

The Black Menace

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

While Kennedy traced over rapidly the history of the Black Menace I could see that every eye in the room was fixed on him. Just how much did he know? What was he aiming at? Kennedy resumed, drawing slowly from his pocket a paper. "I have here a cablegram received tonight in answer to an inquiry of mine to the perfect of police in Paris. It concerns a famous band of criminals which was thought by him to have been finally broken up—La Menace Noire, as it came to be called—a band of international blackmailers and swindlers."

I could feel an almost electric start in the air at the very mention of the Black Menace.

Kennedy bent over the record on the table. We could see that a line of ink was being traced on the ruled paper by the pen. But to none of us as far as I knew, except himself did it convey any idea.

"This," he remarked casually, "is what is known as the pneumograph. It shows the actual intensity of the emotions by recording their efforts on the heart and lungs together. The truth can literally be tapped by this little nerve detective, even when no confession can be extracted. A moment's glance here at these lines traced by each rise and fall of the chest, each beat of the heart, can tell an expert more than words."

He paused. Was Breshkaya breaking down under the combined influence of the drug and the surroundings that Kennedy had carefully staged?

Chapter 20

The Gorgon

"My story," resumed Kennedy, speaking in a measured tone, and still holding the cablegram which seemed to possess a peculiar fascination as a key to unlock the mystery, "would more properly begin at Monte Carlo—in the Casino, or rather the garden about the famous Casino."

He turned to Clare. "It was there that your guardian, Martin Dale, first became involved in the web of dissipation and intrigue, as so many wealthy Americans abroad do."

Clare watched him with wide eyes and Speed leaned forward, dividing his attention between Kennedy and the girl.

"The French Department of Justice," continued Kennedy, "for its own protection keeps very close watch on such things, for the operation of many foreign criminals is like a far-drawn web, from Paris to Nice, to the Riviera, to Monte Carlo—but always, as in the case of the Black Menace and Martin Dale, centering finally in Paris. But the Parisian police are no scandal mongers. That would never do. For what would become of the Paris which is not France, but the playground of the world, otherwise?"

He glanced at Speed. "There too," he added, "was involved Ripley Granby whom New York knew only outwardly as the most estimable of cultured men. That is another, though related, story."

There was no sound now from any of his auditors, no interruption to prevent Kennedy from leading along his exposure in his own way.

A WILD INSTINCT

"How are we to account for it? Only by the well-known fact that in many men—and many women, too—there lurks a wild, deminondaine instinct sometimes, as Freud has shown so conclusively, almost unknown to themselves. With those whom wealth enables to get away from the restraint of the society to which they have by training been accustomed to bow, this wild instinct often breaks loose and runs rampant."

"Thus it came about that in Paris, Martin Dale fell under the power of this desperate gang—La Menace Noire, as it was called. There was in the gang, the decoy, a dancer, Celie Breton, whose career from her childhood as the daughter of a conchierge, ruined by a profligate artist and drifting to a low stratum of the Latin Quarter, is known to the Paris police. Celie Breton captivated Dale, who had cast aside restraints which, in New York, would have prevented such a meeting."

Kennedy paused and we knew

that Celie Breton was no other than the "Russian" dancer, Breshkaya, before us.

"Later," he resumed, "Dale's affections were transferred to another grisette, Cezanne. But Cezanne was not playing fair with the Black Menace. In her ambitious mind rose a splendid dream out of captivating this wealthy American. She would actually become his wife, return to New York with him—take him away from the Black Menace—for herself. Clever though Martin Dale was, he was but a plaything of these criminals."

"Cezanne planned a trip to Monte Carlo where she hoped away from the influence of Paris and the Band, to capture her millionaire. She captured him—and in a wild debauch they were married."

SHE LISTENS FASCINATED

"In the garden of the Casino, that spot in which innumerable tragedies have been enacted, one night, Cezanne and Dale were walking. Suddenly they were confronted by the jealous Breton girl, who had followed from Paris. There was a shot—and another."

