

CHAPTER I.

AMERICA.

"I am off to America on Friday next!"

"I am off to America on Friday next!"

"What! off to America?"

"Yes; I'm not joking."

"Are you really serious?" Fancy, going to America this time of the year, at the end of November! It must be very important business which takes you there! Can't you send some one else? You know Clara won't consider her firstborn properly baptized if you don't stand godfather to him. That ceremony is to take place next Sunday."

"Unfortunately it is important business—very important business—that only I can undertake. I am awfully sorry to disappoint your wife, but I must go."

This conversation took place in Monk's sitting room. It was my usual labit, on leaving my office at seven o'clock, to go up to Monk's rooms and have a chat with him, and sometimes persuade him to come home with me.

I ought perhaps here to inform my reader's that, some years before this story begins, I had returned to my native country after having spent several years abroad, where I had made a small competency as an engineer. When I again saw Monk, the friend of my boyhood, I found he had, strange to say, adopted the profession of private detective. As far as I could understand, he carried on this business just as much out of love for his work as for a means of earning his living, and had already won himself a reputation by his shrewdness, honesty, and disinterestedness.

Monk's sudden announcement took my breath away; he had never for a moment said a word about going to America before.

"Is it a new case you have on hand?"

America before.

"Is it a new case you have on hand?"

I asked.

"The state of the peak case."

I asked.

"No; it is not a new case."

I looked doubtingly at him; this was not the Monk I was accustomed to see standing quietly before me with the handsome, open countenance, and the intelligent grey eyes looking fearlessly into mine.

into mine.

He was now pacing restlessly up and down the floor. All at once he stopped in front of me.

"Can you stay with me this evening?"

"Yes; with pleasure," I replied. "Clara has gone to the theatre with a friend. I am therefore free, and it was my intention to propose to you that we should spend the evening together."

"That's right; let us have supper at once, for I have something to tell you, and until I have done so I shall have no peace."

Monk rang; and soon after we sat down to supper. My host ate scarcely anything; indeed, he hardly attended to his duties as host, and could not conceal his impatience to hasten the end of the mass.

It was quite apparent that something unusual was the matter, so I got through my supper as quickly as possible with out interchanging many words.

When we returned again to the sitting-room, Monk placed me in one of his comfortable chairs, and set before me some whiskey and water and cigars, He himself lit a cigar, but soon threw it half-smoked into the fire.

"You said you wanted to speak to me

"You said you wanted to speak to me about something, Monk."

"Yes, if you have patience to listen

that sort of thing. One generally waits until one is approached."

"You are right, and I ought to have told you all about it long ago; especially as, for my part, I have nothing whatever to conceal. Yes, a man is wrong to shut himself up in himself more than is necessary; and in my ease I am afraid I have been foolish, and doubly stupid, not to have called to my aid a clever friend's assistance. I have stared myself blind with trying to find a way out of the dark. It is, however, wrong of me to call the affair my affair, since I no longer play any part in it; but, in any case, it concerns some one who was as dear to me as my own life. Are you prepared to listen to me? If so, you

shall get to know as much of my history as I know of it myself."

"Go on, Monk; go on! If an honest man and an intelligent woman can help you in any way, you have them at your disposal in Clara and myself."

I stretched out my hand to him; Monk seized it and shook it heartily. All doubt and restlessness on his side had vanished. In giving the account of his story, I only wish that I could have given it in his own clear language and striking words. To detail it in full is of course impossible; but I will do the best I can, and if the narrative should become tedious, or wanting in clearness, it is my fault, and not Monk's.

OLD FRICK.

When we separated, about fifteen years ago (began Monk), that time you went to Zurich to complete your studies as engineer, I went in seriously for law, and was fortunate enough in four years' time to take my degree with

years' time to take my degree with honors.

My friends and teachers tried to persuade me to follow a scientific career. An endowment could have been had from the university; and with this, to gether with a small inheritance from my father, I could have followed without trouble the beaten path to a professorship at the university,—so I was told, at any rate.

a professor, seemed to me anything but attractive.

I first got a situation in the office of a government official, far up in the country, where there was little to do, but plenty of game and fishing; and I returned to Christiania the year after, a bearded, red-cheeked, young Nimrod.

Then I became the youngest inspector in the Christiania police office, and spent about two years in fining young men for disorderly conduct in the streets, and keeping order among the erratic female population of the town.

