

The Black Menace

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

"By all means," she replied, rising with sudden energy, as though she were fearful that Kennedy might reconsider his offer. "I was almost afraid to come to you at first—and then I didn't know whether it would be fair to Mr. Ravenal to do it anyhow. There must be some way in which we can all go ahead together."

A quarter of an hour later our taxicab pulled up before an old brown-stone house, which the upward march of trade had converted from a splendid dwelling of the past generation to an indifferent office building of the present.

We entered the building and climbed the stairs to the second floor. Clare tapped on the door of a room and it was opened quickly by a colored boy. At the sight of Miss Claremont he bowed and ushered us in.

Whatever may be said of Ravenal as a criminal investigator he certainly was a connoisseur. I had expected to find a detective office with perhaps several operatives hanging about in a back office. This place was the direct antithesis. Few artists might have boasted a studio or den which was more beautifully fitted than this headquarters of the society detective. But then, I reflected that was probably the very genius of the man and part of his stock in trade.

Ravenal himself was a moderately tall, dark haired and olive complexioned young man of a type which one may see by the score any afternoon on the avenue. The only difference between Ravenal and the type was that, if anything, he seemed to be the mould from which the others were cast. That, too, was a point in his favor as a society detective. There was no social gathering at which Ravenal would not pass as one of the inner circle itself.

As Clare introduced us I watched Ravenal closely to see how he was going to take the change. Instead of showing any annoyance, the young detective stretched out his hand frankly to Craig and smiled, showing a perfect row of teeth.

To Work Hand In Hand.
"Really, Professor Kennedy," he greeted. "I cannot help saying I am delighted. When Miss Claremont came to me at first I was only too glad to take the case, for it seemed as though it must be that I possessed the confidence of other clients of her acquaintance. But the case is too big. If I might be associated with you and even share in the credit of it I would be quite satisfied."

Kennedy said very little, although he had a way of putting anyone at his ease. We sat down in the wonderful easy chairs that Ravenal had gathered and with a few well-directed questions Kennedy was straightway into the heart of the case. If Ravenal had any expectation of cross-examining Kennedy he must have realized immediately that he had met more than his match. Kennedy interviewed him with an art that I envied. It would have been a wonderful asset to anyone in the newspaper business.

I shall not attempt to repeat the long story of the fruitless efforts of Clare Claremont, Jack Speed and Ravenal to trace out even the slender clues contained in the packet of notes found among the effects of Martin Dale. It was true that after reviewing them I was forced to the conclusion that none had actually been a good clue. And yet all seemed to have presented possibilities.

Whether the Black Menace was an individual as seemed to be hinted at in Granby's letter, or a gang of blackmailers, as Miss Claremont evidently thought, was still as mysterious as ever. That there was some individual who was the head and brains of the gang, if gang there were, was at least certain. The frustration of every attempt, whether by Clare herself, or by Jack Speed with his newspaper connections, or by Ravenal, seemed to point to the fact that there was more than one.

Even the method of blackmailing was still a mystery, whether it was through beautiful women or shady finance, or both. But that there was some powerful weapon wielded by the Black Menace was beyond question.

As we sat there, forgetful of the minutes, it seemed that in our consideration of the case, we were exhausting the list of the best-known men and women of the metropolis. There was every reason to believe that the operations of the Black Menace had reached into the lives of which we did not dream. The most difficult, in fact seemingly impossible, part of it was that by the very nature of the affair evidence against the Black Menace was concealed, not only by the Black Menace itself, but by its very victims.

Waiting for Developments.

It was late in the afternoon when we left Ravenal, and we still had not arrived at any program of action, further than that after thinking it over we were to meet that night at dinner at the Crystal Palace, a new and very popular restaurant.

On the sidewalk again before Ravenal's den, we paused waiting for a taxicab.

"You think that we can do something?" inquired Miss Claremont, anxious and eager.

"We can do no more than try," replied Kennedy and the words, though colorless, had a ring of confidence in them which caused her to press his hand in thanks as he placed her in the cab which he had beckoned.

Another cab cruising down the street pulled up sharply at Kennedy's nod.

"Jump in, Walter," he said, then turned to the driver, directing him to Madison avenue and East Thirty-fourth street. Then, as he joined me in the cab, he whispered, "It will be our only chance to see Granby unobserved—if indeed we can do so even now. We must pick up the trail there."

CHAPTER 2

The Green Death.

