

The Red Circle

by Albert Payson Terhune
AUTHOR OF "THE FIGHTER," "CALEB CONOVER," "SYRIA FROM THE SADDLE," ETC.
NOVELIZED FROM PATHE PHOTO PLAY OF THE SAME NAME BY WILL M. RITCHIEY.

SYNOPSIS.

"Circle Jim" Borden, named from a red birthmark on his hand, has served his third prison term. One in each Borden generation, always a criminal, has borne the Red Circle mark. Jim and his son Ted are the only known living of the Bordens. Max Lamar, a detective, is detailed to keep an eye on Jim. June Travis and her mother meet Jim as he is released. Jim and Ted are killed. Next day Lamar sees the Red Circle on a woman's hand outside a curtained automobile. June, marked with the Red Circle, robs Grant, a loan shark. Mary, June's nurse, discovers her theft and tells her she is "Circle Jim's" daughter, though Mrs. Travis does not know. Mary tricks Lamar. June, dressed as a boy, recovers Mary's coat from the police. Lamar visits "Smiling Sam," Jim's old crime partner. At the seaside June steals war engine plans from Todd Drew and sinks them in the sea with her boy's clothes.

SIXTH INSTALLMENT

"FALSE COLORS"

Halfway down the pier, on her way back to the beach, June turned to look seaward. There was nothing to prove that, only a minute before, a large bundle, heavily weighted and containing invention plans worth a million human lives had plunged to depths.

She bent to pick up a broken shell that was lying on the edge of the pier. A particularly brilliant ray of sunlight caught the back of her hand, making the red circle look like a scarlet welt on the white flesh. She covered the telltale mark with her other hand, and looked around, guiltily.

Crouched there, the old, stark fear cut into her heart for a moment. As her keen, searching eyes found the beach she sprang to her feet and started toward a little building on the pier, that had been used for a boat-renting office. Once safe in the shadow it cast, she looked shoreward again.

On the beach, running around a corner of the battered shack she saw Todd Drew and Count Frell. As she watched, they ran down to the sea, and stood looking about blankly. Their loud, agitated dialogue drifted out to her faintly. She caught the words, "Which way? Find her!"

A wave, a little heavier than the rest, swished noisily under the pier. Something knocked against one of the piles. June turned in sudden fear. She saw the ends of a perpendicular, wooden ladder showing above the edge of the stringpiece.

Bending over, she noted that an empty rowboat was tied fast just below her. She descended, untied the painter and pushed away from the side of the pier. Then, dropping on to the rower's seat, she adjusted the oars and pulled with long, easy strokes.

When she felt that she was at a safe distance, she rested on her oars and looked toward the shore. Too far away to distinguish faces and well content at her clever escape, June tried not to scan the shore too carefully for the two men who were searching for her.

A man on the beach, who had just raised his glass to learn what the

Embazoned on the Back of the Hand Was an Irregular Circle of Scarlet!

ed, his chin held closely in one hand was Lamar, in a brown study.

Mary crept up beside her and looked over her shoulder. Her eyes fell on Lamar; and she started so violently that June put out an arm to steady her.

"There's nothing to be frightened about," she said, soothingly. "Nothing at all, only—"

"Only what?" asked Mary, quaveringly.

"Only I'm going to put on my gloves."

A minute later she entered the ball room with her mother. Presently she was surrounded by men imploring her to allow them to photograph her dance card. Lamar glanced up, saw her and started across the floor in her direction.

CAME AS RESULT OF CHANCE

Possibilities of Illuminating Gas Revealed to Irish Clergyman in a Few Moments of Abstraction.

When Philadelphia was an infant town a few years old, Dr. John Clayton, the dean of Kildare, sat meditating before a fire. He put a piece of coal in his pipe and held it above the blaze. In a short time a tiny blue flame came from the pipe. And so illuminating gas was born!

The death in this city of John McIlhenny brings up the history of gas, as the death of Cyrus Field made everyone think of the ocean cable. Mr. McIlhenny was the grand old pioneer in gas. He saw it develop from its early infancy in America and saw it push the oil lamp off the table.

He beheld this same agency shove anthracite out of over 240,000 cook stoves in Philadelphia. Once I saw this veteran sitting at dinner beside Samuel T. Bodine, president of the world's most potential gas company.

