

The MYSTERY OF THE SILVER DAGGER

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. WEIL

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MARIE GESSLER.

Synopsis.—In a New York jewelry store Philip Severn, United States consular agent, notices a small box which attracts him. He purchases it. Later he discovers in a secret compartment a writing giving a clue to a revolutionary movement in this country seeking to overthrow the Chilean government. The writing mentions a rendezvous, and Severn decides to investigate. Finding the place mentioned in the writing apparently deserted, Severn visits a saloon in the vicinity. A woman in the place is met by a man, seemingly by appointment, and Severn, his suspicions aroused, follows them. They go to the designated meeting place, an abandoned iron foundry. At the rendezvous Severn is accepted as one of the conspirators and admitted. He meets a stranger who addresses him as Harry Daly. The incident plays into Severn's hands and he accepts it. His new acquaintance is a notorious thief, "Gentleman George" Harris. Concealed, Severn hears the girl he had followed address the conspirators. She urges them to hasten the work of the revolution. The girl discloses Severn's presence and he explains to her his presence and makes an appointment to meet her next day. He tells her his name is Daly. Harris informs him of a scheme he has to secure a sum amounting to \$100,000, the revolutionary fund, and offers to "split" with him. Severn accepts the proposition. Severn learns it was his new friend and a "Captain Alva" who had lost the box which started him on the trail.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

"And then, of course, you hunted up Alva?"

"The next morning, before any bank opened. I thought over it all night and got up a peach of a story. I needed it, too, for this Alva was a smooth guy. It took some nerve to get him, but I knew, through Horner's memorandum, some things about him he never supposed was known up in this country; so when I sprung them, natural-like, he quit being offish, and gave me the glad hand."

"Who is he? A crank?"

"Not by a d-d sight. He's a captain in the Chilean army, military attaché to the embassy at Washington. I trusted with certain work. But he's really working to overthrow the present Chilean government—gettin' up a revolution down there. I lied until I was black in the face, but I must have kept within bounds, for he got to liking me real well. He was a high-roller, and I put him onto some things in New York he had never been steered against before. That made a bit with him. There wasn't nothing said about cashing up all day long, and early the next morning we breezed into a downtown hotel, and went to bed."

"What hotel?"

"Search me. We'd been tanking up on champagne and were drunker in the morning than when we turned in. That's the honest truth. All either of us wanted for breakfast was a cup of coffee. We got that at a little dump on some side street, so as to brace up a little." He paused to laugh at the recollection, helping himself to a third cigar.

"And you actually retain no knowledge of where you spent the night?"

"Not the faintest glimmer. Can you beat it? Alva lost part of a letter somewhere, and a curious sort of box he had picked up in Chinatown. He put them both in his pocket, so he says, but that was the last he ever saw of either. Queer looking box that was; nothing I cared about, but it cost the guy a hundred bucks, and he was daffy over it. Anyhow, that night put me solid with Alva."

"But the money? He's never drawn it?"

"Not a dinky red. He claims the time hasn't come yet, and that it's safer with Krantz. But I've stuck to him like a brother and he's took me in with his gang, so now I know every move that's going on. I'm on the inside, all right, and now it's beginning to get hot."

"They are ready to act?"

"Sure; that's what the meeting was about tonight."

"What are they after—ships?"

"Well, they've got to have some, but mostly arms; then there is a guy down there who's got to be croaked. I don't care what it is; when the time comes they won't find a handful of change to act with. I'm some patriot, I am, and I'll put a bigger crimp in their sails than the whole United States government secret service."

"But see here, Harris," soberly, "how do you know you are going to get this? Of course, I see the game the way you've mapped it out, but suppose Krantz pays in check, or draft. That spikes your gun."

"H—l, yes; but he won't. I've sized up this man Krantz. He's in the game for money. He don't care who wins

the d—n revolution, for he gets his share out of the pot right away. He's playing the game secretly on his own account. Get that? He expects it may be a year, or perhaps two, before he can cash in on the deal, but when it does come his share of profit will be likely a hundred thousand. That beats bank interest, and the old bird is willing to take the chance."