I reflected on the danger of the visit, not so much to ourselves as to Granby. If Granby knew that Clare had been to see us, others might know it, too—might even know of Granby's own attempt at secret communication and assistance to her.

Kennedy, I saw also, felt that we must observe the conditions of the girl. Yet the Black Menace had covered up its tracks so well that after our talk with Ravenal we had no point of attack. Every lead that had occurred so far seemed to have been exhausted. We were practically forced into starting our investigation with Granby. If we could only see him once secretly we might never need to see him again until such time as he himself determined that the meeting was safe.

Accordingly, when our cab stopped on the corner of Madison Avenue and Thirty-fourth street, and Kennedy jumped out and paid the driver, I knew that he was doing everything in his power to cover our trail. We walked back into the Murry Hill district of old houses, turning corners and endeavoring to see that we were not trailed.

Finally we came out on the block on Park avenue on which I knew the Granby house to be, in that little basis of splendid dwellings between Thirty-fourth and Forty-second street. As we walked up the street we could see that a closed car was already standing before the door. Kennedy passed, looking intently at the house and at others near it, then both up and down the street. Instead of going in he walked about the block. When we had nearly completed the circuit, he turned, and we doubled on our tracks. No one, apparently, was paying the slightest attention to what we were doing.

Admitted at Once.

The closed car, however, was still standing before the house when Kennedy turned into the English basement and rang the bell.

It was just a moment that we waited. A Japanese butler opened the door, and his beady eyes slanted at us subtly. Before he could even refuse to admit us, Kennedy had stepped inside followed by me.

"Give Mr. Granby my card," said Kennedy briskly. "Tell him it is very important."

The Japanese took the pasteboard and fingered it, glancing at it out of the corner of his eye and then at us. In perfect English he parried, "But, sir, Mr. Granby cannot see anyone just

now."
"Cannot see anyone? Why?"
There was a noise of someone coming down stairs, and I saw a rather portly middle aged man, with a Van Dyke beard. As he caught sight of us, half way down, he looked quickly over at the butler.

"Who are these gentlemen, Kato?" he asked.

"Dr. Gilbert, I believe," hastened Kennedy, before the Jap could reply, recognizing at once the well known society physician.

"Yes," returned the doctor, slightly elevating his eyebrows.

I don't believe that we have ever met," introduced Kennedy, taking the card from the Jap and handing it to the doctor, "but perhaps you have heard of me at the university?"

Dr. Gilbert glanced at the card, then his manner changed as he looked up at Kennedy. "Oh, yes, yes. Professor Kennedy. You are here just a bit late. Mr. Granby is dead."

Astounding News.

The abruptness of the announcement almost swept us off our feet, but Kennedy quickly recovered.

"Dead?" he repeated, "It seems almost impossible. I know that he must have been alive at least two hours ago."

The doctor shook his head sadly. "Quite true," he replied, "but this thing has been so sudden that even I do not know as yet what happened."

"But what was it?" persisted Kennedy. "There must be something that you know."

The doctor waved his hand toward the Jap. "It was Kato who called me, perhaps an hour ago. Mr. Granby, he says, went out very hurriedly early in the afternoon and returned most agitated. He shut himself up in the library, and not 10 minutes later, Kato says he heard him ringing the bell and calling frantically. 'Tell them again, Kato, just what happened.'"

Reluctantly the Jap looked from us to the doctor, then concluded that he had better take his orders from the physician.

"I heard the bell, as I came to the library door Mr. Granby was standing by the library table. He had his hands up before his eyes. As I entered he said, 'Kato, what color does this room seem to you?' I was greatly surprised, and I could think of nothing to say except 'Many colors, sir.' He stared around, and I thought his eyes would jump out of his head. 'Kato it's yellow! Everything in the room is yellow! Call Dr. Gilbert immediately!'"

"I did so, and before the doctor came we managed to get him up to his room. He was very weak and delirious. He seemed to be getting worse, and just before the doctor came we heard him groaning: 'It's turning green—everything is turning green!'"

Dr. Gilbert nodded as though to indicate that the butler had told his story substantially as he had already heard it.

Too Late to Save Him.

"Yes, Kennedy," said Dr. Gilbert, "When I got here he was very far gone, almost in a state of coma. His vision seemed to be very strangely affected, and the muscles which controlled his throat were gradually becoming paralyzed."

