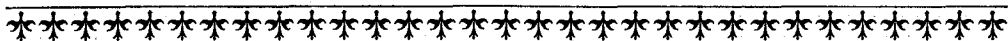




THE FIELD OF ART

## The Sculpture of Edward McCartan— The Winter Academy

BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ



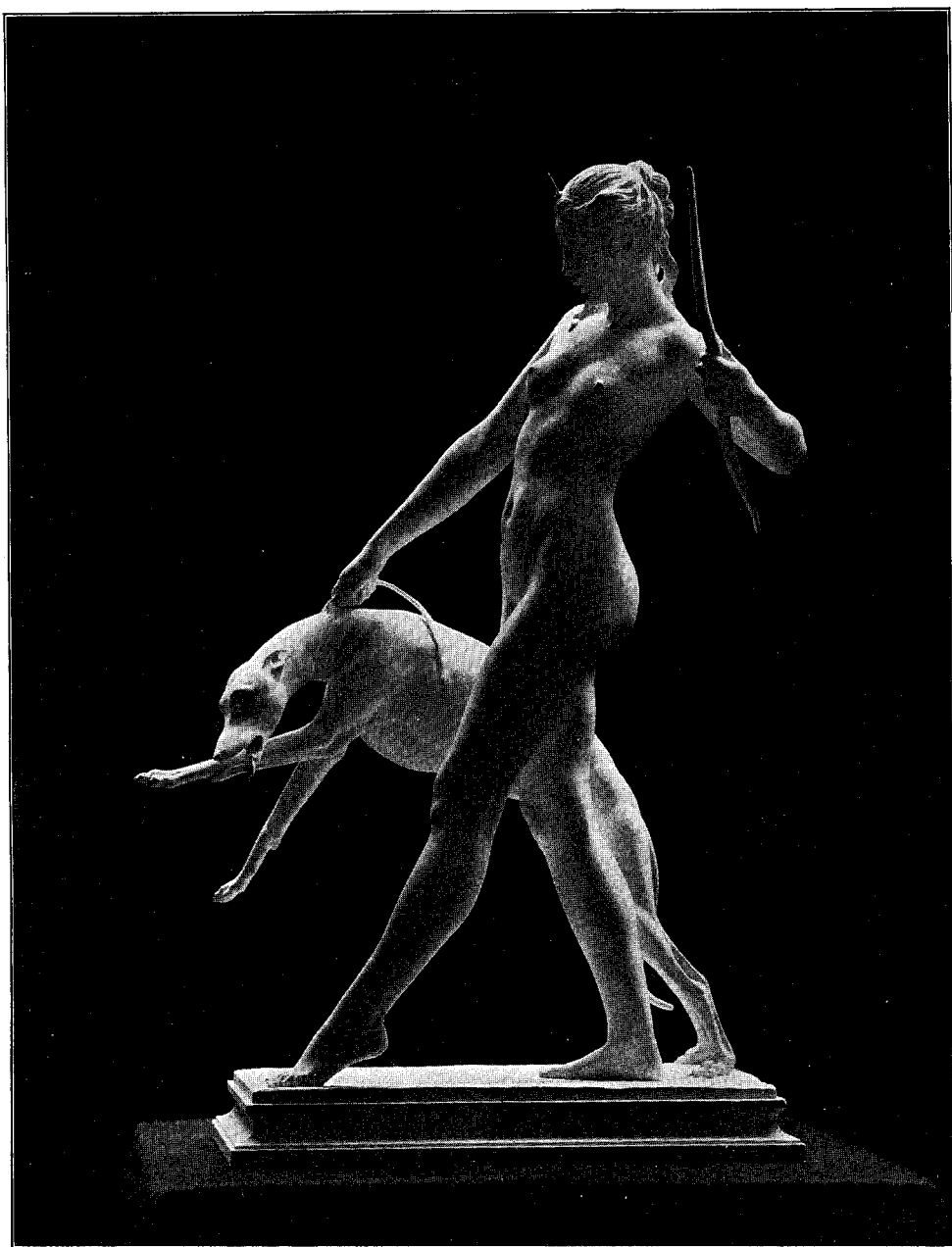
SOME time before the year is out the people of New York will be looking at one of the most conspicuous sculptural decorations ever erected in the city. It is to take the shape of a gigantic clock, lifted sixty feet above the ground on the north façade of the towering New York Central Building in Park Avenue. The dial will be about thirteen feet high. The reclining figures supporting it, Transportation on one side and Industry on the other, will be nearly four times the size of life. A few symbolical accessories will be introduced into the more or less pyramidal composition, but this aims to be one of simple line and mass. Carved in limestone it will be decorative, but, as I have said, portentously conspicuous. Countless thousands will look up at it every day as they come down the avenue. They will note the hour. Also, I think, they will get an impression of beauty. The model promises that and there is good augury, too, in the previous works of the artist, Edward McCartan. This seems an appropriate moment in which to consider the origins and nature of his art.



He was born in Albany in 1879 and appears to have gravitated toward sculpture from his earliest years. He began to draw, instinctively, in childhood, and by the time he was ten years old he

had modelled in clay the figure of a lion. All through the period of his schooling these preoccupations continued and he was still in his teens when he came down to Brooklyn to embark upon his profession, entering Pratt Institute to study under Herbert Adams. An interlude ensued of brief employment in business, and then followed further training at the hands of George Gray Barnard and Hermon MacNeil, at the Art Students' League, which prepared him for three years in Paris. Injalbert was his master at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but I gather that his attendance at this institution was of an intermittent character, hardly more important to him than constant visits to the Louvre and contact with antique and Renaissance sculpture. McCartan's French experience coincided with the resounding period in Rodin's vogue, and he shared in the prevailing enthusiasm for that master. He recalls especially the interest with which he observed the development of their patinas upon *Le Penseur* and *Les Bourgeois de Calais*, placed out in the open for the purpose near his own studio. But there is no trace of Rodin's influence in his work.

It was back in Paris, around 1908, that he made the first sketch for *The Kiss*, a marble of a mother and her child that stands in the Albright Gallery at Buffalo. But the modelling of this was not resumed until long after-



Diana.

From the sculpture by Edward McCartan.



The Eugene Field Memorial.

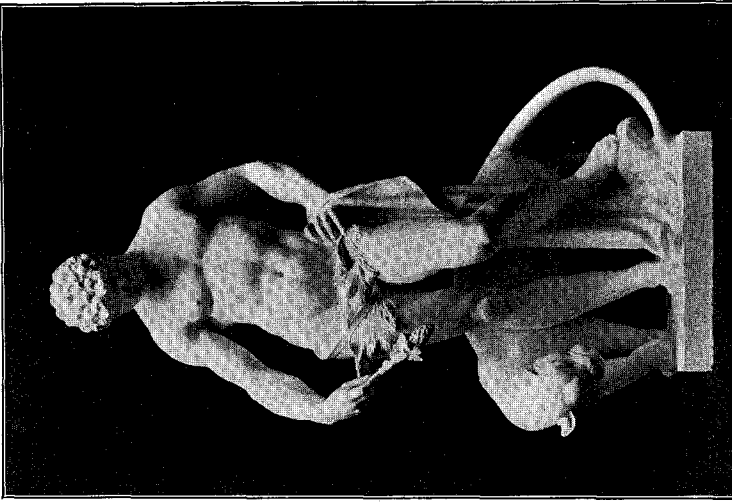


The Spirit of the Woods.

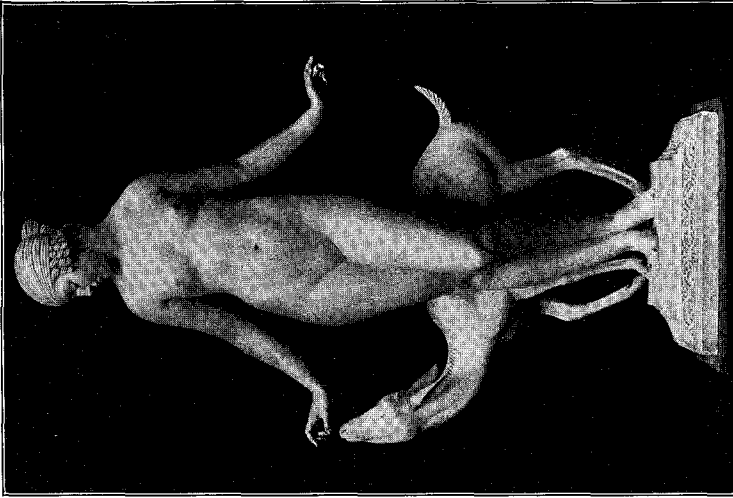


Nymph and Satyr.

From the sculptures by Edward McCartan.

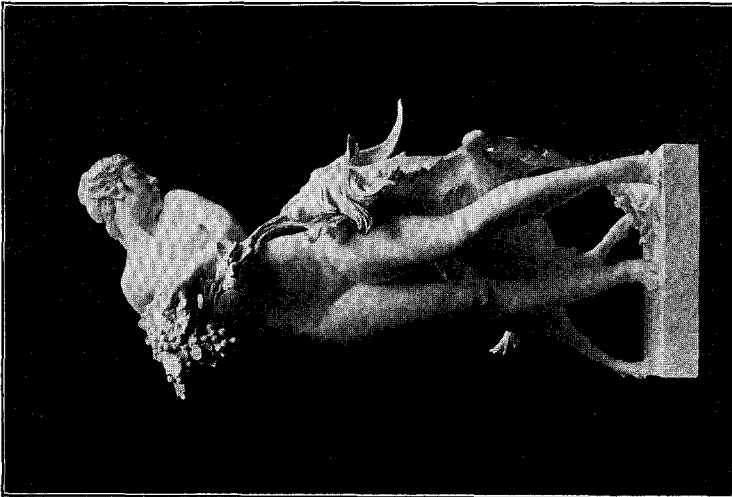


Boy with Panther.



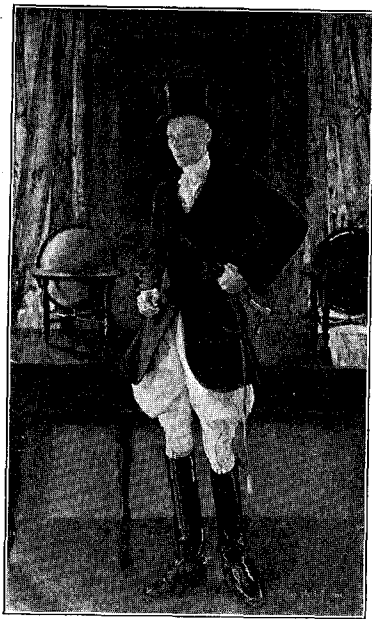
Isoult.

From the sculptures by Edward McCartan.



Girl with Goat.