"Quite likely that's true; no bank would finance such a project."

"Of course not—the directors would throw a fit. Well, now, that kind of a guy, in on a raw deal like this, is going to play safe, isn't he? He isn't going to leave any evidence lying around to hang himself with—any drafts, or checks to pass through the clearing house? Not on your life; he is too wily a fox for that. Krantz knew this was coming, and he's been cashing in for six months or more to be ready for it. And now he's got the currency stored away, nobody knows where but himself. When Alva comes for it, it will be handed out secretly, and that old bird will crumple up the receipt in his pocket and wait till he can cash in through those guys in London. So now it's up to us to locate the dough; we've got to separate it from either Krantz, or Alva—I'm for Alva."

"Why?"

"Because the job looks easier. He's human and no money grubber. He's just as liable as not to carry the whole wad around with him; d—n it. I think that's just what he will do, for he won't dare deposit such a sum anywhere. That's why I have laid back so long, without attempting to strike—I'm banking on the army captain to offer me a soft thing. What do you say?"

I had the whole story now in a nutshell and it was one to think over. That Harris had played his cards well was sufficiently evident. Now I must be fully as cautious in playing mine. I felt the fellow had given me his full confidence; actually believing me to be Daly, and on the same trail with him; desiring to use me in what was probably the biggest job of his life. He had been led into the indiscretion of confiding to me the full truth of his scheme. If I kept my head and nerve, I had it in my power to block everything and thus bring the whole gang to swift justice. I realized the danger of such an attempt, the immediate peril of endeavoring to accomplish this alone, yet at the moment perceived no other way. I must remain Daly and appear eager to obtain my share of the spoils.

"A slick piece of work, Harris," I admitted admiringly, "and so far as I can judge you have figured out the chances about right. They look good, I'm with you, old man—shake!"

Our hands clasped. "That is what I thought you would say, Harry," more familiarly. "Come on now and drink with me."

I put the stuff down, rather feeling the need of it, and desiring to establish our intimacy more closely.

"Then that's settled, George—yes, I'll have another cigar. By the way," as I lit up, "there was another thing I wanted to ask you about. You said there was a woman here from Washington. What's the idea?"

"D—n if I know, but I guess it's all right. Still I don't quite cotton to the dame. This is how I get it from Alva. Those junta fellows—the big ones, you know—think this New York bunch is pretty slow; they want some action for their money. So Senor Mendez, who seems to be engineering the deal, decides to send somebody over here to stir up the criminals. But he's watched every minute; secret service men are as thick as flies, and if one of his underlings was to leave for New York, he'd never get ten feet without being spotted. Mendez is wise to this, so he gathers in privately a skirt he believes is all right, and sends her. It's not a decent job for a woman, and that's what makes it safe. He made a good guess, too; that female is as smart as a steel trap. She gave me the cold shivers."

"You don't think she suspects you?"

"No, I don't; there ain't no reason why she should; but she gave me the once over, all right, and I am perfectly willing to know she is on her way back to Washington. I never did play in any luck with a woman in the game—perhaps that's what makes me afraid of 'em."

"What's her name?"

"Gessler, so Alva said—Marie Gessler; South American, I suppose; anyhow, she talked that language like a native. I stowed clear of her most of the time. Somehow she got my goat. However, that's nothing to worry over." He glanced at his watch. "The dame's safely off by this time. What do you say—let's go home."

I signified my willingness.

