

# The Girl and the Bill

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS



"Evans, S. R." The car ran silently through the park and out on the broad Sheridan road. Orme put on as much speed as was safe in a district where there were so many police. From time to time the girl indicated the direction with a word or two. She seemed to be using the opportunity to rest, for her attitude was relaxed.

The hour was about eleven, and the streets were as yet by no means deserted. As they swung along Orme was pleased by the transition from the ugliness of central Chicago to the beauty of suburbs—doubly beautiful by night. The great highway followed the lake, and occasionally, above the muffled hum of the motor, Orme could hear the lapping of the wavelets on the beach.

The girl roused herself. Her bearing was again confident and untired. "Have you been up this way before?" she asked.

"No, girl." "This is Buena park we are passing now. We shall soon reach the city limits."

Clouds had been gathering, and suddenly raindrops began to strike their faces. The girl drew her cloak most closely about her. Orme looked to see that she was protected, and she smiled back with a brave attempt at cheerful comradeship. "Don't worry about me," she said. "I'm quite dry." With that she leaned back and drew from the tonneau a light robe, which she threw about her shoulders.

The act was an act of partnership merely, but Orme let himself imagine an evidence of solicitude in her thoughtfulness. And then he demanded of himself almost angrily: "What right have I to think such thoughts? She has known me only an hour."

But to him that hour was as a year, so rich was its experience. He found himself recalling her every change of expression, her every characteristic gesture. "She has accepted me as a friend," he thought, warmly. But the joy of the thought was modified by the unwelcome reflection that the girl had had no choice. Still, he knew that, at least, she trusted him, or she would never have let him accompany her, even though she seriously needed protection.

They were passing a great cemetery. The shower had quickly ended. The white stones and monuments fled by the car like dim and frightened ghosts. And now the car swung along with fine houses, set back in roomy grounds, at the left, the lake at the right.

"Do you know this city?" the girl asked.

"I think not. Have we passed the Chicago limits?"

"Yes. We are in Evanston."

"Evanston!" Orme had a glimmer.

The girl turned and smiled at him. "Evanston—Sheridan Road."

"Evans—S. R.!" exclaimed Orme.

She laughed a low laugh. "Ah, Monsieur Dupin!" she said.

Speeding along the lake front, the road turned suddenly to the left and west, skirting a large grove of trees which hugged the shore. Just at the turn was a low brick building on the beach. "The life-saving station," explained the girl; "and these are the grounds of the university. The road goes around the campus, and strikes the lake again a mile or more farther north."

Large buildings were at their right after they turned. Orme noted that they were scattered among the trees—some near the street, some at a distance back. Then the road again turned to the north, at a point where less imposing streets broke in from the west and south.

"Stop at this corner," said the girl. Orme threw on the brakes.

"We are in Evanston, on the Sheridan road," she said, "and this street cutting in from the south is Chicago avenue."

"Chi. A.!" exclaimed Orme.

She had taken the paper from the pocket of her coat, and was scanning it closely. "One hundred paces north and two hundred and ten east. 'T' must mean 'tree.'"

Orme jumped to the ground. He noticed that the university grounds were cut off from the street by an iron fence. There was a gate at the corner by which they had stopped. The gate was not closed. If it were customary to shut it at night, there had been some neglect on this particular evening.

"You'd better go in through the gate," said the girl, "and follow the west fence northward for 100 paces. Then turn east, at right angles and go 210 paces—I suppose it must be paces, not feet."

"Yes," said Orme. "That would be the natural way for a burglar in a hurry to measure."

"I will move the car north on Sheridan road a little way," she went on, "so as not to be in the glare of this street light."

This was the first evidence she had shown of nervousness, and Orme suddenly realized that enemies might be lurking among the trees.

"It might be well for you to take the electric hand-lamp," she added. "It's in the kit-box, I think."

He looked in the kit-box, but the lamp was not there. He told her so.

"Maku may have stolen it," she said.

Orme slipped a heavy wrench into his pocket and closed the kit-box. With the girl, he avoided any reference to the possible presence of the Japanese among the trees, but knowing that he was no match for them unarmed, with their skill in jiu-jitsu, he resolved to be in some measure prepared.

He walked through the gate and began to pace northward, keeping close to the fence and counting his steps. Meantime the car followed his course, moving along the side of the road just west of the fence. Orme counted his hundred paces north, then turned east.

He saw that the 210 paces which he now had to take would carry him well over toward the lake. The girl evidently had not realized how great the distance would be. She would be nearer him, if she turned back to the corner and followed the Sheridan road eastward toward the life-saving station, but Orme did not suggest this to her, though the car was within twenty feet of him, the other side of the fence. If there should be a struggle, it would please him just as well that she should be out of hearing, for her anxiety, he knew, was already great, though she kept it closely under control.

