CATCHING CHICAGO CROOKS!

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Dick Doom's Ten Strike; or, The Top Floor Club's Exposé.

By Colonel Prentiss Ingraham.

Pointing at Miss Dixie, the man with the lamp said sternly: "You are the murderer of that unfortunate lady. You poisoned her."

H. W. Pray,
Norwood, R. I.
**Dick Doon's Ten Strike; or, THE TOP FLOOR CLUB EXPOSED.**

**BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM, AUTHOR OF "DICK DOON," NOVELS, ETC.**

**CHAPTER I.**

**THE CHIEF AND THE FERRET.**

Chief of the Secret Service sat in his private office wearing a cloud upon his brow, for he was sorely puzzled.

The rapid increase in the city’s population, the coming there of the most noted crooks from the large cities of the world and the remarkably rapid increase in secret deeds of lawlessness and crime in general was taxing his powers to the very utmost.

As he puzzled over the situation he was interrupted by an attendant bringing in a card which read:

"**RICHARD RICHARDSON,**

**U. S. S. S., New Orleans.**"

"Admit him at once," said the chief, and a moment after a young man, fashionably dressed in a style that made him look like a dude, with his high silk hat, eye-glasses and cane, appeared.

"Ah, Doon, I am glad to see you. You are on time, and I greatly need your aid and advice," and the chief reversed the hand of the visitor who answered:

"I am here to give you both, major, but, what is the trouble?" and Dick Doon, seconding his eye-glasses, dropped into a chair.

"In the first place, Dick, Chicago has become the rendezvous of innumerable criminals and crooks of the very worst kind, and the result, of course, is murders, robberies and other lawless deeds that keep my men driven to the utmost."

"Yes, I have read in the papers that they were crowding you, major, and "They are indeed, and though you added me greatly in running down the gang in Lake View Hall, they are increasing on me daily.

"You have seen something about that old man, having a new mistress, sir," and the chief asked:

"It has, and that is the mystery that I wish you to set upon.

"I have here a scrap-book with all that has been said about it and its people, and also what my men have worked on and discovered.

"The papers take the idea that the three deaths there were caused by murders!"

"Yes, major, I was half way inclined to the same belief.

"And now?"

"I do not think so.

"I do, sir.

"You think that old man Granger was murdered?"

"I have that idea, sir.

"And his son, Captain Lawrence Granger, Jr.

"It looks as though he had died the same way.

"And the wife of the latter, or rather the one whom he led into a marriage with him, telling her that his wife was dead!"

"Yes, in the same peculair manner that the other two died.

"True, but now the real wife is in possession.

"Yes, sir, and her son?"

"Dick, that is the strangest part of it all, for a mother seldom discards her own children, he said, and no one can make it wicked.

"And did she say so?"

"Yes, for he was a claimant for the estate, and but for her sudden and unexpected coming would have gotten it, though he has been a wild fellow!"

"Did she admit him to be her son?"

"She did, naming the check for five thousand dollars and sent him away forever."

"That is strange; but, how had he wronged her?"

"I can find out nothing that he did, as he was a little fellow of tender years when his father put him into the asylum and she had not seen him since."

"Perhaps hatred for his father, for his crime against her, had been transferred to his son, even though many years had passed?"

"It must be so; but will you take the case, Dick?"

"To find out if the three who died there were murdered?"

"Yes.

"I will do so, sir, for the case is one of deep interest to me, and I would like to remove the veil from the mystery overhanging the old mansion and its owners, if any there really is?"

"But you think there is a mystery?"

"I naureully do, sir."

"Well, the case is in your hands, and I'll simply drop it all, call off my men, and let it be known that I give it up, let the papers pitch me as they may."

"All right, sir; I'll begin work at once."

And Dick Doon started to work on the case that very day by taking the scrap-book to his hotel with him and reading it carefully over.

**CHAPTER II.**

**THE MANSION OF MYSTERY.**

**LAKE VIEW HALL** was an old mansion that dated back to the early settlement of Chicago — to old Fort Dearborn days.

It had been built of bawn logs by an old sea-captain who, abandoning the sea, had come to the Great Lakes, and, purchasing a staunch vessel, had become a fresh-water sailor and trader.

There were rumors, in truth, in those early days, that Captain Lawrence Granger was given to smuggling from the Canada shore to the United States, and some even went so far as to say that in some cases he even was guilty of piracy, but as there was nothing more than rumors to substantiate the report or charge, nothing was done about it.

At last the captain sold his vessel to his son, bearing his own name, and who had been his mate, went to his home in the out skirts of Chicago one year after.

He then had ample means and began to improve his home, making it into a mansion with large grounds and grounds.

After a dozen years of lonely life there, with his servants, his son came to the home to dwell, bringing with him his wife and son — the latter, Loyd, being then in his fifteenth year, and soon developing into a very wild, self willed lad.

The father, Captain Lawrence Granger Jr., still sailed his vessel, making visits home of a week or more after every down the lakes cruise; but, whether the family was a happy one or not one seemed to know for they had few visitors and no intimate friends or relatives.

After several years passed thus thus, young Loyd Granger suddenly disappeared, from his home.

It was hinted that he had had trouble with his father, that he had gone to the bad, that he had been turned gambler and led a life of dissipation, but, though no one seemed to know the truth as to his going, certain it was that he had really left his home and not a soul knew where he had gone.

The family continued to live on as before for several years after, then old Captain Granger suddenly died.

It was said that he was carried off by heart disease, brought on by bad living and too much rum.

He was buried in a corner of the large grounds about the mansion, and a monument was erected over him, the white shaft glimmering in the darkness of the night.

Six months after the old man’s death Capt. Granger and his wife left the mansion for a prolonged stay, the chief thought.

The servants were dismissed, the house locked and double locked, the gates chained and the iron keys, destruction, lost or burned.

Weeds soon grew in the walks, the foliage and vines ran wild and homestead and out buildings began to go to decay, with little or none cared for; then a startling announcement was made one morning in the papers, to the effect that the famous detective, known as Dick Doon, the Ferret of the Golden Fetter— a man about whom there hung the deepest mystery, in tracking Chi cago crooks, had shadowed them to the old Granger mansion.

He had laid his plans well, set his traps well, and one night with the aid of some Boy Ferrets whom he had allied with in his Secret Service work, had run the crooks to earth in the place supposed by all to be wholly deserted — Lake View Hall.

He had shadowed them as unthinkingly and unerringly as a bloodhound, and had unearthed a band of murderers and rob bers, for during their stay of over a year the victims were in their cruel clutches, and those killed in quarrels among themselves, and they were several, and had all been buried in an unseen cellar of the mansion.

Here, too, they kept their plunder, and cailed forth to their deeds of crime. Lake View Hall their rendezvous by night, and the scene of many a midnight orgie.

With the band of crooks captured at night in a debauch, and not one escaping, Dick Doon made a grand haul and placed behind bars some of the most noted criminals.

For awhile the old mansion was guarded by police, who little liked the dismal work, with the weird stories told of the place, and then, suddenly, there appeared upon the scene, after a long absence, the owner of the hall, Captain Granger, and his wife.

They heard the stories told of their long deserted home, had the unused cellar nailed up after the graves had been filled in, from which a score of victims had been removed, and gazed upon the damage done with an exultant palm press.

The mansion was thoroughly overhauled and put in good condition, the grounds were turned over a green again, and the mansion was opened to Captain Granger and his wife seemed to care little for ghostly stories and desolate sur roundings.

But ere he had been one year at home Captain Granger died suddenly, one night, and but for the father had died, the son, Loyd Granger, was quietly buried under the shadow of the monument in the grounds of the mansion, leaving his wife alone to mourn his loss and inherit his estate.

**CHAPTER III.**

**TWO KEEN.**

For nearly a year did the widow of Lawrence Granger dwell alone, save for her servants, in Lake View Hall.

The few servants she kept were old, and remained only upon the payment of large wages, for they dreaded the place, and every night looked upon having the mansion lighted up through all the hours of darkness.

This one all fell upon the mansion in the sudden death of the widow.

As the two captains had died before her, so died she, suddenly, and at midnight, in her home, with no one near.

Thus three deaths so mysterious, caused the papers to refer to them as suspicions, and the authorities investigated, but without results.
The servants were closely examined, and they testified that Mrs. Granger, as had the captain and his father before him, Leen most of her time in bed, eating a late and sup- per every night before retiring, with wines at lunch, dinner and supper, and keeping her bedroom, while she seldom arose before ten and took little exercise.

The three had died, as stated, in about the same manner, and the police after careful in- vestigation found nothing suspicious about the affair.

The lawyer had left no will, nor had the two captains before her, or at least none could be found, and so the heirs or heirs were advertised for by the attorneys having the matter in charge.

In less than a week an heir appeared, in the person of a young man with the rank of dissipation plainly stamped upon his face, He was handsome, with strong features, yet looked like one who, born well edu- cated and with innate refinement, had seen the very roughest side of life as well.

He presented himself before the attorneys as Loyd Granger, the son of the late master of Lake View Hall, and claimed to be the sole legatee and that the estate was worth over a million.

He young man stated that he had been born in the town of York, as he had been according to the father, who had run off and gone to foreign lands, and had heard about the world as a sailor, and on returning, the old father would receive him kindly, when, in a New Year's Day, he had seen the notice of his mother's death.

"Prove your identity and the estate is yours," said the attorney.

But he had hardly uttered the words when a woman in mourning and heavily veiled, swept into the office.

She stated that she was the wife of the late captain Lawrence Granger, had married him some years ago, and was now living in New Orleans, and had one child.

Returning with her husband to the lakes, she had left him with their child, son on Lake Superior her child, a boy, had been born and named Loyd.

A few weeks after her husband had tired of her, and she discovered that the cause was a woman with whom he had become in- fatiated.

Suspecting no plot she had given medicines, when in port, which had rendered her swoon, and then had been locked up in a lunatic asylum, returning to consciousness to find herself entered there as a victim of the captain.

In vain she pleaded that she was not of disorder mind—that it was a plot against her, that the steward had been caught in a lunatic asylum, returning to consciousness to find herself entered there as a victim of the captain.

Then they listened to her; the superin- tendent investigated her case, set her free and she went to work to solve the mystery of her incarceration.

She found that her husband had reported her as dead, and then had married the woman he had been infatuated with, and whom she did not believe ever suspected the truth of the fraud marriage.

