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ARMOUR CLAD

Amateur Cracksman.

By E. W. Hornung, Author of "Shadow of the Rope," "Rogue's March." Etc.

We had cut the last strap. He could not stand. We supported him between as to a horsehair sofa, for the room was furnished, and I begged him net to speak, while his one-eyed deliverer was at the door before Raffles recalled him with a sharp word in Italian.

"He wants to get me a drink, but crossing now. But do listen to what that can wait," said he in firmer voice. I am telling you; it's interesting, my "I shall enjoy it the more when I've | dear man. This old sinner Corbucci told you what happened. Don't let him go, Bunny; put your back against the door. He's a decent soul, and it's | self. One of the capi paranze, my lucky for me I got a word with him before they trussed me up. I've promised to set him up in life, and I will. out I don't want him out of my sight

"If you squared him last night," I exclaimed, "why the blazes didn't he come to me till the eleventh hour?" "Ah, I knew he'd have to cut it fine, though I hoped not quite so fine as all that. But all's well that ends well, and I declare I don'tifeel so much the worse. I shall be sore about the gills for a bit-and what do you

He pointed to the long black ruler with the bronze stain; it lay upon the floor. He held out his hand for it, and I gave it to him.

"The same one I gazged him with," said Raffles, with his still ghastly smile. "He was a bit of an artist, old Corbucci, after all!"

"Now let's hear how you fell into

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his clutches," said I briskly, for I was as anxious to hear as he seemed to tell me, only for my part I could have waited until we were safe in the flat. "I do want to get it off my chest, Bunny," eld Raffles admitted, "and yet I hardly can tell you after all. I followed your friend with the velvet eyes. I tollowed himself the way here. Of course I came up to have a good look at the house when he'd let himself in, and damme if he hadn't left the door ajar! Who could resist that? I had pushed it half open, and had just one foot on the mat when I got such a crack on the head as I hope never to get again. When I came to my wits they were hauling me up to that ring-bolt by the hands, and old Corbucci himself was bowing to me, but how he got here i don't know

"I can tell you that," said I, and I told how I had seen the Count for myself on the pavement underneath our windows. "Moreover," I continued, "I saw him spot you, and five minutes after in Earl's Court road I was told he'd driven off in a cab. He would see you following his man, drive home ahead and catch you by having the door left open in the way you de-

"Well," said Raffles, "he deserved to eatch me somehow, for he'd come from Naples on purpose, ruler and all, and the ring-bolts were ready fixed, and even this house taken and furmished for nothing else! He meant catching me before he'd done and scoring me off in exactly the same way that I scored off him, only going one better, of course. He told me so himself, sitting where I am sitting now, at 3 o'clock in the morning, and smeking a most abominable cigar, that I've smelled ever since. It appears he sat twenty-four hours when I left him trussed ap, but he said twelve would content him in my case, as there was certain death at the end of them, and I mightn't have life enough left to appreciate my end if he made it longer. But I wouldn't have trusted him if he could have got the clock to go twice round without firing off the pistol. He explained the whole mechanism of that to me. He had thought it all out on the vineyard I told you about, and then he asked if I remembered what he had promised one in the name of

the Camerra. II only remembered some vague threats, but he was good enough to give me so many particulars of that institution that I could make a European reputation by exposing the whole show if it wasn't for any unfortunate resemblance to that infernal rascal Raffles. Do you think they would know me at the Yard, Bunny, after all this time? Upon my soul, I've a good mind to risk it!" I offered no opinion on the point. How could it interest me then? But interested I was in Raffles; never more so in my life. He had been tortured all night and half a day, yet he could | lying against the door, the Count's

Sit and talk mee true the moment we cut him down. He had been within a minute of his dea ..., yet he was as full of life as ever : ill-treated and defeated at the best, he could still smile through his blood as though the boot were on the other leg. I had imagined that I knew my Raffles at last. was not likely so to flatter myself

"But what has happened to these villains?" I burst out, and my indignation was not only against them for their cruelty, but also against their victim for his phlegmatic attitude toward them. It was difficult to neve that this was Raffles.

