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The POOL of FLAME

by LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLSWORTH YOUNG

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CHAPTER I.

A still and sultry dusk had fallen, closing an oppressive, weary day: one of those days whose sole function seems to reside in rendering us irritably conscious of our too-close casings of too-solid flesh; whose humid and inert atmosphere, sodden with tepid moisture, clings palpably to the body, causing men to feel as if they crawled, half-suffocated, at the bottom of a sea of rarefied water.

The hour may have been eight; it may have been not quite that, but it was almost dark. The windows were oblong, black as night in the yellow walls of O'Rourke's bedchamber in the Hotel d'Orient, Monte Carlo.

I have the honor to make known to you the O'Rourke of Castle O'Rourke in the county of Galway, Ireland; otherwise and more widely known as Colonel Terence O'Rourke; a chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France; sometime an officer in the Foreign Legion in Algiers; a wanderer, spendthrift, free-lance, cosmopolite—a gentleman-adventurer, he's been termed.

He was dressing for dinner. The glare of half a dozen electric bulbs discovered him all but ready for public appearance—not, however, quite ready. In his shirt sleeves he faced a cheval-glass, plucking (if with the haggard eye of exasperation) endeavoring to outmaneuver a demon of inanimate perversity which had entered into his dress tie, inclining it to refuse to assume, for all his coaxing and his stratagems, that effect of nonchalant perfection so much sought after, so seldom achieved.

Patently was the thing possessed by a devil; O'Rourke made no manner of doubt of that. Though for minutes at a time he fumbled, fidgeted, fumed, it was without avail.

His room itself was in a state of considerable disorder—something due mainly to O'Rourke's characteristic efforts to find just what he might happen to desire at any given time without troubling to think where it ought properly to be.

Something of this confusion, mirrored in the glass, was likewise reflected in O'Rourke's eyes, what time he paused for breath and profanity. "Faith, 'tis worse than a daw's nest, the place," he admitted, scandalized. "How ever did I—one lone man—do all that, will ye be telling me?" He flung out two helpless baffled hands, and let them fall. After a meditative pause he added: "Damn that Alsatian!"—with reference to his latest and least competent valet, who had but recently been discharged with a flea in his ear and a month's unearned wage in his pocket. "For knowing me ways," sighed O'Rourke, "there was never anyone the like of Danny."

For as many as three living days this man had been reduced to the necessity of dressing himself with his own fair hands—and that at least thrice daily, and that nothing by halves. And, somehow, mysteriously, his discarded garments had for the most part remained where he had thrown them, despite the earnest efforts of the femme de chambre to restore something resembling order from this man-made chaos. For servants all liked well the O'Rourke, imprudent soul that he was, freehanded to a fault.

You are invited to picture to yourself O'Rourke as invariably he was in one of his not infrequent but ever transient phases of affluence; that is, a very magnificent figure indeed. Standing a bit over six feet, deep of chest and lean of flank, with his long, straight legs he looked what he had been meant to be, a man of arms and action. His head was shapely, its dark hair curling the least in the world; and, incredibly stained, a transparent brown, his features were lean, eager, and rendered very attractive by quick boyish eyes in whose warm blue-gray depths humor twinkled more often than not, though those same eyes were not seldom thoughtful, a trace wistful, perhaps, with the look of one who recalls dear memories, old friends and sweethearts loved and lost. . . . For he had begun to live early in life and had much to look back upon, though for all that it's doubtful if he were more than thirty at the time he became involved in the fortunes of the Pool of Flame.

For the rest of him, barring the refractory tie, the man was strikingly well groomed, while his surroundings spoke for comfortable circumstances. On the authority of the absent and regretted Danny, who had long served the O'Rourke in the intimate capacities of body-servant, confidant and chancellor of the exchequer (this last, of course, whenever there happened to be any exchequer to require a chancellor), there was never anyone at all who could spend money or wear clothes like himself, meaning the master. And at this time O'Rourke was ostensibly in funds and consequently (as the saying runs) cutting a wide swath. Heaven and himself only knew the limits of his resources; but his manner a Monte Cristo might have

aped to advantage. His play was a wonder of the Casino; for the matter of that, his high-handed and extravagant ways had made the entire Principality of Monaco conscious of his presence in the land. And you fall in the least to understand the nature of the man if you think for a moment that it irked him to be admired, pointed out, courted, pursued. He was, indeed, never so splendid as when aware that he occupied the public eye. In short, he was just an Irishman.

So, then, it's nothing wonderful that he should seem a thought final about the set of his tie.

Now as he stood scowling at his image, and wishing from the bottom of his heart he had never been fool enough to let Danny leave him, and calling fervent blessings down upon the head of the fiend who first designed modern evening-dress for men—he found himself suddenly with a mind divested of any care whatever and attentive alone to a sound which came to him faintly, borne upon the heavy wings of the sluggish evening air. It was nothing more nor less than a woman singing softly to herself (humming would probably be the more accurate term), and it was merely the tune that caught his fancy; a bit of an old song he himself had once been wont to sing, upon a time when he had been a happier man. It seemed strange to hear it there, stranger still that the woman's voice, indistinct as it was, should have such a familiar ring in his memory. He frowned in wonder and shook his head. "The age of miracles is past," he muttered; "I would never be myself. I've had my chance—and forfeited it. 'Twill not come to me a second time."

The singing ceased. Of a sudden O'Rourke swore with needless heat, and, plucking away the offending tie, cast it savagely from him. "The devil fly away with ye!" he said. "Is it bent on driving me mad ye are? I'd give me fortune to have Danny back! . . . Me fortune—faith!" He laughed the word to bitter scorn. "This meself that never had the least of anything like that without 'twas feminine—with a 'mis' tacked onto the front of it!" And he strode away to the window to cool off.

It was like him to forget his exasperation in the twinkling of an eye; another mood entirely swayed him by the time he found himself gazing out into the vague, velvety dusk that momentarily was closing down upon the fairy-like panorama of terraced gardens and sullen, silken sea. His thoughts had winged back to that dear woman of whom that fragment of melody had put him in mind; and he was sighing and heavy of heart with longing for the sight of her and the touch of her hand.

Even as he watched, stark night fell, black as a pocket beneath a portentous pall of cloud. . . . Far out upon the swelling bosom of the Mediterranean a cluster of dim lights betrayed a stealthy coasting steamer,



O'Rourke Caught his Breath, Stunned.

making westward. Nearer, in the harbor, a fleet of pleasure craft, riding at anchor on the still, dark tide, was revealed in many faint, wraith-like shapes of gray, all studded with yellow stars. Ashore, endless festoons of colored lamps draped the gloom of the terraces; the facade of the Casino stood out, lurid against the darkness; the hotel's shone with reflected brilliance, the palace of the Prince de Monaco loomed high upon the peninsula, its elevations picked out with lines of soft fire.

The O'Rourke shook his head, condemning it all. "Tis beautiful," he said; "faith, yes! 'tis all of that. But I'm thinking 'tis too beautiful to be good for one—like some women I've known in me time. 'Tis not good for Terence—that's sure; 'tis the O'Rourke that's going stale and soft with all this easy living. . . . Me that has more than many another to live for and hope for and strive for! . . . And I'm lingering here in the very lap of luxury stuffing myself with rare food, befuddling myself with rarer wines—me that has fought a day and a night and a half a day atop

of that on nothing and a glass of muddy water!—risking me money as if there was no end to it, throwing it away in scandalous tips like any drunken sailor! And all for the scant satisfaction of behaving like a fool of an Irishman. . . . 'Tis sickening—disgusting; naught less. . . . I'm thinking this night ends it, though; come the morning I'll be pulling up stakes and striking out for a healthier, simpler place, where there's something afoot a man can take an interest in without losing his self-respect. . . . I'll do just that, I will!"

This he meant, firmly, and was glad of it, with a heart immeasurably lightened by the strength of his good resolution. He began to hum the old tune that the unknown woman's voice had set buzzing in his brain, and broke off to snap his fingers defiantly at the Casino. "That for ye!" he floated it—"sitting there with your painted smile and your cold eyes, like the brazen hussy ye are—Goddess of Chance, indeed!—thinking ye have but to bide your time for all men to come and render up their souls to ye! Here's once ye lose, madam; after this night I'm done with ye; not a sou of mine will ever again cross your tables. I'll have ye to understand the O'Rourke's a reformed character from the morning on!"

He laughed softly, in high feather with his conceit; and, thinking cheerfully of the days of movement and change that were to follow, the song in his heart shaped itself in words upon his lips.

"I'm Paddy Whack
From Ballyhack,
Not long ago turned soldier—O
At grand attack,
Or storm or sack,
None than I will prove bolder—O!"

His voice was by way of being a tenor of tolerable quality and volume, but untrained—nothing wonderful! It was just the way he trotted out the rollicking stanza that rendered it infectious, irresistible. For as he paused the voice of the woman that had reminded him of the song capped the verse neatly.

"Ah! whin we get the route
Wid a shout,
How they shout!
Wid a ready right-about
Goes the bould soldier-boy!"

O'Rourke caught his breath, startled, stunned. "It can't be—" he whispered. For if at first her voice, subdued in distance, had stirred his memory with a touch as vague and thrilling as the caress of a woman's hand in darkness, now that he heard the full strength of that soprano, bell-clear and spirited, he was sure he knew the singer. He told himself that there could be no two women in the world with voices just like that; not another than her he knew could have rendered the words with so true a spirit, so rare a brogue-tinged as that had been with the faintest, quaintest exotic inflection imaginable.

But she had stopped with the verse half sung. His pulses quickening, O'Rourke leaned forth from the window and carried it on:

"O, 'tis thin the ladies fair
In despair
Tear their hair!
But—'tis divvie a bit I care!
Cries the bould soldier-boy!"

There fell a pause. He listened with his heart in his mouth, but heard nothing. And it seemed impossible to surmise whence, from which one of all the rooms with windows opening upon that side of the hotel, had come the voice of the woman. She might as well have been above as below him, or on either side; he could not guess. But he was determined.

Now there was beneath his window a balcony with a floor of wood and a rail of iron-filagree—a long balcony, extending from one corner of the hotel to the other. At intervals it was splashed with light from the windows of chambers still occupied by guests belated or busy, like himself, with the task of dressing for the evening. The window to his left was alight; that on his right, dark. With half his body on the balcony, his legs dangling with in the room, O'Rourke watched the opening on his left with jealous, breathless expectancy. Not a sound came therefrom. He hesitated.

"If that weren't her room, I'd hear somebody moving about," he reasoned. "Tis frightened she is—not suspecting 'tis me. . . . But how do I know 'tis herself? . . . Faith! could me ears deceive me?"

With that he took heart of hope and broke manfully into the chorus, singing directly to the lighted window, singing the first line with ardor and fervor, with confidence and with hope, singing persuasively, pleadingly, anxiously, insistently.

"For the world is all before us—"

he sang—and then paused. He heard no echo. And again he essayed, with that in his tone to melt a heart of ice:

"For the world is all before us—"

And now he triumphed and was lifted out of himself with sheer delight; for from the adjoining room came the next line:

"And landladies ado-ore us—"

Unable to contain himself, he chimed in, and in duet they sang it out to the rousing finale:

"They ne'er rayfuse to sco-ore us,
But chalk us up wid joy
We taste her tap, we tear her cap—
'O, that's the chap
For me," cries she—
'Isn't he the darlint, the bould soldier-boy!"

As the last note rang out and died, the next window was darkened; the woman had switched off the lights.

He heard a faint rustle of silken robes. "Tis herself," he declared in an agony of anticipation—"herself and none other! And I'm thinking she'll be coming to the window now—"

He was right. Abruptly he discovered her by the reflected glow from the illumination behind him. He was conscious of the pallid oval of her face, of a sleek white sheen of arms and shoulders, of a dark mass of hair, but more than all else of the glamour of eyes that shone into his softly, like limpid pools of darkness touched by dim starlight.

Inflamed, he leaned toward her. "Whist, darling!" he stammered. "Whist! 'Tis myself—'tis Terence—"

But she was gone. A low, stifled laugh was all his answer—that and the silken whisper of her skirts as she scurried from the window. He flushed crimson, waited an instant, then flung discretion to the winds, and found himself scrambling out upon the balcony. Heaven only knows to what lengths the man would have gone had not the slam of a door brought him up standing; she had left her room!

So she thought to escape him so easily! He swore between his teeth with excitement and tumbled back whence he had come. Regardless of the fact that he was still in his shirt-sleeves he rushed madly for the door. On the way a shooting-jacket on the door, perhaps in revenge for neglect and ill-treatment, maliciously wound it



"The Divvie!" He Said Beneath His Breath.

self around his feet and all but threw him headlong; only a frantic clutch at the footrail of the bed saved him. Kicking the thing savagely off he flung himself upon the door and threw it open. His jaw dropped.

The lift shaft was directly opposite. Before it, in more or less patient waiting, stood a very young and beautiful woman in a gown whose extreme candor was surpassed only by the perfection of its design and appointment—both blatant of the Rue de la Paix; a type as common to the cognoscenti of Monte Carlo as the Swiss hotel porters. But O'Rourke did not know her from Eve.

"The divvie!" said he beneath his breath.

He was mistaken; but the young woman, at first startled by his unceremonious appearance, on instantaneous second thought decided to permit him to discover that twin imps, at least, resided in her eyes. And when his disappointment prevented him from recognizing them, her dawning smile was swiftly erased and her ascending eyebrows spoke eloquently enough of her haughty displeasure. Synchronously the lift hesitated at that landing and the gate clanged wide; the young woman wound her skirt about her and showed him a back which at any other time would have evoked his unstinted admiration. Then the gate shot to with a rattle and bang, and the lift dropped out of sight, leaving the man with mouth agape and eyes as wide.

A beaming but elderly femme de chambre on duty in the corridor, remarking O'Rourke's pause of stupefied chagrin, hoped and believed he needed her services. She bore down upon him accordingly.

"M'sieu is desirous of—?"

He came out of his trance. "Nothing," he told her with acid brevity. "But, yes," he reconsidered with haste. "That lady who but this moment took the lift—her name?"

"Her name, m'sieu? Ma'm'selle Voltaire."

"Impossible!" he told himself aloud, utterly unable to forge any connecting link between the lady in the lift and her whose voice had bewitched him. "But assuredly, m'sieu. Do I not know—I who have waited upon her hand and foot these three days and to whom she has not given as much as—that?" The woman ticked a finger-nail against her strong white teeth. "Ma'm'selle Victorine Voltaire," she asserted stubbornly.

O'Rourke fumbled in his pocket and found a golden ten-franc piece, surrendering it to the woman as heedlessly as though it had been as many centimes. "I'll be leaving me room in five minutes, now. And do ye, for the love of Heaven, me dear, try to set me things the least trifle to rights. Will ye now, like the best little girl in the world?"

The best little girl in the world, who was forty-five if a day, promised miracles—with a bob of a courtesy. But so disgruntled was O'Rourke that he shut his door in her face.

"Tis meself that's the fool," he said savagely enough, "to think for a moment that ever again I'll set me eyes on her pretty face—God bless it, wherever she may be! . . . For why should I deserve to—I, the penurious adventurer?"

CHAPTER II.

After that bitter disappointment his interest in his personal appearance dwindled to the negligible. In a black temper with himself (whom, alone he blamed for the deception to which he had fallen too facile a victim) he searched blindly for a fresh tie, found it somehow, and knotted it round his collar in the most haphazard fashion imaginable. Then he shrugged a dress coat upon his shoulders and marched forth to dine.

In this humor he propelled himself with determination into the public restaurant of the establishment, and, oblivious to the allure of many pairs of bright eyes that brightened all too readily to challenge his, insisted upon a table all to himself, and dined in solitary grandeur, comporting himself openly as a morose and misunderstood person, and to his waiter with a manner so near rude that the latter began almost to respect him.

After some time he was disgusted to discover that he felt better. An impulse toward analysis led him to probe the psychology of the change, with the result that he laid the blame for it at the door—or the neck—of a half-bottle of excellent burgundy. So he ordered another, and, resolutely dismissing from his mind the woman who had no right whatever to be able to sing a certain song the way she had, set his wits to work on the riddle of Tomorrow.

To a man whose trade was fighting, the world just then was a most distressful place, too peaceful entirely.