As you can well understand, it was hardly an occupation likely to attract a man for any length of time, and I explained this to our amiable chief superintendent when, one day, I placed my resignation on his desk.

"Stop, a moment, my dear Monk," he said, with his genial smile. "Could you not wait a little, before you hand in this resignation? I must admit I have not found that you possess any special talent, either with regard to arresting drunken students, or as a censor of vice; still, on the other hand, I should be much deceived, after my many years of experience, if you do not find your right sphere in the detective department. Practically every one is aware that it is to you we owe our success in the great post office robbery, although officially you had nothing to do with it; and I, at any rate, know how well you cleared up the Fjorstat murder. For many months I have been thinking of offering you an appointment on the detective force. If you will take your resignation back, you can consider the matter as settled."

I gladly accepted the offer, but not until I had obtained a year's leave; avery well and the professional in travel. to

I need hardly mention how useful my

I need hardly mention how useful my stay abroad has been to me.

I have no doubt that I found my right vocation when I joined the detective police; especially if I am to take into consideration the overwhelming praise which my superiors gradually poured upon me, or the flattering attention which the papers and the public began to bestow upon me.

Monk paused, and for a few minutes paced up and down the floor, as was his habit when he was deeply occupied in thought.

Well, he continued, I think I have now given you an account of my life until the day when the incident occurred which since has played such an important part in my life, and continues to do so to this very day.

It was a rainy and stormy night at the end of September, about seven years ago, when, wet to the skin, and dead beat, I came driving up to my lodgings in University Street. At that time I always had rooms on the ground floor, so that I could get in and out quickly and unobserved.

I had been on an expedition after

and unobserved.

I had been on an expedition after some burglars high up on the Egeberg hills. The expedition had been long and irksome, both for myself and my assistants, and without result.

ays employ the same cabma emember Peter Lyverson,

in the East end, and was just as disappointed at the lack of success and as
wet as I was, so I thought it only right
to ask him inside and give him a stiff
glass of brandy.

Lyverson had just finished his glass,
and with a profusion of thanks was
lighting a cigar and bowing himself out,
when we heard a ring at the telephone.

"Wait a moment," I cried to him, and
rushed to the apparatus.

"Bartholomew Frick of Dram

Bartholomew or "Captain" Frick, as

he was also called, had left Norway when quite a young man—somewhere between twenty and thirty years of age. For a generation or so no one heard anything of him, until suddenly he returned to his native country, an old man. This was some years before my

returned to his native country, an old man. This was some years before my story begins.

He came to Christiania, bringing with him a whole shipload of curiosities and costly articles, and was, on the whole, considered to be a very rich man.

His title of captain he presumably got from the fact that he had won his fortune, so people said, as captain of a pirate ship, and later on as a slave-dealer.

A more likely explanation, and one

dealer.

A more likely explanation, and one which carried with it a greater conviction of truth, was that he had acquired his fortune at gold washing in Australia, and diamond digging in Africa. He had, in both places, been one of the first to discover the rich treasures

there.
On his return to Christiania he bought On his return to Christiania he bought himself a large house in Drammen Road, and this he filled with the curiosities which he had collected and brought with him from all quarters of the globe. After becoming settled, he began to look about him to make inquiries regarding his family, and he found that his only remaining relations were his

garding his family, and he found that his only remaining relations were his brother's widow and two young children in needy circumstances.

Apparently in order to make some reparation for his earlier neglect. he overwhelmed the poor widow with benefactions, and brought the poor, weak soul to a state of great bewilderment by placing large and, to her notions, fabulous sums at her disposal.

After a short time she died, and Frick then adopted her two children, a boy and a girl, and it was generally assumed that they would inherit his wealth.

Old Frick was a well-known figure in Christiania, and had a widespread reputation for his riches, benevolence, and—irascibility.

reputation for his riches, benevolence, and—irascibility.

The house is situated just outside Skillebek, as you must know. I should not wonder, however, if you have never seen him, although your house is not far from his property, for during the last few years old Frick has been confined to his house, an invalid, and he never shows himself outside of it. As it usually happens, the indifference of the world to him now is just as great as its interest in him and his affairs was at one time.

Presidently the carriage drew up before an iron gate, which was immediately opened by a man, the coachman of the house, with a lantern in his hand. Words were unnecessary; he was prepared for my arrival, and I followed him immediately up to the house. We went along a passage and passed one or two rooms, in the last of which stood some servants whispering together, until we came, at length, into a large room or salon which was lighted up.

a large room or salon which was lighted up.

