# The Green Seal

By CHARLES EDMONDS WALK

Author of "The Silver Blade," "The Paternoster Ruby," "The Time Lock," etc.

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd).

If the room suddenly had turned upside down, I could not have been more staggered. I vaguely heard Struber asking other questions in a tone that brooked neither disregard nor inattention.

"Do you mean one o' the fellas with the diamond was Steve Willets?"

"No, no, no; I didn't say Steve—just Willets. That's all I efer heard of his name. The other fellow's, that I forget."

"Which o' the two was Willets?"

"The fierce-eyed fellow. He was jolly enough too, though, when he had anything to say. He mostly sat quiet and watched, I remember."

Struber gave his head a short jerk as if the puzzle were perfectly comprehensible to him.

"And the little ivory box they brought the uncut stone in, would yuh recognize it if yuh were to see it again?"

"Surely," replied Aartsen. "It was square—about two inches"—he indicated the size with his hands—"covered with funny Chinese carvings—"

We all turned abruptly to Miss Fox. She had uttered an inarticulate cry of amazement.

"Why," she faltered, suddenly blushing and confused under our concentrated regard, "that describes a small Chinese box that has belonged to my aunt ever since I can remember. But of course it can not be the same one."

"Of course not," Aartsen readily agreed. "Just as there was nefer such another diamond as this one."

"Don't be too sure," Struber drily advised him. "I can show yuh inside of an hour a box I bet yuh'll swear is the same one."

He flipped the sheet of wrapping-paper across the table toward the expert.

"If the box had been wrapped in that," he went on, "wouldn't it just about fit those plain creases?"

"Don't forget," I spoke aside to the detective, while Aartsen, perplexed and frowning, examined the wrapper, "that there is another box that will fit those creases."

I meant, of course, the ring box. The only recognition by Struber of my reminder was another curt nod; he did not remove his sharp regard from Aartsen. Presently the latter showed the wrapper aside.

"I should say yes," said he. "But that means nothing. Blenty of boxes are that size and shape; any one of them would fit those greases."

With a secret, crooked little smile, Struber recovered the wrapper, and folding it along the creases, careful not to erase them, quietly placed it in his pocket.

"Mebbe you're wise when it comes to givin' diamonds the acid test," he observed to Aartsen, "but yuh ain't wise to the fact that this particular chunk o' ice was in somethin' else besides that wad o' paper when this wrapper was put on. Mr. Ferris ain't told us yet why he didn't bring it along."

"Because I couldn't find it," I quickly explained. "It was precisely such a box as Mr. Aartsen described—a replica of the box you have already seen, Struber. A verbal description, you know, wouldn't amount to much."

"What does anything amount to in this case?" inquired Struber. "You don't know. You're not ready to say what's important an' what ain't. It's up to me to find out, for it looks like I got to horn in without a invite because my reg'lar duties 've brought me in. This here gent"—indicating Aartsen by a sidewise motion of his head—"won't even say for sure what the rock's worth. I reckon they're scarce all right; but them dinkey little boxes seem to be as thick as fleas on a dog. How many is there anyhow? I'd like to see Miss Fox's aunt's."

"You may," she quietly told him. "She'll show it to you if I give you a note to her."

"Thanks, Miss Fox. I'll take a passar out there some time to-day, then."

CHAPTER XII.

The proposal I wanted to offer respecting the diamond may be sufficiently explained by the disposition finally made of it. Before our party broke up and separated, it was with the understanding that the priceless gem was to remain in the custody of the Citrus Exchange Bank, and to be delivered only upon either my or Miss Fox's application in person, and in the presence of Mr. Hall himself. No merely written demand—less than a court order, of course—would be honored, and should anything happen to me I imposed confidence enough in Miss Fox to trust to her judgment and discretion in case of emergency. Finally, unless Mr. Hall were fully satisfied that everything was proper, he need not deliver the diamond at all.

Thus was an inestimable treasure, seemingly ownerless, safeguarded, and my burden of responsibility lightened.

Three of us—Struber, Miss Fox, and myself—emerged upon the walk together. At that moment a rangy gray automobile spun by, so fast that I caught only a hazy glimpse of its occupants, who were two in number: the driver, and a figure in the tonneau, muffled to the ears in a drab motoring-coat. A feeling that I had seen the car before impelled me to watch it until it rounded the corner into Fifth Street and disappeared toward Hill Street.

I was engaged thus perhaps two seconds. Then I became aware that Miss Fox's hand was clutching my arm and that Struber was regarding us inquiringly, as if to ask why we lagged.