This woman claimed that she could go to the mansion and secure her certificate of marriage, and other papers, which she did, while she brought with her the letters of her husband to the keepers of the asylum, and other papers thoroughly identifying her from the superintendent.

The attorneys carefully investigated the case, and Mrs. Granger was at length in- stalled as mistress of Lake View Hall, while, strangest of all, though admitting that the advertisements regarding the estate had been given, she gave him a sum of money and bade him go his way and never darken the threshold of the mansion.

Thus parted mother and son, the former at

CHAPTER IV.

HER SECRET.

Dick Doom spent two hours in his hotel reading the scrap-book given him by the Secret Service chief.

His face was a strange one, in that it pos- sesed a beauty that would be proud of, and his features were cast in a perfect mold.

His hair was worn short, and clustered in ringlets about his temples and neck, his eyes large, expressive and dreamy, and his mouth was perfect, red-lipped and with teeth as white as pearls.

Yet the man was by no means what his face indicated, effeminate.

To study the features, the brow was an in- telligent one, the eyes full of fire, the mouth daring and resolute, the nose being also ex- pressive in its perfection of outline.

A well-built, graceful form, well clad, an erect carriage, small, shapely hands and feet and a certain courtliness of manner made up the man; and one whose nature was as strong as a giant.

"I cannot catch the slightest clue to this mystery, and begin to feel, after all, that I was wrong in surmising that a mur- der had been committed in the Granner house- hold, instead of there being some other cause having carried off the three persons who have died in the old manor house.

"Yes, they must have died natural deaths, for I am baffled in every effort to find a clue to the mystery," said the attorney.

His eyes, roving listlessly as he mused half aloud, had fallen upon an advertise- ment in the paper that lay upon the table by his side.

Aloud he read the advertisement which was headed in large type:

"READ THIS!

Then the advertisement went on as follows:

"Wanted immediately, and for good pay when the right party applies, a lady com- panion for an invalid lady.

"Must be a good musician, able to read well, understand nursing and medicines, and be willing to make herself generally useful.

"Good accommodations and meals with the family to such a person.

"Apply to Mrs. Georgine Granger, Lake View Hall, Harriman place.

The young man read the advertisement several times over, and a strange smile crossed over his expressive face with the thoughts that came.

At last he said:

"How singular that, just as I was giving up the solution of the Granner mystery, my eyes should fall accidentally upon this advertise- ment.

"But, was it an accident, a coincidence, or was it fate?"

"I lean toward the latter, and once more my suspicions arise that crime is at the bot- tom of the three Lake View Hall deaths—yes, I shall call them once more, murderers, and I am deeply convinced that this advertise- ment sets the clue."

Then he was thoughtful for awhile and at last seemed to have decided on the course to pursue, for he murmured:

"The advertisement must be responded to, prompt application among the first may be successful in securing the place, so essential now for work!"

"I know the very young woman to fill this position.

"A companion; a nurse who understands music, and understands something of good reader, the advertisement says. She can fill each place!"

"She has to happen another calling— an accomplished in her professional duties, so much the better—for me."

"I will see that the young lady in ques- tion applies at once for the position. In- deed, she must secure it; there must be no mistake, and, cutting out advertisement out of the paper with his penknife, the young man arose and left the room.

CHAPTER V.

THE MISTRESS OF LAKE VIEW HALL AND HER NEW MAID.

Moving into the old house the new Mrs. Granger had at once begun to put it in the best of repair.

She furnished her own rooms in which she dwelt purchased a pair of fine horses for her own use, had the grounds put in the finest condition, and had besides a coach- man and a gardener, a cook, butler and maid.

She purchased a small yacht, put a sailing master upon it, and accompanied by her maid, was wont to sail the lake twice each week, while she always enjoyed her afternoons at the city.

Dressing elegantly she was fond of wear- ing diamonds and other jewels, yet received no compliments, and, though often, often, with her maid as an attendant, she indulged in a box at the opera or theater.

She lived luxuriously, her table being loaded with silver service, and in a temperate climate, she was wont to have her maid, however cold.

But, there seemed something wanting in the life of this strange woman, something she could not exactly comprehend the nature of.

At last it dawned upon her that, though Charlotte, her maid, was kind and efficient, she was no companion for her, for she could not read, writing, business letters necessary, act as maid also, and nurse her when she needed care.

At once deciding, she wrote an advertise- ment for a new maid, and sent it to the Chicago Inter-Ocean Tribune and Herald.

The result was a stream of feminine humbly and personally to Lake View Hall, and, after receiving a score or more of applications, Mrs. Georgine Granger gave the choice to the butler to admit no more, as she was disgusted.

"There is one to see you now madam," replied Spoons, the butler.

"I do not want to see another one."

"But this one looks different from the other.""

"Well, show her in, Spoons." A few moments after, a young and beauti- ful woman swept into the parlors of the house, and was admitted to the mistress of Lake View Hall in a most courteous manner, said in the sweetest of voices:

"Pardon me, for disturbing you, madam, for I see that you have had many other answers to your advertisement, and I fear I am too late."

Mrs. Granger was at once impressed with the face, form and manner of the fair appli- cant before her, and as a dread came over her that she would not answer all require- ments, she said:

"No; you are not too late, if you will suit me. Sit down, please."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIR APPLICANT.

It was the first one of the applicants whom Mrs. Granger had softened toward enough to ask to sit down.

The maid was obeyed.

"What is your name, please?" asked the mistress of Lake View Hall with her eyes riveted upon the fair young maid before her.

She saw a young girl with a perfection of
Dick Doom's Ten Strike.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF LAKE VIEW.

The servants at Lake View were a stately set, and Mrs. Granger's whim had given them names suited to their own amusements. The butler, Spoons, was as dignified as a bishop, while the cook was the best of her class, and prided herself upon her culinary accomplishments. Her name, having told it as a secret that she was a descendant of the kings of "Old Irish," she kept up the dignity becoming her race.

Ribbons, the coachman, wore his livery with the same air that a French marshal might have, while the gardener, Spades, as Mrs. Granger called him, was a quiet individual, working from daylight to sunset, and going through the hours of darkness.

Frills, the maid, was a character in her way. She claimed to be a "French maid," and spoke French fairly well, but she was Irish born and bred, and the accent would crop out at all times.

She had a face that was studious, for it was shrewd, intelligent in some expressions, and a blank at others. She could curl hair, sew well, tie a ribbon, or show taste in dressing her mistress, was attentive and was thoroughly trusted; but outside of her duties she appeared to be densely ignorant.

She seemed perfectly delighted at being retained in service, and instead of looking upon the coming of Della Dixie as a trial, she at once determined to do all in her power to please her, and told the mistress of Lake View, as she was about to leave, she would offer to serve Miss Dixie as well.

"Do so, Frills, for I wish to make her life as pleasant as possible, and have her treated as though she were my daughter, for, had I a daughter I would be a happy woman indeed!"

And from this the mistress of Lake View, the woman who had driven her only son from her! But Frills had faced the result without an expression on her face revealed the fact, and she said: "Yes, madam, she may prove such a jewel you might wish to adopt her as your daughter, for you will want an heir!"

"Yes, yes, do so, and the thought thus called up brought a deeper shadow upon the face of the mistress of Lake View Hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXILED HEIR.

The mistress of Lake View felt relieved after the departure of her visitor; Miss Dixie, when she thought that she had found the very one who would indeed be a companion to her.

She had been charmed with the young applicant, and thought Frills was her own child, and what had set Della Dixie aside upon the world, was convinced that it was from no wrong doing. She said: "I am ready to get on as I am, and you shall be my companion, escort and entertainer."

"You are most kind, madam; but when will you need me?"

"Come to-day if you like, but to-morrow surely."

"Come, I will show you the room I am to give you, and do you need any money in advance?"

"No, madam, I have some funds saved up" and Della Dixie followed the mistress of Lake View as far as the floor where she was shown a most delightful little parlor and bedroom adjoining both commanding views and nice decoration.

The rooms were charmingly furnished, and as Della Dixie stood gazing about her, she felt that there at least would be a haven of rest for her.

She remained to lunch as she was urged to do, and soon after took her departure, promising to come on the next morning to enter upon her duties as companion to the wealthy mistress of Lake View Hall.

"What is it, Frills?"

"A gentleman is in the library to see you, madam."

"My attorney?"

"No, madam."

"Who is he?"

"I never saw him before, madam."

"Did he send no card?"

"He did not, madam."

"Nor give his name?"

"He only said he wanted to see you particularly, and I would state his business to you."

"I suppose I must see him," and Mrs. Granger arose from the lounge upon which she had thrown herself upon returning to her room after Della Dixie's departure, and Frills began to aid her in her toilet.

The visitor awaiting Mrs. Granger stood in the shadow of the heavily curtained window of the library. He was well dressed, carried his hat in his hand, and not having taken a seat appeared like one who was anxious to have an oracle over.

His face was pale, beardless and had a somewhat haggard look which gave him the appearance of being several years older than he really was.

It was a face that was striking, yet hardly ever called her name, and it had youth though it was, a look upon it that was sinister, cynical and the stamp of one who had led a life of crime.

That he was nervous his manner showed, and as he heard the approaching step of the mistress of Lake View he started like one caught in a guilty act.

Into the library, somber in its dim light, swept the mistress of Lake View.

Her eyes swept the room at a glance and in an instant fell upon the form standing in the shadow.

Turning, she closed the door behind her and her voice was firm and stern as she said:

"Why have you dared cross the threshold of my house, my retreat, where I deemed myself secure from every thought, every memory of the past?"

"Forgive me, mother, but..."

"Hold! do not you dare call me by a name that I hold sacred."

"In Heaven's name what am I to call you?"

"The voice of the youth was pleading and reproachful."

"To you, sir, as to all others, I am Mrs. Granger, the mistress of Lake View."

"So I will call you if you ask it, mother..."

"I demand it; but, why have you broken your pledge word to me, and come here again?"

"I will tell you in a word, if you do not read it in my face, that it is want and suffering."

"You do look as though you had been ill; but our contract was that under no circumstances were you to again come near me."

"I remember but too well; I signed the contract, and I went my way to earn my own fortune and be independent."

"I ought to leave from all my old and evil associations, for without a father's, or loving mother's care, I had gone wrong."

"My dear child, if you gave me, I put into a shoemaker in New York, buying a half interest in her, and going as first mate. But we were wrecked on the coast of Cuba in a tornado, and I found that the captain, the other half-owner, had neglected to receive the insurance, and I lost every dollar I had in the world."