As Kennedy amplified the bare facts that the cablegram had repeated, Breshkaya listened, fascinated, her eyes now flaming with an unnatural light. Clare drew closer to Speed as though for protection against some foul hand of the underworld stretched out and threatening her.

"It is a matter of police record," nodded Kennedy, now directly facing Breshkaya.

"The shots were fired, Cezanne was found dead. Near her was a little ivory-handled pistol. It was known to have belonged to Celie Breton. But she had fled—disappeared. Dale suddenly was shocked to his senses. And for the sake of the wealthy American, the affair was hushed up."

Kennedy paused, still watching Breshkaya.

"But here is the thing, Celie Breton," he shot out suddenly, "which you do not know, but that is also a matter of police record over there, both at Monte Carlo and in Paris."

Again he paused. Breshkaya's breath came fast as she struggled with her weakness.

Unknown, to you another person had followed from Paris—was in the garden at the same time—bent on the same mission—that of removing Cezanne for her treachery and terrifying the wealthy American into submission. That person was the head of the gang—the Apache.

Kennedy took a step closer to the pneumograph, bent over it, began studying the ruled tape.

"There is a record given to the police since by a doctor at Monte Carlo, that he dressed a wound in the arm of a man that night. His description and that of the police tally—Raoul Rogue. Therefore, on that fatal night in the garden of the Casino, when the two shots were fired, almost together, the one you thought came from either Cezanne or Dale in the darkness was actually fired by your master criminal—Raoul."

Kennedy turned full on Breshkaya. She had raised herself in bed, a lovely figure now in her dishevelled pallor. Criminal though she was, one could not not help seeing in her what American jurymen proverbially see—the woman whom fortune and society had sinned against, somehow. Wild, burning light flashed in her eyes for an instant—then there seemed to overcome her a nameless terror again. She sank back.

TWO SHOTS FIRED

"You understand what I mean?" enforced Kennedy, loathe to let his advantage slip, as he tried to hold her with the tense tone of his revelations.

"Two shots were fired. One lodged in the arm of Raoul. Therefore, it could not have been your shot that killed—his own. For years he has known this—has never told. What, then becomes of the grip that this man has held over you ever since?"

Breshkaya gazed about at us wildly. Rapidly I could reconstruct what was passing in her mind.

Not a murderess, after all! Kennedy waited.

Evidently he had planned this to be a breaking point at which, free from the death terror of the

law, she might release herself forever by coming to the aid of the law.

Her lips quivered. But not an intelligent sound came from them. It was fear—not confession. Even yet the terror was upon her.

Kennedy slapped down the telegraph.

"The last sentence of the message read," he exclaimed, "Find the man who was Raoul the Red, examine his left forearm, and the sear will tell."

I could see that the tracing of the pneumograph was now violently agitated.

I glanced about at Rene and Jacques. Stirred as they were, I could make nothing of them. I glanced again at Breshkaya. So powerful was the terror of the Black Menace that even now, in the face of freedom, fear still sealed her lips.

MERELY A TOOL

But what fear could do with lips, it could not do with the heart and lungs that were hidden from our eyes, but not from the eye of science.

Suddenly I realized that in centering my attention on Breshkaya, I had missed the whole trend of Kennedy's exposure. Breshkaya was but a tool in the hands of someone else. Back of her stood the Black Menace.

Who was this dastardly figure? Were we as far as ever from discovering?

In fear, Clare clutched wildly at Speed's arm.

Kennedy bent over again, still studying the pneumograph tracing, a quiet smile playing over his face.

"Miss Claremont," he reassured casually, "I think we'll be able to recover from a safety deposit vault at least enough of your fortune to make a sizeable dowry."

He tapped the pneumograph again.

"Strangest part of all this strange story—as it is revealed here by the emotions recorded—this Black Menace hiding here in New York for years, has an unparalleled opportunity to prey upon the weaknesses of American society—had been welcomed almost as a moment of society—entrusted with society's inmost secrets—and never suspected, although he has for months."

