

# The Black Menace

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

Nearing the front porch, but still able to see about the side of the house, I saw that some distance back of it was an old barn. There I could see that Kennedy paused just for an instant to leave Clare in the shelter of the barn, unwilling to have her in the actual fighting which he thought would take place when we all reached the house.

There were several cars about the side of the house, showing that there were the usual afternoon visitors. But we did not stop.

On my end I managed to break through a French window that opened out on the side porch, while I could hear Speed battering at the front door, already barred to him. In the rear Kennedy was attacking a stout back door.

NO ONE THERE

The French windows bulged in before our blows and we found ourselves in the room where the roulette wheel had been in operation. I had expected an immediate attack. Instead there did not seem to be a soul in the house. Besides, the roulette wheel was gone. Several other articles of furniture which might have proved of an indiscriminating nature were smashed. I knew that it was all merely a blind; that they must have seen us coming.

Speed dashed in through the central hall at the moment that Kennedy, coming from the rear, joined us. Somehow it all seemed too easy. The silence was ominous.

We dashed from room to room. Everything had been wrecked or removed, evidently in the greatest haste. Had some one tipped them off, after all? Where were Mme. Rone and the suave Jacques?

Suddenly there was a violent explosion and a radiator in the living room blew up as if it had been a bomb. Not a second later another in the hall shattered, scattering flame far and wide—as from the unjoined end of a pipe a jet of gas apparently shot out in a long tongue.

We retreated to the middle of the room in which we were, as amid flying splinters and pieces of steel another radiator exploded. One after another they went, like a bombardment and instantly almost every door and window was a curtain of flame.

"Must have connected the gas main somehow with the steam heating and wired the thing—like a set of bombs," cried Kennedy to us from the hall. "Get to the windows where there are radiators—quick—jump."

There was no need to urge haste as the booming of the radiators bombs all over the house continued, surrounding us with a veritable curtain of fire. Floors and ceilings were shattered, the air was thick with plaster dust and smoke. Everywhere was wreck and ruin. And above all were the licking, hungry flames for the old rebuilt colonial house was but a huge piece of timber, dried out by years and ready at a touch to flare up.

Speed on the second floor, was cut off from the stairs as Kennedy and I gained the lawn.

"Throw down a rug—blanket—anything," shouted Craig.

Just as Speed turned from the window we heard a scream down near the barn. In spite of his peril Speed paused in the window pointing.

It was from Clare, and as we looked we could see several loaded figures running from the barn. They had seized her and were bearing her off, struggling but no longer screaming, as a gag was forced over her mouth. Evidently there had been a secret passage from the cellar of the House of Mystery to this barn, and we had overlooked it. They had waited long enough for Craig to pass the barn and become involved in the fire trap that had been set in the house against such a raid. Then they had darted out, seized Clare, and now were away, with her.

Above us was Speed, caught in the flames which were already mounting about the window.

We could not leave him to perish there miserably. Nor could we stand still and allow Clare to be carried off bodily, no one knew by whom or where.

Chapter 17

The Gray Cruiser

The fire was gaining rapidly

on Speed, but he stood in the window, almost fascinated at his helplessness, as he witnessed the capture of Clare.

"Hurry," shouted Kennedy, "Get a rug—something, anything that's big."

Speed closed his eyes, held his breath, and fought his way back into the flames and smoke of the room. A moment later he emerged staggering and gasping, half blinded, and threw down to us a partly blazing rug of grass-cloth.

We seized it and stamped out the fire. Kennedy grabbed one end, waving at me.

"Get the other corner, Walter," he cried, then as he caught sight of a couple of the operatives, shouted, "Here—you fellows, take the other corner."

Thus we improvised a net. Standing in the window, Speed leaped into the rug. Although the impact of his weight bore down one side until it almost touched the ground and his feet went through the other side, it broke his fall sufficiently.

Kennedy dropped his end now intent only on the rescue of Clare, which had been delayed even now too long. Over the lawn he dashed away, after the retreating figures bearing Clare. INTO THE WOODS

Speed and I followed closely and as we ran we could see the group of four or five disappearing into the clump of woods, and making for a direction opposite from that in which Kennedy had approached in his car.

