THE BLUE BUCKLE A BAFFLING MYSTERY AND BREATHLESS TALE OF By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Corvright, 1914, McBride, Nast & Co.)

6 *

BYNOPSIS. beard a transmillantic liner, returnin Europe, Crais Ruthercord falls with a woman, a Mrs. Talenti, BJ is be translid hubbend. Also en beau Baron Heiderman, an unserufullo-dir, who makes a business proposition the sumeris the fullentia of somethin bar unseris the fullentia of somethin the sumeris the fullentia of somethin

are an operation to the second second pock for the second second

the woman he heves he catches a sumpar-ter her in Neiderman's suite with her arms Arms her way thio Craig's cab and asks him to dock. New York. Mrs. Taicnit arms her way thio Craig's cab and asks him to do the homo. As they examine the bouse Craig attempts to declare his here bouse Craig attempts to declare his here bouse craig attempts to declare and here bouse craig attempts to declare his here bouse craig attempts to declare his here bouse craig attempts to declare are the bouse craig attempt to declare his here bound in the string of dimmonia. The here here here and the string of dimmonia the bouse of the the bouse been made are the bouse of the Taicott saves the day. Craig keeps the blue buckle for sarety and the been seen at his home every hight for threade and through the glass wall of Helderman's house has seen that gentle-man here been as his home every hight to Helderman's house has seen that gentle-man here been as his how more to the secret and the been even at his home every hight to Helderman's house has seen that gentle-man here been as his how here the and way but helder and through the glass wall the Helderman's house has deal the secret is attached hous bout that the reset who have employed by a Miss Arony who was also on the boat with him. Mrs. Allows Hills builden the data the la really Miss Hills builden to that an inscription.

the firm which has the second blue file, and attempts to get this inscription in Miss Ballantyne's buckle, but 18 78-d. His villatny is discovered when the Lawyer appears.

XVI

THE GRIP IN THE DAEK

Rutherford found the taxi still waiting in front of the house, and departed therein in high dudgeon to his club and to din-

ner. After that function, partaken of in numbers after that that do not the second three of the fellows, one being Monty, to invelgie him into a game of bridge. He and Monty were triumphant by some 1200 points, and he departed for home with a rising barometer.

A few minutes' vigorous exercise of the same sort that he had given his un-welcome visitors, a few afternoons before, made him feel quite fit and ready to re-tire, and he turned in to begin a sound and refreshing sleep unbroken by any of the mental perplexities of the day. His conscience, at any rate, was proved to be clear, even though his brain had been muddled.

How long he slept he did not know-nor why it was that he awoke with an uneasy He had heard nothing, at least start. with his waking mind, but now he lay motionless but with every sense alerthis eyes wide open, striving to pierce the darkness,

He was sure that something or some one was moving about in his room. The figure was not erect; he would have seen it as a blurred shadow. It was crouching or crawling in the durknoss

along the floor. Mike never came into his room after he had retired, and he would have had no cause to prowi around like a beast on all fours. No, this was some foreign pres-ence or person. But how silent it was! He knew that he sensed rather than heard the intruder. He scarcely breathed, so intent was he upon locating and identifying some sound.

Presently he was sure he detected a stealthy movement, as though the writhstealthy movement, as though the write-ing object were crossing the room. It was coming in his direction, but he did not move. He felt no fear. Instead, he was busy speculating in a detached sort of way just what would be the best way to counter an attack. He had the trained sportsman's caution. He had hunted big

game too often not to know that in his own coolness hay his greatest safety. Holding himself in motionless alertness, he made his ears do double duty. They

from this dangerous proximity, Buther-ford gave him a mighty wrench that lifted both himself and his captive clear of the floor. Again he was warned by the ease with which the man abundoned himself to his rough handling. Pulling him away from the bed and into the middle of the room, Craig stood holding his man, with arms pinioned to his side,

In a bear-like embrace. the tenseness of the moment, two In the tenseness of the moment, two things came forcibly to his notice. One was that while he himself was breathing fast and hard from his exertion, the breath of his capitve was as even and regular as if he were sleep. The other was that neither of them had made a sound in their outst encounter. wound in their quiet encounter.

