

# A LIFE FOR SALE

BY SYDNEY HORLER

"Nearly. It was a close thing. If his man-servant, after hearing a strange noise in the bathroom, hadn't forced the door, the newspapers this morning would have been publishing full biographical details of one of England's most prominent politicians. As it is, not a word of the affair will be allowed to leak out. But why, Bunny, should a man like Sir Wilmot Williamson wish to take his own life?"

"There may be many reasons," was the matter-of-fact reply, "but it certainly seems to point to blackmail. It would appear to be a case of personal blackmail, however. In that event, why should they come to you at all? Is Scotland Yard in on this?"

"No. A special branch of the Secret Service—a sort of Secret Service of the Secret Service—has formed, and, as I have already told you, I have been placed in charge of it. As for your query, Bunny, frankly I am mystified. The fact is known to very few. I am expected to root out this evil, but how they imagine I am going to do it I don't know, because they are tying my hands by withholding valuable information. They tell me so much, but no more. What I think is taking place is this: By some means or other secrets in the lives of the men who form the present Government are being obtained (if you think the idea far-fetched, Bunny, reflect from your own experience what man hasn't a secret in his life) and utilized for blackmail of one sort or another. More than that I cannot say at present. It is all very hazy and difficult, and that is why I want your help."

Chipstead was prompt in his reply.

"I'll do anything I can, Bob, of course. Where do you think we can make a start?"

Sir Robert shook his head. "I am completely in the dark," he said again; "I called you this morning, Bunny, because I wished to know if you were free to take on this work. Perhaps in a few days' time I may have the beginning of a clue. Directly I have, I will give you a call."

The two men, who were such old friends, and who had such respect and liking for each other, shook hands, and the short interview was over.

Chipstead was about to turn to leave, when the door, which the Secret Service chief had unlocked, was violently thrust open.

A man, whose deeply lined, cultured face was twitching with emotion, confronted Sir Robert Heddingley.

"I must see you at once," he said, apparently unaware of Chipstead's presence; "something terrible has happened."

Bunny, noiselessly leaving the room, recognized in the speaker the Prime Minister of England.

Bunny Chipstead walked slowly to his club. The impression made on him by his visit to Sir Robert Heddingley was considerable. The British Secret Service chief was not the type of man to become so seriously perturbed without reason, and the tense feeling with which Chipstead was so familiar when starting on a "job" came back to him. After the bustle of the streets, the dull atmosphere of the Granville

Club became tedious, and, changing his mind, Bunny walked to the Savoy for lunch.

His work had tuned up all his faculties to an astonishing degree of efficiency, and it was by accident, and not design, that he found himself overhearing the conversation of the two men at the next table.

"I tell you," said the distinguished-looking man with the gardenia in his button-hole, "that the fellow has completely lost his nerve. Poor old Ferraby!"

"Old!" ejaculated his companion; "I was at school with Phillip Ferraby. He's not a day over thirty-six. He always was a brilliant chap—even when a kid he talked about going into politics—and now at thirty-six he is a Cabinet Minister. What do you think it is, Maitland?"

Lowering his tone, "drugs?" Quiet as was Maitland's answer, Chipstead caught the words: "No one knows, but the poor devil's a wreck all right. Well, I must be going."

The two men rose and walked out of the restaurant.

Chipstead finished his light meal and lit a cigar. Then he did some reflecting. The thing, to the solution of which he had pledged himself, was assuming tragic substance. He had known before that Bob Heddingley was not the man to send him out on any wild-goose chase, but this conversation he had just overheard substantiated, in his mind, the startling gravity of the situation. The Hon. Phillip Ferraby was His Majesty's Minister for Education in the present Government.

Still reflecting, Bunny Chipstead walked into the Strand. The first thing he noticed was a newspaper placard:

## SUICIDE

### OF CABINET MINISTER

Before he paid his penny for the paper, Bunny knew that the dead man was the Hon. Phillip Ferraby . . .