The lights of the room flashed out. In the semi-darkness of the street light, shining at us through the window, I could make out a dim figure over by the wall switch.

A woman screamed—Breshkaya's voice.

The figure hurled itself at the first.

One of the police flashed a pocket bull's-eye, and its rays fell on an upraised arm, clutching a gun.

The gun discharged wild in the air.

But in the drifting smoke and the rays of light I could see the coat-sleeve pulled back from the forearm, the shirt ripped.

On the forearm was a deep ploughed scar of a bullet.

I flung myself forward, just as the arm wrenched down.

"Never mind, Walter," panted Kennedy. "I have the bracelets on him now."

The lights flashed on again, and I saw at last the Black Menace—head of a band of international blackmailers who had fled to New York at the outbreak of the war to prey on American millionaires already compromised abroad—Raoul the Red, who for months had failed to catch himself—Ravenol.

THE END

CALLS COSMETICS WASTE OF MONEY

Rubbing and Massaging necessary for Use of "Beautifiers" Produces Real Benefit, Declares Professor

COLUMBUS, OHIO.—That cosmetics "are a waste of money" and that just as beneficial results are obtained by massaging the face with pure water as by using cold creams, facial creams, clays and other "beautifiers" are claims voiced by Prof. J. Seymour, assistant professor of physiology at Ohio State University.

It is the rubbing and massaging, necessary in the use of the "beautifiers" for which American women annually spend millions of dollars, that stimulate the skin and circulation and result in real benefit, according to professor Seymour.

"The skin absorbs outside agents only to a negligible extent," he said. "This is demonstrated by the fact that we handle all sorts of poisons, yet suffer no ill results. A small portion of the poison present in paints which the painter uses would be enough to kill him if it found its way into his blood, yet lots of it comes in contact with his skin and does him no harm."

The Master Man

By Ruby M. Ayres

When Peter Rolf died Patricia was away from home staying with some people in a houseboat on the Thames.

It had been ideal weather for the river, hot and breathless, with wonderful starry nights, and it was an ideal night when the telegram came summoning her home because Peter Rolf had inconsiderately died while she was away and so spoiled a holiday which she had been thoroughly enjoying.

Patricia was Peter Rolf's adopted daughter.

For fourteen years he had fed and clothed her and brought her up in the lap of luxury, and had thoroughly succeeded in spoiling a girl who had been born in homely circumstances and who had been meant by nature to be sweet and unselfish.

Once or twice when people had ventured a well-meant criticism of his conduct, he had laughed, the slow, mirthless laugh which Patricia hated.

"When I die, everything will be hers," he said. "If she has extravagant tastes she will be able to gratify them for the rest of her life."

Peter Rolf was a strange man. It was his boast that he had no friends. He had been married, but his wife had died so long ago that nobody seemed to remember anything about her. He had had a son, but he had quarrelled with that son before Patricia came upon the scene, and the youngster had gone abroad and died.

Patricia was the only person with whom he never quarrelled. He never showed her any affection, but he gave her everything she wanted and let her do exactly as she pleased, with the consequence that she grew up from the shy, affectionate child she had been when he first brought her to his house, to an imperious, self-willed beauty, admirably. She had the air of a princess, though there were people who said unkind things about the home from which Peter Rolf had taken her.

But nobody really knew, any more than they really knew why Peter Rolf had adopted her at all.

The general impression was that he had wanted someone to leave his money to and that his queer nature had been attracted by the girl's prettiness.

She had been seven when she first entered Peter Rolf's life, and she was one-and-twenty when the maid crossed the lawn behind the Reroot houseboat and gave her the telegram that told her of his death.

Patricia was lying in a hammock slung under the shady trees on the river bank, and Bernard Chesney lounged beside her in a deck chair.

