

The MYSTERY OF THE SILVER DAGGER

BY RANDALL PARRISH

AUTHOR OF "THE STRANGE CASE OF CAVENDISH"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY AWEIL

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CHAPTER XII—Continued.

"Look to the right! What is that?" It was a dull, red glow, a mere pin-point in the black curtain, yet it seemed to change in brilliancy, like an evil eye winking at us out of the dark. There was something uncanny about the thing, yielding me no suggestion as to what it could be, yet frightening by its baleful gleam at such a time and place. Then there was borne to my nostrils the faint odor of tobacco smoke; it must be a man sitting there smoking; what we saw was the red tip of his cigar.

Could we slip by unheard? I doubted it, yet whatever happened, one of us, at least, must escape from the house before any alarm was sounded. There was but one chance left—for her to slip silently down that other flight of stairs to the street door, while I remained behind to protect her flight. If there was no alarm, no notice taken of her passage, possibly I might venture to follow without being overheard; but she must go first, her step was light, and she was more sure of the way. Besides, I could block pursuit by a fight if necessary, and thus give her ample time in which to unchain and open that front door. Once without, these fellows would never follow. I put my lips close against the girl's ear.

"It is a guard there smoking. Don't try to answer, but do exactly as I say. One of us, at least, must get out; you stand the better chance, with my remaining behind to hold these fellows back if there should be any alarm. If there is not, I'll follow. Do you understand?—answer with your hand."

I felt the firm pressure of her fingers in quick response.

"The fellow evidently hasn't heard anything yet—you better go."

I felt her creep past me without a sound, her hand slipping from my grasp as her foot touched the level floor of the hall. She was invisible, no longer even a shadow in the black gloom. Then suddenly from somewhere a chain clanked faintly; the ear could not determine from what direction the sound came, yet it was clear enough to be heard plainly. The man stood still, evidently listening; I lost sight of the red glow, as though he had removed the cigar from between his lips and slowly straightened myself up, braced for any emergency. She had reached the outside door, and was preparing to open it. For an instant nothing happened. Then the sharp, resounding click of a heavy lock echoed up from beneath, like the tap of a hammer.

The fellow snapped on the electricity, flooding the large hall, and uttering a gruff oath, started forward. We met face to face. There was nothing else for it but to fight it out. If I ran the act would only expose her before she could distance pursuit; besides that first glimpse had revealed my antagonist, and I was glad—it was "Gentleman George"! He knew me almost at the same instant, spitting out a curse as he reached back for his gun.

"You, hey! How the h—l did you get down here!"

But I was quicker, the move ready, gripping the wrist, and twisting the arm back until the torture caused him to drop the weapon, as we struggled back across the width of the hall. We were both weaponless, relying only on the efficacy of bare hands, but he turned into a savage, a dangerous fighter who cared only to disable his opponent in any way possible. It was like battling with a wild cat, infuriated, crazed with hate and fear. And for the moment the fellow had me, driving me back against the rail, helpless before the fierceness of his assault.

Some one was coming. I could hear a voice, and flying steps on the stairs; then a woman's scream somewhere above. I broke away, getting a grip on his throat, and feeling my feet firm on the floor. He could see what I couldn't, and found voice in spite of my throttling.

"It's that d—d skunk, Severn, got out. Hit him, Ivan! Smash in, I've got the guy—quick now!"

I whirled with him, ducking my own head behind his shoulder, gaining as I did so one blurred glimpse of Waldron as he swung full at me with what looked like the leg of a chair. Harris caught the full force of the blow just over his eyes and the power of it, added to the swirl of my arms, sent him hurtling along the rounded rail, heading down the stairs. Waldron stood paralyzed, stunned, his hands still on the club, his eyes following that flying figure. With all my strength I drove a fist flat to his face, and, as he reeled, stumbling backward, endeavoring to retain his feet, I sprang past, and raced down the steps.

The body lay at the bottom motionless, huddled up in such fashion as to block the door. Without a doubt but that the man was dead, I thrust the form to one side, leaped through the opening, and crashed the door behind me.

I turned to the left, afraid of the bright lights, and the street-cars, and plunged into the depths of the alley. I may have gone a mile, twisting and turning before I came to what evidently was a small hotel. Here I encountered a cab, an old horse cab, the driver half asleep inside. An odd-time cabby was not liable to care who his fare might be so long as he was well paid. Encouraged by this reflection, I stepped over to the curb.

"Engaged, my man?"

He came to life in an instant, tumbling out of his comfortable quarters to face me.

"No sir. I never heard you comin', sir. Bin a bit quiet about here to-night."

He stopped, as though just noticing my appearance under the dim street lights.

"Yer bin hurt, sir?" he asked solicitously. "Yer coat's all tore, and there's some blood on yer face."

