

The Black Menace

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

He picked up another test tube in which I knew he had separated some of the poison, whatever it was, from the liquor. Then he took from one of the shelves above his laboratory table a bottle labelled "Alcoholic Potassium Hydroxide." He poured some of it into the test tube. The colorless liquid in the tube slowly turned a brilliant red.

As I watched the transformation, Kennedy reached for a bottle of sulphuric acid. The liquid had scarcely turned red when he poured a few drops of the acid into it, picked up the tube with a holder, and held it in the flame of a burner until the liquid boiled. This time it changed to a delicate shade of violet.

A Well Known Drug.
"That is the test for santonin."

"Santonin?" I repeated.

"A drug, well known in Turkey, where it is sometimes called Levant Worm-seed. It comes from the dried flower tops of a plant known as Artemisia santonica. I suppose I should have recognized it from its effect, but one does not expect to see it here in New York."

"Its most noticeable effect is what it does to vision. Everything that Kato and Dr. Gilbert told us of Granby was quite typical. First the victim sees everything about him yellow and if enough of the drug has been taken, this yellow vision gradually changes to green; insensibility, convulsions and death follow."

"Placed in food or drink its slight taste can be easily masked, although sometimes even a small amount has been known to produce unexpectedly bad results."

I looked at Kennedy in amazement and horror.

"The green death," I exclaimed.

He nodded, "We know what it was, but we are just as far as ever from knowing whence it came."

CHAPTER 3.

The Double Cross.

There was a knock at the laboratory door and Kennedy opened it, admitting a young man whom I recognized at once as Jack Speed.

Speed was a rather handsome young fellow, a splendid figure of a man, athletic and with a free and carefree manner, which stamped him as one whom you could easily find very likeable.

"Professor Kennedy?" he inquired as he stepped in through the door.

"Yes," answered Craig.

"I'm from the Star," he went on, "My name is Speed. I was out on an assignment and about to telephone in my story when the city editor told me to go over to Granby's. They said that you had been there, and I thought I'd better come to see you to get the inside story."

Kennedy smiled. "Trying to get a beat on Jameson?" he laughed, nodding toward me.

"Oh hello," greeted Speed, turning toward me. "I didn't recognize you at first—didn't think about it."

"That's all right," I replied. "I'd much rather the story were yours anyhow. Besides, from what I know of it already I think it will take more than both of us to handle it anyhow."

Speed turned from me inquiringly at Kennedy, as though to ask just how much he did know.

Getting Too Deep.

"Miss Claremont called on us this afternoon," explained Craig.

"Oh, she did? That's fine. I am delighted. In fact I have been telling her that she should do something of the sort. Ravenal is all right, but this thing is getting too deep for us."

Without wasting any more words Kennedy related briefly what had happened at the interview, the strange note from Granby and the fatal sequel. Speed grew more and more excited as Kennedy finished.

"My God," he exclaimed. "This thing has ramifications I never dreamed of. I had no idea that poor Ripley was involved. What a desperate gang this must be."

"Involved in what?" asked Kennedy, watching the young man's face keenly.

Speed shook his head doubtfully, but said nothing.

"What do you make of the

sheet of paper the larger amounts, passing over the ordinary cash withdrawals. Before we finished, our total was close upon \$250,000.

We looked at each other. What might there be in Granby's life that would shed light on the Black Menace? We had searched the library thoroughly and there was certainly nothing there, except these checks.

"Let us go and have dinner," suggested Speed. "After we have seen Kennedy we may know better how to proceed. I cannot tell you how much relieved I feel to know that you fellows are in on this thing. 'Only,' he added, suddenly turned and grasping my hand, "you are in to stick, aren't you?"

"I have known Kennedy for many years," I replied, "and I have yet to recall the case he ever deserted."

A Little Worried.

"Indeed I have." He set his jaws tightly. "But I am going through with this thing and so is Clare."

"And you—have you received no threats?"

"Indeed I have."

He set his jaws tightly.

"Come, let's get over to the Crystal palace. I begin to be worried about Clare myself."

It was still a bit early for our appointment, but nevertheless Speed, in his anxiety, hurried over.

The Crystal palace was something more than merely a restaurant. It was almost an institution in itself, with a big ornate dining room, grill room, ball room, innumerable private dining rooms, in fact a palace of recreation to which everybody went.

We entered the main dining room and stood for a moment in the doorway, ignoring the effusive head waiter who caught sight of Speed. We looked about in the hope that we might see those whom we had come to meet. Clare was certainly not outside in the reception room, nor could we see her anywhere in the long vista of tables.

"There's Ravelen," recognized Speed, finally spying him about an angle of palms and mirrors. I looked in that direction and there I could see the young detective seated alone at a table evidently waiting for us. He caught sight of us at the same moment and waved to us to come over.

As we approached the table, he rose nervously. "I suppose, you are the death of Granby?" he asked, adding, "another victim."