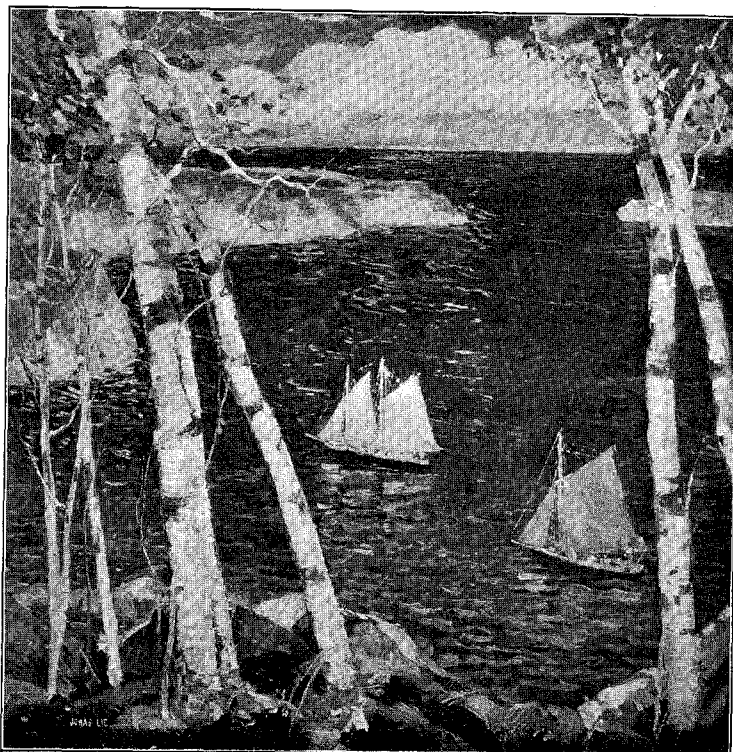
T. Shardin, Esq.

From the painting by Lilian Westcott  
Hale in the Winter Academy.



Cypripedia.

From the painting by Sergeant Kendall  
in the Winter Academy.



The Cloud.

From the painting by Jonas Lie, N. A., in the Winter Academy.

ward, the completion of the thing being postponed to 1924. Indeed, he seems to have proceeded with great deliberation upon his career, designing a few pieces of his own on returning to America but earning a livelihood as helper in more than one studio. None of our sculptors has evolved his art out of a more comprehensive practical experience. Under Karl Bitter he was busily occupied in the big studios at Hoboken where the endless mass of stuff for the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo was developed. He spent his time not modelling but "pointing up." Working later for Adams and MacNeil he got deeper into the mysteries of technique. All this made him a seasoned craftsman, so that he can make a cast, chisel stone, do any of the tasks that fall to a sculptor's lot.



In this earlier formative time there slowly ripened in McCartan's imagination the conception of sculpture which had been growing in him from the beginning, fostered by long hours in contemplation of the fountains and other open-air statuary at Versailles. He had arrived then at the conviction that sculpture, as he saw it and felt impelled to make it, would be sculpture enveloped, allied with its background and environment, a thing essentially decorative. He learned to distinguish between the "museum piece," the sculpture standing as it were in a vacuum, and the "garden piece," the sculpture fit to bear the test of close scrutiny but above all things functioning as an episode in a living world. The distinction is important, as every exacting observer of garden sculpture knows. Some bronzes, admirable in themselves as works of modelling, look when placed out-of-

doors as though they really belonged in the house. McCartan struck the right note with a kind of clairvoyant touch. I have not seen his first production, a Pan for a garden at White Plains, but I well remember the Spirit of the Woods, which came next, the dancing nymph balancing a baby in her outstretched hands which has a lovely setting to-day in the Harold Pratt garden at Glen Cove. I came upon it in an exhibition which may or may not have placed some greenery about the statue. I know that it immediately seemed to create its own natural surroundings, to evoke a sense of sylvan beauty, intimate and free. The thing had *élan*. This sculptor, who thinks of form less as the embodiment of an idea than as a decorative pattern, had nevertheless given his figure an animating principle and in its lithe young movement made it the very image of woodland grace and magic.

Chronology carries us not long after the foregoing statue to an interesting parting of the ways. We are confronted by two salient works, a Nymph and Satyr, which takes us from the blithe naturalism of the Spirit of the Woods to a sophisticated, intensely decorative mood akin to that of Clodion, and an essay in pretty sentiment, the Eugene Field Memorial for Lincoln Park, at Chicago. The latter is a considerable monument. The hovering fairy is about seven feet high, looking down upon the children grouped against a granite base. It is clever, picturesque, and, if you like, exactly the right thing in the right place, a conception breathing the sweet airs of childhood, illustrative of Field's genius—a true memorial. But as sculpture it seems to me almost irrelevant in the story of McCartan's progress. All that is characteristic of him in it is the polished workmanship and a certain

lightness of touch. Otherwise it is a conventional performance, and particularly does it disclose in its sentimental aspect a motive outside his real range. The parting of the ways was to prove, for him, a matter of no dubiety whatever. He made his choice and it was on the side of that *métier* which the Nymph and Satyr proclaims. That foreshadowed the specific path he was to take and to which he was to adhere in successive works such as the Girl with Goat, the Boy with Panther, the Diana, the Artemis, and the Isoult, which brings us to the present time, abreast of the new clock.



How is it that the works named just now may be said to prefigure a successful design in the decoration for the New York Central Building? In the first place, through the evidence they afford that McCartan is a thoroughly able and original sculptor. The two merits are peculiarly intertwined in his case. I have spoken of his rigorous discipline in respect to technical research. There has gone with it a singularly penetrating study of form. His figures are organic, realized from within. They are decorative, but they have the vitality of life. And to this genuineness of theirs I would ascribe a good deal of that originality to which I have alluded. McCartan has been too busy interrogating the actualities of form to permit anything like a "derivative" quality to creep into his work. He has profited by the museums. It has aided him to study Greek sculpture and the art of Michael Angelo. Clodion is not the only eighteenth-century Frenchman of whom I think when I look at the American's compositions. I think, in fact, of the whole delightful school, that did so much to implant a light, graceful type of plastic art, in so

many decorative episodes, indoors and out, in the French social scene a century and more ago. Sometimes the atmosphere of Houdon in particular seems revived by McCartan. It is impossible to avoid recollection of it in the presence of the Diana, for example. Yet that very work leaves the sculptor's essential originality unchallenged. It is a matter not of an old formula renewed but of independent expression in a kindred language. I would call McCartan not a conscious disciple of the eighteenth century but one of its spiritual descendants.

He is a child of Houdon, say, simply in that it is natural to him to compose in terms of an animated mundane elegance and to stress in his figures the precious quality of line. The Diana is perhaps his outstanding triumph in this regard. Its contours have a delectably pure and flowing linear distinction. How spare and refined the lovely figure is! It is delightful, as you apprehend it, to reflect upon the artist's escapes during his pupilage in Paris. He had no traffic with either the earthy power of Falguière or the supersensitive virtuosity of Rodin, but went wide of the pitfalls concealed by both. The exquisiteness of feeling which characterizes the Diana is carried over, rather, into some such fine dry light as we associate with the more academic works of Houdon. Just as the spirit of the thing is purged of merely sensuous elements, so the ideal of form set forth, and the technical mode that defines it, are chastened, clarified, given a certain keenness and elevation.



Three factors count in the achievement of this lucid, high-bred effect. There is felicity of design. Observe the pattern made of figure and animal not only in the Diana but in all the other



groups. Then there is the circumstance that these sculptures, though usually modest in scale, have been somehow seen, primarily, "in the large." The Nymph and Satyr was projected as a statue seven feet high, in stone. Go to the Metropolitan Museum, where the Diana stands in bronze, and you will find that it is hardly more than two feet high. But the artist has been putting it into a bronze of nearly seven feet for a Greenwich garden, and, while this has required a rehandling of some of the modulations of form, the design, as such, has submitted easily to the transposition. In composition and in scale he is true to the simple clarity which makes him, to my mind, a faintly Houdonesque sculptor. But the thing that clinches the point is the third of the special ingredients I have in mind, the ingredient of style. I use the word not in the customary sense, implying a specifically personal attribute, but rather in that broad connotation which brings many artists of varying idiosyncrasies into a kind of alliance. That slender, supple, poised Diana, the vivacious Girl with Goat, the serene Isoult, have the style of a *gaillard* carriage, of a distinguished gesture, style as it is manifested in the flourish of a flawless act or in the finish of a perfect epigram.

The Isoult, a six-foot bronze, as the embodiment of an idea sprang from a romantic source. McCartan got his heroine out of Maurice Hewlett's *Forest Lovers*. But it is not quite as a romanticist that he has rounded out this work of art. The colorful theme is in some sort sifted through the warm tapestry of the enchanting tale, and, if not precisely de-personalized, is at any rate simplified until it takes on an almost classical reticence. Remark the synthesizing of the maiden's hair, and the

similarly generalizing touch in the treatment of the fawn. Throughout, the sculptor makes you feel his reserve, his selective taste, that same handling of form, I repeat, which belongs to the cool, calculating, fastidious Houdon. It is upon just such refined, rarefied work that the benison of style descends. This distinction of style is what gathers together and validates all of McCartan's traits as a sculptor.

It makes him a beguiling figure in American art. There never can be too warm a welcome for work that, like his, interprets gracious, delicately imaginative motives and envelops them in what I may call the nobility of a great plastic tradition. He is American, yes, but as I have endeavored to show, there functions again in him the urbane decorative purpose which has adorned not only eighteenth-century France but other places in other times. He makes sculpture, as it has been made in the historic episodes from Tanagra down, small in scale, part and parcel of a choice background, pleasing to the eye, and, even more than that, in a thoroughly sophisticated way lovable. It goes happily into a luxurious *milieu*. I recall one of his pieces raised against a tapestried background in a stately hall. It made a fascinating incident, falling into its place in a truly brilliant manner. But these statues pass, by a kind of predestination, into a garden. There, in a green space, they seem most fittingly to live their life of measured movement and linear beauty. I am told that McCartan finds difficulty in inventing titles for them, as though such poetry as is in his bronzes—and they have poetic charm—were something subordinate to his aim. It is an appropriate anecdote, pointing to the artist in him pure and simple. He is nothing if not



the absorbed weaver of decorative plastic patterns.



The Winter Academy has just opened as I write and it will be gone before these lines appear in print. But I cannot let it go without expressing some appreciation of an uncommonly good exhibition. Last spring the modernists were given a room to themselves, and there we could see "our young lions all at play." It was not the most edifying spectacle in the world and this season the experiment was not repeated. The result was an ensemble illustrating the familiar walk and demeanor of the Academy of Design. That, if we are to believe the modernists who assail this institution in season and out of season, is indicative of only uninspired convention. As a matter of fact, the Academy, with all its faults—and it is not faultless—happens to maintain a principle of high value, the principle of honest, instructed workmanship. It is the Academy's ill fortune—and ours—that the crop of brilliant men of genius is always slender, everywhere. To realize that you have only to go to London, or Paris, or any European capital, and see how a few good painters are swamped in vast companies of duffers. There never was an epoch poorer than our own in resplendent leaders. But how stupid it is to let that circumstance blind us to the really fine work that is nevertheless being done here and there! More of it, I think, might be lured into

the Academy than actually gets there, but I found plenty to admire in the particular exhibition to which I refer.