Eastward he went through the trees. When he had covered about half the distance he found himself approaching the side of a large building. There must be some mistake. Had he deviated so widely from the course? In leaving the fence he had taken sights as carefully as he could.

Then the explanation struck him. Walsh, the burglar, had probably paced in eastward from the fence and come to the building just as he had. There was no good hiding-place apparent near at hand, and Walsh would hardly have retraced his steps. What, then, would he have done? Orme asked himself. Why, he would have turned north or south.

Orme looked in both directions. North and south of the building were open driveways. Walsh must have gone around the building, then continued eastward. This is what Orme now proceeded to do.

Remembering the number of paces to the side of the building, he chose the northward course, because there was less light north of the building. He hugged the side of the building, counting his steps, and, after reaching the corner, turned eastward. He now counted his paces along the northern side of the building.

When he reached the corner of the eastern side of the building, he paced as far southward on the eastern side as he had gone northward on the western side, and on reaching a point due east of the place at which he had originally come to the building, he added the number of paces from the fence to the building to the number of paces he had taken along the northern side of the building, and continued eastward toward the lake.

At the two hundredth pace he stopped to reconnoiter. Not more than two hundred feet ahead of him he could see dimly, through the tree trunks, the expanse of the lake. There was no sound, no evidence that any other person was near.

He proceeded cautiously for ten paces. Many trees were near him. He would have to examine all of them, for it was hardly possible that he had followed Walsh's course with unerring exactness. If the tree was within twenty feet of him north or south, that was as much as he could expect.

One thing was clear to him. Walsh had probably chosen a tree that could easily be distinguished from the others, either by its size or by some peculiarity of form. Also, the tree must have a hollow place in which the envelope could be concealed. Orme now decided that Walsh must have found his tree first and then paced westward to the fence. The even number, 100 paces north from the gate, could be only a coincidence.

A little to his left Orme discovered a trunk much larger than its neighbors. It ran up smoothly about eight feet to the first limb. An agile man could easily get up to this limb and pull himself into the branches. A

cavity such as are so common in oaks, would furnish a good place for hiding the envelope away.

He looked up. Suddenly a light appeared among the branches. It was a short ray, striking against the trunk. Before Orme could realize what was



A Figure Swung From the Lower Branch Apparently Without Haste.

happening a hand appeared in the little bar of radiance and was inserted apparently into the trunk of the tree. A moment later it was withdrawn. It held an oblong of white.

Involuntarily Orme took a step forward. A twig cracked under his foot. Instantly the light went out.

Orme drew the wrench from his pocket and stood tense. There was no other tree quite close enough for the man above him to spring to its branches. He would have to drop near Orme.

Standing there, the wrench in his hand, Orme felt that the advantage was his. He heard rustlings in the branches above his head and kept himself alert to guard against the man dropping on his shoulders.

To strike the Japanese down as he dropped from the tree, that was his plan. But meantime, where was the other Japanese? Was he among the near shadows? If so, he might even now be creeping stealthily toward Orme. The likelihood of such an attack was disconcerting to think of.

But as Orme was wondering about it, it occurred to him that the man in the tree would not have gone on guard so quickly, if his confederates were near at hand. It was natural that he should have put the light out, but would he not immediately afterward have given some signal to the friend below? And would he not take it for granted that, were a stranger near, his watcher would have managed to give warning? No, the other Japanese could not be on guard.

Perhaps, thought Orme, only one of them had come on this quest. He hoped that this might be the case. He could deal with one.

The man in the tree was taking his own time to descend. Doubtless he would await a favorable moment, then alighting on the ground as far from Orme as possible, make off at top speed.

But now, to Orme's surprise, a figure swung from the lower branch apparently without haste. Once on the ground, however, the stranger leaped toward Orme.

An intuition led Orme to thrust out his left arm. It was quickly seized, but before the assailant could twist it, Orme struck out with the wrench, which was in his right hand. Swift though the motion was, his opponent threw up his free arm and partly broke the force of the blow. But the wrench reached his forehead nevertheless, and with a little moan, he dropped to the ground in a heap.

As Orme knelt to search the man, another figure swung from the tree and darted northward, disappearing in the darkness. Orme did not pursue—it was useless—but a sickening intuition told him that the man who had escaped was the man who had the envelope.

He struck a match. The man on the ground was moving uneasily and moaning. There was a scar on his forehead. It was Maku.

He went through the unconscious man's pockets. There was no envelope such as he was looking for, but he did find a folded slip of paper which he thrust into his own pocket. A discovery that interested him, though it was not now important, he made by the light of a second match. It was the marked five-dollar bill. He would have liked to take it as a souvenir, if for no other reason, but Maku was short and Maku, who evidently was not seriously hurt, showed signs of returning consciousness.

