

A LIFE FOR SALE

BY SYDNEY HORLER

There was a tap on the floor, and a police-clerk entered bearing a sheaf of papers. These, Bunny noticed were typewritten, and as he watched them being placed in the Deputy Commissioner's desk, he found himself leaning forward.

As he left the building, after another cordial handshake from the Deputy Commissioner ten minutes later, Bunny Chipstead softly whistled—an unconscious habit of his when deep in thought.

Bunny Chipstead was no Spartan. He believed in the good things of life, in reason—and in season. That was why, after leaving Scotland Yard, he walked briskly to that famous rendezvous of the fastidious luncher, Rimini's.

It was whilst seated at a secluded table in the balcony that he noticed a young man, somewhat shabbily dressed, but of striking athletic appearance, rise from his seat in the large room below, cross the floor, and speak to a remarkably beautiful girl, who, judging from her look of consternation, regarded him with marked disfavor.

Anything unusual intrigued this keen observer of life, and Bunny found himself speculating on the reason why this girl should have so behaved. In spite of his shabby clothes—clothes which in the beginning must have been cut and fashioned by Savil Row craftsmen—the young man in question was distinctly good to look upon. In any case, he was not the type, judged superficially, from whom the ordinary girl would have shrunk.

Sipping his Moselle, Bunny was further surprised a minute later to discover that a very distinguished actor in this strange little drama was one of the greatest personages in England. In the tall, striking-looking man now hurrying to the girl's side, in company with Luigo, the well-known maitre d'hotel of Rimini's, he recognized instantly Lord Belshaven, the present Foreign Secretary. He had met Lord Belshaven twelve months before in Washington, had dined with him, and found the distinguished politician a very charming man indeed.

Bunny's face became thoughtful. The words of Sir Robert Heddingley the day before flashed back into his mind. Was Lord Belshaven included in this sinister plot against a very member of the Cabinet? Whilst he pondered the question, Chipstead noticed the athletic young man speaking earnestly to the Foreign Secretary, and then, without another look in the girl's direction, rapidly leave the room.

Chipstead half rose. It was his original intention to follow the man. Then he reflected: Luigo the Admirable would be able to tell him, no doubt.

Half an hour later he sat in Luigo's little cubby-hole of an office. His host's expressive face beamed a welcome. One of the best-known figures in London life, Luigo had friends scattered all over the world. Patrons of his famous establishment, they invariably made a habit of shaking hands with the great restaurateur when they came to London. Not to know Luigo personally was to miss a great joy and a rare honor.

The little rotund man poured out with his own hands two liqueur glasses of wonderful Napoleon brandy.

One of these he raised, saying: "It is a real pleasure to see you again, my dear Chipstead." He spoke now not as the maitre d'hotel talking to a patron, but as a man of the world chatting to a friend and an equal. "Are you here on business?" he went on to inquire.

"Perhaps, Luigo." And the non-committal reply made the wise eyes of the little man twinkle. Knowing all the highest Secret Service men of every nation, and being himself a trusted agent for a certain Foreign Power, Luigo was not committing a faux pas by asking the question. Neither was he nonplussed at having his question evaded. He knew that Chipstead would tell him all that he could tell him, and, maybe, the other would ask for his help.

This was exactly what happened.

"There was a little scene in the main diningroom just now, Luigo," started his guest. "I watched it from the balcony. A young fellow, who looked to me to be a very decent sort of chap, walked across the floor and commenced talking to a remarkably pretty girl. The latter looked at him as though he were something unclean. I couldn't catch what was said, of course, but she seemed to be telling him that she would be sending for the police unless he left her at once. Just then you and Lord Belshaven came up. This girl had been lunching with Lord Belshaven—"

"She is an under private secretary to Lord Belshaven, who, as you know, is Foreign Secretary in the present Government," put in Luigo. "His lordship informed me of the fact when we were called to the disturbance." The restaurateur stopped to regard Chipstead with a very keen scrutiny. "That young man," he said, "you do not intend him any harm, my friend?"

Bunny became non-committal again.

"I don't know him from Adam," he observed indifferently. "Why should I wish him any harm?" Then: "Do you happen to know him, Luigo?"

The other smiled at the sly thrust. After that his expressive face grew serious.

"I know him, yes—and I like that young man. Listen, my friend Chipstead, and I will tell you a story that might form the basis of one of those romances of modern London which the novelists are so fond of writing about. This young man"—as Luigo warmed to his tale the pace of his voice quickened, and he gesticulated with his hands—"is well born. He is what you call a gentleman. He has been to the Public School, has played all kinds of sport, but is forced to leave England because this country is not able to provide him with a decent job. So—he goes away. To South America, or some such place as that, where he makes money as a mining engineer. He returns with his money, but is foolish enough to lose it through a bad investment—he could not see a shark when he met one—and so he is put upon the ends of his beams—or what you say?"

Chipstead flicked the ash from his cigar.

"May I ask how you know all this?" he inquired.

"Partly I am in the young man's confidence, and partly

I make inquiries because I wish him well."