This salon presented a motley appearance. Some of the furniture was old-fashiomed, and some of it modern. There were tropical plants in large tubs; Venetian pier glasses on the walls, having between them large cases filled with wonders from all climes, and of all ages; stuffed animals in the middle of the room and in the corners. On a shelf stood some heavy altar candelabra from an old church, and from a neighboring shelf hung a lamp, doubtless stolen from some Hindoo temple.

On a bracket, opposite a clock worked by sand, a relic of the Middle Ages, ticked a splendid specimen of a modern Parisian timepiece. Indeed, I might go on forever enumerating the extraordinary and wonderful assortment of curiosities that met one's eye at every turn. In spite of this conglomeration, the

nary and wonderful assortment of curiosities that met one's eye at every turn. In spite of this conglomeration, the room was not unpleasant. My first impression—and later it proved to be correct—was that, though all these things had been brought together by Bartholomew Frick, they had been arranged by his niece.

his niece.

At one end of the room only was At one end of the room only was there any noticeable disorder. There several chairs were overturned, a couple of cupboards stood wide open, and a window was entirely smashed, both glass and woodwork. The storm and rain, however, did not beat in, as this room lay to the leeward side of the house, and the cheerful fire in the grate at the other end of the room impressed one with a sense of warmth and comfort.

By the fireside sat old Frick in an armchair. On the mantelpiece before him lay a large American revolver,

him lay a large American revolver, with brightly polished barrel, and lean-ing against his chair was an enormous Prussian cavalry sword.

large-patterned dressing gown and slip-pers, and he got up at once when I came in.

At his side stood his brother's chil-

At his side stood his brother's children, a fine young fellow with an honest face, and a very pretty young girl.

Old Frick himself could hardly be considered handsome. He had a large, fat, red face, with an enormous reddishblue nose, white bushy hair, which stuck out in unkempt tufts, and a white, thick beard under his chin. His eyes were light, and generally friendly; but when he was angry, which not seldom happened, they changed into a kind of greenish color, which was anything but pleasant to see.

pleasant to see. Every human being is said to resemble

Every human being is said to resemble some animal or another in appearance; Bartholomew Frick would not have done discredit to a Bengal tiger.

He came quickly across to me, and pressed my hand in his own large ones; they were of the fulness and size of a wairus's flippers. He was stout, broad, and thick-set, but moved about with youthful energy, although somewhat elumsily.

"Oh, are you here already, Mr. Monk?"

clumsily.

"Oh, are you here already, Mr. Monk?
Glad to see you! It isn't more than twenty minutes since I rang you up through the telephone; that's smart work if you like! That's the thing, young man, promptitude above everything! It is the most important thing

in the world. How do you think Napo-

in the world. How do you think Napoleon managed to conquer the whole of Europe? What do you think it was that helped him? His promptitude, my friend, and nothing else. Don't talk to me of generalship or anything of that sort. He was smarter and quicker than every one else, and that's the reason he could do what he liked with them all. "But now you must hear how it all happened with regard to the burglary—ah, you wink at me, Sigrid? I suppose you mean that I must first introduce you to Mr. Monk? Very well! This is my niece, Sigrid Frick, and that is my nephew, Einar Frick; both are the joy and stay of my old age. But now what about the—what are you now making signs about, Einar? I suppose you mean Mr. Monk should be asked to take a seat."

"And a glass of wine," whispered the

"And a glass of wine," whispered the young girl, casting a compassionate glance at my wet clothes.

"Yes, of course; Mr. Monk shall sit down and have everything he wants. But meanwhile I can in a few words tell him how it all happened."

Bartholomew Frick was, however, not a man of a few words, and it took some time before I got to know how he had lain sleepless, kept awake by a "devilish unpleasant pain in his big toe," and so toward one o'clock he had heard a strange sound in the room below,—for he slept just, over the salon where we sat.

sat.

The old man had lost not a minute in getting out of bed; he had seized a loaded revolver, which always lay at hand on his table, and a sword, which was also within reach, both mementoes, no doubt, of his adventurous life.

Thus armed, and with slippers on his feet, but with no other clothes on than his nightshirt, he had crept down the stairs and slowly opened the door of the salon.

stairs and slowly opened the door of the salon.