I glanced about as Speed spoke to him and saw that the waiter, a rather dark fellow with saturnine face, was hovering about with what I thought an undue amount of solicitude. Speed and I sat down. My ears were on the conversation, in which I joined now and then, and my eyes, or at least one of them, was on the waiter, for I was quite anxious also not to miss either Kennedy or Miss Claremont should they appear in the doorway.

Mechanically I picked up the napkin on the table before me, and as I did so Ravelen could not resist an exclamation, pointing at the tablecloth.

A New Warning.

On the tablecloth, underneath the napkin, was written in lead pencil.

"Kennedy—She will not be here tonight." The Black Menace.

I gazed at the writing in consternation, as the others leaned over and read it, too. Our saturnine-faced waiter was not about. His extraordinary politeness had taken him off to get something for our comfort. Who had known and anticipated us?

Had it been this man or somebody back of him?

At that moment Ravelen caught sight of him down the line of tables, hurrying toward us. "Who wrote that thing?" demanded Ravelen accusingly of the waiter.

The waiter looked at it a moment, but not a muscle of his face moved as he shook his head, "I don't know, sir," he said quickly. "I didn't fix the table up. Pardon, sir; I will get Monsieur Louis, the head waiter."

He was gone before we could ask him another question. One could hardly criticize his eagerness for attention, but it was at least, I felt suspicious. Just then there was a disturbance out in the lobby, and we could see several of the uniformed attendants and guests gathered in a group. Our waiter had disappeared in that direction, and, together all three of us rose and hurried out toward the lobby. The waiter was nowhere to be seen near the head waiter, either.

"Poor thing! Isn't it a shame?" I heard a girl whisper to her escort.

"What is the matter?" I demanded of a page boy who passed from the direction of the revolving street door.

"Just a girl—drinkin' too

much, I guess—private dining room upstairs," he returned as though it were a usual occurrence. Then, catching sight of another uniformed attendant, he cut short his words, as though he remembered that the least said about such things the better for the reputation of the Crystal palace.

A Quick Glance.

A quick exclamation from Speed caused us to turn in the direction in which he was looking. Through the glass doors to the street we could catch a glimpse of a girl surrounded by two or three attendants of the restaurant almost carried as she was helped into a waiting taxicab. Speed had caught just a glimpse of her face.

"By George, that looks like Clare," he exclaimed, starting toward the door.

At that moment the door of the taxicab banged shut and the car, whose engine had been running started off with a jump uptown through traffic.

Without stopping for our hats and coats we hurried out to the sidewalk. Someone must have been ahead of us for the only other taxicab standing there had pulled out before we could engage it. We looked about helplessly. Speed turned frantically to the starter. "Get me a cab," he cried. "Why don't you have more than one waiting here?" Confound it, it will be too late to follow by the time we get another."

"Here's one," cried Ravelen, spying another that had just rounded the corner and was pulling up with a couple of passengers. We commanded it, scarcely waiting for the man to pay his fare and were off after the other two cars which were several blocks ahead of us.

CHAPTER 4.

The Lounge Lizard.

As we raced on uptown the traffic at this hour soon became thicker, but our cab did not seem to be able to overhaul the other two cars, although we lost nothing. On uptown the two cars sped, turning eastward until, as I glanced sideways out of the window, I saw we were verging toward the big park in the Bronx.

Why we were all not arrested for speeding I do not know, unless it happened about the time that they were changing traffic squads. However, it was not long before the cars ahead, which were only a few hundred feet apart, veered sharply from the lighted boulevard and turned into a dark and lonely side road down a grade. The constant urging of our own driver had made him perhaps a little more reckless than he would have been otherwise with his own cab, and on the grade he let her out for all his engine and gravity could accomplish.

The sudden jamming on of the brakes almost threw us forward through the front windows, and before we knew it we could see that he had pulled up only a matter of inches behind both other cars which had stopped. In the darkness I could just make out a fellow who jumped from the first cab through the door on the inside of the road and crashed into the shrubbery, followed by the driver himself, who leaped over the spare tires on the side of the car.

They Both Start.

Ravelen and Speed started after the two, crashing through the bushes also. For an instant I paused as I saw both doors of the first cab open and a man inside bending over a girl. I poked my head in through the door.

"Kennedy," I exclaimed.

He did not reply, but seemed busily over the girl who was huddled in the upholstered corner of the cab. It was, as Speed had suspected, Clare herself, and she was weakly murmuring as though just recovering from something.

"Is there anything I can do?" I asked.

"Put down the top—more air—that's all," replied Craig.

The driver and I had just finished bending back the folding top of the cab when, through the bushes, we could hear Speed and Ravelen crashing back, and I knew that those whom they pursued must have escaped.

"Jack," murmured Clare as she caught sight of Speed's face in the other door.

Speed bent forward and took one of Clare's hands.

The deafening explosions of a motorcycle interrupted us as a park policeman at last pulled up. "What's the matter here?" he demanded.

Quickly Kennedy told him in tabloid sentences.

(To Be Continued Next Week.)

