THE BLUE BUCKL

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "The Red Mouse," "The Running Fight," "Catspaw," Etc. (Copyright, 1914, McBride, Nast & Co.)

He directs attention to a blue buckle worn by Mrs. Talcott. Later Helderman bribes the wireless operator to let him take a misseage.

An element of the him take a misseage, the takes is that a valuable diamond mecklace is being smutgled into the consistive of the sent and a young was consisted against the Talcotts. Later Mrs. Talcott is attacked by a ruffian, who attempts to smarch the blue buckle from her, Craig Rutherford reames her. Following the woman he loves he catches a glimpse of her in Helderman's witts with hor arms about his neck.

At the dock New York, Mrs. Talcott forces her way into Craig's cab and asks bim to drive her home. As they examine the house Craig attempts to declare his love, but Mr. Talcott voice is heard, warning him of his oresence.

Craig then finds that he has been made a tool for the amugglers. In his pockets are the blue buckle and the string of diamonis. Ruffiers break into the room, and again the voice of Mr. Talcott saves the day. Craig keeps the blue buckle for safety and turns the diamonds over to the secret service agents. They tell hum that Heiderman has been seen at his home every night for the last tw. weeks. Craig goes himself to investigate and through the glass wall of Helderman's house he sees that gentified in him. Heiderman which are absolutely under his control. They talk about the simulation. They talk about the simulation on the boat with him. Mrs. Talcott, are employed by a Miss Arany who was also on the boat with him. Mrs. Talcott, each of which bears half an interpretant impersonates a lawyer acting for the firm which his a myer free ling her father from suspicion of which is right-fully hers, confessed his love for her Helderman in horse his love for her father from suspicion time. Helderman line fine the inscription trum Miss Ballantyne to the for time which is right-fully hers, confessed his love for her Helderman in his parker acting for the firm which has the intercription trum Miss Ballantyne to the for time which is right-fully hers, confessed his love

CHAPTER XIX-(Continued).

Miss Ballantyne wondered how the boy could know who she was so quickly, and if it were customary in large offices like this to tell an office boy so accurately of expected clients. In a moment he was back, asking her to follow. "Mr. Cowen is glad he waited a mo-ment longer, he says."
The boy seemed disposed to treat her

like an old friend, although she could not remember having seen him before. Perhaps all New York office boys were

free and easy!

There were two men seated in the room, into which she was ushered. One she recognized as Mr. Leclerc, peering heavy classes. and recognized as Mr. Leclerc, peering at her from behind his heavy glasses. The other was evidently Mr. Cowen, as he sat behind a desk piled high with papers. Mr. Leclerc arose. She appapers. Mr. Leclerc arose. She ap-proached him with hand extended. "You are here on time, Mr. Leclerc."

she said, pleasantly.
"You are back, Miss Ballantyne?" he remarked, not noticing her hand at first, then taking it as if her greeting rather surprised him.
"Back?" she repeated. "Why, I haven't

been away,"
"No?" said Leclerc, seemingly puzzled

at her presence. Mr. Cowen had risen from his place behind the deak "Is there something further we can do for you, Miss Ballantyne?" he inquired,

courteously, "Further?" she questioned, smilingly, "This is Mr. Cowen, I believe?" "Certainly," he replied, looking keenly at her. "I thought we agreed that

ly at her. "I thought we agreed that everything was properly adjusted."
"So I understood you to say," she answered, her mind reverting to the telephone conversation, "and I have come for—the blue buckle." I rectery repeated. "The blue buckle?" Leclere repeated, while Cowen appeared to listen to this

conversation without compre-"I came for it, as you suggested," the

'And you got it, as I promised,"

"I-got it!" Billie exclaimed, in aston-"The buckle," Cowen interjected, "We

gave it to you half an hour ago.
"Why, Mr. Cowen, I have only just come!" she protested.
"You have only just come back, of

course. But you were here half an hour The girl's eyes opened wide and she

gazed from one man to the other.
"Am I dreaming—or are you? You told me at first to come at three—"Which you did, Miss Ballantyne," observed Cowen, with lawyer-like preci-

"Indeed, I did not. I obeyed your telephoned instructions to come at four in-stead," she answered, with gentle in-

Mr. Cowen stood silent a moment; then he sald: "Miss Ballantyne, I did not telephone you."
"Not this morning?"

