

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 watchers who ran back and forth through the dusty rooms. He quavered helplessly his daughter to a chair. She stared wide-eyed at Wilson as the latter led David Manley, 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 Da 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 Anstott 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 deserves to bring it!"

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

Had Doctor Anstott 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, might have discovered that these envenomed 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.

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 fled 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 Kirby'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 Kirby 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.]

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 dominoed head in the direction of the library door.

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[To Be Continued.]

STYLES FOR THE Woman's Eye



"The Crevice"

By Wm. J. Burns and Isabel Ostrander

A Real Detective Story by the World's Greatest Detective. A Fascinating Love Story Interwoven with the Tangled Threads of Mystery.

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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 paused to save the photograph of the man she loved from the wreckage of her home; Emily, too, 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, keeping 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 living room, too, but my tooth was jumping so I went straight to bed. About half an hour after you'd left for business I was shaking a rug

"I thought it was funny to see a 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'."

"For good?" I asked.

"Forever!" she says. "Will you give me 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 pail 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 kitin' an' that's every last thing I know. What dyu 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 ingratiating 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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NOTICE TO SHIPPERS

Pennsylvania Lines West of Pittsburgh

Office Freight Agent, Richmond, Ind.

August 31, 1916

Embargo 750-10. Account impending labor trouble, Pennsylvania Lines West of Pittsburgh place an embargo as hereinafter itemized, same to apply on shipments from ALL points for ALL Destinations:

Item 1. Effective close of business Thursday, August 31st, 1916, embargo all shipments of explosives and inflammables of every kind and description.

Item 2. Effective close of business, September 1st, 1916, embargo all shipments of perishable freight, including live stock, dressed beef, dressed and live poultry, fresh fruits and vegetables.

Item 3. Effective close of business Saturday, September 2nd, 1916, embargo ALL freight of all kinds from ALL points for ALL destinations.

All freight as above described, which may be in transit, will not be accepted from connecting lines at any junction point after date and hour in each item above named, regardless of date on which shipments were accepted as indicated by date on card and revenue waybill.

All bills of lading issued on and after Wednesday, August 30, 1916, and until further notice must bear the following notation: "This shipment accepted subject to delay, loss and damage account of embargo."

This embargo takes precedence over all modifications of embargoes that have been previously issued, and the acceptance of any cars that may have heretofore been arranged will not be accepted if acceptance is in conflict with this embargo.

Please be governed accordingly.

C. D. SLIFER,
Fr. Agt.

INDOOR SPORTS

By Tad