Upon arriving back at his flat, he had another surprise.

Brooks, looking very pontifical, handed him an envelope.

"This was left for you an hour ago, sir."

"By whom?" sharply demanded Chipstead.

"By a man, sir."

Bunny exploded.

"What kind of a man, you fool?"

Chipstead was slightly on edge. He had already glanced at the note.

Brooks' majestic mien sagged a trifle. To be addressed in that curt fashion by a man whom, in his secret soul, he regarded as a distinctly irresponsible member of society was gall and wormwood to the portly ex-butler. He answered now in a tone in which ruffled dignity and justified reproach were equally mingled.

"Really, Mr. Chipstead, I am afraid I am unable to give you a detailed and accurate description of the person in question. Beyond noticing that he had a slight squint in the left eye, the man struck me as being distinctly nondescript. May I enquire if the message was important, sir?"

"Not in the least, Brooks. But, all the same, I shall be glad if you will increase your powers of observation a little."

Brooks bowed. He felt that

moment unable to reply in words. He left the room with the stately carriage of an archbishop.

With the man gone, Bunny turned his attention to the note, which he read again.

Neatly typed on a piece of ordinary white paper were the words:

"You are seriously advised not to attempt to interfere in matters which do not concern you. Kindly accept this, your first and only warning."

## CHAPTER VII

The only answer that Martin Creighton received to his question, "Why did you want my thumb-mark?" was an enigmatic smile. The Colossus, without vouchsafing any word of explanation, turned away.

Only thing prevented Creighton from rushing at the man and forcing the truth out of him. The power that made him refrain was the memory of that beautiful girl he had seen crouching in piteous terror in her room the night before. This girl, every instinct told him, was in the man's power. By some devilish mischance he had such a hold over her that she was being detained in that house of mystery against her will. After this perplexing incident with "Mr. Jones," he was more than ever determined, not only rescue and befriend this girl, whoever she might be, but to get at the bottom of the whole baffling affair.

That ridiculous piece of melodrama, for instance, by which he was compelled to sign a document with his thumb-print—what could be the possible solution? When, in that fit of ironical desperation, he had advertised his life, he had imagined that the only possible type of purchaser would be a man who wished him to start, perhaps alone on some mad and foolhardy enterprise, from which the chances were he would never return. The craze for hazardous adventure, of the articles in the newspapers were to be believed, was not entirely dead, even in this prosaic age; and he had thought that the promoter of some particularly dangerous expedition might have been attracted by his bizarre advertisement. Yet here he was, plunged up to his neck in an embroglio of mystery which bewildered him at every turn.

This waiting was infinitely wearisome. But for the fact that Martin felt fairly certain the girl was still in the house, he would have left by some means or other, despite the grave warning he had received from the Colossus.

"You must remain here and await my orders," the latter had told him. The door of the room was locked behind the speaker, and Creighton had been left to some fresh bewildering reflections.

He would have to be patient, for only by being patient could he help that girl who was in such dire distress. The more he thought about it, the more convinced he became that some evil plot was being woven around her. A subtle plot, for that remarkable man whose acquaintance he had made in so strange a manner was no ordinary personality. Like the girl, his companion, he was both vivid and magnetic—an individual who stood out head and shoulders above the majority of his kind. A great personal power, assuredly. And this was the man whom he, just a careless, penniless, casual, happy-go-lucky specimen of his class, had sworn to thwart and bring to earth.

Pacing up and down that luxuriously furnished room, he found himself gripped by a great emotion. He knew

the state capital, in his trim speed-boat, The Campaigner, usually making the 36-mile up-stream trip along the Kennebec river in an hour. Going homeward, downstream at night, he often clips several minutes from this schedule.

The Campaigner is 26 feet long, powered with a six-cylinder motor permitting a speed of 45 miles an hour.

