he Mackintosh Masque wiert Foster +



his scheme, and it did, I must confess, show

which a gentleman could assume. Yet I was grateful to Fate, having been set down in a strange city where no soul knew me. If one is obliged to be penniless it is better so.

Mr. Moe Levy was enthusiastic regarding

an inventive turn of mind. Mr. Levy racked his brain daily for new and startling advertising displays, and the mackintosh masque certainly kept a throng front of his huge display window. It was arranged in this way: At the rear of the window was a square booth, six feet high, and inclosed in brown curtains. This was divided in the middle with a curtain, and in the rear part was a chair in which I could sit to rest myself between my appearances in the front compartment of the booth as the "animated dummy."

The real dummy was a figure of just my height, with a waxen face which was made lifelike and sufficiently like my own to be a startling resemblance. Each morning at half past 8, when I went to work, I "made up" with grease paint and rouge until I was the exact counterpart of the wax dummy. On the dummy was a fine brown mackintosh; I wore a black one. There was a clock arrangement in the back of the dummy's head which, when wound up, made the figure wink and roll its eyes in a most natural manner. And not regularly, either, but with sufficient lapses between to make the thing seem wonderfully human.

I would display the dummy for a while, keeping out of sight myself behind the dividing curtain; then the front curtains of the booth would be drawn. I rolled the dummy back into the rear compartment, and carefully assumed its attitude in the front, the curtains of which were then drawn aside again. The change took about the length of time it would have demanded to have exchanged the mackintoshes. A big sign offered a pair of rubber overshoes to every customer who, during the month, guessed which was the man and which was the dummy. And I flatter myself that I filled the dummy's part most excellently. The guesses piled up in Moe Levy's safe, and the old man rubbed his hands delightedly to see that far more guessed that I was the dummy than vice versu.

I never stood in the dummy's place more than half an hour at a time, and for that stretch I could keep a perfectly impassive expression and sometimes even winked or rolled my eyes with the precision of clockwork. Once a man stood out in front with his watch, timing these eye movements, for the purpose of discovering, I suppose, if the movements were really mechanical. I could hear my own watch ticking in my vest pocket, and I rolled my eyes every sixty seconds exactly during the half hour. Then I made the change, and as cogs on the wheel of the dummy's mechanism were broken off at uneven intervals the dummy's eye rollings actually seemed more like life than The man with the watch walked in and wrote down his guess that I was the mechanical figure.

I grew interested in my daily audience; one could not help that. Many of the same people passed Moe Levy's corner daily, and it was seldom that the unhurried person did not halt to watch either the dummy or me. Small boys tried to make me laugh by cutting up antics in front of the window. One youth made believe to throw a cobble stone through the window at my head, but I had long since learned to control my features. Occasionally a fly buzzing about my head gave me some trouble and once a desire to sneeze possessed me so strongly that had I not had under my foot a spring by which the curtains of the booth were dropped instantly I would have given the street an exhibition of a dummy shouting "achoo!" with most human vehemence.

It was when the month was almost completed, and I was wondering where my next job was to rise from, that I began to notice a young man standing before the window of the rubber goods store, sometimes for half an hour at a stretch, and several times a day. He evidently was as

uncertain as the public at large which figure was the living

one; nor did ne come into the store to make a purchase

and guess. Yet I could see that he was deeply interested

in the small problem which the dummy and I presented.

Excepting on Saturday nights, when the mackintosh

masque was kept up until 10 o'clock, I was free at 6.

The store was open until an hour later, and I always man-

aged to mingle with the crowd and go out as though I

was a chance customer. With my hat brim down and my

face half muffled in my coat collar, nobody was likely

to recognize me as the animated dummy that appeared

with Mr. Levy that, as I left the store, I was accosted by

the young man whose attention seemed so centered upon

the dummy and me for the last few days. He was a dark

man, with a bristling mustache, and heavy brows, which

failed to give him a disagreeable cast of countenance only

" You are the-er-man?"