Some one in the neighboring house must have seen the smoke and flames from the House of Mystery and telephoned the news to the local fire department, for at that moment there burst upon the still air of the country-side the weird windings up and down the scale of steam siren at the fire-house and power plant. It was sufficient to wake even the volunteer fire department, and we were content to leave the house now to their tender mercies, as well as to those of the detective bureau operatives whom Kennedy told off to stay as we wallowed after our fugitives.

Fortunately the clump of woods was not so thick or undergrown that it completely concealed them as they fled through it, with Clare held firmly and forced along between two of them.

As we ran we could see that they had gained a little private garage on the back road and had seized a car which was evidently kept there for emergency. Kennedy began signalling frantically on a police whistle three sharp blasts repeated as often as he could above the grating echoes of the siren.

"They're off," fumed Speed watching them helplessly as their car swung into the road and started away, gathering power. "And there isn't a chance that anyone will stop them on this road, coming to the fire."

Kennedy said nothing, but waited with outward confidence in himself as the valuable minutes passed while the car he had come in, and the road, with the driver alert, came sweeping down to us.

Speed and I leaped into the back, while Kennedy directed five of the detectives to join us, crowding in the limited space. He himself swung into the front seat with the driver, preferring to let the men who understood this particular motor best handle it.

A GOOD START

We were away in an instant and as we sped along Kennedy drew his gun and began examining it hastily to make sure that it was alright. Speed and I and the rest did the same, for we were all well armed, and as I looked about I was sure that if there was going to be any gun-play we preserved as fine a band of gunmen as could be desired outside of a moving picture.

They had a start of us of some minutes but the road was fairly straight and there was little reason that they would get off it, at least for some miles, for the upper road was the more travelled and was especially likely to be congested as the Heaton Williams turned out for the great event of a local fire.

Our car sped along, in spite of the weight it was carrying, nor

did the driver, who was getting into the spirit of the chase, neglect to take any chances in passing the few farmers' teams we met or in shooting past the wretched dirt crossroads.

At last we came to the brow of the hill. Over the valley and almost at the brow of the next hill, we could see the car. It was some encouragement to know that we were gaining, if only by a few yards, and at least on the trail.

The occupants of the car ahead, looking back, saw us and it seemed to act as a stimulus to them. They were getting every inch of speed out of their engine, as we were out of our own.

One thing that gave me an air of relief was that no longer were they able to elude us. We had got close enough for that.

"Going in the direction of North Harbor, by Jove," muttered Speed recognizing some of the landmarks as they flashed past.

"Where the Black Menace led you and Clare?" I inquired.

"Yes," he cried, "only not by this road."

REELING OFF THE MILES

It was evidently their destination, for we were already far out of the flat country of the middle of the island and among the hills and good roads of the north shore, bearing ever nearer to Long Island Sound.

Past estate after estate we reeled off the miles, now and then skirting near a village, but for the most part keeping away from the main arteries of traffic. The Black Menace, for by this time we were convinced that it was he and his emissaries who were leading us the chase, had no mind to involve himself in any stretch of road that might furnish delay. Instead, he was playing for any opportunity that chance might offer to slip away on a side road, double and throw us off the trail. But we clung to him tenaciously and even continued our slight gain. If nothing went wrong with the motor we might even expect to overhaul him the longer the chase lasted.

Although we clung to them we seemed never to get within such distance that from the careening car they offered even a fairly good shot. I felt sure, though, that as we approached the village of North Harbor they would be forced to slacken speed and then at least we might have a chance to get up with them.

And, indeed, I was right, for as we left the large estates and came to the suburban developments with the small houses which denoted the approach of a town, it seemed as if the chase was really becoming too hot for them.

Craig exclaimed, as just this side of the town, their car veered away and down toward the head of the harbor, glimpses of which from the last hill-top we had caught.

It was the chance we sought and at once we opened on them with a volley carefully directed at the lowest part of the car and aimed at the tires. Speed watched nervously and I noticed that he was the only one who did not fire. He said nothing, but I could see that Clare's safety was the sole thought in his mind.