In the silence he heard the chimes from the clock in the stately tower on Madison Square complete their quatrain, indicat-ing the close of an hour; and after a moment the bell boomed out the hour of

wo. Realizing that his antagonist was playing with him, allowing him to use up all his energy, Rutherford gathered himself together for a mighty effort. The push-button on the opposite side of the room would summon Mike. He must reach it if he had to drag this inert weight all the way across with him. He turned in that direction

Whether the man suspected his intention or decided that the time was now ripe for an effort in his own behalf, Rutherford could not guess. He only knew of the swift change of attitude, as a grip like the snapping shut of a steel spring closed down upon his arm. He knew that hold. He had never felt it but He had never in all his experience a world of sport met such another. once In his amazement he uttered a single and_

"Helderman!" That second of surprise with its acompanying relaxation was his undoing. he man who had submitted to being dragged about like a sick kitten became a thing of iron and steel. He seized Rutherford in the adept clasp of the trained wrestler. The two would have been pretty evenly

natched, but for the fact that Cralg had been taken by surprise, and also was not as fresh as his antagonist. Despite these handicaps, however, he met the onslaught with a skill and wariness which soon showed the assallant he had no mean antagonist.

The man was seemingly avoiding coming to blows, or doing anything which would attract attention on the outside; and for some occult reason it went r Craig's grain to call for help. No, he would fight his own battles, win or lose! Suddenly the man wrenched himself clear of Rutherford and darted toward the door, as if he had but one object in view, to make his escape. Rutherford darted after him. The next instant the retreat-Ing figure reversed its motion and met the oncoming man with terrific momentum. Rutherford was hurled to the floor by the impact. He felt himself seized in the grasp of two long, lean, powerful arms, which seemed to him more like those of

a gorilla than a human being. Slowly but surely he was bent back across the knee of his cunning opponent. He struggled values, feeling ribs and muscles which had not yet fully recov-ered from his hunting accident twist and strain. He thought he must burst asunder. A groan was forced from his tense lips, and the merciless agony was ended by unconsciousness.

XVII

AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

When Miss Billie Ballantyne flung out f the room, in scornful protest of Rutherford's auspicions, she did not know whether to laugh or to cry. Certainly things were at cross-purposes, and she was as yet powerless to straighten them. But he might trust her or herself, and not be perpetually wanting explanations! Just like a man! With which piece of feminine logic she listened ruefully to the sound of his departing footsteps down the stairs. footsteps down the stairs. She was tempted to call him back and try to explain, but she feared only a fur-ther tangle. It seemed a perversity of fate that the moment one situation was cleared up or explained, another even more exasperating should interpose. She did not see, or would not see, that her own enforced silence had been responsible for most of these misunderstandings

sure that the man only awaited his chance, just as he himmelf had done, as he lay there in the bed, a few moments before. It was to be a struggle of wits, as well as of muscles. Under his pillow which the burgiar had not had time to explore lay a revolver, if the man knew of its presence, his first move would be to secure it. This would again give him control of a very delicate situation. Determined to remove him from this dangerous proximity. Butherwas sure that he had entered their house surreptitiously, in her absence. If that were true, why this sudden bold move In the open? More important still, should she see

him? Her first impulse was to telephone, not her father, but Crais-because he knew more of the circumstances, she told herself. But pride held her back. He had accused her of fibbing, the night be-fore, and she must wait for him to apol-

ogize! So she held a short conversation with her father, and he saw no objection to the interview; on the contrary, pointed out that it might be very advantageous to her. It was not every day that influ-ential bankers concerned themselves with

the personal concerns of possible clients. The message, therefore, was not sent, and at the appointed hour a smart limou-sine rolled up to the old-fashioned house on West 10th street.

Helderman felt elated to be received so graciously by the self-possessed young hostess, although he may have felt surprise at being ushered into the somewhat bare study. The sole ornament to re-lieve its businessilke aspect was the aplendid horned head mounted upon the nble

'Please pardon my use of this room rather than the drawing-room," she said, cordially. "To tell the truth, the latter is a trille upset today, over some neces-Sary

renovating, and your appointment was at short notice." "Say no more, Miss Ballantyne," re-plied the banker. "If I might be allowed to speak the truth also-the bareness of even a prison wall would be atoned for by the presence of a charming woman." He said this in a tone vold of offense, but his eyes spoke volumes of his admira-tion, as they swept over the winsome pic-ture before him. Miss Ballantyne, always

connoisseur of color effects and harnies, had never appeared to better ad-itage. Her dress, while of inexpensive vantage. Her dress, while of inexpensive material, was of an indescribable hue of blue-white pearl. It was just scanty quaintness to her appearance. Her young, warm-hued shoulders peeped oung, warm-hued shoulders peeped om a bodice the upper edge of which as outlined by a dully-lustrous trim-ing. The buckles on her slippers were 'the same dull pearl. The colorful vellness of the girl herself contrasted ith the severely colorless costume. round her shoulders was loogely thrown idit'