Over his coffee the adventurer nodded in despair and frowned in disgust; then rousing, he summoned the waiter and paid his reckoning with a secret grin at himself, a fifty-franc note and a gesture which splendidly obliterated altogether every trace of suspicion that he intended to take back any part of the change due him.

Trimming and lighting a cigar, he reviewed the restaurant with a listless eye which discovered no one of his acquaintance; therefore, with neither haste nor waste of time, he rose and betook himself to the Casino—that is, to the one place where one may feel certain of encountering, sooner or later, everybody who is anybody within the bounds of the principality.

This night, more particularly than on any preceding it, now that he had made up his mind to seek betterment of his fortunes elsewhere, he played heedlessly, little concerned with the fate of what money he had about him. He had set aside a reserve fund sufficient to settle his hotel bill and carry him a considerable distance into the unknown which he was resolved to guard, and was resigned to lose the remainder. It was a tenet of his creed of fatalism that chance seldom favored him when he had money in his pockets; the tide of his affairs must be at its lowest ebb ere it turned. His policy then was obvious—childishly plain: he must fling to the winds all that which he had.

Now never was there a man who played to lose who didn't win his point. Colonel O'Rourke's case can be cited as no exception to this rule. Elbow to elbow on one side with an artless old lady from Terre Haute, who risked her minimums with the ferocious jealousy of a miser making an unsecured loan, on the other with an intent little Austrian gambler absorbed in the workings of his "system," the adventurer scattered gold upon the numbered and illuminated grid-iron as unconcernedly as though he had been matching shillings, and saw the coins gathered in by the greedy rake as often as the little ivory ball ceased to chatter on the wheel.

For the better part of an hour this continued. And the little group of cynophants which had gathered behind his chair to watch his play inquisitively dissipated. A whisper ran through the ranks of the habitués that the luck of the mad Irishman had turned; and forthwith he ceased to be an object of interest. Only the little Austrian, having risked the number of stakes prescribed by his system for one evening's play, put away his notebook and pencil and, surrendering his place to another, lingered behind O'Rourke's chair, unable to resist the fascination of watching a man who could at once lose money and retain his composure.

At length, inexpressibly bored and too impatient to defer the inevitable by niggardly wagers, O'Rourke ransacked his pockets and placed the proceeds—several hundred francs—I am as ignorant of the amount as he was indifferent to it—upon the red.

There fell a lull, the croupier holding the wheel to permit an unbaked cub of Chicago millions to cover the cloth with stakes too numerous for his half-developed intelligence to keep count of; and the adventurer shifted in his seat, reviewing the assemblage. For some moments, through the mysterious working of that sixth sense which men are pleased vaguely to denominate intuition, he had been subconsciously aware of being the object of some person's fixed regard, that somebody was not only watching, but weighing him. He sought the source of this sensation and, for a little time, sought it unsuccessfully. Annoyed, he persisted. He heard the croupier's mechanical "Rein ne va plus," followed by the whirring of the wheel, but cared so little that he would not turn to watch the outcome. Only an exclamation of the Austrian's appraised him of the fact that red had won. He glanced listlessly round to see the money doubled, and let it rest, turning back to his survey of the throng.

A moment later his attention became fixed upon two men who stood in the doorway, looking toward him. Again the wheel buzzed, the ball clattered and was still. The word rouge among others in the announcement told him that

again he had won; this time, however, he did not turn, but, frowning in speculation, stared back at the two.

Stared? Indeed and he did just that. If it was impertinent, sure and were they not staring at him? And who should gainsay an O'Rourke the right to stare at anybody, be he klag or commoner? Furthermore, who might these men be, and what their interest in himself?

The one was tall and slender, saturnine; an elegant, owing as much to the art of his tailor and upholsterer as to his own indisputable, native distinction; a Frenchman—at least of a type unquestionably Gallic. His face was very pale, his fine, pointed mustache very precise, jaw square, forehead high, eyes deep and dark beneath brows heavy, level and black, manner marked by a repose almost threatening in its impassibility.

His companion was shorter of stature, a younger man by at least ten years, rather stout and very nervous, with a fresh red face marred by hallmarks of dissipation; British, every inch of him.

"That, I'm thinking," mused O'Rourke, "will be the Honorable Bertie Glynn. Faith, he looks the part, at least; 'tis just that kind—bred, underbred, without brains or real stamina—that would run through a half-million sterling inside a year."

But the other?

"Monsieur," the little Austrian stammered excitedly in his ear, "for you the red had doubled a fourth time."

"Thank ye," replied O'Rourke without moving. "Twill turn up seven, this run."

The system-gambler subsided, petrified.

But the other? O'Rourke continued to probe his memory. Something in the man's personality was curiously reminiscent. . . . Of a sudden he remembered. The Frenchman had been pointed out to him, years ago, in Paris, as a principal in a Boulevard scandal which had terminated in a duel—a real duel, in which he had been victorious. He was accustomed to anticipate such an outcome of his affair of honor, however; that was why he had been named to O'Rourke; Des Trebes (that was the name; the Viscount des Trebes) was a duelist of international repute.

"Monsieur," the agitated voice fluttered in his ear, "you have won yet again—for the sixth time!"

"Let it stand for the seventh, mon ami."

Why should Des Trebes be watching him so openly, so pointedly? As he watched he became aware that these two, the Frenchman and the Englishman, were not alone; detached though their attitude was, they were evidently of a party of ladies and gentlemen whose gay, chattering group formed their background.

"Monsieur, the seventh turn!"

"Yes, yes."

"Rein ne va plus," croaked the croupier.

One of the lad, turned to speak to the Honorable M. Glynn. Smiling, he nodded, and offered her an arm. She lingered, addressing Des Trebes. The latter bowed, lifted his shoulders and laughed lightly, plainly excusing himself. A general movement took place in the party; it began to disintegrate, men and women pairing off, all moving at leisure toward the lobby. Des Trebes alone remained. O'Rourke could see that the personnel of the gathering was largely British. He recognized Lady Pinlimmon, whose yacht (he had heard casually) had arrived in the harbor that morning. Evidently this was her party. Another woman's figure caught his attention; her back was turned, but she had an air, a graceful set of the shoulders, an individual pride and spirit in the poise of her head, that O'Rourke could have sworn he knew. He was conscious that he flushed suddenly, that his heart was pounding. He made as if to rise and follow, but was prevented, almost forced back by a hand which the Austrian in his feverish interest had unconsciously placed on the Irishman's shoulder.

"Monsieur, monsieur!" he gasped, his eyes, protruding, fixed upon the wheel. Beads of sweat glistened on his forehead. He trembled as though his own fortunes hung on the change.

Impressed, O'Rourke could not forbear to linger, to cast a reluctant glance at the table.

The size of his pile of gold and notes on the red was a somewhat startling sight to him. His breath stopped in his throat. The ivory sphere was rattling over the compartments to its predestined place. What if he were to win? O'Rourke began to calculate mentally how much he had at stake, how much he might win if his careless prediction that red would turn up the seventh time should come true—lost his bearings in a maze of intricate computation and was on the point of abandoning the problem when black was called.

"Great God!" panted the Austrian, withdrawing his hand.

O'Rourke rose. "The fortunes of war, me friend," said he with a laugh so unforced that it sounded unnatural. He strode away hastily, searching the throng in the lobby for her with whom his mind was occupied to the exclusion of all else.

The system-gambler followed him with a stare of incredulous amazement. "What a man!" said he to himself, if half aloud. A second later he added: "What admirable acting!"

But he was mistaken. There was nothing assumed in O'Rourke's air of apathy. He was actually quite indifferent and already preoccupied with his new interest—the pursuit of the woman whose unexpected appearance in Monte Carlo seemed likely to upset all his calculations. The odds of his fortunes had all his

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are requested to govern themselves accordingly.

TODAY'S JOURNAL

We are publishing today the largest issue that we have ever published.
We have thought for some time that Key West ought to have a big Sun-
day paper. Other cities the size of ours have one or more big Sunday
papers and we see no reason why the people of the Cigar City should not
have one, too. On the contrary, there is every reason why we should.
And beginning with this morning's issue The Journal is going to try to sup-
ply this need. We are publishing sixteen pages this morning, in two sec-
tions, and we believe we are carrying in those sixteen pages as much inter-
esting matter, in the way of news, stories and attractive advertising, as has
ever been carried in one issue of any Key West paper. We want to say
that we appreciate the hearty response which the merchants and business
men of the city have given to our request for additional space. We have
tried to arrange every advertisement in today's issue so that it would appear
to the best advantage, and we have tried to carry enough news and reading
matter to entertain our readers during their leisure hours today.

A PERTINENT QUESTION

There is considerable stir among the people, on account of a fear that
the paving being put down may prove to be not of the best construction. A
reading of the specifications shows that they seem to be all right in every
particular, and if they are strictly followed we should have a good paved
pavement. Is the engineer holding the contractors strictly to the speci-
fications? Many fear they are not so held. It seems to the Journal that
the Board of Public Works is making a mistake in not answering through-
ly the paper the many who are asking this pertinent question. This is public
business, we are all interested—every dweller in the city—it is our business
and we should like to know.

SUPERVISOR'S NOTICE

The registration books for the ap-
proaching Democratic primaries will
be open at the office of the Supervisor of
Registration at the County Court House
commencing March 19, 1912, daily dur-
ing the following hours: 7 a. m., until
12 m. and 1 to 7 p. m., until and in-
cluding April 16, 1912.
Precinct books will be open in the
following precincts as follows:
Precinct 2: Garing Furniture Store,
Eaton street, books open on Tuesday,
and Fridays between dates specified
above.
Precinct 3: Arthur Ingraham's resi-
dence, Olivia street, Mondays and
Saturdays between dates specified
above.
Precinct 4: Robert Bethel's resi-
dence, Olivia street; books open on
Wednesdays and Fridays between
dates specified above.
Precinct 5: Alfonso Gomez, deputy,
in Willie Park's coffee shop, Division
street; books open Tuesdays and Sat-
urdays between dates specified above.
Frank Cates.

Supervisor Registration Monroe Co.
March 10, 1912. mch 19 1mo

FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTOR
Jefferson B. Browne

FOR MEMBER HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-
TIVES,
Chas. L. Knowles.

FOR MEMBER HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE
Marcy B. Daball

FOR SUPERVISOR OF REGISTRATION
Frank Cates

TO THE HOUSE KEEPERS OF KEY WEST:

You are kindly invited to visit the demonstrating room used by the
Lawson Mfg. Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio, at E. A. Waddel's office where we have
on display one of the latest improvements for the kitchen. Once you see
the Pure Food Cabinet which we have on display here, you will recognize
the absolute necessity of one for your own household. It will be a pleasure
to have you come, whether you purchase or not. We have only a limited
number to place in Key West homes, for advertising purposes. We want
to show you this cabinet, then you may decide whether you will be one of
the number to take advantage of this offer.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,

The Lawson Mfg. Company.

life long been trimmed to the winds
of Chance; he was accustomed to see-
ing them fall flat and flapping, empty,
just when a venture seemed most
propitious. The loss of the money
was nothing; the initial amount had
been little enough in all conscience,
though the major part of all that he
possessed; but to him the woman was
everything—the world and all.

And now she was gone, had disap-
peared with her companions! In that
instant in which he had turned from
her to the table, she had made her es-
cape.

He cursed roundly the weakness
that had lost her to him, and passing
rapidly through the lobby, left the
Casino, pausing before the entrance
to look right and left.

There was no sign of what he
sought; the party had vanished. And
who should say whither?

"Damnation!" he grumbled.
"Monsieur," a voice intruded at his
side.

"He turned with a start, annoyed.
"Well?" he demanded curtly, recogniz-
ing Des Trebes.

The Frenchman bowed. "I have the
honor to address Monsieur le Colonel
O'Rourke?"

Reflecting that the man might af-
ford him the information he sought,
O'Rourke unbent. "I am he, Monsieur
des Trebes."

Surprised, the latter lifted his eye-
brows, showing even white teeth in a
deprecatory smile. "You know me,
monsieur?"

"By sight and reputation only, mon-
sieur."

"I am honored."
"No more than myself, if it comes to
that."

The vicomte laughed. "Then I may
presume to ask the favor of a word
with you?"

"Are ye not having it, monsieur?"
"True . . . But in private?"

"One moment. Ye can do me a
favor, if ye will. Afterwards—"

"I am charmed."
"Tis not much I'll be asking ye—
merely a question or two. Now that
gentleman ye were talking with awhile
back: isn't he the Honorable Bertie
Glynn?"

"The same, monsieur."
"And the lady who poked to
him—"

"Madame Smyth-Herriott, I believe;
I know her only slightly."

"Then ye are not of their party?"
"Party?" Des Trebes appeared per-
plexed. "What party?"

"Why, Lady Plinlimmon's, of
course."

"I have not the honor of that lady's
acquaintance, monsieur."

"Oh, ye have not? But Mr. Glynn?"
"Is he with me, monsieur—a fly-
ing trip. We ran down from Paris but
yesterday. Our meeting with Madame
Smyth-Herriott was quite accidental."

"Oh, the devil!" said O'Rourke be-
neath his breath. Plainly he might
expect nothing more helpful from this
man; he had jumped prematurely at a
baseless conclusion, it seemed. And
by now it was much too late to think
of further pursuit. "That is all I
wished to know, monsieur," he admit-
ted lamely. "There was a lady in the
group whom I thought I recognized.
I wished to find her, and fancied ye
might perhaps direct me. Ye didn't
by any chance happen to hear Mrs.
Smyth-Herriott say where she was go-
ing with Mr. Glynn?"

"Unhappily, no, monsieur."
"Very well then. What can I have
the happiness to serve ye in?"

The Frenchman hesitated briefly.
"This is a trifle public," he suggest-
ed. "Will you not be kind enough to
walk with me a little distance, while
we converse?"

"Certainly, monsieur."
Des Trebes produced a cigarette case,
and together, smoking, the two turned
their backs upon the casino and wan-
dered off along the paths of the ter-
race.



"I Have the Honor to Address Mon-
sieur le Colonel O'Rourke."

raced gardens. Ever descending, they
came at length to the secluded, little
lighted and less frequented portions of
the grounds which border the water-
front, and presently sat side by side
upon a bench, looking out over the
harbor. Then and then only did Des
Trebes approach his subject—some-
thing which he had until now studious-
ly avoided, distracting the not over-
patient Irishman by a falling fire of
banalities.

"I dare say, Colonel O'Rourke," he
suggested abandoning his mother
tongue for excellent English—"I dare
say you are wondering—"

"I am that."
"I feared so. But it was essential
that we should speak in privacy."

"Yes—?"
"But before I proceed, may I put you
a question or two bordering, perhaps,
upon impertinence, yet not so con-
ceived?"

"What a long-winded beggar!"
O'Rourke commented mentally. "As
for that," said he aloud, "tis impos-
sible for me to calculate the imperti-
nence until 'tis put to me. Eh?"

"Believe me, sir, I am anxious only
to avoid indiscretion. It is the ques-
tion of your identity alone. I desire
only to be assured that you are the
Colonel O'Rourke I take you to be."

"My faith! And who else would I
be, now?"

"There's the bare possibility that
two of the same name might exist."

"Tis so bare that 'tis fairly inde-
cent," chuckled the Irishman. "But fire
away."

"I am not mistaken in assuming
that I address the Colonel Terence
O'Rourke who was at one time a party
to le petit Lemerle's mad Empire du
Sahara project and who later mar-
ried Lemerle's widow, Madame la
Princesse de Grandlieu?"

O'Rourke took a long breath and
looked his questioner up and down.
"Ye have a very pretty taste in the
matters of impertinences," he said
gravely. "However, let that pass. I'm
the same man."

"A thousand pardons. Caution in
matters such as this—" A shrug com-
pleted the thought most eloquently.
"You can give me proofs of your iden-
tity, then?"

"Proofs!" O'Rourke got to his feet.
"Believe me, monsieur, ye have all the
proof I'm willing to give ye; and that's
my last word. If ye find it insufficient,
why, then—"

"Pardon!" Des Trebes interrupted,
rising. "I am myself more than con-
tent. But the Government of France—"

"The Government of France!"
O'Rourke whistled.

"Is more exacting than I. It knows
a certain Colonel O'Rourke and him
alone does it need."