Another occurrence also hastened him. A man was strolling along the lake shore, not far away. Orme had not seen his approach, though he was distinctly outlined against the open background of lake and sky. The stranger stopped. The striking of the two matches had attracted his attention.

"Have you lost something?" he called.

"No," Orme replied.

The man started toward Orme, as if to investigate, and then Orme noticed that outlined on his head was a policeman's helmet.

To be found going through the pockets of an unconscious man was not to Orme's liking. It might be possible to explain the situation well enough to satisfy the local authorities, but that would involve delays fatal to any further effort to catch the man with the envelope.

So he jumped to his feet and ran

northward, then turned to the west. Circling about, he made for the gate at which he had entered. His pursuer either took the wrong lead in the darkness or stopped to examine Maku, for when Orme went through the gate and doubled back, outside the fence, to the car, there was no sound of steps behind him. He jumped to the chauffeur's seat.

"Well?" inquired the girl, eagerly. "Too late," said Orme. "I'm sorry. I caught Maku, but the man with the envelope got away."

She laid a hand on his arm. "Are you hurt?" There was unconcealed anxiety in her voice.

To say the things he yearned to say! To be tender to her! But he controlled his feelings and explained briefly what had happened, at the same time throwing on the power and driving the car slowly northward.

"I only know that the fellow ran northward," he said. "He may have worked back or he may have gone on. He may have climbed another tree and waited."

By this time they had come to the northern limits of the grounds, but he had seen no one.

Suddenly the girl exclaimed: "Listen!"

Orme stopped the car. Somewhere from the distance came a faint hum. "Another car!" he muttered.

"Yes," she said. "Oh, but I can do no more. I am tired, Mr. Orme. We cannot catch that car, even if it does hold the man we want—and there is no way of being sure that it does."

"If there is any place to leave you, I will go after him alone." He had turned the car as he spoke and was sending it slowly southward.

"No," she said wearily. "We—you must do no more tonight. You have been so good, Mr. Orme—to help me in a matter of which I could tell you almost nothing. I won't even try to thank you—except by saying that you have understood."

He knew what she meant. He had met her need, because he had shown his greatness without her telling him. His recognition of her plight had been unaccompanied by any suggestion of ignored conventions. No gushing thanks would have pleased him half so much.

He smiled at her wistfully. "Does it all end here?" "No," she said. "I will not let it end here. We are friends already; in fact, Mr. Orme, as soon as I can do so, I will see that we are friends in name. Can you accept as little a promise as that?"

"I can accept any promise from you," he said gravely. "And now shall I take you home?"

"Not home. It is too far. But I have some friends a few blocks away who will take me in. Turn here, please."

Under her guidance he took the car through several streets, drawing up at last before a large, comfortable-looking place, set back from the street, with a wide, shrub-dotted lawn before it. Several windows were still lighted. He descended to help her out.

She hesitated. "I hate to ask it, Mr. Orme," she finally said, "but you can catch the trolley back to Chicago. They will take care of the car here."

He nodded. "But one thing, girl," he said. "I am going to find that other Japanese tomorrow. I shall get the envelope. Will you call me up at the apartment tomorrow noon? If I am not there, leave word where I can find you."

"I will do that. But don't get yourself hurt." She let him help her to the ground.

"At noon," he said.

"At noon. Good-night, my friend."

She offered her hand.

"Good-night, girl," he said, and then he bent over and kissed her fingers gently.

He stood by the car until she had crossed the lawn and ascended the steps—until the door opened and admitted her.

To be continued.

## EAGLES TO HAVE A GRAND MASK BALL

The Eagles' annual grand mask ball will be held at Coates hall on Saturday evening, February 18th. The Eagles' lodge have long since been placed in the veteran class of successful ball promoters of the city. They have all proven successful both financially and socially and the members on the various committees do not propose to see the coming event in anyway contrary to the former occasions. Four valuable prizes will be given to those preparing the best costumes. Good music has been secured and there will be plenty of it. Gents' tickets are 50c, ladies' 25c and spectators 25c. You are politely requested to hold the date for the Eagles.

## Moving To Plattsmouth.

Jacob Meisinger, sr., is engaged in moving his household furniture into the residence on north Fourth street, which he recently purchased. Mr. Meisinger is removing from the farm west of town a few miles which he has occupied for some years. He will turn the farm over to his son and take life a little more easily than formerly when he was actively engaged in farming.

# JANUARY CLEARANCE SALE!

## A REVIEW

Ad No. 1 Jan. 5 } Men's fine dress trousers 5, 6 and \$7 values at just two set prices—3 and \$4. They are nearly gone.

Ad No. 2 Jan. 9 } Men's fine suits, worth from \$15 to \$30, at three set prices to close—\$9.75, \$12.75 and \$17.75. For strictly cash. All marked in plain figures.

