

# Fiction Features for Saturday Evening Reading

## "THE IRON CLAW" BY ARTHUR STRINGER

[Read this story in the Palladium and see it at the Palace.]

Golden, staring dazed at the great room through which sudden ruin had erupted, was scarcely conscious of the frightened girl clinging so forlornly to his arm. He was scarcely conscious of the throng of servants and watchmen who ran back and forth through the dusty rooms. He quaveringly helped his daughter to a chair. She stared wide-eyed at Wilson as the latter led David Mansley, limping a little and much disordered as to apparel, into the room.

"Is anybody hurt?" asked the white-faced girl.

The ever dependable old butler looked at Manley, who in turn looked away.

"I'm sorry, Miss Margery," Wilson hesitatingly explained, "but it is the Count De Espares!"

"You mean he is?"

The old butler nodded.

"I'm afraid so, Miss Margery. They have just found his body, crushed under the vault!"

### NINTH EPISODE Arrows of Hate.

Doctor Anstett stared down at the bundle of delicately carved arrows. They were as slender as a bistoury blade and scarcely longer than a darning needle. Then he looked up at his visitor.

"So you really object to telling me your name," he said as he carefully restored the fragile darts to their receptacle of capped bamboo.

"Unless it's essential, I'd prefer not to," was the stranger's quiet-toned reply.

"Then why did you bring these things to me?" asked the doctor.

"Because I understood you were the most eminent toxicologist in America. And I was anxious to know whether or not those innocent-looking arrows in your hand were really poisoned."

The doctor's smile was a grim one.

"Well, they were poisoned, all right! It is difficult, of course, to say just what the nature of this venom is. But that does not interest me as much as the question of where you obtained possession of such remarkably deadly little missiles."

"For a moment or two the stranger remained silent."

"To be quite candid, doctor, these arrows were stolen."

"But from whom?"

"From the foreign valet of a man who has unmistakably proved himself an enemy to society."

"And is that why you have asked me to clean and neutralize them with such scientific exactitude?"

"It is."

"And now that their fangs have been drawn, so to speak, what do you propose to do with them?"

"Return them to their owner."

"To what end?"

"To the end that any nefarious plan which he may be about to execute will not bring death where that criminal desires to bring it!"

The abstracted-eyed doctor watched his visitor as the latter prepared to take his departure.

Had Doctor Anstett been less interested in remarkable poisons and more interested in remarkable persons, he might have kept on the trail of this mysterious stranger, and, in doing so, he might have discovered that these venomous arrows of mystery were the rightful property of one unrighteous Mauki, the personal servant of that elusive master criminal known as Jules Legar.

Legar's campaign to discredit the Laughing Mask was a characteristically audacious one. It even embraced a number of artfully forged letters, duly signed by the Laughing Mask and left in surroundings which

caused both perplexity and alarm to the city police.

One note, found beside the body of a murdered miser, briefly explained that crime by the declaration that the dead man had always robbed the poor and so earned the end which overtook him—even though this included the carrying away of a not inconsiderable portion of his worldly wealth. A gambler and a government inspector met a similar fate. The complex machinery of the law was set in motion and far-reaching efforts were made for the rounding up of this somewhat too autocratic Laughing Mask.

One of these efforts included a visit on Enoch Golden by Lieutenant Kibby and three of his men from the detective bureau. Golden, the lieutenant pointed out, was in a position to help the authorities out of a predicament by telling all he knew about this same mysterious stranger.

"But I don't know any more about this Laughing Mask than you do!" protested the old financier.

"Surely you had at least some theory as to the identity of the man."

"I thought I had, once or twice. And my daughter thought she had. But we were off the track, each time."

"One moment, please," cut in the lieutenant as he suddenly rose to his feet and strode across the room. He stepped out through the portiere doorway, stared down the hallway, and returned to the room again. "Are you aware of the fact that a young woman has been standing there listening to every word we said?"

The deep-lined face of the aged financier showed no perceptible change.

"My daughter, undoubtedly," retorted Golden. "For the girl's about as interested in this case, you see, as we are ourselves!"

Margery's interest in the mysterious case of the Laughing Mask, indeed, would have been brought promptly home to that somewhat puzzled police lieutenant had he been able to give less attention to Enoch Golden and more to the puzzled-eyed girl who had stood momentarily arrested at the entrance to her father's library. For as she moved on down the shadowy

hallway she found herself confronted by that interruptive but all too familiar figure of the Laughing Mask himself. He made a gesture for silence as she started back in alarm. Then he nodded his domineering head in the direction of the library door.

"Now, perhaps, you will understand why it has not been easy for me to explain just who I am!"

"But you must explain," gasped the bewildered girl. "They are saying terrible things about you, things which I know to be untrue."

"Do you trust me?"

"I want to," was the whispered answer.

"Then will you continue to trust me?" asked the man in the mask.

"I don't think I can," was the girl's hesitating answer, "until you can trust me!"

"You mean that I must unmask?"

But Margery Golden's reply to that question was never uttered. For as she was about to speak, her volatile maid, Celestine, stepped into the hall behind her, beheld the mysteriously masked figure, and promptly filled the house with a ringing Gallic scream.