Around her shoulders was loosely thrown a rale blue scarf, its folds secured by a blue buckle. "I see that you have a penchant for buckles, Miss Ballantyne," said Helder-man, "A pleasing idea," man. "A pleasing idea!" There is a great deal of romance con-

nected with buckles, in our family, Mr. Helderman," she replied, "and as for myself, I confess I love them." "A unique fancy, and charmingly car-tied out! But, if I might make so bold-this is not the famous blue buckle, is it?" "You mean the one I wore on ship-

board? No, this is a more modern inven "You still have the other"" Nothing

I do not always wear it," she parried. Outwardly she smiled, ns though they were taiking about the latest opera or something equally remote from her own interests; while inwardly she marveled

at the assurance of this man. If he only knew what she suspected of him, she wondered what would be his attfude. Suddenly, Helderman forsook his careess indifference and drew his chair close to where she sat by the square desk. His eyes gleamed brightly, although his voice was still schooled to courteous calm. "Miss Ballantyne, you may wonder why

I left you so unceremoniously yesterday, and why I am calling this evening. It and why i am calling this evening. It is because I feel a deep concern for your interests, and would render you a serv-ice-any service in my power! O, if you would only believe this-how much your happiness means to me!"

it concerns the relinquishment of the es-taic to the right party. I knew Geoffrey Ballantyne in life"-"You knew my uncle!"

"Yes-and I have reason to balleve that he respected the injustice he had done, and wished to make reparation. But he has involved his will in so many curious mafeguards, that his purpose may be de-reated by impostors!" "Mr. Helderman, If you anow all this, why have you not southt me before?" The sirl was looking him frankly in the cyc, and speaking with an ingenuousness which forhade concealment.

which forbade concealment

"You forget, Miss Ballantyne, that while on shipboard you were under an assumed name. How should I know that, even if you were interested in the Ballan-tyne estate, you were not-an impostor?" She flushed, but her glance did not waver

"But you remarked upon the buckle!" "True: it was the first thing that at-tracted me to you-and then I did not

tracted me to you-and then i did not care what name you bore-whether you were an impostor or not!" Again his cycs sleamed, as he leaned toward her. Could it be possible that this man was really playing court to her? In order to fend a dangerous sit-nation abs said utebuty. uation, she said lightly:

uation, she said lightly: "A dubious compliment, Mr Helder-man, when one is classed with impos-tors, willy-nilly!" "I have long alnes ceased classing you thus, Miss Fallantyne. I know that you are the rightful owner of the buckle, and the one to whom my old friend Gooffrey Ballantyne would have his prometty case Ballantyne would have his property go. Ballantyne would have his property go. But ahead of you loom deep pitialla, and I have come to warn you of them." "Will you pisase explain yourself?" "If the buckle is not in your personal possession, that is had. It is in danger." "Why?"

She would not commit herself on this

point, for she felt the man's keen eyes regard her searchingly. The leads must come from him. His next was even more inexpected.

"If you are to prove your claim-this week-it would be well to go alone, and avoid confidantes."

Was he endeavoring to cast any stur-upon Mr. Butherford? Did he by chance know of the appointment at the attor-ney's office? She humanity divined that hey a oncer: She matching divined that he did not know, but was seeking in-formation. Yet why should he, whom she supposed to be an enormously wealthy banker, have any underhanded interest in the matter? She would employ his tactics. She would temporize, and seek to draw him into some admis-

'Why should I he so mysterious?' she asked artlessly. "Even though some one else knew about the buckle-obtained possession of it-they could not show my proofs; they would not dare to-imersonate me!" She was looking straight at him as she

spoke, and she fancied that he gave a slight start, as her last words came out with emphasis. But he met her look with look.

"Stranger things have happened. Miss Ballantyne. One may easily be imper-sonated-and personal proofs are of value only so long as they remain in one's own porsession

She realized the truth of his words. It came as a sharp mental shock to her, that all her proofs were now out of her hands, and in the lawyer's possession. Supposing in any event he may even he may them up-what possible chance would she have to recover! As if perceiving his advantage, Helderman proceeded. "The message that called me away from

you yesterday was to the effect that there were two claimants for the Ballantyne estate-both women-both young - both beautiful! It will resolve itself into a question of personal identity. You must e on your guard!"