"The devil it does! And what will
it be wanting with me?"

"I can say at present no more than
that I represent Government in an
affair demanding secrecy and dispatch.
I have a certain diplomatic mission to
discharge, and shall have need, mon-
sieur, of a man strong, bold, venture-
some, willing to undertake a long and
perhaps perilous journey." Had Des
Trebes been inspired he could have
formulated no speech better calculated
to intrigue the Irishman; the merest
echo of its import would have fired
his hearer's fancy. He added: "And I
am authorized to retain for that pur-
pose, should I be fortunate enough to
find him unengaged, a certain Colonel
Terence O'Rourke."

"Say no more, monsieur. 'Tis
enough. 'Secrecy—dispatch—a long
and perilous journey!' Faith I'm just
your man!"

"You have no other business of the
moment?"

"None whatever."
"Then I am indeed fortunate. And
now, I presume, you will no longer
object to satisfying me as to your iden-
tity."

"Not in the least. Although, to be
candid, monsieur, I'm not in the hab-
it of carrying me Bertillon record
about me. But if ye'll have the good-
ness to accompany me to the Orient,
over there, I'll put your mind at ease
before ye can say knife."

Des Trebes nodded. "I should be
delighted, but unfortunately—" He
snapped the case of his watch—"I
have an appointment with a confrere.
May we fix a time—in half an hour,
say—when it will be convenient for
you to have me call at the Orient?"

"In half an hour? I'll await ye
then, monsieur."

"Pardon, then, my haste. I am late.
I must be off."

The man's hand touched O'Rourke's
in the most brief of clasps, singularly
firm and cold. The Irishman pondered
the sensation for some moments after
Des Trebes' hurrying figure had van-
ished in shadows.

"I don't like it," he averred; "tis
a bad sign—a hand that's naturally
cold. I never yet touched one like it
that belonged to a man ye could trust.
I misdoubt he's sound at the core.
Des Trebes. . . . But then, what's
the odds? Can I not take care of me-
self? And since 'tis the Government
of France I'm treating with, and him-
self only the medium—that puts alto-
gether a different complexion on the
matter."

He spent the ensuing half-hour lo-
itering in the more populous portion
of the grounds, smoking as he stroll-
ed, his eyes keen to scrutinize each
woman who came his way. But he dis-
covered none resembling her whom he
had seen in the Casino.

CHAPTER III.

As he stepped out of the lift Colonel
O'Rourke remarked a light in his
room, visible through the transom
over the door.

"The femme de chambre," he
thought. "Sure and the poor thing's
still busy trying to clear up."

To the contrary, he found the door
fast. "Tis careless she was to leave
the light on," he observed; fitting his
key in the lock.

If thoughtless in that one way, the
woman had fulfilled the letter of her
word in the other. It was with com-
prehensive relief (since he anticipated
a caller) that he found the room once
again presentable.

But one thing surprised him; and
more surprising still was the fact that
his ordinarily indifferent eye should
have detected it at the first glance.
He had indeed hardly entered before
he became aware of a square of white
paper tucked in the corner of the bu-
reau mirror.

"The devil, now!" he greeted it.
"That's curious. . . . Could one of
me many admirers have bribed the
femme de chambre to bring a note to
me?" He chuckled, holding to the
light a much soiled envelope, grimy
with the marks of many fingers, plas-
tered

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are within the reach of all. We will
be pleased to have you drop in at
any time and inspect our goods. The
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they like to get it in the shortest pos-
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best meals and tastily prepared dishes
on the shortest notice. The restaurant
is open day and night.

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taurant.

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MEAL when he is Hungry. He
likes to have his meals prepared
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possible notice.

We know that every man likes
his meals prepared this way,
and we know, too, that every
man likes to have something
that is GOOD when he goes to
the table.

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every man can be best served at
the OLYMPIA, we have no
hesitation in handing out this
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reasonable price, stop in and
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THE OLYMPIA RES-
TAURANT

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Letter from Mr. A. K. McMullen.
Cigar City, Fla.
March 22, 1912.

Key West Drug Co.
City.

Gentlemen: Several days ago I pur-
chased a bottle of Liver Right from
your branch store, this preparation has
so greatly benefited me that I can
most heartily recommend it to any one
suffering from disordered liver or
constipation.

Yours truly,
A. K. McMullen.

Letter from Mr. Andrew J. Page.
Key West, The Cigar City, Fla.
March 21, 1912.

Key West Drug Co.
City.

Gentlemen: The bottle of Liver
Right purchased from you several days
ago proved all that you claimed for it.
It certainly put my liver right.

Yours truly,
Andrew J. Page.



WONT YOU TRY A BOTTLE OF
LIVER RIGHT?
ITS GUARANTEED

Key West Drug Co.
Distributors.

Ladies Attention! Ladies.

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700 Duval St.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

All persons having claims and demands against the Estate of Juan Rodriguez, deceased, will present the same to the undersigned for payment, within the time prescribed by law, otherwise the same will be barred. Key West, March 14th, 1912. Edmundo Moral's, Executor Last Will and Testament of Juan Rodriguez. Mar. 15-6m

tered with stamps and black with postage marks and substitute addresses, having evidently been forwarded over half the world before it reached the addressee: who was, in a bold hand, "Colonel Terence O'Rourke."

He whistled low over this, examining it intently, infinitely less concerned with its contents than with the manner by which it had reached him. The first postmark seemed to be that of Rangoon, the original address, the Cercle Militaire, his club in Paris. Thence, apparently, it had sought him in Galway, Ireland, Dublin, Paris again, and finally—after half a dozen other addresses—"C. of Mme. O'Rourke, Hotel Carlton, London." The London postmark was indecipherable.

He found himself trembling violently. By one hand alone could this have reached him, since the post had not brought it to Monte Carlo. . . . He recalled that woman's voice which had so stirred him, the woman of the Casino whose bearing had seemed to him so familiar. . . .

Someone tapped on the door; he smothered a curse of annoyance, and went to answer, thrusting the letter into his pocket.

A page announced Monsieur le Comte des Trebes.

"Show the gentleman up," snapped O'Rourke. He was about to add, "in



The Frenchman Rose, Offering Him the Envelope.

five minutes," when Des Trebes himself appeared.

"Anticipating that message, monsieur," he said, moving into view from one side of the door, "I took the liberty of accompanying this boy. I am late, I fear."

O'Rourke forced a nod and smile of welcome. "Not to my knowledge," said he.

The Frenchman consulted his watch. "Ten minutes late, monsieur; it is ten past midnight."

"Then," said O'Rourke, "the top of the morning to ye. Enter, monsieur." He stood aside, closing the door behind him. "Tis no matter; if I thought ye punctual, 'tis so ye are to all intents and purposes."

A chair, monsieur. He established Des Trebes by a window. "And a cigarette? . . . A drop to drink? . . . As ye will. . . . And since 'tis to talk secret business that we're here—would ye like the door locked?"

"That is hardly essential!" Des Trebes reviewed his surroundings with swift, searching glance. "We are at least secure from interruption; one could ask little more."

"True for ye," laughed O'Rourke. He moved toward the alcove. "Now first of all I'm to submit proofs of me identity, I believe," he added, intending to dig out of his trunk a dispatch-box containing his passports and other papers of a private nature.

But Des Trebes had changed his mind. "That is unnecessary, monsieur. Your very willingness is sufficient proof. I have your word and am content."

"That's the way of doing business that I like," assented O'Rourke heartily, warning a little to the man as he turned back a chair facing the vicomte. "Besides, I quarrel with no man's right to be reasonable. . . . And now I'm at your service, monsieur."

Des Trebes, lounging back, knees crossed, thin white fingers interlaced, black eyes narrowing, regarded the Irishman thoughtfully for a moment. Abruptly he sat up and removed from an inner pocket a long thin white envelope, thrice sealed with red wax and innocent of any super-scription whatever.

"Are you prepared, monsieur," he demanded incisively, "to play blind-man's bluff?"

"Am I what?" asked O'Rourke, startled. Then he smiled. "Pardon; perhaps I fail to follow ye."

"I mean," explained the vicomte patiently, "that I have to offer you a commission to act under sealed orders"—he tapped the envelope—"the orders contained herein."

"And when would I be free to open that?"

"As soon as you are at sea—away from France, monsieur."

O'Rourke considered the envelope doubtfully. "From you, monsieur—from the Government of France, which you represent," he said at length, "yes; I will accept such a commission. France," he averred simply, "knows me; it wouldn't be asking me to do anything a gentleman shouldn't."

"You may feel assured of that," agreed Des Trebes gravely. "Indeed, I venture to assert you will find this—let us say—adventure much to your liking. . . . Then you accept?"

"One moment—a dozen questions, by your leave. . . . When must I start?"

"Tomorrow morning by the Cote d'Azur Rapide, at ten minutes to eight."

"And where will I be going?" "First to Paris; thence to Havre; thence, by the first available steamer, to New York; finally, it may be to Venezuela, monsieur."

"Expenses?"

"I will myself furnish you with funds sufficient to finance you as far as New York. There our consul-general will provide you with what more you may require. It is essential that your connection with this affair shall be kept secret; should you draw on the government in this country, it would expose you to grave suspicions, perhaps to danger."

"I understand that," assented the Irishman. "But to obviate all danger of mistake, would it not be well to have one of your trusted agents meet me on the steamer and provide me with whatever ye figure I might require? 'Tis barely possible your consul-general might not recognize me in New York. Why should he? I never heard his name, even."

Des Trebes meditated this briefly. "It shall be as you desire, monsieur. It shall be arranged as you suggest."

"Finally, then, what is to be my recompense?"

"That must depend. I am authorized to assure you that in no case will you receive less than twenty-five thousand francs; in event of a successful termination of your mission, the reward will be doubled."

"Tis enough," said O'Rourke with a sigh; "I accept."

The Frenchman rose, offering him the envelope. "You must pledge yourself, monsieur, not to break these seals until you are at sea?"

"Absolutely—of course," O'Rourke took the packet, weighed it curiously in his hand and scrutinized the seals. He remarked that they were yet soft and fresh; the wax had been hot within the half hour.

"I will do myself the honor of meeting you at the train to see you off, monsieur," said Des Trebes. "At that time, also, will I provide you with the funds you require."

"Thank ye."

Their hands met.

"Good night, Monsieur O'Rourke."

"Good night."

Half way to the door, Des Trebes paused. "Oh, by the way," he exclaimed carelessly, "I believe you are a friend of my old school-fellow, Chamberlain—mon cher Adolphe?"

"Tis so," assented the Irishman warmly. "The best of men—Chamberlain!"

"Odd," commented the vicomte, "only this afternoon I was told that he had been killed."

"The last I heard of him, he was in Algeria, monsieur—with some French force in the desert."

"Thank you. . . . On the point of leaving the vicomte snapped his teeth on a second "Good night," and swore beneath his breath.

O'Rourke, surprised, stared. The Frenchman was standing stiffly at attention, as if alarmed. His pallor was, if possible, increased, livid—his closely shaven beard showing blue-black on his heavy jaws and prominent chin. His eyes blazed, shifting from the alcove to O'Rourke.

"Monsieur?" he demanded harshly, "what does this insult mean?"

"Mean?" iterated O'Rourke. "Insult? Faith, ye have me there."

Speechless with rage, Des Trebes gestured violently toward the alcove; and O'Rourke became aware that the curtains were shaking—wavered as though a draught stirred them. But there was no draught. And beneath their edge he saw two feet—two small, bewitching feet in the daintiest and most absurd of evening slippers, with an inch or so of silken stockings showing above each.

Des Trebes' eyes, filled with an expression unspeakably offensive, met the Irishman's blank, wondering gaze. "It is, no doubt," the Frenchman stammered, "sanctioned by your code to have me spied upon by the partner of your liaisons."

"But, monsieur—"

"I compliment the lady upon the smallness of her feet, as well as upon ankles so charming that I cannot bring myself to leave without a glimpse of their mistress' features."

Des Trebes moved toward the alcove. Thunderstruck, O'Rourke rapped out a stupefied oath, then in a stride forestalled the man. With him it was as if suddenly a circuit had closed in his intelligence, establishing a definite connection between the three—now four—most mystifying incidents of the evening.

"Less haste, monsieur," he counseled in a voice of ice. His hand fell with almost paralyzing force upon the other's wrist as he sought to grasp the curtain, and swung him roughly back. "Yourself will never know who's there—whoever the lady may be. . . . Ah, but no, monsieur!"

Maddened beyond prudence, Des Trebes had struck at his face. O'Rourke warded off the blow and in what seemed the same movement whirled the man round by his captive wrist and caught the other arm from the back. The briefest of struggles ensued. The Frenchman, taken at a complete disadvantage, was for all his resistance hustled to the door and thrown through it before he fairly comprehended what was happening.

Free at length, if on all fours, he scrambled to his feet to find O'Rourke had shut the door behind him, calmly awaiting the next move.

"Haven't ye had enough?" demanded the Irishman as the vicomte, blinded with passion, seemed about to renew the attack. "Or are ye wishful to be going downstairs in the same fashion?"

Des Trebes drew back, snarling.

Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Company

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First Sailing from Miami, January 4, 1912

Miami - Nassau 3. Miami Jan. 29, 1912	Eastward	Lv. Miami	Mon.	Wed.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	On Tide
		Ar. Nassau	Tues.	Thur.	Sat.	Sun.		On Tide
	Westward	Lv. Nassau	Tues.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	On Tide
		Ar. Miami	Wed.	Fri.	Sun.			On Tide

Last sailing from Miami, Monday April 8th, 1912

St. Petersburg Port Tampa Key West Havana	Southward	Lv. St. Petersburg	Tues	10 30 PM	
		Ar. Port Tampa	Tues	10 30 PM	
		Lv. Port Tampa	Sun	10 30 PM	
		Ar. Key West	Mon	Wed Fri	3 30 PM
		Lv. Key West	Mon	Wed Fri	8 00 PM
	Northward	Ar. Havana	Tues	Sat	6 30 AM
		Lv. Havana	Tues	Thu Sat	12 00 M
		Ar. Key West	Tues	Thu Sat	8 00 PM
		Lv. Key West	Tues	Thu Sat	10 30 PM
		Ar. Port Tampa	Wed	Fri Sun	3 30 PM
S. S. Olivette	Southward	Lv. Port Tampa	Fri	6 00 PM	
S. S. Mascotte		Ar. St. Petersburg	Fri	7 00 PM	
Effective Jan. 4, 1912					
Effective Jan. 22, 1912	Southward	Lv. Key West	Daily Except Sunday	10 00 AM	
KEY WEST		Daily Except Sunday	5 00 PM		
S. S. Halifax S. S. Gov. Cobb	Northward	Lv. Havana	Daily Except Sunday	9 30 AM	
		Ar. Key West	Daily Except Sunday	4 30 PM	

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"You dog!" he cried. Then abruptly, by an admirable effort, he calmed himself surprisingly, drawing himself up with considerable dignity and throttling his temper as he quietly adjusted the disorder of his clothing. Only in his eyes, black as sloes and small, did there remain any trace of his malignant and unquenchable hatred.

"I am unfortunately," he sneered, "incapable of participating in such brawls as you prefer, Colonel O'Rourke. But I am not content. I warn you . . . My rank prevents me from punishing you personally; I am obliged to fight gentlemen only."

O'Rourke laughed openly. "But I advise you to leave Monte Carlo before morning. Should you remain, or should you come within my neighborhood another time—at whatever time—I will kill you as I would a rabid cur—or cause you to be shot." "There's always the coward's alternative," returned the Irishman. "But ye mustn't forget ye've only the one leg to stand upon in society—your notoriety as a duelist. And I shall take steps to see that ye fight me before sunset. Else shall all Europe know ye for a coward."

Behind the vicomte the lift shot up, paused, and discharged a single passenger. As swiftly the cage disappeared.

Out of the corner of his eye, O'Rourke recognized the newcomer as an old acquaintance, and his heart swelled with gratitude while a smile of rare pleasure shaped itself upon his lips. He had now the Frenchman absolutely at his mercy.

"Captain von Einem," he said quickly, "by your leave, a moment of your time."

The man paused stiffly, with the square-set and erect poise of an officer of the German army. "At your service, Colonel O'Rourke," he said in impeccable French.