"Mon Dieu, it is the Laughing Mask!" she shrieked as she ran down the hall, giving the alarm.

And her alarm, unreasoning as it seemed, was fully shared by the Laughing Mask himself. He swung about, darted through a doorway, and disappeared from sight as Golden and his retainers and his official visitors came flocking out to the scene of that disturbance.

Two minutes later Margery Golden, hearing a shout from Kibby's men above stairs, followed that officer to the scene of the sudden tumult. There, to her alarm, she saw three men struggling with a figure which she promptly recognized as the Laughing Mask himself.

"We've got him!" gasped one of his captors as Lieutenant Kibby confronted him.

"What'll we do with him?" asked his other captor.

"First thing, tear that fool mask off!" commanded the lieutenant.

[To Be Continued.]

## STYLES FOR THE Woman's Eye



Rather daring black and white checks are introduced in some of the new fall suits and prove very attractive. The normal waistline is moulded beautifully in this instance and the flare skirt is divided by a row of bone buttons.

## "The Crevice" By Wm. J. Burns and Isabel Ostrander

A chill settled about his heart. Had Brunell been captured, and police detectives searched the house, his picture could hold no interest for them. Had the old forger fled alone, he would not have taken so insignificant an object from among all his household goods and chattels. Emily alone would have passed to save the photograph of the man she loved from the wreckage of her home; Emily, too, had gone!

Scarcely knowing what he was doing, and caring less, Morrow rushed across the street, and descended upon Mrs. Quinlan, his landlady, at her post in the kitchen.

"What's happened to the Brunells?" he demanded breathlessly.

"Land's sakes, but you scared me, Mr. Morrow!" Mrs. Quinlan turned from the stove with a hurried start, and wiped her plump, steaming face on her apron. "I should like to know what's happened myself. All I do know is that they've gone bag and baggage—or as much of it as they could carry with them—and never a word to a soul except that Emily ran away to me!"

"What was it?" he fairly shouted at her. But there were few interests in Mrs. Quinlan's humdrum existence, and seldom did she have an exciting incident to relate and an eager audience to hang upon her words. She sat down ponderously and prepared to make the most of the present occasion.

"He is a good man—isn't he?"

Perhaps the hardest ordeal which Kelley Delaine ever had to endure was telling Julia Marvin that her sister had died in giving John Redfield's name as that of the man with whom she was infatuated, and that, as yet, no trace of the girl or her lover could be found. Julia tried to be brave, but the terror and desolation that overwhelmed her, as she thought of facing life in the store and lodging house now that Caryl was gone, made her appreciate that Delaine was right in urging her to go back to her father's house for a while. She had a strange sense of unregretfully wasting an opportunity when she gave up her position at Baird's, but nothing made much difference to her now except thoughts of Caryl and Delaine. She seemed for weeks to wander in a dream.

Her father was pathetically glad to see her. He had aged within the past few months and welcomed her eagerly. When she told him of the great sorrow that had come upon them, the old man spoke no word of blame, and agreed unprotestingly to Julia's suggestion that her step-mother be kept in ignorance of what had happened.

"It is enough for her to know that Caryl has left New York to take a position in another city," he said gravely. "Our secret and the family shame—if shame there is—are ours and ours alone, my child."

Perhaps there was something in Julia's increased gentleness or softened manner that lessened Mrs. Marvin's animosity toward her. So tactfully and unobtrusively did the girl lift sundry burdens from the wife's shoulders that she soon was watching and longing for his coming. But he knew how brave and patient she would be, and he loved her all the more for her silent heroism.

In spite of sadness and complete absence of any further information about Caryl, Julia found the weeks and months slipping away. At last spring came, and on the first of May she and Kelley Delaine were quietly married by the old minister who had baptized her. Then, with affectionate words from her father and actual tears from her step-mother, Julia left again to begin a new life in New York.

[To Be Continued.]

"I thought it was funny to see a man go!" into their yard at 5 o'clock this mornin', but my tooth was so bad I forgot all about him and it never came into my mind again until I seen them goin' away. I sleep in the room just over yours, you know, Mr. Morrow, an' my tooth ached so bad I couldn't sleep. It was 5 by my clock when I got up to come down here an' get some hot vinegar, an' I don't know what made me look out my window, but I did. I seen a man come running down the lane, keepin' well in the shadows, an' looking back as if he was afraid he was being chased, for all the world like a thief. While I looked, he turned in the Brunells' yard an' instead of knocking on the door, he began throwin' pebbles up at the old man's bedroom window. Pretty soon it opened and Mr. Brunell looked out. Then he came down quick an' met the man at the front door. They talked a minute, an' the feller handed over somethin' that showed white in the light of the street lamp, like a piece of paper. Mr. Brunell shut the door an' the man ran off the way he had come. I came down an' got my hot vinegar, an' when I got back to my room I seen there were lights in Mr. Brunell's room an' Emily's, an' one in the livin'-room, too, but my tooth was jumpin' so I went straight to bed. About half an hour after you'd left for business I was shaking a rug

out of the front sittin'-room window, when Emily come running across the street.