"I worked my way back before the mast, and when I was taken sick at the hospital in New York for some time, then came here, buying these clothes with my wages."

"I don't know of the same amount, for I will pay it back to you, every dollar, and I will once more try my fortune, pledging myself if fall or win, never to..."
CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST CHANCE

Mrs. Granger’s face did not relent, did not even dim its expression. It was haggard, cold and stern, as though she was gazing upon a perfect stranger, and her voice had no sympathy in it as she said:

"See here, do not for a moment think that I care for your threats, Loyd, or are to be awed by them, for I am not.

"I have done my duty by you as I feel it, and you have played your game and lost.

"If you are telling me the truth, that you invested your money in a vessel, and lost it, and you are sorry that is so; but your next venture may be equally as unfortunate, and then I am once more to have a demand from you for money.

"I make no demand; I only plead with you to give me one more start in life.

"If I refused, I might be the cause of your going broke again, perhaps taking your own life in your desperation.

"I want not your evil doing, or of your ill-will; I shall do your will, when you and I are once more together.

"You believe, madam; but am I to understand that, in case of your death, for we are all liable to err, I am not to be held responsible for your fault.

"Of course not.

"Do you mean that you will dishonor me?

"I have already done so.

"You have made your will against me?

"The youth asked quickly.

"No, I have made no will, I shall do that at a future day when I find out what more of my fortune I have invested, and they called us from my life.

"You know that I could contest a will?

"The woman’s eyes flashed and she replied in angry tones, as she snapped her fingers in the youth’s face.

"One of the truth of you, would you dare contest my will, my wish, and make a demand of me?

"As soon as she asked back as though he had been struck a blow, and stood in silence with bowed head and slow steps.

"For a moment she gazed at him silently and then she spoke, but her voice was unmoved, with no sympathy in its tones as she said:

"Loyd, let me tell you that I shall once more help you, and for the last time,

"I gave you five thousand dollars before, and your father’s papers reveal that, though he left you from his home, he gave you, in answer to your appeals, a great deal of money at different times.

"When you were upon the verge of claiming this fortune, I appeared and you got only that which I allowed you.

"One is different from the other is, then I might be touched; but my heart has turned to stone toward you and all whom I knew in the whole past.

"Your money is gone, either squandered, or lost as you have said it was, but it is gone.

"Nor will your give you more than one thousand dollars, it would all go the same way, so I will tell you that I will pay to you just one thousand dollars.

CHAPTER X.

THE TOP FLOOR CLUB

Is the busiest part of Chicago, where the rumble of wheels was constantly heard, and men were hastening to and fro tolling hard for their daily bread, stands an old rookery, which, for the desolation of those who dwell under its roof might well be known as the Curiosity Shop.

It was once a haunt of seven stories in height, with several hallways leading to the floors above, and with a second-hand book-seller, a pawn broker, an old end shop and a saloon on the ground floor, it has in the basement a Chinese laundry, a room for unwashed, a grocery, restaurant, and in fact nearly all of the professions and trades.

Upon the top floor the hall door is closed at the stairs and upon it is a sign which reads:

"YOUNG MEN’S MISSION.

"WORKERS ARE WELCOME.

"Virtue is its own reward.

"Ring the bell once."

There was no elevator in the building, and the young men who were content to climb up to the top story in their work of good, certainly deserved their reward.

Night was just coming on, when a young man climbed the stairs toward the top floor and halted before the doors of the young man’s rooms.

He evidently did not read the sign to “ring the bell once,” for he gave it three sharp, quick pulls, following it with three more to the door.

No step was heard upon the other side, but a voice said from within:

"Yes.

"Yes, I’d like to come in and join the Mission," said the visitor.

"All right, my friend," was the answer, and after a moment of delay the door was opened.

As a swaying open there was heard upon the floor above a score of men’s voices singing:

"Turn, slum, turn.

Why will you die?"

The visitor found the stairway carpeted, but dimly lighted, and reaching the top he was ushered into a door with a glass panel, into a large hall.

There was a long table there, chairs, shelves of books, all of papers, all of a religious nature, while at one end there was a reading desk upon which was a Bible, and a small organ at one side.

The walls were hung with maps of the Holy Land, pictures of Jerusalem and chromos of a religious nature, with framed Biblical quotations.

Seated at the reading-desk was a man dressed in black and with glasses, while another sat at the organ playing upon a score more seats around the room were singing.

"Turn, slum, turn."

As the one who had ushered the visitor into the room turned, he exclaimed, as the bright light revealed that he was no stranger:

"See here, pal, what these devils did yer play for me?"

The singing stopped instantly, and with a laugh the new-comer replied:

"Oh, I just wanted you to fellows a scare, and I did it, for you look like a nest of parsons."

A general groan of anger went round, and the man at the desk, throwing off his black coat and spectacles grinned.

"Of course we are not to be caught napping, Loyd, and when we get Nick’s warning from the door we obeyed it.

Well, what news have you? and the man took a seat at the long table, while the others threw off various disguises they had used, and that gave them a critical look in spite of the tough faces that most of them possessed.

The man is enjoying his joke of frightening the members of the Young Men’s Mission, threw himself into a chair and said:

"I have only bad news, Cap."

"She refused you?"

"She said I would not give me a dollar."

"And our cash box is pretty near empty."

"Well, a bird that can sing and won’t sing must be made to sing," said the captain.

"So say we all of us," rumbled in deep chorus the band about the table, whom the reader already suspected of being wolves in sheep’s clothing.

CHAPTER XI.

MAKED LIVES.

The man known as “captain” was possessed of a strong, intelligent face.

Had his life not been spoiled by greed for gold, or crime, he would have made a name for himself in an honorable career.

About the man was formed the athletic in build, and wore a hat that was brown, curling and silken.

In his dark-blue eyes there was a certain tenderness when his face was in repose, but they could assume an evil glint when he was angry or disturbed in mind.

He was known as Wirt Westley, and that name was upon a shingle of a floor below, as attorney at law; but by his fellows, known as the “Yagband Club,” he was called captain, and was their leader.

Some one of the Yagband Club, who professed to have known him in the past, said that he was the younger son of an English noble, and was a graduate of Oxford, but had gone wrong and fled from home to avoid bringing disgrace upon his family.

The other members of the “Yagbands” were ordinary sinful mortals, or, if above the average it was anything it was in carving and crime.

One had been a physician, and his shingle also hung out in the old rookery, and now and then he got a patient and was skilled in medicine, but preferred to lead a life of crime.

A type-writer of the club had his office below stairs, an artist had his studio also in the building, and so forth went on that each one of the Yagbands was, or pretended to be,
CHAPTER XII.

PLOTTING FOR SPOILS.

"See here, Loyd, state the case as you know it, for all will decide at this present night, and what action to take, for what you have told me is money to be gained through this old woman.

"Professor Loyd, as Loyd Granger took his seat at the table.

"The case is simple, this," answered the youth, who was the youngest member of the band, and as he spoke he lighted a cigar: "I happen to know that a friend of mine is the heir to the Granger estate, or at least a half-heir with his mother. "The mother holds possession and lives a life of luxury, while her son is a fugitive from justice, in hiding, and only through her death without a will can he get a dollar."

"And if the mother dies without a will?" asked the captain.

"Why, the youth gets it all, of course."

"Can you identify him?"

"Oh, yes."

"Dare he show up if he is a fugitive?"

"Yes, only two or three know of his guilt and with money he can readily buy them off."

"For should he get his money what do we receive?"

"Why, we must get one-half of the club by helping him to secure it."

"But who shall be done?"

"As I said, the death of Mrs. Granger saves her son the heir."

"I see, the captain thoughtfully.

"But is she in good health?"

"Yes."

"Lives alone?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ORDEAL PASSED.

DELLA DIXIE reported at Lake View Hall on time, according to her promise to Mrs. Granger.

She drove out in a hack, which carried her trunk and a satchel, her name being upon each.

The coachman and the gardener carried her baggage up to her room, and after changing her dress she went to Frills to report to the mistress of Lake View.

A beautiful vase of flowers in her room Frills told her had been placed there by order of the mistress as a welcome, and Miss Dixie seemed pleased with this courtesy upon the part of her patron.

She found Mrs. Granger reclining upon a lounge in the sitting-room, and robed becomingly in a dressing-gown and silk cap. Mrs. Granger motioned for her to take her hand, covered with jewels, and said:

"Glad to see you, Dixie, for I will so call you."

"Call me what you please, Mrs. Granger, and I will be satisfied. Now tell me what you wish me to do for you."

"Sit down and talk to me until lunch, which we will have at two, and afterwards we will take a drive—have you a fashionable with the strange patroness, and convinced that I wish you to robe yourself well, both indoors and out—I detest shabby genteel people.

"I have a handsome black silk with lace trimmings and hat to match."

"Then will do; what else have you?"

"I have other fine dresses for dinner, evening and walking suits, as well as home robes—your trunk in fact is enormous."

"I am glad you are so well supplied, for you must dress well, and remember, I supply your wardrobe as I am critical in my demands and extravagant.

"You must dress for dinner every day, for at least seven, unless I go to the theater when it is at six, and I have it a la carte every day."

"Do you love wine?"

"I am temperate, madam, yet not a profligress."

"That is right, for on whom can —within reason should never touch wine or liquors."

"I am sure that we will be fast friends, Dixie."

"I sincerely hope so, Mrs. Granger," answered Miss Dixie, more and more impressed with her strange patroness, and convinced that she possessed an inner and better nature than she was willing to admit even to herself.

"She has her eccentricities, has known much of trouble, sorrow and bitterness in her life, but has a big heart and a noble nature. I am sure," was Miss Dixie's comment of the mistress of Lake View after she had been there twenty-four hours under her roof.

She found that Mrs. Granger did not ask of her the slightest menial duty—Frills being always on hand to obey her slightest bidding, in this regard.

The lunch was a good one, with a glass of claret, and after dinner, which she was to do, she went to her room, read for an hour of reading, when the two dressed for a drive. Miss Dixie declined firmly but kindly any suggestion made for her to accompany her in her efforts to serve her, and appeared dressed for her drive in a way that greatly pleased the chef.

The latter seemed positively pleased at the glance her fair companion received from those in other vehicles they passed on the avenues.

