

With Weird Weapons.

By DUFFIELD OSBORNE.

Author of "The Spell of Ashtaroth."

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SYNOPSIS.

"The little French doctor who looks twice as old as he is and seldom talks a story of his early life. At the Ecole de Medecin in Paris he becomes acquainted with Professor Fournier, the leading pathologist, and also with a fellow-student named Toedt, a general favorite with all but Fournier and the narrator, and a distinguished epologist. After graduation the narrator enters Fournier's private laboratory, finds that the latter is engaged in serious investigations, probably electro-photographic in nature, and involving the unexplainable death of anti-matter plants. He is then suddenly broken up among the wealthy mill-owners in Arteil, a town situated in the midst of a manufacturing country. Fournier is sent there by the government, and the narrator goes with him. On the train they discuss the disease, which is confined to the upper classes, some similar cases that occurred some years before at Montrevaux, and the fact that Toedt practiced at Montrevaux, but was now at Arteil. Fournier appears to have some suspicion, and the narrator begins to grasp it.

PART II.

Gripping the arms of my seat with both hands and leaning forward with a face from which I felt all the blood had vanished, I stammered out: "You do not— you cannot think that— that?" "That what?" he asked, eyeing me closely. "That these people have been— but for the life of me I could not get the word out. "Murdered!" he queried, calmly. "Folks!" I at last managed to ejaculate. "Well," said Prof. Fournier, crossing one leg over the other and leaning back among the cushions, "I confess that I have certain ideas on the subject which I am hardly ready to formulate just yet. This much I will say for your guidance: that I do not believe in the presence of any ordinary poison administered by an ordinary poisoner. In fact, the case is such that, if I find my ideas substantiated, I should regard it as my duty to humanity to take upon myself the punishment rather than the exposure of the criminal."

"I am perfectly correct," said Fournier, and I imagined that he too seemed surprised at the other's easy manner. "But can you oblige me further with your own theory?" he asked, which has been cultivated in this vessel."

"I should say," replied Toedt, weighing each word with cool deliberation, "that what you have there are the rim, stopper and fragments of a germ-culture. You are perfectly correct," said Fournier, and I imagined that he too seemed surprised at the other's easy manner. "But can you oblige me further with your own theory?" he asked, which has been cultivated in this vessel."



"PARDON ME, DOCTOR."

covered that he had said all he then intended to say on the subject. The next morning I saw that his suggestion was not a man to speak such words lightly. That night, two of the leading practitioners who had come to Arteil called upon Fournier, and a long discussion of the situation and prospects ensued—a discussion which ended in a suggestion, rather tentative, that he should undertake an autopsy upon the body of the next victim.

"You think, gentlemen," he said at last, "that there is a reasonable prospect of good results from such an experiment?"

"If made by you, yes," replied one of our visitors, frankly.

"Besides, but in the other, 'do you not think the dangers which the earlier efforts have made apparent could be successfully guarded against by a fully forewarned science?'"

"I was not thinking of the danger," said Fournier, slowly. "Of course I should need several assistants in order to undertake such a work with the best prospects of success."

"Permit me to offer myself," exclaimed the two physicians in a breath. "Thank you, gentlemen," said Fournier, with some show of feeling. "Do you not think we could also obtain the services of a third?"

"Beyond doubt he would feel highly flattered at such a suggestion coming from you," said the older of our visitors. "In fact, I may say that the idea of a new autopsy to be made by you is largely his. Naturally, however, I do so myself only upon the distinct understanding that I should consider you fully justified in ignoring it."

"I had been silent thus far. Now, however," said Toedt, "I feel that the danger of an autopsy may be minimized to next to nothing, but he frankly admitted that his preventive tactics have availed no better than his curative ones in actual practice."

Fournier cut me short with: "The question of the doctor, is hardly to be considered by us." Then, turning to the others, he added: "May I ask you to request Dr. Toedt to call upon me at nine o'clock tomorrow morning. I should be pleased to discuss this matter with him."

"When the two doctors had taken their leave, Fournier turned to me. "You purchased the revolver?" he asked.

"I nodded.

"Good! Load them both and give me one. Place the other in your pocket; in this room by a quarter to nine tomorrow morning and see that your nerves are in good condition. By the bye—" he added, as I bowed and turned to fulfill his directions; "and will you procure good oil of stout rope?"

"I retired that night in a rather perturbed frame of mind.

Morning broke, bright and cloudless, and, at a few minutes after half-past eight, I entered the reception room. Fournier was pacing the floor with quick, nervous strides.