Bunny nodded. He had benefited himself by Luigo's good nature in the past.

"Two nights ago," continued Luigo, "this young man—Martin Creighton is his name—came here to dine. He had an air of quiet recklessness about him, but he wore a flower in his button-hole."

He is that type, my dear Chipstead. So, if circumstances forced him, he would go to his death, I feel sure—with a flower in his button-hole and a leetle smile. The longer I live with the English, the more I admire the type of young man they produce. You, my dear Chipstead, are half English and will appreciate the compliment.

"He is—this Martin Creighton—what you say—at his last gasp. It seemed that someone had asked him to dine, but this someone did not turn up—at least, not until—but I am putting the horse before the cart."

"Suddenly he beckons to me."

"I have no money, Luigo," he says; 'I am ruined, busted. This man I was to meet here invited me to dine, but he has not turned up.'

"What did I say to him? I told him if he were ruined and busted, it was all the more necessary that he should dine. Then, when he told me he had no money, not one penny left in all the world, I offered, very discreetly, you understand, to lend him two pounds—"

"Good for you, Luigo!" commented the listener; "but that's just the sort of thing you would do, of course."

"Haven't I already said I liked this young man? At first he refused, but I persuaded him. Imagine, my dear Chipstead, a man leaving Rimini's without having dined!"

"M'sieur Creighton dined. I served him myself. Then—Are your ears wide open, my dear Chipstead?"

"As wide open as a barn door."

"Something happened," continued Luigo, in a thrilling whisper. Regardless of the fact that he himself had been concerned in many an adventure of pure sensation, he imparted to his narrative a quite unnecessary embellishment. "Do you know, my dear Chipstead, a man standing at least six feet three inches high, weighing at least fifteen stone, and who has three curious white streaks in his otherwise black hair? He is a new one to me." Luigo spoke as a collector.

"He is a new one to me, too," replied Bunny.

"He came to my restaurant with a girl. Mon Dieu! that girl... Had I been young, my dear Chipstead, I might have—what you say—fallen for her. She was too ravishing to be good, and, from the first, I could see that she made the eyes at M'sieur Creighton."

There was the sound of a scraping chair. Impervious to the wiles of women himself, Bunny Chipstead knew from experience what potent weapons they were in the underworld arts of crime and intrigue. He had become interested in Luigo's tale.

"It was these two who talked to Creighton," continued the restaurateur. "After a while the three left. It was a handsome car—a Victory of superb make."

"Although I knew neither the man nor the girl, I whispered a warning to M'sieur Creighton. He listened as he passed, but something stronger than my warning made him enter that car."

"Regardless of my patrons, I snatched up a coat and hat from Alphonse, one of my waiters, and so I saw—My dear Chipstead, what do you think I saw that girl, who was too ravishing to be good,

do to that unfortunate young man?"

"Kiss him!" was the laconic query.

"Non! I saw her take a black silk handkerchief and bind it over M'sieur Creighton's eyes. He made no resistance."

"Did you also happen to see the number of the car, Luigo?" No highly colored, melodramatic tale of ravishing maidens who tied black silk handkerchiefs over the eyes of unfortunate young men could move Bunny Chipstead out of his unemotional calm. It seemed. He drew pencil and paper from his pocket, awaiting Luigo's reply.

The Frenchman smiled. "So long as you do not mean any harm to my young friend," he said, "I will give you the number."

He did so.

For the remainder of the day Bunny was busy. In the absence of further information from Sir Robert Heddingley, he decided that it might possibly be worth his while to try to solve what was at the back of the strange story Luigo had told him. Here were all the elements of an intriguing affair, and concerned in it, although perhaps quite unconsciously, was one of the leading statesmen of the day. On the face of things and in the light of the curious knowledge that he already possessed, both the young man from whom Lord Belshaven's private secretary had recoiled and the girl herself became persons of suspicion. He could leave the girl for the time being, and concentrate on the man, Creighton.

It was while he was walking away from Rimini's that he suddenly stopped, pulled out his pocket-book, and read a certain advertisement which he had cut a few mornings before from the Personal column of the Meteor.

Bunny softly whistled. According to the description which Luigo had given him of the young man, Creighton, this advertiser, who offered his life for £5,000 cash, might have been the same man. Luigo had said that Creighton was down and out, that he did not possess a penny in the world... With a quickened pace, Chipstead moved on.

As already stated, he spent a busy day. The result of his researches was to prove that the advertiser had indeed been a young man of the name of Martin Creighton. In another direction, however, he was not so successful. Luigo had said that the car in which Creighton, after being blindfolded, had been driven away from Rimini's two nights before had been a magnificent Victory. His inquiries established the fact that the number Luigo had said was on the car really belonged to an Austin Seven driven by a Balham grocer.

This man, a Colossus in build, with parti-colored hair; he was certainly worth investigating. Bunny, as he drank his nightcap of whisky-and-soda, decided to make his acquaintance as soon as possible.