The full-length by Lillian Westcott Hale abundantly deserved the Altman prize that it received, the highest award which the Academy has to bestow. It proved a spirited, really interesting portrait, and it was especially impressive technically. I saw any number of good portraits on the walls, and while the exhibition was weak in *genre*, as any American exhibition, for some occult reason, is seemingly bound to be, there were several strong figure-pieces by Sergeant Kendall, Philip Hale, Will Foster, and so on. The Carnegie prize was justly given to Jonas Lie for a beautiful coast scene, *The Cloud*, and there were many other delightful open-air studies in the show. American art is nowhere more personal or distinguished than in its landscape-paintings. In every department the Winter Academy struck me as being possessed of inspiring productions numerous enough to counterbalance the usual contingent of negligible pictures. I can understand the hatred of the modernists for these exhibitions. They think, fondly, that Matisse has obliterated everything else. But it is a grave error to browbeat the Academy as though it were a hotbed of mediocrity and nothing more. It is helping to keep alive some standard of technical integrity, the standard which modernism is constantly threatening.



A calendar of current art exhibitions will be found in the  
Fifth Avenue Section.

## The Greene Murder Case

(Continued from page 186 of this number)

she left behind her was largely a substantiation of Hemming's outpourings. She, though, did not regard the two murders as the acts of an outraged God. Hers was a more practical and mundane view.

"There's something awful funny going on here," she had said, forgetting for the moment the urge of her coquettish spirits. "The Greens are queer people. And the servants are queer, too—what with Mr. Sproot reading books in foreign languages, and Hemming preaching about fire and brimstone, and cook going around in a sort of trance muttering to herself and never answering a civil question.—And such a family!" She rolled her eyes. "Mrs. Greene hasn't got any heart. She's a regular old witch, and she looks at you sometimes as though she'd like to strangle you. If I was Miss Ada I'd have gone crazy long ago. But then, Miss Ada's no better than the rest. She acts nice and gentle-like, but I've seen her stamping up and down in her room looking like a very devil; and once she used language to me what was that bad I put my fingers in my ears. And Miss Sibella's a regular icicle—except when she gets mad, and then she'd kill you if she dared, and laugh about it. And there's been something funny about her and Mr. Chester. Ever since Miss Julia and Miss Ada were shot they've been talking to each other in the sneakiest way when they thought no one was looking. And this Doctor Von Blon what comes here so much: he's a deep one. He's been in Miss Sibella's room with the door shut lots of times when she wasn't any more sick than you are. And Mr. Rex, now. He's a queer man, too. I get the creeps every time he comes near me." She shuddered by way of demonstration. "Miss Julia wasn't as queer as the rest. She just hated everybody and was mean."

Barton had rambled on loquaciously with all the thoughtless exaggeration of a gossip who felt herself outraged; and Markham had not interrupted her. He was trying to dredge up some nugget from the mass of her verbal silt; but when at last he sifted it all down there remained nothing but a few shining grains of scandal.

The cook was even less enlightening. Taciturn by nature, she became almost inarticulate when approached on the subject of the crime. Her stolid exterior seemed to cloak a sullen resentment at the fact that she should be questioned at all. In fact, as Markham patiently pressed his examination, the impression grew on me that her lack of responsiveness was deliberately defensive, as if she had steeled herself to reticency. Vance, too, sensed this attitude in her, for, during a pause in the interview, he moved his chair about until he faced her directly.

"Frau Mannheim," he said, "the last time we were here you mentioned the fact that Mr. Tobias Greene knew your husband, and that, because of their acquaintance, you applied for a position here when your husband died."

"And why shouldn't I?" she asked stubbornly. "I was poor, and I didn't have any other friends."

"Ah, friends!" Vance caught up the word. "And since you were once on friendly terms with Mr. Greene, you doubtless know certain things about his past, which may have some bearing on the present situation; for it is not at all impossible, d' ye see, that the crimes committed here during the past few days are connected with matters that took place years ago. We don't know this, of course; but we'd be very much gratified if you would try to help us in this regard."

As he was speaking the woman had drawn herself up. Her hands had tightened as they lay folded in her lap, and the muscles about her mouth had stiffened.

"I don't know anything," was her only answer.

"How," asked Vance evenly, "do you account for the rather remarkable fact that Mr. Greene gave orders that you were to remain here as long as you cared to?"

"Mr. Greene was a very kind and generous man," she asserted, in a flat, combative voice. "Some there were that thought him hard, and accused him of being unjust; but he was always good to me and mine."

"How well did he know Mr. Mannheim?"

There was a pause, and the woman's eyes looked blankly ahead.

"He helped my husband once, when he was in trouble."

"How did he happen to do this?"

There was another pause, and then:

"They were in some deal together—in the old country." She frowned and appeared uneasy.

"When was this?"

"I don't remember. It was before I was married."

"And where did you first meet Mr. Greene?"

"At my home in New Orleans. He was there on business—with my husband."

"And, I take it, he befriended you also."

The woman maintained a stubborn silence.

"A moment ago," pursued Vance, "you used the phrase 'me and mine.'—Have you any children, Mrs. Mannheim?"

For the first time during the interview her face radically changed expression. An angry gleam shone in her eyes.

"No!" The denial was like an ejaculation.

Vance smoked lethargically for several moments.

"You lived in New Orleans until the time of your employment in this house?" he finally asked.

"Yes."

"And your husband died there?"

"Yes."

"That was thirteen years ago, I understand.—How long before that had it been since you had seen Mr. Greene?"

"About a year."

"So that would be fourteen years ago."

An apprehension, bordering on fear, showed through the woman's morose calmness.

"And you came all the way to New York to seek Mr. Greene's help," mused Vance. "Why were you so confident that he would give you employment after your husband's death?"

"Mr. Greene was a very good man," was all she would say.

"He had perhaps," suggested Vance, "done some other favor for you which made you think you could count on his generosity—eh, what?"

"That's neither here nor there." Her mouth closed tightly.

Vance changed the subject.

"What do you think about the crimes that have been committed in this house?"

"I don't think about them," she mumbled; but the anxiety in her voice belied the assertion.

"You surely must hold some opinion, Mrs. Mannheim, having been here so long." Vance's intent gaze did not leave the woman. "Who, do you think, would have had any reason for wanting to harm these people?"

Suddenly her self-control gave way.

"*Du lieber Herr Jesus!* I don't know—I don't know!" It was like a cry of anguish. "Miss Julia and Mr. Chester maybe—*gewiss*, one could understand. They hated everybody; they were hard, unloving. But little Ada—*der süsse Engell!* Why should they want to harm her!" She set her face grimly, and slowly her expression of stolidity returned.

"Why, indeed?" A note of sympathy was evident in Vance's voice. After a pause he rose and went to the window. "You may return to your room now, Frau Mannheim," he said, without turning. "We sha'n't let anything further happen to little Ada."

The woman got up heavily and, with an uneasy glance in Vance's direction, left the room.

As soon as she was out of hearing Markham swung about.

"What's the use of raking up all this ancient history?" he demanded irritably. "We're dealing with things that have taken place within the past few days; and you waste valuable time trying to find out why Tobias Greene hired a cook thirteen years ago."

"There's such a thing as cause and effect," offered Vance mildly. "And frequently there's a dashed long interval between the two."

"Granted. But what possible connection can this German cook have with the present murders?"

"Perhaps none." Vance strode back across the room, his eyes on the floor. "But, Markham old dear, nothing appears to have any connection with this débâcle. And, on the other hand, everything seems to have a possible relationship. The whole house is steeped in vague meanings. A hundred shadowy hands are pointing to the culprit, and the moment you try to determine the direction the hands disappear. It's a nightmare. Nothing means anything; therefore, anything may have a meaning."

"My dear Vancel! You're not yourself."



Markham's tone was one of annoyance and reproach. "Your remarks are worse than the obscure ramblings of the sibyls. What if Tobias Greene did have dealings with one Mannheim in the past? Old Tobias indulged in numerous shady transactions, if the gossip of twenty-five or thirty years ago can be credited.\* He was forever scurrying to the ends of the earth on some mysterious mission, and coming home with his pockets lined. And it's common knowledge that he spent considerable time in Germany. If you try to dig up his past for possible explanations for the present business, you'll have your hands full."

"You misconstrue my vagaries," returned Vance, pausing before the old oil-painting of Tobias Greene over the fireplace. "I repudiate all ambition to become the family historian of the Greens. . . . Not a bad head on Tobias," he commented, adjusting his monocle and inspecting the portrait. "An interestin' character. Dynamic forehead, with more than a suggestion of the scholar. A rugged, prying nose. Yes, Tobias no doubt fared forth on many an adventurous quest. A cruel mouth, though—rather sinister, in fact. I wish the whiskers permitted one a view of the chin. It was round, with a deep cleft, I'd say—the substance of which Chester's chin was but the simulacrum."

"Very edifying," snorted Markham. "But phrenology leaves me cold this morning.—Tell me, Vance: are you laboring under some melodramatic notion that old Mannheim may have been resurrected and returned to wreak vengeance on the Greene progeny for wrongs done him by Tobias in the dim past? I can't see any other reason for the questions you put to Mrs. Mannheim. Don't overlook the fact, however, that Mannheim's dead."

"I didn't attend the funeral." Vance sank lazily again in his chair.

"Don't be so unutterably futile," snapped Markham. "What's going through your head?"

"An excellent figure of speech! It expresses my mental state perfectly. Numberless things are 'going through my head.' But nothing remains there. My brain's a veritable sieve."

Heath projected himself into the discussion.

"My opinion is, sir, that the Mannheim

angle of this affair is a washout. We're dealing with the present, and the bird that did this shooting is somewhere around here right now."

"You're probably right, Sergeant," conceded Vance. "But—my word!—it strikes me that every angle of the case—and, for that matter, every cusp, arc, tangent, parabola, sine, radius, and hyperbole—is hopelessly inundated."

## XI

### A PAINFUL INTERVIEW

(Friday, November 12; 11 a. m.)

Markham glanced impatiently at his watch.

"It's getting late," he complained, "and I have an important appointment at noon. I think I'll have a go at Rex Greene, and then leave matters in your hands for the time being, Sergeant. There's nothing much to be done here now, and your routine work must be gone through with."

Heath got up gloomily.

"Yes; and one of the first things to be done is to go over this house with a fine-tooth comb for that revolver. If we could find that gun we'd be on our way."