"Not this morning or any other time."

Eillie listened to his calm tones, as if
in a trance. While he spoke it came
to her that his voice was not at all like the one she had heard over the tele-

"But you came at three, just the same. and we turned over the buckle to you,"
Leclerc interposed. The conversation
seemed to him meaningless and fulle. "You mean that you have delivered the buckle to somebody?" she cried, start-ing forward.

"We delivered it to you-don't you re-member?" Why, here is your own receipt for it!"

Mr. Cowen advanced from behind the desk, helding a slip of paper in his hand. She came to meet him, and the bright light of the desk lamp, the only artificial light in the room, made necessary to overcome the shadows from the neighboring sky-scrapers cast by the declining sun, outlined the graceful gray figure and the winsome face clearly. "Why, you are not the woman to whom we gave the buckle!" he cried, aghast. "You are not Miss Ballantyne!"

Realising that she stood upon the threshold of some terrible mistake, the girl stood eilent, with quivering lips, while the lawyer continued to survey her, as though she were an apparition. It is keen eyes went over every detail

of her costume, from the broad, black hat with its qualit plume running out and then under the brim, to the veivet gown; and thence to the trim slippers orna-mented by their old-fashioned silver buckles. Every detail was the exact duplicate of a costume worn by an earlier callier; yet he knew this was not the

Leclarc, excited, worried by this new

Leclare, excited, worried by this new complication, came close to the girl and prered impersonally into her face, through his thick glasses.

"Glood heavens, Mr. Cowen!" he excistmed, "this is the real Miss Ballantyne—the one I met up at the hotel!"

"And the other woman has the buckle!"
Unwer almost grouned.
In their excitement they had given no

In their excitament they had given no thought to the mental anguish of the girl. The last bit of her fortitude, already severely tried, that day. With a stiffed "Ch!" she collapsed into a pathetic heap upon the floor.

The two men lifted her clumsity to the meaning chair, and brought her a glass.

ne two men lifted her clumsily to the rest chair, and brought her a glass saler. They laved her temples, and opened her eyes wearily, but at first red so word, either of complaint on the She was thinking, is dumbery of her father awaiting her rewith the facility, the rich with the facility, the plant is new to their rety and his unreducement house. Now square was episted away—by that his silvents discorrant had warned

her, and whom Craig had repeatedly

seen! It was gone forever!

Leclerc and Cowen looked at each other in undisguised alarm. Hends of perspiration stood on the Canndian's forehead, as he thought of what he had inadvertently done.

"It was my near-sightedness," he pro-tested. "In height and general bearing, the woman was like you. And in dress exactly as you were the other day as you are now. She seemed so fully inormed about the buckle and the Ballan-

Mr. Cowen interrupted his colleague's miserable monologue by selzing the tele-phone and ringing up a detective agency, requesting them to detail to him the best

man on their force.
"Come come! We mustn't lose any
more time!" he said, energetically. "We'll see if we cannot get hold of this weman and the buckle:"

"If you cannot-I'll never know what was on it—the inscription, I mean," said Billie, in a pathetic little voice. They were her first words after her collapse.

"It isn't quite as bad as that." Leclere exclaimed with some relief.

He picked up a piece of paper, and rapidly printed in capital letters the following stranga words-

DOT ULAPSINE KBAN IMMIA.

"There, Miss Ballantyne, are the sym-nols on the second blue buckle," he said. 'And take heart again! One buckle is valueless without the other, at the place where they are to be presented. You still have the other?"

Billie nodded, and took the proffered paper eagarly, clasping it in her gloved hand as though it were the most precious "My letters and affidavits-all the proofs

of my identity—" she asked, fixing implor-ing eyes upon Leclerc.

He was obliged to tell her the truth.

"I turned them over to the other woman, believing my part in this strange transaction ended, and knowing they would be needed in claiming the fortune." Would be needed in claiming the locules.

Her features trembled pitifully; but in all her own misery she divined something of the wretchedness of spirit which Leclerc was enduring, and she tried to cover her grief.

"Let me know-if you hear-anything

"Let me know-if you near-anything else-please" she manased to whisper, and then fled to the waiting cab.