Here he saw two men, who were quietly at work breaking open his cupboards and emptying their most valuable contents into a sack.

"I first of all fired two shots at their heads," continued Frick; "but when the smoke had lifted, I saw they were both as alive as ever, and on their way to the window to escape. I rushed after them with the sword, and they would not have got away alive if I had not stumbled over that confounded panther!" and he pointed to a large stuffed panther which lay overturned on its side in the middle of the room.

"But you might have killed them, uncle!" faltered the young girl, reproachfully.

in the middle of the room.

"But you might have killed them, uncle!" faltered the young girl, reproachfully.

"Yes, killed them! I only wish I had hacked them to sausage-meat! But just listen; now comes the most irritating part of all. Only one of the secondrels could get out through the open window, for the one half has no hinges on it and does not open; so the other fellow, who evidently didn't think he had time to escape before I came up, disappeared head foremost, through both glass and framework. But he didn't get through quickly enough, for when I got away from that confounded panther, his left leg was still hanging inside the window ledge. 'You shan't take that with you, at any rate,' thou it I, for now I was only a couple of yards from him, and the sword was just raised above my head, ready to strike, when one of my feet caught in the jaw of the ice bear, and over I fell for the second time.

"Yes, you laugh! Perhaps you do not believe me? But I tell you, if that ice bear had not been in the way, I should have been able at this moment to place on the table before you the rascal's foot, and perhaps a bit of his leg as well. Here, you can see for yourself; the sword just cut off the heel with a bit of the sole, and more than that I could not manage; but another inch or two would have done it."

He triumphantly put before me a broad heel, with a bit of the sole attached, evidently cut from the boot with a powerful stroke.

"This was the only bit of the scoundrel that was left behind; the rest of him ran across the garden over the railings, and out into the road. The revolver had also fallen from my grasp, or else I should have tried a couple more shots after them. I once shot a Zulu at seventy paces, with the same revolver; he had stolen a hen from me

or else I should have tried a couple more shots after them. I once shot a Zulu at seventy paces, with the same revolver; he had stolen a hen from me, the rascal!"

I didn't quite know what to think of such a bloodthirsty old man. But a certain humorous twinkle in his eyes gave me to understand that this was not genuine, and, as the young people didn't try to hide their merriment, we all three had a good laugh.

At last he finished his description of how the thieves had disappeared, the house had become aroused, and I telephoned for, etc., with the result known. But what he was especially proud about was that he had given orders that nothing should be touched or moved in the room after the burglary.

"I myself have been a policeman," he said. "I was sheriff in Ballarat for three years in succession, and I had charge of many investigations there. One thing I have learned by experience, and that is,

many investigations there. One thing I have learned by experience, and that is, that the place of a crime must remain untouched until the police arrive, otherwise it is impossible for them to get to work."

story, but because it will, perhaps, give you some idea of the man and his char-acteristics.

Next I proceeded to examine the so

acteristics.

Next I proceeded to examine the scene of the burglary. It was just as Frick had said, nothing had been touched or moved. Even the sack which the thieves had used to stow away their spoil in, lay there on the floor, just as they had flung it from them when they took to flight. Several of the cupboards in the room had been filled with gold and silver articles, and precious stones. It was a complete museum; and the thieves had, so far, carried out a sensible plan in having broken open all the cupboards and drawers, but, only putting into the bag the articles which were of the most value and the easiest of transport. Otherwise there was little else to discover. We could follow the tracks of the thieves through the garden, over the palings, and out into Drammen Road; but they had left nothing behind them except old Frick's trophy, the heel with the bit of sole adhering, and the sack.

This was emptied, and the contents set in their places in the cupboards.

This was emptied, and the sack.

This was emptied, and the contents set in their places in the cupboards. Nothing seemed to be missing; and as each article was numbered, and the place in which it was to stand, it was

an easy matter to control them.
Suddenly Miss Frick clasped her
hands together, and exclaimed:
"But the tortoise, uncle! the tortoise

"It is a precious gem we have given that name—a large diamond set in gold, and in the shape of a tortoise," she added, when she saw my puzzled ex-

added, when she saw my puzzed expression.

"That is the most valuable of all my collection," continued Frick. "I don't know what the diamond can be worth when it is polished, but all I know is that I have been offered £2,000 for it as it Is now. It is black."