'Pardon me," he said, staring hard under my hat

"I'm certainly not the dummy," I said, shortly, as he

His smile was retained, but I could see that it was a

He glanced once or twice about as if seeking a quiet

"Going to dinner?" he queried. "Well, there's a res-

Maybe you'd like another job like-er-that," and he

mechanical effort. "Beg pardon!" he said again. "I'd

spot. The passersby jostled us, and his face grew black

taurant over there. Will you come with me? I invite you to dine. We can talk meanwhile."

jerked his thumb toward Moe Levy's establishment.
"If nothing better offers," I admitted, and went with

only when we were half through our meal that he uttered

a word regarding the work in question. Then it was to

At the restaurant table he appeared glum, and it was

'Look here! Can you do something and keep your

I felt the tone as well as the words to be insulting.

But when a man lowers himself in public estimation by

accepting the kind of a position I had filled in the rubber

goods store, he brings upon himself such joits to his pride

as this. I swallowed my animosity and politely asked him

you can do-ask no questions what it is done for, and

secretly," he returned, promptly. " If you mean, will the

law be broken by what you do, I answer no! You will

"I don't like the sound of that," I observed flatly.

this way: Try what I want you to do and ask no ques-

tions. When you get to that point where you think that

you can go no farther without hurting your tender con-

hour's work. You'll not make that acting the dummy

risk or shame was connected with the job he offered. But

I could go as far as I liked and then-stop! I nodded.

'Good! When do you get through at Levy's?"

nce, or without running into darker, stop!

See here!" he said earnestly. "I'll put it to you

'I'll give you \$10 each evening, and for perhaps an

The sum he offered was enough to show me that either

"Then come to this address in the evening," he said.

thrust a written card into my hand, paid the walter, and

"Is it-er-bonest?" I demanded bluntly,

run no danger of arrest. I will protect you."

"I want a man who can do something-something that

"It is as honest as anything can be that is done

It was the night previous to the closing of my contract

in Moe Levy's window.

because he smiled.

seemed still in doubt.

like to talk with you."

But why?"

mouth shut about it?"

after it is done forget it!"

in a store window," he snarled.

You'll do it?" he asked.

"Tomorrow night," I replied.

departed without further remark.

say roughly:

what he meant.

"Upon what subject?"

as he drew out of the crowd.

At least I was told that if the work did not suit me I might drop it at any point. I thought much about it that night and the next day. When I left Moe Levy's at last with the balance of the small sum which was coming to me, and allowed myself to contemplate how short a time that sum would keep me in shelter and from starvation, I read the address on the card with renewed interest. It took me to a part of the town I had not been in beforea shabby neighborhood, but not at all threatening. One of those streets, merely, that display the tarnish of departed grandeur. It was once a fashionable avenue, Ellis was the name on the card. I found that he was merely a boarder here, and his room was as shabby as the house itself. It did not look like the abode of a man

What do you wish me to do?" I asked him, after our brief greeting. That you are not to ask. That is, I shall refuse to tell you any of the details. It is-er-shem !- a family

who could afford to pay \$10 an hour for any kind of labor.

I have heard that expression before. It usually masks a deal of scandal or deviltry. I told him so bluntly enough, for I found myself unable to respect the man. His was not an attractive personality.

What matters it, as long as your neck is not in the noose?" he growled. "I'll tell you this much. I hinted at it before. You are to act the spy."

Not nice," I said. "But the money is nice." He drew a crisp \$10 note from his pocket and shoved it toward me across the table. retainer." he said. "All you need to do tonight is to let me fit you for your part."