Skipper, the governor's thoroughbred etter, is a regular passenger on the boat.

this to be something entirely different from mere nerve reaction from the excitement of the past few hours. It was a new and vital force which had been born in him through looking into the troubled depths of a girl's brown eyes. So far girls had never troubled him a great deal; certainly they had not occupied much of his attention nor any noticeable part of his thoughts. Knocking around the world as he had done, Creighton had found the tang of life in rough places sufficiently absorbing. He had never discussed the subject, but his secret opinion had been that a fellow only fell in love—to use the usual phrase—when he hadn't sufficient else to occupy his mind. Returning to London from the mining camp in South America, he had certainly thought that pretty women gave a distinctly decorative effect to the streets, but these women he regarded in the mass, and not as individuals. Luck, or fate, had not sent him any particular representative of the sex, and so he had gone on viewing women merely in a vague, haphazard manner.

Now—it was so amazing that he could scarcely bring himself to realize the truth—a conviction was forced home upon him: he was so interested in one particular girl that everything else in life sank into insignificance. Looking back, he realized that this interest had been awakened the moment he had heard her appeal for help over the telephone wire. And it was not the mere chivalrous instinct alone which had aroused this interest; the cause went deeper and further than that. Creighton was not very imaginative; still less was he impelled by any high-sounding, romantic nonsense; yet, as he sat down once more, a mental picture, very real and very vivid, came to him. He fancied he saw, standing clear and definitely outlined, this girl. Although she was in the midst of thousands of other people, she seemed to dwarf all the rest. She was looking straight at him, and her arms were outstretched.

Crighton woke with a start. For the last few minutes he must have been asleep. Yet the mental picture which had come to him in a dream was as real as ever.

He pulled himself together, annoyed that he should have dropped off in that fashion. Then he remembered that he had had practically no sleep for several nights past.

Although served with luncheon and tea, the hours dragged by. It was not until twilight had come and the room was in comparative darkness that his intolerable boredom was relieved. There was a gentle clicking sound, and the door opened. The same man-servant who had brought him his meals now entered.

"Mr. Jones wishes to see you, sir. Will you please follow me?" The tone was quite calm and matter-of-fact; the speaker might have been a servant in a perfectly conducted household.

Only too pleased to change his present position, Creighton followed the man as directed.

He was conducted along a panelled corridor to the room in which he had signed in so strange a manner the extraordinary document that morning. The Colossus rose as he entered.

"I hope you have not found the time hang too heavily on your hands, Mr. Creighton," he inquired suavely.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

**NEW BEETLES FOUND**  
Tuscaloosa, Ala.—(UP)—A party of scientists of the Alabama Museum of Natural History has discovered, on a recent field trip, several new kinds of beetles heretofore unknown in Alabama. Another discovery was the 57th variety of snake in Alabama—a small ring-neck, burrowing and nonpoisonous.

**From Bad to Worse.**  
From Tid-Bits.  
"Yes, my new maid came to me from a very good family."  
"Really?" I suppose she wanted a change."

## TRICK RACKETS NET BILLIONS

Chicago — (UP) — "Business rackets" that have cost the public approximately a billion dollars in 1931 will be the chief problem facing the National Association of Direct Selling Companies convention here.

H. J. Bligh, Chicago publisher, and a past president of the organization, says that a nationwide survey shows "promoters of trick business schemes, classified as rackets, gleaned a billion dollar harvest last year from the small fry."

Prize contests were one means of obtaining mailing lists, he pointed out, and fees for entry in these contests and for sales samples were one means of getting money. Home-work plans, employment schemes and other promotional offers drew his criticism.

"The unemployed and other persons hard pressed for money, who could ill afford to lose even small sums, were among the majority of victims," said Bligh. "The 'business racket' promoter invariably bases his appeal on the willingness of the needy 'try anything to earn a little money. Usually he seeks small individual sums, but goes after a great volume of returns."

Evidence gathered by a survey will be submitted to the federal trade commission and post office department, according to Bligh, who placed Chicago's contribution to these rackets at about 15 million dollars in 1931.