"I don't want to damp your ardor, Sergeant," drawled Vance, "but something whispers in my ear that the weapon you yearn for is going to prove dashed elusive."

Heath looked depressed; he was obviously of Vance's opinion.

"A hell of a case this is! Not a lead—nothing to get your teeth in."

He went to the archway and yanked the bell-cord viciously. When Sproot appeared he almost barked his demand that Mr. Rex Greene be produced at once; and he stood looking truculently after the retreating butler as if longing for an excuse to follow up his order with violence.

Rex came in nervously, a half-smoked cigarette hanging from his lips. His eyes were sunken; his cheeks sagged, and his short splay fingers fidgeted with the hem of his smoking-jacket, like those of a man under the influence of hyoscine. He gave us a resentful, half-frightened gaze, and planted himself aggressively before us, refusing to take the seat Markham indicated. Suddenly he demanded fiercely:

"Have you found out yet who killed Julia and Chester?"

"No," Markham admitted; "but we've

\* I remember, back in the nineties, when I was a schoolboy, hearing my father allude to certain picturesque tales of Tobias Greene's escapades.

taken every precaution against any recurrence. . . .”

“Precaution? What have you done?”

“We’ve stationed a man both front and rear——”

A cackling laugh cut him short.

“A lot of good that’ll do! The person who’s after us Greenes has a key. He has a key, I tell you! And he can get in whenever he wants to, and nobody can stop him.”

“I think you exaggerate a little,” returned Markham mildly. “In any case, we hope to put our hands on him very soon. And that’s why I’ve asked you here again—it’s quite possible that you can help us.”

“What do I know?” The man’s words were defiant, and he took several long inhalations on his cigarette, the ashes of which fell upon his jacket unnoticed.

“You were asleep, I understand, when the shot was fired last night,” went on Markham’s quiet voice; “but Sergeant Heath tells me you were awake until after eleven and heard noises in the hall. Suppose you tell us just what happened.”

“Nothing happened!” Rex blurted. “I went to bed at half past ten, but I was too nervous to sleep. Then, some time later, the moon came out and fell across the foot of the bed; and I got up and pulled down the shade. About ten minutes later I heard a scraping sound in the hall, and directly afterward a door closed softly——”

“Just a moment, Mr. Greene,” interrupted Vance. “Can you be a little more definite about that noise? What did it sound like?”

“I didn’t pay any attention to it,” was the whining reply. “It might have been almost anything. It was like some one laying down a bundle, or dragging something across the floor; or it might have been old Sproot in his bedroom slippers, though it didn’t sound like him—that is, I didn’t associate him with the sound when I heard it.”

“And after that?”

“After that? I lay awake in bed ten or fifteen minutes longer. I was restless and—and expectant; so I turned on the lights to see what time it was, and smoked half a cigarette——”

“It was twenty-five minutes past eleven, I understand.”

“That’s right. Then a few minutes later I put out the light, and must have gone right to sleep.”

There was a pause, and Heath drew himself up aggressively.

“Say, Greene: know anything about firearms?” He shot the question out brutally.

Rex stiffened. His lips sagged open, and his cigarette fell to the floor. The muscles of his thin jowls twitched, and he glared menacingly at the Sergeant.

“What do you mean?” The words were like a snarl; and I noticed that his whole body was quivering.

“Know what became of your brother’s revolver?” pursued Heath relentlessly, thrusting out his jaw.

Rex’s mouth was working in a paroxysm of fury and fear, but he seemed unable to articulate.

“Where have you got it hidden?” Again Heath’s voice sounded harshly.

“Revolver? . . . Hidden? . . .” At last Rex had succeeded in formulating his words. “You—filthy rotter! If you’ve got any idea that I have the revolver, go up and tear my room apart and look for it—and be damned to you!” His eyes flashed, and his upper lip lifted over his teeth. But there was fright in his attitude as well as rage.

Heath had leaned forward and was about to say something further, when Vance quickly rose and laid a restraining hand on the Sergeant’s arm. He was too late, however, to avoid the thing he evidently hoped to forestall. What Heath had already said had proved sufficient stimulus to bring about a terrible reaction in his victim.

“What do I care what that unspeakable swine says?” he shouted, pointing a palsied finger at the Sergeant. Oaths and vituperation welled shrilly from his twitching lips. His insensate wrath seemed to pass all ordinary bounds. His enormous head was thrust forward like a python’s; and his face was cyanosed and contorted.

Vance stood poised, watching him alertly; and Markham had instinctively moved back his chair. Even Heath was startled by Rex’s inordinate malignity.

What might have happened I don’t know, had not Von Blon at that moment stepped swiftly into the room and placed a restraining hand on the youth’s shoulder.

“Rex!” he said, in a calm, authoritative voice. “Get a grip on yourself. You’re disturbing Ada.”

The other ceased speaking abruptly; but

his ferocity of manner did not wholly abate. He shook off the doctor's hand angrily and swung round, facing Von Blon.

"What are you interfering for?" he cried. "You're always meddling in this house, coming here when you're not sent for, and nosing into our affairs. Mother's paralysis is only an excuse. You've said yourself she'll never get well, and yet you keep coming, bringing her medicine and sending bills." He gave the doctor a crafty leer. "Oh, you don't deceive me. I know why you come here! It's Sibella!" Again he thrust out his head and grinned shrewdly. "She'd be a good catch for a doctor, too—wouldn't she? Plenty of money —"

Suddenly he halted. His eyes did not leave Von Blon, but he shrank back and the twitching of his face began once more. A quivering finger went up; and as he spoke his voice rose excitedly.

"But Sibella's money isn't enough. You want ours along with hers. So you're arranging for her to inherit all of it. That's it—that's it! *You're* the one who's been doing all this. . . . Oh, my God! You've got Chester's gun—you took it! And you've got a key to the house—easy enough for you to have one made. That's how you got in."

Von Blon shook his head sadly and smiled with rueful tolerance. It was an embarrassing moment, but he carried it off well.

"Come, Rex," he said quietly, like a person speaking to a refractory child. "You've said enough——"

"Have I?" cried the youth, his eyes gleaming unnaturally. "You knew Chester had the revolver. You went camping with him the summer he got it—he told me so the other day, after Julia was killed." His beady little eyes seemed to stare from his head; a spasm shook his emaciated body; and his fingers again began worrying the hem of his jacket.

Von Blon stepped swiftly forward and, putting a hand on each of his shoulders, shook him.

"That'll do, Rex!" The words were a sharp command. "If you carry on this way, we'll have to lock you up in an institution."

The threat was uttered in what I considered an unnecessarily brutal tone; but it had the desired effect. A haunting fear showed in Rex's eyes. He seemed suddenly to go limp, and he docilely permitted Von Blon to lead him from the room.

"A sweet specimen, that Rex," commented Vance. "Not a person one would choose for a boon companion. Aggravated macrocephalia—cortical irritation. But I say, Sergeant; really, y' know, you shouldn't have prodded the lad so."

Heath grunted.

"You can't tell me that guy don't know something. And you can bet your sweet life I'm going to search his room damn good for that gun."

"It appears to me," rejoined Vance, "he's too flighty to have planned the massacre in this house. He might blow up under pressure and hit somebody with a handy missile; but I doubt if he'd lay any deep schemes and bide his time."

"He's good and scared about something," persisted Heath morosely.

"Hasn't he cause to be? Maybe he thinks the elusive gunman whereabouts will choose him as the next target."

"If there *is* another gunman, he showed damn bad taste not picking Rex out first." It was evident the Sergeant was still smarting under the epithets that had so recently been directed at him.

Von Blon returned to the drawing-room at this moment, looking troubled.

"I've got Rex quieted," he said. "Gave him five grains of luminal. He'll sleep for a few hours and wake up penitent. I've rarely seen him quite as violent as he was to-day. He's supersensitive—cerebral neurasthenia; and he's apt to fly off the handle. But he's never dangerous." He scanned our faces swiftly. "One of you gentlemen must have said something pretty severe."

Heath looked sheepish. "I asked him where he'd hid the gun."

"Ah!" The doctor gave the Sergeant a look of questioning reproach. "Too bad! We have to be careful with Rex. He's all right so long as he isn't opposed too strongly. But I don't just see, sir, what your object could have been in questioning him about the revolver. You surely don't suspect him of having had a hand in these terrible shootings."

"You tell me who did the shootings, doc," retorted Heath pugnaciously, "and then I'll tell you who I *don't* suspect."

"I regret that I am unable to enlighten you." Von Blon's tone exuded its habitual pleasantness. "But I can assure you Rex had



no part in them. They're quite out of keeping with his pathologic state."

"That's the defense of half the high-class killers we get the goods on," countered Heath.

"I see I can't argue with you." Von Blon sighed regretfully, and turned an engaging countenance in Markham's direction. "Rex's absurd accusations puzzled me deeply, but, since this officer admits he practically accused the boy of having the revolver, the situation becomes perfectly clear. A common form of instinctive self-protection, this attempting to shift blame on others. You can see, of course, that Rex was merely trying to turn suspicion upon me so as to free himself. It's unfortunate, for he and I were always good friends. Poor Rex!"

"By the by, doctor," came Vance's indolent voice; "that point about your being with Mr. Chester Greene on the camping-trip when he first secured the gun: was that correct? Or was it merely a fancy engendered by Rex's self-protective instinct?"

Von Blon smiled with faultless urbanity and, putting his head a little on one side, appeared to recall the past.

"It may be correct," he admitted. "I was once with Chester on a camping-trip. Yes, it's quite likely—though, I shouldn't like to state it definitely. It was so long ago."

"Fifteen years, I think, Mr. Greene said. Ah, yes—a long time ago. *Eheul fugaces, Postume, Postume, labuntur anni*. It's very depressin'. And do you recall, doctor, if Mr. Greene had a revolver along on that particular outing?"

"Since you mention it, I believe I do recall his having one, though again I should choose not to be definite on the subject."

"Perhaps you may recollect if he used it for target practice." Vance's tone was dulcet and unceasing. "Popping away at tree-boles and tin cans and what not, don't y' know."

Von Blon nodded reminiscently.

"Ye-es. It's quite possible. . . ."

"And you yourself may have done a bit of desult'ry popping, what?"

"To be sure, I may have." Von Blon spoke musingly, like one recalling childish pranks. "Yes, it's wholly possible."

Vance lapsed into a disinterested silence, and the doctor, after a moment's hesitation, rose.

"I must be going, I'm afraid." And with a

gracious bow he started toward the door. "Oh, by the way," he said, pausing, "I almost forgot that Mrs. Greene told me she desired to see you gentlemen before you went. Forgive me if I suggest that it might be wise to humor her. She's something of a dowager, you know, and her invalidism has made her rather irritable and exacting."

"I'm glad you mentioned Mrs. Greene, doctor." It was Vance who spoke. "I've been intending to ask you about her. What is the nature of her paralysis?"