As we pressed out together through the narrow passage, extinguishing the lights behind us, the one overpowering

desire in my mind was to be once more alone, so as to think over, and piece together as best I might this fabric of villainy with which I was confronted. The situation was fairly clear, yet there were strange lights and shadows in it I found hard to reconcile. Moreover, what should I do? How could I serve best—by immediately telling my story to the officers of the law, and thus washing my hands clean? or by continuing to enact the role of Harry Daly, and in this way entrapping these fellows red-handed? I had had fully enough of Harris for the present. His boastfulness and pride of crime disgusted me. I had no desire to be associated with the fellow, or pretend, even for a worthy purpose, to be his companion. Yet, all this had happened so suddenly and unexpectedly I could not determine the best course to pursue. I remained dazed and confused, the only clear decision being an eagerness to bring him, and these others also, to justice.

We were the last to leave the place, and emerged from the building into the deserted yard, leaving all in silence and darkness behind us. The door closed tightly, secured by a night-draft, and we stood motionless in the drizzle. By that time I was ready with a suggestion, but by good fortune he took the initiative.

"We better slip out of here alone, I reckon," he whispered. "I'll go up this way, and then you take a sneak through the lumber yard. Likely we'll catch the same car going down. If we don't, look me up at Costigan's place—you know where that is?"

"Sixth avenue, isn't it?"

"Sure. Ask for Parker, and it will be all right. If I ain't in, leave a note where I can hunt you up. I got to keep my eye on Alva tomorrow, so he don't get away with the stuff."

"You expect him to draw?"

"Not before night; but, just the same, I want to know for sure. You wait here five minutes, for I've got the longest trip to make. You'll show up all right?"

"You can't lose me; it looks too good."

He chuckled and patted me on the shoulder in an excess of friendliness, evidently feeling to some extent the whisky he had been imbibing so freely.

"That's the talk, Daly. Well, so long."

He slipped out through the gate into the dark of the alley, leaving it slightly ajar for me to follow. I sheltered myself behind the high board fence and listened to the soft slush of his feet in the mud. The sound vanished, and all about was silence and darkness. I waited only long enough to be sure he was safely out of the way, and then followed, eager to be off. One thing was certain, I would make no effort to join him on the car; I would use the remainder of the night to decide the future, working out the problem alone.

To make certain that I avoided any possibility of encountering the fellow again, I passed directly through the deserted lumber yard before emerging upon Gans street. This thoroughfare was at this hour desolate enough, not a light showing in the houses, or a moving figure visible as far as I could see in the dimness of the street lamps. The rain was steady, the pavement shimmering with moisture, the only sound the pattering of the drops as they fell. If any policemen were abroad I saw no signs, and, with collar turned up to my ears, I chose to walk rather than seek the block to the east and the possibility of a street car.

The factory district ended in a row of houses, dark and silent at this hour, but the walking was good, and I pushed forward briskly, so buried in thought as to become practically insensible to the unpleasant surroundings. The night had been a full one far exceeding my expectations, yet left me more puzzled than ever as to my own duty. So far I knew of no act of crime with which these men could be connected; they were merely proposing a future attack on a neutral government. If, however, I consented to play my part with Harris, I would not only be in ample time to circumvent any danger Alva and his gang might contemplate, but also gain ample evidence for their conviction and expulsion from this country. In addition to this I would be in position to block the daring plans of this international thief. Altogether it seemed to me that the wiser course for me to pursue was to wait, and watch, ready to act at any moment, but keeping my own council until certain that the specific moment had arrived.

Nor was I oblivious to the strange impression left upon me by my encounter with Marie Gessler. She had interested me oddly, and I could not drive her memory from my thoughts. Our moment of conversation had been peculiar, and her words and actions remained as a constraint. Why had she stood there, her hand on the door, and talked to me in that mocking way? Had she a purpose, an aim? Did she believe my explanation? or was her suspicion aroused into a determination to verify it in some way? Although I could not decide, yet doubtless the latter theory was the most probable. That was why I had been pledged to call at "247 Le Compte street," and ask for "Miss Conrad." This was the same place where Harris had secretly met Krantz. Evidently it was another headquarters for these precious villains. Once there, and safely in their power, the truth of my identity could easily be established. Was that her idea?

