

The Red Circle

Albert Payson Terhune

AUTHOR OF "THE FIGHTER," "CALEB CONOVER," "SYRIA FROM THE SADDLE," ETC. NOVELIZED FROM PATHE PHOTO PLAY OF THE SAME NAME BY WILL M. RITCHEY.

SYNOPSIS.

"Circle Jim" Borden, named from a red mark on his hand, has served his third prison term. One in each Borden generation, always a criminal, has borne the Red Circle mark. Jim and his son Ted are the only known living of the Borden. Max Lamar, a detective, is detailed to keep an eye on Jim. June Travis and her mother meet Jim as he is released. Jim and Ted are killed. Next day Lamar sees the Red Circle on a woman's hand outside a certain automobile. June, married with the Red Circle, robs Grant, a loan shark. Mary, June's nurse, discovers her theft and tells her she is "Circle Jim's" daughter, though Mrs. Travis does not know. Mary tricks Lamar. Lamar visits "Smiling Sam," Jim's old-time partner. Sent to Surfont by Smiling Sam, Alma La Salle robs the guards at a jail. Mary points her out to Lamar, who follows her back to town, captures her with the jewels and goes after Smiling Sam. On the edge of a cliff pursued and pursued, engaged in deadly combat, Gordon, a fugitive, rescues Lamar, and June in turn saves Gordon from arrest. Smiling Sam sees the Red Circle on June's hand, tells her he knows her secret and follows her to her city home. She helps Gordon to get away, after recovering for him the securities receipt which incriminates him by tricking Farwell and Lamar.

TWELFTH INSTALLMENT

LIKE A RAT IN A TRAP

While Max Lamar was musing in miserable uncertainty over the problem of June's guilt or innocence, June herself was confronted by a problem quite as disheartening and far more perilous.

Mary had told her of "Smiling Sam" Eagan's presence in the Travis house, and June realized all it might mean to her. The man, hidden in the attic storeroom, held her fate, her liberty, in the hollow of his grimy hand.

He had seen the Red Circle on her hand. He was crafty enough to know how fearful a hold over the girl this secret gave him.

June could bear the suspense no longer. Impulsively she got to her feet and crossed the room toward the hall door.

"Where are you going, dearie," asked Mary in sudden anxiety.

"I'm going to see him," replied June. "I must."

June had taken off her hat, and as she spoke she was stripping the gloves from her hands. The left glove came off first. Then, as the right glove was half removed, its wearer noted the pulsing Red Circle on her hand. Instinctively she drew the glove over it.

Meantime Mary had flung herself between June and the door, exclaiming in horror:

"Oh, my dear, my dear! You mustn't do—he might kill you!"

"Kill me?" echoed June, bitterly. "I almost wish he would!"

"If you're going there," declared the valiant nurse, giving up the unequal battle, "then I'm going too. I'll keep him from harming my baby if anyone can."

June a step ahead, they emerged into the gloomy attic room.

Mary paused, staring timorously around the dismal and cluttered room.

From an impromptu couch of patched quilts and moth-eaten pillows, between two trunks, a frowny head cautiously came into view.

At sight of June and Mary he grinned pleasantly, got up, stretched himself and slouched forward to meet them.

"Well, well!" he rumbled, in mock cordiality. "It seems like this is my reception day. Welcome to Castle Eagan, ladies. I'd 'a spruced up a bit if I'd known I was goin' to have company."

"Sam," said the girl, facing the grinning fugitive. "I've come here to have you help me."

"Help you?" repeated Eagan, puzzled.

"Yes, by leaving here."

"Oh, I see. Nothin' doing, sweetie."

"The Red Circle Blazed into View."

June turned her horse's head toward the section of the city where stood the Farwell corporation's factory. It was not a savory neighborhood, at best. And this morning it was even less peaceful than usual. For the bulk of the Farwell employees were gathered in the big yard of the factory holding an impromptu indignation meeting.

Silas Farwell's failure to keep his word about sharing with his men the profits of the concern was the theme of their spokesman's harangue.

From the building's entrance, Farwell watched the gathering of the men in the yard. He knew well enough what was up. And he scowled, as fragments of the spokesman's speech came to his ears.

At last, as he was about to go into his office, Farwell saw the spokesman and two of his audience detach themselves from the group and walk toward him. He understood the object of their visit.

His right hand slipped into the pocket of his coat, and his fingers closed about the cold butt of a pistol that rested there.

The men drew near. At sight of their employer, they halted, glanced at one another, and then stepped up to him, taking off their hats as they came.