But the Irishman had returned undivided attention to Des Trebes. "Monsieur," he announced, "your nose annoys me." And with that he shot out a hand and seized the offensive member between a strong and capable thumb and forefinger. "It has annoyed me," he explained in parenthesis, "ever since I first clapped me two eyes upon ye, scum of the earth that ye are."

And he tweaked the nose of Monsieur le Viscomte des Trebes, tweaked it with a will and great pleasure, tweaked it for glory and the Saluts; carefully, methodically, even painstakingly, he kneaded and pulled and twisted it from side to side, ere releasing it.

Then stepping back and wiping his fingers upon a handkerchief, he checked his head to one side and admired the result of his handiwork. "It has an amazingly happy effect," he observed critically—"the crimson blotch it makes against the chalky complexion ye affect, Monsieur des Trebes. . . . And now I fancy ye'll fight. Your friends may call upon mine here—Captain von Einem, with your permission."

"Most happy, Colonel O'Rourke," assented the German, blue eyes sparkling in an immobile countenance. "I shall await the seconds of Monsieur des Trebes in my rooms."

The Frenchman essayed to speak, choked with passion, and turning abruptly, somewhat unsteadily descending the staircase.

O'Rourke laughed briefly, offering the German his hand. "Twas wonderfully opportune, your appearance, captain dear," said he. "Thank ye from the bottom of me heart. . . . And now will ye forgive me excusing myself until I hear from ye about the affair of the morning? I've a friend waiting in me room here. . . . Pardon the rudeness."

CHAPTER IV.

It would be difficult to designate precisely just what O'Rourke thought to discover, when after a punctilious return of Captain von Einem's salute, he reopened his door and, closing it quickly as he entered, turned the key in the lock.

His mood was exalted, his imagination excited; the swift succession of events which had made memorable the



"Monsieur, Your Nose Annoys Me!"

night, culminating with his open invitation to a challenge from the most desperate duelist in Europe, had inspired a volatile vivacity such as not even the excitement of the Casino had been potent to create in him. Of all mad conjectures imaginable the maddest was too weird for him to credit in his humor of that hour. Eliminating all else that had happened, in the course of that short evening, his heart had been stirred, his emotions played upon by a recrudescence of a passion which he had striven with all his strength to put behind him for a time;

he had first heard the voice of the one woman to whom his love and faith and honor were irrevocably pledged, he had then seen her (or another who remarkably resembled her) for the scantiest of instants; and finally he had mysteriously received a letter which could, he believed, have been conveyed to him by no other hand but hers. And now he was persuaded beyond a doubt that the person of the alcove, the eavesdropper for whose fair repute he had chosen to risk his life, was nobody in the world but that same one woman.

But more than all else, perhaps, he expected and feared to find the room deserted; for the balcony outside the windows afforded a means of escape too facile to be neglected by one who wished not to be discovered. . . .

His first definite impression was of consternation and despair; for the lights had been shut off in his absence. Then quickly he discerned, with eyes dazed by the change from the lighted hallway to the lightless chamber, the shadowy shape of a woman, motionless between him and the windows, waiting.

An electric switch was at his elbow. With a single motion he could have drenched the place with light. For an instant tempted, some strange scruple of delicacy, abetted it may be by his native love of romantic mystery, stayed his hand.

"Madame," said he, "or mademoiselle, whichever ye may be—the windows are open, myself's not detaining ye. If ye choose, ye may go; but ye'd favor me by going quickly. . . . I give ye," he continued, seeing that she neither moved nor replied, "this one chance. In thirty seconds I turn on the lights."

The woman did not stir; but he thought he could detect in the stillness her quickened breathing.

"What ye've taken," he amended, "I'd thank ye to leave as ye go—if ye came to steal. 'Tis little I have to lose. . . ."

There was no answer. He touched the switch with an impatient hand, stepped forward a single pace, caught himself up and stopped short, now pale and trembling who had a moment gone been flushed with calm.

"Beatrix!" he cried thickly. Dumbly his wife lifted her arms and offered herself to him, unutterably lovely, unspeakably radiant. . . .

It were worse than a waste of time to attempt a portrait of her as she seemed to him. Seen through her husband's eyes, her beauty was incomparable, immaculate, too rare and fine, too delicate a thing to be bodied forth in words, dependent upon the perfection of a single feature. Not in her hair, falling sunlight on the sea, not in her eyes, of autumnal brown, not in the wonderful fineness of her skin or in the dauntlessness of her features, not in the graciousness of her body, did he find the beauty of her that surpassed expression, but in the love she bore him, in the sweetness of her inviolate soul, in the steadfastness of her impregnable heart.

But it's doubtful if ever he had analyzed his passion for her so minutely. Mostly, I think, at that moment of her abrupt disclosure to him, he longed unutterably for her lips and the proffered wreath round his neck of her slim, round, white arms.

Yet he would not. Trembling though he was, with every instinct and every fiber of his being straining toward her, with the hunger for her keen pain in his heart, he held himself back; or his conception of honor held him back. That which he had voluntarily forfeited and put away from him for his honor's sake, he would not take back though it were offered freely to him.

"So," he said, after a bit, shakily; then pulled himself together, and controlling his voice—"So 'twas yourself, after all, Beatrix! Me heart told me no other woman could have sung that song as ye did—"

The woman dropped her arms. "Your heart, Terence?" she asked a little bitterly.

"What else? Do ye doubt it?" She shook her head sadly, wistfully. "How do I know? How can I tell? Surely, dear, no two people were ever happier than we—yet within a year from our wedding you . . . you left me, ran away from me. . . . Why?"

"Well ye know why, dearest, and well ye know 'twas love of ye alone that drove me from ye. Could I let it be said ye had a husband who was incapable of supporting ye? Could I let it be said that your husband lived like a leech upon your fortunes? Faith, didn't I have to go for your sake?"

"No," she dissented with a second weary shake of her pretty head; "I think it was love of yourself, a little, Terence—that and your pride. . . . Why should any of our world have guessed you were not the rich man you fancied yourself when we were married? Who would have told them that your landed heritage in Ireland had turned out profitless? Not I, my dear."

"I know that," he contended stubbornly, "but I know, too, sooner or later it would have come out, and they would have said: 'There she goes with her fortune-hunter, the adventurer who married her for her money—'"

"And if so? What earthly difference could it make to us, sweetheart? What can gossip matter to us—if you love me?"

"If!" he cried, almost angrily. "If! . . . Ah, but no, darling! 'tis yourself knows there is no 'if' about it; that I'm sick with love of ye this very minute—sick and mad for ye."

"Then," she pleaded, with a desperate little break in her incoherent voice; and again held out her arms to him—"then have pity on me, oh, my

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dearest one—have pity on me if only for a little while.”

And suddenly he had caught her to him, and she lay in his arms, her young strong body molded to his, her lips to his, her eyes half-veiled, the sweet fragrance of her—too well remembered—intoxicating him; lay supine in his embrace, yet held him strongly to her, and trembled in sympathy with the deep, hurried pounding of his heart.

In the south the horizon flamed livid to the zenith, revealing a great, black wall of cloud that had stolen up out of Africa; beneath it the sea shone momentarily with a sickly silken luster. Then the dense blackness of the night reigned again, as profound as though impenetrable, eternal.

Later a dull growl of thunder rolled in across the waste. With it came the first fitful warnings of the impending wind storm.

“Twas ye who sang to me, dear—est?”

“Who else, you great silly boy? And when you followed me to the door, making as much noise as a young elephant, Terence—I was minded to punish you a little, a very little, my dear. So I merely opened mine and closed it sharply.”

“There was a woman in the hall—”

“I saw her, dear, and laughed, thinking how puzzled you would be. . . . Was I cruel, my heart? But I did not mean to be. I’d planned this surprise, you know, from the minute I found our rooms adjoining.”

“And this letter”—O’Rourke fumbled in his pocket and got it out—“ye brought it to me?”

“It came to me in London, dear, two weeks ago; we were together—Clara Minilimon and I—at the Carlton,

you read it?”

“Have I had time, sweetheart or mine?”

There was an interlude.

In the distance the thunder rolled and rumbled.

Resolutely the young woman disengaged herself and withdrew to a little distance.

“Read, monsieur,” she insisted, peremptorily.

“I’ve better things to do, dear,” he retorted with composure.

“You’ll find it interesting.”

“I find the wife more interesting than— How d’ye know I will?”

“Perhaps I have read it.”

O’Rourke turned the letter over in his hand and noted what had theretofore escaped his attention—the fact that the envelope, badly frayed on the edges through much handling, was open at the top.

“So ye may,” he admitted.

“It was that way when I received it. And I have read it. How could I help it?”

“Then ye’ve saved me the bother.”

He prepared to rise and capture her. She retreated briskly. “Read!” she commanded. “Read about the Pool of Flame!”

He stopped short, thunderstruck. “The Pool of Flame?” he reiterated slowly. “What d’ye know about that?”

“What the letter tells me—no more. What has become of it?”

But he had already withdrawn the enclosure and tossed the envelope aside, and was reading—absorbed, excited, oblivious to all save that conveyed to his intelligence by the writing beneath his eyes.

It was a singularly curt, dry and business-like document for one that was destined to mold the romance of his life—strangely terse and tritely phrased for one that was to exert so far-reaching an influence over the lives of so many men and women. Upon a single sheet of paper bearing their letterhead, Messrs. Secretan and Sypher, solicitors, of Rangoon, Burmah, had caused to be typed a communication to Colonel Terence O’Rourke, informing him that on behalf of a client who preferred to preserve his incognito they were prepared to offer a reward of one hundred thousand pounds sterling for the return, intact and unmarred, of the ruby known as the Pool of Flame. The said ruby was, when last heard of, in the possession of the said Colonel O’Rourke, who would receive the reward upon the delivery of the said stone to the undersigned at their offices in Rangoon within six months from date. Said delivery might be made either in person or by proxy. With which Messrs. Secretan and Sypher begged to remain respectfully his.

The Irishman read it once and again, memorizing its import; then deliberately shredded it into minute particles.

“So it’s come,” he said heavily, “just



He Stopped Short, Thunderstruck.

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“It came to me in London, dear, two weeks ago; we were together—Clara Minilimon and I—at the Carlton,

as the O’Mahoney foretold it would!”

He sank back in his chair, and his wife went to him and perched herself upon the arm of it, imprisoning his head with her arms and laying her cheek against his.

“What has come, my heart?”

“One hundred thousand pounds,” he said. . . . “Treble its worth, double what the O’Mahoney expected.”

“Who is the O’Mahoney, dear?”

He roused. “An old friend, Beatrix—an old comrade. He died some years back, on the banks of the Tugela, fighting with a Boer commando. He was a lonely man, without kith or kin or many friends beside himself. That, I presume, is how he came to leave the Pool of Flame with me.”

He wound an arm round her and held her close. “Hearken, dear, and I’ll be telling ye the story of it.”

Behind them the infernal glare lit up the portentous skies. Thunder echoed between clouds and sea like heavy cannoning. The wife shrank close to her beloved. “I am not at all afraid,” she declared, when her voice could be heard—“with you. . . . Tell me about the Pool of Flame.”

“The O’Mahoney left it with me when he went to South Africa,” explained O’Rourke. “Twas a pasteboard box the size of me fist, wrapped in brown paper and tied with a bit of string, that he brought me one evening, saying he was about to leave, and would I care for it in his absence. I knew no more of it than that ‘twas something he valued highly, but I put it away in a safe-deposit vault—which he might’ve done if he hadn’t been a scatterbrain—an Irishman.”

“Then he wrote me a letter—I got it weeks after his death—saying he felt he was about to go out, and that the Pool of Flame was mine. He went on to explain that the box contained a monstrous big ruby and gave me its history, as far as he knew it.”

“It seems that there’s a certain highly respectable temple in one of the Shan States of Burmah (‘tis myself forgets the name of it) and in that temple there’s an idol, a Buddha of pure gold, ‘tis said. It would be a perfectly good Buddha, only that it lacks an eye; there’s an empty socket in its forehead, and ‘tis there the Pool of Flame belongs—or come from. In the old days the natives called this stone the Luck of the State, and maybe they were right; for when it disappeared the state became a British possession.”

“In the war of ‘eighty-five, says the O’Mahoney, a small detachment of British troops out of touch with their command, happened upon this temple we’re speaking of and took it, disposing priests and populace without so much as a day’s notice. The officer in command happened to see this eye in the Buddha’s forehead, pried it out and put it in his pocket. In less than an hour the natives surrounded the

temple and attacked in force. The British stood them off for three days and then were relieved; but in the meantime the officer had been killed and the Pool of Flame had vanished. . . . For several years it stayed quiet, so far as is known. Then the curse of the thing began to work, and it came to the surface in a drunken brawl in the slums of Port Said. The police, breaking into some dive to stop a row, found nobody in the place but a dead Greek; they say ‘twas a shambles. One of the police found the big ruby in the dead man’s fist and before his companions guessed what was up slipped away with the stone. . . . He was murdered some months later in a Genoese bagnio, by a French girl, who got away with it somehow. . . . The O’Mahoney came across the thing in Algeria, when he was serving with the Foreign Legion. He was in Sidi Bel Abbas one night, off duty, and wandering about, when he heard a man cry out for help in one of the narrow black alleys of the place. He thought he recognized a comrade’s voice, and surely enough, when he ran down to aid him, he found a Dutchman, a man of his own regiment, fighting with half a dozen natives. He was about done for, the Dutchman, when the O’Mahoney came up, and so were three of the Arabs. The O’Mahoney took care of the rest of them, and left seven dead men behind him when he went away—the six natives and the Dutchman, who had died in his arms and given him the Pool of Flame with his last whisper. . . .

“That’s how it came to me,” said O’Rourke.

“And where is it now?”

“Back in Algeria, if I’m not mistaken. Ye remember Chambret—he was with us in the desert and wanted ye to marry him afterwards? He has it—the dear man; I love him like a brother. . . . He sickened of Europe when he found his case with you was hopeless, and went to Algiers, joining the Foreign Legion.”

“But how—?”

“Well, we were fond of each other, Chambret and I. I helped him out of some tight corners and he helped me along when me money ran short—as it always did, and will, I’m thinking. After a while I got to wondering how much I owed the man and figured it up; the sum total frightened the life out of me, and I made him take the ruby by way of security—and never was able to redeem it, for ‘twas only a little after that that I came into me enormous patrimony and squandered it riotously getting married to the most beautiful woman living. . . .

“He warned me to hold the stone, the O’Mahoney did, saying that the time would come when some native prince would offer to redeem the Luck of the State as an act of piety and patriotism. He prophesied a reward of

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the thing in Algeria, when he was serving with the Foreign Legion. He was in Sidi Bel Abbas one night, off duty, and wandering about, when he heard a man cry out for help in one of the narrow black alleys of the place. He thought he recognized a comrade’s voice, and surely enough, when he ran down to aid him, he found a Dutchman, a man of his own regiment, fighting with half a dozen natives. He was about done for, the Dutchman, when the O’Mahoney came up, and so were three of the Arabs. The O’Mahoney took care of the rest of them, and left seven dead men behind him when he went away—the six natives and the Dutchman, who had died in his arms and given him the Pool of Flame with his last whisper. . . .

“That’s how it came to me,” said O’Rourke.

“And where is it now?”

“Back in Algeria, if I’m not mistaken. Ye remember Chambret—he was with us in the desert and wanted ye to marry him afterwards? He has it—the dear man; I love him like a brother. . . . He sickened of Europe when he found his case with you was hopeless, and went to Algiers, joining the Foreign Legion.”

“But how—?”

“Well, we were fond of each other, Chambret and I. I helped him out of some tight corners and he helped me along when me money ran short—as it always did, and will, I’m thinking. After a while I got to wondering how much I owed the man and figured it up; the sum total frightened the life out of me, and I made him take the ruby by way of security—and never was able to redeem it, for ‘twas only a little after that that I came into me enormous patrimony and squandered it riotously getting married to the most beautiful woman living. . . .

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Key West Drug Company. None Like "Nunnally's" Delicious Atlanta Candy

We Sold The Cheapest Piece of Real Estate Sold Yesterday. We Have Numbers of Others

Just as Cheap.

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ONE CLOTHING

IS OF THE DIFFERENT SORT

Every \$17.50 PLUS SUIT sold with a guarantee from the manufacturer. Other makes \$7 and up.