Miss Ballantyne did not sense the compliment embedded in his warning, so amazed was she at hearing him tell of a possible double. She recalled that Rutherford had been fully persuaded he had seen her with Helderman-and who else could he have seen but this impersonator? But he had seen her with Helderman!--and here sat the man himself, warning her against the other woman! It was inexplicable. The man must have some ulterior purpose in exposing his cards in this manner; or he must rest secure in the belief that she had not wit-nesses for anything he might utter. She smiled a triffe scornfully, when this idea curred to her. Helderman saw her smile, and it goaded

him on even more than her noncommittal attitude. "You may think it singular that I have taken all this trouble to warn you of things, many of which you may already know. But what you do not know is the



This department will appear once a week in the Evening Ledger and will be devoted to all matters of interest to owners, or prospective owners, of phonographs, player-pianos and all other music instru-ments. Notices will be taken of new records and rolls and of new inventions or improvements in ininventions or improvements in instruments.

"Of making phonograph records there is no end," would be a modern paraphrase of the famous quotation from the Book of Ecclesiastes. Month by month the makers of records find fascinating abjects to put on their discs; month subjects to put on their diecs: month after month the owners of machines in-crease their pleasurs by the variety of records they can put on. The companies do not all put out their records at the same time; the Victor records are "re-leased" on the 25th or each month, the Columbia on the 25th, with special re-leases earlier, and the Edison each week, with no default dates. The dealers with no definite dates, The dealers throughout this city receive the new rec-ords a few days in advance, play them over and decide how many of each they lesire. Sometimes they are outguessed by the public, which demands a record they thought would not go; and

ice versa. Last month the favorite records in the hree largest companies' lists were as follows

Columbia "Cohen on the Telephone."

"Chin Clin." "Staty" Suste" (Al. Johon). Dance record made by Joan Sawyer's Persian intien. Orchestra. anden Orchestra. "On the 5:15." "I dign't Raise My Boy to be a Boldier."

Edison

"The Resard" and "A Dream" (cornet solo). Berearole, "Thiss of Hoffmann," and Inter-rezes, "Cavalletia Rusticana," Noctures in E fat, Chopin, and Spanish ance, No, S., Sarasate, played by Albert pathing, violin, "Calm-Chip" inedicy and "Dancing Around" under

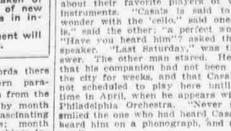
wiley. "A Farewell," and "Island of Dreams," sung Heiderne Hollinsbead, lumoresque, Dvoruk, and melody in F. Ru-nstein, played by Isldere Moskowitz, violin.

Victor

"Chin-Chin" (2 records), "Coleste Alda," Martinelli, "On the 5/1%, Kreisler-McCormick, "Are Alaria," with "Sister Suids" and "A Hot Time in the Od Town." "Giltering Moenbeams."

The above are from compared lists of dealers in the central part of the city. It will be seen that "Chin-Chin" and

The editor of the department will gladly answer all questions.



Many music lovers who have been walt-ing for the great virtueso of the 'cello to come here will be as pleased as this musi-cian was by the recordings which are announced in the new (April) Columbia Int. and the records are quite good. Among the other records of opera music put out by the Columbia for the coming month are Mme, de Cisneros singing arias from "Carmon" and from "La Favorita"; Henri Scott's "Drinking Song" from "Martha," and the entire opera of "Alda" on 34 faces (17 records). From the famous "Celeste Alda" to the "O terra aldio," the whole opera the reproduced "I is said

the whole opera is reproduced. It is said that the company intends to produce an that the company intends to produce an opera in this way each month. The Pathe Freres have already done so with many operas from the standard repertoire. On the Edison list (for this week only), there are "Che faro senza Euridice," fi Gluck's "Orfeo et Euridice," sung from Margaret Keyes (contraito), and on the

same record Helen Stanley's singing of Massenet's "Elegie."