"Mr. Farwell," began the spokesman, nervously, clearing his voice as he spoke. "Mr. Farwell, we are a delegation from the hands, chosen—chosen to ask you if you mean to make good on your promise to share profits with us. We—"

"No," said Farwell, coolly. "I don't. I explained that, in the notice I had the janitor tack up on the work-room doors. I—"

"Then, you rotten crook," roared the spokesman, losing hold of his temper. "What do you mean to do?"

"Just this," answered Farwell. "Before the others could guess his intent, his left fist caught the spokesman, flush on the point of the jaw, and sent him sprawling.

The stricken man scrambled to his feet. His two companions at his side, he sprang like an angry dog at Farwell's throat. But the three men stopped their rush almost in midair, as the factory owner flashed out the pistol from his coat pocket and leveled it at the foremost of them.

There was an instant pause; as the assassins blinked irresolutely at the black pistol muzzle and at the coldly murderous eyes behind it.

"Go back to your work," said Farwell, breaking the momentary silence. Beneath the menace of the leveled weapon and the dominating gaze of their employer, the trio looked sheepishly at each other; then, one by one, turned and shuffled away toward the yard.

Farwell dropped the pistol back into his pocket and continued upon his way to his own office.

The three delegates returned to their fellows. The rest of the men crowded eagerly around them for news of the interview.

"It's no use," reported the spokesman. "I asked him, and he—"

Something white flew through the air, striking him across the eyes and then falling to the ground at his feet.

"Three cheers for Silas Farwell!" shouted the spokesman.

The three cheers were given with a thunderous zest.

The men came to a halt just in front of the window, shoving forward the spokesman, who still held the bundle of money in one hand and the typewritten letter in another.

"Mr. Farwell," he began, "we want to thank you. It was a funny way of sending us our cash, but it was mighty welcome. And I want to apologize to you for—"

"What are you blithering about?" queried Farwell, in dire perplexity. "And what's that money you're shaking at me? What is it?"

"The money?" echoed the spokesman, as a murmur of surprise ran through the crowd. "Why, the co-operative profits money, of course. The money this letter of your agent—"

He got no further. Farwell reached out of the window and snatched the typed note from his hand. He would have snatched the money, too, but that chance to be just out of his reach.

"Who gave you this?" roared Farwell when he caught his voice.

"A girl," he answered the puzzled spokesman. "On horseback. Threw it over the fence to me. She rode past, two minutes ago. And—"

But Farwell, note in hand, had bolted out into the street. He was just in time to see a girl, mounted on a slenderly built saddle horse, turn a corner, several blocks away, and vanish from his view.

Alongside the opposite curb lounged a mounted policeman, chatting with a passerby. Farwell ran across and seized the officer by the arm.

"Did you see a woman ride past here a few moments ago?" he demanded.

"Why, yes," returned the patrolman, wondering at his interlocutor's excitement. "I did. I didn't take much notice to her, except that she rode mighty well. She'd gotten past me before I saw her. Is—"

"She has robbed me," interrupted Farwell. "Catch her! She turned to

the past twenty-four hours. And now, at last, he had nerved himself to make the test he had planned—the test which, he believed, would prove to him, once and for all, June's guilt or innocence.

With shrinking heart, but with firm step, he approached the Travis house.

And at the same moment, Yama, the Jap butler, was privily conveying "Smiling Sam" Eagan's late breakfast to the attic. For some occult reason, Sam loved to torment and frighten the dapper little butler. And Yama's visits to the hiding place were moments of terror to the poor little yellow man.

Today was no exception. He set the tray down in front of Sam and started to pour out a glass of wine for him. But Yama's hand shook pitifully, from sheer fright. A spoonful of wine fell on Sam's knee.

With a truly terrifying growl Eagan snatched up the carving knife he still carried in his belt and rushed at the Jap.

"I'm going to cut my monicker on your measly heart!" he snarled.

Yama did not pause to see if the threat would be fulfilled. Dropping everything, he fled.

Eagan returned the knife to its place, chuckling amusedly at the scare he had given the butler. Then he picked up the bottle of wine and tried to read its label.

But the light was dim and his eyes were nearsighted. He went over to the window to get a better view of the label. Close to the pane he stood for an instant, curiously and laboriously spelling out the name.

And, in that instant, Max Lamar, turning in at the front walk, chanced to look up—and saw him.

Lamar halted and stared upward more keenly. But Sam had moved away from the window. Max, with the excitement of a hound on the scent, bounded up the veranda steps.

At the top, he collided violently with a little figure that shot out of the front door. It was Yama, still in flight from Sam's imaginary pursuit.

"What's up?" demanded Max.

Yama stared, speechless and gasping.

"What's the matter?" repeated Lamar. "Did you see him, too? Were you going for the police?"