There was no need of another volley. From the car itself we could hear an explosion, as though one of our bullets had been an explosive shell. The car ahead swerved. One of the rear tires, by lucky chance, had been hit and had exploded.

NO NEED OF BRAKES

Off the road the driver of the car deliberately shered it, into a clump of bushes, bumping on the flat shoe.

It was now only a matter of seconds for us to sweep down and follow the deep-cut tire tracks into the self-same bushes. Nor did we stop for fear of an answering volley.

Our driver had no need of brakes, as the car plowed through the soil up to the hubs, the engine stalled. Ahead of us, only a few feet, we could see the other car.

We leaped out and piled after the abandoned motor, Speed and Kennedy leading, with a shout of triumph. In the body of the car was Clare herself, half fainting.

Speed jumped into the car and bent over Clare as she lay huddled on the back seat where her captors had abandoned her, in fear that we might overtake them if they delayed to carry her.

"They seized me—I tried to break away—but there were five of them," she murmured.

"What did they look like? Who were they?" questioned

Kennedy. "Could you recognize any of them?"

She shook her head. "They were masked and in long coats—with the collars pulled up over their faces."

"Was there one that looked like that Monsieur Jacques?" asked Speed.

"Perhaps—I cannot tell."

"Which way did they go toward the harbor," queried Craig.

"Yes...I heard them say something about a boat."

Clare was reviving in the excitement of the rescue. We pressed forward, leaving Speed with her, his arm about her, and helping her to follow more slowly.

The trees thinned out and we saw that we were coming to what was a sort of a cove opening into the harbor head itself. IN THE BOAT

As we approached, it was evident that our delay with Clare had given them just the seconds they needed. The Black Menace had hidden a boat in the cove. It was high tide and he was having no trouble in getting away, which might not have been the case when the tide was low uncovering much of the cove as flats of mud.

Already he was in the boat, the engine had been started, the anchor hauled up, and he was gathering headway as he approached the entrance to the cove, rounding out into the harbor and away.

We stood on the shore and made the party out. We saw that it was the same gray cruiser which he had used the time when he had escaped from Clare and Speed.

There was only one thing to do and that was to find another boat in which we could pursue. Yet down here, away from the activity of the town, there were no boats at anchor. We stood on the shore helpless.

Out across the water, however, we could hear a speed-boat which a boy was handling, evidently just to see what he could do with her. Kennedy raised his gun and fired a volley into the air, to attract his attention. Then we all waved and together sent up a shout at him.

He did not understand, but evidently for the lack of the thing, brought his scotter about and headed it at us.

Further and further the gray cruiser melted into the distance, turning the point and about to disappear around it into the Sound bearing to the east whence there were more ways of escape.

"What do you want?" shouted the boy through a megaphone. Kennedy clapped his hands to his mouth to megaphone back. "Rent us the boat—name your own price."

The boat shot in as close to the shore as he could without grounding. Kennedy did not wait, but waded out nor did he stop to dicker over money. The rest of us followed, Speed and I between us carrying Clare out to the boat.

At last we were ready and our boat shot out across the water, cutting the waves like a knife. MORE AND MORE EXCITED

Not much was said, but our boat was indeed the fastest of the two, for as we rounded the point we could see the gray cruiser not so far ahead.

Speed grew more and more excited as we headed after it and it became evident that we were gaining. Nor could I blame him. Would the Black Menace repeat his former performance and try to shoot us up—perhaps not hit the gas tank this time, but one of us.

This time if he attempted any shooting we were better prepared than Jack and Clare had been alone. We were more heavily armed, and with more people. In such a contest I felt sure that the Black Menace must inevitably be brought down himself.

"If it's a race he's looking for," cried the boy gleefully, "my boat outlasts his."

"It's a race, all right," encouraged Kennedy. "And if you beat him—we'll all make up a purse."

The boy handled his boat splendidly. We overhauled the gray cruiser gradually, and as we drew closer we could see that it was a low, slim craft, not of the high-decked type, but with a small hunting cabin in which evidently one of the party had taken refuge.

The lack Menace veered off, but it was of no use. We were plainly overtaking him now.

I saw one figure duck down under the stern. We covered

ourselves as best we could, expecting him to fire.

