

The Black Menace

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

CHAPTER 7.

The Armored Man.

Speed called on us early the following morning, and Kennedy at once took advantage of the chance he had wanted in order to question the young man alone. "There's one thing I'd like to ask you," said Kennedy. "Last night when we came to that private dining room where we found Breshkaya I noticed that she recognized you."

Speed met the question frankly.

"Yes, I know her, but not intimately," he replied. "You see, one night, when some friends of mine who were former classmates at college were here, we had a theater party. Some of the fellows knew her, and I was introduced along with the rest."

"But what do you know about her?"

"Very little," replied Speed. "She seems to be very popular—always has plenty of friends, with money to spend. I can find out more for you if you wish."

Just then Ravenal dropped in, cutting off further private questioning of Speed.

Kennedy nodded to Speed, and he departed, quite delighted at having something to perform.

Glad of the Job.

"Since you told me last night of that gambling den on Long Island," suggested Ravenal thoughtfully, "I wonder whether I couldn't get in there without exciting suspicion? I've many society friends. Will you let me try it?"

Kennedy considered a moment. "By all means," he assented.

Ravenal seemed glad of the commission and departed eagerly to make such inquiries as might lead to his introduction to the de luxe gambling joint that night.

Evidently the Black Menace was waiting to see how after the failure of the strange attack in the field, the devilish germ letter might work.

Nothing further took place during the day though we kept in close touch with Clare.

"Having failed to get Clare, perhaps he's content to rest awhile," I remarked.

Kennedy shook his head doubtfully. "At least we must give him no chance. Between us all, I think we ought to be able to get something."

As evening approached I could see that Kennedy was getting restive for action. Speed had not returned; Clare seemed to be safe for the time being at least; and Ravenal was busy.

So far we had nothing to show for our day's work. We had made very little better progress than Speed and Ravenal alone.

What of the mansion of mystery, the society gambling joint out at Heaton Hills? Had the strange figure in the field any connection with it?

The same though must have been in the mind of Kennedy as he paced up and down the laboratory considering what was to be his next move.

"I think I'll take my own speedster, Walter," decided Craig finally. "We'll do some scouting about tonight on our own responsibility. Perhaps the thing will put in an appearance. I'd like to see it myself."

And so, alone, we retraced the drive which we had taken the night before, going over the same roads that Clare and Speed had taken on their return.

Dark at the Hills.

It was quite dark by the time that we arrived at Heaton Hills. But there seemed to be many cars out. The wealthy colony out there were much given to fast and reckless driving, and we had to exercise caution especially when we came to crossroads down which some scion of wealth was likely to be tearing in sheer enjoyment of speed.

Kennedy had brought a road map and we began an apparently aimless tour of the country, hoping that by chance our way might cross that of the strange figure. There seemed to be nothing else to do.

We kept in the neighborhood of the mansion of mystery, passing and re-passing it any number of times. Early in the evening there did not seem to be many people there, but as the night advanced the cars began to pull up. I wondered whether Ravenal had been able to gain admittance, and if so, what might be

taking place inside.

Nothing happened as the night wore on, but there were fewer and fewer headlights that passed us on the roads.

We did not go very far away from the society gambling den, but stuck close to it, hoping that something might turn up. At last after the play at the place had become frenzied and high, we might repeat our performance of the evening before and perhaps a half mile away from it, a tation worth while, outside, while Ravenal was at work inside.

Once, when we had passed the front of the place and were perhaps a half mile away from it, a roadster loomed up, coming from the direction of the city. For a moment our own lights played on it.

In it, there were two people.

Not a Good Look.

"Breshkaya!" I exclaimed. "Who was the man with her?" "I didn't have a very good look at his face," returned Craig, "but it looked to me like our friend Werner."

"They had not seen us. Kennedy stopped. It seemed as though there were no use in trying to trail them, for by the time we could turn around in the narrow road they would be gone.

However, it was a chance. Up and down the roads we had been trailing, now and then all but lost, and frequently getting out to study signposts and the road map in the light of our own headlights. This was at least a chance, and we turned and followed.

It was long past midnight, and I had for sometime been convinced that it was a wild-goose chase upon which Kennedy had taken me. We had been running almost continuously for a matter of some hours and our engine was missing badly.

As we approached the mansion of mystery, Kennedy pulled up at a point where the road widened out and crawled out from under the wheel, raising the hood to give the engine some adjustment.

As he stood there he looked out over the big field near the gambling house.

"Look!" he exclaimed in a whisper, pointing.

I followed the direction of his finger.

There, in the field, I could just make out the indistinct outlines of a moving figure.

It was a strange thing, inhuman, like nothing I had ever seen before. Its head was, as Speed had described it, pointed; its body unwieldy, almost clumsy.