There was a gramophone playing from a punt somewhere downstream, and Chesney was idly humming the words of the song under his breath as he looked at Patricia with adoring eyes.

It was a silly song about a moon and a man leaning over the railing of the houseboat which was moored a little way off looked across at the singer with a sort of affectionate contempt in his eyes.

He was rather a tall man heavily built, and he was not very young, if one could judge by the tinge of grey in his hair and the lines about his eyes, but he was good-looking in a powerful masculine way, and he was very much tanned as if by constant exposure to wind and weather.

"When she said she lub'd me she didn't speak true, So I'm off with the ole lub an' on wid de new!" sang Bernard Chesney, keeping time with the rather rasping tone of the gramophone. The man leaning over the houseboat railing frowned a little and looked at Patricia.

She certainly made a picture, lying there in the hammock, but her beauty was entirely spoiled for him by the knowledge that nobody was more keenly aware of its existence than was she herself.

To his irritated eye there was a pose in every line of her figure, every fold of her white frock; even the turn of her pretty dark head on the scarlet cushions seemed to him to be studied.

That he knew her to be quite

young seemed to make her self-confidence and queenly air more difficult to tolerate; where in heaven's name had she acquired it, he wondered, even as he realized the perfection of her pale, oval face and the deep brown of her eyes? Her hair, which was very dark and straight, was coiled rather untidy in a big knot at the back of her head, and when she smiled—which was often when she looked at young Chesney—a most distracting dimple appeared at the corner of her mouth.

She was deliberately trying to ensnare the boy at her feet, Milward knew, and he was just turning away with a sort of honest disgust when a maid crossed the lawn from the houseboat behind him and gave Patricia the telegram.

She opened it with a languid hand; then she gave a little scream, which was too inartistic not to be genuine, and sprang up.

Chesney broke off abruptly in the middle of his refrain and "Good heavens! What's the matter?"

The telegram fluttered to Patricia's feet.

"He's dead!" she gasped. "Mr. Rolf—Oh, what shall I do?"

The frightened words reached the man leaning over the railing, and he moved and came quickly forward.

"Is anything the matter?" Not bad news, I hope."

Patricia raised her dark eyes to his face; there was a world of fear in them.

"It's Mr. Rolf—he's dead. Oh, what shall I do!" she said again, and hid her face in her hands.

Chesney had picked up the telegram, and the two men read its message together.

It was the elder man who spoke.

"There is a train to town in half-an-hour; if you hurry, you can catch it, Miss Rolf. I will drive you to the station."

"Half-an-hour!" Patricia looked up quickly. "I can't possibly be ready in half-an-hour. How can I, with all my things to pack and everyone to say goodbye to?"

"Your things can be sent on," he answered rather curtly. "And I am sure that people will understand if you leave without saying goodbye."

His first pity for her distress was passing; he was beginning to realize that perhaps it was only for herself that she was upset. His face was pale and stern as he turned to Chesney.

(Continued Next Week)

MANLESS PLANE HAS NEW CONTROL

Idea of Player-Piano is Adapted by French to Guide Airplane in Intricate Maneuvers

PARIS.—At the moment when eager attention is riveted on power in the air a new development of incalculable importance has taken place in French aviation.

Nine months work by aeronautical experts here has proved results which, it is claimed, will revolutionize the science of military flying and put France definitely ahead of all other nations.

This is the effect of an invention which as recently been tested at Estampes in the presence of the heads of the service, and has, it is reported in every sense of the word come through with flying colors.

The invention consists in the adaptation of the principle of something like piano-player control of the movements of aeroplanes.

With a dynamo installed in place of a pilot the mechanism enables an aeroplane to rise, perform series of pre-arranged evolutions at any distance within the range of its normal flight, turn at a given point, drop bombs and return to its own aerodrome.

At the same time complete success is said to have been obtained in aeroplane control by wireless, thus ensuring an alternative or complimentary method of direction in the event of accident to the piano-player mechanism without the necessity of any one being on board, although during the trials at Estampes a pilot remained in the aeroplane a register results.