"Girard" writes in the Philadelphia Ledger.

intent upon the hand that Lamar held prisoner. A smooth white surface with just the tiniest golden brown freckle on one knuckle met his eye. He laughed at the other two in sheer amusement.

"May I present Mr. Drew, Miss Travis? And Count Frell, Miss Travis. It's strange you people haven't met before. Surfton is a small place."

"It is strange you haven't met at some of the functions that have been given at the hotel. You men are stopping there and I'm sure Miss Travis attends all the dances," said Max.

"I do, indeed," said June gayly.

"There's to be a ball there tonight, by the way. Mother and I are going. Won't I see you all there?"

"I'll be there," he promised firmly.

"And I'll bring the count and Drew with me, Miss Travis."

"Just look at the crowd!" June exclaimed with delight, as their car turned into the drive leading to the hotel. "This is going to be the best dance of the season."

An attendant in livery helped them from the car. June took hold of Mary's hand and helped her up the steps.

"Just don't you let me catch you flirting—that's all," she whispered wickedly in the old woman's ear; and Mrs. Travis wondered what Mary's sudden indignant exclamation was about.

"Everyone's going inside, dear," the nurse said, as they reached the top of the steps. "Let me take your things to the coat room or you'll be late for the first dance."

"Oh, I don't care about the first dance. I haven't promised it to anyone. I'm going to see who's here first. Stay out here with me just a minute."

She walked to one of the long French windows and looked inside. The scene was gay enough to dispel any shadows. Yet over in one corner, leaning against a pillar, his arms fold-

ed, his chin held closely in one hand was Lamar, in a brown study.

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Mary, sitting on a little settee against the wall of the ballroom saw him take June's hand and bend over it. She half rose from the seat, then remembered where she was and sat down again; gripping the arm of the chair and watching every move of the little group.

Suddenly a woman appeared at one of the pillars—a woman who attracted attention by her daring attire. She wore a gown whose foundation was of flesh color chiffon. The overdress was simply a network of jet. The costume was daintily delectable, and was held in place over the shoulders by a delicate chain of jet beads. Among the pretty, girlish dance frocks it looked bizarre—all but indecent.

Just for a moment she leaned against the pillar, waving a huge, black ostrich fan to and fro. Over the soft tips of the graceful feathers her eyes met those of a venturesome young man. She signaled. He obeyed. Mary watched, until the two were lost in the maze of dancers. Then her eyes wandered back to June, who was still deeply engrossed in what Lamar was saying.

Mary wished that some of the men would come up and claim June for a dance. Anything to be rid of Lamar. The slender woman in the startling

costume kept dancing into Mary's line of vision. She was leaning back against her partner's arm, looking into his eyes, a taunting smile on her thin vivid lips.

While Mary was deciding that this was quite the most disgusting type of woman she had ever seen, the strange girl and her partner collided clumsily with another couple. The woman with whom they collided—a plump blonde and beautifully gowned—got the worst of the collision.

Mary saw her bend down and rub her ankles. Then, while proper apologies were made by the woman in black and her partner, the little blonde limped away on her partner's arm and sought refuge on a settee near Mary.

The acute pain in her foot must have made her feel faint. For the man immediately went in search of a glass of water and returned with it as quickly as possible.

After taking a few swallows, Mary saw the blonde girl put her hand over her heart and draw a deep breath of relief. But the expression of renewed strength gave way instantly to startled surprise. She was passing her hands rapidly over the front of her elaborately embroidered gown.

"What's the matter, Mrs. Hinkle?" Mary heard the young man say.

"I've lost my brooch—my diamond brooch!" gasped the woman. "I had it on a minute ago, I'm sure."

"Surely it must be around somewhere if you had it on just a moment ago," protested the young man. "Maybe you dropped it when we had our tumble. Wait here and I'll go look around that spot."

"No, I'll come with you. It's made me nervous. I couldn't sit still."

As they passed several chatting groups Mrs. Hinkle announced her loss, loudly. Soon the floor was covered with people searching for the missing diamonds.

Suddenly Mary realized that June was not in the little throng of search-

ers. She jumped up anxiously. Mary wandered about looking into room after room, with no result.

She decided that Lamar and June were walking in the grounds. It would be impossible for an old woman with failing sight to find them out there in the pale moonlight.