Von Blon appeared surprised.

"Why, a sort of paraplegia dolorosa—that is, a paralysis of the legs and lower part of the body, accompanied by severe pains due to pressure of the indurations on the spinal cord and nerves. No spasticity of the limbs has supervened, however. Came on very suddenly without any premonitory symptoms about ten years ago—probably the result of transverse myelitis. There's nothing really to be done but to keep her as comfortable as possible with symptomatic treatment, and to tone up the heart action. A sixtieth of strychnine three times a day takes care of the circulation."

"Couldn't by any chance be a hysterical akinesia?"

"Good Lord, no! There's no hysteria." Then his eyes widened in amazement. "Oh, I see! No; there's no possibility of recovery, even partial. It's organic paralysis."

"And atrophy?"

"Oh, yes. Muscular atrophy is now pronounced."

"Thank you very much." Vance lay back with half-closed eyes.

"Oh, not at all.—And remember, Mr. Markham, that I always stand ready to help in any way I can. Please don't hesitate to call on me." He bowed again, and went out.

Markham got up and stretched his legs.

"Come; we've been summoned to appear." His facetiousness was a patent effort to shake off the depressing gloom of the case.

Mrs. Greene received us with almost unctuous cordiality.

"I knew you'd grant the request of a poor old useless cripple," she said, with an appealing smile; "though I'm used to being ignored. No one pays any attention to my wishes."

The nurse stood at the head of the bed arranging the pillows beneath the old lady's shoulders.

"Is that comfortable now?" she asked.

Mrs. Greene made a gesture of annoyance.

"A lot you care whether I'm comfortable or not! Why can't you let me alone, nurse? You're always disturbing me. There was nothing wrong with the pillows. And I don't want you in here now anyway. Go and sit with Ada."

The nurse drew a long, patient breath, and went silently from the room, closing the door behind her.

Mrs. Greene reverted to her former ingratiating manner.

"No one understands my needs the way Ada does, Mr. Markham. What a relief it will be when the dear child gets well enough to care for me again! But I mustn't complain. The nurse does the best she knows how, I suppose.—Please sit down, gentlemen . . . yet what wouldn't I give if I could only stand up the way you can. No one realizes what it means to be a helpless paralytic."

Markham did not avail himself of the invitation, but waited until she had finished speaking and then said:

"Please believe that you have my deepest sympathy, madam. . . . You sent for me, Doctor Von Blon said."

"Yes!" She looked at him calculatingly. "I wanted to ask you a favor."

She paused, and Markham bowed but did not answer.

"I wanted to request you to drop this investigation. I've had enough worry and disturbance as it is. But I don't count. It's the family I'm thinking of—the good name of the Greens." A note of pride came into her voice. "What need is there to drag us through the mire and make us an object of scandalous gossip for the *canaille*? I want peace and quiet, Mr. Markham. I won't be here much longer; and why should my house be overrun with policemen just because Julia and Chester have suffered their just deserts for neglecting me and letting me suffer here alone? I'm an old woman and a cripple, and I'm deserving of a little consideration."

Her face clouded, and her voice became harsh.

"You haven't any right to come here and upset my house and annoy me in this outrageous fashion! I haven't had a minute's rest since all this excitement began, and my spine is paining me so I can hardly breathe." She took several stertorous breaths, and her

eyes flashed indignantly. "I don't expect any better treatment from my children—they're hard and thoughtless. But you, Mr. Markham—an outsider, a stranger: why should you want to torture me with all this commotion? It's outrageous—inhuman!"

"I am sorry if the presence of the officers of the law in your house disturbs you," Markham told her gravely; "but I have no alternative. When a crime has been committed it is my duty to investigate, and to use every means at my disposal to bring the guilty person to justice."

"Justice!" The old lady repeated the word scornfully. "Justice has already been done. I've been avenged for the treatment I've received these many years, lying here helpless."

There was something almost terrifying in the woman's cruel and unrelenting hatred of her children, and in the cold-blooded satisfaction she seemed to take in the fact that two of them had been punished by death. Markham, naturally sympathetic, revolted against her attitude.

"However much gratification you may feel at the murder of your son and daughter, madam," he said coldly, "it does not release me from my duty to find the murderer.—Was there anything else you wished to speak to me about?"

For a while she sat silent, her face working with impotent passion. The gaze she bent on Markham was almost ferocious. But presently the vindictive vigilance of her eyes relaxed, and she drew a deep sigh.

"No; you may go now. I have nothing more to say. And, anyway, who cares about an old helpless woman like me? I should have learned by this time that nobody thinks of my comfort, lying here all alone, unable to help myself—a nuisance to every one. . . ."

Her whining, self-pitying voice followed us as we made our escape.

"Y' know, Markham," said Vance, as we came into the lower hall, "the Empress Dowager is not entirely devoid of reason. Her suggestion is deserving of consideration. The clarion voice of duty may summon you to this quest, but—my word!—whither shall one quest? There's nothing sane in this house—nothing that lends itself to ordin'ry normal reason. Why not take her advice and chuck it? Even if you learn the truth, it's likely to prove a sort of Pyrrhic vict'ry. I'm afraid

it'll be more terrible than the crimes themselves."

Markham did not deign to answer; he was familiar with Vance's heresies, and he also knew that Vance himself would be the last person to throw over an unsolved problem.

"We've got something to go on, Mr. Vance," submitted Heath solemnly, but without enthusiasm. "There's those foot-tracks, for instance; and we've got the missing gun to find. Dubois is up-stairs now taking finger-prints. And the reports on the servants'll be coming along soon. There's no telling what'll turn up in a few days. I'll have a dozen men working on this case before night."

"Such zeal, Sergeant! But it's in the atmosphere of this old house—not in tangible clues—that the truth lies hidden. It's somewhere in these old jumbled rooms; it's peering out from dark corners and from behind doors. It's here—in this very hall perhaps."

His tone was fraught with troubled concern, and Markham looked at him sharply.

"I think you're right, Vance," he muttered. "But how is one to get at it?"

"'Pon my soul, I don't know. How does one get at spectres, anyway? I've never had much intimate intercourse with ghosts, don't y' know."

"You're talking rubbish!" Markham jerked on his overcoat, and turned to Heath. "You go ahead, Sergeant; and keep in touch with me. If nothing develops from your inquiries, we'll discuss the next step."

And he and Vance and I went out to the waiting car.

## XII

### A MOTOR RIDE

(November 12—November 25)

The inquiry was pushed according to the best traditions of the Police Department. Captain Carl Hagedorn, the firearms expert,\* made a minute scientific examination of the bullets. The same revolver, he found, had fired all three shots: the peculiar rifling told him this; and he was able to state that the revolver was an old Smith & Wesson of a style whose manufacture had been discontinued. But, while these findings offered sub-

\* Captain Hagedorn was the expert who supplied Vance with the technical data in the Benson murder case, which made it possible for him to establish the height of the murderer.

stantiation to the theory that Chester Greene's missing gun was the one used by the murderer, they added nothing to the facts already established or suspected. Deputy Inspector Conrad Brenner, the burglar-tools expert,† had conducted an exhaustive examination of the scene for evidential signs of a forced entrance, but had found no traces whatever of a housebreaker.

Dubois and his assistant Bellamy—the two leading finger-print authorities of the New York Police Department—went so far as to take finger-prints of every member of the Greene household, including Doctor Von Blon; and these were compared with the impressions found in the hallways and in the rooms where the shootings had occurred. But when this tedious process was over not an unidentified print remained; and all those that had been found and photographed were logically accounted for.

Chester Greene's galoshes were taken to Headquarters and turned over to Captain Jerym, who carefully compared them with the measurements and the patterns made by Snitkin. No new fact concerning them, however, was discovered. The tracks in the snow, Captain Jerym reported, had been made either by the galoshes given him or by another pair of the exact size and last. Beyond this statement he could not, he said, conscientiously go.

It was established that no one in the Greene mansion, with the exception of Chester and Rex, owned galoshes; and Rex's were number seven—three sizes smaller than those found in Chester's clothes-closet. Sprout used only storm-rubbers, size eight; and Doctor Von Blon, who affected gaiters in winter, always wore rubber sandals during stormy weather.

The search for the missing revolver occupied several days. Heath turned the task over to men trained especially in this branch of work, and supplied them with a search-warrant in case they should meet with any opposition. But no obstacle was put in their way. The house was systematically ransacked from basement to attic. Even Mrs. Greene's quarters were subjected to a search. The old lady had at first objected, but finally gave her consent, and even seemed a bit disappointed when the men had finished. The only room

† It was Inspector Brenner who examined and reported on the chiselled jewel-box in the Canary murder case.



that was not gone over was Tobias Greene's library. Owing to the fact that Mrs. Greene had never let the key go out of her possession, and had permitted no one to enter the room since her husband's death, Heath decided not to force the issue when she refused point-blank to deliver the key. Every other nook and corner of the house, however, was combed by the Sergeant's men. But no sign of the revolver rewarded their efforts.

The autopsies revealed nothing at variance with Doctor Doremus's preliminary findings. Julia and Chester had each died instantaneously from the effects of a bullet entering the heart, shot from a revolver held at close range. No other possible cause of death was present in either body; and there were no indications of a struggle.

No unknown or suspicious person had been seen near the Greene mansion on the night of either murder, although several people were found who had been in the neighborhood at the time; and a bootmaker, who lived on the second floor of the Narcoss Flats in 53d Street, opposite to the house, stated that he had been sitting at his window, smoking his bedtime pipe, during the time of both shootings, and could swear that no one had passed down that end of the street.

However, the guard which had been placed over the Greene mansion was not relaxed. Men were on duty day and night at both entrances to the estate, and every one entering or leaving the premises was closely scrutinized. So close a watch was kept that strange tradesmen found it inconvenient and at times difficult to make ordinary deliveries.

The reports that were turned in concerning the servants were unsatisfactory from the standpoint of detail; but all the facts unearthed tended to eliminate each subject from any possible connection with the crimes. Barton, the younger maid, who had quitted the Greene establishment the morning after the second tragedy, proved to be the daughter of respectable working people living in Jersey City. Her record was good, and her companions all appeared to be harmless members of her own class.

Hemming, it turned out, was a widow who, up to the time of her employment with the Greens, had kept house for her husband, an iron-worker, in Altoona, Pa. She was remembered even there among her former neighbors as a religious fanatic who had led

her husband sternly and exultantly in the narrow path of enforced rectitude. When he was killed by a furnace explosion she declared it was the hand of God striking him down for some secret sin. Her associates were few: they were in the main members of a small congregation of East Side Anabaptists.

The summer gardener of the Greens—a middle-aged Pole named Krinski—was discovered in a private saloon in Harlem, well under the benumbing influence of synthetic whiskey—a state of beatific lassitude he had maintained, with greater or lesser steadfastness, since the end of summer. He was at once eliminated from police consideration.