"Did you see that automobile?" asked Miss Fox in a dropped voice.

I glanced at her, surprised that she should have been attracted to it too. I saw that she was disturbed. Automobiles of all shapes and sizes and vintages, were passing in both directions in two continuous streams; but I knew very well the one she meant.

"Yes," I replied. "I was wondering where I had seen it before."

"All during our morning ride," she declared, "it followed us." Her look was troubled as it met mine. She let her hand drop from my arm as she continued hurriedly:

"When we paused, just before turning into Vermont Avenue, it paused too."

Struber had approached and was now an interested listener.

At that instant a light of comprehension broke upon me; something surged up into my conscious mind and exacted recognition, something that intuition or subconsciousness had apprehended all along: there had not been a moment when I was abroad during the past week that I had not been followed, my every movement watched. Without being able to connect it with any certain, definite occasion, that gray automobile darted dimly in and out of memory's field, personifying the shadow that had hung persistently upon my trail. In my mind I saw it as through a veil.

Miss Fox's perturbed assertion served to fix the conviction; yet I was sure I had not noticed this particular automobile during our ride—I had been too engrossed to heed insignicant details, like automobiles, or even solar eclipses or earthquakes. So I questioned her assurance until I could no longer conjure up a doubt.

"You know," I said, "it's a common thing to imagine that another car is following yours. They do, too, but inadvertently; it's a sort of hypnosis, one driver riding aimlessly and unconsciously letting the car ahead act as pilot—too lazy or feeble-minded to choose a route of his own."

"That may be the explanation," she assented, so dubiously that I knew she didn't think so at all.

It appeared that Struber had not observed the car; but when I presently admitted that Miss Fox possibly had been correct in her suspicion, that the gray car probably had followed us with intent, not only that morning, but had trailed me closely all week, he was disposed to view the matter seriously. He even expounded a theory elucidating the problem.

"Yuh start out to shadow a fella," he averred; "stick close to him all the time—I don't care whether he sees yuh or not, or hasn't any reason to suspicion he's being followed—he'll get next to it in time. Funny thing, but it's so. He can't pick out the shadow, but after a few days he gets uneasy and fidgety without knowin' why—gets to jerkin' his head round and lookin' to see who's behind him. . . . You walk mostly, don't yuh?" he abruptly broke off.

"As much as I can," I told him. "It's about all the exercise I get."

"Wish you'd get the license number," he went on, "or could describe them better. It don't look good to me. Them ginks is prepared for anything. I see how they work it; they're pretty foxy, all right. As long as you're walkin' the guy in the back seat walks too, shadowin' yuh, while the other trails along with the auto, keepin' him in sight. Then if yuh hop a car, get a taxi, or anything like that, this guy signals his machine, climbs aboard and don't lose yuh. An auto followin' a fella on foot would be spotted by him right off, so this gray auto keeps out o' your sight as much as possible—but you've got a line on 'em, just the same."

"But why the dickens should they want to follow me?" I demanded. "Who are they anyway?"

"Search me," he returned gloomily. "What with that diamond and the Chink sign and all I feel like I was 'way out over my head, where the undertow and tide-rip was a-gettin' me. I ain't no Sherlock Holmes."

Miss Fox and I both laughed; but right away he regarded me with whimsical shrewdness.

"Just watch your Uncle Heinie," he adjured; "I'll go plugging along in my own way, an' I bettcha, when we come to cash in, my stack won't be all whies. . . . Going anywhere particular to-day?" he asked irrelevantly.

I considered.

"Why," I returned at length, "I must be at the courthouse at two—have a motion to argue in department four; that will take only a few minutes. After that an engagement at the Henne Building; then the inquest. You are not asking merely out of curiosity, I suppose?"

"You suppose right. Mebbe I'll have something to tell yuh before night. Don't forget this—don't let on like you're wise to your shadow. Yuh might scare 'em off, and I want 'em to keep followin' yuh for a while." He turned abruptly to Miss Fox.

"If yuh'll give me that note to your aunt," he said, "I'll bother her just long enough to let me see the ivory box you spoke about."

We moved up closer to the building, away from the jostling sidewalk throng. A sheet from my memorandum-book, my fountain pen, the memorandum-book itself serving as desk, and the note was written right there. She appended a street and number that I identified as being some distance out on Boyle Heights. "The First Street car goes within two blocks of the house," she told him.

