

But apparently by this time the Great Brooding Spirit was beginning to take effect. Singing a monotonous, harsh chant, the Indian knelt on the floor, and poured some powder into a little brazier. He was still close to the open window, and finally he sat down with his elbows on his knees, and his head rocking to and fro in his hands.

"Less light—less light!" The words seemed to come from a great distance —ventriloquism in a mild way was one of Lakington's accomplishments; and as the lights went out a greenish, spluttering flame rose from the brazier. A heavy, odorous smoke filled the room, but framed and motionless in the eerie light sat the Indian, staring fixedly in front of him. After a time the chant began again; it grew and swelled in volume till the singer grew frenzied and beat his head with his hands. Then abruptly it stopped.

"Place the box upon the floor," he ordered, "in the light of the Sacred Fire." Hugh saw the duchess kneel down on the opposite side of the brazier, and place the box on the floor, while the faces of the guests—strange and ghostly in the great light—peered like specters out of the heavy smoke. This was undoubtedly a show worth watching.

"Open the box!" Harshly the words rang through the silent room, and with fingers that trembled a little the duchess turned the key and threw back the lid.

"Why, it's empty!" she cried in amazement, and the guests craned forward to look.

"Put not your hand inside," cried the Indian in sudden warning, "or perchance it will remain empty."

The duchess rapidly withdrew her hand, and stared incredulously through the smoke at his impassive face.

"Did I not say that there was power in the box?" he said dreamily. "The power to render invisible—the power to render visible. Thus ample protection to the jewels of the Chow queens."

"That's all right, Mr. Ram Dar," said the duchess a little apprehensively. "There may be power in the box, but my pearls don't seem to be."

The Indian laughed.

"None but you has touched the cabinet, your Grace; none but you must touch it till the pearls return. They are there now; but not for mortal eyes to see."

Which, incidentally, was no more than the truth.

"Look, oh! sahibs, look; but do not touch. See that to your vision the box is empty. . . ." He waited motionless, while the guests thronged round, with expressions of amazement; and Hugh, safe from view in the thick, sweet-smelling smoke, came even nearer in his excitement.

"It is enough," cried the Indian suddenly. "Shut the box, your grace, and lock it as before. Now place it on the table whence it came. Is it there?"

"Yes." The duchess' voice came out of the green fog.

"Go not too near," he continued warningly. "The gods must have space—the gods must have space."

Again the harsh chant began, at times swelling to a shout, at times dying away to a whisper. And it was during one of these latter periods that a low laugh, instantly checked, disturbed the room. It was plainly audible, and someone irritably said, "Be quiet!" It was not repeated, which afforded Hugh, at any rate, no surprise. For it had been Irma Peterson who had laughed, and it might have been hilarity, or it might have been a signal.

"Bring the box, your grace," he cried harshly, and once more the duchess knelt in the circle of light, with a row of dimly seen faces above her.

"Open; but as you value your pearls —touch them not." Excitedly she threw back the lid, and a chorus of cries greeted the appearance of the gold and silver tissue at the bottom of the box.

"They're here, Mr. Ram Dar."

In the green light the Indian's somber eyes stared round the group of dim faces.

"Did I not say," he answered, "that there was power in the box? But in the name of that power—unknown to you—I warn you: Do not touch those pearls till the light has burned low in the brazier. If you do they will disappear—never to return. Watch, but do not touch!"

Slowly he backed toward the window, unperceived in the general excitement; and Hugh dodged rapidly toward the car. It struck him that the seance was over, and he just had time to see Lakington snatch something which appeared to have been let down by a string from above, before turning into the bushes and racing for the car. As it was he was only a second or two in front of the other, and the last vision he had through a break in the trees, before they were spinning smoothly down the deserted road, was an open window in Laidley Towers from which dense volumes of vapor poured steadily out. Of the house party behind, waiting for the light to burn low in the brazier, he could see no sign through the opaque wall of green fog.

It took five minutes, so he gathered afterward from a member of the house before the light had burned sufficiently low for the duchess to consider it safe to touch the pearls.

In various stages of asphyxiation the assembled guests had peered at the box, while the cynical comments of the men were rightly treated by the ladies with the contempt they deserved. Was the necklace not there, wrapped in its gold and silver tissue, where a few minutes before there had been nothing?