Sophie gave a little cry as she opened the door at home. So drawn and haggard was the girl's face, in contrast to the buoyant look of hope with which she had the state on her mission downtown, that started on her mission downtown, that the French woman was frightened. With-out a word she hurried her mistress upstairs, and undressed her and put her to bed, as though she were a tired child.
"You are so good to me, Sophie," her mistress said, gratefully, "and the rest of the world is—so hard."

THE FORGED NOTE

The slow days of convalescence were naturally tedious ones to Craig Rutherford, active in body and mind as he normally was. However, he schooled his soul to patience, being aided thereto by the repeated warnings of his physician, that every gare must be exercised at presthat every care must be exercised at preent to prevent a recurrence of his old attack

One of his few diversions was the read-One of his few diversions was the read-ing of the newspapers, and the managing editor of one of them could not have glanced through the current files more assiduously than he did. A lot of amuse-ment was derived from taking an ordi-nary story, and comparing the different versions in various papers. It was astounding how widely these versions dif-fered. Even the portraits used to illus-trate them often failed to bear the retrate them often failed to bear the re motest resemblance one to another. Craig was accustomed, like all other good Amercan citizens, to treat the newspaper with lenient colerance just before election, or any such time of national stress. He knew beforehand that they could not be expected to give unbiased versions of any political movement either for or against

bely particular creed. But this lack of agreement in the ordinery run of news-this printing of stories with a wealth of detail one day, only to ave them denied in toto the next, was disturbing even more than diverting. If Craig had been familiar with newspaper offices, or had even visited one during the offices, or had even visited one during the busy hours of make-up, wituessing the stress and strain of collecting and sifting items from all over the world, he would have understood how easy it was for errors to creep in, and would have made more allowance for features which to the layman seem absurd.

Every newspaper every day was brought up to him by the devoted Mike. Consequently, he was in a position to notice what otherwise might have escaped him. In one issue a small item almost hidden in the closely printed column brought his wandering attention sharply back to his

GOES TO FLORIDA Helderman, the Financier, Off For a Needed Rest

J. Baron Helderman, that enterprising New York financier, goes to Florida this week to spend considerable time. He says he is driven to it by fatigue. "I'm dogtired," he said resterday when the re-porter found him in a 5th avenue store buying a new white yachting cap. "I'm the kind of man who can do 12 months work in eight, but I can't do 12 months'

work in 12. That's my style!" The last sentence was addressed to the salesman in reference to the cap; but it fit the eccentric financier's way of doing things.

As for the cap—he bought it; and unques-tionably it was his style—and fit. Before Rutherford had ceased to ponder over this item he picked up another paper, the columns of which were more financial in character, and giving importance only to news that affected business, directly or indirectly. Here he again encountered the name of Helderman.

J. Baron Helderman to Pay a Flying Visit to the South

Financial circles were interested today o learn that J. Baron Helderman suddenly decided to pay a flying visit to the South, perhaps going as far as Flor-At his office no importance was attached to this trip, but it can hardly be taken for his health, as he is the picture of energy at present, having recently re of energy at present, having recently re-turned from a sojourn abroad, it is known, also, that he is immersed in sev-eral important deals now pending, which will necessitate his presence in the city within a very few days. The hasty trip South, therefore, has get the Street to wondering as to what new venture, per-haps in the Southern field, he may have

Rutherford worried over these two con-tredictory stories, with the unreasoning concern of an invalid denied his usual employments. Ordinarily he would have paid little attention to the goings and comings of Heiderman, whether for busi-ness or for pleasure, but these items struck him as peculiar. In the same day's news a financial paper was attaching importance to a flying trip South, in the face of detaining engagements in New York, while the banker himself was anxlous to create the impression that he was going away for a needed rest and would be absent for some time.

Long before this, Craig realized that he himself had become involved in a curiously complicated series of events. Whether he wished to or not, he must play the game to the end; and these two innocent-looking newspaper items came to him like a challenge—a call to arms. He owed it to himself, even though the girl he had championed had proven un-worthy, to learn more about Helderman's contemplated move. Yet what could be do? For some days yet-no telling how long—he would be confined to his bed. He shook his flat savagely at an imagianary Helderman, before him. If Helderman were only there!