"I could make nothing out of what he mumbled except that it seemed to be that he feared someone or something. Once or twice he opened his eyes without recognizing me, and I could just make out that, as his vision was fading, he was muttering, 'I see everything green—green—green. I see, everything green.'"

In the face of two such witnesses there could be no doubt now of the tragedy into which we had run.

"Might I see him?" asked Kennedy quickly. "You have no objection?"

"The doctor considered a moment. 'None whatever. Perhaps you can give us some clue to the mystery.'"

He turned and led the way up through the heavily carpeted hall, and we came at last to the huge front bedroom on the second floor.

Granby was a bachelor, although he kept the big Granby house in the city open just as his father and grandfather had done before him. The big room was luxuriously furnished in the style of a past generation. Just now it was in disorder. In the next room were a nurse and a maid, stunned by the suddenness of the death.

As we entered we could see Granby's body stretched on the bed, covered by a sheet, Kennedy

stepped over quickly to it and lifted a corner of the sheet, regarding the cold and distorted face which he disclosed. He seemed to be debating what to do first. He quickly replaced the sheet and strode out into the hall again where I stood with Dr. Gilbert and Kato.

"What was he doing last in the library?" demanded Kennedy of Kato.

"I don't know, sir. I saw him as he came in. He seemed very nervous. When I saw him again in the library, on the table were a glass and a decanter. I should say, sir, that he had taken a drink."

Without waiting to hear more, Kennedy hurried down the hall to the first floor, over the English basement. A moment later, as we followed, he entered the library.

A Sudden Move.

"I took away the glass and put the decanter back in the cellar," explained Kato.

Kennedy turned toward a beautiful mahogany and glass cellaret in an alcove of the den.

"Which decanter?" he demanded.

Kato pointed it out.

As he did so, Kennedy bent forward and lifted it, but his eyes were not on the decanter. With two sheets of paper, which he picked up from a writing desk, he scraped up the slight dust which had collected on the shelf. Then he folded up the paper into which he had scraped the dust and drew from his pocket a small case in which he always carried some miniature test tubes. From the decanter, he poured a bit of the liquor and plugged the test tube, restoring it to his pocket.

With scarcely a word of explanation further, Kennedy excused himself to Dr. Gilbert, and we were on our way up to the laboratory. It was a quick ride and silent. Kennedy had but one idea, and that was first of all to discover the manner in which Granby had met his sudden fate.

In the laboratory he set to work at once, examining first under a microscope the few grains of dust in the paper. I stood beside him, eagerly watching, as he finally he looked up from the eye-piece.

"Some sort of powder," he remarked, "colorless or perhaps whitish, shining flat rhombic prisms."

"Held the dust and powder to his nose, but it evidently had no odor. Under a hand lens with a pair of tweezers he picked out what I assume to be some grains and placed them on his tongue. His face indicated that the taste was a bit acid, but I could not tell whether it gave him a clue or not."

He turned from the microscope, taking the test tube from the case in his pocket. Quickly he poured the contents into a large test tube, and I saw that he was making a hasty qualitative analysis.

To Tell Clare.

I knew it would be some time before Kennedy discovered anything.

"I think, Craig," I suggested, "Miss Claremont should know about this, and perhaps I had better tell her."

Craig nodded assent, and, delighted by the mission, which at least served as an outlet for his own excitement, I hurried out.

Clare Claremont, however, was not at home, nor could I find her. I called up the Star, but Steed was out on an assignment and could not be located. Ravenal, too, must have left his den directly after we did, for his servant could tell me nothing. Unable to carry out my mission, I was finally forced to go back to the laboratory, trusting that Kennedy had made some progress.

As I entered, Kennedy was apparently finishing up his work. I could see by his manner that he had discovered something. I told him hastily of my failure to find Miss Claremont, and, even before I had a chance to ask a question, he beckoned me over to his table, where, before him in a rack, stood a test tube about half full of some liquid.

"I didn't have very many grains of the stuff," he remarked, "but from even the few that I had I have discovered that it is not soluble in water, although very soluble in alcohol. That's as far as I went with the few grains, for I soon found that I must have a great deal of the stuff in the solution of the liquor."

(To Be Continued Next Week.)

Tamaki Miuri, Japanese prima donna, who has just completed tour of United States, sailed for Italy where she will sing "Madame Butterfly" in Milan and Rome. She will later tour France, Spain and Germany.

Los Angeles Woman Tells of Wonderful Experience.



MRS. GUSSIE E. HANSEN.