The Silver Dagger!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HATS OF THE HOUR

Parisiennes Are Devoted to the Cloche Shapes.

Enormous Picture Types, Worn by Pretty Women, Are Conspicuous at the Races.

At the fashionable race meetings and in all the smartest restaurants, asserts a Paris fashion writer, one recognizes that a war of hats is in full swing. Quite early in the spring season Lewis—who has great influence in the feminine world—announced the speedy arrival of very large picture hats, with wide, flat brims and rather low crowns.

And side by side with these models he showed—at Monte Carlo and Biarritz—cavalier hats of remarkable outline, the sort of hat that Cecile Sorel has always worn.

Now it happens that the more eclectic Parisiennes have become devoted to cloche shapes—large and small. In fact, so devoted were they to these charming styles that nothing can induce them to look, seriously, at other models. The favorite hat of the hour remains the cloche—large or small.

At the races one sees enormous picture hats worn by very pretty women, but these are almost always mannequins, who have been paid to show off some particular style. It is a rare thing to see a real Parisian elegant wearing a remarkably wide-brimmed hat. We shall watch this little military war with interest.

At least two of the most influential milliners in Paris are determined to make big flat-brimmed picture hats popular, but no one can say, decidedly, that this effort will be really successful.



Hot of 'Avaling' Pink Organdie and Black Crepe De Chine With Black Waxed Leaves

Little Cloche in Black and Crêpe De Chine With Red Enamel of Lorraine

ful—just as no one can predict the future of the quaint 1830 dresses which are now shown in every important exhibition of models.

At any rate it is safe to say that modified cloche shapes will remain fashionable all through the summer months and well into the autumn.

Jeweled Ornaments.

Jeweled ornaments catch up the draperies of dance frocks. Turquoise cabochon surrounded with brilliants or cameos are particularly fashionable for this purpose. The new corsets are designed to give an absolutely flat back, but are slightly higher over the bust and the sides curve inward a trifle. Black silk jersey corsets are extremely popular with Parisiennes now.

If Gloves Wear.

If your otherwise good gloves have worn through at the finger tips, turn them inside out and stitch around the tips of them. Then pull them together and they will have the finish of a new glove.

HOW HATS MAY BE RENEWED

Ironing and Bleaching Simple Matter Which May Be Easily Accomplished at Home.

A hat which becomes limp with dampness may be restored by pressing it with a warm iron over a damp cloth. A white straw or leghorn hat, writes a correspondent, may be bleached by washing with soap and lukewarm water after which it should be well brushed with oxalic acid solution or a paste of lemon juice and sulphur. If the oxalic acid forms bubbles when poured on a clean white pine board it is too strong for use and should be diluted. If the straw is brittle and soap and water cannot be used on it, it should be well brushed before using the oxalic acid and rinsed with clear water afterwards. The hat may be dried by covering it with a cloth and pressing with a warm iron or placing it in the sun.

Black straw hats may be cleaned with a piece of velvet which has been dipped in gasoline. If it is still not black enough after this process is finished it may be dyed with commercial dyes. Colored straw hats may be cleaned and colored in the same way. Most commercial dyes come in dark sauces and may be diluted by the use of a neutral liquid. A straw hat may be reshaped by dampening the brim and bending it to the shape desired.

Faded flowers which are soiled should be cleaned first by shaking them in gasoline, after which water colors and oil paints mixed with gasoline may be used to tint them. If the whole flower is to be colored it may be dipped in the bowl of coloring,

WRAP AND NECKPIECE



This stunning wrap and neckpiece in violet and angora wool makes a charming outfit for summer wear.

FASHION BRIEFS

Embroideries show an oriental influence.

Wool trotteurs are smartly trimmed with latticed ribbon.

The Florentine neckline is seen in almost every dressy afternoon gown.

In frocks the skirts are nearly always more elaborate than the bodices.

The newest fans are of dyed coque feathers mounted in tortoise shell.