He raked about with his large fingers at the bottom of the sack, and finally turned it inside out, but there was no diamond tortoise. Then the room and at last the garden, and the nearest part of Drammen Road was searched most carefully by aid of the lantern, but without result.

"How large was the tortoise?" I

asked.
"It could at a pinch be hidden in the hollow of a man's hand—say about two inches in diameter with the setting."

It was now nearly three o'clock in the morning. There was no more for me to do there, so I prepared to take my departure.

the morning. There was no more for me to do there, so I prepared to take my departure.

The old man began again to lament the loss of the diamond, and complained in the most energetic manner that he had not been able to shoot, or cut in two, the rascals who had robbed him.

"It would be stupid of me to promise anything," said I. "but, for my own part, I am pretty sure we shall have the birds caged before many days, and that we shall secure the diamond as well."

With these words, I took my departure, put the cut off heel bits in my pocket, and went home.

My thoughts on the way were naturally taken up with what I had heard and seen at Bartholomew Frick's.

But, remarkably enough, it was the young girl, Miss Frick, upon whom my thoughts dwelt most of all. I had only heard her speak a few words, and this was the first time I had seen her face; but she attracted me strangely. I have never been of an impressionable nature, and no woman had ever had much of an attraction for me. So I was astonished to find how clearly her image stood out before me after the few hours we had been together. I already felt a strong desire to please her—a desire to do something which would compel her admiration.

You must, in any case, get the dia-

something which would compet her miration.

You must, in any case, get the diamond back for her uncle, I thought; women naturally set value upon a detective's skill. It will, at any rate, please her uncle, and bring me into her soci-

her uncle, and bring me into her society again.

I had at once noticed that the robbers at Frick's was of a simple and not very complicated kind; and though the matter from a professional standpoint had not interested me particularly, it had suddenly become invested with a new importance.

As soon as I arrived home, I hurriedly changed my wet clothes, made myself

Zulu at seventy paces, with the same revolver; he had stolen a hen from me, the rascal?"

I didn't quite know what to think of such a bloodthirsty old man. But a certain humorous twinkle in his eyes gave me to understand that this was not genuine, and, as the young people didn't try to hide their merriment, we all three had a good laugh.

I afterward learned that old Frick suffered from many of the defects which are so often the outcome of a hard and adventurous life, such as he had led from his youth to old age: stubbornness, waywardness, and tyrannical contempt for the feelings of others when his own were aroused. Otherwise his heart was soft and as good as gold.

It was plain to see that the burglary had not in the least ruffled his temper. On the contrary, he felt himself considerably enlivened with this reminder of a life which had been full of such seenes.

At last he finished his description of

vague recollection of something set my brain to work.

Ah, suddenly I saw it all! The heel and sole belonged to the same sort of shoes, in fact they were a perfect match to a pair which had just helped the police to circumstantial evidence by an impression on soft soil in a similar case. It was the same kind of boot with which the prison society provides discharged prisoners, so that they shall not be entirely shoeless when they come out of prison.

one of the thieves must be a discharged prisoner, I'went on reasoning. The boots are quite new; he must, therefore, have been just lately releasedin all probability yesterday morning. The burglary must have been planned and the necessary watch on the house undertaken by a confederate, who, of course, must have been at large for some time previous.

must have been at large for some time previous.

Ten minutes later I stood in the anteroom to my office at the police station. It was not yet morning. The official on duty sat and dozed over the stove.

"Find out from the ledger if any of our burglars have been diseharged from Jail in the course of the last two or three days," I asked.

It is unfootunately, a fact, that a

register of those who are let loose. the meanwhile, I went into the room and ordered two constables

guardroom and ordered two constables to follow me.

"Black John, the Throndhjemer, as you perhaps remember, sir, was discharged yesterday morning; I don't see any others."

"That's all right! find out where he hangs about when he is out."

"I know him well, sir. He generally puts up at 'Fat Bertha's,' she who has the coffee-house and lodgings for travelers up by Vaalerengen. But he often frequents the sheds in the brick fields and round about there."

I always had a trap in readiness at

and round about there."

I always had a trap in readiness at the police station, and in a quarter of an hour I, and two officers in plain clothes, stopped at a suitable distance from Fat Bertha's lodging-house.

Black John was not there, however, and we began to search among the brick

ovens.

Daylight was just breaking when we came to the second oven, and the workmen were arriving with their tin cans in hand. Two men crept out on the other side and began to run across a ploughed field which adjoined one of the sheds.