"Some trick of that beastly light," remarked the duke peevishly. "For heaven's sake throw the dam' thing out of the window."

"Don't be a fool, John," retorted his spouse. "If you could do this sort of thing, the house of lords might be some use to somebody."

When two minutes later they stared horror-struck at a row of ordinary marbles laboriously unwrapped from a piece of gold and silver tissue, the duke's pungent agreement with his wife's sentiment passed uncontradicted. In fact, it is to be understood that over the scene which followed it was best to draw a decent veil.

THREE.

Drummond, hunched low over the wheel, in his endeavor to conceal his



"Did I Not Say That There Was Power in the Box?" He Said Dreamily.

identity from the man behind, knew nothing of that at the time. And Lakington was far too busy to bother with the chauffeur.

One snarling curse as they had started, for not having done as he had been told, was the total of their conversation during the trip. During the rest of the time the transformation to the normal kept Lakington busy, and Hugh could see him reflected in the wind-screen removing the make-up from his face, and changing his clothes.

Even now he was not quite clear how the trick had been worked. That there had been two cabinets, that was clear—one false, the other the real one. That they had been changed at the crucial moment by the girl Irma was also obvious. But how had the pearls disappeared in the first case, and then apparently reappeared again? For one thing he was quite certain. Whatever was inside the parcel of gold and silver tissue which, for all he knew, they might be still staring at, it was not the historic necklace.

And he was still puzzling it over in his mind when the car swung into the drive at The Elms.

"Change the wheels as usual," snapped Lakington as he got out, and Hugh bent forward to conceal his face. "Then report to me in the central room."

And out of the corner of his eye Hugh watched him enter the house with the Chinese cabinet clasped in his hand. . . .

"Toby," he remarked to that worthy, whom he found mournfully eating a ham sandwich in the garage, "Let's go on the roof."

Silently they both climbed the ladder which had been placed in readiness, to find Peter Darrell and the American detective already in position. A brilliant light streamed out through the glass dome, and the inside of the central room was clearly visible. In the three chairs sat the motionless, bound figures so swathed in rope that only the tops of their heads were visible, just as Lakington had left him and Toby and Algy earlier in the evening. The only moving thing in the room was the criminal himself, and at the moment he was seated at the table with the Chinese cabinet in front of him. With a quick turn of his wrist he pried open two flaps of wood, and folded them back against the side. Then he lifted out a parcel of gold and silver tissue from underneath.

"My hat!" muttered Hugh, "what a fool I was not to think of it! Just a false bottom actuated by closing the lid."

But the American, whistling gently to himself, had his eyes fixed on the rope of wonderful pearls which Lakington was holding lovingly in his hands.

"So easy, you scum," continued Lakington, "and you thought to pit yourselves against me"—he rose and stood in front of the chair where he had last left Drummond. "That fool of a chauffeur failed to carry out my orders, and create a diversion. You will see what happens to people who fail to carry out my orders, in a minute. And after that you'll never see anything again."

"Say, he's a dream—that guy," muttered the American. "What pearls are those he's got?"

"The duchess of Lampshire's," whispered Hugh. "Lifted right under the nose of the whole bally house party."

The four watchers on the roof glued their eyes to the glass. And the sight they saw a moment or two afterward stirred even the phlegmatic Mr. Green.

A heavy door was swinging slowly open, apparently of its own volition, though Hugh, stealing a quick glance at Lakington, saw that he was pressing some small studs in a niche in one of the walls. Then he looked back at the door, and stared dumfounded. It was the mysterious cupboard of which Phyllis had spoken to him, but nothing he had imagined from her words had prepared him for the reality. It seemed to be literally crammed to overflowing with the most priceless loot. Gold vessels of fantastic and beautiful shapes littered the floor; while on the shelves were arranged the most wonderful collection of precious stones, which shone and scintillated in the electric light till their glitter almost blinded the watchers.

The pearls were carefully placed in a position of honor, and for a few moments Lakington stood gloating over his collection.

"Do you see them, Captain Drummond?" he asked quietly. "Each thing obtained by my brain—my hands. All mine—mine!" His voice rose to a shout. "And you pit your puny wits against me." With a laugh he crossed the room, and once more pressed the studs. The door swung slowly to and closed without a sound, while Lakington still shook with silent mirth.