OUR HATS

You must see our big assortment at the LOWEST PRICES, then you will appreciate the Home of Cut Prices on W. L. Douglas Shoes.

THE NAVAL STORE

Undersells Its Competitors all the Time.

J. LEBOWITZ

128 DUVAL STREET

FOR SALE

The furnishings and three year lease of

CHICAGO HOUSE.

At 318 Simonton Street. The house has 35 rooms, with all modern improvements.

Also the furnishings of the adjoining house, 320 Simonton, with furnished rooms, barber shop and coffee shop.

Proprietor wishes to leave the city, and wants to make quick sale.

See Proprietor Chicago House.

Watch This Particular S

FOR THE

Easter Announcement of the

Vogue**A Good Reminder**

It is because of your breakdown your fair one was fretful and said the No. she didn't mean.

BRING US YOUR WHEEL,

and we will fix it good as new. It won't take long and shant cost much. After that call in the minister and she'll say Yes that will make two of you one, and may you live long and be happy, and not forget our shop.

The best line of tires to be had anywhere. HOYLES' Ever Johnson, Heavy service, and Ramblers.

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PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS

The Misses Rosalia Harris and Ruby Baeza, commencing next Thursday, will give a weekly dance at the Centro Asturiano club rooms which are over the Johnson building on Duval street. The dances will be held each Thursday evening until further notice. That these affairs will be delightful and most popular is indicated by the fact that the fair sponsors will bend every energy toward making them successful in every sense of the word.

A man working for the street car company was overcome by the heat yesterday afternoon. He was working near the corner of Greene and Fitzpatrick Sts. when he suddenly toppled over. Dr. Warren was called and after an examination stated that the man would suffer no serious effects.

On April 16, the Miami, now plying between Miami and Nassau, will enter the Key West-Havana service, and in connection with the Mascotte will take the run now being made by the Governor Cobb and the Halifax.

The J. G. White party of financier who spent Friday evening in Key West left yesterday morning on No. 38 for Sebastian, whence they go to investigate the famous Fellsmere Farms Section.

Quite a number of the members of the engineering and other departments of the F. E. C. Ry. were in Key West last night. Among those who registered at the Jefferson were: Jno. A. Blake, J. W. Northrup, of Sugar Loaf Camp Engineer H. A. Miller at the Big Coppitt camp, J. J. Reynolds, J. B. McClymont, Sugar Loaf, and C. A. Roach.

Charles Moorehouse and wife of Tampa passed through here last night from Havana on the Olivette, en route to Tampa. They spent a very pleasant time in the Cuban Capital. Mr. Moorehouse is one of the largest wholesale grocers in the state. He is well known to Key Westers, as for a number of years he made this point while representing a big New York house.

The schooner James E. Jouett is undergoing repairs on Curry's Marine Railway.

C. N. Munson and wife of New York, who have been spending a few weeks in our city, as the guests of Mrs. M. S. Bell, at her residence 509 Whitehead street, will leave on Monday morning's train en route to Miami, whence they will go by the S. S. Miami to Nassau where they will spend a few days. Afterwards they will visit Mr. Munson's parents in Jacksonville. Thence they will go to Gotham. Mr. Munson has the only Florida land office in New York city. He has taken an option on a large number of tracts of Key land.

Just a week's trial of one of our lights will convince you that you're using your own gas plant. The Best Light Agency. Cleveland R. Pierce, Agent.

The Navy tug Osceola will probably return from Tortugas today.

The Olivette carried an unusually large list of passengers to Port Tampa last night. A large number of the steerage passengers were laborers off the extension.

Chas. Chase, Jr., of the Florida Keys Sponge & Fruit Co., Sugar Loaf, was a Jefferson Hotel guest last night.

V. A. Johnson is manager and Michael Rossi of Philadelphia is the cutter of the Philadelphia Tailors 122 Duval street.

Hon. Jefferson B. Browne, of Key West is a candidate for presidential elector. He is one of the ablest men in the state and has hosts of friends in every section who will support his candidacy.—Orlando Sentinel.

The British S. S. Riverdale from Hamburg, Germany, with cement for the F. E. C. Ry. is expected to arrive here this week.

Come in and make your selection for your spring suit. The Philadelphia Tailors will make your suit as you want it.

For fine tailoring see the Philadelphia Tailors.

Chief officer Sharpley, of the S. S. Miami, is visiting his family and calling on friends in this city. He will return to his ship on Tuesday. You are always welcome, Sharpley.

The San Marcos of the Mallory line, which should arrive here, Tuesday, bound for New York, will not come. She has been ordered to Mobile, where she will transfer her cargo to the Comal. The Comal is due here Saturday.

On the Halifax for Havana yesterday were Mr. and Mrs. Alex Allison, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Gering, J. G. Donnellan and 7 second class.

The Mallory liner, Concho, which arrived here midnight, Friday, carried these passengers from Key West for New York. Rev. L. W. Snyder, D. D., Mary W. Mills, Amy Hyde, D. L. Emanuel and 42 steerage. The Concho unloaded here 22 tons of window sash weights consigned from Anniston, Ala. to the Blum Hardware Co., Galveston, Texas. They will be loaded on the Sabine, today bound for Galveston.

The ladies of the Public Library Association desire to express their thanks for these contributions: \$15 from Frank Fleitas, manager of the San Carlos Theatre, and \$5 from St. Clair Crain, of the Key West News Co.

Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Hemphill and family are here to take up their permanent residence. Mr. Hemphill is the new proprietor of the Consumers' Bottling Co.

See the Philadelphia Tailors at Dr. and Mrs. Kemp are at Planter, Fla. on a visit with the latter's sister, Mrs. Simon Johnson. The doctor returns to Key West tomorrow. Mrs. Kemp will make a protracted visit.

A regular meeting of the Ladies' Aid Society of St. Paul's Church will be held tomorrow afternoon at the rectory, corner Duval and Eaton Sts.

Mrs. Francisco Fleitas is making a short visit with relatives at Homestead.

Mrs. George Bocker, who is a delegate to the Daughters of the King convention will go to Miami Tuesday.

Fish were very scarce here yesterday, and as a consequence, the grunts and groupers brought the fishermen good prices.

THE HOLTSBERG

Sole Agent For
**THOMPSON,
GLOVE FITTING
CORSETS**

THEO. HOLTSBERG
Next to San Carlos

**BLUE LINE
TRANSFER CO.**

We can transfer your baggage day or night. Let us serve you. We guarantee you efficient service at reasonable rates. Try us.

Blue Line Transfer Co.
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515 Whitehead street. Phone 239

ELECTRIC FLATIRONS

From March 20th to April 20th we will sell six pound electric irons for \$3.00. After the last day of this sale iron will be sold at the regular price of \$4.00.

Each iron is guaranteed to last until Jan. 1st, 1917.

The Key West Electric Co.
SALES DEPARTMENT

FOR SPRING AND SUMMER

Bright, New, Stylish, Spring and Summer wearing apparel are being received most every day.

DRESS GOODS, SHOES, HOSIERY, MUSLIN, UNDERWEAR, CORSETS, LACES, EMBROIDERIES AND TRIMMINGS OF ALL KINDS

The real rush for spring goods is just beginning, and a rush it will be for Easter falls on April 7th this year, and all the buying will have to be crowded into a very short time.

Hundreds of different styles, of shoes, for Ladies, Misses and children in white, black and brown leather, and patent leather, canvas and buck skin, are awaiting your inspection.

DOROTHY DODD SHOES

As durable as they are fashionable, a dainty as they are durable. When the work is considered the prices are most moderate.

**MRS. A. R. KING
KANT SLIP SHOES**

For children have just arrived in a large variety of styles, among them a big assortment of white canvas pumps and high button shoes from \$1.25 to \$3.00.

La Crecque Corsets

Makes shapely the stoutest women permanently holds its stylish shape being heavily boned with non rustable double aluminum boning. A large assortment of styles, and many other pretty spring and summer goods are always awaiting you at

A. LOUIS & SON
DEPARTMENT STORE

**How About
That Straw?**
2.00 \$2.50, \$3.00 \$4.00.

A. Wolkowsky

Reliable Mdse. Distributor.

EASTER IS COMING

If you want some new jewelry for this glad season, we have a large variety for your approval. We're not going to say a word about it; we just ask you to drop in and see for yourself. That's a fair proposition isn't it?

The Diamond Palace
P. WEINBERG

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Official Paper
Of The City Of
Key West Fla.

THE KEY WEST MORNING JOURNAL

Key West
The Cigar
City

VOLUME 4 NO. 94

SUNDAY, MARCH 24 1912

PRICE FIVE CENTS

HERE ARE TWO PRETTY HOMES Which one will you take?

We have been in Key West for several years, and we believe the People of the Cigar City know that we give more Furnishings and better Furnishings for a stated sum than any other house.

We would make your interests ours and look after the many details of fitting up the home, which ordinary furniture and carpet dealers would never think of bothering with. Today we go more deeply into the matter. We publish two combination offers, which you should study carefully.

Every article in the different lists is first-class, new, refined in style and guaranteed. We name a very special price for each outfit entire, but if you wish to furnish but one or two rooms, we will adjust the price to meet your approbation.

HOME NO. 1

FOUR ROOMS COMPLETE FOR \$75.45

If you could see this furniture all assembled in a cozy little cottage, you would never believe so beautifully furnished a house could be had for just \$75.45.

PARLOR

6 Chairs, Sofa, 1 Center Table 4 Rockers, 3 Window shades, 1 Art square.

BED ROOM

1 Iron bed complete with Springs, Mattress and Pillows; 2 Chairs, 2 Window shades, 1 Bureau and 1 Wash stand.

DINING ROOM

1 Dining table, 6 Chairs, 1 Safe for china etc., 2 window shades.

KITCHEN

1 Oil stove, 1 Kitchen table, 2 Chairs, Wash pan, Coffee pot, Frying pan, Buckets, Spoons, etc.

HOME NO. 2

FOUR ROOMS COMPLETE FOR \$492.50.

This combination of furniture, if bought at other stores, in the ordinary way, would cost you at least 20 per cent. more than the price we charge.

PARLOR

1 wicker suit of 6 pieces, including center table, Axminster Art Square and 3 shades, best grade.

BED ROOM

Best grade bed room suit, including bedstead, Mattress, Springs and Pillows. Bureau and Wash stand, 2 Rockers and 2 Straight chairs, Toilet set, 3 window shades.

DINING ROOM

1 Dining table (quartered oak), 6 chairs to match, China closet, Side board, Linoleum for floor and 3 window shades.

KITCHEN

3 burner Oil stove, Kitchen safe (oak, glass doors), Kitchen table, set of dishes (good grade China), 2 Chairs (oak).

The Key West Furniture Co.
700 Duval Street.

at least ten thousand pounds. And now it's come twice over!"

"And now what can you do?"

"Do?" cried O'Rourke. "Faith, what would I be doing? D'ye realize what this means to me, dear heart? It means you—indeed, a little fortune, the right to claim my wife!"

He drew her to him. "Do? Sure, and by the first train and boat I'll go to Algeria, find Chambret, get him to give me the stone, take it to Rangoon, claim the reward, repay Chambret and—"

"And what, my paladin?"

"Dare ye ask me that, madame?"

"Say, will ye wait for me?"

She laughed softly. "Have I not waited, Ulysses?"

"Tell me," he demanded, "have ye talked with anyone about this letter?"

"Only to Clara Plinlimmon!"

"Good Lord!" groaned the Irishman. "Only to her! Could ye not have printed broadsides, the better to make the matter public?"

"Did I do wrong?"

"Twas indiscreet—and that's putting it mildly, me dear. D'ye know the woman's a walking newspaper? How much did ye tell her? Did ye show her the letter?"

"No." She answered his last question first. "And I told her very little—only about this reward for a rufy I didn't know you owned. We were wondering where to find you."

"And she told no one—or who do you think?"

The woman looked a little frightened. "She told—she must have told that man—Monsieur des Trebes."

"That blackguard!"

"He was with us on the yacht, one of Clara's guests."

"She has a pretty taste for company—my word! How d'ye know she told him? He asked you about it?"

"The letter? Yes. He wanted to know the name of the solicitors and their address. I wouldn't tell him. I—disliked him."

"No."

"Praises be for that!"

"Why?"

"Because . . . O'Rourke paused, vague suspicions taking shape in his mind. "Why did he ask about Chambret?" he demanded. "How could he have learned that the jewel was with him?"

He jumped up and began to pace the floor.

His wife rose, grave with consternation. "What," she faltered—"what makes you think, suspect—?"

"Because the fellow lied to me about you this very night. Ye were with Lady Plinlimmon in the Casino, were ye not? Faith, and didn't I see ye? I was in chase of ye when the man stopped me with his rignarole about representing the French government and having a secret commission for me. Ye heard him just now?"

And when I asked him was he of your party, he denied knowing Lady Plinlimmon. . . . He made a later appointment with me here, to talk things over. I'm thinking he only wanted time to think up a scheme for getting me out of the way. Also, he wanted to find out where Chambret was. D'ye not see through his little game? To get me away from Monte Carlo by the first morning train, that ye might not meet; to get me on the first Atlantic liner, that I might not interfere with his plot against Chambret. For what other reason would he give me sealed orders? Sealed orders!" O'Rourke laughed curtly, taking



She Flung Herself Upon Him, Sobbing.

ing the long envelope from his pocket and tearing it open. "Behold his sealed orders, if ye please!"

He shuffled rapidly through his fingers six sheets of folded letter paper, guiltless of a single pen-scratch, crumpled them into a wad and threw it from him.

"What more do I need to prove that he's conspiring to steal the Pool of Flame and claim for himself the reward? . . . A bankrupt, discredited, with nothing but his title and his fame as a duelist to give him standing; is it wonderful that he's grasping at any chance to recoup his fortunes?" He took a swift stride toward the door, halted, turned. "And young Glynn?" he demanded. "Was he with you, and was he thick with this precious rogue of a vicomte?"

"They were much together."

"Faith, then it's clear as window-glass that the two of them, both broke, have figured out this thing between them."

"Well and good! I want no more than a hint of warning."

He was interrupted by a knocking. With a start and a muttered exclamation he remembered Van Elnein, and stepped to the door and out into a corridor, shutting the woman in.

She remained where he had left her, her pretty brows knitted with thought, for a time abstractedly conscious of a murmur of voices in the hallway. These presently ceased as the speakers moved away. She turned to one of the windows, leaning against its frame and staring at the ominous flicker and flare of sheet-lightning which lent the night a ghastly luminosity.

A cool breeze sprang up, bellying the curtains. The woman expanded to it, reviving in its fresh breath from the enervating influence of the evening's still heat. Her intuitive faculties began to work more vivaciously; she began to divine that which had been mysterious to her ere now.

The lightning grew more intense and incessant, the thunder beating the long roll of the charge. A heavy gust of air chill as death made her shiver. She shrank away from the windows, a little awed, wishing for O'Rourke's return, wondering what had made him leave her so abruptly.

Then suddenly she knew. . . . She could have screamed with horror.

Almost simultaneously the door slammed; her husband had returned. With a little cry she flung herself upon him, clinging to him, panting, sobbing.

"Tell me," she demanded, "what you intend to do? Do you mean to fight him—Des Trebes?"

"In the morning," he answered lightly, holding her tight and comforting her. "Tis unavoidable; I provoked his challenge. He was obliged to fight. But don't let that worry ye."

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" She sobbed convulsively upon his breast. "Twill be nothing—hardly that; an annoyance—no more. Believe me, dear."

"What can you mean—?"

"That the man will never consent to weapons worthy the name. He values his precious hide too highly, and he's not going to put himself in the way of being injured when he has the Pool of Flame to steal. Be easy on that score, darling—and have faith in me a little. I'll not let him harm me by so much as a scratch."

Dearest, my dearest, why not give it up—not the duel alone, but all this life of roaming and adventure that keeps us apart? Am I not worth a little sacrifice? Is my love not recompense enough for the loss of your absolute independence? Listen, dear, I have thought of something; I will make you independent, I will settle upon you all that I possess. I—"

"Faith, and I know ye don't for an instant think I'd dream of accepting that!"