Returning home, dinner was served at seven sharp.

There were flowers upon the table, the service of silver was superb, and the meal was a most substantial and enjoyable one, Spoons acquitting himself in a most masterly manner.

After the coffee the two ladies adjourned to the parlor, where Miss Dixie hung and played for awhile, after which a game of chess was indulged in, and, escorting Mrs. Granger to her room, then returned to her own, having bravely passed through the ordeal of her first day at Lake View Hall.

CHAPTER XIV.

DICK DOOM MAN-HUNTING.

Some ten days after the going of Miss Dixie, Della came early one morning to the house, having been sailled forth from his rooms in his hotel, and made his way toward the Secret Service Headquarters.

Though he had come out of Dick Doom's
CHAPTER XV.

THE VAIRED VISITOR.

A BINGO was at the door of the Young Men's Mission one afternoon, and the doorkeeper at once sought to know who the visitor was.

He found a lady in black at the door, and one so deeply veiled that her face was wholly invisible. She was long black gloves also, and there was nothing to indicate whether she was white, black, blue, or what.

"Is Mr. Loyd here?" she asked, speaking with a decided German accent.

"He is," said the man.

"May I see him?"

"Ladies sometimes go up into the mission room, but not often, so you can go up, if you will give me your name, for he is alone."

"Say that his old nurse wishes to see him."

The man departed, but soon returned and asked the veiled visitor up.

She entered the large mission rooms and found the young hypocrite seated at the table reading the Bible.

He arose quickly and said:

"Can it be you, Jane?"

"Yes, Loyd, I came to see you, and have no wish to speak to you in private, I am sure."

The young man said something to the doorkeeper, who at once put on his hat and left the room, leaving the two alone.

"Now tell me what you have come for, as I feel it is important."

"We are all alone."

"Yes, and I can come in unless I open the lower door."

The veiled visitor at once dropped the foreign accent with which she had spoken and said:

"I want to tell you that I have news that all is not well with the mansion."

"How do you mean?"

"Your mother has packed up a lady companion, and is becoming perfectly wrapped up in her."

"Ah! who is she?"

A young man, young woman, who had no reference and has no friends that I can learn of.

"She is designing, however, bold, shrewd, and avuncular, and she is simply winding herself into your mother's affections in such a way that she will be the belle of the mansion."

"What! do you mean this?"

"I certainly do."

"You mean to say that there will be a will made leaving all to her?"

"Every dollar."

"This must not be," said the youth, in a determined tone, and with an ugly expression crossing his face.

"No, it must not be."

"It shall not be," was the firm rejoinder.

"Can you say how it can be prevented, Loyd?"

"Yes, if it is a certainty that she means to do what you assert.

"It is a certainty.

"Then there is one way to prevent."

"How is that?"

"Has the will yet been made?"

"It has not."

"Sure?"

"I am."

"It must not be made."

"Then prevent it."

"I will, with your aid."

"How can I help you?"

He leant forward and whispered a few words close to her ear.

The woman started to her feet and a cry broke from her lips. "Here are Mrs. Loyd!"

A moment she stood like a statue and then she rapidly paced the floor several times.

"Tell me, Loyd, she asked, her face a mass of black, her eyes shining black and black. "Do you mean what you said to me, Loyd?" she asked, hoarsely."

"Tell me, Loyd, she asked, her face a mass of black, her eyes shining black and black. "Do you mean what you said to me, Loyd?" she asked, hoarsely."

"I will not!"

"You dare not refuse."

"I will not refuse anything that you think you can stand by your refusal."

"What will you do?"

"I will do my best to keep you safe, while you will, you will go to prison for life, for I hold all the papers, the damning proofs that you are guilty."

"For God's sake say no more, Loyd, or you will drive me mad."

"I simply wish to have you obey my command. "Will you, or will you not?"

"Do you mean the threat you made?"

"I do."

"What reward?"

"All that you ask."

The woman hesitated a moment and then said in a whisper:

"I obey you; I will do it."

As she spoke the bell rung three times sharply, and three knocks followed the ringing.

CHAPTER XVI.

A WOMAN TRAMP.

The mistress of Lake View was pacing up and down the broad plaza of her home, gazing out upon the good weather not far away and enjoying the balmy breezes that came to her, laden with the perfume of flowers.

Miss Dixie had gone to the city on a shopping tour for Mrs. Granger, and Flirtius had asked for an afternoon off, and so the mistress of Lake View was alone. Suddenly her eyes fell upon a form appearing on the mansion's balcony.

It was a woman, walking slowly as though fatigued, or in pain, with her head bent and bearing very seedy clothing and a tattered valise.

She came on to the mansion, ascended the plaza and stood before Mrs. Granger, who had taken a seat and was watching.

"Madam, you are she whom they call the mistress of Lake View?" said the woman in a low, faint tone.

"Yes, how can I serve you?"

"I am ill, suffering, full of sorrow and trouble."

"I am sorry for you; but have you no friends?"

"Why, yes, I am a tramp, a vagabond."

"A woman tramp?" said Mrs. Granger in amazement.

"Yes, that is just what I am, homeless and a wanderer, with no money and no friends."

"I can help you, for I can clothe you, give you food, some money, and perhaps aid you to secure a home that will give you a living."

"You are very kind. I had not expected this from you."

"And why not from me?"

"Because I had heard that you were cold, heartless, heartless."

"My good woman, I have known all there is in being friendless and have suffered as few have, but I have let the dead past bury its dead and live now alone for what there is in life of luxury and enjoyment."

"I am charitable in my way, yet I will not allow impostors to fleece me."

"You are a woman and needy, you look alike as you say you are and I will help you; come in."

The woman slowly followed her into the house and up to the room. Mrs. Granger laid out for her clothing, shoes and all that was needed. She took her to her boudoir, so dress yourself and you will feel better, for I will give you food.

rooms at the hotel, no one who had seen the young lady, fully detective in his manner, would have taken the apparently prim old gentleman, with black cloth suit, white tie, gold-rimmed spectacles and a cane for him. Dick, but for the magic letters on your card, you would have fooled me, for I would never take you for other than you appear to be, professor of theology, or a sleek deacon on a begging tour," said the chief.

"My disguise is a simple one, chief; but I have managed it not wishing to be seen by any one, for at my hotel it is given out that I am away from the city."

"Well, you must be, as I had not seen you for about two weeks."

"No, I have not been far away, sir."

"What have you been doing?"

"Man-hunting."

"Ah! and what game have you bagged?"

"Nothing so far, but I am on the scent."

"Do you mean on the Granger case?"

"Oh, yes, chief."

"I thought that you might have found something in it, and had come to give us your case?"

"Did you ever hear of my undertaking a case that required a sure of finding crime?"

"I confess that I have not, Dick."

"Did you ever know of my giving up a case you had started upon?"

"Never, Dick."

"I have not given up this case, chief; in fact, I am carrying it daylight in it."

"You still hold to the belief that there is a murder mystery to solve, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"What have you done, Dick?"

"Very little, sir, save see a rift in the clouds."

"That means light ahead?"

"Yes, sir, for I saw an advertisement that Mrs. Granger wanted a lady companion, one that could not as an amanuensis, could sing, play and read well."

The idea struck me that I knew the very young person that would suit her, and yet who would not fill one requirement, that of lady's maid."

She selected one who was simply an accomplished servant."

"About that, sir; but my lady friend got along on and was accepted, though declining to serve as maid, and I might say that from her accounts, Mrs. Granger is a most estimable woman, and has treated her with the most carefully and kindness."

"I am glad of that for your friend's sake, Dick."

"So am I, sir, and she is more than generous, for, being eccentric she makes many demands upon the companion's purse, such as elegant dressing for dinner, driving and the theater, but these dresses she supplies herself, and in no way allows Miss Dixie to feel her dependent position."

"Well, I am glad to hear this; but your friend then is a spy?"

"Says rather a fair detective, or ferret, chief."

"She is acting as such then?"

"Yes, sir."

"And she has made certain discoveries?"

"She has, sir, and they are valuable, inasmuch as she has found out that Mrs. Granger's eldest son has returned and made another demand upon his mother for money, that he received another sum from her and it not what he is pictured to be, but is a wild young fellow who seems to be just hanging about and waiting for his mother to die, for if she dies without a will he will be the heir, and if she makes him to he can contest it, and doubtless break it."

Dick, she added to you, and Dick Dooan soon after left the Secret Service Headquarters and returned to his hotel.
CHAPTER XVII.

A Sudden Death.

It was after sunset when Miss Dixie returned to Lake View, and as the carriage drove to the door Mrs. Granger was not there to greet her.

She went to one of her rooms, changed her toilet, and with her purchases sought Mrs. Granger's rooms.

Through the curtains not there, and she then sought for Frills, but that would not be found.

Then she went into the library.

The latter, from the hall lighted the room and she saw Mrs. Granger reclining upon the lounge, as she believed asleep.

But there was a pallor about the face that caught her eye, and advancing quickly she bent over her.

There was no sound of breathing, and she lay upon her side, her hands stretched out listlessly.

Placing her hand upon her head, Miss Dixie started.

The brow was as cold as marble.

"My God! she is dead!" cried the young woman.

Then the fingers felt the pulse, then the hand was placed over the breast.

"Nothing, and her heart was still!"

"Oh! what does this mean?" cried Miss Dixie, and she turned toward the door to give the signal, just as there were heard heavy footfalls in the hallway, the door opened, and into the library strode three persons, one of them carrying a lamp.

One of the sannocks was a youth, with pale, haggard face, wearing somewhat seedy clothes, and the other was a young man carrying a leather portfolio, and with the appearance of being a lawyer's clerk.

"Ah! this dead soul is known to you then, for you are the messenger," said Miss Dixie, turning to those who entered.

The man carrying the lamp raised it above his head, and pointing directly at Miss Dixie said sternly:

"It is known to you that you are the murderer of that unfortunate lady, that you poisoned her?"

"What! do you dare make such an accusation against me?" indignantly cried Miss Dixie, and she turned her flashing eyes upon her accuser.

"I do, and with proof."

"What is your proof?"

"Do you see that poor boy?" and he pointed to the pale youth standing with set face by the side of the dead woman.

"I do."

"He stands by the side of his dead mother, poisoned by your hand."

"It is false!"

"It is true!"

"We came here, my clerk and I, with that poor youth to visit his mother, for he had a confession to make to her which was to be taken down here, and to beg her to take him back to her love and confidence once more.