"Saw—saw nobody!" babbled the Jap, still remembering Sam's threat of what he would do should Yama betray his hiding place. "Saw nobody. Going for a little walk. I—"

"Going for a little hundred-yard dash, you mean," corrected the perplexed Lamar. "Let me in there. I've just seen—"

"Why, Mr. Lamar!" exclaimed a voice from the foot of the steps.

Max turned, to see June, in riding dress, crop in hand, mounting the veranda toward him.

"Miss Travis!" he said, hurriedly. "I caught a glimpse of a man I'm almost sure was Sam Eagan."

"Really?" asked June, her heart beating fast. "How interesting! Whereabouts?"

"In that topmost window of your house. The attic window, I suppose. He was—"

"What nonsense!" she laughed, nervously. "How could he possibly—?"

"I must go and look for him," insisted Lamar. "That is, if you'll let me. He probably remembered your goodness to him in other days, and sneaked in here to try to persuade you to help him. Let me go in, please. He mustn't get away from us again."

June, too confused to make any protest, led the way into the house. She was sick with terror. In the library doorway they met Mrs. Travis. She came forward, cordially, to greet Lamar. The crime specialist cut short her salutations by saying, brusquely:

"Mrs. Travis, I have reason to think a criminal is hiding in this house. 'Smiling Sam' Eagan, the crook I told you about, down at Surfont. May I search for him?"

"Why certainly," asserted the startled old lady. "But—oh, I do hope you are mistaken, Mr. Lamar! I can't believe—"

Max had already started up the stairs. June, dreading to go with him, yet dreading far more to remain in suspense, followed. Mary, who had been crossing the lower hall as Lamar entered, hurried after her.

The search of the next floor was merely perfunctory.

"He's not down here!" declared the crime specialist at last, in growing impatience. "I'm going to try the attic. How do I get to it?"

He was standing close to the doorway, as he spoke, the doorway leading to the attic stairs. And his strong voice carried every word to the fugitive above.

At the sound, Eagan started to his feet, knife in hand. This attic was no place to be cornered like a rat in a trap. If he could get downstairs, a knife-thrust in Lamar's body might leave the way free for him to escape to the street. Yes, and that same knife-thrust might silence Lamar forever. If so, he had no fear of the household's women blabbing as to who had done the murder. They would not dare.

Knife in fist, Eagan tiptoed down the stairs. With his free hand he opened the door a little way, and peeped out into the upper hall.

Lamar had just moved from that very door, and was standing with his back to him, only a few feet away, looking about for the entrance to the attic stairs.

But June saw the door open. She saw the broad, hideous face, the tight-gripped knife. She saw Sam crouch for a spring. She saw him, knife raised, launch himself at the unsuspecting Lamar.

Then, as the man stabbed, June awoke from her daze of horrified inaction.

Believe in yourself; believe in humanity; believe in the success of your undertaking. Fear nothing, and no one. Love your work. Work; and hope.

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A Dead Shot. The valor and candid simplicity of our Indian Babu is proverbial. A story goes of one ancient the German east campaign, who (in the words of a

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tion. With a scream she seized Lamar, and by main force hurled him to one side and half way around.

The knife-thrust missed its mark by the fraction of an inch. Lamar, whirling, caught sight of his foe. As Eagan's arm went back to stab again, Max grappled him.

Back and forth across the hall, the two men swayed and lurched in their fierce wrestle. The shoulder of one of the two close-locked bodies struck against the attic door, slamming it

shut. Chairs were overturned, and the hallway became a bedlam of noise and fury.

Sam managed to wrench his knife hand free. He lunged murderously at Lamar's throat. Max was too late to guard the blow. But he shifted his lithe body to one side. The blade flashed past it and was buried, half to the hilt, in the wood of the door.

Sam now turned his full attention to the task of crushing his opponent with his bare hands.

Max merely defended himself, as best he could. At last he was able to draw his pistol.

But, as he did so, Sam seized the crime specialist's right wrist with both his own huge hands, and exerting all his brute strength and weight twisted Max's hand outward and upward.

No human power could withstand that pressure, so suddenly and skillfully exerted. The pistol leaped from Lamar's opened fingers and fell to the floor.

Mrs. Travis, at first sound of the battle, darted into the nearest room snatched up a telephone and summoned police headquarters.

It took her some moments to get the connection, because police headquarters "Central" was just then listening to a patrolman's thrilling account of the way Attorney Charles Gordon had come to the chief of police, a little while before, and given himself up to justice—laughing as he did so.

But presently Mrs. Travis was switched from headquarters to the precinct station phone. And in less than a minute two policemen were on their way to the Travis house.

Meantime, the fight in the hall had reached a new and more vital stage—a skirmish for possession of the fallen pistol.

It was Sam Eagan who at last seized the pistol. Despite his enemy's efforts he gradually worked its muzzle toward Lamar's writhing body.