"But give it up. What is the world's esteem when you have me to love and honor you? . . . Come to me, Terence. I need you—I need you desperately. I need the protection of your arm as well as your name. I need my husband!"

"I will," he said gently; "sweetheart, I promise ye I will—in ninety days. Give me that respite, give me that time in which to make or break my fortunes. Give me a chance to take the Pool of Flame to Rangoon—nay, meet me there in ninety days. I will come to you as one who has the right to claim his wife; but if I have lost, still will I come to you, a broken man but your faithful lover—come to you to be healed and comforted."

Dear heart of me, give me this last chance!"

With an eldritch shriek and a mighty rushing wind the storm broke over the mainland and a roaring rain came down.

Impulsively the Irishman turned off the lights, and lifting his wife in his arms bore her to an armchair by the window.

The storm waned in fury, passed, died in dull distant mutterings. Still she rested in his embrace, her flushed face, wet with tears, pillowed to his cheek, her mouth seeking his.

Vague murmurings sounded in the stillness, sighs. . . .

CHAPTER V.

At five in the morning a heavy motor car of the most advanced type stole in sinister silence out of the courtyard of the Hotel d'Orient, at the same sedate pace and with the same surreptitious air skulked through the town, and finally swung eastwards upon the Route de la Corniche, suddenly discarding all pretense of docility and swooping onward with a windy roar, its powerful motor purring like some gigantic tiger-cat.

It carried four; at the wheel a goggled and enmiled operator in shapeless and hideous garments; in the tonneau its owner, a middle-aged French manufacturer with puffed eyes, a liver, lank jaws clean-shaven, and an expression of high-minded devotion to duty; Captain von Elnein in uniform; and Colonel O'Rourke.

At the end of an hour's run, disturbed by one or two absurdly grave conferences between the seconds, in appropriate monotones, the mechanician put on the brakes and slowed down the car, then deftly swung it into a narrow lane, a leafy tunnel through which it crawled for a minute or two ere debouching into a broad and sunlit meadow, walled in by woodland, conspicuously secluded.

To one side and at a little distance a second motor-car stood at rest; its operator had removed the hood and was tinkering with the motor in a most matter-of-fact manner. In the body of the machine Monsieur le Vicomte des Trebes, ostentatiously unaware of the advent of the second party, sat twisting rapier-points to his moustaches and concentrating his gaze on infinity. O'Rourke observed

with malicious delight the nose of the duelist, much inflated.

Advancing from his antagonist's position three preternaturally serious gentlemen of France in black frock coats and straight-brimmed silk hats waded ankle deep in dripping grass to meet O'Rourke's representatives.

The two parties met, saluted one another with immense reserve, and retired to a suitable distance to confer; something which they did wordily, with enthusiasm and many picturesque gestures. At first strangely amicable, the proceedings soon struck a snag. A serious difference of opinion arose. O'Rourke divined that the conference had gone into executive session upon the question of weapons. He treated himself to a secret grin, having anticipated this trouble.

The choice of weapons being his, as the challenged, he had modestly selected revolvers and had brought with him a brace of Webleys, burly pieces of pocket ordnance with short barrels and cylinders chambered to hold half a dozen .45 cartridges. They were not pretty, for they had seen service in their owner's hands for a number of years, but they were undeniably built for business. And at sight of them the friends of the vicomte recoiled in horror.

Eventually a compromise was arrived at. Monsieur Juillard stepped back, saluted, and with Von Elnein returned to his principal, his face a mask of disappointment. As for himself, he told O'Rourke, he was desolated, but the seconds of Monsieur des Trebes had positively refused to consent to turning a meeting of honor into a massacre. They proposed to substitute regulation French dueling pistols as sanctioned by the Code. Such as that which Monsieur le Colonel O'Rourke might observe in Monsieur Juillard's hand.

O'Rourke blinked and sniffed at it. "Sure," he contended, "tis a magnifying glass I need to make it visible to me undressed eye. What the devil does it carry—a dried pea? What d'ye think we're here for, if not to slay one another with due ceremony? Ask them that. Am I to save the vicomte's wounded honor by smiting him with a spitball? I grant ye, 'tis magnificent, but 'tis not a pistol."

Grumbling, he allowed himself to be persuaded. As he had foreseen and prophesied, so had it come to pass. Yet he had to grumble, partly because he was the O'Rourke, partly for effect.

None the less, he consented, and in the highest spirits left the car and plowed through the lush wet grass to the spot selected for the encounter, in the shadow of the trees near the eastern border of the meadow. Here, the seconds having tossed for sides, he took a stand at one end of a sixty-foot stretch and, still indecorously armed, received a loaded pistol from Von Elnein.

The French course, O'Rourke's seconds, with a regretful already (O'Rourke made no doubt) that he had not accepted the Webleys. The Irishman's open contempt maddened the man.

The seconds retired to a perfectly safe distance. Von Elnein holding the watch, one of Des Trebes' seconds a handkerchief. The chauffeurs threw away their cigarettes and sat up, for the first time roused out of their professional air of blasé indifference.

"One," cried the German clearly. Des Trebes raised his arm and leveled his pistol at O'Rourke's head. A faint flush colored his face, but his eye was cold and hard behind the weapon was as steady as if supported by an invisible rest.

"Two," said Von Elnein. O'Rourke measured the distance with his eye and raised his arm from the elbow only, holding the pistol with a loose grip.

"Three," said Von Elnein. The handkerchief fell.

The Irishman fired without moving. Des Trebes' weapon was discharged almost simultaneously, but with a rattle; its bullet went nowhere in particular. The Frenchman dropped the weapon and, winching, examined solicitously a knuckle from which O'Rourke's shot had struck a tiny particle of skin. His seconds rushed to him with cries, preceded by the surgeon with bandages. O'Rourke gracefully surrendered his artillery to Juillard, laughed at the vicomte again, and strolled back to the motor-car.

Juillard and Von Elnein presently joined him, the former insistently anxious to have O'Rourke descend and clasp the hand of fraternal friendship with the vicomte. But the Irishman refused.

"Talk, no!" he laughed. "Niver! I'm too timorous a man to dare it. Sure and hasn't he hugged both his seconds and the surgeon, too, already? For me own part I've no mind to be kissed. Let's hurry away before he celebrates further by imprinting a chaste salute upon the cheek of our chauffeur. . . . Besides, I've a train to catch."

CHAPTER VI.

Events marched to schedule; what O'Rourke planned came serenely to pass. He experienced a day as replete with emotions as the night that preceded it and more marked by activity. Nothing hindering, he left the little-scarred Vicomte des Trebes upon the field of honor at half-past six; at seven forty-five he settled himself in a coach of the Cote d'Azur Rapide, en route for Marseilles—a happy man, for he was alone.

At a quarter to one in the afternoon of the same day he boarded the little steamer Tabarka of the Mediterranean ferry service; and half an hour later stood by the after-rail of its promenade deck, watching the dis-

tances widen between him and all that he held beloved.

"In ninety days, dear boy," she had said. . . . "Ah, Terence, Terence, if you should fail me . . . !"

"I shall not fail. . . . Rangoon in ninety days. Dear heart, I will be there. . . ."

As if to feed the hunger of his heart he strained his vision to see the last of the land that held her. At length it disappeared, and then for the first time he consciously moved—drew a hand across his eyes, sighed and turned away.

Picking his way through the cosmopolitan throng of passengers, he went below, found his stateroom, and subsided into the berth for a sorely-needed nap; instead of indulging in which, however, he lay staring wide-eyed at his problem. He had much to accomplish, much to guard against. Des Trebes bulked large in the background of perils he must anticipate; O'Rourke was by no means disposed to flatter himself that he had scotched the schemes of the vicomte.

He made his second public appearance on the Tabarka at the hour of sunset; and in the act of making it, turned a corner and ran plump into the arms of a young person in tweeds and a steamer cap—a stoutish young Englishman with a vivid complexion and a bulldog pipe, nervousness tempering his native home-brewed insolence, the blank vacuity of his eyes hopelessly betraying the caliber of his intellect.

A sudden gust of anger swept O'Rourke off his figurative feet. He stopped short, blocking the gangway



So This Was What Had Been Set to Spy Upon Him.

and the young man's progress. So this was what had been set to spy upon him!

"Good evening to ye," he said calmly, fixing O'Rourke with a steady gaze. "I'm Mr. Glynn, and you are Mr. O'Rourke, I presume."

"Oh, no—not at all," stammered the Englishman. "Not in the least. No." O'Rourke for a way round him, found himself with no choice but to retreat, and lost his presence of mind completely. "I—I say," he continued desperately, "I say, have you a match?"

"Possibly," conceded O'Rourke. "But I've yet to meet him. Of this ye may feel sure, however: if I have, 'tis neither yourself nor Des Trebes. Now run along and figure it out for yourself—what I'm meaning. Good-night."

He brushed past the man, leaving him astare in sudden pallor, and went his way, more than a little disgusted with himself for his lack of discretion. As matters turned out, however, he had little to reproach himself with; for his outbreak served to keep young Glynn at a respectful distance throughout the remainder of the voyage. They met but once more, and on that occasion the Englishman behaved himself admirably according to the tenets of his caste—met O'Rourke's challenging gaze without a flicker of recognition, looked him up and down calmly with the deadly enmured air peculiar to the underdone British youth of family and social position, and wandered calmly away.

O'Rourke watched him out of sight, a smile of appreciation curving his lips, and tempering the perturbed and dangerous light in his eyes. "There's stuff in the lad, after all," he conceded without a grudge. "If he can carry a situation off like that, I'm flattered not at all that something might be whipped out of him, if he weren't what he's made himself—a slave to whisky."

For all of which appreciation, however, he soon worried of Mr. Glynn. During the first day ashore it was not so bad; there was something amusing in being so openly dogged by a well-set-up young Englishman who had quite ceased to disguise his interest. But after that his shadowy surveillance proved somewhat distracting to a man busy with important affairs. And toward evening of the second day O'Rourke lost patience.

All day long in the sun, without respite he had knocked about from pillar to post of Algiers, seeking news of Chambret; and not until the eleventh hour had he secured the information he needed. Then, hurrying back to his hotel, he made arrangements to have his luggage cared for during an absence of indeterminate duration, hastily crammed a few indispensables into a kit box, and having dispatched that to the railway terminal, sought the restaurant for an early meal.

In the act of consuming his soup he became aware that the Honorable Bertie, in a dinner coat and a state of drowsiness, had wandered down the outer corridor, passed at the restaurant door

and espied his quarry. The fact that O'Rourke was dining with one eye on the clock and in a dust-proof, dust-colored suit of drill, was enough to disturb seriously the poise of the Englishman.

Exasperation stirred in O'Rourke. He eyed the young man rather morosely throughout the balance of his meal, a purpose forming in his mind and attaining the stature of a definite plan of action without opposition from the dictates of prudence. And at length swallowing his coffee and feeling his servitor, he rose, crossed the room with a firm tread, and came to a full stop at the Honorable Mr. Glynn's table.

Momentarily he held his tongue, staring down at the young man while drumming on the marble with the fingers of one hand. Then Glynn, glancing up in a state of some hat-prickled inquiry which strove vainly to seem insouciant, met the level stare of the adventurer and noticed the force of his gaze.

"I—I say," he floundered, "what's the matter with you, anyway? Can't you leave me alone?"

"I've been thinking," said O'Rourke crisply, disregarding the other's remark entirely, "that it might be of interest to ye to save ye a bit of botheration to know that I'm going up to Biskra by tonight's train. It leaves in ten minutes, so I'll have to forego the pleasure of your society on the trip."

Glynn got a grip on himself and pulled together the elements of his manhood. He managed to infuse blank insolence into his stare, and said "Ow!" with that singularly maddening infection of which the Englishman alone is master; as who should say: "Why the dooce d'you annoy me with your bally plans?"

"Don't believe I know you, do I?" he drawled.

"I don't believe ye do, me lad."

"Can't say I wish to very badly, either."

"I believe that," O'Rourke chuckled grimly.

The meaning in his tone sent the blood into the young man's face, a fiery glow of resentment.

"Oh, I'm not afraid of you, y'know," he said, bristling. "Of course ye're not going to Biskra, or you wouldn't tell me so. But if you do, I shall make it my business to find out and follow by the next train—bringing Des Trebes with me."

"Oh, will ye so? Ye mean to warn me he's in Algeria, too?"

"His boat's due now; I'm expecting him at any moment, if you wish to know." O'Rourke's smiling countenance was angering the young man and rendering him reckless. "You'll be glad to know you've made a dem' ass of yourself—if you really are going to Biskra."

"Praise from Sir Hubert!"

He was, indeed, as he had been told, a first-class fellow, and a surly one at that. O'Rourke's eyes clasp gain anything by it. Y'see I know where you're going, and I know it's not there. If you'll take a fool's advice, you'll turn back now. You'll come back empty-handed anyway. I don't mind telling you that we mean to have that ruby, Des Trebes and I, and we know where it is. You're only taking needless trouble by interfering."

Truth was speaking from the bottom of the absinthe tumbler. O'Rourke's brows went up and he whistled noiselessly, for he realized that at least Glynn believed what he was admitting. "So that's the way of it, eh? I admire your candor, me boy; but be careful and not go too far with it. 'Twill likely prove disastrous to ye, I'm fearing. . . . But tit-for-tat; ye've made me a handsome present according to your lights, of what ye most aptly term a fool's advice, and 'tis meself who'll not be outdone at that game. For yourself, then, take warning from the experience of one who's seen a bit more of this side of the earth than most men have, and—don't let Des Trebes know ye've talked so freely. He's a bad-tempered sort and . . . But I'm obliged to ye and I bid ye a good evening."

CHAPTER VII.

South of Biskra there is always trouble to be had for the seeking; south of Biskra there is never peace. A guerilla warfare is waged perennially between the lords of the desert, the Touaregs on the one hand, and the advance agents of civilization, as personified by the reckless French Condemned Corps and the Foreign Legion on the other. Year after year military expeditions set out from the oasis of Biskra to penetrate the wilderness, either by caravan route to Timbuctoo or along the proposed route of the Trans-Saharan Railway to Lake Tchad; and their lines of march are traced in red upon the land.

Toward this debatable land O'Rourke set his face with a will, gladly; for he loved it. He had fought over it of old; in his memory its sands were sanctified with the blood of comrades, men by whose side he had been proud to fight, men of his own stamp whose friendship he had been proud to own.

Mentally serene, if physically these verse of comfortable, O'Rourke dozed through the interminable twelve hours of the journey to El-Guerrah; arriving at which place after eight hours of travel, he transferred himself and his hand-bags (for now he was traveling light) to the connecting train on the Biskra branch. The latter, scheduled to reach the oasis at four-thirty in the afternoon, loafed casually up the line, arriving at the terminus after dark.

The Irishman, thoroughly fagged but complacent in the knowledge that he had left both vicomte and honorable a day behind him, kept himself

from bed by main will-power for half the night, while he made the rounds of cafes and dance halls, in search of a trustworthy and competent guide—no easy thing to find.

The French force by then was three days out from the oasis, and no doubt since it was technically a "flying column," calculated to move briskly from point to point in imitation of Touareg tactics, hourly putting a greater distance between itself and its starting point. Moreover, the pursuit contemplated by the adventurer was one attended by no inconsiderable perils. By dint of indomitable persistence, unflagging good-nature and such influence as he could bring personally to bear upon the authorities, O'Rourke got what he desired—a competent guide and two racing camels, or meharas, with a pack animal that would serve their purpose.

By dawn they were ready to start; and so, in the level rays of a sun that seemed a dazzling sphere of intolerable light, poised itself in the eastern rim of the world—as if undecided whether or no to take up its flight across the firmament, the little caravan rocked out into the fastness of the desert, the Irishman in the van sitting a blooded mehari as one to the wilderness born.

On the seventh night they bivouacked hard on the heels of the flying column, having for seven days pursued it this way and that, zigzagging into the heart of the parched land.

Now, when they were come within six hours of their goal, reluctantly, long after nightfall, O'Rourke gave consent to halt, conceding the necessity; for weariness weighed upon their shoulders a great burden, and the camels had become unusually sullen and evil tempered; if rest were denied them presently they would become obstinate and refuse to follow the road.