There was another. "This is becoming interesting," Bunny said aloud. Whistling softly a little tune, he went cheerfully to bed.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Watchman's Slumbers Disturbed Community

Allentown, Pa. — (UP) — An unusual sound, described as a cross "between a grown and a snort" disturbed the midnight peace of a section of Allentown where construction work was progressing.

Investigators traced the disturbance to a man asleep among the air compressors, concrete mixers and other apparatus of the construction project. Snores that sounded like explosions played an accompaniment to his slumbers.

It was the night watchman.

Women Turn Down Hunt for Gold

Oroville, Cal. — (UP) — Oroville clubwomen are not desirous of possessing gold—at least not to the extent of possibly ruining their clubhouse site.

The clubwomen refused permission to a local miner to prospect for pocket gold on the club property. The miner declared that after panning dirt taken from the cellar excavation of the new club building he believes the ground to be very rich.

Not So Dapper This Time



Weather is no respecter of high and lofty stations so the Prince of Wales had to run for it when he arrived at St. Margaret's Church, London, recently in a downpour to attend a wedding. He presented the above not so dapper figure, as clutching his "topper," he rushed from his car to the church door.

It's Real This Time



Here is John Gilbert with his latest bride, Virginia Bruce, following their wedding at the M.G.M. studio in Hollywood. This is the actor's fourth trip to the altar, his most recent wife, Ina Claire, having just received her divorce. Miss Bruce is experiencing matrimony for the first time. She first met Gilbert when she played in a picture with him recently, but states she has been in love with him since she first saw him in the films ten years ago.

New Italian Envoy



Augusto Rosso, director-general of League of Nations affairs at the Foreign Ministry in Rome, who has been appointed Italian Ambassador to the United States. He is forty-seven and well known in the capital where he served as an Embassy attache.

Historic Birmingham

Birmingham, Ala. — (UP) — Filled with memories as grim as the smoke-blackened exterior it has presented to visitors here for 45 eventful years, the old L. & W. train shed is to be torn down.

It has seen hundreds of thousands turn out to greet Presidents Harrison, McKinley, Taft, Roosevelt and Harding.

It remembers the mob that met a wife-murderer and attempted to take him from officers and how an officer began shooting and killed

Smoke Screens Guard London Jewelry Windows

London — (UP) — London jewelers now use smoke-screens to save their diamonds from window-smashing thieves.

The latest thing in burglar alarms, if it does not catch the thief, it is enough to frighten him to death. The instant a plate glass window is broken this device sets off a screaming siren, turns on a red searchlight which police can see blocks away, sends clouds of smoke pouring through the win-

the postmaster and several other citizens.

It will be replaced by a modern structure.

President's Ancestors

Arrived in Pennsylvania

Philadelphia — (UP) — President Hoover's ancestors on the material side came to America at about the time of William Penn, and attended Friends meeting with the founder of ennsylvania at the Falls monthly meeting, near Pennsylvania, Pa., according to Dr. Albert Cook Meyers.

The President's immigrant ancestors, Andrew Hoover, came to this country at 15, about 1730, and first landed on American soil in Philadelphia, Dr. Meyers said.

He settled for a time in Earl Township, Lancaster county; later moved to Carroll county, Md.; then to Guilford county, N. C. His son, John, moved with his family to Ohio, and from there to Iowa, where the family lived when the president was born.

Japanese Bombs Ended

Translation of Work

Geneva — (UP) — Geneva is chuckling over a wry fable on the League. Some time ago a copy of "Ten Years of World Co-operation" for the past ten years, entitled "Ten Years of World Co-operation," was sent to China for translation and publication in Chinese.

The translators had finished their difficult labors and the printers were just ready to put the costly book under the press when the Japanese bombed Shanghai. The printing establishment was destroyed and with it the only Chinese copy of "Ten years of World Co-operation."

down and explodes several gas bombs in the face of the "smash-and-grab" raider.

"Smash-and-grab" raids have grown so alarmingly that insurance companies have raised their burglary rates.

As He Said.

From the Humorist.

Ralph: Before Amos was married he said he would be the boss or know the reason why.

Chester: And now?

Ralph: He knows the reason why.

Tamaulipas Plans

Mecca for Divorces

Brownsville, Tex. — (UP) — Faced with loss of their most important source of revenue if the move to repeal the 18th amendment of the United States is successful, officials of the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas are planning to create a mecca for Americans seeking easy divorces.

The officials are considering a law which will provide divorces to Americans after 24-hours residence, provided the separation has

been agreed upon by both parties. If either party objects, a longer period of residence will be required and a higher fee charged.

It is said the law will make Mexicans ineligible for securing divorces under these short-term agreements.

Japan Awards Degree To Chinese Woman

Tokio — (UP) — The first Chinese woman to receive a doctor's degree from a Japanese university is Miss Tao Wei-sun, former pro-

fessor of chemistry in the Tatung University, Shanghai, who has been awarded a degree of Doctor of Science by the Ministry of Education. Her thesis was "A Scientific Study of the Digestibility of Rice Starch" and was accepted by the science department of the Imperial University, Kyoto.

Miss Tao is 37 and attended school in Tokio before entering Columbia University, New York, where she received her bachelor's degree in science.