"And now"—he resumed, rubbing his hands—"we will prepare your bath, Captain Drummond. And while it is getting ready, we will just deal with the chauffeur who neglected his orders."

(To Be Continued.)

Early Training Counts

The detail had just arrived near the front lines when the captain looked around and noticed a private, hatless and coatless.

"Where's the rest of your uniform?" he demanded.

"Back where we came from."

"Go back and get it."

The private vanished and later reappeared, correctly uniformed, but without his rifle.

"Where' your gun?'

"Left it back where we came from."

"Listen," bellowed the captain. "You're a fine soldier. What were you in civilian life?"

"Plumber's assistant."—American Legion Weekly.

Read the American Union, $1.00.

Maryland's Negro Population

Washington, D. C., Aug. 24—The population of the state of Maryland as recently announced by the Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, is 83.1 per cent. white and 16.9 per cent Negro. In 1910 the percentage Negro was 17.9.

The Negro population which was 232,250 in 1910, increased to 244,479 in 1920, an increase of 5.3 per cent. The white population in the same period increased from 1,062,639 to 1,204,737 or 13.4 per cent.

About one-fourth (25.9 per cent.) of the white population of the state is of foreign birth or foreign parentage, there being 102,177 foreign-born whites, 143,203 native whites who had foreign born parents, and 66, 269 who had one foreign-born parent, the other being native. The rest of the white population, numbering 893,088, are native Americans born of native American parents. They constitute about three-fourth (74.1 per cent.) of the total white population and about three-fifths (61.6 per cent.) of the total population of the state.

In additon to the whites and the Negroes the total population includes 32 Indians, 371 Chinese, 29 Japanese, 6 Hindus and 1 Korean.

In almost every county of the state the percentage of Negroes has decreased and in 19 of the 24 counties there were also a decrease in the number of Negroes.

The percentage of Negroes in local counties follows: Anne Arundel, 30.9; Caroline, 23.8, a decrease of 1.1 per cent. since 1910; Dorchester, 31.3; Harford, 15.7; Kent, 34.9; Queen Anne

This Is the Hay Fever Season

The hay fever season began on Monday and lasts until the first frost of fall, according to the best traditions, although many unfortunates start their annual suffering toward the end of July.

Besides afflicting hundreds of thousands annually, hay fever has caused many hot disputes in the last decades, not to mention centuries, among medical men, among scientists and many sufferers themselves.

Aside from the hundreds of different remedies, home-brewed, patented, and prescribed, one or two antitoxins also have been announced. But the multitudes have been able to find no sure or lasting relief, it is reported by many members of the Hay Fever Association of America. It is one disease alleged to be more prevalent among low-brows or rough-necks, while some scientists have even said that all hay-fever sufferers are neurotics. Incidentally it has several aliases, some of the most frequent being nose cold, autumnal catarrh and hay cold.

"LIGHTNIN' " CLOSES ITS RECORD NEW YORK RUN

Theatrical Parade Will Bid Farewell to Company and Star

New York, Aug. 23.—A theatrical parade was arranged here today to bid farewell to Frank Bacon, star of "Lightnin', " which ran three years and a day in New York and set a new record run. Famous theatrical stars and civic dignitaries joined in final tribute to the actor. The company is going to Chicago, where the play will open at a theatre there next week.

At the final performance Saturday night Secretary of Labor James J. Davis was present. A letter from President Harding was read.

We've Seen the Last of Tight Money

Money ought to ease up now pretty soon. The bankers cannot apply the screws to legitimate business enterprise any longer with safety to themselves. The bankers' last remaining excuse has been discounted by the action of the Federal Reserve Banks in reducing the discount rate to 5½ per cent.

In other words, the reverse ratio for the country now actually tops 80 per cent, after adding the 35 per cent required against deposits, writes the editor of Sugarman's Indicator. Here is good news for the country at large. The extraordinary facilities extended to the bankers by the Federal Reserve Board cannot fail in making their accumulated reserves, already sky-high, available to the average business man.