"A small fight, that's all, in a saloon over west. Any place around here where I could wash up?"

"Sure; right in yere; there ain't nobody 'round to bother. I'll show you."

He opened a little side-door, and I followed down a narrow hallway to a small washroom, flung off my coat, and filled a basin with water. The cabby turned up the light, and watched me curiously. He was evidently delighted to have some one to companion with at this weird hour of the morning.

"They got yer one good 'un, anyhow," he remarked. "Feller whut struck yer must've hed a ring on ter make that gash."

"There were two of them," I answered, spluttering through the water I was using liberally. "I may have hurt one of the fellows, so you keep still—will you?"

"Me! Shucks, I don't talk about my fares none. That ain't business. I picked one up night before last down by the west-side docks, who'd been in some kind of a fracas—anyhow, he was sure scared half ter death. Looked like a foreigner, an' was draggin' a grip 'long with him. Got off at Jersey ferry, I reckon."

"When was that?" I was using the towel by this time, eying the loquacious speaker over the edge.

"'Night afore last, 'bout midnight; I'd hed a fare down that way, an' was drivin' back empty, when he hollered to me to stop. Gosh, the feller tumbled in like there was a ghost after him, an' sed I was ter drive like h—l."

"Had a grip with him, did he?"

"Yep; black, 'bout medium size. The fellow wasn't overly big himself, an' it was quite a lug for him; it bumped against his legs when he toted it. I wouldn't a thought nothin' more 'bout it, only I got hol' of a paper, an' read how there was a guy croaked that same night over in Jersey. It sorter made me think of this feller, just because he was so d—d scared. It was sorter funny where he had me set him down, too after midnight that way."

"Where was that?"

"Colmar buildin' on Broad street. Wan't a darn light from top to bottom. He didn't let me pull up there—not by a d—n sight. I had ter let him out a block away, around the corner. But somehow I sorter wanted ter know just where the bloke went, so I slipped off the box, an' took a peek. He turned in there, where it was blacker than a stack of black cats, an' that's the last I seen of him. S'pose he was the duck who did that job sir?"

"He might have been, of course. Did you report it to the police?"

"Lord, no; if us fellers told the cops half we know they wouldn't get no sleep at all. I ain't sed nothin' to nobody. Ready to go now, sir?"

CHAPTER XIII.

In the Colmar Building

His horse was not a fast traveler, yet this afforded me time to think over my own situation, as well as this clew so unconsciously furnished me by the loquacious driver. The chances were that this mysterious passenger of two nights before had no connection with the Alva case; yet there remained a possibility. The hour, the place, his evident fear of pursuit, his eager desire to get out of sight, the heavy bag he carried, and his being a foreigner of some kind, all combined to stimulate my suspicion. Who the fellow could be was beyond guess. The Colmar building! My recollection of the place was vague,

a huge pile on Broad near Wall, devoted largely to brokers' offices, absolutely deserted at night, except by scrubwomen and a watchman or two. A tenant might slip in at such an hour, yet he would be fortunate indeed to escape the observation of some one along the halls, or on the staircase. I felt confident a careful questioning among the night employees would give some line on the identity of the man, even if there should prove no other means of locating him.

One thing was settled; I must go back to the hotel. If I was to pay my bill and depart I would lose all connection with Marie Gessler; she would then possess no means of finding me. I could not seek her, but she possessed my address, and must surely endeavor to communicate with me before night. The only thing, then, was to remain and wait for her to call. Yet this surely exposed me to the danger of arrest, if Waldron named me to the police in connection with the death of Harris.

Yet by this time I was firmly convinced that the Russian would either lie outright in the affair—claiming that Harris' injuries had resulted wholly from a fall downstairs in the dark—or else would swear them upon some unknown invader who had escaped after knocking him senseless. Certainly he would never reveal the truth, unless compelled to do so. To do so would queer his whole game.

That is, it would if his game was anything as I had hoped it out. If he, working alone, or with some accomplice, as now appeared more probable, had been concerned in the Alva murder, his main object at present would assuredly be to escape detection, and get a division of the spoils. His one desire would be to remain out of sight, and in order to do this he must shield me from arrest.

I awoke at eleven, rested and with a clear brain. Nothing had occurred to disturb me, and, as I looked at the watch and realized the hour, felt no longer a doubt but what Waldron had found some way in which to protect us both. Eager to look over the noon editions myself, I dressed rather hurriedly, and descended to the lobby. The paper secured was devoid of particulars, "Gentleman George" Harris, well known to the police, had been found dead in the hallway of a rooming house on Le Comptre street, operated by Mrs. Sarah Waldron. It is believed to have been a thieves' quarrel from the evidence of those in the house, who heard the sounds of a struggle, and saw a strange man escape through the front door. There were no arrests, although the police were searching for certain parties who might be implicated.