The investigation into the habits and associates of Mrs. Mannheim and Sproot brought nothing whatever to light. Indeed, the habits of these two were exemplary, and their contacts with the outside world so meagre as to be regarded almost as non-existent. Sproot had no visible friends, and his acquaintances were limited to an English valet in Park Avenue and the tradespeople of the neighborhood. He was solitary by nature, and what few recreations he permitted himself were indulged in unaccompanied. Mrs. Mannheim had rarely left the premises of the Greene house since she had taken up her duties there at the time of her husband's death, and apparently knew no one in New York outside of the household.

These reports dashed whatever hopes Sergeant Heath may have harbored of finding a solution to the Greene mystery by way of a possible accomplice in the house itself.

"I guess we'll have to give up the idea of an inside job," he lamented one morning in Markham's office a few days after the shooting of Chester Greene.

Vance, who was present, eyed him lazily.

"I shouldn't say that, don't y' know, Sergeant. On the contrary, it was indubitably an inside job, though not just the variety you have in mind."

"You mean you think some member of the family did it?"

"Well—perhaps: something rather along that line." Vance drew on his cigarette thoughtfully. "But that's not exactly what I meant. It's a situation, a set of conditions—an atmosphere, let us say—that's guilty. A subtle and deadly poison is responsible for the crimes. And that poison is generated in the Greene mansion."

"A swell time I'd have trying to arrest an atmosphere—or a poison either, for the matter of that," snorted Heath.

"Oh, there's a flesh-and-blood victim awaiting your manacles somewhere, Sergeant—the agent, so to speak, of the atmosphere."

Markham, who had been conning the various reports of the case, sighed heavily, and settled back in his chair.

"Well, I wish to Heaven," he interposed bitterly, "that he'd give us some hint as to his identity. The papers are at it hammer and tongs. There's been another delegation of reporters here this morning."

The fact was that rarely had there been in New York's journalistic history a case which had so tenaciously seized upon the public imagination. The shooting of Julia and Ada Greene had been treated sensationally but perfunctorily; but after Chester Greene's murder an entirely different spirit animated the newspaper stories. Here was something romantically sinister—something which brought back forgotten pages of criminal history.\* Columns were devoted to accounts of the Greene family history. Genealogical archives were delved into for remote titbits. Old Tobias Greene's record was raked over, and stories of his early life became the common property of the man in the street. Pictures of all the members of the Greene family accompanied these spectacular tales; and the Greene mansion itself, photographed from every possible angle, was used regularly to illustrate the flamboyant accounts of the crimes so recently perpetrated there.

The story of the Greene murders spread over the entire country, and even the press of Europe found space for it. The tragedy, taken in connection with the social prominence of the family and the romantic history of its progenitors, appealed irresistibly to the morbidity and the snobbery of the public.

It was natural that the police and the District Attorney's office should be hounded by the representatives of the press; and it was also natural that both Heath and Markham

should be sorely troubled by the fact that all their efforts to lay hands on the criminal had come to naught. Several conferences had been called in Markham's office, at each of which the ground had been carefully reploughed; but not one helpful suggestion had been turned up. Two weeks after the murder of Chester Greene the case began to take on the aspect of a stalemate.

During that fortnight, however, Vance had not been idle. The situation had caught and held his interest, and not once had he dismissed it from his mind since that first morning when Chester Greene had applied to Markham for help. He said little about the case, but he had attended each of the conferences; and from his casual comments I knew he was both fascinated and perplexed by the problem it presented.

So convinced was he that the Greene mansion itself held the secret to the crimes enacted there that he had made it a point to call at the house several times without Markham. Markham, in fact, had been there but once since the second crime. It was not that he was shirking his task. There was, in reality, little for him to do; and the routine duties of his office were particularly heavy at that time.\*

Sibella had insisted that the funerals of Julia and Chester be combined in one service, which was held in the private chapel of Malcomb's Undertaking Parlors. Only a few intimate acquaintances were notified (though a curious crowd gathered outside the building, attracted by the sensational associations of the obsequies); and the interment at Woodlawn Cemetery was strictly private. Doctor Von Blon accompanied Sibella and Rex to the chapel, and sat with them during the services. Ada, though improving rapidly, was still confined to the house; and Mrs. Greene's paralysis of course made her attendance impossible, although I doubt if she would have gone in any case, for when the suggestion was made that the services be held at home she had vetoed it emphatically.

It was on the day after the funeral that Vance paid his first unofficial visit to the

\* Among the famous cases mentioned as being in some manner comparable to the Greene shootings were the mass murders of Landru, Jean-Baptiste Troppmann, Fritz Haarmann, and Mrs. Belle Gunness; the tavern murders of the Benders; the Van der Linden poisonings in Holland; the Bela Kiss tincask stranglings; the Rugeley murders of Doctor William Palmer; and the beating to death of Benjamin Nathan.

\* The famous impure-milk scandal was then to the fore, and the cases were just appearing on the court calendar. Also, at that time, there was an antigambling campaign in progress in New York; and the District Attorney's office had charge of all the prosecutions.

Greene mansion. Sibella received him without any show of surprise.

"I'm so glad you've come," she greeted him, almost gaily. "I knew you weren't a policeman the first time I saw you. Imagine a policeman smoking *Régie* cigarettes! And I'm dying for some one to talk to. Of course, all the people I know avoid me now as they would a pestilence. I haven't had an invitation since Julia passed from this silly life. Respect for the dead, I believe they call it. And just when I most need diversion!"

She rang for the butler and ordered tea.

"Sproot makes much better tea than he does coffee, thank Heaven!" she ran on, with a kind of nervous detachment. "What a sweet day we had yesterday! Funerals are hideous farces. I could hardly keep a straight face when the officiating reverend doctor began extolling the glories of the departed. And all the time—poor man—he was eaten up with morbid curiosity. I'm sure he enjoyed it so much that he wouldn't complain if I entirely forgot to send him a check for his kind words. . . ."

The tea was served, but before Sproot had withdrawn Sibella turned to him pettishly.

"I simply can't stand any more tea. I want a Scotch high-ball." She lifted her eyes to Vance inquiringly, but he insisted that he preferred tea; and the girl drank her high-ball alone.

"I crave stimulation these days," she explained airily. "This moated grange, so to speak, is getting on my young and fretful nerves. And the burden of being a celebrity is quite overwhelming. I really have become a celebrity, you know. In fact, all the Greenses are quite famous now. I never imagined a mere murder or two could give a family such positively irrational prominence. I'll probably be in Hollywood yet."

She gave a laugh which struck me as a trifle strained.

"It's just too jolly! Even mother is enjoying it. She gets all the papers and reads every word that's written about us—which is a blessing, let me tell you. She's almost forgotten to find fault; and I haven't heard a word about her spine for days. The Lord tempers the wind—or is it something about an ill wind I'm trying to quote? I always get my classical references confused. . . ."

She ran on in this flippant vein for half an hour or so. But whether her callousness

was genuine or merely a brave attempt to counteract the pall of tragedy that hung over her I couldn't make out. Vance listened, interested and amused. He seemed to sense a certain emotional necessity in the girl to relieve her mind; but long before we went away he had led the conversation round to commonplace matters. When we rose to go Sibella insisted that we come again.

"You're so comforting, Mr. Vance," she said. "I'm sure you're not a moralist; and you haven't once consoled with me over my bereavements. Thank Heaven, we Greenses have no relatives to swoop down on us and bathe us in tears. I'm sure I'd commit suicide if we had."

Vance and I called twice more within the week, and were received cordially. Sibella's high spirits were always the same. If she felt the horror that had descended so suddenly and unexpectedly upon her home, she managed to hide it well. Only in her eagerness to talk freely and in her exaggerated efforts to avoid all sign of mourning did I sense any effects on her of the terrible experience she had been through.

Vance on none of his visits referred directly to the crimes; and I became deeply puzzled by his attitude. He was trying to learn something—of that I was positive. But I failed to see what possible progress he could make by the casual methods he was pursuing. Had I not known him better I might have suspected him of being personally interested in Sibella; but such a notion I dismissed simultaneously with its formulation. I noticed, however, that after each call he became unaccountably pensive; and one evening, after we had had tea with Sibella, he sat for an hour before the fire in his living-room without turning a page of the volume of da Vinci's "*Trattato della Pittura*" which lay open before him.

On one of his visits to the Greene mansion he had met and talked with Rex. At first the youth had been surly and resentful of our presence; but before we went away he and Vance were discussing such subjects as Einstein's general-relativity theory, the Moulton-Chamberlin planetesimal hypothesis, and Poincaré's science of numbers, on a plane quite beyond the grasp of a mere layman like myself. Rex had warmed up to the discussion in an almost friendly manner, and at parting had even offered his hand for Vance to shake.

On another occasion Vance had asked Sib-

ella to be permitted to pay his respects to Mrs. Greene. His apologies to her—which he gave a semiofficial flavor—for all the annoyance caused by the police immediately ingratiated him in the old lady's good graces. He was most solicitous about her health, and asked her numerous questions regarding her paralysis—the nature of her spinal pains and the symptoms of her restlessness. His air of sympathetic concern drew from her an elaborate and detailed jeremiad.

Twice Vance talked to Ada, who was now up and about, but with her arm still in a sling. For some reason, however, the girl appeared almost *farouche* when approached by him. One day when we were at the house Von Blon called, and Vance seemed to go out of his way to hold him in conversation.

As I have said, I could not fathom his motive in all this apparently desultory social give-and-take. He never broached the subject of the tragedies except in the most indirect way; he appeared, rather, to avoid the topic deliberately. But I did notice that, however casual his manner, he was closely studying every one in the house. No nuance of tone, no subtlety of reaction, escaped him. He was, I knew, storing away impressions, analyzing minute phases of conduct, and probing delicately into the psychological mainsprings of each person he talked to.

We had called perhaps four or five times at the Greene mansion when an episode occurred which must be recounted here in order to clarify a later development of the case. I thought little of it at the time, but, though seemingly trivial, it was to prove of the most sinister significance before many days had passed. In fact, had it not been for this episode there is no telling to what awful lengths the gruesome tragedy of the Greens might have gone; for Vance—in one of those strange mental flashes of his which always seemed wholly intuitive but were, in reality, the result of long, subtle reasoning—remembered the incident at a crucial moment, and related it swiftly to other incidents which in themselves appeared trifling, but which, when co-ordinated, took on a tremendous and terrible importance.

During the second week following Chester Greene's death the weather moderated markedly. We had several beautiful clear days, crisp, sunshiny, and invigorating. The snow had almost entirely disappeared, and

the ground was firm, without any of the slush that usually follows a winter thaw. On Thursday Vance and I called at the Greene mansion earlier than on any previous visit, and we saw Doctor Von Blon's car parked before the gate.