"Did you do this to me on purpose?" he

Mike stuck his head in at the door Beg pardon, sor, did you call me?" he

"No. Mike, I was just paying my se-spects aloud to-a friend of mine!" he "Well, if he's the same chap I'm think-

Well, if he's the same chap I'm think-ing of-asking your pardon-just tell him I'd like to see him, too!" Seldom did master and man understand each other better than these two. Few words were necessary with them to con-

vey thought.
"What I was just coming in to say, sor," continued Mike, "was that a young ady was walting downstairs to see you." "A lady? I can't see her here."
"She says it's very important, and she's sorry to disturb you, but asks that you see her, anyway. She has been here before, sor."

Craig defied the doctors. He struggled up from his bed, and made the protesting Mike help him into a bedroom robe and draw a big rattan chair with him in it into the living-room. He confidently and wonderingly expected to see Miss Ballan

Mike wiped the perspiration from his prow and went back to the reception-room where the visitor waited. A few moments later she appeared in the door. a slender, distinguished-looking figure in gray gown and a big, black hat, with a unch of violets at her walst. Then the light brought the oval face into relief, and Craig, who had half risen, sank back again, "You, Miss Arany!" he exclaimed, not

"You, Miss Arany!" he exclaimed, not being able in his first moment of surprise to conceal his disappointment.

"You expected some one else?" Miss Arany saked, in her turn.

"You will excuse my not rising," Rutherford said, courteously, but without noticing her inquiry. "You see I am rather incapacitated."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" she exclaimed, with such a pretty show of real concern, that he felt pleased by her sympathy, in

that he felt pleased by her sympathy, in spite of a vague distrust her presence al-ways inspired in him. But what ordinary man is proof against the interest dis-played in him by a young and attractive

I believe you said that you had business of importance—" he suggested.
"Inded, I cannot consult my own interests until you tell me what has happened to you!" she protested. "Is it an acci-dent, or an illness?"
"Not exactly either—and I believe that

I owe the fact I am not worse off to your As he fired this chance shot he watched her expressive face intently; but she only

replied, as if in pleased surprise;
"To me! How have I unintentionally been of some real use to you?"
"You telephoned the doctor in the nick of time-which was about 3 a. m."

of time-which was about 3 a. m." he answered.
"I. Mr. Rutherford?" she raised large and really beautiful eyes to his, meeting his gaze with the frankness of a child.

was informed at first that it was another

person—"
"Miss Ballantyne?" she interrupted, quickly. "That might well apply to me, for I am indeed Miss Ballantyne. But the one of whom you speak is the pretended Miss Ballantyne—or, rather, Miss Ballantyne, the pretender."
"Just what do you mean, Miss Arany?" saked Rutherford coolly. "Of course you are not Miss Ballantyne," she retorted defiantly. "I am Miss Ballantyne, the daughter of the woman with whom Geoffrey Ballantyne was in love, I am the rightful heir to his fortune; and

I am the rightful heir to his fortune; and this Miss Ballantyne, alias Talcott, who is trying to rob me, has not the least claim. She's an impostor." The lovely eyes sparkled and flashed, as the woman spoke with intense feeling. It was clear that she fought back an

It was clear that she fought back an emotion that almost overcame her.

"Look!" she said, holding out to him a mass of papers. "Surely you will trust your own eyes! These will establish my claim and forever quiet the false pretensions of the girl who poses as Miss Ballantyne—even duplicates my costumes!" Craig looked at the documents which she spread out before him. There was a birth record, and there the marriage cer-tificate of Arthur Elwood Ballantyne and Margaret Horton, the mother and father. He recognized the papers. They were the ones he had seen on the tea-table at the

Ritz-Carlton. "Miss Arany," he said quietly, "I saw some of these papers in the possession of another person. I believe they apply to her, and belong to her."

"I know you do. You have faith in the pretended Miss Ballantyne—such faith that you have more than once overlooked the testimony of your own eyes!

Craig wheed in spite of himself, but Miss Arany vehemently hurried on: "I admit that you saw these papers in "I admit that you saw these papers in the possession of the pretended Miss Ballantyne; but they have at last been secured and returned to me, the rightful Miss Ballantyne, from whom they were stolen. You remember that they were placed in the attorney's nands to investigate? The result is—as you see! He has returned them to their rightful

Rutherford was startled and puzzled by this conflicting chain of evidence. It came, also, at a psychological moment when he was disposed to distrust, not merely Billie Ballantyne, but the whole tribe of womankind in general. This woman told her story glibly; but was not the the person who, he had been informed, had sent the men to search his apart-

Seeing that he still looked doubtful, Miss Arany hastened to produce her crowning bit of evidence. "Have you ever received any written mmunications from Wilhelmina Ballan-

tyne?" she asked. "Why do you wish to know?"
"Because, if you have, you must recognize her handwriting. Here is a note from her to you, which explains itself. It is the cause of my visit."