## Soup Tureen Recalled

### Texas Bombardment

Cuero, Tex. — (UP) — A battered old soup tureen, relic from the china closets of 1863, is being displayed here as one of the few articles which escaped destruction in the storms that wrecked the old seaport town of Indianola.

A nick in the tureen, owned by Mrs. Mary Kleinecke, recalls an episode of 1863. Three federal gunboats slipped into Port Lavaca bay, allowed 24 hours for women and children to find safe shelter, then bombarded the town. A cannon ball shattered a double partition wall, passed through a kitchen safe and out through a window. The ball nicked the tureen without shattering it.

A china piece will be sent to Witte museum at San Antonio as a Civil war relic.

## Maine's Governor Claims

### Boat Commuter Title

Augusta, Me. — (UP) — Governor William Tudor Gardiner of Maine believes he's the nation's only gubernatorial speedboat commuter.

Daily he journeys from his estate at Phipps Point to Augusta, the state capital, in his trim speed-boat, The Campaigner, usually making the 36-mile up-stream trip along the Kennebec river in an hour. Going homeward, downstream at night, he often clips several minutes from this schedule.

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## Salt Lake City Rents

### Lot for Carrot Crop

Salt Lake City, Utah — (UP) — Rent for a city owned lot will be paid in carrots.

R. N. Anderson, who leased a small tract from the city, has agreed to hand over his entire carrot crop in payment for rent.

The city commission, by agreeing to the vegetable payment, has revived an ancient custom of paying tithes in crops, livestock and other farm products.

The carrots will be used to feed animals at the municipal zoo.

## Hoover Dam Will

### Wipe Out Settlement

Salt Lake City, Utah — (UP) — One of the famous Mormon frontier settlements, St. Thomas, Nev., will become a very wet "Ghost city" after the Hoover dam is completed.

Water backed up by the huge dam will completely inundate the settlement.

Plans are being made to transfer the residents, 274 persons, to a 12,000 acre ranch, 135 miles away.

## WOOD COMMERCIAL CLUB

### DESTROYING "HOPPERS"

Brave, S. D.—(Special)—The Wood Commercial club is helping the farmers to obtain the grass-hopper fungus in an effort to save the corn crop. A car was sent by the club to Iona, S. D., the state laboratory to obtain fungus disease to be given free to the farmers. This work has been successful as far as it has been carried out. Many more are getting a start of the fungus and then scattering over their fields and neighboring fields. Prospects for corn are good if the hoppers can be killed off.

**WRECKLESS DRIVERS TO SERVE LONG SENTENCE**  
Aberdeen, S. D.—(Special)—William Haegel, 16, the owner and driver of a "collegiate" car, will serve 25 days in the city jail and will stay out of the driver's seat for a full year. He pleaded guilty to driving while intoxicated, and unable to pay his fine, must sit it out at the rate of \$2 a day. Haegel admitted being under the influence of liquor when he crashed into a parked car. A girl companion, Lena Malson, was painfully injured but Haegel escaped with minor scratches.

## Mercolized Wax Keeps Skin Young

Get an ounce and use as directed. Fine particles of aged skin peel off until all defects such as wrinkles, liver spots, tan and freckles disappear. Skin is then soft and supple. Your face looks years younger. Mercolized Wax brings out the hidden beauty of your skin. To remove wrinkles, use one ounce Powdered Sachette dissolved in one-half pint witch hazel. At drug stores.

## Wonder What Party at

### Other End Was Saying!

Albert D. Lasker's pet story of the week is about the colored maid in the home of a friend who answered an imperative ring of the telephone.

"Yas'm," her mistress heard her say. And a second time:

"Yas'm." Then she added:

"It sho is," and lung up.

The telephone rang again immediately and the girl made identically the same replies, then disconnected.

"What kind of conversation was that, Lucy?" her mistress asked.

"What did they want?"