Dance Records

For the dance, the Edison list has a record combining a hesitation and a Lu Lu Fado. The former is "Lucile Love," the latter "Paprika." The Columbia lists "I Didn't Balse My Boy to Be a Soldier," which is rapidly catching up to "Tipper-ary" in popularity, and "When You're a Long, Long Way From Home" on one

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Real Action Pictures of the Great War

the beautiful song of sentiment the beautiful some of sentiment with by Carrie Jacobs-Bond. Among the records are "I Didn't Raise My have Be a Soldier" and "Down by the of Mill Stream," The former occurs in Columbia list linked with "Goodby we ginia"; the latter doubles up with " Down on Tampa Bay" in an Edison

TELEPHONE ROMEO WINDS DE AT MAGISTRATE'S TRIBUNAL Alleged Scion of du Pont's Held a

hearing next Monday on the accurat

of Mrs. Harry B. Williams, of size Hand

of Mrs. Harry B. Williams, of size Ham avenue, that he threatened to infur he the vell-known powder main avenue the well-known powder main avenue the well-known powder main avenue and society man is denied by the istu-but Pont is charged by Mrs. William her ausband and her daughter, Marsan with calling her on the telephone inually and annoying her with his st tentions. At a preliminary heating re-admitted that he had often called to Mrs. Williams. He said he know it wa wrong, but that he was deeply in her with calls and he was deeply in her worns, but that he was deeply in her with her. He also admitted that he had followed her to Atlantic City. The man said he was born in Finlan and had come to this country in 106, as that his father was Count famed a pont, a noted French officer and late grain Commissioner for the French ge-ernment. He said he worked as pr

ernment. He said he worked as provide secretary for Alfred I du Pont when he first reached this country. He said he has lately been selling "Billy" Smoother the same selling "Billy" Smoother the selling "Billy" Smoother the same selling "Billy"

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Complaint of Woman's Husband "Dancing Around" occur in some form George W. du Pont, of 1532 Page stress who says he is related to Alfred t at on all the lists, so they really deserve to be called the best of the "six best sellers." Pont, of Wilmington, will be given a

New Recordings

New Recordings Two musicians were taiking yesterday about their favorite players of various instruments. "Casats is said to be a wonder with the 'cello," said one. "He is," said the other, "a perfect wonder"! "Have you heard him"? asked the first speaker. "Last Saturday," was the anspeaker. "Last Saturday," was the an-swer. The other man stared. He know that his companion had not been out of the city for weeks, and that Casals was not scheduled to play here until some time in April, when he appears with the Philadelphia Orchestra. "Never mind." Philadelphia Orchestra. "Never mind," smiled the one who had heard Casals; "I heard him on a phonograph, and so can

Int. Pablo Casals plays on one record he famous "Largo" of Haendel, and the "Melody in F" of Rubinstein. On another he has the "Spanish Dance No. 2" (Pop-per), and Saint-Saens' "The Swan," Casals' tone is marvelously true and full,

assured him of one stray fact after an-other, as to the visitor's actions. Grad-ually he discovered that in all likelihood he had to deal with a burglar, but not an ordinary second-story man. This was a past master in the profession—a very prince of thieves! His motions were as silent and yet as certain as though he were a nocturnal creature gifted with the owner of assing in the dark

power of seeing in the dark. Ah! a quick, tiny flash of light that vanished almost as soon as seen! His prowling friend had an electric pocket-lantern, and had used it for reconnoiter-ing purposes. One glimpse, however, seemed sufficient, for the flash did not reappear. This man took no needless chances; he made his wits do his work; he must indeed be the arch-burglar of the tribe

Rutherford lay upon his side, in the exact position he had found himself when awakened. He could see very little, strain his eyes as he might. A chair, on which hung his coat and waistcoat, interposed itself dimly between his vision and the

itself dimly between his vision and the window. Could his eyes be deceiving him? The ensir was no longer rigid, but had begun to move-oh, so slightly! Still, by sighting it against the sharp line of the window-sill, he was sure it moved. The chair certainly was not moving of itself. He knew that, extended along the carpet, the sinuous figure had reached forth a long, while hand to grasp it, and was slowly pulling it further back into was slowly pulling it further back into the obscurity of the corner. Rutherford walted for that moment, the

time of his opportunity, of which his in-stinct would inform him. He watched the chair move barely half an inch at a time, until it was a little way from the bed. Then he heard faint sounds which told him that the hand had reached up and was searching through one pocket after vertice. He made no sutward prover to another. He made no outward protest to this careful search; on the contrary, he auddenly devoted himself to giving a persummeric of a man sound asleep. The tiny searchlight had swept across his face inquiringly. He breathed deeply and regularly, and soon his was rewarded by a slight motion of his pillow. The de-termined and curious hand had slid un-dermeath it.