She produced a large, square envelope which Cruis resonated at a giance was

which Craig recognized at a glance was precisely like one he had in his desk, from Billie, relating to the Canadian ad-vertisements. And the writing in appearnnce was the same. He took the letter and opened it, with the best show of un-concern that he could muster. Yes, there was the same monogrammed device, in embossed characters, and below he read Dear Mr. Rutherford

"I knew you will consider this a strange equest, but when I see you—if I ever do again-1 will try to explain more fully.



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"I? Oh, if I only could be of service to you, I should be glad! But you will not see this—you formal American! And this time you give me credit for kindness I do not deserve. Who told you that I do not deserve. Who told you that I telephoned in your behalf?"

"No one," he answered, frankly, "I to the lady you have known as Miss was informed at first that I make, "I to the lady you have known as Miss. entitled to the Ballantyne estate. So I am writing you to ask you please to turn over the blue buckle in your possession to the lady you have known as Miss Arany. She will show you the papers and you will know that she is the right one. I am terribly sorry to have given you all this trouble, and will be always grateful for your kindness. Believe me,

"Sincerely, WILHELMINA BALLANTYNE. He read this amazing communication over a second time, to make sure that he understood its meaning. His worst fears were realized, then! The girl had played her desperate game as far as she dared, and was now trying to undo some of the harm, possibly in order to avoid arrest. And yet, despite this damning vidence, Craig caught himself inventing excuses-still wishing to shield her! How villingly would he have seen the positions reversed, and this woman standing with eager, expectant look before him,

proved the impostor!
"So you have come for—the blue buckle, Miss Arany?" "Yes, as the note indicates," ahe re-

plied. "Miss Arany-" "Miss Ballantyne, if you can accustom

"Miss Ballantyne, if you can accustom yourself to it," she suggested, smiling. "I am used to the other," he responded, coldly. "In a matter of this importance I must proceed cautiously." She flushed angrily. "Isn't there enough before you to satisfy even your caution? There are the papers. I have told you before about the inscription on the buckle. And new I bring you a written request from the rival claimant. Surely, that is enough!" rival claimant. Surely, that is enough?"
"Possibly, Miss Arany, but I realize,
as well as you do, that this buckle in-

volves a large property. I am taking only the precautions that you would take In a like situation. "And what are those?" she asked "I have not myself determined them.

However, if you will call temorrow, I (CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

"COPS" SURPRISE CROOKS Bluecoats Arrive Just in Time to Seize

Hold-up Men. Two policemen met at the ends of their beats at 23d and Pearl streets, this morning. Two men were against a wall, holding up their hands. Two other men were expressing a desire for loose change.

The two policemen grabbed the two highwaymen, the two victims put down their hands and all six men marched to the 20th and Buttonwood streets station. The prisoners gave their names as Sam-uel Scott, of 2225 Race street, and John Collins, of 336 North 23d street. The victims, who had \$4.25 between them, said they were Thomas Daley and Robert Mc-Cleary, both of 2111 Vine street. The policemen were Casey and Dermody, Magistrate Beaton held the prisoners in \$800 bail for court for attempted highway robbery.

Favor "City Flag Day"

A "City Flag Day" is advocated by Walnut Street Business Men's Associa tion, which has sent a letter to Mayor Blankenburg, asking him to issue a flag day proclamation. The business men, in their letter to the Mayor, suggest that he issue a preclamation to the merchants and residents, requesting them to fly the Walnut Street Business Associaanniversary of the day on which City Councils determined on a city flag.

Demand Road Improvement Residents and business men of Ammore whose homes or stores front on the

Lancaster pike are protesting against the fallure of the borough authorities to insist upon the olling of that thoroughfare. Letters have been sent to Charles R Mather, president of the Lancaster Ave. nue Improvement Association, which owns the turnpike, protesting against the condition of the road.



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