ADMIT ONE

BY SIDNEY HORLER.

SYNOPSIS.

When Philip Crane arrives in London on a holiday, through a coincidence of like names, he is taken for the crook Crane, who is a tool of a band ruled by a mysterious "Empress."

He rescues Margery Ferguson and learns that her father is held captive by "The Empress" in Mandling. Philip goes to Mandling and meets Charles Whittle, an American detective. When Crane is abducted Whittle calls in Scotland Yard. Margery goes to Mandling. Young Crane is imprisoned with Margery's father, who drops dead from exhaustion. Judith Felstead, an accomplice, realizes she has incurred the hatred of The Empress.

CHAPTER XXI.—(Cont'd.)

Judith realized that she had been a fool to come. The bitter fate which, to her own knowledge, had overtaken so many other people who had worked for that cruel mistress of crime who, living in luxury in Mayfair, spread her net so wide that men and women hundreds and even thousands of miles away shivered at the nickname which had been given her, had now caught up even her. She had outlived her usefulness—therefore, she was to be outcast.

Where could she turn now that the man in whom she had trusted had allied himself with the enemy? In that moment of revelation, she knew she must get away. There was danger for her here. The room seemed to be filled with a miasmatic vapor that was filling her throat . . choking her . . . Through this mythical mist, she could see Stevensson, his eyes now mere slits, staring at her hostilely.

Yes, she must get away—and quickly. If there had been any lingering doubt before, it was now dispelled. Her fate had been sealed. They wished her gone—perhaps dead. There could be no appeal; it would be useless to waste any further words.

Stevensson now spoke; and what he said came as a dreadful corroboration of her fears.

"You won't be able to get out that way, Judith—not yet, at any rate. You have a nerve to come down here—you spy!"

"Spy?"

"None of your sob-stuff. Listen. Grosner telephoned just now to say he saw you talking to that American dick outside The Empress' house this morning. After what you told him, Whittle went to Scotland Yard; Scotland Yard 'phoned to the Folkestone Police—and they've just paid a visit here. What do you say to that?"

"It's all a damned lie. I didn't tell anything to Whittle, or whatever his name is. I asked him what he wanted."

"And you expect me to believe that?" sneered Stevensson. "Look here, you've been getting in wrong for some time. Oh, I don't mean that Crane business—before that. You've been too independent, asking too many questions, expecting too big a share. Do you imagine The Empress didn't know? And do you think she's the woman to stand that sort of thing? You've been a fool, and now you'll have to suffer for it."

How futile to attempt to argue. He was building up a case against her, monstrous in its falsity. She had done none of these things. It was simply that they were tired of her, and this was always the way they got rid of people they considered no longer useful.

"Leave me alone; I'm going to get away."

"Are you?" he commented derisively. And before she could put a hand in her bag, he had brought from his coat pocket a thing of dulled-steel. One shot—and it was over.

* * * *

There was a tap on the door.

"Yes?"

"Birchall," was the reply.

"You can't come in yet—wait." The speaker arranged the screen to his satisfaction and then walked to the manteliece. He pressed the higher of two bell pushes, and the door opened.

"What's the idea?" asked the American; "something private going on?"

Stevensson, a sinister figure, stood looking at him from the hearth-rug in front of the fireplace.

"I'm the only one who is allowed to ask questions in this house," he replied; "please remember that."

"Is that so?" drawled the other, with a show of confidence he by no means felt; "well, nevertheless, I think I must put one or two queries to you, Stevensson. Directly I got back just now, friend Badoglio, the Big Cheese, spilled one or two whispers in my ear. What he told me didn't sound too nice—the dicks have been here, haven't they?"

"Yes—and gone again. What are you afraid of?"

"Me afraid? Say, laugh it off! But I think I've ogt a right to know what's happened, anyway. Are they coming back?"

"How should I know? They came, they went through the place, they saw nothing—isn't that god enough?"

"I don't know. Might be all right for the dicks in America. But these English are a persevering lot. Simps, perhaps, but too much of the bulldog in them to please me. You may think you've got them bluffed, but they pull a come-back just when you're not expecting it. My advice is to clear out and take Ferguson with us. It's only a few miles to the coast, and we might get a motor boat across to France."

"Cut it out," was the contemptuous answer; "if you haven't got any guts, I hope I have. No damned policeman is going to frighten me away from my own house. Here I am, and here I'm going to stay until this job's over. When Ferguson's done his second piece of work, I'll think about it. But not till then."

"In that case," said Birchall, "I also hang my hat up."

Stevensson made no immediate comment. He could read this man. Birchall's reputation had preceded him. This American was never one to take the hardest way. He always went when the going was good, and, unless he was very much mistaken, he was going now.

"Please yourself," he said curtly, at length. 'If you're a rat, go. If you're a man stay, It's up to you. But listen here: if you do go, it's for good. Understand that? There'll be no more working for us in the future. There's no danger, in spite of all your hot air. The police have been—and found nothing. How many more times do you want me to tell you?"