His time for action had come. With the swiftness and agility of the sprinter isoping away at the tape, Craig flung himself chear of the covers and with a fightne stride was upon the burglar, rottiling him

Surprised and stunned the man went down. Craig's hand went out instantly to the burglar's right. He tore the pistol from the clenched fist, and flung it across

Now I've got you!" he breathed be-

<text>

Louis a manual. Craig

for most of these misunderstandings. She only tossed her head and remeated "But he might trust me, anyway! And If he doesn't, why should I care?" But for all that, her eyes were suspi-clously red the next morning when Sophie

cloualy red the next morning when Sophle entered her room. Her reason to the observant maid was truthful enough. "I sleet badly last night. Sophle, and my head aches a little this morning. I wish you would do over my hair, please; that hat tumbles it frightfully." And with a deft sweep of her fingers, she loosened the few remaining plns and let the long thick tresses come tumbling about her face.

"I have a letter for you. Mademoiselle

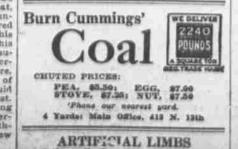
-a what you call it?-a special delivery." remarked Sophie, as she rearranged the hair with practiced hand. "Do you wish

it now?" "By all means," said her mistress, quickly, "I wonder whom it could be

But although she took the missive from But although she took the missive from the mald, she made no move toward opening it until she was alone. In her heart she hoped it was from a certain obstreperous young man, extending the olive-branch of peace; but the strange handwriting which confronted her was a disappointment. It ran as follows: "My Dear Miss Ballantyne:

"The message which called me from your charming society, yesterday, so suddenly was, curiously enough, concernsuddenly was, curiously enough, concern-ing you. It was a letter sent up from my office by one of my clerks who knew I had gone up to the Ritz-Cariton. Its contents were so disturbing that I could not trust myself to return and talk the affair over with a third party present-even though he might be as trustworthy as our mutual friend, Mr. Rutherford. I am therefore taking the liberty of asis-ing you if you will be at home this even-ing and can grant me a brief interview. I assure you it is a matter of importance

ing and can grant me a brief interview. I assure you it is a matter of importance to you: while as for myself, while I regret its necessity, I am more than pleased personally to have this opportunity to cultivate an acquaintance I have long regarded as highly desirable. "If you have other dulles, will you be good enough to telephone my residence before, noon? Otherwise, pray expect me at 8 o'clock sharp. "With all good wishes for the safe con-



FLAVELL'S, MANON GANDEN ST

looked at him a trifle startled, and We spoke of your blue buckle just now-the blue buckle. I would warn you to guard it carefully-to trust it to no one! You may not know it, but oth-ers seek it and its meaning, as well as yoursel?!"

yourself! In spite of herself she started slightly, He was telling her nothing new-and yet coming from him who had been suspected of being the arch-conspirator, it was odd.

to say the least. Helderman saw her gesture and placed his own interpretation upon it. He continued in even tones;

"I may tell you, as I informed you yesterday, that I am indirectly inter-ested in this affair, but only in so far as

know, but what you do not know is the inexhaustble resourcefulness of - your enemy. That enemy is constantly active-constantly at work in channels you know not; and alding her is a large supply of funds, against which you would be help-less. I am telling you this frankly, burget a selish motive for there is only through a selfish motive, for there is only one way in which you can controvert such agencies.

"And how is that?" asked the girl, breathlessly. In spite of herself, the mag-netism of this man, his boundless energy were reflecting and enthusiasm. her, just as Craig had felt them on their first meeting. "You must marry me!"

(CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

Every time you see a clerk footing bills you can now say:

"There is a man wasting time." Whose fault?

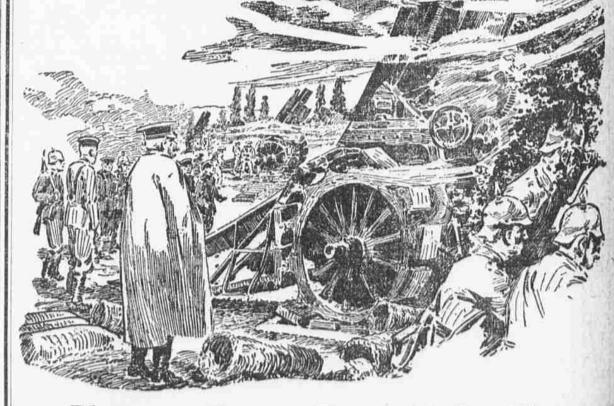
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