Kennedy did not wait. His gun cracked and we could see that the bullet had made a hit on the coaming of the boat.

The Black Menace, or at least the lone figure visible redoubled his efforts. Was it another Coston signal gun and flare he was preparing to aim at us?

Chapter 18.

The Smoke Screen.

As our boat forged ahead, we waited, expecting some devilish attack, either shooting or perhaps a bomb. Instead, the Black Menace rose for an instant over the side of his boat and threw overboard what looked like a small square box.

Instantly I thought that, perhaps, he was trying to lighten the draught of his cruiser, especially so when, a few yards ahead he rose again and threw over another box.

"Look!" exclaimed Clare quickly.

The water about the spot where he had thrown over the first box had begun actually smoking, throwing up a thick white impenetrable haze, and, as we looked, from the second box another cloud of haze arose.

The wind took the two rapidly spreading clouds and wafted them together while the heavy haze mushroomed out over the water.

Other boxes must have been thrown overboard, for the smoke became thicker, spreading in all directions, but hanging low. We ran into it almost before we knew it and found that now we were going blindly ahead as in a maze, our only sense of direction being the compass.

(Continued Next Week)

Become Better Americans

Frank Aydellotte in Scribner's magazine.

One of the most important things which a Rhodes scholar gets from his Oxford experience is a changed attitude toward his own country.

A Rhodes scholar always returns to the United States, a better American than he was when he went over.

The fears which were widely expressed when the Rhodes award was made public, that three years at Oxford would make British subjects, or at any rate Anglomaniacs out of our American boys, have proved to be without foundation. Out of about 600 Rhodes scholars who have been elected since the scheme started in 1904, only one has become a British subject and the others cannot be told from American college graduates who have not enjoyed that experience by any tendency to use the English accent or a monocle.

Practically all the Rhodes scholars have returned to the United States to live. A few have gone abroad as members of the diplomatic corps of the United States, or as representatives of American newspapers or business firms. The largest single group living abroad are those who have become American missionaries in China, and perhaps no Rhodes scholars are better placed to serve their country than are these.

The Rhodes scholar comes back a better American than he was when he went over, but he comes back less of a jingo. The jingo, like every other blusterer, is a man who is at heart not sure of his own cause. The attitude of the United States toward England has been for a century one of sensitiveness to criticism, of resentment of fancied slights on our manners and culture, of a disposition to undervalue those intellectual and artistic achievements in which Europe has excelled us, and to overvalue those political and material goods in which we have excelled Europe. The American has often carried a chip on his shoulder because he was scarcely conscious in some points of his own inferiority.

The American Rhodes scholar sees that he need take that attitude no longer. The energy and idealism of the people of the United States, and the good fortune of her position, have brought America to a place where she need no longer envy other nations their points of excellence, where her cue should be to thank God for her own blessings, to admire frankly and to study carefully the best of other countries in order, if possible, to add all good things to her own heritage.

EVERYBODY'S GOVERNMENT.

Elihu Root.

A French nobleman could at + tend the court of Louis XIV + or retire to his castle, as he + chose, without discredit; for + under that system of govern- + ment the question was wheth- + er a certain man or certain + other men conducted the gov- + ernment. The essential fea- + ture of the present condition + is that the burden and duty of + government rest upon all men, + and no man can retire to his + business or his pleasure and + ignore his right to share in + government without shirking + a duty.

South Dakota Goes in For

From the South Dakota Huronite

A strawberry club for boys and girls living on the farms near Spearfish is being planned by the Lawrence County Farm Bureau. The members start with a plot of Progressive Everbearing strawberries ten rods square containing 500 plants. Mr. Ford of the State College at Brookings will obtain the best plants available for the use of the club.

A Good Time Expected

From the Atlanta Constitution

What a good time the summer vacationists will have when they come home to "rest up!"

Ten pins were invented in the fourteenth century. The Washburn Handkerchiefs were first manufactured in Scotland in 1743.