O'Rourke closed his eyes and lost consciousness with a sensation of falling headlong into a great pit of oblivion, bottomless, eternal. Yet it seemed no more than a moment ere he was sitting up and rubbing sight into his eyes, shaken out of slumber by his guide.

He stumbled to his feet and lurched toward the camels, still but half awake. When his senses cleared irritation possessed him. His guide had been overzealous. He turned upon the man and rebuked him roughly by the arm.

"What the devil!" he grumbled angrily, between a yawn and a chatter of teeth—for the air was bitter cold. "The moon's not yet up!"

"Hush, Sidi!" Something in the guide's tone stilled his wrath. "The Touaregs are all about us. They have been passing us throughout the night."

Y'see of his he had a surly and pertinent had they not been entirely a functionary, and took his leave. "There from the gang could not have moved back without detection. Now, the and the astir, and we in the night, appropriate for them—until moon-up!"

The guide turned away to rouse the meharas, prodding them up, mutinous, snarling and ugly. In another five minutes they were again moving forward. By the time the silver rim of the moon peered over the edge of the east they were pelting on at full speed, as yet, apparently, undetected by the Touaregs.

An hour passed, and the chill in the air became more intense; dawn was at hand. A sense of security, of dan-



He Had Found Chambret.

gers left behind, came to the Irishman; he began to breathe more freely, though still the polished butt of a repeating rifle swung from the saddle remained a comfort to his palm. He grew more confident, mentally at ease, seeing the desert take shape in the moonlight and show itself desolate on every hand.

Even as he gained assurance from this thought, the guide turned in his saddle and cried a warning: "The Touaregs!" From that moment on both wielded merciless whips. For out of the moonlit wastes behind them had shrilled a voice, cruel and wild, announcing discovery and the inception of the chase. The fugitives had need of no sharper spur.

A rifle shot rang sharp on the echoes of that cry, but the bullet missed its fallen far short. A moment later, indeed, they opened a brisk, scattering fire—naturally ineffectual, though the bullets dropping right and left in the sand proved that the chase had got within range.

Even with that warning, the end was nearer than he had dreamed or hoped. It came in a twinkling and as unexpected as a bolt out of a clear sky: a flash of fire ahead, a spitting snap and—ptt!—the song of a bullet speeding past his head.

The guide pulled up with a jerk.

Photographs and Sketches of Interesting People

SURGEON GENERAL RUPERT BLUE



Dr. Rupert Blue, who has succeeded the late Dr. Walter Wyman as surgeon general of the public health and marine hospital service, came from Honolulu to get his promotion. He gained fame by stopping the plague in San Francisco. Having discovered that rats and ground squirrels were responsible for the spread of the plague, he originated a plan by which these animals were almost exterminated in the city.

SUCCEEDS WHERE MANY FAIL



Mme. Coromilas is one of the rather limited number of American girls who have made good at foreign capitals. She is a daughter of former United States Senator Francis E. Cockrell of Missouri. Her husband is still accredited as Greek minister to this country but he has not been here for some time. He is now minister of finance in the cabinet of the king of Greece. M. and Mme. Coromilas were married last June.

FIRST GOVERNOR OF NEW STATE



William C. McDonald has the distinction of being the first governor of the new state of New Mexico. He was elected to that office by the Democrats.

AT THE Store of Fashion.

The Store of Fashion, Louis Wolfson's popular department store, is now ready with every want for Easter. We have just received twenty cases of White Shoes, White Buck, and White Canvass, for Ladies, Misses and children.

Everything in low cut slippers, pumps and high button. All of the latest styles and the new low button shoes, also the NEW SHADE, champagne, 1/2 low cuts. A full line of Ladies, Misses and children's stockings, in filse and Silk.---Stockings to match every shade and siipper.

NEW EASTER DRESSES

We have the daintiest line of new Easter dresses for Ladies, Misses and Children that ever came to Key West. Come and see them. Also the prettiest display of dress goods we have ever carried. New EASTER laces, embroideries, and trimmings to match all our new dress goods.

EVERYTHING FOR EASTER AND SUMMER

THE STORE OF FASHION, L. Wolfson, Prop.

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O'Rourke, reining in desperately, swung his camel wide to avert the threatened collision. Simultaneously the sharp "Qui vive!" of a French sentry rang out, loud and sweet to hear.

"Thank God!" said the adventurer in his heart. And aloud, "Friends!" he cried, driving past the sentry in a cloud of dust.

By a blessed miracle the man was quick of wit, and swift to grasp the situation—of which, however, he must have had some warning from the rattle of firing. He screamed something in O'Rourke's ear as the latter passed, and turning threw himself flat and began to pump the trigger of his carbine, emptying the magazine at the on-sweeping line of Touaregs.

The alarm was hardly needed; O'Rourke and the guide swept on over the slip of a depression in the desert and halted in the midst of a camp already quickened and alive with shadowy figures running methodically to their posts, carbine and accoutrement gleaming in the moonlight: men of the camel crops, hardened to and familiar with their work. They buckled down to it in a business-like way that chilled the heart of O'Rourke. In a trice they were doubling out past lines of tethered meharas, past the white hillocks of the officers' shelter-tents and, like the sentry, throwing themselves down upon the ground to take shelter of whatever inequalities the face of the desert offered; and their firing ringed the bivouac with a fringe of flame.

O'Rourke slipped from his camel and turned to watch the skirmish.

Messed, the Touaregs, in strength greater than the adventurer had believed—something like two hundred mounted men, in all—charged down upon the camp as if to overrun and stampede it.

Yet at the critical moment, when it seemed that of a surety there was no stopping them, they divided and swung round the camp in two wide circles, scattering into open order and firing as they scattered. Here and there a horse fell, a rider threw out his hands and toppled from his saddle, a camel seemed to buckle at full tilt like a faulty piece of machinery; and so gaps appeared in the flying wings.

For the men of the flying column were picked shots. They had need to be, who had such tasks as this to cope with.

Nor for that matter—were the Touaregs the only sufferers. Here and there in the camp a man plunged forward in mid-stride, and on the firing line beyond the tents now and again a sharpshooter shuddered and lay still upon his arms. Even at O'Rourke's side an officer was shot as he ran to the front, and would have

been stopped by the French sentry. As he did so the stricken man rolled an agonized eye upward.

"O'Rourke!" he said between a groan and a sigh.

And O'Rourke, kneeling at his side and peering into his face, gave a bitter cry. For he had found Chambret.

CHAPTER VIII.

Preparations for breakfast were toward; an aroma of coffee and bacon hung in the still, crisp air. The troopers were bustling about as if nothing had happened, laughing and joking, cleaning rifles, feeding the meharas, striking tents, drawing water from the palm-ringed well round which the camp had been made.

Out of sight beyond the edge of the sunken oasis a detachment was digging shallow trenches for the dead.

In the open Chambret lay dying, a stark grim figure in the growing light. O'Rourke sat by his side, near the head of the improvised litter, elbow in knee, chin in hand, eyes fixed on the face of his friend.

Just before sunrise the man on the litter stirred, moaned, opened his eyes and turned his head to see O'Rourke. He smiled wanly. "Mon ami," he said in tones faint yet thick.

The Irishman rose. "Don't talk," said he. "I'll be calling the surgeon."

But Chambret stayed him with a gesture. "Has he not told you, dear friend?" he asked.

O'Rourke hesitated. "Told me what?"

"That my wound was fatal—mortal? Surely he must have told you. It is so. Presently I die. Chambret. Let him be—this surgeon! I am beyond his aid. Attend to me, in my last moments, O'Rourke, my friend."

The adventurer vacillated, torn by an agony of compassion. "I must do something for you," he said miserably.

"I must do something," he repeated.

"Comfort me," the dying man closed his eyes and lay still for a little. "You are not gone, O'Rourke?" he asked presently.

"I'm here, be your skin, mon ami."

"Tell me . . . of madame . . . your wife. She is well?"

"She is very well, Chambret."

"You have seen her recently?"

"Within ten days."

"You have . . . returned to her?"

"No—and yes. 'Twas not for lack of love for her that I gave her up."

"Yes," said Chambret impatiently. "That I understand. . . I comprehend utterly your feeling. . . But you owe her happiness, though you sacrifice your own—everything—to give it her. She loves you . . . as she might have loved even me had you not come into her life."

"But give it up. What is the world's esteem when you have me to love and love me?"

"Come to me, Terence," I need you—I need you desperately. I need you—fallen had I been as well."

O'Rourke, who had been caught him with scruples that she may have had a portion of happiness?

"I've promised, Chambret."

"I am glad. . . But you—what has brought you hither?"

"I—I wished to see you."

But the dying are oftentimes and strangely endowed with curious insight into matters beyond their ken. Without perceptible hesitation Chambret made this apparent.

"You have come for the ruby," he said with conviction.

"How did you know?"

"It is true, then. . . I fancied so; I knew that some day you would come to claim it. . . Bend nearer to me. . . The Pool of Flame is in the keeping of my good friend, the Governor-General of Algeria. It is all arranged. When I am gone, take my signet ring, tell him your name, and demand the package—a small morocco-leather box, wrapped in plain brown paper and superscribed with my name and yours. He knows nothing of its value, save that it is great, and will deliver it to you and only you without question. . . That is all."

The hand that clasped O'Rourke's was like ice.

"Chambret!"

"Restraint."

The cold fingers relaxed. Gently O'Rourke disengaged his hand and put it to the pitiful, torn bosom of the man who had died with his wife's name upon his lips.

CHAPTER IX.

Shortly before midnight the tri-weekly train from Constantine to Algiers pulled up over an hour late at the town of El-Guerrah. It took up a single passenger, discharged none, and



They Had Literally Caught Him Napping.

fort ahead of him, he disposed himself and his belongings about the cushions of the first-class compartment which he occupied in solitary grandeur.

O'Rourke had no intention of leaving anything undone that might tend to mitigate the terrors of the journey. Five days had elapsed since that morning in the oasis. In the interval he had again dared the danger of the desert, returning to Biskra alone by a route more direct than that which had brought him up with the flying column. Discharging the guide with a gratuity larger than his ebbing means warranted, he had proceeded to El-Guerrah by the first daily train, and so now found himself on the direct line of communication with Algiers and the Governor-General.

His chiefest concern now lay with the future and the Pool of Flame; both bulked large upon the horizon and were at once the architects and the nuclei of a thousand different plans of action.

So far, the affair had worked smoothly; he anticipated little trouble.

So thinking he dozed, and in the course of a state-dream at the forward end of the coach, fell asleep. He awakened suddenly after a nap of some two hours or so, to a confusion of impressions: that the train had stopped; that some one had invaded his compartment; that a cold blast was blowing across his wrists, bewildered and not half master of his senses, he started up and fell back with a thud, assisted to resume a recumbent position by a heavy blow upon his chest, delivered by some person for the moment unknown. Simultaneously he was aware of a clicking sound, followed by the sensation of being unable to move his feet; and then, the clouds clearing from his understanding, he realized that the cold upon his wrists was that of steel. With hands as cold as his ankles, he lay helpless, unable even to protest because of a cloth wadded tightly into his mouth and a firm hand that prevented ejection.

Other hands were rifling his pockets, swiftly but after a bungling fashion. The train, having paused briefly at Selti (the afterwards located station by conjecture), began to move again, was presently in full thundering flight. Abruptly the examination of his person—which was so thorough that it included the opening of his shirt to assure the thieves that he carried nothing in the shape of a money-belt—was concluded and the adventurer was roughly jerked into a sitting position. At the same time his gag was removed.

He gasped, blinked, coughed, and rolled a resentful eye around the compartment. "Be the powers!" he said huskily; and no more. At first glance it became apparent that he had miscalculated the audacity of his passengers. By fixing the Honorable Mr. Bertie, O'Rourke, in the eye that served as an interrogative eye that served to deepen his embarrassment and

of the vicomte and Mr. Glynn. They had literally caught him napping.

The Honorable Bertie, O'Rourke discovered kneeling in the act of turning the adventurer's traveling gear inside out; at least, he seemed to be trying to do so. Monsieur le Vicomte des Trebes on the contrary was seated at ease, facing O'Rourke, a revolver on the cushion beside him, his interest concentrated not upon his captive, upon his collaborator. O'Rourke remarked an expression on the Frenchman's face, a curious compound of eagerness, triumph and apprehension.

Without noting the Irishman's ejaculation, he addressed Glynn: "Find it!"

"No—worse luck!" grumbled the Englishman, rising and kicking the hand-bag savagely. "There isn't so much as a scrap of paper anywhere about him."

The vicomte favored O'Rourke with a vicious glance, muttering something about a "thousand devils." The Irishman, quick to grasp the situation and inwardly exulting, acknowledged Des Trebes' attention with a winning smile.

"Good evening," he said, and nodded amiably.

"Oh, what up!" snapped the Honorable Bertie, unhandsofly. "Where's that letter?"

O'Rourke chuckled. "You're a hard loser, one bright young friend," he commented. "I thought Englishmen always played the game as it laid."

Glynn grunted and flushed, shamefaced, but the Frenchman cut short the retort on his lips by a swift repetition of Glynn's own question:

"Where's that letter, monsieur?"

O'Rourke glanced at him indignantly, and smiled an exaggeratedly strictly personal smile. "Then give us the letter," he said, and snatched it from his wrist and ankle.

"Answer me!" snarled the vicomte, picking up his revolver.

"Divvle a word," observed O'Rourke, "will ye get from me if ye shoot me dead, monsieur le vicomte. Put down your pistol and be sensible."

Des Trebes' face darkened, suffused with the blood of his rage. Yet the man asserted that admirable control of self which he was able to employ when it suited his purposes. Evidently, too, he recognized the cold common-sense of the wanderer's remark. At all events he put aside the weapon.

"Where's the letter?" he demanded again, more pacifically.

Again O'Rourke yawned with malice prepense, yawned deliberately and exhaustively and dispassionately.

"Not a word," he volunteered at length, "until ye loose me hands and feet. Which," he added, "ye need not hesitate to do, for I'll not strike back—unless ye crowd me."

The vicomte scowled darkly for a moment, then gave up, and

that most assuredly he would learn nothing from him until his request was complied with, he growled an order to Glynn to unlock and remove the handcuffs. The Englishman obeyed.

Free, O'Rourke stretched himself, rubbed his wrists, and observed a collection of his pocket hardware lying upon the seat by him, thrown aside by Glynn in his disgust at not finding what he sought.

"Ye'll not be wanting to deprive me of these few trifles, me gay highwaymen, I'm thinking?" he inquired placidly of the pair. "If ye've no objection I'll make so free as to take back me own."

"Take what you want," returned Des Trebes in an ugly tone. "But—I give you three minutes to tell me where you have put that letter."

"Indeed? Your courtesy overpowers me." The Irishman took up his watch and calmly made a note of the hour—hard upon three in the morning; then, with easy nonchalance stowed it away with the rest of the miscellaneous collection—the knives, coins and keys, his wallet, tickets and so forth.

"Your time," the voice of the vicomte interrupted this occupation, "is up." He fingered his revolver. "Where is that letter? I am losing patience."

"Where rust nor moth cannot corrupt nor thieves break in to steal," O'Rourke misquoted solemnly.

"Steady. Don't call names—or I'll forget myself. I mean that the letter is in fragments, scattered to the four winds of heaven, destroyed. There ye have your answer. Ye fools, did ye think I would carry it about me?"

"By God!" said Glynn tensely. "No—don't shoot him, Des Trebes! He's telling the truth. Make him tell what was in the letter."

"I'm afraid 'tis useless," O'Rourke mocked them. "I have forgotten the contents. What use to me to remember?" he demanded, inspired.

"What made ye think I would have it at all? Sure, and the letter was properly Chambret's. Why would I not turn it over to him?"

"Oh, cut it!" Glynn interrupted impatiently. "We know he's dead. The news was telegraphed in from the column day before yesterday."

"Quite so. Yet, if ye know so much, if—as I gather—ye suspect that Chambret turned over this precious jewel to me, why do ye not demand it as well as the letter? Not that I have either."

"Because we jolly well know you haven't got the ruby," blurted the Englishman.

"Be quiet!" snapped the vicomte.

"Quite right," echoed O'Rourke with assumed indignation. "Be quiet, Bertie. Children should be seen and not heard. Mind your uncle. And, 'Oho!' he commented to himself. "And they knew I didn't have the ruby!"