"Ah!" Vance observed. "I do hope the family Paracelsus is not departing immediately. The man lures me; and his exact relationship to the Greene family irks my curiosity."

Von Blon, as a matter of fact, was preparing to go as we entered the hallway. Sibella and Ada, bundled in their furs, stood just behind him; and it was evident that they were accompanying him.

"It was such a pleasant day," explained Von Blon, somewhat disconcertedly, "I thought I'd take the girls for a drive."

"And you and Mr. Van Dine must come with us," chimed in Sibella, smiling hospitably at Vance. "If the doctor's temperamental driving affects your heart action, I promise to take the wheel myself. I'm really an expert chauffeur."

I surprised a look of displeasure on Von Blon's face; but Vance accepted the invitation without demur; and in a few moments we were riding across town, comfortably installed in the doctor's big Daimler, with Sibella in front, next to the driver's seat, and Ada between Vance and me in the tonneau.

We went north on Fifth Avenue, entered Central Park, and, emerging at the 72d Street entrance, headed for Riverside Drive. The Hudson River lay like a sheet of blue-grass below us, and the Jersey palisades in the still clear air of early afternoon were as plainly etched as a Degas drawing. At Dyckman Street we went up Broadway, and turned west on the Spuyten Duyvil Road to Palisade Avenue overlooking the old wooded estates along the water. We passed through a private roadway lined with hedges, turned inland again to Sycamore Avenue, and came out on the Riverdale Road. We drove through Yonkers, up North Broadway into Hastings, and then skirted the Longue Vue Hill. Beyond Dobbs Ferry we entered the Hudson Road, and at Ardsley again turned west beside the Country Club golf-links, and came out on the river level. Beyond the Ardsley Station a narrow dirt road ran up the hill along the water; and, instead of following the main highway to the east, we continued



up this little-used road, emerging on a kind of plateau of wild pasture-land.

A mile or so farther on—about midway between Ardsley and Tarrytown—a small dun hill, like a boulder, loomed directly in our path. When we came to the foot of it, the road swung sharply to the west along a curved promontory. The turn was narrow and dangerous, with the steep upward slope of the hill on one side and the precipitous, rocky descent into the river on the other. A flimsy wooden fence had been built along the edge of the drop, though what possible protection it could be to a reckless or even careless driver I could not see.

As we came to the outermost arc of the little detour Von Blon brought the car to a stop, the front wheels pointing directly toward the precipice. A magnificent vista stretched before us. We could look up and down the Hudson for miles. And there was a sense of isolation about the spot, for the hill behind us completely shut off the country inland.

We sat for several moments taking in the unusual view. Then Sibella spoke. Her voice was whimsical, but a curious note of defiance informed it.

"What a perfectly ripping spot for a murder!" she exclaimed, leaning over and looking down the steep slope of the bluff. "Why run the risk of shooting people when all you have to do is to take them for a ride to this snug little shelf, jump from the car, and let them topple—machine and all—over the precipice? Just another unfortunate auto accident—and no one the wiser! . . . Really, I think I'll take up crime in a serious way."

I felt a shudder pass over Ada's body, and I noticed that her face paled. Sibella's comments struck me as particularly heartless and unthinking in view of the terrible experience through which her sister had so recently passed. The cruelty of her words evidently struck the doctor also, for he turned toward her with a look of consternation.

Vance glanced quickly at Ada, and then attempted to banish the embarrassment of the tense silence by remarking lightly:

"We refuse to take alarm, however, Miss Greene; for no one, d' ye see, could seriously consider a criminal career on a day as perfect as this. Taine's theory of climatic influences is most comfortin' in moments like this."

Von Blon said nothing, but his reproachful eyes did not leave Sibella's face.

"Oh, let us go back!" cried Ada pitifully, nestling closer under the lap-robe, as if the air had suddenly become chill.

Without a word Von Blon reversed the machine; and a moment later we were on our way back to the city.

### XIII

#### THE THIRD TRAGEDY

(November 28 and November 30)

The following Sunday evening, November 28, Markham invited Inspector Moran and Heath to the Stuyvesant Club for an informal conference. Vance and I had dined with him and were present when the two police officials arrived. We retired to Markham's favorite corner of the club's lounge-room; and soon a general discussion of the Greene murders was under way.

"I'm rather amazed," said the Inspector, his voice even quieter than usual, "that nothing has turned up to focus the inquiry. In the average murder case there are numerous lines to be explored, even if the right one is not hit upon immediately. But in this affair there appears to be nothing whatever on which to concentrate."

"That fact in itself, I should say," rejoined Vance, "constitutes a distinguishing characteristic of the case which shouldn't be overlooked, don't y' know. It's a clew of vital importance, and if only we could probe its significance I think we'd be on our way toward a solution."

"A fine clew that is!" grumbled Heath. "'What clew have you got, Sergeant?' asks the Inspector. 'Oh, a bully clew,' says I. 'And what is it?' asks the Inspector. 'The fact that there ain't *nothing* to go on!' says I."

Vance smiled.

"You're so literal, Sergeant! What I was endeavoring to express, in my purely laic capacity, was this: when there are no clews in a case—no *points de départ*, no tell-tale indications—one is justified in regarding everything as a clew—or, rather, as a factor in the puzzle. To be sure, the great difficulty lies in fitting together these apparently inconsequential pieces. I rather think we've at least a hundred clews in our possession; but none of them has any meaning so long as it's unrelated to the others. This affair is like one

of those silly word-puzzles where all the letters are redistributed into a meaningless jumble. The task for the solver is to rearrange them into an intelligible word or sentence."

"Could you name just eight or ten of those hundred clues for me?" Heath requested ironically. "I sure would like to get busy on something definite."

"You know 'em all, Sergeant," Vance refused to fall in with the other's bantering manner. "I'd say that practically everything that has happened since the first alarm reached you might be regarded as a clue."

"Sure!" The Sergeant had lapsed again into sullen gloom. "The footprints, the disappearance of the revolver, that noise Rex heard in the hall. But we've run all those leads up against a blank wall."

"Oh, those things!" Vance sent a ribbon of blue smoke upward. "Yes, they're clues of a kind. But I was referring more specifically to the conditions existing at the Greene mansion—the organisms of the environment there—the psychological elements of the situation."

"Don't get off again on your metaphysical theories and esoteric hypotheses," Markham interjected tartly. "We've either got to find a practical *modus operandi*, or admit ourselves beaten."

"But, Markham old man, you're beaten on the face of it unless you can put your chaotic facts into some kind of order. And the only way you'll be able to do that is by a process of prayerful analysis."

"You give me some facts that've got some sense to 'em," challenged Heath, "and I'll put 'em together soon enough."

"The Sergeant's right," was Markham's comment. "You'll admit that as yet we haven't any significant facts to work with."

"Oh, there'll be more."

Inspector Moran sat up, and his eyes narrowed.

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Vance?" It was obvious that the remark had struck some chord of agreement in him.

"The thing isn't over yet." Vance spoke with unwonted sombreness. "The picture's unfinished. There's more tragedy to come before the monstrous canvas is rounded out. And the hideous thing about it is that there's no way of stopping it. Nothing now can halt the horror that's at work. It's got to go on."

"You feel that, too!" The Inspector's

voice was off its normal pitch. "By God! This is the first case I've ever had that frightened me."

"Don't forget, sir," argued Heath, but without conviction, "that we got men watching the house day and night."

"There's no security in that, Sergeant," asserted Vance. "The killer is already in the house. He's part of the deadly atmosphere of the place. He's been there for years, nourished by the toxins that seep from the very stones of the walls."

Heath looked up.

"A member of the family? You said that once before."

"Not necessarily. But some one who has been tainted by the perverted situation that grew out of old Tobias's patriarchal ideas."

"We might manage to put some one in the house to keep an eye on things," suggested the Inspector. "Or, there's a possibility of prevailing upon the members of the family to separate and move to other quarters."

Vance shook his head slowly.

"A spy in the house would be useless. Isn't every one there a spy now, watching all the others, and watching them with fear and suspicion? And as for dispersing the family: not only would you find old Mrs. Greene, who holds the purse-strings, an adamant obstacle, but you'd meet all manner of legal complications as a result of Tobias's will. No one gets a dollar, I understand, who doesn't remain in the mansion until the worms have ravaged his carcass for a full quarter of a century. And even if you succeeded in scattering the remnants of the Greene line, and locked up the house, you wouldn't have stamped out the killer. And there'll be no end of this thing until a purifying stake has been driven through his heart."

"Are you going in now for vampirism, Vance?" The case had exacerbated Markham's nerves. "Shall we draw an enchanted ring round the house and hang garlic on the door?"

Markham's extravagant comment of harassed discouragement seemed to express the hopeless state of mind of all of us, and there was a long silence. It was Heath who first came back to a practical consideration of the matter in hand.

"You spoke, Mr. Vance, about old man Greene's will. And I've been thinking that, if we knew all the terms of that will, we

might find something to help us. There's millions in the estate, all of it left, I hear, to the old lady. What I'd like to know is, has she a full right to dispose of it any way she likes? And I'd also like to know what kind of a will the old lady herself has made. With all that money at stake, we might get on to a motive of some kind."

"Quite—quite!" Vance looked at Heath with undisguised admiration. "That's the most sensible suggestion that's been made thus far. I salute you, Sergeant. Yes, old Tobias's money may have some bearing on the case. Not a direct bearing, perhaps; but the influence of that money—the subterranean power it exerts—is undoubtedly tangled up in these crimes.—How about it, Markham? How does one go about finding out about other people's wills?"

Markham pondered the point.

"I don't believe there'd be any great difficulty in the present instance. Tobias Greene's will is a matter of record, of course, though it might take some little time to look it up in the Surrogate's files; and I happen to know old Buckway, the senior partner of Buckway & Aldine, the Greene solicitors. I see him here at the club occasionally, and I've done one or two small favors for him. I think I could induce him to tell me confidentially the terms of Mrs. Greene's will. I'll see what can be done to-morrow."

Half an hour later the conference broke up and we went home.

"I fear those wills are not going to help much," Vance remarked, as he sipped his high-ball before the fire late that night. "Like everything else in this harrowin' case, they'll possess some significance that can't be grasped until they're fitted into the final picture."

He rose and, going to the book-shelves, took down a small volume.

"And now I think I'll erase the Greenses from my mind *pro tempore*, and dip into the 'Satyricon.' The fusty historians pother frightfully about the reasons for the fall of Rome, whereas the eternal answer is contained in Petronius's imperishable classic of that city's decadence."

He settled himself and turned the pages of his book. But there was no concentration in his attitude, and his eyes wandered constantly from the text.

Two days later—on Tuesday, November 30—Markham telephoned Vance shortly af-

ter ten o'clock in the morning, and asked him to come at once to the office. Vance was preparing to attend an exhibition of negro sculpture at the Modern Gallery,\* but this indulgence was postponed in view of the District Attorney's urgent call; and in less than half an hour we were at the Criminal Courts Building.