Fit me?" You see, I was attracted to you because of your ability to control the muscles of your face so well and-for another reason. Yours is a wonderful power. Do you think you could remain impassive—as to your face, I mean -for an bour or so?

into the room before I bid him good-night. He will remain. I want you to see and remember everything he doeseverything, mind!-while he remains alone there. Now, will you obey, or do you drop the matter here?" I obey." He thrust me down upon my knees and I put my face carefully through the hole in the painted canvas. I heard a voice ealling below stairs.

to discover?

"I must go," Ellis whispered. "Remain as you are Remember everything you see. When the old man retires with the light, you may come downstairs and open the doors. I shall wait upon the porch for you and will return and put back the painting myself." He sped away and left me kneeling in the dark my

Pool; What do I know? Did I know, would I pay you

You will first see an old man whom I shall accompany

body on the stair landing, my eyes seeking to explore the fathomless darkness of the room in which the painting Almost immediately a door opened and light streamed into the place. Then I saw why it had been so dark.

Every window was shuttered, and draped as well by heavy portières. The room was a library, although the glass doors of the old bookenses were thick with dust and seemed not to have been opened in months. At one end of the room was a yawning black fireplace, with a mantel shove and tiling around it. At the opposite end of the room was a batze covered table, on which Eilis, as he came in, set down the lamp he curried. Behind him

more prepossessing than my employer. Well, uncle, I'll bid you good-night," Ellis said, cheerfully, turning toward the door again. "Hope you'll sleep O. yes! O. yes!" croaked the old man, standing at one

side, wringing his hands nervously, and watching the other

walked a bent old figure-a man in shabby clothing, whose

yellow, clawlike hands and wrinkled face made him no

Nothing more I can do for you, uncle?" " Nothin' more I'll let you do." snarled the old fellow. I saw Ellis glance once in my direction. His gloomy face seemed to express satisfaction at my pose. He said goodnight again and left the room. When the outer door of the gloomy house had closed loudly, the old man double locked the library door. Then he trotted up and down the room. examined all the easements to see that no ray of light could get out, nor an eye peer in. Then he sat down at the table,

action filled me with disgust and horror. Yet the jewels were a prince's ransom!

At length he put them back into the box and the box in its secretiplace behind the tile. With another glance up at the portrait he unlocked the door picked up the lamp, and hobbled away. The room was pitch dark again. It was some moments before I remembered my instructions and left the aperture to creep downstairs to my waiting employer. When I opened the door he selzed my arm and suppressed eagerness shook his voice

What is it? What did you seo?' he gasped. But I had recovered more than my composure now.

" I saw an old man playing solitaire for an hour before went to bed," I replied, in a tone of disgust. He cursed bitterly. "The old devil! Where does he hide them?" I heard him mutter. Then aloud: "Wait

at the corner. I'll be with you in a minute." He went upstairs to replace the painted face in the picture. When he overtook me he had recovered his calm-

"Tell me everything that passed." he commanded, and

I told him what I pleased. But never a word of the gems or the hidden box.

'Report tomorrow night at 7," he commanded, and left

And did I lie awake the night before facing the unsolved problem, much more cause had I tonight for wakefulness! There was no doubt as to my employer's intention. I understood him fully. Did I refuse to continue to play the spy, however, he might find some other person to do so, or even attempt it himself, and ac learn the truth about the gems. Then, did I refuse to act for him, I would lose the ten dollars he gave me for each session. By continuing the work, and lying a little. I might thwart a crime and benefit my own pocket. I reported at 7 as instructed the next evening. This time, after painting my face as carefully as before. Ellis led me to the old house, to the side door of which he had a key. He did not go up to the landing with me. I was to take all the risk of discovery

Again I knelt on the landing, removed the painted face, and prepared to thrust my own through the aperture in the portrait. Ellis had lent me his lantern, and first I examined the bit of canvas carefully It was indeed startingly like my own-I could see that. Ellis' second reason for employing me was plain! So interested was I in it that I was scarcely in position when the old man came into the library with the lamp. I was greatly moved, and had he looked up instantly at the picture instead of sitting down for his nightly game of solitaire he must surely have discovered the imposition. I was composed again ere he rose to bring out his treasure. Again I saw him gloating over the gems-the worship of a pagan before his god! And now I viewed the jewels and their settings with greater care. There was a small cross of peculiar design which had not observed the night before, and a bracelet of ancient workmanship which fixed my attention until the sweat fairly started from my pores and my eyes burned