Competent authorities declare that bombing expeditions on a large scale will now be possible without any danger to the valuable lives of pilots. In fact, the pilot of today will tend to disappear and to be replaced by a strategic scientist at the base of the air fleet.

A quartet is better than a chorus because it makes less noise.

COMMISSION'S ORDER BACKED BY PRESIDENT

Leaders of Operators and Miners Called to Present Contentions Wednesday

Washington, Aug. 13.—Telegrams carrying a virtual mandate from President Coolidge went forward Monday from the United States Coal Commission, to S. D. Warriner, chairman of the anthracite operators, and John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, calling on them to meet in New York on Wednesday.

This is the government's answer to the threat of an anthracite coal strike or lockout on September 1. The telegrams direct an immediate resumption of negotiations looking to a new wage agreement before the present contract expires.

Otis Sees Hammond

The telegrams were dispatched immediately after Dr. George Otis Smith, member of the coal commission had conferred with President Coolidge Saturday afternoon, made a flying trip to Gloucester, Mass., where he conferred Sunday with chairman John Hays Hammond, returning to Washington Monday morning.

His telegrams, which were identical, called on the leaders of each side to be present with their associate members of the joint wage committee, four on each side, at 3 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, at the Pennsylvania hotel in New York, to meet with the members of the coal commission, five of whom will be on hand.

Will Report to Coolidge

Each side will lay before the commission its contentions. The commission, after giving them a full hearing and offering suggestions on how they should proceed toward arriving at a resumption of formal negotiations and an agreement, will report back to President Coolidge, who then will determine what further action the government should take.

For the present, at least, it was indicated that the president desired to leave the situation entirely in the hands of the commission. Whether he would take any more direct steps later to insure an agreement has not been revealed.

Watches Situation Closely

There is no doubt, however, that Mr. Coolidge is fully advised regarding the break between the operators and miners, which is threatening suspension of work in the anthracite mines on September 1, and will remain in close touch with all developments.

Since the interruption in negotiations between operators and miners at Atlantic City several weeks ago, members of the coal commission have insisted there would be no strike. While the president has assured the commission of his complete support, republican leaders declared he was not entirely satisfied with its "watchful waiting" policy and demanded action.

IOWA TAX LEVY SHADE HIGHER

Fixed at 11.5 Mills for Next Two Years—Average Land Valuation \$77 Acre

Des Moines, Ia., Aug. 13.—Iowa's state tax levy for 1923 and 1924 will be .24 of a mill higher than last year's levy of 11.26 mills, according to a decision of the executive council which will be certified immediately to county auditors for observance during the next two years.

The levy of 11.5 mills includes provision for the soldier bonus, but not for capital extension as that work was completed through last year's levy. The bonus levy is about 1.31 mills for this year. Last year it amounted to 2.15 mills.

The levy for the coming two years is based upon an actual valuation of property of more than four and a third billions. This valuation excludes exemptions. Because of the executive council's equalization, farm land valuations generally will be lowered instead of raised, as had been rumored. The farmer will also profit by the lower assessed valuation of live stock. The executive council set the average land value at \$77 an acre, the same figure the levy has been based upon since 1921. Representatives of the farm bureau federation sat in the conference with the executive council when land and live stock values were being taken up and were said to have been pleased with the final figures.

SCIENTISTS OFF

Havre, Aug. 13.—A Scientific expedition en route to Point Loma, Cal., sailed today on the steamer Franco to witness the total eclipse of the sun Sept. 10.

+ BRINGS PIG TO MARKET IN PLANE +
+ Omaha, Neb., Aug. 13.—Peter +
+ Harkert, jr., livestock breeder of +
+ Hooper, Neb., arrived by airplane +
+ with his pilot today with a pig +
+ for the South Omaha market. +
+ It was the first time any live- +
+ stock has been brought here in +
+ this manner. +