Struber gallantly doffed his shabby derby and murmured his thanks. To me he said over his shoulder, as he moved away:

"I'll drift back to your loft as soon as I can. I've a hunch it'll help things along if we compare notes."

"I'm willing," I agreed. And the detective, in his illusory shiftless fashion, went rapidly away.

CHAPTER XIII.

Up to this time I had spoken of the death-ring to Miss Fox only in the slightest and most casual way; because, prior to Steve Willets's death—I never could bring myself to thinking of him as her father—her interest in it had seemed so remote that the idea did not suggest itself, and afterwards I was restrained from speaking of it by a reluctance to mention the instrument that had been the direct cause of that death.

But now, with the potential connection between the ring and the ivory boxes in mind, and the manner in which they had come into the mystery surrounding her own life, I decided that she was entitled to have all the information relating to it that I could impart. The circumstances of her attitude toward the bandit being nearly, if not quite, impersonal, relieved the situation immensely. She fostered no tender memories of the man; in his death she had known no grief. The only sentiment respecting him that she could possibly entertain was regret that he had been the sort of man he was. His taking off had been a blessing instead of an affliction.

Accordingly, therefore, after Struber left us and we were once more back at the office, the instant I found the opportunity I called Miss Fox into my private room for the purpose of telling her about the ring. The story of the diamond, of course, she had already heard that morning, except one feature that I purposely had not referred to at the bank, namely, the coincidence of its apparently miraculous arrival, and her having come into the midst of that astounding situation with what was to me the most extraordinary story of all.

My principal purpose, however, was to give her the ring's history, as much as I knew of it; and as I unlocked the drawer where I had hidden it beneath a mass of old papers, I said:

"The diamond coming as it did was enough to upset any man; but the two boxes being exactly alike was the limit." I was fumbling for the ring box. "You know, there is an atmosphere about this box, as if it had belonged to the ring for ages. It was hard to believe that there could be another just like it. Right on top of that came your story, then, a day or two later, the Strang letters—well, it's been a pretty strenuous week for me."

My hand encountered the box, which I drew forth. The instant Miss Fox beheld it I knew its appearance was not strange to her. But how little did I dream that this relatively unimportant episode was to end in a climax more astonishing than anything else that the baffling mystery had yet jolted me with. She was only frankly curious, and her lovely eyes were aglow with a light of anticipation. Then she saw the box and uttered a little exclamation.

(To be continued.)


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## WAR AND BUTTERFLIES.

### What Fashionable Women Are Doing in the Great War.

Centuries ago a chronicler of the crusades recorded quaintly of a certain vain and valorous knight:

"Three wounds he received in this battle, whereat he laughed; but the Paynim who shore his tall plume he cursed deeply, and rested not till he had, with his good sword, shorn off his head."

That was in the day when every gentleman who was not a priest must be a fighter, and could be a dandy only by the way. It was many years later that another type arose, dandy first and fighter afterward: the graceful idler, the society fop, suddenly transformed by patriotism, at his country's call, into a hero. History proved him, fiction adopted him; he became one of the most popular figures in drama, story, and romance. But until now neither fact nor fiction has supplied a corresponding type of heroine.

The great war of to-day, although it demands of many of the noble women who have answered the call greater ability, responsibility, and thoroughness of training than has ever been demanded of women before, has also offered opportunities of service to others, hitherto merely women of fashion and the gay world, which many have eagerly accepted. Women used only to organizing balls toil on committees; women who have shone in foreign capitals interpret for hapless refugees; women who have played with petted children in charming nurseries establish orphanages, care for destitute mothers, or adopt war babies. Other women, of the modern athletic type, untrained in nursing, devote their nerve and muscle to slaving in hospitals,—hastily improvised, ill equipped, overcrowded, undermanned hospitals,—where they fag for the real nurses, and turn their hands to anything from writing wills and messages for dying men to menial and often horrible tasks of washing, scrubbing and disinfecting.

Others give themselves, with their automobiles, to the Red Cross, and drive their own cars, filled with wounded, over war-torn roads and half-wrecked bridges with skill and daring. Often they run them under fire, and not one of them has flinched.

"If ever this terrible time, which seems an endless nightmare, does really end," the American wife of an Englishman of high social position, who has been loyally working with the rest, wrote home recently, "and if I wake up to peace and pretty clothes and gay doings, and life as it used to be—sometimes I wonder who it will be that will wake ? Not I, as I am now, or it wouldn't be waking, and not I, the old I of before the war; that I, my dear, is as dead as if she had been shot. I want to be happy and jolly again, yet when I think of the old life it seems no more possible to take it up and live it than to go back and be a little girl. I have died, or grown up, or been born again since then—I don't quite know which! I only know that I am, and must be, different, and that I cannot even wish to be the same again."