Suddenly he thrust back paper and all into the box, recovered it, and stumbled down the room towards the secret hiding place. He seemed to glance up at me in fear, and he muttered and mumbled to himself as, with shaking hands, he thrust the box back behind the tile and closed the aperture. He turned again and locked up at the portrait, and I saw that his face worked strangely while his mutterings became audible.

'No peace! no peace!" I heard him say. "They should be mine-they are mine-mine-MINE!"

His voice rose to a half suppressed shrick, and he wrung his hands as though in agony, still staring up at me, You know they are mine!" he cried. "You are dead -long ago. Who knows John Burton now?"

God! the question must have shocked my face into audden life. With a shrick the old ma., fell upon the floor and groveled there.

Don't look at me so! Don't burn me with your eyes! My God! My God!" I knew that the sweat was pouring down my face; but

I was held motionless, and could not even tear my face from the mutilated picture. With another screech, that set all my nerves a-tingle, the miser

relied over upon his face, his body was convuised once, and then layatill! At that I recovered my muscular powers. I burst the remainder of the portrait of John Burton from the

frame and cast it away. The hole in the wall was sufficient for the passage of my body, and there was the top of a bookease just below where tre picture had hung. I scrambled through and dropped from the bookcase to the floor. I

seized the old man and turned him over. He was dead! I stood there for a minute, appalled by the horror of the catastro-

phe. This was not a result which I had looked for. Punishment had overtaken the miser more quickly and certainly than any man could have planned. He was beyond human judgment, or blame or praise. And with this thought came another, I went

swiftly to the fireplace and ran my hand over the tiles. 'Third from the end, second row from the top." found the spring; the door flew open. In a moment the tin box of jewels was in my hands.

And as though this were a signal, on door and window sounded several crashing blows. The door flew inward, driven from its hinges; with a crash of shattered glass one of the casements was demolished; and there leaped into the room through both apertures a crowd of uniformed men-the police!

"Caught in the act! We've been watching for you hanging about here for two nights, my man," declared the leader, who seized me. "Robbery and-yes! murder, by heaven."

Neither," I declared, but he would not listen then,

and one of his men slipped handcuffs upon me. The room became crowded. A doctor came and pronounced the old man's death due to heart failure. 'That clears you of one charge, my man," said the police inspector. "But what about these?" He pointed to uncovered box of gems, and from them to the hole in

the wall. "Those lewels are mine," said a harsh voice, and I saw Eilis pushing through the crowd. "I am Mr. De Villier's nephew-his only relative." "Pardon me," I said. "The jewels are mine.

What's that?" cried the inspector. "Of all the cool ones, you are the cap! You claim the jewels you stole as your own?" 'A man cannot be accused of stealing what is right-

fully his own," I said. "He is mad!" cried Ellis. "Mr. De Villiers owned the

gems. They are-er-family heirlooms."

They are indeed!" I replied. "But they never beonged to De Villiers. They are the Burton jewels, and were left in De Villiers' care by John Burton when he fied the country twenty years ago.

Burton & De Villiers failed, under circumstances that were suspicious. The jewels were all that remained of John Burton's sister's fortune. Burton had squandered the rest of the estate. The jewels could not be sold by the terms of his father's will. He left them in De Villiers' care. In that box you will find a paper, being the copy of a contract between Henry De Villiers and John Burton, to that effect.

"Burton died abroad, and before he could communicate personally with his sister. De Villiers being a miser at heart, failed to make search for the rightful owners of the gems, but has hid himself and the jewels away here all

"Only of late have the rightful owners learned what fohn Burton did with the Burton jewels. And 1 ---It is a lie! an infamous fabrication!" shouted Ellis.