A perky little vest of white linen embroidered with black silk livens up the dark tailleur.

No spring wardrobe is complete without the popular canton crepe frock. It is all the rage just now.

The smart shops are showing all-black underwear. Even milady's night robe is a thing of clinging black lines and laces.

Several smart hats have a high back trimming which simulates Spanish combs. These often are made of lace or plaited mallines.

Evening gowns still show a predilection for gray—and if it is not gray, then it verges on it by being a soft violet mauve or lustrous blue.

As the season progresses one will see the gay hats bedecked with cherries, which are now being worn uncovered, draped with black lace which in many cases will reach to the elbow. The lace invariably is very soft.

In this season of utter simplicity deep folds of the material are often the only trimming allowed—and, by the way, they are very smart. A charming organdie dress is thus fashioned, the waist and skirt each trimmed with three horizontal folds.

Unity of Decoration.

It is charming to match the curtains, bedspreads, lamp shades and bureau scarf with a touch of hand embroidery on each. Pretty and easy to achieve the hand touch is applied silk or cotton crepe in a floral or fruit design. Just a single motif on each article gives a unity of decoration that is pleasing.

Cor-Wreck.

Al Bert—"How do these love triangles usually end?" Phil Bert—"Most of them turn into a wreck-tangle."—Science and Invention.

LAND IN DEMAND

Why Western Canada Can Take Her Pick of Settlers.

Opportunities and Conditions There Appeal to the Most Desirable—Possibilities of Country Proved.

While Canada wants settlers, and is pursuing every legitimate means to secure them, it is realized, as pointed out by Hon. J. A. Calder, minister of immigration and colonization, that selection is necessary, and in order to keep undesirable out of the country legislation is passed that will doubtless have this effect. As pointed out by the minister, the class of settlers which Canada stands most ready to welcome are those who desire:

Opportunity to acquire good farm land, either free or at a cost within their means.

Opportunity to live in a country under healthful conditions and liberal laws and among an intelligent and friendly people.

Opportunity to live in a country where children receive free public education and where all children are enabled to start in the battle of life with, as nearly as possible, equal advantages.

Opportunity to live in a country where industry applied to the land will produce something more than the bare necessities of life, and will afford within reasonable time comfort and independence.

Opportunity to live in a country where ambition is not handicapped by any creed, birth, or class, but where every citizen has the right to aspire to the highest position in his or her chosen walk in life.

These are the conditions which will appeal to the most desirable people for this or any country, conditions which, to a certain degree, make an automatic selection of the fittest.

Canada possesses farm lands in large areas which may be had free or at a cost within the reach of the settler of limited means. Vast areas are available for settlement within reasonable distances of railways. Land values have in the last quarter of a century received a tremendous impetus, so that any good farm land which can still be secured in its raw state at reasonable prices is an attraction. Such lands today are probably more attractive to the settler than were the free homesteads of the pioneer era. The country has been tried out; its possibilities have been proved; the trails have been blazed; the foundations have been laid. Railroads, telephones and public roads have been provided; market towns dot the prairies and other agricultural districts; schools, churches, and all the marks of modern conditions of life abound. Records which have been taken over a period of years establish the fact that Western Canada's grain production is greater per acre than that of probably any other new country. It is worthy of note that the production of grain per acre in many of the older countries has increased with the intensified farming methods which the very high cost of land made necessary. This condition does not yet obtain to any extent in Canada, and yet the yield compares favorably with some such countries in which the cost of land is very much greater than it is in the farming districts of the Dominion. In most cases present owners of Canadian farm land who are not cultivating it themselves are willing to sell at moderate prices and on terms arranged for the convenience of the purchaser, provided that the purchaser is prepared to go into actual operation and bring the land under cultivation and cause it to produce. That is the kind of settler which Canada wants and to whom it extends open arms.—Advertisement.

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To seal in the delicious Burley flavor

It's toasted.

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