"That's all right," was the meant-to-be-easy response. "In our game, a guy has got to consider all the chances. But if you're satisfied, I am." He turned to go.

Stevensson sent this after him:

"There's no coming back, mind, Birchall."

"Who's going?" drawled the other, and sauntered out of the room.

Stevensson did not trouble to have the man watched. Snake he might be, but, in considering his own skin, he would take care not to give anyone else away. If he went, he would be off immediately, like an animal in the jungle, leaving no trace.

CHAPTER XXII.

For once, however, Stevensson was wrong in his estimate of human character. It was true that Birchall intended to get away—danger's firing-line had never been any place for him—but there was one call he was going to make before he left England. A fast car, driven recklessly, took him to a house in Curzon Street in just over two and a half hours.

Mrs. Aubyn St. Clair was in, according to the servant to whom he gave his name, and she would receive him at once.

The Empress was an imposing figure as he bowed himself into her presence.

"Well, Birchall?"

"I've come to give you the tip to get away, Empress," he started, without any preamble. "The police have been to 'The White House'—and, very likely, are coming again."

"I daresay," was the reply; "in fact, I telephoned the information to Stevensson this afternoon. Why the agitation?"

"I'll tell you, Empress: Stevensson is too cocksure. There's no reason why he should hang on there, as I've told him; the place is dangerous. Once the police get their claws in, you know what it is. Stevensson has bluffed them once. This afternoon he gave them permission to search throughout the house and grounds——"

'And they found nothing."

"That's right. But they'll come again. They can't be put off as easily as that. I tried to reason with Stevensson, but he wouldn't listen. So I've come to you."

"Thinking of your own skin?"

"Not entirely. If I had done that, I should have slipped down to Folkestone and got across to France tonight. In stead of that, I've come to you. Empress, let me advise you. Don't play your hand too hard: if the police once get a clue down at 'The White House'—if they find Ferguson, he'll spill the beans; he'll tell them about you—and then all your plans will be blown sky-high. Up till now, you've been lucky—wonderfully, marvellously lucky—but there comes a time when a little cog goes wrong, and the whole wheel is stopped. You should know that."

For reply, the woman blew a thin cloud of cigarette smoke.

"If I leave London, this business, which may be worth a million, will be finished."

"If you don't leave, you'll be finished," said Birchall, using a more dominating tone than he had ever dared before.

She remained silent for several seconds.

"I'll telephone," she said finally.

"Yes," he urged; "tell Stevensson to meet us in Paris. We'll go by 'plane from Croydon. They can dope Ferguson—or," quickly, "finish him off."

"You stupid fool!" blazed the woman. "Don't you realize what Ferguson means to us? He hasn't done his job yet. Without Ferguson, the whole thing falls to the ground."

Birchall's nerves were getting the better of him, and he snapped his fingers irritably.

"All I trouble about is getting away," he said. "I was lucky at Southampton, but I'm not going to take too many chances. I've been a fool, perhaps, to stay in England so long."

The Empress's back, as she turned, was eloquent of contempt.

Now, she was at the telephone.

"I want Trunks, please," she said. "Mandling—Mandling—yes—in Kent—017. Have you got that? Mandling 017. Quickly, please—I'm in a hurry."

(To be continued.)

ANY CLEANING?

All Parker garment cleaning is done by the famous Zoric non-gasolene method. It is gentle, yet sure, and the fluid is a tonic to materials.

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ISSUE No. 16—'32

Motor Hints

Protection For Bearings

Motorists should beware of binding that may ruin bearings. After the bearing has been adjusted the front wheel should spin freely and there should be a bit of sideplay.

Oiling Windshield Cleaner

Use a special tube when oiling the windshield cleaner. Trying to pull oil through the regular hose connection on the vacuum wiper is a good means of shortening its life. Oil has that effect upon rubber.

Care of Radiator Core

Poking the dirt or dead insects out of the radiator core is a temptation. It is better, however, to lift the hood and put the hose behind the radiator and force any mud or dirt out of the core.

Select Water For Battery

Water may look clear and "feel" soft but that is no excuse for using it in a battery regardless of what a motorist may think. It is what may be dissolved in the water that does the harm.

Turn Signal Urged

Motorists are urged not to forget to signal when turning out of a main highway.

Remedy for Steering Lock

Pressure will make the steering-gear lock hard to unlock at times. A simple remedy is to turn the steering wheel slightly and the drag on the lock plunger will be relieved.

Insect Mimics

Mimicry in insects, that is, the trick of looking like a dangerous or ill-tasting species or of camouflaging oneself as a leaf or twig, is not the prop of evolution it was once thought to be, according to W. L. McAtee, of the bureau of biological survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Beetles are taken as one example of the failure of various protective devices. Some of them are mimics. Others have powerful, ill-smelling secretions which are supposed to repel their enemies. Still others have hard shells. Yet the birds eat them all.

The sting-armed family of bees, ants and wasps fare no better. The birds eat the "stingers,' 'and they eat also the unarmed ones that mimic the "stingers" in appearance. And the birds are joined by ground-dwelling animals: toads, mice, foxes, weasels, bargers, skunks and bears, which make victims of these supposedly most powerfully-armed members of the insect clan.