"When have you done this you can go your way, but to poverty and distress again, for I will care for you, though our paths through life must not run parallel.

"You can go your way, I will keep on as I have begun."

"What do you say, Geraldine?"

"We ask you whom she meant as the one who had given her the poison and she said:

"It was Miss Dixie, in whose favor Mrs. Granger had to-day made her will."

"She pointed you out to us, and you are the guilty one and, as an officer of the law I arrest you."

"Who is my accuser?" calmly asked Miss Dixie.

"She is there in the hall!"

"Come in, miss."

Slowly into the room came Frills, her hat and coat on, and a terrified look upon her face, which was livid.

"Is that the lady who accuses me of murder?" asked Frills.

"Yes, I am sorry for you, Miss Dixie, but the glass was found, the dregs of poison still in it, and without any doubt from Mrs. Granger said that you had given it to her, and you know that she made her will to-day in your favor."

"No, I did not know it, for I have been away all day; but being accused I can but submit, and I will leave the butler in charge, Frills, for I have that authority.

"Now, sir, as soon as I get my wraps and change my dress, I am ready to accompany you."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The extreme coolness of Miss Della Dixie was either an indication of innocence or of hardened guilt. She turned toward the door as she spoke, hesitated, and then said:

"Do you not think it would be well to send for a physician under the circumstances?"

"Ah, yes, a good idea," the lawyer said, while, speaking for the first time, the youth said:

"My mother's faithful maid has already done so."

"You will please give the keys of the house into my keeping, Miss Dixie."
CHAPTER XIX.

BEHIND THE BARS.

The chief of police was just about to leave his headquarters for the night, when the lawyer and his prisoner arrived. He heard the story of the attorney and at once:

"I must hold you on this accusation, Miss Dixie, for the case looks decidedly against you."

"I grant that it does, sir, and I submit to incarceration without a murmur.

"But what about Miss Dixie? Is it my business to say the least, but have you any friend or attorney you desire to consult in the morning?"

"I have, sir, and his name is on this card," and he handed the chief a slip of paper. He started slightly as he read what was written thereon, and then Miss Dixie remarked:

"To you, sir, I desire to give the keys of Mrs. Granger's rooms and my own at Lake View Hall, and I left Spoons, the butler, in charge, while the Granger carriage is now at the door to carry me to prison."

"I will go there with you, Miss Dixie; but now, sir, let us attend to your case," and he turned to the lawyer.

"My client," said the lawyer with some trepidation,

"Yes; who and what are you?"

"I am, sir, Wirt Westley, an attorney at law, with my office in the Old Curiosity Building, and this young gentleman is my client."

"I partially see, sir; but what is your interest in this case?"

"I am sorry to say, sir, engaged by young Mr. Granger to arrange a settlement with his mother, now deceased.

"Mr. Granger desired to go to the mansion for that purpose, when we met the lady's maid who gave us the startling intelligence of the sudden death of the mistress of Lake View, she having been strangled.

"Arriving at the mansion all pointed to this young lady as the guilty one, and hence I brought her to you.

"Well, Mr. Westley, see that both you and your client report at my office here to morrow at nine a.m.

"And my client, sir?"

"I will see that your client is also here on time.

"Now you can go.

The lawyer and his clerk departed and turning to Miss Dixie the superintendent of police said:

"I observe that you wrote on your card: 'I am, sir, chief of the Secret Service Corps and tell him that Dick Doom's lady detective wishes to see him at the prison.' After what I have said, I feel justified in not believing his story."

"Yes, I wrote that before coming here.

"Are you Dick Doom's lady detective?"

"Yes, sir.

"And accused of poisoning Mrs. Granger, whom you served as companion?"

"Yes, sir, I am so accused.

"Have you any statement to make?"

"None, sir.

"Very well, I must send you to prison now, and in the morning the major shall receive your message."

"Thank you, sir.

"I shall be glad to do so.

The chief of police rang a bell and an officer appeared:

"Two officers to take this lady to the city prison.

The two officers soon appeared, and bowing to Miss Dixie placed herself between them simply remarking:

"There will be no need to handcuff me, shall I be taken."

"No, there is no need of it, for the officers consider it a kindness for us."

"May I request that I will not be searched upon going into prison, for what I have with me I shall give into the keeping of the major."

The chief of police hesitated, and then said:

"It is customary, you know, to search all prisoners."

"I ask to be the exception to the rule, requesting it as a courtesy of White to the chief of the Secret Service, sir."

"I shall grant it, Miss Dixie."

"Officers, the prisoner is not to be searched."

"Miss Dixie, I will see you in the morning, and the chief of police bowed."

Taking the bow as an order to depart the two officers did so and half an hour after Miss Dixie was behind iron bars, a word came from the two guards informing for her the best quarters in the prison.

Throwing herself upon the cot bed she almost immediately sunk into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TWO CHIEFS.

DELLA DIXIE arose early in the morning, and glanced about her, without the slightest dread of her situation, or fear of her surroundings.

She made her toilet and ate the breakfast placed before her as though she really enjoyed it.

She seemed to feel that it was from the keeper's own table and not the regular prison fare.

Having finished breakfast she drew a chair under the grated window and took out the letter which she had found in her desk and addressed to her in the handwriting of the mistress of Lake View.

The seal was broken and what Miss Dixie read caused her face to flush and an exclamation to break from her lips.

"This is indeed remarkable," she said aloud.

"I must see the major at the earliest possible moment possible and counterplot in this matter, for then the game is mine indeed, and it is worth striving for."

She took out her watch and glancing at it said:

"It is nearly eight o'clock and the chief will soon be here."

But the major on receiving word from the chief of police that Dick Doom's lady detective was imprisoned upon a serious charge and wished to see him, did not go at once to the prison, after he had his breakfast, but instead drove to the hotel of the famous detective.

He asked at the office if "Mr. Richard Richardson was in," and was told that he was out of town.

"How long has he been away?" the clerk was asked.

"For nearly two weeks, sir."

"Did he leave no date when he would return?"

"No, sir."

"Has he kept his rooms?"

"Oh, yes, sir, he does not give those up when he goes away, and keeps his own keys."

"Well, I am sorry not to see him," said the major and greatly disappointed at not finding Dick Doom he went to his own quarters.

There he found a messenger just arrived from the jail and with the request that the "chief of the Secret Service would at once call upon Miss Dixie."

As he was about to leave his office on this mission, thinking that Miss Dixie might be able to give him some information about Dick Doom the superintendent of Chicago's police was announced.

The two chiefs were good friends, and sitting down they had a long talk together in which the major heard the whole story of the accusations against Miss Dixie.

"She is a handsome woman with a very strong face and a nerve of iron, but it looks as though she was guilty, for Mrs. Granger had just made a will in her favor, though I see it was not signed or witnessed, so is of no value."

"That lawyer, whose face I do not like, has handled the case for weeks, and I hope it will not get any worse."

"Then the boy, Loyd Granger, will get the fortune?"

"We must not judge her unheard, for she is Dick Doom's spy, and I'll now tell you confidentially, that there was so much newspaper chatter about those deaths at Lake View that I sent for Doon and put him on the case."

"I am glad of that, for if any one can unravel it he is the one."

"Just so, and he saw enough in it to undertake it, so put upon the case a lady friend I have been told; but now to Miss Dixie."

"What is she like?"

"We must not judge her unheard, for she is Dick Doom's spy, and I'll now tell you confidentially, that there was so much newspaper chatter about those deaths at Lake View that I sent for Doon and put him on the case."

"All right, come along; but you must remember, all you learn is a secret."

CHAPTER XXI.

DICK DOOM'S FAIR FRIENEF.

The lawyer, Wirt Westley, and his clerk were called from the post and were sent out to Lake View with officers who had instructions to the coroner that the two chiefs would shortly follow.

Then the chiefs went to the prison and were admitted at once to the cell where Miss Dixie was confined a prisoner.

He showed the chief of police, and awaited an introduction to the chief of the Secret Service.

"I asked for you, sir, though of course you do not know me, other than as the Detective Dick Doon, placed at Lake View, for I suppose I am at liberty to speak before this gentleman?"

"Certainly, for he is pledged to keep secret all, but he wants to see you and I am sorry you have gotten into trouble."

"I am glad of it, sir, for light follows darkness always, and my arrest will greatly help me."

"Then I am to consider that you are wholly guileless of this charge against you?"

"Certainly, and I regret that you harbored it for a moment."

"I went to Lake View Hall as Mrs. Granger's companion, and she treated me as though I had been her own daughter."

"She gave the housekeeping into my hands, and made me mistress, as she said, that she might take her ease."

"On a number of occasions she let me know secrets of her life, and hinted that I was to be her heiress, for Loyd Granger had nothing."

"Yesterday morning I came down-town shopping for her, and returned at twilight."

"Going to my rooms I dressed for dinner, then sought her, and I found her dead in the library."

"Going to call for help it came unexpectedly by Loyd Atwood, his lawyer, Wirt Westley, and the latter's clerk."

"Frills, Mr. Granger's maid, had met them before, went to Dick Doon at home and brought them into the house, for they were coming there when she discovered them."

"One man was found in the hall and there was no doubt but that Mrs. Granger had been poisoned, or poisoned herself.
CHAPTER XXII.

THE INQUEST.

LOYD GRANGER was found by the side of the road, and it was said that he had remained there all night, pacing the floor in silent meditation.

Perhaps his conscience troubled him for certain deeds in the past that had brought sorrow to his mother, and a feeling of resentment so deep that she had never forgiven him.

Whatever it was, he was found by the coroner and those with him in the room with the dead.

A post mortem examination had revealed the fact that the woman had either taken poison to end her own life, or it had been given to her by some one to kill her and thus get her out of the way.

So it was that he had taken with him his attorney, a man who had often befriended him in his distress.

His story was told in an impressive manner, and his white, haggard face, deep-sunken eyes and general appearance seemed to carry out all he said.

The inquest continued from the coroner's next examination and then the coroner's jury were told to decide.

They had heard Miss Dixie's story, but in the face of other testimony, and the written inscribed will, they could only believe her guilty. And decided that she should be held for murder.

Miss Dixie smiled at the verdict, seemed perfectly unpunished, and returned to the city under the escort of the Secret Service chief to once more go behind the bars of a prison.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SURPRISE.

When Miss Dixie was again in her cell, and left by the Secret Service, she sat down and read the letter which had been left to her by Mrs. Granger.