In turn this will mean that millions of unemployed workers will soon be returning to their jobs as business picks up and the whole country gets into harness once more. There is every indication that the period of general stagnation has touched bottom never to scrape it again in many moons.

PLUCKY PIGEON FINDS WAY HOME AFTER 18 DAYS

Seventeen days behind has fastest companion, a wind-buffeted but plucky homing pigeon

plucky homing pigeon pushed through the trap that rings the automatic bell at the United States Department of Agriculture poultry husbandry farm at Beltsville Wednesday morning, bearing a message from Mayor Thompson, of Chicago, to Congressman Martin B. Madden, of Illinois. He is the third to reach home out of 10 birds from the farm, which were liberated as part of the Chicago Pageant of Progress, July 30.

One of these broke o world's record by covering the 614½ miles in 27 hours elapsed time, which in the opinion of Albert Jacobson, expert in charge of homing pigeons, means less than 16 hours actual flying. This bird bore a message from Mayor Thompson to President Harding. The speed with which he covered the distance seemed to indicate that he realized the importance of his errand, but when he arived at the home loft he was so overcome with modesty, that he slipped in without even ringing the signal bell. Supt. Jacobson had been making hourly visits to the loft and found him there, and the record was officially clocked at the homing pigeon club. The shortest actual flying time ever made before between the two points was 25 hours.

The second bird, bearing a message to Congressman Britten, arrived August 7. Another, bearing a duplicate message, reached Dry Fork, Va., where it became exhausted and was taken in by a farmer. What misadventures befell the latest arrival in his 18-day journey the attendants are unable to tell. It is supposed that he became weak and was obliged to stop and search for food and shelter. That he was able to resume his flight and find his way is regarded at Beltsville as a remarkable exhibition of the homing instinct.

A Pioneer of Thrift

"A rather seedy looking old fellow."

"That's Zeke Toppit," said Squire Witherbee. "Ever hear of Zeke?"

"I never did."

"He's the village miser. Zeke went on a buyers' strike forty years before the World War and he's still out."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Three Parties To A Telephone Call

IT is always well to remember that good telephone service does not depend entirely upon the operator.

There are two other persons involved—the person calling and the person answering—and over their movements the operator has no control. She may do her part very efficiently, but unless the others co-operate, the best results will not be had.

It is not the fault of the operator, for instance, if the calling party, relying on his memory, calls for a wrong number or hangs up his receiver in the middle of a conversation. Neither is it the fault of the operator if the called party fails to answer promptly or is already engaged in conversation with another person.

Good telephone operating is brought about by co-operation on the part of the party calling, the operator and the party called.

The Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company

R. C. Harris, Manager

(A)

HOCHSCHILD, KOHN & Co.

About Your Fall Shopping—

With the coming of the new season, you have begun already to formulate a list of "needs" in your mind.

If you had a friend in the city of Baltimore you could trust to select these "needs," wouldn't it be a pleasure to sit down and write her a long letter about them? Miss Harriet Knight, of Hochschild, Kohn & Co., would be glad to have you look upon her as this sort of "friend"—she would take an interest in your wants for the autumn season—and she enjoys shopping. Describe yourself when you write—that is Miss Knight's only way of judging what would suit you exactly.

Practically every type of figure can wear becomingly an "up-to-the-minute" suit this fall. There are both short and very long coats—and most of them are strictly tailored. Tailored blouses of crepe de Chine, mignonette and batiste will accompany them. You will need undergarments, corsets, hose, shoes, gloves and other accessories.

HARRIET KNIGHT SHOPS WITH YOU OR FOR YOU

HOCHSCHILD, KOHN & Co.

BALTIMORE, MD.

(11)

Messages to Seekers of Success

Your Business Partner

It is a good bank's duty to assist its clients in the solution of their problems — whether they be the problems of a merchant or a farmer. Both are business men.

In fulfilling this moral obligation, we like to consider our organization as your business partner — interested in your success and eager to forward your plans.

Confidential Counsel

If you wish sound advice in seeking credit, making investments, or even the more personal problems of your business you will be welcomed here. You will find a talk with our officers helpful.

This service is in addition to those commonly attributed to banks and is a mark of our appreciation for your account.

We want to show you that this bank wants your business. And we want to show you the many practical benefits you receive through placing it here.



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