"Oh," said he, "they were to go off to Italy instanter; they should be turns out to have been no end of a boss in the Camorra-says so himboy, no less; and the velvety Johnny a giovano onorato, Anglice, fresher. This fellow here was also in it, and I've sworn to protect him from them evermore; and it's just as I said, half the organ-grinders in London belong, and the whole lot of them were put on my tracks by secret instructions. This excellent youth manufactures iced poison on Saffron Hill when he's at home."

"And why on earth didn't he come to me quicker?"

"Because he couldn't talk to you; could only fetch you, and it was as much as his life was worth to do that before our friends had departed. They were going by the 11 o'clock from Victoria, and that didn't leave much chance, but he certainly oughtn't to have run it as fine as he did. Still, you must remember that I had to fix things up with him in the fewest possible words, in a single minute that the other two were indiscreet enough to leave us alone together."

The ragamuffin in question was watching us with all his solitary eye, as though he knew that we were discussing him. Suddenly he broke out in agonized accents, his hands clasped and a face so full of fear that every moment I expected to see him on his knees. But Raffles answered kindly, reassuringly, I could tell from his tone, and then turned to me with a compas-

"He says he couldn't find the mansions, Bunny, and really it's not to be wondered at. If had only time to tell him to hunt you up and bring you here by hook or crook before 12 today, and after all he has done that. But now the poor devil thinks you're riled with him, and that we'll give him away to the Camorra."

"Oh, it's not with him I'm riled." said frankly, "but with those other blackguards, and-and with wou, old chap, for taking it all as you do, while such infamous seoundrels have the last laugh and are safely on their way

to France!" ... mos sopred up at me with a curiously open eye-an eye that I never saw when he was not in earnest. I faniced he did not like my last expression but one. After all it was no laughing matter to him

"But are they?" said he. "I'm not so sure." "You said they were!"

"I said they should be." "Didn't you hear them go?"

"I heard nothing but the clock-all night. It was like Big Ben striking at the last-striking 9 to the fellow on And in that open eye I saw at last

a deep glimmer of the ordeal through which he had passed. "But, my dear old Raffles, if they're still on the premises"---

The thought was too thrilling for a finished sentence.

"I hope they are," he said grimly, going to the door. "There's a gas on! Was that burning when you

Now that I thought of it, yes, it had "And there's a frightfully foul smell," I added as I followed Raffles down the stairs. He turned to me gravely, with his hand upon the front-

room door, and at the same moment I saw a coat with an astrakhan collar hanging on the pegs. "They are in here, Bunny," he said

and turned the handle. The door would only open a few inches. But a detestable odor came out, with a broad bar of yellow gaslight. Raffles put his handkerchief sults. to his nose. I followed his example signing to our ally to do the same, and in another minute we had all three squeezed into the room.

There are four verses. Verse 1. Ayer's Hair Vigor makes the hair grow. Verse 2. Ayer's Hair Vigor stops falling hair, Verse 3. Ayer's Hair Vigor cures dandruff. Verse 4. Ayer's Hair Vigor alchorus is sung by millions. J. C. Ayer Co.,

great carcass sprawled upon the table, and at a glance it was evident that both men had been dead some hours. The old Camorrist had the stem of a liquer glass between his swollen blue fingers, one of which had been cut, in the breakage, and the livid blood that it would ever shed. His face was on the table, the huge mus-

tache projecting from under either leaden cheek, yet looking itself strangely alive. Broken bread and scraps of frozen maccaroni lay upon the cloth and at the bottom of two soup plates and a tureen. The maccaroni had a tinge of tomato, and there was a crimson dram left in the tumblers, with an empty flasco to show whence it came. But near the great gray head upon the table another liquer glass stood, unbroken, and still full of some white and stinking liquid. and near that a tiny silver flask, which made me recoil from Raffles as I had not from the dead, for I knew it to "Come out of this poisonous air," he

said sternly, "and I will tell you how it

So we all three gathered together in the hall. But it was Raffles who stood nearest the street door, his back to it, his eyes upon us two. And though it was to me only that he spoke at first he would pause from point to point and translate into Italian for the benefit of the one-eyed alien to whom he owed his life.