The letter was written in deepest meditation for a long while, and at last said aloud:

"Yes, I will do it, for it is the best course I can pursue.

She turned to the little table, upon which were writing material and wrote two notes. They were alike and as follows:

"Please call at eight to-night to see me.

I have an important confession to make.

"Miss Dixie."

These notes were addressed to the two chiefs and at once dispatched by messenger. Miss Dixie enjoyed her supper, primped up then to receive her visitors, and calmly awaited their coming.

They arrived together, and her first question was to the chief of police.

"May I ask, sir, if you took full control of the Lake View Mansion and its effects?"

"I did, Miss Dixie, and there will be a sergeant and four men there until after the funeral to-morrow afternoon, after which shall turn full control over to Mrs. Granger's lawyers."

"Thank you, sir, for there will be need of the greatest of care, as I happen to know of much that is valuable in the mansion, and I shall ask the attorneys to make me the special guard."

"You, Miss Dixie?" cried both the chiefs in amazement.

"Oh, yes, why not?" was the quick reply. "Why, you will be in prison."

"Not I."

"Why do you allow yourself to be so degraded?"

"I will go out of this prison to-night."

They looked at her as though they thought she was crazy.

Then the major said:

"You wrote for us to come to see you."

"Yes, sir."

"Stating that you had a confession to make."

"Yes, I have."

"May I ask what it is?"

"Have you found Dick Doom yet?"

"No, I have not."

"If he was here he could get me out."

"But he is not here, and if he was he could not do anything."

"Think so?"

"I know so."

"Well, major, I give you credit for being one of the most intelligent, bravest and able men who ever held the important position that you do; but, shrewd as you are, you have been most cruelly deceived."

"In what respect, Miss Dixie?" and the chief of Secret Service's pictures were taken at the words and manner.

"Do you really wish to find Dick Doom?"

"I most certainly do."

"Then behold him."

"Where?"

"I am Dick Doom."

"You?"

Both men uttered the word and both arose quickly to their feet.

"Yes, I."

"I do not believe it," promptly said the superintendent of police.

"Accept proof."

The words were calmly uttered and the eye-glasses were removed from the shapely nose.

Then from the head was taken a wig of..."
Dick Doom's Ten Strike.

CHAPTER XXIV.
THE DETECTIVE'S CONFESSION.

HAVING enjoyed the discomfort of the two chiefs, at finding in "Miss Dixie" none other than the famous detective Dick Doom, that latter said:

"You remember, major, that I undertook your case for you, with the belief that there had been murder, not natural deaths at Lake View Hall?"

"Yes, Dick."

"Sir, I almost began to feel that I was wrong, when I came across an advertisement for lady's companion to Mrs. Granger."

"Yes."

"I told you that I had a lady friend who would go?"

"Yes, and you were the lady friend?"

"Yes."

"But how did you manage it?"

"Most easily, sir, for I happen to be blessed by nature with a form and face that can be made to appear very effeminate, or masculine, as I will.

"For, you now see, I have remarkable vocal powers, am a ventriloquist, in fact, and can imitate a feminine voice without an effort, singing also like a woman."

"My hands are small, when dressed as a woman, I wear number three shoes, numbered six and three quarters gloves, an eight-inch corset, and have a knack of dressing fashionably and in taste.

"I have an estimate of your accomplishments and you can judge if I have overestimated them, I will tell you now that Mrs Granger has given me a pass and read, and took me upon most liberal terms,"

"I drew the line at lady's maid, so she kept to the worms, Mr. Frills, who testified against me this morning."

"I feel that Mrs. Granger was pleased with me, and she several times told me she intended to adopt me as her daughter, and more, she became confidential and told me much of the mystery hanging over her life and family."

"When I came down-town yesterday, it was on a shopping tour for her, yet I slipped into the room at the hotel, read several letters and attended to some business, no one knowing I was there, for, as you know, to add to me in my disguise, I have registered with my name, that of wife, and as I live on the European plan no one knows anything about me.

"I called Miss Dixie, and the chief of the Secret Service said:

"Well, major, what do you think of setting Dick Doom free?"

"We believe no charge against him, chief."

"True."

"And you can keep Miss Dixie's trunk I suppose to represent that young lady."

"Yes, I will do it."

"Wait here while I go and have a talk with the caller."

"The chief of police went, Dick Doom calling after him.

"Remember, he must suspect nothing of my being who I really am."

"No, I will keep that secret, and the chief went on his way, leaving Dick Doom and the Secret Service chief to talk over the strange mystery in which the former found himself with the charge of murder upon him.

"In half an hour the superintendent turned and stated that he had arrived, all satisfactorily, so, removing his wig and putting on a heavy veil, Dick Doom left the cell and the prison in company with the two chiefs.

"They entered a carriage and were driven to the detective's hotel, going with him up to his room.

"Leaving them in the center room, the parlor, he went into one of the bedrooms and in short while returned dressed as a young man, his ordinary attire.

"Now, Dick, what is your next move to bring Mrs. Granger to justice?"

"I am going to take the midnight train, sir, for St. Louis, and will return to-morrow night, and then I expect the superintendent to recommend me to Miss. Granger's lawyers as the man to remain in charge of the matter, with full authority, only refer to me as Officer Kane, for I shall not go there looking as I now do."

"Another disguise, eh, Doom?"

"Yes, superintendent."

"You will let us into the secret of it I hope."

"Oh, yes, sir, in fact I think it will not be long before I have a most important secret to let you into."

"The three then went out to have supper together, after which Dick Doom returned to his hotel, and with a little sachel in hand started for the late train for St. Louis."

"I had made known that Miss Dixie was none other than himself acting in disguise, as he so well knew how to do, he had not, even to the Secret Service chief, his particular friend, confessed one word about the mysterious letter left in his desk by Mrs. Granger.

"This was a secret he kept to himself and he held it as a trump card to play when he felt that the game was in his hands."

CHAPTER XXVI.
THE TRIP TO ST. LOUIS.

WHEN Dick Doom arrived in St. Louis he drove at once to the Southern Hotel, had a bath and breakfast, and then sent his card up to a lady guest who was stopping there. The card he sent was:

"RICHARD DIXIE,

"New Orleans.

"The lady will see you in her room, sir," said the bell-boy, and he showed the detective up-stairs to the room designated. En route he met Mrs. Granger, a lady standing by the window, and she turned toward him and said:

"I wish to speak with you, sir,"

"I do, madam, if you are Mrs. Granger."

"I am, sir."

"You left your home in Chicago three days ago?"

"I did, sir."

"Miss Dixie was your companion, I believe,"

"She was, and you hear her name of Dixie?"

"Yes, I am her brother, madam."

"I am glad to know you then, though the name of her never spoke of her family to me."

"Mrs. Granger, she is indeed a poor, unfortunate girl just now, has been taken down."

"Let me ask you if the day you left you did not have a visitor?"

"Yes."

"Who was she?"

"Why would you know?"

"I have an interest, not curiosity."

"What is it to you?"

"Much,"

"Much?"

"For my sister's sake."

"Oh, yes, you said that she was just now most unfortunate!"

"Yes, she is, madam."

"In what respect?"
CHAPTER XXVII.
THE STORY TOLD.

DICK DOOM had listened to Mrs. Granger's story with the same sharp interest which he had shown in Dick Doom's striking reminiscence; but may I ask who your visitor was?"

"One whose life had been one of wrong and misfortune, one who had become a wrecker."

"What does not answer me as I would have you have?"

"What would you have?"

"Her name, please?"

"Geraldine."

"Her other name, please?"

"Geraldine Granger."

"The same as your own?"

"My name is Georgine Granger."

"Why did she bear the name of Granger?"

"She married my husband's brother."

"Where is he?"

"Dead."

"When did he die?"

"Long years ago; he was lost at sea some years ago."

"And it was his wife who visited you at your home, several days ago?"

"Yes."

"Had it been long since you had seen her?"

"Yes, many years. She had run away from her home, and became an outcast, and it was said that she was dead; but I did not believe it, and though startled was not surprised when she came to see me the other day."

"She was poor and in want?"

"Yes, and came to me for aid."

"You gave it?"

"Yes."

"And you tell me that she was my sister? yes, my twin sister, whom I had loved with all my heart and soul, who, if I had taken her, dressed her in my own clothes, and offered her a home with me, but upon one condition."

"You have a way of finding out all you desire to know so I will tell you."

"I will not. I love her as in the olden time, but I would not turn her away, and I told her that I would care for her for life if she would confess to me one thing."

"What was that?"

"She confessed her treachery; and more, she told me that she had been the one to urge my husband to get rid of me and marry a woman with whom he had become infatuated."

"I could not believe in such treachery from my twin sister, and told her I wished proof."

"She told me to come here, where she had a trunk held for debt, and in it were all the papers proving her perfidy, my husband's, and the plot against me."

"I came here, sent for the one who holds the key, who got it for me, and upon the payment of the debt due by her it will be given to me to-day, when I shall return home."

"I could not sleep beneath the roof with her until I knew all, and had forgiven her, so I wrote Miss Dixie, my dear companion, part of the truth to her."

"Now you know all."

"And I came here to find you, madam," was Dick Doom's earnest response.

"She appreciates all you have done for her, Mrs. Granger, and regards you most highly."

"That, she is a detective, sir?"

"Yes: that is her profession."

"Well, to her story, sir."

"Dick Doom, say more there came a knock at the door and a man entered, followed by a porter with a trunk, on which Dick Doom the detective lost his face; he had been expecting the one for her sister, a year or more before. This done the porter went out and the lady was left once more alone with the detective."

CHAPTER XXVIII.
LEARNING THE TRUTH.

DICK DOOM watched Mrs. Granger, as, all oblivious of his presence, she took a key from her pocket, given her by her sister, and unlocked the trunk. She seemed to know just where to search for certain papers in it and soon came across a bundle of time-worn letters. Carefully she glanced over them, her face pale and stern, though now and then it would soften; tears would dim the eyes and the lips would quiver with emotion called up by what she read.

The paper that she opened was marked "A confession, to be read only when I am dead."

This was signed by Geraldine Granger, and it was addressed to:

"My much wronged sister."

It was a strange document, and seemed to have been written under protest, yet by the dictation of a guilty conscience. It was as follows:

"Why do I write this?"

"I can give no answer to my own query."