Stop, air. Ellis!" commanded the inspector. Then to "Who are you, sir?" "The son and only heir of that sister who is the rightcover did I dare to turn my eyes in his direction. I was

ful owner of the jewels. In my pocket here," I tapped my breast with my manacled hands, "you will find the original of the contract in the box. Likewise my mother's birth and murriage certificate, my own birth certificate, and papers to prove my uncle's death. I came to this country to search for Henry De Vil-

But they were not glass-D, no! If ever my eyes had looked upon gems of the first water it was here and now! liers; but leing almost penniless my search up to this time Diamonds, rubles, emeralds, pearls-unset as well as set in was quite unsuccessful. Then chance-or Providenceheavy gold-these gems sparkled in a glorious heap upon brew me in that man's way." nodding at Ellia who with the green baize covered table. Lucky it was that the old convulsed features stood aside. 'He dreamed of learning where the old man kept these man did not giance up at the picture then. He would have

seen a distorted visage as my eyes strained to observe jewels, and robbing him of them. He sought to use me as a catspaw-the very man to whom the jewels belong; and the beauties of the wonderful display. But he was too much taken up with them himself. He let them run through his fingers with chuckles of infinite satisfaction-These statements I proved before the court. I return strings of pearls, and rubies, and other flashing stones. now with my fortune to my mother's home. Never again

sed them and whispered to them a though they lived by Moe Levy will appeal to me. Nevertheless, had it not been for the mackintosh I recovered my own composure, and the old miser's

shall I be so poor that such a situation as that offered

facing the fireplace at the farther end of the room. I found that I had to roll my eyes sideways to see what he was about. Had my face not been thrust through the picture I could not have seen him at all. And what he did was no remarkable thing. He drew from a drawer a pack of greasy, well worn cards. So often had they been used they were almost oval in shape. These he shuffled and began laying out in one of the commoner games of solitaire, There was not a sound in the room but the slight rustle of the greasy cards and the sucking of the old man's toothless gums. Minute after minute passed, and never had I suffered so tedious a waiting. My month's experience in the mackintosh masque had prepared me for this ordeal, and I flatter myself that, had the old man glanced up and seen my face, he would not have discovered any more lift in it than he might in the painted portrait. He did glance at me finally. It was when he seemed to have tired of his lonely game and replaced the cards in the drawer. Then he slowly rose, hobbled down the room, and stood for a moment peering up at me. I was suddenly smitten with the thought that, despite the half darkness in the room unless my face was much like that of the portrait, he would discover the deception. But his bleared old eyes seemed to no change, and, after a moment, and with shaking head, he moved on to the fireplace. There he stood as Company of the State of the Sta AN AND MANAGER if hesitating, and finally ran his hand over the rows of small square tiles which filled the space between the opening of the chimney and the mantel. Suddenly one of these tiles swung outward. He thrust in his hand and pried out what seemed to be a piece of brick, and then from behind that brought forth a tin box, perhaps six inches long and four square. It seemed to fit closely into the aperture behind the tile, as though having been made for this very place. With a hoarse chuckle, and bearing the box in both hands, he hobbled back to the table. Not until he was seated again and I heard the rattle of the box

in season to see him raise the box and turn it slowly, let-

ting fall upon the table a perfect shower of gems and

lewelry, which blazed like particolored glass in the lamp-

He buried his face in the heap as it lay before him and

and could understand his caressing words.

one side. Then he produced a pocket electric lantern saw that the plastering and laths beyond the panel had been removed. Beyond this I saw a sheet of paint stained canvas, and knew it at once for the back of a picture. In the center of the picture I saw that a sharp knife had been used to cut out an uneven oval-the size, indeed, of my own face! The pattern he had made the night before was explained. An aperture similar to that he had cut in the sheet of paper had been made in this portrait; but several wafers held the part of the picture cut out in place. Those wafers he quickly loosened and drow out the avail place of canvas. I knew that the picture must hang high