"Oh, faith, 'tis just bluffing they are!"



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Johnny Galvin



Scene from "The Two Masqueraders."



Johnny Galvin

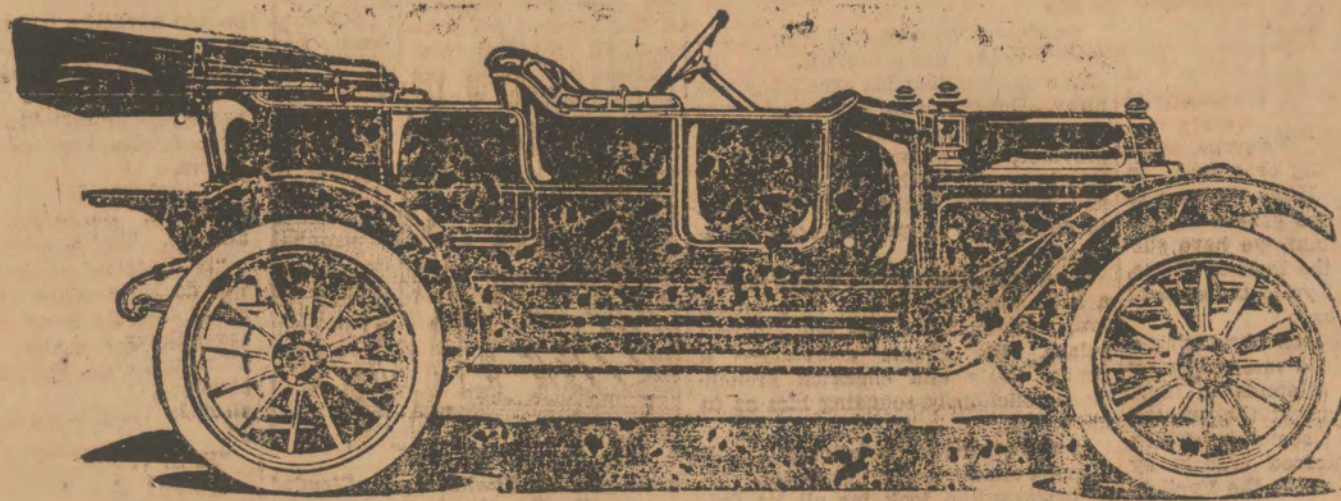
JOHNNY AND ELLA GALVIN ANOTHER WEEK.

The Theatre goers of the Cigar City will be glad to know that the Monroe Theatre has secured Johnny and Ella Galvin and their company of fun makers for another week. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights the Company will present "The Two Masqueraders" and "Bob The Newsboy" will be the attraction for the last three nights of the week. The Monroe has been packed to the capacity for the last two weeks, and Mr. Ca bonell is anticipating full house for every night this week.

REO the FIFTH

THE 1912 SENSATION

30 to 35 Horsepower
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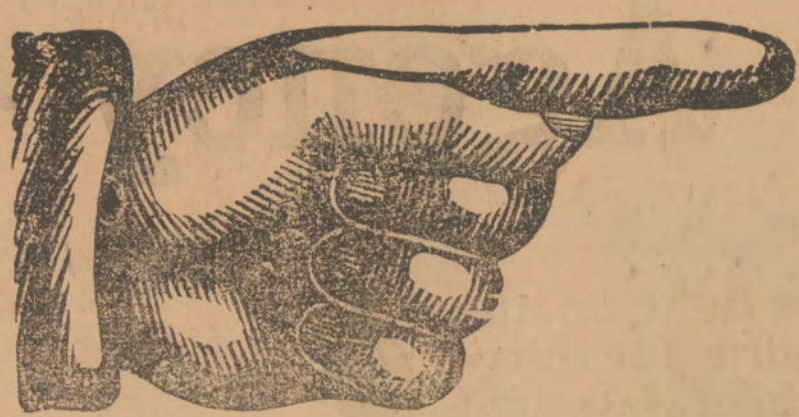


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"You say," the viscount continued slowly and evenly, "you've destroyed the letter."

O'Rourke took up pipe and tobacco. "I told ye," he replied, filling the bowl, "that the letter was non-existent. Now, me man," he continued, with an imperceptible change of tone, "drop the bluff. Turn that pistol away from me. Well I know that ye won't shoot, for if ye did ye would put beyond your reach forever the information that would win ye the reward—al-ways providing ye had got possession of the ruby, be hook or crook. 'Twould be crooks, I'm thinking."

He lit a match and applied the flame to the tobacco. "There's me last word on the subject," he added indistinctly, puffing and eyeing the pair through the cloud of smoke.

The revolver waved in the viscount's hand; he was livid with passion and disappointed, yet amenable to reason. Glynn bent and whispered briefly in his ear, and the Frenchman, nodding acquiescence, laid aside his weapon. The Honorable Bertie continued to advise with him in whispers until O'Rourke, though quite at loss to understand this phase of the affair, saw that their attention was momentarily diverted and, with a swift movement, leaped over, snatched up the revolver and, with a flit of his hand, flung it out of the window.

Glynn started back with an oath, his hand going toward his pocket; but O'Rourke promptly closed with him. A breath later a second pistol was ejected from the carriage and the Englishman was sprawling over the knees of the viscount.

They disengaged themselves and, mad with rage, started up to fall upon and exterminate the wanderer. I think it must have been the very impertinence of his attitude that made them pause in doubt, for he had resumed his seat as calmly as though nothing at all had happened and was pulling soberly at his pipe. As they hesitated he removed the latter from his lips and gestured airily with the stem. "Sit ye down," he invited them, "and take it easy, me dear friends. The mischief's done, and naught that ye can do will repair it. Faith, I said I'd not strike back unless ye crowded me. I remember me words to ye. Your guns made a crowd out of this happy reunion. I've merely dispersed with them; I call ye both to witness that ye have neither of ye suffered. Sure, I'm as peaceable as any lamb. Sit down, sit ye down and take it like little men. The situation's unchanged, save that I've put temptation out of your reach."

And as they wavered, plainly of two minds, O'Rourke clinched the argument of his attitude. "I beg to say," he remarked, "that the fact that ye have left me own brace of revolvers here at me feet, when ye so joyously turned me bag inside out, I'm not touchin' them, mind ye, but

mind ye further: I'm brook no nonsense. If ye make a move as if to attack me, I'll . . . There! That's much better. Wise lads, ye are, both of ye: graceful in defeat. Let me see: We've a long ride together, though ye did come uninvited. I trust ye will help me beguile the tedium with society chatter, me friend," with a twinkle at the discomfited viscount. "I'm in danger of forgetting me manners. Pardon me, I pray, but—but I trust your nose is convalescing?"

In high feather with himself, O'Rourke entertained his companions with a running fire of pleasantries for the balance of the darkened hours. And he touched both more than once with the rapier-point of his wit and irony, and had the pleasure of seeing both squirm in impotent rage. They cut wretched figures, two against one, yet failures, while he taunted them in one breath, with the next declared himself their captive. Toward the end the reserve which the viscount imposed upon the Honorable Bertie was worn down; the Englishman turned with raw nerves upon his tormentor.

"You damned ass!" he stammered, all but incoherent. "You sit there and—gloat, damn you! When all the time we've got the upper hand!"

"Be quiet!" interposed the viscount. "I won't!" raged the honorable. "He thinks himself so infernally clever! What 'you say, you Irish braggart, if I told you you'd never see the Pool of Flame again?"

"I'd say," returned O'Rourke, "that you were either lying or a fool. In either case a fool. If, as ye seem to be trying to make me believe—which I don't for one instant—ye have succeeded in stealing the Pool of Flame, I told you you'd never see the Pool of Flame again."

He eyed them reflectively during a moment or two made interesting by Glynn's desperate attempts to blurt out indiscretions against the prohibition of the viscount: something which the older man enforced crudely by clapping his hand across the Englishman's mouth, as well as by whispering savagely in his ear.

"But there'll be no need," continued the Irishman, when Glynn was calm. "Let's consider the matter dispassionately, presupposing that ye have the stone. Well, what then? Ye dare not attempt to sell it—'twould result in instant detection. It would not pay ye to have it secretly cut up into smaller stones—the loss in value would be stupendous, the whole not worth your while, as I say. Ye cannot take the Pool of Flame (don't get excited: I'm not going to tell ye where) to claim the reward, for ye can't lover where to go. 'Tis a white elephant it would be on your hands."

"It does not seem to be," he called out, "that there are other ways of finding out who offers the reward," the viscount suggested icily. "I can see ye wandering around as-

ing somebody please to relieve ye of the Pool of Flame and pay ye a commission. I wonder how long ye think ye'd last. But 'tis no use trying to hoodwink me: I don't believe one word ye say. I'll wait until I find out the truth before I bother me self with ye."

Their persistence in hinting that they had gained possession of the ruby perplexed and discomfited him. He did not believe it; 'twas inconceivable: yet—he had known stranger things to happen. Still, without a clue, to have stumbled upon the secret, to have made off with it from under the very nose of the Governor-General! No; it was not reasonable to ask him to believe all that.

Nevertheless, when he arrived at Algiers, his anxiety had grown so overpowering that he called a cab and desired to be conveyed post-haste to the Palace de la Gouvernement.

CHAPTER X.

It was high noon when O'Rourke drove up before the Palace of the Governor-General. Weary, dusty and travel-stained as he was, he hesitated no instant about sending in his name and requesting an interview with the representative of France's sovereign power.

Disappointment awaited him at the very outset; disappointment in the shape of word that his excellency was away. But the name of O'Rourke was one well and favorably known in the province, and secured him an invitation to ascend to the Governor's office and state his business—if he cared to do so—to the gubernatorial secretary.

Upon consideration he accepted, and a little later was seated in a broad, low, cool room in the old Moorish palace, the affable secretary—a young, lively and engaging Frenchman—solidly sounding him as to his errand.

It was obviously the office of a man of great affairs, presenting an eminently business-like look for all its Oriental setting. To one side, set in the solid masonry of the wall, was a massive safe with doors ajar, exposing a cavity well stocked with documents. It occurred to the adventurer that such a safe might easily have been the place of security selected by the Governor-General for anything he held in trust. He built upon it a theory whilst he listened—nor lost a point—and replied to the secretary.

The latter regretted excessively that his excellency was absent; his excellency would undoubtedly be delighted when he returned and found he had missed Colonel O'Rourke.

"He'll be back soon, monsieur?" "Alas, no!" with a shrug. "He is en route for Paris—possibly arrived at his moment—passing 's of state."

"Several days since, monsieur." "You know nothing of this package, burdened with the name of Monsieur

Chambret?" To the contrary: the secretary knew it very well. He could place his hand upon it at any moment—monsieur would appreciate that he durst not surrender it without the Governor's authority.

O'Rourke drew a long sigh of relief and was abruptly conscious of fatigue and a desire to get away and rest. "I'm obliged to ye," he said slowly, rising. "I'll have to wait until the Governor returns, I presume. . . . By the way, are ye be any chance acquainted with Monsieur le Vicomte des Trebes?"

But certainly: the vicomte was a great friend of his excellency's. He had dined with his excellency something over a week since, just prior to the latter's departure.

"And I take it ye have seen nothing of Monsieur le Vicomte since?" "Contrary, monsieur: the vicomte called here but two days ago." It appeared that he had desired some



A Frown of Bewilderment Clouded the Secretary's Face.

trifling information, with which the secretary had obliged him.

"Ye didn't happen to leave him alone in this room?"

The secretary, plainly much perplexed by this odd catchism, admitted that such had been the case; the pursuit of the desired data had necessitated his absence from the Governor's room for a matter of some ten minutes.

"But ye say ye can put your hand on this package?"

"But certainly, monsieur."

"Would ye mind making sure 'tis safe. 'Twould save me a deal of waiting, perhaps."

With alacrity and a smile that decreed his visitor's

trifling matter, the secretary rose, went to the safe and confidently

enough thrust a hand into one of the pigeon-holes. The hand came forth empty. A frown of bewilderment clouded the secretary's face. "It must be here," he announced with conviction. "It was in plain sight and labelled with the name of Monsieur Chambret. . . . He turned. "If Monsieur le Colonel will but return in half an hour, I undertake then to show him the packet itself. I shall by then have found it—but assuredly!"

"Ye are very courteous, monsieur. I will return."

This he did—in two hours. The packet had not been found; the secretary, in a flutter of nerves, confessed that through some culpable negligence it must have been misplaced. An extended search was even then in progress. It could surely come to light before evening.

"Thank ye; I shan't be back," returned O'Rourke grimly, and went away, downcast for the first time since the inception of the adventure. "Faith! and to think I would not believe the truth when they slapped me face with it! And all the time, belike, 'twas in the vicomte's own pocket!"

But he had no vocabulary adequate to the task of expressing his self-contempt.

Disconsolate, conceiving that he had proven himself a blind, egregious fool, he plodded with heavy steps and a hanging head back to his hotel; where the crowning stroke of the day was perpetrated to him in the shape of a note, by the hand of a black porter.

Monsieur le Colonel Terence O'Rourke. Be hand," he conned the address. "Faith, and what's this?"

"If Monsieur le Colonel O'Rourke will do Monsieur des Trebes the honor of dining with him, at seven or seven-thirty this evening, at the Villa d'Orleans, St. Eugene, an arrangement satisfactory to both himself and Monsieur le Vicomte may be consummated."

"R. S. V. P.—The bearer waits."

A trap? A subterfuge? A trick to throw him off the scent whilst the two blackguards escaped with their booty? The adventurer frowned darkly over it, dubious. Then, in a flush of recklessness, he seized a sheet of paper from a near-by desk, scrawled a formal acceptance of the strange invitation, and handed it to the Diskri boy. "All to gain, naught to lose," he summed up the state of mind which had dictated his response; and at six-thirty, with brow and eye serene, he left the hotel in a carriage bound for the suburb of St. Eugene—and heaven knew where besides!

CHAPTER XI.

The Villa d'Orleans proved to be a handsome house of white stone, situated in an extensive and well-groomed grounds, on a height outside the town, overlooking the Mediterranean. So complete and elegant seemed the es-

tablishment, indeed, viewed from without or within, that O'Rourke's suspicions were stimulated and his certainty that he was being played with resolved into a pretty definite conviction, as he waited in the broad hallway. It was inconceivable that a man like Des Trebes, so reduced as to be under the necessity of stealing—even of stealing so considerable a sum as a hundred thousand pounds—could maintain so imposing an establishment.

His uneasy conjectures were interrupted when the vicomte appeared to welcome his guest. Suave, dressed properly for the occasion, showing traces neither of fatigue nor of his antipathy for O'Rourke, blandly ignoring the peculiarities of the situation which his own inexplicable invitation had created, he presented himself in the guise of a gracious host.

"Monsieur," he declared, bowing to O'Rourke (but with a care not to offer his hand), "overpowers me with his condescension and punctuality. I can only regret—with a significant glance at the bulge of the adventurer's coat—that he thought it wise to come armed."

"'Tis a habit I find it hard to break myself of," O'Rourke offered the inadequate explanation in a dry and coolish tone.

"It was unnecessary, I assure monsieur."

"Faith, I'm convinced 'twill prove so."

Tactfully the vicomte digressed from the unpleasant topic. "I have asked you here, monsieur," he said with an air of deprecation, "to confer with me on business after we have dined. I trust the arrangement suits your convenience."

"I regret that circumstances prevent me from receiving you under my own roof-tree. The Villa d'Orleans is the property of a dear friend, merely loaned me during my stay in Algiers."

"Ye're fortunate in your choice of friends."

Over his next remark Des Trebes faltered a trifle, with a curious smile that O'Rourke failed to fathom. "Monsieur Glynn," he said, "is—a trifle indisposed—the sun. Nevertheless, I believe he will join us during dinner, if you will be so kind as to excuse him—"

"I could do very well without him." The vicomte caught the eye of a servant, and, "Dinner is announced," he said. "Do me the honor to accompany me to the table."

In the course of time, as the vicomte had predicted, the Honorable Bertie joined them; and on sight O'Rourke diagnosed the "indisposition" as plain intoxication. The Englishman was deep in his cups far too deep to ape the urbanity of his host. He favored

ty of his in- O'Rourke with a curt nod and a surly look, then slumped limply into a chair and called for champagne, which he

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