Laboring Slowly.

Slowly the thing was laboring into the field.

We watched it.

What was it—man or beast? "Shall we go after it?" I asked, reaching mechanically for my automatic.

"Just a minute," cautioned Craig.

Quickly he leaned over and turned the adjustable electric spotlight just above the windshield. It flashed full across the field.

"Halt!" he cried, as the beam of light revealed the uncanny monster, none too distinct at the distance, even yet.

There was no answer.

Instead the figure turned, leaped out of the spotlight rays and began zig-zagging with surprising agility.

At the same time Kennedy fired, emptying his revolver after it.

Together we dashed forward off the wire, and began examining it.

Though we were unencumbered it had too great a start on us and by the time we came to the trampled place it had crossed the strip of field that separated it from a clump of woods, had gained the shadow of the trees and was gone.

We followed, although I felt pursuit was useless.

Suddenly we stopped sharply. A barbed wire fence separate the field from the clump of woods. Quickly Kennedy flashed a light up and down the fence.

There sticking on one of the bars of the wire he could see something fluttering. He pulled it off the wire and began examining it. I too, felt of it. It was a piece of cloth of most peculiar texture.

"What is it—a beast?" I asked.

"Beasts don't leave traces like this," he returned, fingering the cloth.

NOT A GHOSE.

"A phantom?"

"Shadows don't stop bullets."

"Then what is it?"

"This is some of the newly invented armor-cloth," he returned.

We let ourselves through the barbed wire carefully and started into the woods, but there was no trace.

At least we had part of the explanation.

It was an armored man who had made the attack on Clare and Speed the night before.

Who had it been?

There was only one thing to do and that was to wait for the report of Ravenal on his investigation at the mystery house in the morning.

CHAPTER 8.

The Tear Bullet.

Ravenal was bursting with information when he met us at the laboratory the next day.

I got into the place, all right," he reported eagerly. "And such a place you never dreamed of. I was introduced properly, too—found a friend at one of the clubs who knew about it. It cost me some money before I got away, but I think no one suspected me. I can get you in, now I think, if you want to go."

"I shall want to go there later," replied Kennedy. "Tell me—what happened? Did you see Breshkaya?"

"Yes," replied Ravenal in surprise. "How did you know, she was there?"

Kennedy did not answer at once.

"And did you see Werner?"

"Werner?"

"Yes, that tango tout, you remember—at least that was the name they gave him at the Crystal palace."

"No," returned Ravenal. "I didn't see him. Indeed, I don't believe he would fit in such a place as that. He might be a capper for it, I suppose, but hardly anything more."

"What of Breshkaya?" asked Kennedy.

"Between you and me," replied Ravenal slowly, "it's my opinion that she has been going the pace at a pretty lively clip. I don't believe she can afford to lose money at the rate I saw her lose it last night—not at least, unless there is someone with unlimited resources backing her."

He had scarcely finished when the door to the laboratory opened and Clare and Speed entered.

Anything New?

"Is there anything new?" inquired Clare eagerly.

"Not much, except what Mr. Ravenal has discovered out at Heaton Hills," returned Kennedy.

Clare turned to Ravenal, and soon they were chatting with animation as she drew from him the story of his experiences of the night before.

"What did you find out about Breshkaya?" inquired Kennedy the moment he was able to speak alone to Speed.

Speed cast a swift glance over at the corner where Clare was talking with Ravenal, and lowered his voice.

"Not very much," he replied, "but enough, perhaps. She seems to be very popular with some of the fast set. I tried to find out something about that gambling place. She must be a constant visitor—and they say that she has been a heavy loser, too. Of course, that may be only gossip; but I found out something else that bears it out. Evidently things are not so prosperous with her, as I thought. She's going to take an engagement to dance in the new revue at the Crystal palace. I don't think she'd leave the stage for that if she didn't need the money badly."

Kennedy considered. Breshkaya prosperous was one thing, Breshkaya in debt was quite another. What might she not be capable of doing to recoup her losses at the gambling place?

An Ominous Silence.

"Do you know," remarked Speed, still under his breath, but nervous, "this silence on the part of the Black Menace, whoever it is, is ominous? I've been wondering whether it may not mean some new devilry. I wish we could forestall it. Why can't you and Jameson and myself go out there and watch tonight?"

he whispered, glancing over at Clare to make sure that she did not hear.

"Good," agreed Kennedy. "Then tonight we watch together. Don't tell a soul about it—not even Clare."

Speed nodded.

A few moments later Kennedy executed himself and left us. Ravenal left a few moments later to go to his studio-office and finally with a secret nod to me, Speed persuaded Clare to return home, urging her to remain there where it now seemed she was most safe.