We set off after them; but it seemed

We set off after them; but it seemed as if they had got too much of a start, and were likely to get away from us in

behind, and we soon had him between us. We let the other one get away for

the time being.

The fellow we had got hold of swore and cursed, but otherwise made no re-

and cursed, but otherwise made no resistance.

"If it hadn't been for that sore foot of mine, the police wouldn't have got me this time," he bawled.

We followed the direction of his look, and saw how his left foot had forced its way through the shoe, which was dragging about his ankle.

Black John's volubility did not deceive me. I kept a sharp eye on all his movements while he, with a kind of raw good nature, joked with the constables, he slowly passed one hand behind him, and with a deft movement threw a small parcel some ten or twelve paces behind him.

him.

"You had better leave tricks of that sort alone, Black John," I said in a friendly tone, stepping back and picking up a dirty little packet wrapped in a greasy piece of *The Morning Post*.

Inside three or four wrappers of the same sort I found the strangest object

I had ever seen.

It was a large black diamond, of a flattened oval shape, tapering at the ends. It was set in a proad gold rim of the same form as the stone, and, to of the same form as the stone, and, to make its likeness to a tortoise more complete, a head was introduced, together with a little stumpy tail, and four knobs underneath, to represent feet—all of gold. In the head shone two green precious stones for eyes.

"Oh, no; it won't be of much use to me, I can see," said Black John, resignedly. "I suppose I am in for another year or two."

He exhibited a subtle humor, while he tramped along to the town between "stwo policemen. The effects of just prison libations did not seem quite to have left him.

prison libations did not seem quite to have left him.
"Ours is a hard sort of a profession, sir," he continuued confidentially. "I think it's just as well to be a convict all one's life. Then one wouldn't get such frights at night."
"Were you frightened then last night,"

"Were you frightened, then, last night, in the Drammen Road?" I asked sym-

m the Drammen Road! Taske sys-pathetically.

"Frightened, indeed! What would you say, sir, if you were busy rooting about in a house at night, when you thought all was quiet and still, and an old ourall was quiet and still, and an old our-ang outang in a shirt were suddenly to appear before you with a sword in one hand a pistol in the other, firing away at you till the bullets whistled about

our ears."
In this kind of jocular strain he talked ntil we reached the town, where we

(To be Continued.)

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MONK CONTEMPLATES A VOYAGE TO

'What! off to America?'

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Monk rang; and soon after we sat

My host ate scarcely

It was quite apparent that something

to me."
"Of course I have!"
A faint smile lit up Monk's dark coun-

A faint smile lit up Monk's dark countenance.

"I have put your patience to a severe test over and over again with my lectures on detective science, logic, deductions, and the like; but what I have in mind this evening is nothing of that sort. Do you feel inclined to hear a story about myself, the story of how it was I came to be the kind of man I am, and to lead the life I do?"

"My dear fellow," I answered, "I am more than ready to listen to you. Any one can see that some time or another something has happened to you which has thrown a shadow over your existence, but, as you can understand, one does net ask one's friends about that sort of thing. One generally waits until one is approached."

"You are right, and I ought to have

OLD FRICK.

ship at the university,—so I was to say at any rate.

But this was not to my mind; to have got free from the student's bench only to climb immediately to the dusty chair of a professor, seemed to me anything but attractive.

I first got a situation in the office of a government official, far up in the coun-

matter as settled."

I gladly accepted the offer, but not until I had obtained a year's leave; a year which I spent abroad in travel, to study languages and life in the great countries.

Well, he continued, I think I have now

you remember Peter Lyverson, of course? Well, he had been waiting for us five hours in one of the small streets in the East end, and was just as disap-

rushed to the apparatus.

"Hello! are you Monk, the police detective?"

"Yes; who is it?"

"Bartholomew Frick of Drammen Road. Can you come out here at once? My house has been broken into. I thought that a man like you would prefer to be the first on the spot, and as quickly as possible!"

"All right, I will come."

It was not pleasant, for I was wet and tired; but business is business, and Bartholomew Frick was right in saying that I liked to be the first on the spot. Some minutes later the carriage was rolling along the deserted streets in the pouring rain toward Drammen Road.

I used the time, while we were on our way, to recall what I knew about "Old Friek."

Bartholomew or "Captain" Frick, as