"Listen!" Ellis blesed into my ear. "You are to thrust your face into that aperture. It will then fit exactly into the portrait which I had a chance to prepare this morning. Your face will take the place of the painted

"That much-yes." That is enough for you to understand," he said. "All you are to do is to keep your face and eyes perfectly still, and watch. Watch everything that goes on in that below when the light is brought in

What-what shall I see?" I queried, shrinking from

That I shall not tell you. Remember our bargain." the light from which he cast into the hole in the wall. I had not heard him isave the house, nor did I see upon the wall of a room op the first floor, but there was

fuce. Do you understand?"

he closed the door softly and, taking my hand, led me with a warning "Sh!," up a flight of stairs. On what seemed, in the dark, to be a landing, we halted. The wall by my right was paneled and, after some

iar note, impelled me forward. When I had stepped within

That will be all your work, then."

like. But I won't explain any further now."

my hair and the point of my chin.

he gave me final instructions.

around on the other street."

And what then?

"O, go ahead," I grunted, pocketing the bill.

"That you shall not know until tomorrow night," he

returned, shaking his head and scowling. "Remember, I

tell you that you can drop the matter at any point you

although it kept me awake half the night trying to solve

the mystery. He brought forth a large sheet of heavy

drafting paper, took measurements of the size of my

face and head with the aid of a pair of compasses, and

from these measurements drew on the paper an outline of

my face. This he neatly cut out and then fitted the aper-

ture more Bleely to the contour of my visage. My face

was thrust through the hole in the paper to the roots of

a makeup box yonder. Heighten your color, especially

I obeyed. Again be had me thrust my face through

"I am satisfied," he remarked at last. "That will be

Did ever a man earn \$10 so easily? But, as I say, I laid

awake jong trying to solve the problem he had set me. The

uncertainty, if nothing else, would have brought me

promptly to time the following day. Ellis was no more

my face again, and when I had done so to his satisfaction

I was obliged to muffle up so us to hide the face paint and go out with him. We walked several blocks, and to-

ward the open country. At last coming in sight of a big.

dark house, which set back some distance from the road,

'I am due in yonder to dinner," he said, briefly.

Hang about here within hearing. I shall whistle sharp-

I saw him enter by the front door, after ringing. As I

made a circuit of the house I saw that there was a light

in the kitchen, and likewise in what I supposed was the

dining room on the first floor. All the remainder of the

house was darkened. It was an almost descrited neighbor-

hood. The only soul I saw was a policeman who passed

the corner. Fortunately I was walking steadily at the

time and he favored me with but a single glance. It was

two hours, or more, however, before I heard Ellis' whis-

him; but I obeyed his mandate and opened the side gate.

upon which I stepped doubtfully. It was not until I had

stood there in uncertainty a minute or two that I made

out a door ajar just in front of me.

employer's.

The path before me was weedgrown and led to a porch

Enter!" growled a voice which I recognized as my

Curiosity, as well as a desire to earn another ten dol-

ly when I want you. Enter by a side gate you will find

and he walked off before I could argue the point.

unicative than before. He ordered me to make up

the hole in the paper, backed me up against the wall, and

went to the end of the room to observe the effect.

all tonight. Come here tomorrow afternoon at 5."

under the eyes. Give your face a hard, mask-like appear-

'You seem good at making up," he observed. "There is

What he then did explained nothing whatsoever to me,

"But how?"

I was much disturbed in my mind by this fellow and his manner. I did not trust him, yet his offer was not one to be tossed aside lightly. Ten dollars for an hour's work! A hope that I might stand upon a sure foundation again and be enabled to pursue the task which had brought me to America quickened within me. fumbling. Ellis removed a board and set it carefully to