"You probably don't even know the name, Bunny," he began, "of the deadliest poison yet known to science. It is cyanide of cacodyl, and I have carried that small flask of it about with me for months. Where I got it matters nothing; the whole point is that a mere sniff reduces fiesh to clay. I have never had any opinion of suicide, as you know, but I always felt it worth while to be forearmed against the very worst. Well, a bottle of this stuff is calculated to stiffen an ordinary roomful of ordinary people within five minutes; and I remembered my flask when they had me as good as crucified in the small hours of this morning. I asked them to take it out of my pocket. I begged them to give me a drink before they left me. And what do you suppose they did?"

I thought of many things, but suggested none, while Railles turned this much of his statement into sufficiently fluent Italian. But when he faced me again his face was still flaming. "That beast Corbucci!" said he; "how can I pity him? He took the

flask; he would give me none; he flicked me in the face instead. My idea was that he at least should go with me-to sell my life as dearly as that-and a sniff would have settled us both. But no, he must tantalize and torment me. He thought it brandy; he must take it downstairs to drink to my destruction! Can you have any pity for a hound like that?" "Let us go," I at last said hoarsely, as Raffles finished speaking in Italian,

and his second listener stood open-

mouthed. "We will go," said Ralles, "and we will chance being seen. If the worst comes to the worst this good chap will prove that I have been tied up since 1 o'clock this morning, and the medical evidence will decide how long those dogs have been dead."

But the worst did not come to the worst, more power to my unforgotten friend the cabman, who never came forward to say what manner of men he had driven to Bloomsbury Square at top speed on the very day upon which the tragedy was discovered there, or whence he had driven them To be sure they had not behaved like murderers whereas the evidence at my theory he's one of the last people defunct Corbucci was little better. His reputation, which transpired with rest; and or, Bunny, what a partner his identity, was that of a libertine and a renegade, while the infernal apparatus upstairs revealed the idea of a third partner would have fiendish arts of the Anarchist to boot. The inquiry resulted eventually in an | fles had chosen his moment unerringopen verdict and was chiefly instru- of and als arguments lost nothing by mental in killing such compassion as the flowing accompaniment of the exis usually felt for the dead who die in | tra pint. They were, however, quite

this title for this tale.

To Catch a Thief.

No. 11 of the Series.

(Copyright 1901 by Chas. Scribner's Sons.)

Society persons are not likely to have forgotten the series of audacious robberies by which so many of themselves suffered in turn during the brief course of a recent season. Raid after raid was made upon the smartest houses in town, and within a few weeks more than one exalted head had been shorn of its priceless tiara. The Duke and Duchess of Borchester lost half the portable pieces of their historic plate on the very night of Their Graces' almost equally historic costume ball. The Kenwerthy diamonds were taken in broad daylight during the excitement of a charitable meeting on the ground floor, and the gifts of her belted bridegroom to Lady May Paulton while the outer air was thick with a prismatic shower of confetti. It was obvious that all this was the work of no ordinary thief, and perhaps inevitable that the name of Raffles should have been dragged from oblivion by callous disrespecters of the departed and unreasoning apolegists for the police. These wiseacres did not hesitate to bring a dead man back to life because they knew of ne living one capable of such feats. L is their heedless and inconsequent calumnies that the present paper is partly intended to refute. As a matter of fact our joint innocence in this matter was only exceeded by our common envy, and for a long time, like the rest of the world, neither of us had the slightest clue to the identity of the person who was following in our steps with such irritating re-

"I should mind less," said Raffles, "if the fellow were really playing my game. But abuse of hospitality was never one of my strokes, and it seems The man with the yellow boots was to me the only shot he's got. When we took old Lady Melrose's necklace, Bunny, we were not staying with the

Melroses, if you recollect." We were discussing the robberies for the hundredth time, but for once under conditions more favorable to animated conversation than our unique circumstances permitted in the flat. We did not often dine out. Dr. Theobald was one impediment, the risk of recognition was another. But there were exceptions, when the doc-

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though a head full of wine, but as it floats back to me across the gulf between that moment and this.

