkness and pasted to his scalp with a barber's lotion. His ears—flat, roundish—resembled pink buttons sewed close against his skull.

For this late-evening call the stranger evinced a furtive air, an elusive, hunted aspect, which he covered over with bravado.

"I know you'll think it's funny," he began, "me buttin' in here. But—you'll learn I've got my reasons."

"Sit down in *there*," directed the reporter. And he jerked his head toward the small rear sitting-room.

The stranger cast a beady glance toward this apartment.

"Can't we talk right here?" he asked confidentially. He did not seem to be any the worse for his plunge down the stairs.

"What ails you, anyhow? What are you scared of?"

"All right—if that's the way you feel about it."

He preceded them into the sitting-room, not without caution. There he took the first convenient chair, uninvited, and throughout the call sat stiffly on its edge. He played with the derby—continually fingered it.

"Who's the old gent?" he asked Jimmy, another attempt at intimacy,

as the sheriff loitered a minute by the hat rack.

"My uncle. It's his home. Who are you, anyhow?"

"Well, now, I'm not of much importance. But Watts is my name—if it does you any good to know. I'm in the legal line, in a small way. I daresay your mother'll tell you who I am, though I wasn't aware you had an uncle livin' right up here on the ground."

JIMMY repressed an impulse to exclaim, "What on earth are you talking about?" Instead, he demanded: "You mean you're a lawyer?"

"In a small way, you might say. Yes, in a small way." He hitched the chair closer, though he still remained seated on its edge. "Can't we go somewhere and talk privately? Think what'll happen if your uncle finds it out!"

It flashed on the boy in that instant that this queer pink-faced individual mistook him for somebody else. Glancing toward the door, he perceived his uncle listening purposely behind the hall portière.

"You needn't be afraid. My uncle's in on it."

Lawyer Watts drew back. "He is!"

"Sure. What made you think he wasn't?"

"That's right—you'd hardly come di-

rect to his house otherwise, would you?"

And yet Jimmy knew the rumpled attorney was not at all convinced.

"Go on," he prompted. "Speak what's on your mind. Everything's confidential that's spoken in this house."

Never were the stranger's beady eyes more cautious. And yet he appeared decided to play a low card. Play it with innuendo and see what happened. He did it by leaning forward, tapping Jimmy twice on the kneecap and then sitting back.

"I'm wise to everything!" he declared largely. And he turned the derby around in his hands.

"Oh, you're wise to everything."

"I certainly am. And I tell you it won't go. Not unless you take care o' me first."

"Take care of you!" Jimmy echoed.

"Let me in on it too. You see, your mother comin' to see me like she did, I'm halfway in on it, anyhow. And you need a good lawyer. Well, let me go the whole way. You'll—you'll find—I can be useful."

Inasmuch as Jimmy's mother had been dead ever since the influenza epidemic which followed in the wake of the war, this was illuminating. But not quite enough.

"Oh," he said lamely. "So my mother came to see you!"

"Ha-ha! You weren't planin' on that, were you? Well, she hadn't asked me a dozen questions 'fore I see what was afoot. I'm a smart man, I am, even if I say it myself."

"And just what is it you think I'm up to?"

"I see. You want to find out how much I really know. Well, you got papers, ain't you? Even the death certificate. Forged! And if you want me to go a step farther, I can tell you who forged 'em."

"Well," said Jimmy dully, trying to catch his cue, "who was it?"

"Speakin' no names, but just so's you'll know I ain't to be ignored in the divvy, was you ever to 993 Williamsburg Bridge?"

PLAINLY the stranger expected to see Jimmy quail before such revelation. But the lad grasped that this must be the address of some forger and was too busy trying to make head and tail to the enigma to show facial reaction.

"How did you know I was here?" he demanded.

"Ha-ha! I followed you in from the Harmon place tonight. Though I must say this was hardly the spot I expected to see you go."

"Where'd you think I'd go?"

"The hotel naturally. That's where he's been stayin', ain't it?"

"Where who's been staying?"

"Oh, come, come. I guess that ain't necessary."

"What were you doing out at the Harmon house?" Jimmy next asked.

"Just checkin' up," the man said airily. "Just makin' sure I was on the right track. And when he opened them stairs like he did, I knowed all of you was delivered right into my hands."

"So you think he opened the stairs, do you?" the reporter said with deliberate whimsiness.

For the first time Lawyer Watts looked blank.

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Once—just once—the fancy struck him that he was being followed

Not The Type

Corbett's culture used to pain the fans. Now we have a heavyweight champion lecturing on Shakespeare! What's the world coming to?

By
GRANTLAND RICE

I SAT for nearly an entire afternoon not long ago discussing fights and fighters with the man who won the heavyweight championship of the world thirty-eight years ago by terminating the career of John L. Sullivan.

The talk veered around to Gene Tunney, and it suddenly occurred to me how different in many ways, and yet how singularly alike, he and the great John L.'s conqueror were, especially in regard to their ring careers.

The similarity begins with their names: James J. Corbett and James J. Tunney—"Gentleman Jim" and "Scholar Gene." Each of them beat a famous slugger to win the title and each thereby incurred the enmity that invariably follows the dethronement of a dramatic and popular ruler in the kingdom of sock and duck.