The muzzle at last touched Max's side. Sam's finger tightened on the trigger. In the same moment the pistol spun out of his hand, exploding harmlessly, the heavy-caliber bullet burying itself in the woodwork of the wainscoting.

June had seen the newest peril of the man she loved, and with her riding crop had struck his would-be murderer heavily across the knuckles.

Sam whirled about to face her. As he did so Lamar snatched up a heavy vase from a pedestal and brought it down with all his remaining force upon Eagan's head.

Smiling Sam dropped to the floor like a stricken bull.

Max bent over him and snapped a pair of handcuffs on the senseless man's thick wrists. Then, weak and dizzy and panting, Lamar rose again to his feet, swaying as he tried to stand upright.

"He must have broken in here last night," he gasped. "Miss Travis, I owe you my life. I—"

"Your hand is cut!" cried June. "See, it's bleeding! Let me bind it up for you."

The tramp of feet sounded on the stairs below them. The two policemen, escorted by the chattering and shuddering Yama, ascended to the upper hallway. At a word from Lamar they picked up the unconscious Eagan and lugged him away between them.

Max, still reeling with exhaustion, turned abruptly to June.

"Miss Travis," he said. "I must ask you one or two questions. I would cut off my right arm sooner than ask them. But I must. Everything depends on your answers."

June forced a smile to her ashen lips. She knew the moment had come. The moment of reckoning, which she so long had dreaded.

(END OF 12TH INSTALLMENT.)



Struck the Would-Be Murderer Across the Knuckles.

The spokesman looked around him in bewilderment. So did the other men. They had a fleeting glimpse of a girl on horseback, riding away from the board fence that divided the yard from the street.

"She threw it at you," said one of the men. "I saw her. What is it?"

The spokesman had stooped and was picking up the white thing that had struck him. It was a large envelope, very thick. The others pressing close around him in jostling curiosity, he tore open one end of the envelope.

Out fell a package of big denomination bills. A cry of amazement broke from the crowd. The spokesman, holding the money in one hand, stared stupidly at the envelope. He read aloud the typewritten address:

"FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF THE FARWELL CORPORATION."

"What the blue blazes—" he spluttered.

Then he saw a sheet of notepaper sticking half way out of the torn envelope. He drew it forth, and in a voice shaking with wonder, read the few typed lines it contained:

"Accept and distribute the inclosed as part payment of your accumulated co-operative profits in the Farwell corporation—An Agent."

A cheer from hundreds of hoarse throats broke in on his reading.

"Come on!" yelled the spokesman, enthusiastically, as he flourished the handful of big bills. "Come on, boys! Let's go to the boss and thank him. He's a white man, after all."

Farwell, in his ground-floor office, overlooking the yard, glanced out of the open window, just in time to see the crowd start toward the building. His hand went to his pistol butt. He thought he understood that unanimous movement.

Presently, his look of dogged defiance changed to one of bewilderment. This mob of avengers was behaving most strangely! The men were dancing along, laughing and waving their caps and shaking hands with one another. Surely no angry mob would act thus.

Just then, the front rank of them caught sight of Farwell standing in the open window. A roar went up.

not Christian who fell into the bog because of the villain on his back? Then you climb a burdensome hill and pop out upon an open platform above the city.

The height commands a prospect to the west. Below is the smoke of a thousand suppers. Up from the city there comes the hum of life, now somewhat fallen with the traffic of the day—as though nature already practiced the tune for sending later her creatures off to sleep. You light a fire. The baskets disgorge their secrets,

Ants and other leviathans think eventually that a circus has come or that bears are in the town. The chops and bacon achieve their appointed destiny. You throw the last bone across your shoulder. It slips and rattles to the river. The sun sets. Night like an ancient dame puts on her jewels.

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THICK, GLOSSY HAIR FREE FROM DANDRUFF

Girls! Beautify Your Hair! Make It Soft, Fluffy and Luxuriant—Try the Moist Cloth.

Try as you will, after an application of Danderine, you cannot find a single trace of dandruff or falling hair and your scalp will not itch, but what will please you most, will be after a few weeks' use, when you see new hair, fine and downy at first—yes—but really new hair—growing all over the scalp.

A Little Danderine immediately doubles the beauty of your hair. No difference how dull, faded, brittle and scraggy, just moisten a cloth with Danderine and carefully draw it through your hair, taking one small strand at a time. The effect is immediate and amazing—your hair will be light, fluffy and wavy, and have an appearance of abundance; an incomparable luster, softness and luxuriance, the beauty and shimmer of true hair health.

Get a 25 cent bottle of Knowlton's Danderine from any store and prove that your hair is as pretty and soft as any—that it has been neglected or injured by careless treatment—that's all. Adv.

Candor Suppressed. "A person