I did not see Kennedy again until after dinner that night. It was dark when Speed joined us before the laboratory door.

"Does Clare suspect anything?" Craig asked.

Speed negated. "I don't think she heard," he replied confidentially. "The last thing I made her promise was that she would not leave the house."

As we three crowded into the seat that had been built for two I felt something bulging in Kennedy's pocket.

"What's that?" I asked.

"A new gun I succeeded in finding after looking all over the city," he returned briefly.

We shot out over the town, across the bridge and again through the splendid road to Heaton Hills.

Once more we found ourselves in the neighborhood of the mansion of mystery.

"I think," decided Kennedy, "that here's a good place for observation."

We pulled up in the shadow of a bend in the road on a rising spot of ground.

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND BOOZE.

The federal supreme court has ruled that foreign ships may not bring beverage alcohol within the three-mile zone. Five foreign governments, Britain, France, Spain, Italy, and Holland, have protested to the American department of state. Britain asserts that under international law the United States supreme court has not the power to interfere with the stores or rations of foreign ships even in American ports. The British view would limit the court's jurisdiction to commodities designed, or perhaps reasonably likely, to be imported into the United States. The other four nations base their protests on the inconveniences caused them by the court's ruling.

The American treasury department, which makes the regulations for the enforcement of the prohibition act, has hit upon a solution by constituting itself an interpreter of the supreme court—an interpreter of the interpreter, so to speak. The treasury department decides that the liquor among the stores of foreign ships is to be considered part of the medicinal supplies of the ships, and so permissible under the Volstead law and the supreme court's understanding of the purport of that law.

Obviously this is an evasion, though helpful, and like all evasions partakes of dishonesty. It is an anomaly to enforce prohibition, a great moral experiment, in a manner tainted with dishonesty. Obviously, too, the supreme court decision creates a difficult situation, involving international complications. Taking it for granted that the supreme court's interpretation of the law is correct, the trouble must lie with the wording of the law itself.

Why not eliminate possible dishonesty in the enforcement by amending the law so as to obviate the grounds for the supreme court's ruling? It would be but a simple undertaking.

With Lights Dimmed.

Here we waited with lights dimmed. Our senses alert to catch any unwonted sounds. Each of us concentrated his attention in a different direction.

It was a quiet night, which seemed to add to our suppressed excitement. The sound of the wind in the trees added to the tenseness of the country darkness.

Once the quietness was broken by the purring of the motor on the road beside us.

A car shot past containing only a single figure, a woman.

"Clare!" exclaimed Speed involuntarily. "She can't be kept away. We might better have brought her with us."

Kennedy jammed on the starter. It would never do to let this girl be alone in this neighborhood at night. It was foolhardy.

We gathered speed.

The moon was just rising, and there was sufficient light to see the car as it wound along the road, now and then coming into the moonlight.

Clare's car turned off the road to another between two fields. It dipped down over the brow of a hill ahead and we followed.

As we nosed our way up to the crest we could see that she had stopped, and was looking about as though not quite sure where she was.

"Look!" exclaimed Speed, leaning forward.

We strained our eyes in the blackness, where the moonlight had not yet struck.

In the field to the right was the very figure we had seen the night before.

A hundred half-formed ideas rioted through my head.

Had there been some new plot?

Could Clare have been cleverly enticed here in our absence for the purpose of being lured into danger while those who must have helped her were supposed to be safely sidetracked?

A Sudden Crash.

Speed shouted, as Kennedy stepped on the gas and sent the car hurtling along for every ounce of power in it. As he shouted I leaned over and looked again. The weird figure was advancing menacingly full at Clare.

There was a crash.

Kennedy had driven the car right through a rail fence and into the ploughed field the shortest cut, as the road wound down the hill.

In the still night I heard the crack of a pistol. There was a spit of fire in the darkness. Clare had fired at the incoming figure.

But her bullet had no more effect than if it had been a pith-ball.

Still the thing advanced on her, evidently oblivious of our approach. Another moment and it would be upon her.

Speed shouted. But it was of no use. In spite of everything, it was evident that we could not get to Clare in time. Nor was it any use to shoot against the thing in its bulletproof cloth.

(To Be Continued Next Week.)

The European pot is boiling. Ask in your prayers that we be kept out of it. The Greek fleet threatens the Dardanelles. Yesterday the British Admiral Brock, commanding the Mediterranean fleet, started for the Dardanelles, a flotilla of destroyers following.

Mustapha Kemal, with 50,000 men, is ready to start another war if the Greeks cross the Maritza river.

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REVOLT IN BULGARIA ARMY WINS

Sofia, Bulgaria, June 2.—The Bulgarian government was overthrown at three o'clock this morning by an organization of reserve officers supported by the active army.