"Ah, doctor," he said, coming forward, and grasping my hand. "You are on time, I see. And now may I ask you to help me make a few preparations to receive our guest. We will see him in the studio room."

The apartment alluded to was at the top of the house and quite separated from it. It formed, in fact, a sort of a cupola, with a skylight roof, and had been built for a Paris artist who spent some months of each year at Arteil.

By my friend's directions I carried upstairs the coil of rope I had secured. A photographic camera, with several curious attachments, stood at one end of the room and near it was a deal-board table, behind which Fournier seated himself, having first placed a stout wooden chair under the middle skylight for our expected visitor. Scarcely had I thrown myself upon a corner divan before Toedt was announced.

"Have the goodness to request him to step up here," said Fournier. "I noted two things. One, that his face was rather drawn and haggard,

and another, that the door had been provisionally closed with an automatic catch, so that it fell to and clicked fast behind him. Naturally he took no account of this, and having greeted us both and drawn upon the chair in the room—that which Fournier had placed for him. Then followed what seemed to me an awkward silence.

"I understand, doctor," said Fournier, "that you have expressed opinion to the effect that I should undertake an autopsy upon the next victim of this epidemic."

"By no means," replied Toedt, quickly. "That would be a piece of presumption of which I trust you acquit me at once. I merely remarked that I believed a careful autopsy by a first-class pathologist might give very valuable results. I would not even go so far as to believe that you would undertake such a task. It is unquestionably dangerous."

"You knew, though," said Fournier, sternly, "that what you said would be reported to me, and that, if I acquiesced in your reasoning, I would consider it my duty to ignore the element of danger. Pardon me for saying so, but I consider your words in the nature of a direct challenge."

"I can only protest that they were not so intended," replied the visitor, flush-faced.

"Will you act as one of my assistants?" queried Fournier, sharply.

"Assuredly, sir," said Toedt, after an instant of almost imperceptible hesitation.

"You have no suspicion of the nature and origin of this disease that would render an autopsy unnecessary?" was the next question.

"I can only say," said Toedt, with a calmness that surprised me, in view of the pointlessness of the interrogation.

"What would you say this was?" pursued the questioner, still more sharply.

"As he spoke, he drew from the drawer of the table a small tray containing fragments of thin glass with several fluted edges, and a small vial."

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"The visitor actually threw himself back in the chair and laughed. He said at last, 'As for your question let me remind you that I took my degree at Paris in the nineteenth century, not at Saint Louis, and that I am a physician, not a necromancer.'"

"I will tell you something else you are," said Fournier, in a low, clear voice. "You are the greatest villain in the world, who ever shot you with your str hand or foot I will shoot you like a mad dog."

Toedt made a motion as if to spring from his chair, but he settled back before the muzzle of the revolver, smiled, and said with a nonchalance that fairly staggered me:

"You have originated ideas of hospitality, professor, may I presume so far as to ask an explanation of this performance?"

"You oblige me by trying that man in that chair," said Fournier to me, ignoring Toedt's last remark, and still covering him with the pistol. "The man as if for an old-time amputation— so that he can't get up with his legs."

"I know little or nothing on the subject," said I, for hesitatingly, was then, practically a closed book.

"If I told you that the symptoms induced by a certain very rare bacillus closely allied to the anthrax but capable of attacking the mucous membrane of human beings, would be precisely those of this disease; that fragments of germ tubes had been picked up in several of the houses whose inmates had died; that a similar tube containing these fragments was found upon the person of Dr. Toedt, and elaborate apparatus for their culture in a small laboratory had been purchased."

"Is that latter the fact?" I interrupted.

"I obtained entrance there last night," went on Fournier, "and made a careful investigation which resulted as I tell you."

"But the object?" I gasped, beginning at last to half catch his drift.

"It is to determine whether this epidemic had been practically confined to the families of wealthy persons and large employers of labor who inhabit the most salubrious part of the region and town; that Toedt had, by his own admission, taken preventive measures, most of the residences where the disease afterwards broke out; that this man had professed anarchistic principles, and that he was a kind; that papers showing his connection with certain anarchistic bodies had been found in his house, and that the only known source of the disease is Toedt was located before he came here—if I told you all this, and you realized it to be the truth, what would be your verdict?"

"That the man was a monster," I faltered, while I felt the cold sweat burst out upon my forehead.

"I handed him this photograph," he said, handing it to me. "I did not know yesterday all that I know now, but I felt justified in taking it—bound to take it, in fact, although I was certain that the result would be fatal to the sinner."