Ad No. 3 Jan. 12 } Men's overcoats, a clean sweep on high grade coats at just 3 prices prices—\$7, \$10 and \$15. These offers are genuine.

Adlet No. 1 Jan. 12 } A few small sizes in boy's winter overcoats at give away prices to clean them up—\$1 and \$2. Just think of it!

These are bargains unprecedented. They are not only on paper, but they are in the store. You can see them and realize on them if you come soon. You don't have to take the cars to find them. They're right here at home. Watch this space for other items. Also our adlets. It will sure be money in your pocket.

## C. E. Wescott's Sons THE HOME OF SATISFACTION

## "THE NEWLYWEDS AND THEIR BABY" WARMLY RECEIVED AT THE PARMELE

The House Crowded Almost to Its Seating Capacity, and The Audience Highly Delighted With Entire Performance.

"The greatest show of the season," was the verdict of everyone who had the pleasure of seeing "The Newlyweds and Their Baby" at the Parmele theatre last night, and the house was filled almost to overflowing. When you take into consideration that the prices were \$1.50 and \$1.00 down stairs, and 75 and 50 cents in the balcony and the gallery, a crowded house means that the show was remarkably well patronized for a city the size of Plattsmouth, and not one went away regretting that they had paid so much to see "The Newlyweds and Their Baby."

The company consists of fifty people, mostly ladies, and not a poor actor among them. Their songs were up-to-date in every respect and their costumes were dazzling with brightness and most of them were very fair to look upon.—In fact, beautiful, which cannot be said of many companies of a like character, that have visited Plattsmouth. The dancing girls were good, and were greatly applauded. William Clifton, as Ferdinand Newlywed, a father and proud of it; Emsy Alton as Mrs. Newlywed, baby's mama; Master Earl Knapp, as the baby, and D. L. Don, the waiter, kept the house in a roar of laughter, from the time the play opened to the close. Master Earl Knapp, in the full meaning of the trite saying, was

a "crackerjack." He acted the baby to perfection, and is old enough to vote. The scenery was superb, the orchestra and music in general was of a high character, and take it all in all, everything connected with the show was splendid.

It is very seldom that shows of the immensity of the Newlyweds visit such small cities, as the expenses of such a large company is enormous and they are compelled to have large audiences in order to come out even, in small cities. It would take too much time and space to review the cast of characters and give "credit to whom credit is due." Suffice to say that the entire cast is good, but some, as is usually the case, much better than others. Manager Dunbar is to be congratulated upon his efforts in securing such an attraction as "The Newlyweds and Their Baby," and we were glad to see that those efforts were appreciated to the extent they were by our people last night. The audience was one of the best that ever attended an attraction in Plattsmouth, and the good feeling that existed during the entire performance, demonstrated that the "Newlyweds" brought to our city an entertainment that gave such delight to the large audience that honored them with their presence. The company went from here to Nebraska City this morning.

## FEES OF PROBATE JUDGES MAY BE CHANGED SOME

At a meeting of the county judges of the state some time since the matter of fees of the office of county judge was discussed and a bill will be offered changing the fee bill quite materially. In civil cases where a fee for docketing each cause is now 70 cents, the new law proposes \$2.50 for docketing the cause in both term and justice of the peace cases.

In probate matters instead of the law now in force allowing a specified fee for each service performed, as filing and recording instruments, a lump sum will be charged under the new law, graded in amount fixed on the value of the estate administered upon taking an estate of \$1,000 as the basis. In such estates the maximum fee is not to exceed \$15 with a gradual rise in the schedule until the \$5,000 estate is reached, the new law fixing the fee at not to exceed \$25. A \$10,000 estate would pay the probate judge \$35, and a \$50,000 estate, \$50, and in estates above \$50,000 the fee under the proposed law is to be \$60, in estates where there are no contests.

The marriage license is raised to \$3 and the ceremony allowed to stay at the former figure, \$3. In adoption and guardianship matters the limit is \$5, where not contested. The annual report of a guardian under the proposed law will be \$3. The fees provided for in the bill are in addition to the fees of publisher of probate notices. In cases of contest the bill provides that the county judge shall have in addition to the above fees for all things made necessary by such contest the same fees provided for like services in civil cases wherein he has concurrent jurisdiction with the district court.

## Before Judge Archer.

A suit was commenced before Judge Archer yesterday, in which A. Kaufmann and daughter are plaintiffs and August Siltzmann is defendant. The amount in controversy is \$34.34, and is for goods and merchandise sold and delivered to defendant at plaintiff's store in Cedar Creek. The case will be for hearing on the 20th inst.

Frank Svoboda, of Mynard, was in the city a few hours last evening having come up to attend the theatre. While in the city Frank was a guest of the Perkins house.