"Excellent fillet!" said I grossly. "So you think this chap is as much in society as we were, do you think?" I preferred not to think so myself We had cause enough for jealousy without that. But Raffles raised his eyebrows an eloquent half inch.

not only in it but of it; there's no comparison between us there. Society is in rings like a target, and we were never in the bull's-eye, however thick you may lay on the ink! I was asked for my cricket. I haven't forgotten it yet. But this fellow's one of themselves, with the right of entree into houses which we could only 'enter' in a professional sense. That's obvious unless all these little exploits are the work of different hands, which they as obviously are not. And it's why I'd give £500 to put salt on him

glass in festive incredulity.

filled my soul with offense; but Rafstrong in themselves. The gist of But Raffles would mot have passed them was that thus far we had remarkably little to show for what Raffles would call "our second innings," This even I could not deny. We had scored a few "long singles," but our "best shots" had gone "straight to hand" and we were "playing a deuced slow game." Therefore we needed a new partner-and the metaphor failed Raffles. It had served its turn. I already agreed with him. In truth was tired of my false position as hireling attendant and had long fancied myself an object of suspicion to that other impostor the doctor. A fresh, untrammelled start was a fascinating idea to me, though two was company, and three in our case might be worse than none. But I did not see how we could hope, with our respective

"Suppose I have solved it," observed Raffles, cracking a walnut in his

Post for some time now."

"You have got me a good many odd numbers of the less base society pa-"I can't for the life of me see what

you're driving at."

servation nor imagination, Bunnyand yet you try to write! Well, you wouldn't think it, but I have a fairly complete list of people who were at which these different little coups were

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Sept. 19th, 1905 .- w3m.

I said very stolidly that I did not see how that could help him. It was the only answer to his good-humored but self-satisfied contempt; it happened

also to be true. "Think," said Raffles in a patient "When thieves break in and steal," said I, "upstairs, I don't see much

point in discovering who was downstairs at the time." "Quite," said Raffles-"when they "But that's what they have done in all these cases. An upstairs door found screwed up when things were at their height below; thief gone and

be raised. Why, the trick's so old that I never knew you condescend to "Not so old as it looks," said Rafles, choosing the cigars and handing me mine. "Cognac or Benedictine,

jewels with him before alarm could

"Brandy," I said coarsely. "Besides," he went on, "the rooms were not screwed up. At Dorchester House, at any rate, the door was only locked and the key missing, so that it might have been done on either

"But that was where he left his rope ladder behind him!" I exclaimed in triumph, but Raffles only shook his

"I don't believe in that rope ladder, Bunny, except as a blind." "Then what on earth do you be-

"That every one of these so-called burglaries had been done from the inside by one of the guests; and, what's more, I'm very much mistaken if I haven't spotted the right sportsman." I began to believe that he really had, there was such a wicked gravity the eyes that twinkled faintly into mine. I raised my glass in convivial J. V. LV II AKVJ Q U congratulation, and still remember the somewhat anxious eye with which

"I can only find one likely name," he continued, "that figures in all these lists, and it is anything but a likely one at first sight. Lord Ernest Belville was at all those functions. Know anything about him, Bunny?" "Not the Rational Drink fanatic?"

Raffles saw it emptied.

"Yes." "That's all I want to know." "Quite," said Raffies; "and yet what could be more promising? A man whose views are so broad and moderate and so widely held already (saving

(To be continued.)