Discouraged and tired out with worry and the unaccustomed glare and noise, Mary entered one of the little rooms off the main corridor. She sank into a deep, high-backed chair, upholstered in some soft, velvety material and put her head back.

Her imagination tortured her. The very thing that she had feared had happened. She had come to the ball for the express purpose of watching over her little girl. She had relaxed her vigilance for a moment and June had disappeared—in company with Lamar. With grim horror Mary conjured up all the terrible things that might happen. Her thoughts resolved themselves into a waking nightmare—then they faded slowly. A gentle fluttering in the soft lace ruffle at the neck of her black satin dress, spoke of a light, restful sleep. The tricky doze of approaching old age.

Not twenty feet from the room in which fatigue had overtaken Mary, was the oriental smoking room of the Hotel Surfton.

Over in one corner, directly in front of a pair of portieres woven from raw Japanese silk, was a long teakwood seat. June and Lamar had been sitting there for the past half hour; sometimes talking animatedly, sometimes strangely silent.

"It worries me more than anything I've had to solve in years," Lamar was saying. "I've had the woman in my very fingers several times and always she's succeeded in giving me the slip! I wish that—"

Just then a man in evening clothes appeared in the doorway. Catching sight of Lamar he beckoned to him, eagerly. With a murmured apology to June, the crime specialist got up and went over to him.

"What can I do for you, sir?" he asked pleasantly.

"I am George Radner, the manager of this hotel, Mr. Lamar!" The man spoke hurriedly, as if distressed.

"Several guests have lost articles of jewelry tonight. I am afraid a professional thief is at work among them. Can't you do something about it, Mr. Lamar? I hate to trouble you, but—"

"Oh, that's all right—that's all right," Lamar muttered indistinctly. "Has anyone who reported a loss to you said anything about a Red Circle, Mr. Radner?"

"No. I don't think so. Nobody has the slightest clue. It's the cleverest sort of theft I've ever known. There's a master crook operating here, I'm certain."

"I'll see what I can do, Mr. Radner. Just go out and mingle with the guests as though nothing had occurred, will you? I'll be back in a minute."

Lamar came back to the bench and sat down, his hands clenched tightly, his lower jaw protruding in an ugly, determined way. The Japanese silk draperies behind him moved slightly as if in obedience to a gentle breeze. June put her hand over his, soothingly.

"You are terribly worried over this mystery," she said softly. "Let me help you solve it, won't you? Who knows but that I may develop into a regular detect—er—crime specialist."

Annoyed and worried as he was, Lamar threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"All right, Miss Travis," he said gravely. "I'll appoint you my first assistant on this case. Perhaps you can help me."

June turned toward him, her face alight.

"I'll do my best," she promised.

"Will you let me come to see you tomorrow morning to tell you a few more details of this case?" he inquired eagerly.

"I'd be delighted to have you come," June replied heartily. "I'm rather excited about the idea of joining forces with you and—oh!"

She broke off suddenly and put her hand to her throat. It was bare. Her pearl pendant was gone! She twisted around with lightning rapidity, dragging Lamar around with her. The portieres of Japanese silk were parted slightly. Protruding from the opening was a white hand with slender, tapering fingers. Hanging from the over-manicured fingertips was a pendant of pearls. Emblazoned on the back of the hand was an irregular circle of brilliant scarlet!

Lamar and June sat as if paralyzed, until a scraping sound shattered the spell.

Lamar sprang to his feet, jumped over the bench and tore the portieres from the heavy brass poles that supported them. He found himself in a little oblong recess. Directly in front of him was a long window opening presumably on the porch.

With a muttered imprecation he threw himself at the closed window, expecting it to give. The force of his onslaught shattered several of the small panes, but his progress was blocked by a wicker porch settee that had evidently been placed there for that very purpose.

Unable to check his speed he tumbled headlong over this settee and landed bruised against the outer rail of the porch. The frail settee had cracked under his weight and the thud of his falling body sounded unnaturally loud on the still air.

It was this sudden jarring that awakened Mary from her nap in the deep chair. With the dull gaze, or a person just roused from sleep, the old woman rubbed her eyes and looked about. In the same room, but in a far distant corner, she heard the soft rustle of a woman's skirt. Then the clink of glass against metal.

face with a young man who was saying good-night to one of the hotel guests.