"Well, they asked if this was the Blank house and I said yas'm, and then they asked if Mrs. Blank was home and I told 'em yas,' the girl answered. "Then they said, 'Long distance from Washington,' and I said 'it sho was.'"—Chicago News.

**PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM**  
Removes Dandruff, Stops Hair Falling, Imparts Color and Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair. 60c and \$1.00 at Drugists. Hixox Chem. Wks., Paterson, N. Y.

**FLORESTON SHAMPOO**—Ideal for use in connection with Parker's Hair Balsam. Makes the hair soft and fluffy. 50 cents by mail or at drugists. Hixox Chemical Works, Paterson, N. Y.

## Camel-Step Surveying

The best aid in surveying the desert regions of Asia is the camel, according to Dr. Sven Hedin, Swedish traveler and explorer. In a recent newspaper article he disclosed the methods he had used for preparing his maps of the most inaccessible regions. "Anything simpler than the equipment of instruments carried by me on my travels can scarcely be conceived," he wrote. "On the whole, I use for mapping 18,000 miles of mostly unexplored territory only compass, watch, measuring tape, paper, lead pencil and one of my most important instruments—the camel. For computing the distance traveled I used as unit of measure the length of steps of my riding camel."

## This Man Had Faith

### Lost 24 Pounds

"Last November I weighed 192 lbs. Today, (February 5th, 1932) I am down to 168 lbs. and full of pep all day long—since using Kruschen. I have not had to use the laxative that was customary."—Theo. A. C. LaFleur, Providence, R. I.

What do you think of this—you men who doubt—you stay fat—because you want to think that nature made you that way.

You're all wrong—most fat men were made fat because of their ability to handle a knife and fork in a business like manner.

Be frank with yourself. Are you too timid to take a safe, harmless conditioner that not only takes off surplus fat but is so helpful that it makes you feel years younger?

To reduce safely take one-half teaspoonful of Kruschen in a glass of hot water before breakfast every morning—cut down on fatty meats, potatoes and sweets. Kruschen is sold by druggists the world over. A jar that costs but a trifle will last four weeks—but be sure you get Kruschen—your health comes first.

## Didn't Mean to Waste It

A Kansas City (Mo.) druggist was requested the other day for a refund on half a bottle of medicine, one of the customer's children having recovered from an illness sooner than was expected. The druggist declined, whereupon the customer inquired: "Do you know of any other sick people in this neighborhood that might be able to use this?"

## DAISY FLY KILLER

Placed anywhere, DAISY FLY KILLER attracts and kills all flies. Neat, clean, ornamental, convenient and cheap. Lasts all season. Made of metal; can't spill or tip over; will not soil or injure anything. Guaranteed. Insist upon DAISY FLY KILLER from your dealer.

HAROLD SOMERS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

## Momentous Gathering

The Mad parliament was a session of the British parliament held at Oxford in 1258, in the course of which Simon de Montfort began the attack on the rule of Henry III which resulted in broadening the rights of barons and commons and the weakening of the royal despotism.

## Gas Logic

He (driving)—Good-night! Out of gas right in the middle of traffic! She—You can't stop for that, John! Here comes a cop!

If one is a success at selling people what they want, he does not need to become expert in selling what they don't want.

## Try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound



## Had Melancholy Blues

Wanted to die . . . she felt so blue and wretched! Don't let cramps ruin your good times. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound gives you relief.

## Dynamite Handler

### Afraid of Nitro-glycerin

Oklahoma City — (UP) — D. A. Detar handles dynamite like so much cord-wood in a warehouse just east of here but entertains deadly fear of nitro-glycerin, which he has never touched. "I am afraid of it like the average man is of 'harmless' dynamite," said Detar. "This 'soup' is 13 times as strong as dynamite in the same quantity. Give me safe dynamite to handle." In his magazine there is usual

ly around 10,000 pounds of dynamite and black powder.

He does his smoking at his home, half a mile from the explosive cache.

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