Is Disease a Crime?

Not very long ago, a popular magazine published an editorial article in which the writer asserted, in substance, that all disease should be regarded as criminal. Certain it is, that much of the sickness and suffering of mankind is due to the violation of certain of Nature's laws. But to say that all sickness should be regarded as criminal, must appeal to every reasonable individual as radically

It would be harsh, unsympathetic, cruel, yes criminal, to condemn the poor, weak, over-worked housewife who sinks under the heavy load of household cares and burdens, and suffers from weaknesses, various displacements of pelvic organs and other derangements peculiar Frequent bearing of children, with its ex-

with the care, worry and labor of rearing a large family, is often the cause of weak-nesses, derangements and debility which are aggravated by the many bousehold cares, and the bard, and never-ending work which he mother is called upon to perform. Dr. lerce, the maker of that world-famed remedy for woman's peculiar weaknesses and poor, over-worked housewife can not get the needed rest from her many household cares and labor to enable her to secure from the use of his "Prescription" its full benefits. It is a matter of frequent experience, he says, in his extensive practice in these cases, to meet with those in which his treatment fails by reason of the patient's inability to abstain from hard work long enough to be cured. With those suffering from prolapsus, anteversion and retroversion of the uterus or other displacement of the womanly organs, it is very necessary that, in addition to taking his "Favorite Prescription" they abstain from being very much, or for long periods, on any kind should also be avoided. As much out-door air as possible, with moderate, light exercise is also very important. Let the patient observe these rules and the "Favor-ite Prescription" will do the rest.

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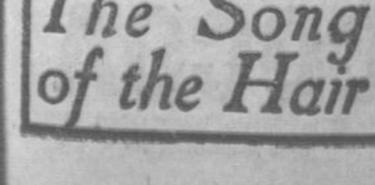
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A New Commandment

A professor is said to have discovered umong some ancient ruins what is supposed to be the eleventh commandment. The text is as follows: "Emas rol yitpmorp tseyap ucht sseinu repapswen a daer ton tlabsucht." The commandment is easily translated by beginning at the end of the sentence and reading backand I seek at all property in the last



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tor was away or the patient denant and on these rare occasions we frequented a certain unpretentious res taurant in the Fulham quarter, where the cooking was plain but excellent and the cellar a surprise. Our bottle of '89 champagne was empty to the label when the subject arose, to be touched by Raffles in the reminiscent manner indicated above. I can see his clear eye upon me now, reading me, weighing me. But I was not so sensitive to his scrutiny at the time. His tone was deliberate, calculating, preparatory; not as I heard it then,

"As much, my dear Bunny? He is

"Not you," said I as I drained my "But I would, my dear Bunny. Waiter! another half bottle of this," and Raffles leaned across the table as the empty one was taken away. "I never was more serious in my life," he continued below his breath. "Whatever else our successor may be he's not a dead man like me or a marked man like you. If there's any truth in upon whom suspicion is ever likely to

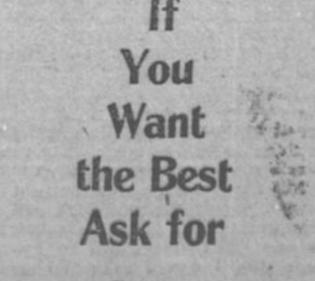
he would make for you and me!" Under less genial influences the very

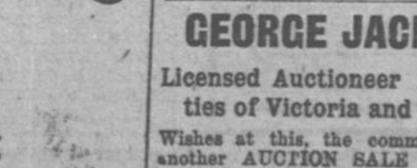
handicaps, to solve a problem which was already the despair of Scotland

"How could you?" I asked without believing for an instant that he had. "I have been taking the Morning "Well?"

Raffles smiled indulgently as he cracked another nut. "That's because you've neither ob-

You the Best





care will be conducted satisfactorily. GEO. JACKSON.

Port Perry.