Nor are insects the only animals that are betrayed by the failure of the "armor wherein they trust." Even the rattlesnake is attacked and eaten by birds. And the skunk, expert par excellence in defensive chemical warfare, nevertheless frequently falls victim to the attack of the great horned owl.

Ashamed

A certain firm had the following legend printed on its salary receipt forms:

"Your salary is your personal business, and should not be disclosed to anyone."

The new employee, in signing the receipt, added: "I won't mention it to anybody. I'm just as much ashamed of it as you are."—Irish Independent.

What is the difference between a mare and an egg?—A mare is a gee-gee, and an egg is an e-g-g.

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Half-pound (BROWN LABEL) now only 25¢

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French Expedition to Seek Lost Sea of the Sahara

Algiers.—Somewhere in the vast and uncharted wastes of the Sahara Desert, a French scientific expedition is seeking traces of inland seas, along whose shores an unknown civilization once flourished.

Led by Professor Auguste Chevalier, of the Paris Natural History Museum, the expedition vanished into the desert below southern Algeria. Nothing may be heard of the explorers for months. Heading due southward, they will visit the principal oases of the central Sahara, gathering data.

Then, leading their camel train to the southwest, they will proceed to the River Niger. The next stage of their explorations will be a journey due east to Lake Chad. FFinally, continuing eastward, they will come back to civilization by way of the Sudan and Senegal.

When Chevalier visited the southern Sahara for the first time thirty-three years ago, he thought he saw indications that a sea, or several lakes, had once existed there. This theory was later substantiated by discoveries of sea shells and fossils of animals.

While seeking to confirm these suppositions, the expedition also will undertake practical research work. The expedition is under the patronage of the Ministry of Public Instruction, the Academy of Colonial Sciences and the colonial governments of Algeria and Occidental Africa.

A Matrimonial Wood Pile

"Miss Ruth Birch yesterday became the bride of Mr. Arthur Oaks. The ceremony was performed by Rev. J. S. Maples. Mr. and Mrs. Oaks left immediately after the ceremony for Hickory, N.C., where they will visit the bride's aunt, Mrs. Oscar Shingle. Upon their return they will board with Mr. and Mrs. Frank Forrest on Elm Street."

The unusual combination of names helped make the marriage of national prominence and of lasting interest to every one who read about it.

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EAGLE BRAND CONDENSED MILK

Feminist Library

Paris—Mme. Marguerite Durand has been working for many months preparing her library as a gift to the City of Paris When it is opened this spring this will be the first feminist library in Paris, and as such it is expected to do much to help the cause of feminism in France. It consists mainly of books written by or about women, showing the progress of feminism throughout history It also has a very complete system of classification, giving the titles of the most important books on this subject and the names of the public libraries at which these works may be consulted. Mme. Durand is particularly pleased because her library is to be housed in the new Mairie of the fifth "arrondissement" which is the Latin Quarter, thus enabling students to have free and easy access to it.

CONFIDENCE.

We want a fuller confidence bringing a deeper joy, that what is done from a conscientious purpose will come back to cast hues of brightness over the evening sky, even though many a cloud may have darkened the day.—C. C. H.

In Childhood

It was a cold spring, the rain
Blew out of the hills, and the wind blew.
After a little it was quiet, then
Yellow as stars, on the twigs the new leaves grew.
And waxen as candles with a purple stain
Hyacinths blossomed in the icy sun
It was a cold spring and long—but when
The pear trees flowered, summer had begun.

—Bertha Ten Eyck James in *Poetry*.

All the Winners

The vicar met the village reprobate wandering slowly in the churchyard.

"William," he said, "it is indeed a hopeful sign to observe you so often in this sequestered and contemplative spot where, doubtless, you will yet meet with some spiritual consolation."

William blinked.

"Well, no, sir. To tell you the truth I usually meets the bookie's runner 'ere."

YOUR PULPIT

(And louder these) a sermon speaks.
On Sunday you are in the pew,
But in the pulpit all the week.

"FATIGUE? I just postpone it!"

"No, I don't have 'nerves.' You can't have them, and hold this sort of position. My head used to throb around three o'clock, and certain days, of course, were worse than others.

"Then I learned to rely on Aspirin."

The sure cure for any headache is rest. But sometimes we must postpone it. That's when Aspirin saves the day. Two tablets, and the nagging pain is gone until you are home. And once you are comfortable the pain seldom returns!

Keep Aspirin handy. Don't put it away, or put off taking it. Fighting a headache to finish the day may be heroic, but it is also a little foolish. So is sacrificing a night's sleep because you've an annoying cold, or irritated throat, or grumbling tooth, neuralgia, neuritis. These tablets always relieve. They don't depress the heart, and may be taken freely. That is medical opinion. It is a fact established by the last twenty years of medical practise.

The only caution to be observed is when you are *buying* Aspirin. Don't take a substitute because it will not act the same. Aspirin is made in Canada.

BAYER