"Why do I pen lines, put down in black and white, a story of my own sin, tell of a crime I committed against her who was ever good and true to me?"

"I can only answer that my conscience drives me to put upon paper that which will be a lasting stigma upon me."

"As the penitent goes to a confessor, so my conscience drives me to pen and ink, for when it is written I shall feel better, though never can I know happiness."

"Loving you, my sister, with all the devotion I was capable of, making you my idol, my paragon, and believing that no shadow could ever fall between us, I yet allowed a man to become that shadow, the devil befogged and defiled all, and shut out of my heart the pure love for you, for the passionate worship he inspired in me."

"As one I loved I knew that you also loved."

"I knew that he was wrapped up body and soul in you."

"Strange alike though we were, in face, form, and apparently in nature, I found that you were the one he sought, you were the one to win him, I was the one that he cared not for."

"The discovery was wormwood in my heart, the fire of hatred in my brain."

"I found my love for you changing into a loathing that was not the natural love of a heart."

"Where I had loved, I hated, where I had trusted I grew suspicious, and though you were pure and good through all, I could see only that you were robbing me of him."

"Oh! how had I striven to take him from you?"

"How I sought to win him, to place myself between you two, to show him that I was more amiable, the sweetest, the most beautiful, the sweetest, the more graceful, the more perfect, the more gifted, in every way."

"He was blind to my attractions, blind to my actions, and could not appear to see that I loved him, that my soul was wrapped up in him.
Dick Doom's Ten Strike.

"Why was it that he was so blind then, to be so open-eyed later in life?"

"Why did he not then know all were so, that there was no mercy in it, all had been saved in the future, so much of wrong?"

"But he did not see, and he having won you, I need not tell you, as I have said before, if my heart was a volcano of fury, of hatred, of sin.

"I gave, you remember, a kiss of congratulation, a kiss of farewell, and I would have given my life had the kiss poisoned you, killed you.

"As his sister," so he said, he claimed a kiss from me.

"I kissed him, and though idolizing him, I could then and have driven a dagger to his heart in that he was so blind as not to see what I felt for him.

"Ah! me! the rest is soon told, of how I loved by his brother, whom I had refused, sent for him, here is the one I loved him, that I would be his wife.

"He was rejoiced and wished to make grand arrangements for our marriage.

"But I refused and told him that I would only be his wife upon condition that he would make the marriage within two weeks from that day.

"He was surprised, yet gladly assented, and so I became Mrs. Granger also, and I tried to feel then that I would forgive you, forgive your husband, for wedding each other, and then breaking my heart.

"But alas! I could not keep my resolve.

"I had tried to prevent their marrying by signing false reports, and afterward I sought to part them in the same way.

"The more I saw of my husband the more I hated him, and I was happy when he was lost at sea, yes, happy.

"Then I set to work to destroy your happiness, to part you from your husband.

"I had a friend, an accomplice, who I knew could infatuate any man.

"I set her to work to win your husband, to fascinate him.

"My plot was successful, and I turned him from you, yes, I told him that you was not true and urged him to get rid of you and claim the one he had learned to love.

"Not seeing his own perfidy he did as he was told and you were placed in a lunatic asylum and was declared to be dead, while the woman who had infatuated him became known as Mrs. Granger.

"Do you see all my wickedness now?

"Do you see how I destroyed your life?

"Well, you have your revenge, for I became a wreck, I am one now, so forgive if you can. Your unhappy, sinful, GERALDINE.

The woman read this strange confession to the end, and then sat holding the letter in her hands, lost in deepest meditation.

At last she said aloud, all unmindful of the presence of the detective.

"It is as I had expected it is as I had foreseen it is as I had predicted it.

"Not seeing his own perfidy he did as he was told and you were placed in a lunatic asylum and was declared to be dead, while the woman who had infatuated him became known as Mrs. Granger.

"Do you see all my wickedness now?

"Do you see how I destroyed your life?

"Well, you have your revenge, for I became a wreck, I am one now, so forgive if you can. Your unhappy, sinful, GERALDINE.

She started, for she had forgotten the very existence of the detective.

"Yes, sir.

"You seemed to have forgotten my presence."

"Pardon me, I had done so, wrapped up in my own misery.

"You need have no further dread that your sister will live near you."

"What did she mean, after my promise to her?"

"She has gone, Mrs. Granger, never to return.

"Where?"

"Into the Great Beyond," impressively said Dick Doom.

"My God! have mercy! Do you speak the truth?"

"Most solemnly I do, madam,"

"You mean that she is dead?"

"I do, madam. Your sister, Mrs. Geraldine Granger, is dead.

"The woman bowed her head upon her hands for a moment, and the detective remained silent.

"Then she raised her head and said:"

"Tell me of her death."

"I fear I will profit you, Mrs. Granger, but you must know the truth and all that goes with these mysterious cases of death in Lake View Hall."

"She died there?"

"Yes. As you know you dressed her in your own clothes, and the resemblance between you is startling."

"It was always so."

"You kill hurriedly for St. Louis, writing a letter to Miss Dixie."

"I did. Did she get the letter?"

"Yes, I have it here."

"And then?"

"Your maid was out and Miss Dixie did not return until dark. When she did come back, she went to her rooms, changed her clothing, and then descended in search of you.

"She had not then received your letter, and your maid did not know, nor any of your servants about the house of your sister's coming, or of your sudden departure.

"True, I told only Miss Dixie in my letter."

"Entering the library, Miss Dixie saw, as she supposed, you upon the lounge, and asleep.

"She did not understand your not being dressed for dinner, knowing your promptness, and Spoons had not disturbed you when lighting the gas.

"She went to the lounge and was startled to find that the form lying there was dead."

"Ah! it was my sister.

"It was."

"And she was dead?"

"Yes; but worse still, she had been poisoned!"

"Mrs. Granger started to her feet and cried:"

"Do you mean this?"

"I do, madam.

"Then there is indeed a murder hunting down the owners of Lake View Hall, and my sister was put to death for mercy, yes, she was supposed to be me.

"That is the truth, madam," said Dick Doom.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DICK DOOM'S SUSPICION.

"My dear Mr. Dixie, do you not see this as I do, the clothes, and dead in my stead?"

"I earnestly asked Mrs. Granger, after she had come over the matter in her mind for a few minutes.

"It is just as I see it, madam."

"But the murderer?"

"Is yet to be found."

"The book it must have been to your poor sister, sir."

"You forget that she is a detective, Mrs. Granger, and accustomed to surpries, tragedies and startling sights."

"Yes, I have often remarked her wonderful nerve, but, tell me more."

"Miss Dixie then decided to give an alarm, send for a physician and do all she could to find the culprit."

"She did not know then?"

"She was not assured at that time, but, as she was leaving the room there entered it three persons."

"The servants?"

"No, madam, they were a lawyer by the name of Wirt Wesley, his clerk and your own son."

"What! Loyd Granger?"

"Yes, madam."

"He knew better than cross my threshold again!"

"He did cross it, madam; and more, he brought his lawyer with him, for he had foreseen, as he asserted, to make a confession to you, draw up some papers, and have you take him again to your heart.

"He has no cause to make that I do not know or would care to hear. I have no papers to draw up in his behalf, and I never wish to have him to cross my threshold again."

"Well, Mrs. Granger, he came, and with those I have named, and they at once accused Miss Dixie of being your murderer, and upon the word of your maid, Frills, who asserted that you—as they supposed—had been discovered by her dying, and had stated that when asking for water Miss Dixie had given her poison.

"It is false, for that girl could never be guilty of such an act."

"No one knows that better than I do, Mrs. Granger, and yet her word went for nothing. She was arrested by the lawyer and taken to prison."

"Most infamous."

"She went to her rooms, however, to change her dress, and locked both your apartment and her own, leaving Spoons in charge, but taking the keys to turn over to the chief of police."

"Good girl! I shall remember her for this."

"She will find her reward, madam, in accomplishing her work."

"But, she found your letter when in her room, and did not read it until the next day."

"In the mean time the body was mistaken for yours, the coroner held a post-mortem, and discovered that death had been caused by poison, and the next day the inquest was held at the mansion.

"The verdict was against Miss Dixie, who was held for trial and sent back to prison, while the chief of police placed a sergeant and six men in charge to hold possession until the place was turned over to your attorneys."

"And the trial?"

"Took place to-day, madam."

"I will return at once and free that young girl from jail."

"No, Mrs. Granger, that is just what I do not wish you to do, and I will explain why. I have more to tell you of a mysterious nature."

"You will find me good listener, sir."

"Then Miss Dixie read your letter to her, she at once had a suspicion come over her that it was a deep plot against you."

"How so?"

"Your letter stated enough about your sister's plot against you, and you had told Miss Dixie enough, that she believed that she might be another one. In fact, she suspected that you might have been murdered, that you had not written that letter,
and that your sister, pardon me, please, having taken your life had gone away, intending to return, claiming to be the real Mrs. Graunger.

"A deep plot, and one that might have happened."

"So Miss Dixie sent for the chief of the Secret Service Corps, and the chief of police, and brought to them the account of her detective work."

"And she was set free?"

"In our Secret Service work, Mrs. Graunger, there is much that is wonderful, mysterious, and distressing. I am Dick Doom, and I believe in the work of the Granger, I assumed the disguise I did.

"I came here, for your better to meet Miss Dixie on my own. I will find you, and I came, hal! believing that you had been murdered, and that I would find your sister here intending to return and impersonate you.

"I am sorry I wronged her, but, now that I know her, and you have heard the story, I wish you to trust me to the end and let me work out the mysterious murder in my way, that I "certainly will, Mr. Doom."

"I wish you to return with me to my hotel in Chicago, and while Miss Dixie is thought to be in prison, Dick Doom will be free to work in his own way, and I pledge you my word I will track down the murderer."

"You have some suspicion, surely."

"Finding that I was wrong in suspecting your sister, I went back to old suspicions, and I will candidly confess to you that I do suspect one, or more, persons."

"You will not make known to me who they are."

In good time you shall know all, Mrs. Graunger, and that evening Dick Doom and Mrs. Graunger took the train back to Chicago.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE MISSION.

The funeral of the murdered woman took place, and many attended it, for the papers had gone on to vigorously again against the police, pointing to the last death of a Granger as proof positive that some avenger was dogging their path.

"Miss Dixie," supposed to be in jail, was attacked at all points, and many reports were made of the most exaggerated kind.