"Ada Greene called up this morning, and asked to see me without delay," explained Markham. "I offered to send Heath out and, if necessary, to come myself later on. But she seemed particularly anxious that I shouldn't do that, and insisted on coming here: said it was a matter she could speak of more freely away from the house. She seemed somewhat upset, so I told her to come ahead. Then I phoned you and notified Heath."

Vance settled himself and lit a cigarette.

"I don't wonder she'd grasp at any chance to shake the atmosphere of her surroundings. And, Markham, I've come to the conclusion that girl knows something that would be highly valuable to our inquiry. It's quite possible, don't y' know, that she's now reached a point where she'll tell us what's on her mind."

As he spoke the Sergeant was announced, and Markham briefly explained the situation to him.

"It looks to me," said Heath gloomily, but with interest, "like it was our only chance of getting a lead. We haven't learned anything ourselves that's worth a damn, and unless somebody spills a few suggestions we're up against it."

Ten minutes later Ada Greene was ushered into the office. Though her pallor had gone and her arm was no longer in a sling, she still gave one the impression of weakness. But there was none of the tremulousness or shrinking in her bearing that had heretofore characterized her.

She sat down before Markham's desk, and for a while frowned up at the sunlight, as if debating how to begin.

"It's about Rex, Mr. Markham," she said finally. "I really don't know whether I should have come here or not—it may be very disloyal of me. . . ." She gave him a look of appealing indecision. "Oh, tell me: if a person knows something—something bad and dangerous—about some one very close and very

\* The Modern Gallery was then under the direction of Marius de Zayas, whose collection of African statuette-fetiches was perhaps the finest in America.

dear, should that person tell, when it might make terrible trouble?"

"That all depends," Markham answered gravely. "In the present circumstances, if you know anything that might be helpful to a solution of the murder of your brother and sister, it's your duty to speak."

"Even if the thing were told me in confidence?" she persisted. "And the person were a member of my family?"

"Even under those conditions, I think." Markham spoke paternally. "Two terrible crimes have been committed, and nothing should be held back that might bring the murderer to justice—whoever he may be."

The girl averted her troubled face for a moment. Then she lifted her head with sudden resolution.

"I'll tell you. . . . You know you asked Rex about the shot in my room, and he told you he didn't hear it. Well, he confided in me, Mr. Markham; and he *did* hear the shot. But he was afraid to admit it lest you might think it funny he didn't get up and give the alarm."

"Why do you think he remained in bed silent, and pretended to every one he was asleep?" Markham attempted to suppress the keen interest the girl's information had roused in him.

"That's what I don't understand. He wouldn't tell me. But he had some reason—I know he did!—some reason that terrified him. I begged him to tell me, but the only explanation he gave was that the shot was not all he heard. . . ."

"Not all!" Markham spoke with ill-concealed excitement. "He heard something else that, you say, terrified him? But why shouldn't he have told us about it?"

"That's the strange part of it. He got angry when I asked him. But there's something he knows—some awful secret; I feel sure of it. . . . Oh, maybe I shouldn't have told you. Maybe it will get Rex into trouble. But I felt that you ought to know because of the frightful things that have happened. I thought perhaps you could talk to Rex and make him tell you what's on his mind."

Again she looked beseechingly at Markham, and there was the anxiety of a vague fear in her eyes.

"Oh, I do wish you'd ask him—and try to find out," she went on, in a pleading tone. "I'd feel—safer if—if . . ."

Markham nodded and patted her hand.

"We'll try to make him talk."

"But don't try at the house," she said quickly. "There are people—things—around; and Rex would be too frightened. Ask him to come here, Mr. Markham. Get him away from that awful place, where he can talk without being afraid that some one's listening. Rex is home now. Ask him to come here. Tell him I'm here, too. Maybe I can help you reason with him. . . . Oh, do this for me, Mr. Markham!"

Markham glanced at the clock and ran his eye over his appointment-pad. He was, I knew, as anxious as Ada to have Rex on the carpet for a questioning; and, after a momentary hesitation, he picked up the telephone-receiver and had Swacker put him through to the Greene mansion. From what I heard of the conversation that ensued, it was plain that he experienced considerable difficulty in urging Rex to come to the office, for he had to resort to a veiled threat of summary legal action before he finally succeeded.

"He evidently fears some trap," commented Markham thoughtfully, replacing the receiver. "But he has promised to get dressed immediately and come."

A look of relief passed over the girl's face.

"There's one other thing I ought to tell you," she said hurriedly; "though it may not mean anything. The other night, in the rear of the lower hall by the stairs, I picked up a piece of paper—like a leaf torn from a notebook. And there was a drawing on it of all our bedrooms up-stairs with four little crosses marked in ink—one at Julia's room, one at Chester's, one at Rex's, and one at mine. And down in the corner were several of the queerest signs, or pictures. One was a heart with three nails in it; and one looked like a parrot. Then there was a picture of what seemed to be three little stones with a line under them. . . ."

Heath suddenly jerked himself forward, his cigar half-way to his lips.

"A parrot, and three stones! . . . And say, Miss Greene, was there an arrow with numbers on it?"

"Yes!" she answered eagerly. "That was there, too."

Heath put his cigar in his mouth and chewed on it with vicious satisfaction.

"That means something, Mr. Markham," he proclaimed, trying to keep the agitation



out of his voice. "Those are all symbols—graphic signs, they're called—of Continental crooks, German or Austrian mostly."

"The stones, I happen to know," put in Vance, "represent the idea of the martyrdom of Saint Stephen, who was stoned to death. They're the emblem of Saint Stephen, according to the calendar of the Styrian peasantry."

"I don't know anything about that, sir," answered Heath. "But I know that European crooks use those signs."

"Oh, doubtless. I ran across a number of 'em when I was looking up the emblematic language of the gypsies. A fascinatin' study." Vance seemed uninterested in Ada's discovery.

"Have you this paper with you, Miss Greene?" asked Markham.

The girl was embarrassed and shook her head.

"I'm so sorry," she apologized. "I didn't think it was important. Should I have brought it?"

"Did you destroy it?" Heath put the question excitedly.

"Oh, I have it safely. I put it away. . . ."

"We gotta have that paper, Mr. Markham." The Sergeant had risen and come toward the District Attorney's desk. "It may be just the lead we're looking for."

"If you really want it so badly," said Ada, "I can phone Rex to bring it with him. He'll know where to find it if I explain."

"Right! That'll save me a trip." Heath nodded to Markham. "Try to catch him before he leaves, sir."

Taking up the telephone, Markham again directed Swacker to get Rex on the wire. After a brief delay the connection was made and he handed the instrument to Ada.

"Hello, Rex dear," she said. "Don't scold me, for there's nothing to worry about. . . . What I wanted of you is this:—in our private mail-box you'll find a sealed envelope of my personal blue stationery. Please get it and bring it with you to Mr. Markham's office. And don't let any one see you take it. . . . That's all, Rex. Now hurry, and we'll have lunch together down-town."

"It will be at least half an hour before Mr. Greene can get here," said Markham, turning to Vance; "and as I've a waiting-room full of people, why don't you and Van Dine take the young lady to the Stock Exchange and show her how the mad brokers disport them-

selves.—How would you like that, Miss Greene?"

"I'd love it!" exclaimed the girl.

"Why not go along too, Sergeant?"

"Mel!" Heath snorted. "I got excitement enough. I'll run over and talk to the Colonel\* for a while."

Vance and Ada and I motored the few blocks to 18 Broad Street, and, taking the elevator, passed through the reception-room (where uniformed attendants peremptorily relieved us of our wraps), and came out upon the visitors' gallery overlooking the floor of the Exchange. There was an unusually active market that day. The pandemonium was almost deafening, and the feverish activity about the trading-posts resembled the riots of an excited mob. I was too familiar with the sight to be particularly impressed; and Vance, who detested noise and disorder, looked on with an air of bored annoyance. But Ada's face lighted up at once. Her eyes sparkled and the blood rushed to her cheeks. She gazed over the railing in a thrall of fascination.

"And now you see, Miss Greene, how foolish men can be," said Vance.

"Oh, but it's wonderful!" she answered. "They're alive. They feel things. They have something to fight for."

"You think you'd like it?" smiled Vance.

"I'd adore it. I've always longed to do something exciting—something . . . like that. . . ." She extended her hand toward the milling crowds below.

It was easy to understand her reaction after her years of monotonous service to an invalid in the dreary Greene mansion.

At that moment I happened to look up, and, to my surprise, Heath was standing in the doorway scanning the groups of visitors. He appeared troubled and unusually grim, and there was a nervous intentness in the way he moved his head. I raised my hand to attract his attention, and he immediately came to where we stood.

"The Chief wants you at the office right away, Mr. Vance." There was an ominousness in his tone. "He sent me over to get you."

\* Colonel Benjamin Hanlon, one of the Department's greatest authorities on extradition, was then the commanding officer of the Detective Division attached to the District Attorney's office, with quarters in the Criminal Courts Building.

Ada looked at him steadily, and a pallor of fear overspread her face.

"Well, well!" Vance shrugged in mock resignation. "Just when we were getting interested in the sights. But we must obey the Chief—eh, what, Miss Greene?"

But, despite his attempt to make light of Markham's unexpected summons, Ada was strangely silent; and as we rode back to the office she did not speak but sat tensely, her unseeing eyes staring straight ahead.

It seemed an interminable time before we reached the Criminal Courts Building. The traffic was congested; and there was even a long delay at the elevator. Vance appeared to take the situation calmly; but Heath's lips were compressed, and he breathed heavily through his nose, like a man laboring under tense excitement.

As we entered the District Attorney's office Markham rose and looked at the girl with a great tenderness.

"You must be brave, Miss Greene," he said, in a quiet, sympathetic voice. "Something tragic and unforeseen has happened.

And as you will have to be told of it sooner or later——"

"It's Rex!" She sank limply into a chair facing Markham's desk.

"Yes," he said softly; "it's Rex. Sproot called up a few minutes after you had gone. . . ."

"And he's been shot—like Julia and Chester!" Her words were scarcely audible, but they brought a sense of horror into the dingy old office.

Markham inclined his head.

"Not five minutes after you telephoned to him some one entered his room and shot him."

A dry sob shook the girl, and she buried her face in her arms.

Markham stepped round the desk and placed his hand gently on her shoulder.

"We've got to face it, my child," he said. "We're going to the house at once to see what can be done; and you'd better come in the car with us."

"Oh, I don't want to go back," she moaned. "I'm afraid—I'm afraid! . . ."

(To be continued.)





Queen Henrietta Maria and the Dwarf, Sir Geoffrey Hudson.

From the painting by Van Dyck at the Duveen Gallery.

—See "The Field of Art," page 367.