"Oh, Mrs. Quinlan!" she calls to me, an' I see she'd been cryin'. 'Mrs. Quinlan, we're goin' away!'

"For good?" I asked.

"Forever!" she says. 'Will you give a message to Mr. Morrow for me, please? Tell him I'm sorry I was mistaken. I'm sorry to have found him out!'

"She burst out cryin' again an' ran back as her father called her from the porch. He was bringin' out a pile of suit cases and roll-ups, and pretty soon a taxicab drove up with a man inside. I couldn't see his face—only his coat sleeve. They got in an' went off katin' an' that's every last thing I know. What d'you s'pose she meant about findin' you out, Mr. Morrow?"

He turned away without reply, and went to his room, where he sat for long, sunk in a stupor of misery. She knew him for what he was, knew his despicable errand in ingrating himself into her friendship and that of her father. She believed that the real love he had professed for her had been all a mere part of the game he was playing, and now she had gone away forever! He would never see her again!

"By God, no!" he cried aloud to himself, in the bitterness of his sorrow. "I will find her again, if I search the ends of the earth. She shall know the truth!"

[To Be Continued.]

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rather, as Ben had asked for an introduction.

"If any trouble has come of it, I'm sorry," Somerdyke wrote. "I supposed then that Hadley was a very decent sort. I did not discover until just before I left New York that he has a wife and child down south somewhere."

Kelley Delaine, reading this, groaned. He had promised Julia to tell her all that he learned.

Here was another blow for her. And as the prospect of his next visit to Springfield was shadowed by the thought of the suffering of the woman who would be watching and longing for his coming. But he knew how brave and patient she would be, and he loved her all the more for her silent heroism.

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[To Be Continued.]

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63 YEARS A FAMILY MEDICINE

## "Two Sisters" —By— Virginia Terhune Van de Water

Julia's note was as brief as Caryl's had been.

"I believe you implicitly," she wrote. "It would be foolish and wicked were I to pretend now that I do not care for you. But I am not clever or well educated, and am only a poor work-girl—and you are all the things that I am not. Still, you tell me to reply just what my heart dictates, and to think of nothing else. If I obey you in this matter my answer must be 'yes.'"

Then she, too, went to the street corner and posted her letter, and, returning, was too wide awake to think of sleep. Seating herself under the gas-jet she tried to read.

Kelley Delaine dined at a restaurant that evening, and it was 9 o'clock when he returned to his rooms. On his desk lay a letter in a handwriting which he recognized as his stenographer's. What could she be writing to him about? he wondered. Was it to say that her cold would prevent her coming tomorrow?

He tore open the envelope indifferently, his mind on the sister of the girl whose epistle he held. Then, as his eyes took in the meaning of the written words, he started violently.

The sentences before him had been written hurriedly, but they started at him with a vicarious meaning.

"When you get this," Caryl had written, "please notify my sister that I have gone away to be married. I can not stand being spied at and interferred with. I love the man I am going with. I am tired of work, tired of the kind of life I have had to live. Indeed, I am tired of everybody except this man. Julia will not miss me if she has you. This is why I'm sending this to you. She won't feel badly if you will tell her about my plans."

"CARYL MARVIN."

The petty spite contained in the words, the bitter resentment, did not so much as touch the man to whom they were addressed. Instead his own emotion was a great sense of pity for the woman he loved, who was even now waiting at home for her little sister. How could he lessen this blow for her? How could he spare her a night of agonized anxiety? There was no telephone in Mrs. Hollan's lodging house. He could not go there at this time in the evening and call on her without exciting disagreeable comment. There was but one course left him. He would telegraph a quieting message. Then, tomorrow, he would see Julia and tell her the truth.

Thus it came about that, as Julia Marvin sat reading, Mrs. Hollan's excited knock prefaced her hurried entrance into her lodger's room. She held a yellow envelope at arm's length.

"Sure, dear," she said sagely. "I hope it don't carry no bad news!"

Julia hastily tore open the envelope, imagining of her father's possible illness or death rushing upon her. She read the message twice before she spoke.

"That's all right, Mrs. Hollan," she said then, "it's only a message from a friend of my sister's and mine."

When she was alone again she repeated the words over to herself in perplexity.

"Do not worry at your sister's absence tonight. I will explain it when I see you tomorrow at 6 o'clock in the little park."

KELLEY DELAINE.

It was characteristic of Julia's faith in the man she had learned to love that no doubt as to its fair dealing penetrated her mind.

"I will try to do as he says," she muttered, "and not worry, but where is Caryl? Perhaps, after all, Dora Redfield decided not to leave town until tomorrow, and Caryl is staying with her."

With which solution of the problem Julia Marvin tried to be content.

Looking back over the days following Caryl's disappearance—her elopement, as Kelley Delaine was careful to call it—Julia always remembered distinctly two things, her own anguish and her lover's goodness. In telling her the awful truth he had spoken briefly and compassionately. She had gone away to be married," he had said. "To—to—John Redfield!" Julia asked

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## INDOOR SPORTS By Tad



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