## ILLEGAL FISHING GIVEN HARD JOLT

### Aurelia, Ia., Men Caught Catching Catfish From Under Rocks At Storm Lake

Storm Lake, Ia., July 23—Three fishermen from Aurelia were arrested at midnight Friday by Deputy Fish and Game Warden Dan Fuller who caught them in the act of pulling catfish out from under rocks along the shores of the lake with their hands.

Mr. Fuller had been suspicious that some of this illegal fishing had been going on and he determined to stop it. From the Swallow banks, he watched the Aurelia trio until he was convinced that they were violating the laws. He and C. M. Boldt then descended upon the anglers, found them with eight big cat fish in their possession and placed them under arrest.

Justice of the Peace Charles Aikin was summoned to his office. Here Fuller filed information charging that Ralph Troeger, Walter Meiniking and W. H. Swenson, all of Aurelia were "taking cat fish from the waters of Storm Lake from among the rocks unlawfully with their hands."

They pleaded guilty and Justice Aikin assessed each man \$10 and costs, amounting to \$14.35.

## THREE GOVERNORS TO BE PRESENT

### Kendall, Preus and Bryan To Attend Ceremonies at Military Training Camp at Des Moines

Des Moines, Ia., July 23—General John J. Pershing, Maj. Gen. George B. Duncan, of the Seventh Army corps area; Governor C. W. Bryan, of Nebraska, Gov. J. A. O. Praus, of Minnesota, and Gov. N. E. Kendall, of Iowa, will be honor guests at the citizen's military training camp at Fort Des Moines next month, it is announced.

The governors of Nebraska and Minnesota and Iowa will attend the camp on August 17, "Governors' Day." Pershing and Maj. Gen. Duncan will be here August 23 and review the students.

BIDS RECEIVED FOR

NEW LE MARS SCHOOL

Le Mars, Ia., July 23. (Special)—Bids for the construction of the new high school and grade school building were opened Wednesday afternoon. C. F. Buettner of the firm of Buettner and Arnold, architects of Sioux City who drew the plans and specifications for the building read the bids and also the various deductions and additions.

Twelve contractors and construction firms had filed bids on the general construction of the building. Five bids were filed for the plumbing, heating and ventilating, while eight firms made bids for the electrical wiring.

The Devereux and Olson Construction of Minneapolis, presented the low bid for the general construction work. The original bid was \$108,571, with certain deductions and additions on the various alterations specified in the plans. The Mathey Plumbing Co., of Le Mars made the low bid for the plumbing, heating and ventilating. The sum asked is \$24,746, subject to deductions and additions for alterations. The Consumers Electric Co., of Carroll made the low bid for the electrical wiring in the new building, the offer being \$3,754.

More than a hundred representatives of construction firms and others interested were at the meeting of the school board at which the bids were opened.

AUTO SMASHUP IS

CAUSE OF SHOOTING

Fort Madison, Ia., July 23—A mysterious shooting, climax of an automobile accident near here is being investigated by police while one motorist is in the hospital and another under arrest. Charles Kessington, Salem, Mo., was the injured man. He was shot through the jaw after an attempt to pass another machine had resulted in a smash-up. Kessington was driving on when the shot was fired. C. W. Smith, Salina, Mo., driver of the other car, was held in the county jail with his wife and son, while police tried to clear up the shooting. No weapon was found by the officers.

RELATIVES MADE GOOD

FOR HER BAD CHECKS

Council Bluffs, Ia., July 23. (Special) Miss Anna M. Ferner, who checks for \$1,000 upon her employer, an Omaha insurance man, left today with her parents for their home near Shelby, an uncle having made good the checks and the banks offering the girl a chance to be good.

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, English militant suffragist, is making an automobile tour of a month in northern Ontario, to make Canada the "cradle of a stronger race" through social hygiene education.

MAIL POUCHES ARE

STOLEN AT CEDAR FALLS

Cedar Falls, Ia., July 27.—Thieves, believed by police to be amateurs, stole three pouches of first-class mail from the local postoffice early Friday morning. The robbers gained entrance by prying open a window during a clerk's absence. No registered mail is believed to be missing.

WASHTA NEWSPAPER

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Washta, Ia., July 28. (Special)—Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Robinson have purchased the Washta Journal. G. N. Crane, formerly part owner, will retire.