I glanced once at the vague, mysterious shadow upon the card in my hand—oh, the unutterable horror of that one glance! Hideous distortion, fiendish malignity; abject terror; mortal agony—I then faintly.

"When I came to, Fournier was lowering my feet from the chair upon which he had raised them."

"What is it?" I whispered, eyeing my master fearfully.

"His solemn events fell heavily upon my brain as he answered: 'It is a photograph of Herman Toedt's soul.'"

"(The End.)

"The Bull Fighter's Secret," by Mary Lovett Cameron, author of "At a Moorish Window," will begin tomorrow.

focus is entirely correct?" he said, turning his eyes to the instrument. "I applied my eye to the instrument. 'Absolutely so,' I replied, stepping back. A smile that was more than half a sneer curled the corners of Toedt's mouth. Suddenly a luminous glow filled the apartment. It was in no wise like the effect of a flashlight. There was nothing blinding in its intensity, and yet, during the few seconds while it lasted, it gave you the impression of a penetrating intensity, inconceivable and mysterious. In that light a man might have become a seer to whom the world and its secrets were as transparent as crystal. All this I felt on the instant.

By what mechanism Fournier had produced this effect I had not observed, but the form of Toedt seemed to occupy the central point of illumination. Then the light as suddenly went out, and the brightness of the sun seemed dull and dingy. The professor had merely touched a short lever and placed the cap over the lens, and much I saw, for my eyes were upon him at the moment.

A second later I turned toward Toedt and an indescribable dismay seized me. His body hung limp in its bones, and his face was set in the same half smile, half sneer I had noted a few moments earlier. He was dead, and I had grasped his pulse. There was not the faintest flutter. Never in all my experience have I known death to be so absolute and instantaneous as this.

"He is dead!" I exclaimed, staring at Fournier, with an expression of horror.

"I know it," replied he. "You might loosen him, if you will."

While he spoke, Fournier was busy with his apparatus. Without venturing to reply I hastily cut the ropes and laid the dead man upon the floor.

"I had a strange feeling," said Toedt, continued Fournier, in the same voice. "I shall be very much occupied for the next twenty-four hours—and pray do not advise a coroner's jury, if you can help it, I see you again. By-the-by, may I ask you to call upon my patients today?"

I placed the now detached camera under his arm and hurried out, leaving me alone with the corpse. How I got it downstairs and on the sofa in the reception-room I do not know, but I was not alone when I returned to the household and sent them scurrying hither and thither to notify several of our confederates.

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SMOOTH MARCUS A. HANNA

He Appears Every Four Years in National Politics.

MANAGER OF M'KINLEY'S BOOM

He Devotes Time, Money, Energy and Brains to His Favorite Candidates.

A Political Comet Just Now Rising to Its Zenith.

Cleveland, Ohio, March 15.—Mr. A. Hanna is a political comet. He appears every four years. His presence in the national sky sets the country talking for a summer; he then slips under the horizon. He is now in the ascending phase. He is discussed over the breakfast table of the land. He shares public attention with the leaders who make a business of being public. The people have learned to know him—to recognize his influence and they wonder in the manner of man he is that in the distribution of the rewards of victory he neither gets nor seeks any portion. This unique trait is sufficient to make him conspicuous. He shares public attention with the leaders who make a business of being public. The people have learned to know him—to recognize his influence and they wonder in the manner of man he is that in the distribution of the rewards of victory he neither gets nor seeks any portion. This unique trait is sufficient to make him conspicuous. He shares public attention with the leaders who make a business of being public. The people have learned to know him—to recognize his influence and they wonder in the manner of man he is that in the distribution of the rewards of victory he neither gets nor seeks any portion. This unique trait is sufficient to make him conspicuous. He shares public attention with the leaders who make a business of being public. The people have learned to know him—to recognize his influence and they wonder in the manner of man he is that in the distribution of the rewards of victory he neither gets nor seeks any portion. This unique trait is sufficient to make him conspicuous. He shares public attention with the leaders who make a business of being public. The people have learned to know him—to recognize his influence and they wonder in the manner of man he is that in the distribution of the rewards of victory he neither gets nor seeks any portion. This unique trait is sufficient to make him conspicuous. He shares public attention with the leaders who make a business of being public. The people have learned to know him—to recognize his influence and they wonder in the manner of man he is that in the distribution of the rewards of victory he neither gets nor seeks any portion. This unique trait is sufficient to make him conspicuous. He shares public attention with the leaders who make a business of