All the ministers were placed under arrest. A government has been formed by all the opposition parties, with the exception of the communists. The movement is supported by the provincial garrisons.

The Bulgarian peasant government headed by Alexander Stamboulsky as premier, was first formed in October, 1919, and has continued in office since that time, with some changes in the cabinet personnel. The present movement originated in the popular resentment throughout the country against the war policy pursued by former King Ferdinand, who threw the country in on the side of Germany and the central powers.

The Stamboulsky government took a strong stand against the members of the former ministries whom it accused of aiding in the war plans of the ex-king, and brought a number of the former ministers to trial.

Considerable sentiment however, developed in favor of the imprisoned statesmen and some of them were returned to parliamentary seats in the last election.

The political situation has been in an unsettled shape for some time and several revolutionary attempts have been reported, the latest only last

THOSE FOCAL INFECTIONS

By H. Addington Bruce

Impressive evidence of the great variety of human ills that may result from so-called focal infections of the teeth, tonsils, nose, and sinuses of the face is presented by a Boston physician, Dr. Oliver Ames Lothrop, in a paper contributed to the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal. In the hope of assisting thereby to the alleviation of suffering, I gladly give additional publicity to Dr. Lothrop's findings.

They are based in the main on the experience of persons long burdened with disease symptoms that remained unrelieved because, until they consulted Dr. Lothrop, there had been no suspicion that focal infection might have something to do with their troubles. And certainly in several instances it is not surprising that the possibility of focal infection was overlooked.

Dr. Lothrop tells, for example, of a man of sixty who, for nearly forty years, had been hard of hearing. There were times when he was stone deaf. It was during one of these times that examination by X-ray and transillumination showed that both antra—the large sinuses of the cheeks—were seats of infection.

Treatment by drainage and irrigation of the antra was at once begun, and immediately an improvement of the hearing set in. Several years have passed and there has been no return of the deafness of forty years' standing.

In another case, a middle-aged man was troubled, not by deafness, but by a chronic eruption of the skin. This was aggravated by the eating of certain foods, notably lobster. But abstinence from such foods only mitigated the eruption instead of completely clearing it away.

No remedies gave more than temporary relief until, it being found that the patient's tonsils were in poor condition, an operation was performed for their removal. "Within twenty-four hours after the removal of his tonsils," Dr. Lothrop reports, "his skin was all cleared up, and has remained so for over a year." Also the once offending foods offend no longer.

A woman, blind in the left eye for more than a year, regained her vision following an operation for the removal of pus from an infected frontal sinus. In two other cases falling eyesight was restored through, in one case, a tonsil operation, and, in the second, drainage of an infected antrum.

"Neurasthenia," characterized by chilly sensations, fatigue, obscure aches and pains, and general nervousness, was overcome in the case of one woman by extraction of teeth having apical abscesses. Even more spectacular were the results obtained through tonsillectomy performed on a woman twenty-two years old.

For a long period this young woman had been afflicted with epileptic attacks, occurring both by day and by night. Her general health had failed markedly, and altogether the outlook for her was dismal in the extreme.

The discovery that her tonsils were seats of infection was made by a ment meteorologist.

SIoux CITY SHRINERS TO RETURN SATURDAY MORNING
Sioux City Shriners who attended the annual conclave at Washington this week are scheduled to arrive at the Milwaukee depot here at 11:30 o'clock Saturday morning.

VALUABLE NECKLACE MISSING
London, June 2.—A necklace said to be valued at 25,000 pounds, the property of Mrs. William E. Corey, formerly Mabelle Gilman, an American actress, disappeared from her apartment in the Carlton hotel Wednesday evening.

Scotland Yard detectives believe the necklace was misplaced or lost, and that it was not stolen.

There are mediums that deceive themselves and the public; there are mediums that deceive the public only. There are no mediums that talk to ghosts, or bring messages from dead people.

Spiritualists say it wasn't fair to have the magician there to expose the tricks. No scientist would object to the presence of any magician. You couldn't prove the radio a fake with all the magicians of the world. Truth operates, no matter who is watching.

One European correspondent says Belgium is getting tired of her trip into the Ruhr, hand in hand with France. It is costing too much; there isn't enough in it—money or coal.

Another correspondent says a Belgian statesman suggests seizing and operating German railroads and other natural monopolies. The people will have to use them and pay the fares demanded. That sounds reasonable, but it isn't.

They would pay in marks, and the higher the fare the lower the marks would go. If you want a hen to lay eggs, make her physically healthy.

If you want a nation to pay reparations, make it economically healthy. You can't squeeze eggs out of a hen by