So far so good; but now what about the Russian? He had evidently escaped suspicion, yet would be far from easy in his own mind. The situation in which he found himself would only serve to increase his desire to secure the money, and get safely away while the going was good. If he actually knew where such money was to be had, he would scarcely delay seeking it. If he had personally hidden that bag of currency taken from Alva, he would be after the stuff within twenty-four hours; while if another held it, he would as surely seek the fellow out, and demand his share. This gave me two lines to follow; I might locate Waldron, and shadow him; or I might see what discoveries I could make in the Colmar building. The better chance seemed to me lay in Broad street. I ate a deliberate lunch, planning how best to proceed, and hoping some belloy would call me to the telephone. I finished the meal uninterrupted.

Both Wall and Broad streets were busy enough when I showed my passage through the shifting crowds of men hurrying in every direction, and reached the edge of the curb, gazed upward at the ornamental front of the Colmar building.

I took an elevator to the twelfth floor, and walked slowly from end to end of the marble corridor, reading the names on the glass doors as I passed. I met but few people and attracted no attention, passing down the stairway to the floor below. Growing more pessimistic as I proceeded, I had reached the fifth floor, when, as I turned at the front of the iron stairs, my glance rested on the letters stenciled along the frosted glass opposite—"Mutual Investment Company, Gasper Wine, Manager." I stopped still, my heart beating wildly, feeling that I had stumbled blindly on the very thing I had been seeking. Gasper Wine was the name of the man who, through accident, had opened to me the door leading into the Alva factory; the man who had left me alone in the entry while he disappeared to talk with Alva privately in the little side-room. Gasper Wine! For the first time I really believed the old hack driver was right—he had actually picked up just such a fare, logging a bag with him, and driven the fellow to this place at midnight. I had never connected the crime with Wine before—yet why not? He was among those present; he had been alone with Alva; he doubtless knew of the transferring of the money; and he answered fully the description of the man the cabby had picked up near the Jersey docks.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Country Life Is Sweet.

The best and most hopeful feature in any people is undoubtedly the instinct that leads them to the country to take root there, and not that which sends them flocking to the town and its distractions. The lighter the snow the more it drifts; and the more frivolous the people the more they are blown by one wind or another, into towns and cities.—John Burroughs.

NOVEL WRAP COAT

Attractive French Model Has Instant Success.

Royal Garment Made of Dark Sapphire Blue Duvelyn Lined With Smoke Gray Suede.

A very novel and attractive autumn wrap coat designed by a prominent Paris molder of fashion was recently launched at Biarritz, writes a fashion correspondent, and had an instant success. It was taken over to San Sebastian, to be shown to the golden-haired Queen of Spain, and she at once ordered one.

This royal garment is made of dark sapphire blue duvelyn, lined with smoke gray suede, and the buttons are gray horn, finely carved. An ideal wrap for driving on a chilly autumn afternoon.

The original model was made of heavy black satin and lined with suede in the natural shade of beige. The buttons were carved ivory and the immense gauntlet gloves, which are buttoned up on the sleeves, were made of suede, in exactly the same color as the lining.

These exaggeratedly large gauntlet gloves are going to play a role in the world of fashion this coming winter. They are exact copies of the gauntlet gloves worn by "The Three Musketeers" of Dumas fame, but a novel note is struck by the buttons which attach them to the coat sleeves.

I have seen the same idea expressed in a variety of materials, pale gray suede buttoned up on gray velours de

DISREGARD LENGTH OF SKIRT

Designers of the Rue de La Paix are creating skirts in every variety of measurement. Here is one of medium length, but noticeable fullness, criss-crossed with plaited ruchings. The bodice is plain but for bands of the same trimming at wrist and shoulder. All is of taffeta.



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NECKLACE ADDS TO OUTFIT

Chains and Beads of Gay Colors Enhance Beauty of the Costumes for Sport Wear.

Necklaces are not worn with formal frocks now unless the ornament be a string of handsome pearls or of beads that add distinction, not mere color, to the costume. It is the sport costume that calls for odd and colorful neck trinkets, and the trinket carries out the color scheme of the costume, matching sport hat or sweater and giving added emphasis to other color notes in the costume.

The bright necklace looks very well also over a white blouse, or on the bodice front of a linen sport frock. An interesting necklace has a pendant covered with tiny beads in black and white. Still another hanging ornament for a necklace or sashlet ribbon suggests a cluster of toy balloons hanging down, not floating upward. The tiny balloons are colored glass beads and the combined hues are gay and pretty with a sport costume.