"She was said to be a well-preserved woman, not looking thirty, even, and that she had plotted the death of all the Grangers, to the end get possession of the estate."

The unsigned will of Mrs. Graunger was published, and in that a motive was seen for the murder of the misses of Lake View, when she, Miss Dixie, was to be the beneficiary by it to such a great extent.

In her rooms at the hotel, had all these reports read to her by Dick Doom, who, on arrival, upon his return, had reported the spread of the story, and been taken into the rooms, and gotten from him a recommendation for the position of guard at the mansion.

The right man to take charge of the place, until it was shown who was to possess the property.

Through his lawyer, Wirt Westley, Loyd Graunger had put in his claim as the direct heir, and thought he had thought that a wild youth, such as he had been, should not have such wealth, yet legally they considered that he had been abandoned.

Having secured the position as keeper, Dick Doom set to work to ferret out who these old acquaintances, of times long past, were, and to shadow them thoroughly, and also the young heir and his lawyer.

He did this shadowing in various disguises, and having tracked Loyd Graunger, the lawyer and his clerk several times, to the "Young Men's Mission" in the Old Curiosity Building, he began to consider that there was more in that man than appeared upon the surface.

Attired in a clerical suit, gold spectacles, a white cravat and high hat, he rung for admission one afternoon and gained entrance. He pretended to be a young clergyman, gave a liberal donation to the mission, which he said he had decided to do on various charities, and asked to bring some young friends around with him some evening.

The perimeter, after some discussion, and Dick Doom promptly appeared with his friends—detectives in disguise.

Lawyer and Mr. Westley was there, his clerk also, and Loyd Graunger, and so were the rest of the pretended mi stories.

Unsuspected Dick and his men were taking notes, and studying the situation in all its features.

The result was that after a week or more of scrutiny the disguised detective asked to hold a meeting there on a certain evening.

After some discussion it was granted, for the lawyer and Loyd Graunger were working what they called the "mission racket" for all they were worth.

They were passing as good christians, and many were glad to know that such a good young man, as Graunger had become, was going to get a fortune with which he would do so much good.

The attorneys of the estate the while were putting off the day of turning over the estate as long as they could, requiring certain proofs from the lawyer which he said he could secure if he was given time.

At last he reported that the proofs had ar

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE THREE PLOTTERS.

In a secluded room adjoining the mission Loyd Graunger paced to and fro, his face pale and flaming as thoughts of an ex

"What will it bring to me, the next day?"

"Westley says that I will win, and bids me hope, for there can be no mistake, nothing to keep me from inheriting that inheritance I have so long tried to possess."

"Heaven knows how hard I have worked to win, and it has now live in luxury or die in despair with me."

"We have left not a stone unturned, we have done all that we can, and there should be no page missing, no proof gone, no delay."

"Westley has rehearsed me fully in the questions that might be asked and the answers that I must give to them."

"There must be no failure, no hesitation, no alarm, only the coolest nerve will save me now."

"Would that the ordeal was over, for I dread the end—Ah! here comes Westley now."

There was a peculiar knock at the door and opening it Loyd Graunger admitted the lawyer clerks.

"Where is Westley?" he asked eagerly.

"He is detained for awhile, but hearing you would be anxious sent me ahead to say that all goes well and that he will soon follow me."

"All right, I can wait; but has he discovered any new evidence for our side?"

"I believe that he has, for he got some papers from the post-office, and I have a package here that I got from the Express."

Loyd Graunger still kept up his walk to and fro until there came another knock upon the door.

The clerk opened it and the lawyer, Wirt Westley entered.

"Ah, my boy, you look pale and anxious, and that will not do at all."

"Think! I think nothing about it; I know that you, that we will win, for remember, that you are carrying me through this terrible ordeal!"

"Yes, oh, yes, but I have as much on my conscience as you have, and I have done my share."

And I have done mine; but I fear you are despondent, and yet you must not be.

"A good glass of brandy before you are called upon to appear will brace you up."

"I'll take it."

"But, Westley?"

"Welly, Welly, Welly, why do you wish to ask me a most important question?"

"Certainly."

"You know that I appear as the sole heir in this matter?"

"Of course."

"You know that my poor dear mother died under what the papers have tried to make out most suspicious circumstances."
ask her to let you come back to the shelter of the oven."

"It was the case of the Prodigal Son over again, and you were looking for the joy of having spent a few days of illness cheered by your fond mother’s presence.

"But what a shock, when you arrived, to find that love had thrown cold in death to have all your hopes dished to the ground.

"Of course you mourn for her bitterly, and you may think it’s natural for you to think of your mother’s son, it is but natural that you should wish to secure your inheritance, that you may have the time to do good, your money to charity.

"See, dear boy, that is the situation, that is the way you must talk.”

"Oh! if I only could!"

"You will, and when I can I will do it for you.

"Now brace up, and we'll go over all these papers together, and then through a rehearsal of the scene in court, as it will be,” and the lawyer rubbed his hands in glee of anticipated triumph.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PREPARING TO PLAY TRUMP CARDS.

DICK DOOM, to the public, was not known in the running down of the murderers who had been so fatally at the owner of Lake View Hall.

He was a man of mystery himself, and was not a stranger to mystery.

He had, as Miss Dixie, been accused of the murder of the mistress of Lake View, and the old seeming evidence against him, he had been sent to jail. Yet, though sent to jail as Miss Dixie, he, Dick Doom, he had a good man’s name, he went on with his Secret Service work.

Assuming the character of “Miss Dixie’s brother,” it has been seen how clever was his tracking of Miss Granger, and how he had brought her back to Chicago to appear against those who deemed her dead and buried.

Upon his return to Chicago his first duty, after seeing Miss Granger settled comfortably, was to seek the chief and have an interview with him.

"Well, Dick, here you are again, and I'll vouch for it that you have some tidings for me," said the chief, motioning Dick Doom to a chair.

The ferret dropped into the chair and said:

"Yes, I have news for you, chief.

"Out with it.

"What’s news is dead.

"Nonsense, Dick, don’t test my credibility too far.

"I’ll clear up the fog, sir.

"You must know that Mrs. Granger, our Mrs. Granger, had a sister, a twin, a twin.

"In the same family.

"They were as like as two peas, and were devoted to each other until a man came between them.

"I’ll tell you.

"This man Geraldine loved, as well her sister, and loving him, for he married Geraldine back a jealous fiend.

"Yes, jealousy makes devils of many women, who, for the most part, would have never known how wicked they could be.

"But go on with your story, Dick, for I interest me greatly.”

DICK then continued his story, telling how the whole thing was, as he had heard it from Mrs. Granger, whose kindness to her sister had cost the latter’s life and saved her own.

"This is a most diabolical plot, Dick, and it is lucky for Miss Granger that she died.

"But where is the mistress of Lake View Hall?”

"She returned with me, sir, and will be on hand when she is wanted.

"A most remarkable case, but you have missed seeing those lawyers, for did they take me into their hands to give that boy money he would be able to skip the country, fearing to face the orders of the tinkered attorney, so that all sustains him I am sure.

"I will stop in and see them when I leave here, sir, for there must be no mistake of any kind made, as my honor is at stake.

"Yes, and Miss Dixie’s life, you know as well," said the chief with a smile.

Dick Doom returned a short while longer with the chief and then made his way to the attorneys of Mrs. Granger.

"I wish to ask you, gentlemen, how you still feel in this matter of young Lord Granger being the heir to the Lake View Hall estate?” he asked.

"You know, Mr. Doom, that we do not wish to see that scaparce get the property, but law is law, and right is right, and if we cannot find one who has a better claim, Lord Granger must have it.

"You are not forced to turn it over to him yet.

"We can delay a while longer if you particularly desire it; but Mr. Granger has seen us personally, and through his attorney, and told us that we must prove that he is not the heir, or surrender the property to him, and so we see the situation, for he maintains that under our management it having done so well, he wishes to let it remain as it is, and you know we do not care to lose a good client.

"No, I see that you do not, gentlemen, but I tell you in confidence that Lord Granger is not the heir, and I can prove it to you and will, but not now.

"I advise you, however, not to advance to him one dollar on account, and to hold on to that estate until you know, you understand, I say know, that you are giving it to the proper one.

"We have given him to a certain date to prove himself the heir, and bring us proofs.

"If those proofs are sufficient he must have the estate.”

"When is that date?”

The senior lawyer looked on his calendar and gave the date.

"Very well, say nothing to him or to his lawyer about the claim, but let me tell you that on the morning of that date I will be here at your office early, and I will bring proofs that will be indisputable, that Lord Granger cannot inherit the Lake View Hall estate.

"Good-day, gentlemen," and Dick Doom left the office musing to himself.

"These lawyers see a chance now of still remaining agents of the estate, should Lord Granger get the property, and they are bidding for his partner, but I will surprise them.

"Now to go to Lake View Hall and get what confession I can from that woman Pilrrs.

"The time is drawing near now, when nothing can save the murderers of that woman, cover up their tracks as they may, for at last I have the whip-hand of the situation and I shall hold it.

"A more consummate piece of devi1try I never saw with murder and fraud from beginning to end, but the game is ending and I hold a hand full of trumps to play when they grasped more to their work.

"Now to Lake View Hall, and to work to catch Pilrrs in my trap now that it is set for her, and Dick Doom returned to his hotel to put on another disguise in which to prosecute his work as a ferret.”
Dick Doom's Ten Strike.

his Fair Ferret, "Miss Dixie," was no one seemed to be able to find out. With her in town and nothing more to dread from the foes who had so ruthlessly tracked her through life, as they were safe behind prison walls, the mistress of Lake View Hall returned to her elegant home, haunted though it was by so many sad and bitter and weird memories, and began life anew with other servants about her and there, whenever he visited Chicago. Mrs. Granger had told Dick Doom he would ever find the warmest of welcomes, for the lone woman seemed to have taken a fancy to the young savior as strong as the strongest ties of friendship. She had begg’d him to give up the strange life he led as a shadower, and become a son to her in place of the one who had been stolen from her in his early boyhood by the Gypsies.

But, Dick Doom, though warmly thanking the mistress of Lake View for her kind- ness toward him, had told her that he had a mission to perform, and must still remain a shadower of evil men and women, and so he continued to do his duty as he felt it to be, winning new laurels that stamped him again and again as the one who, above all others, deserved the sobriquet of 'King of the Crook-Catchers.'

The END.

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