Corbett started out as a bank clerk in San Francisco—Tunney as a clerk in Greenwich Village, New York. They may not be listed as the most interesting fighters in the ring, but they must at least stand as the two most unusual types in ring lore. They both came to the top through the development of boxing skill and competitive intelligence rather than by the crushing power of the smashing fist.

Corbett, stylishly dressed, well-groomed, keenly intelligent, at home in any society, startled the world nearly forty years ago by stepping up to a throne where formerly only mighty-fisted, burly battlers had sat. And so they called him "Gentleman Jim" and hated him for a long time because he had yanked the scepter of slug from old John L., "the noblest Roman of them all."

Only a few weeks ago Scholar Gene handed the world at large an even greater surprise by addressing Professor William Lyon Phelps' class in English at Yale University—amazing the pop-eyed students by discussing Shakespeare, Carlyle and Herbert Spencer with all the confidence and aplomb of a college president.

Skill, Science and Speed Win

IT WAS a strange turn thirty-eight years ago to see the man who had beaten the mighty Sullivan display wit, good manners, and rare social charm. It was even more strange to hear the man who had twice beaten Jack Dempsey, the old Manassa Mauler, discussing the philosophy of moral beauty and its effect upon the arts.

Yet in many ways Corbett and Tunney are totally unlike. Corbett has the keener wit, the quicker, sharper mind,

the more restless energy, the more vivid personality. Tunney has the greater repose, the more dogged determination to reach a certain goal, the capacity for greater patience.

Corbett likes crowds and entertainment while Tunney doesn't, except when he is with old friends. Corbett always has been a far better mixer and a far better showman than Tunney, who makes no pretense along those lines.

It was Corbett who brought in the new type of boxing and who first proved the winning value of skill, science and speed.

The crowd, in those far-off days, regarded the slugging Sullivan as the correct type for a heavyweight king. And the crowd, from 1919 on, regarded the rushing, slugging Jack Dempsey as fit lord of the mauling manor.

It isn't strange at all that a large section of the crowd resented the arrival of Corbett and Tunney, both of whom were "out of character."

Jim Corbett today is one of the most popular figures in sport. Tall, erect, athletic-looking though past sixty, you could never guess within ten years of his actual age.

Is He on the Level?

HOW would Corbett and Tunney, each at his best, compare in the ring? Corbett undoubtedly was the better boxer in his prime. He had greater natural speed of hand and foot, quicker reflexes, a more baffling way of stepping in and out. Tunney is the slightly better puncher because he hits from a better balance and Tunney is the harder to hurt, more rugged, more durable and somewhat more grimly determined to stick and win.

Corbett could have been a far better puncher than he was if he had not sacrificed punching balance for speed, for the art of getting in and out as he jabbed and rapped. Tunney isn't a smashing slugger, but there is much more behind those short jolts of his, backed up by a heavy shoulder, than the onlooker would imagine.

There is less waste effort in Tunney's boxing. Lacking Corbett's dazzling speed and his uncanny agility, Tunney through his eight- or nine-year pursuit of the fundamentals has mastered most of the mechanics that go with high-grade boxing. He has always been hard to hit in any vital spot.

Corbett created his sensation nearly forty years ago. The belief was then current that a new type had come into boxing. But this belief soon faded as freckled old Fitz, the massive Jeffries, Jack Johnson, Willard the giant and the Manassa Mauler filed by in the long parade.

Gene Tunney, as he followed Jeffries, Johnson, Willard and Dempsey, proved to be an even more startling change than Corbett was for another generation. "Gentleman Jim," with his quick wit, his smooth tongue and polished manners, was one thing. A heavyweight champion who could go before the Eng-



"Scholar Gene" with William Lyon Phelps after addressing Professor Phelps' class in English at Yale. (Left) "Gentleman Jim" in character

lish class at Yale and talk intelligently upon Shakespeare, Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, Ulysses, Ajax, Achilles and the philosophy of "moral beauty" was something else—something quite undreamed of by the multitudes who have followed the various paladins of punch.

It has been asked more than once if Tunney was on the level with this swing at literature. He confesses that he read "The Winter's Tale" ten times in order to absorb a better understanding of its complete message. No one is going to read "The Winter's Tale" ten times for the purpose of making a synthetic gesture. No one is going to read the books that Tunney has actually read with care in order to establish a high-brow pose.

It may be that those who pay out \$30

or \$40 for ringside (as they are called) seats prefer the sock to Shakespeare, the smash to Shelley, the knock-out to Keats, the punch to Plato, the crack to Carlyle and the wallop to Wordsworth. But that does not minimize the fact that a fellow good enough to be heavyweight champion of the world is also deeply interested in the best literature the ages have set before the eyes of mankind.

James J. Corbett had the populace of another day guessing but James J. Tunney has them gasping. He'll be rated as a great guy, after he is beaten, as Corbett was and is. But at present the crowd at large can't figure him out—and what the crowd can't figure out is permitted to "run for Sweeney," so far as the welkin ringing goes.