Sometimes to lose a self is to find a soul.

## MISSILE FOUND BY X-RAYS.

### Bullet Taken From Heart and Soldier Still Lives.

The opening of a chamber of the heart and extracting a bullet is reported by Professor Freund and Doctor Casperson in the Munich Medical Weekly. The patient was a young soldier who had recovered from a bullet wound through the liver. Upon X-ray examination preceding his discharge from the hospital a foreign object was discerned in the heart. It moved synchronously with the heart's pulsations, and the physicians decided that it was a shrapnel bullet.

To prevent possible dangerous complications it was determined to remove the bullet. The breast was opened, the pericardium slit sufficiently to permit the heart to be brought forward, a quick incision was made in the right ventricle, and the bullet was immediately found and removed. Much blood was lost, but the bleeding stopped after a prompt stitching and the patient made a complete recovery.

The bullet, which weighed 12 grams, had taken a most erratic and extraordinary course. It struck the soldier on the left shoulder from above, as he was storming forward, inflicting only a flesh wound. It passed down and diagonally across the body, barely marking the skin, was deflected by a cartridge box and entered the liver, passing completely through it into the vena cava, one of the two trunk veins that empty into the heart. The bloodstream conveyed it thence into the right ventricle of the heart.

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Hand separator cream produces better butter than that separated by any other method. The deep can surrounded by cold water is second best; pans and crocks are third best, and the water-dilution method comes last.

The cream should be kept in as nearly a sweet condition as possible until enough has been gathered for a churning. This should then be soured or ripened. To ripen the cream warm it to a temperature of 75 to 80 degrees, until it is sour enough; then cool down to a temperature of from 55 to 60 degrees, which is right for churning. Let it stand at this temperature for an hour or so before churning, if possible. This will cause the butter to come in better condition. Cream that is being ripened should be thoroughly stirred several times before it is ready for churning.

It is often advisable to save some of the buttermilk of one churning to be used as starter (the same as yeast in bread making) for the next batch of cream. Add a small amount of this buttermilk to the sweet cream when enough has been gathered for a churning; thoroughly stir it, and it will ripen very much more rapidly. Care should be exercised to keep this old buttermilk in as good condition as possible.

Strain all cream into the churn. This will remove all clots and particles of curd, and there will be no danger of white specks in the butter. Do not fill the churn over one third to one half full. Give the cream room for agitation, which insures quick churning. Turn the churn just fast enough to give the cream the greatest amount of agitation.

The butter should be gathered until the grains become about one half the size of wheat. Then draw off the buttermilk through a strainer and wash the butter in cold water two or three times or until the wash water is removed practically clear. In washing, care should be exercised not to bring the grains together in one mass, but rather keep it in the granular condition. The washing of the butter removes the buttermilk and makes the butter keep for a longer time. It also puts it in better condition for salting.

The butter should be taken from the churn in the granular condition and the salt sprinkled over it before it has been worked together. Usually a scant ounce of salt is added for each pound of butter.

One working, at the time of salting is usually sufficient, providing the butter is hard enough when removed from the churn. If the butter is somewhat soft when taken out, it can be salted and set away for a few hours until it gets hard enough to finish. Butter is usually worked enough when the water has been removed so that it will bend without breaking. Too much working will spoil its grain and make it salvy, while leaving too much water in it will spoil its keeping qualities.

Pack or print the butter as soon as it has been worked sufficiently and put it in a cool place until it is taken to the market. Remember that the appearance of the package, as well as the way the butter is packed, has a great deal to do with the selling price.

In order to make a uniform colored butter for the entire year, some color may be used. Very little will be required during the spring and summer months, when the cows are getting green feed. Colored butter is not only more appetizing, but can be sold on the market for a very much better price than that which is not colored. The color should be added to the churn before starting to churn.

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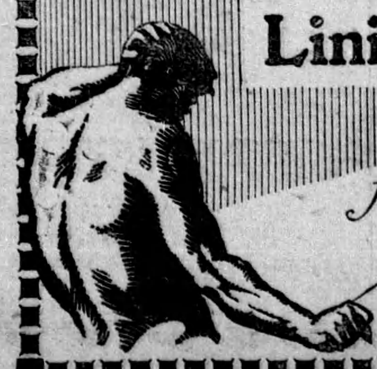

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