REAL COLLARS FOR NIGHTIES

Decoration for Fall and Winter Garments Finished With Lace or Embroidered Edging.

The new lines of fall and winter undergarments show many nightgowns equipped with short sleeves, just above the elbow. Some sleeves are straight and plain, others flare in bell-shape, while the little puff sleeves finished with bands of lace, embroidery or ribbon are featured. Real collars, not merely low neck line finished with lace or embroidery edging, are shown on many new nightgowns, a tailored silk model seen having a collar much like those appearing on tailored silk blouses, and held together with a little bow of ribbon. Another silk gown had a flat turn-back collar of strips of chiffon and lace.

The pajama type of negligee continues to be approved, brocade and plain satin being combined in some charming garments of this kind.



Cape Approved by Queen of Spain.

laine sleeves, white doekin buttoned on to the loose sleeves of a white duvelyn, and so on. It is a very attractive idea, and one which would be achieved with any gloves provided with musketeer gauntlets.

Fads in Handbags.

Small handbags are bulletined for the coming season, with all black or black and white combinations much approved, the fancy for black and white bags extending to beaded ones and to metal mesh bags in two tones. Facile or moire silk bags decorated with applique motifs of white or ivory lace are decidedly smart, and easy to make. A black frame is easy to find and at little cost. All sorts of individuality may be given to the lace-trimmed black bag, the owner's initial being worked out in the lace applique if desired.

TO BEAUTIFY FALL PLUMAGE

Metallic Decorations Now Produced by New Process Which Greatly Lessens the Cost.

Metallic plumages are to be a style factor this fall, and various treatments have been employed to create a chemical that will give the required metallic surface and coloring to plumage without labor, waste and damage to the feather stock. A formula has just been perfected by a leading bronze powder manufacturer, whereby the cost and time required in processing the plumage have been cut down materially. The solution prepared for this use is combined with silver, gold, bronze, antique or other finishes. Ordinarily the minimum cost of gilding, bronzing or oxidizing a blade was 5 cents, but the new liquid has reduced this to half a cent. The time consumed in the process has been cut down to two minutes.

EMBROIDERY FOR BED LINEN

Colored Decorations Now Considered Very Fetching on the Sheets and Pillow Cases.

The old-fashioned housewife insists that pure white, glossy, smooth sheets are the only proper sort of sheets, and of course admits that if the sheets are of real linen the acme of sheet perfection has been reached. The modern housewife agrees insofar as the linen sheets are concerned; no bed is as beautifully and aristocratically dressed as the one with pure linen sheets and pillow cases, but colored embroidery is now considered a

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The Kitchen Cabinet

Copyright, 1921, Western Newspaper Union. Next thing to knowin' you're woff off is not to know when y' ain't.

PUDDINGS AND PUDDING SAUCES

A tender, delicate, well-flavored steamed pudding is a dessert one enjoys any season of the year.

Plum Pudding.—Take one cupful of finely chopped suet, add one cupful of New Orleans molasses, sift three cupfuls of flour with one and one-half teaspoonfuls of soda, one teaspoonful of cinnamon, one-half teaspoonful of cloves, one-fourth teaspoonful of nutmeg, and one-half teaspoonful of salt. Add to the first mixture alternately with one cupful of sweet milk, one cupful of seeded and cut raisins, and one cupful of hickory nut meats. Enough of the flour should be reserved to dredge the raisins and nuts. Mix well and steam in a buttered mold three hours. Serve with any desired sauce—one of beaten egg flavoring and hot milk is especially good, sweetening to taste.

Chocolate Rice Pudding.—Scald two cupfuls of milk; add one-fourth of a cupful of uncooked rice, one-half teaspoonful of salt. Cook until the rice is tender. Add one tablespoonful of butter, one-third of a cupful of sugar, one square of chocolate melted, one-half teaspoonful of vanilla, one-half cupful of minced raisins and one-half cupful of shredded almonds. Cut and fold in the stiffly-beaten whites of two eggs, and one-half cupful of cream whipped. Pour the mixture into a buttered baking dish and bake 20 minutes. Spread with a meringue using a little vanilla flavoring. Brown in the oven.

Ginger Pudding.—Cream one-third of a cupful of butter with one-half cupful of sugar; add one egg well beaten. Mix and sift two and one-fourth cupfuls of flour with three and one-half teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one-fourth of a teaspoonful of salt, three teaspoonfuls of ginger; add alternately with one cupful of milk to the first mixture. Turn into a buttered mold, cover and steam two hours. Serve with a vanilla sauce.

Apricot Sauce.—Drain a can of apricots from their sirup and rub through a sieve. There should be three-fourths of a cupful of pulp. Add three cupfuls of whipped cream, sweeten to taste and serve on any plain cottage pudding.

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