"Why Mary," exclaimed the man in great surprise, "where have you been? Miss Travis was looking all over for you. When she couldn't find you she decided you had gone home without her knowing it. She and Mrs. Travis have left. I'm going that way. Let me take you home in my car."

When he put her down at the cottage he warned her:

"Don't wake Miss Travis if she's sleeping. Mary. The poor girl's half dead. She danced more than anybody

there—mostly with that chap Lamar. Mrs. Travis said she was going to make her sleep until noon tomorrow."

The next morning at eleven-thirty, June ran out on the porch and clapped her hands over Mary's eyes just as the nurse was finishing her happy daily perusal of the death column—in the Morning Star.

"Guess!" she commanded.

"It's my lamb," said Mary, complacently, trying to smooth her ruffled front hair.

"Aren't you a sly, old lady, sneaking home hours and hours ahead of me, last night? I didn't dare go near your room when I came in, for fear you'd wake up."

"I wasn't there, pet," Mary told her. "I didn't leave the hotel until after you did."

"What!"

With a cautious glance around, the nurse started to recount the happenings of the night before. She told haltingly, fearful that she might omit an important detail. When she got to the point of her recital where the Woman in Black left the room, June clutched her hand excitedly.

"And you let her go?" she exclaimed, almost unbelieving. "Why? Why?"

"Of course I let her go"—the old woman was offended to think her judgment in the matter was questioned—"she could have broke away from me and made her escape—and then she would have been warned. This way, she thinks she's safe and she won't hide. I'd know her again, the minute I lay eyes on her."

June pulled her up from the chair, impetuously.

"You've got to come right over to the hotel and tell the whole thing to Mr. Lamar. Don't you see how tremendously important it is to him—and to us?" she added thoughtfully.

Mary protested violently as June dragged her down the path and toward the hotel.

"Look! Oh, what luck! There is Mr. Lamar now; just leaving Mr. Radner at the entrance to the hotel. Hurry, Mary, and we'll be able to catch him."

June waved her hand excitedly, Lamar ran toward them.

DEATH DUE TO EXHAUSTION

Man Who Succumbs to Exposure to Not Really "Frozen," as it is Generally Understood.

During the deep sleep which follows extreme fatigue the sensitiveness of the nervous system is greatly reduced, and it becomes unable to perceive the lowness of temperature. The unconscious sleep gradually passes into the unconsciousness of collapse. According to the popular belief such a man dies "frozen to death," but as a matter of fact he was killed long before his temperature fell to zero.

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GAVE HIS CANE AWAY! Mr. S. P. Benton, Kerrville, Tex. writes: "For several years prior to 1906 I suffered from kidney and rheumatic troubles. Was bent over and forced to use a cane. For the disorders I was glad to say I used Dodd's Kidney Pills, which proved to be the proper remedy. I am 70 years old, feel fine and am again standing straight as an arrow. Dodd's Kidney Pills deserve great credit." Be sure and get "DODD'S," the name with the three D's for (disensed, disorder, deranged kidneys; just as Mr. Benton did. No similarly named article will do.—Adv.

DEATH DUE TO EXHAUSTION Man Who Succumbs to Exposure to Not Really "Frozen," as it is Generally Understood.

His Clutch Slipped. Harold, aged four, was trudging the distance of many blocks with his father to Sunday school, and the long tramp was almost too much for him. The father, glancing back, noticed the small boy's fatigue and, slackening his pace, asked: "Am I walking too fast, son?" "No," returned the small boy, puffing and panting breathlessly, "it's me, papa."—Christian Herald.

Not the Same. "Ah!" exclaimed the near-sighted man, as he glanced at the front page of a newspaper. "Here's the old wagon again!" "I beg your pardon," said his friend. "What you see there is a drawing of a British 'tank' going into action."

Wanted Information. Father—When I was a small boy I was left an orphan.

Tommy—What did you do with it?

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reduced by the presence of micro-organisms, which in growing produce poisonous products productive of ptomaine poisoning.

So, too, eggs laid by hens not hygienically cared for may be carriers of uncleanness. To insure the perfectly clean egg the hen must have clean nests, clean runs and an abundance of clean, pure water.

A man's best things are nearest him, lie close about his feet.—Richard Monckton Mills.