Mrs. Gussie E. Hansen, of 916 West 52nd Street, is now numbered with the multitude of Los Angeles men and women who have realized the wonderful merits of Tanlac. In relating her experiences, Mrs. Hansen said:

"It is wonderful what Tanlac will do for one suffering from stomach trouble, nervousness and run-down condition. I have tried it."

"Before taking the treatment everything I ate disagreed with me so that I actually dreaded to sit down to the table. I suffered from constipation, had awful pains across my back, and was so nervous and run down I was in misery all the time."

"Tanalac was helping so many others I thought it might help me, too, and it certainly has. Why, my appetite is just splendid, and my stomach is in such good order I eat to my heart's content. My back doesn't bother me any more, and I sleep like a child at night. I can't say too much for Tanlac."

Tanalac is for sale by all good druggists—take no substitute. Over 87 million bottles sold.

Observant Daddy.

"There's only one good thing about that young puppy that came to see you last night," said the angry father, "and that is he's healthy."

"I'm surprised to hear you admit that much," replied the dutiful daughter.

"I wouldn't except for the fact that when you met him in the hall I heard you say: 'Oh, George, how cold your nose is!'"

Cuticura for Sore Hands.

Soak hands on retiring in the hot suds of Cuticura Soap, dry and rub in Cuticura Ointment. Remove surplus Ointment with tissue paper. This is only one of the things Cuticura will do if Soap, Ointment and Talcum are used for all toilet purposes.—Advertisement.

Rust Takes Huge Toll.

Of the world's output of iron and steel during the 60 years from 1860 to 1920, approximately about 600,000,000 tons were lost by rusting. Taking the average yearly output for that period as 31,000,000 tons, and the average yearly wastage as 11,000,000 tons, the depreciation due to rust was more than one-third of the output—Exchange.

The Less the More.

Husband—Dear me! Another dress? Wife—But it's only a little one, dear. Husband—Well, it's my experience that the less there is of your frocks the more they cost.

WHY TAKE LAXATIVES?

Discovery by Science Has Replaced Them.

Pills and salts give temporary relief from constipation only at the expense of permanent injury, says an eminent medical authority.

Science has found a newer, better way—a means as simple as Nature itself.

In perfect health a natural lubricant keeps the food waste soft and moving. But when constipation exists this natural lubricant is not sufficient. Doctors prescribe Nujol because it acts like this natural lubricant and thus secures regular bowel movements by Nature's own method—lubrication.

As Nujol is not a medicine or laxative, it cannot gripe and, like pure water, it is harmless and pleasant.

Nujol is used in leading hospitals. Get a bottle from your druggist today.—Advertisement.

Photographed Bones.

As an improvement on the fingerprint method of identification a French criminologist makes X-ray photographs of finger tips which include outlines of the bones and nails.

By recent legislative enactment, women have been admitted to the practice of medicine in India.

WOMAN'S HEALTH RESTORED

She Claims Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Did It After Everything Else Failed

Milwaukee, Wisconsin.—"I feel that I ought to let you know about my case. I was ailing and could barely do my housework and washing I was so run-down, just from having one child. I took a lot of medicines and had doctors. Then I gave them all up and took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and I feel wonderfully good now. I do everything that comes along, and we all take your medicine as a tonic when we don't feel just so. I am thankful for what the Vegetable Compound has done for my health and for my family."—Mrs. MARY SAEBECK, 944 28th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Letters like these testify to the value of the Vegetable Compound. These women speak from the fullness of their hearts. They describe as correctly as they can their conditions: First, those symptoms that affected them most conspicuously; and later the disappearance of those symptoms. They are sincere expressions of gratitude. For nearly fifty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has been so praised by women.



A sure, safe way to end CORNS

In one minute you can end the pain of corns with Dr. Scholl's Zino-pads. They remove the cause—friction—pressure. You risk no infection from cutting, no danger from corrosive acids.

Zino-pads protect while they heal. Thin, antiseptic, waterproof. Sizes for corns, callouses, bunions. Get a box today at your druggist or shoe dealer's.

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Constipation Wind Colic
Flatulency To Sweeten Stomach
Diarrhoea Regulate Bowels

Aids in the assimilation of Food, promoting Cheerfulness, Rest, and Natural Sleep without Opium

To avoid imitations, always look for the signature of *Charles H. Fletcher*. Proven directions on each package. Physicians everywhere recommend it.