JOINT ACTION IN CHINA INDICATED

Pressure Exerted on State Department to Have U. S. Take Initiative in Chaotic Situation.

BY H. H. STANSBURY,
Universal Service Correspondent.

Washington, May 21.—Strong pressure was brought to bear upon the state department and White House Monday, urging the United States to take the initiative against the existing chaos in China.

The situation is scheduled to be the chief subject of discussion at Tuesday's cabinet meeting.

Inquiries made Monday of individual members of the cabinet indicate complete unanimity of opinion favoring an immediate ultimatum to the Chinese government, to be followed by military action in case of failure to comply.

Two Problems Involved.

The first problem to be solved is that of securing the safety and freedom of Americans and other foreigners held by the bandits. The second is the urgent necessity of keeping open the large trade avenues which are practically closed.

It is frankly admitted that the state department has yielded to a policy of procrastination, hoping from day to day that the representations of the diplomats at Peking would secure the release of the captives. Developments of the last few days indicate that mere diplomatic representations cannot yield satisfactory results as the Chinese government itself is impotent and commands no respect from the outlaws.

Had the captives been released when the demands were first made it is more likely the incident of the train holdup would have been ignored, at least until fall. It had already been decided to call a conference in November of the interested powers to discuss the future of China with reference to treaty agreements reached at the time of the arms conference.

Quick Action Necessary.

Now the situation is such as to demand immediate action, it is believed.

The release of the captives will be a signal for joint action of some kind, if in fact such action is not found to be necessary in order to secure the freedom of the prisoners. The movement of a considerable body of foreign troops into the bandit infested region is known to be under contemplation, and it is thought probable that the Chinese railway systems will be policed by the great powers for several years, or until a stable government shall have been established in China.

One of the greatest problems in the contemplated action revolves about Japan. To what extent can Japan be permitted to participate without aggravating the situation, is the question.

Japan is so hated by many Chinese for her aggressions in Shantung and Manchuria that it is feared the presence of any considerable number of Japanese troops might invoke a general uprising that would be difficult to handle.

Urge Direct Negotiations.

The American legation at Peking reported to the state department Monday the utter failure of all negotiations between the Chinese government and bandit leaders for the liberation of the foreigners. Further efforts to secure their freedom in that way are believed to be useless.

"The only hope of early release of the prisoners," the cablegram to the state department said, "is by direct foreign negotiations."

• • •

DELMONICO'S, FAMOUS FOR CENTURY, CLOSED

Restaurant Widely Known for Cuisine Dies of Vole steady Blues.

Universal Service.

New York, May 21.—Delmonico's, for nearly a century the center of New York's exclusive restaurant life and known for its wonderful cuisine and its aristocratic "atmosphere" from one end of civilization to the other, closed its doors Monday night.

No demonstration wrote the "finis" to its long life. The regular dinner-crowd, sprinkled through with old time and white-haired patrons, came and ate and went away in peace and quiet.

Delmonico's died of prohibition blues.

Rich a few years ago in the lavishness of its choicest wines, its imported cordials, its fancy mixed drinks, the restaurant that was the rendezvous of the four hundred of New York and the entertainment place for all distinguished visitors, had to bow before the 18th amendment.

• • •

SUPREME COURT JURIST OUT FOR SENATOR TOGA

St. Paul, May 21 (A. P.)—Judge Oscar Hallam today resigned from the state supreme court to become a candidate for the republican nomination for United States senator in the special primary election June 18.

CORPORATIONS BENEFIT BY INCOME TAX RULING

Washington, May 21 (U. P.)—The treasury department Monday revoked its decision of two weeks ago exempting from income tax distribution by corporations of earnings accumulated before March 1, 1913.

The decision had opened the way to refund of millions of dollars to corporations that had paid tax on such distributions. Today's reversal will keep this money in the treasury. No explanation accompanied the reversal of the ruling.

WALTERS IS READY TO BUCK THE LINE

Declares Tanlac Ended Indigestion and Put Him in Pink of Condition.

"I would stake my last throw on Tanlac, for it can't be beat," says Floyd E. Walters, 1008 E. 13th St., Kansas City, Mo.

"My appetite was such a slacker I could hardly eat enough to keep going, and all the disagreeableness of indigestion, bloating, heartburn and palpitation fell to my lot. I would tremble from nervousness, sleep was almost a stranger to me, and my head and back ached so bad I could hardly stand it. I was as pale as a sheet, and that 'all in' feeling was nearly torturing me.

"But today I am in the pink of condition, feeling as hale and hearty as when I used to play football back in Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Tanlac treatment is what turned the trick for me. Yes, sir, I feel as fine as a fiddle, and am greatly indebted to Tanlac."

Tanlac is for sale by all good druggists. Accept no substitute. Over 37 million bottles sold.—Advertisement.

The Starting Fashions of Yore.

He went up with his mother to "help" her clean the attic. He was just five years old. In the course of the digging-out process some fashion magazines of 1895 were unearth