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The Middle of Things

BY J. S. FLETCHER.

Author of "Black Money," "Searhaven Keep," etc.

CHAPTER XIV .- (Cont'd.)

The old solicitor nodded, then sud-

"Mr. Ashton gave it to me, a few "He said it had belonged to my

The old lawyer bent nearer, looked you will see me to-morrow. In the meantime, if there is anything you want done, our young friend here will be close at hand."

had left the house, "did you notice what's on the locket Miss Wickham is my long-missing uncle?"

"What is it?" asked Viner. the Cave-Gray family and their peerand motto. Viner, as sure as fate, that girl's father was the missing Lord Marketstoke, and Ashton knew the secret! I've made up my mind to a certain course, Viner. To-morrow, after the funeral, I'm going to call on the present Lord Ellingham-his town house is in Hertford Street and ask him if he has heard anything of a mysterious nature relating to his long-

missing uncle." Next day, toward the middle of the afternoon, Mr. Pawle and Viner were walking down Hertford Street when Viner suddenly gripped his compan- back. ion's arm. He was looking ahead-at the house at which they were about to call. And there, just being shown out by a footman, was the man whom he had seen at the Grey Mare, and with him a tall, good-looking man whom he had never seen before.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PRESENT HOLDER. "What is it?" Pawle asked. "Those fellows are coming away from Lord Ellingham's house. You seem to know

them? "The clean-shaven man," exclaimed Viner, "is the man I told you of-the man who was in conversation with Ashton at the Grey Mare, the night Ashton was murdered."

Mr. Pawle turned and looked after the retreating figures.

"You're sure of that?" Pawle asked. "Certain!" replied Viner. "It is surely a very curious thing that we should find him evidently in touch with Lord Ellingham-considering our recent discoveries. But-what are you going to do?"

"Going in here," affirmed Mr. Pawle. "Have you a card?" The footman lead the callers into a room at the rear of the hall, wherein

stood a very young man who was obviously just ready to go out.

long, Mr. Pawle," he said, glancing at the old lawyer. "I've a most important engagement in half an hour."

"My lord," said Mr. Pawle in his most solemn manner, "I will go straight to the point. We have reason to feel sure, from undoubted evi- "With pleasure!" responded Mr. dence, that Mr. John Ashton, a very Pawle. "Your lordship's solicitors are wealthy man, who had recently come from Australia, to settle here in London, had in his possession certain highly important papers relating to your lordship's family, and that he was murdered for the sake of them!" Lord Ellingham turned on the old lawyer a stare of utter amazement.



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"I shall be very much surprised if denly pointed to a gold locket which I'm not right!" declared Mr. Pawle. Drillford impatiently. "Where did you get that, my dear?" Where did you get that, my dear?" Marketstoke, your long-lost uncle was believed to have gone to the way know that when his left when h believed to have gone to the colonies-Australia-and was lost there. His amined, almost immediately after his weeks ago," answered Miss Wickham. death was presumed. Now, Ashton came from Australia, and as I say, we watch, chain, rings, pocketbook, purse. believe him to have brought with him If Hyde took everything from his viccertain highly important papers relamore closely at the locket, and got up. tive to Lord Marketstoke, whom we had a purse full of ready money. But "Elegant old thing!" he said. "Not think to have been well known to him made yesterday, that! Well, ladies, at one time. Indeed, we feel sure that the pawnbrokers! Hyde told you the

"Mr. Pawle," said Lord Ellingham "Viner," observed Pawle when they quietly, "have you any proof that Mr. | ued Viner: "Do you believe that Hyde, Ashton did possess papers relating to

"Yes," answered Mr. Pawle, "I have!" He pulled out the bundle of those things there? The mere idea is "After we came back from Market- letters which he and Viner had un- absurd-ridiculous!" stoke," replied Mr. Pawle, "I looked up earthed from the Japanese cabinet. "This! It is a packet of letters writ- ed Drillford. age. That locket bears their device ten by the seventh Countess of Elling- "We shall prove a good many things ketstoke we are talking of, when he quietly. was a boy at Eton. Your lordship will probably recognize your grandmother's handwriting."

Lord Ellingham bent over the letter which Mr. Pawle spread before him. "Yes," he said, "I know the writing he said. "Come with me." quite well. And-these were in Mr.

Ashton's possession. Viner and I-in a cabinet in his low, showed no great interest on hear-

house," replied Mr. Pawle.

was in possession of a secret relating a bit of a sleep that night," he said. to the missing man-my uncle, Lord "There was nothing to prevent him farketstoke?" he asked.
"I am convinced of it!" declared "Where did you find those valuables" Marketstoke?" he asked.

Mr. Pawle. "But now I should like to this morning?" asked Viner. ask a question which arises out of this visit. As we approached your lord- in a corner above the bundle of sackship's door, just now, we saw, leaving ing. "There!" he answered. "In turnit, two men. One of them, a clean- ing some boxes over I came across the shaven man, my friend Mr. Viner imparcel, wrapped in paper." mediately recognized. He does not know who the man is-"

obvious surprise.

I know this man was certainly with Viner went forward and picked them

Mr. Ashton at a tavern in Notting up. Hill from about nine-thirty to tenthirty on the evening of Ashton's death. In fact, they left the tavern

The young nobleman sat silent-it seemed to Viner that his youthful face had grown unusually grave and

told me, and all the more so because this is the second surprise I've had this afternoon. I may as well tell you Melbourne Argus of September 6th that the two gentlemen whom you saw going away just now brought me some very astonishing news-yours comes "I'm afraid I can't give you very right on top of it! And, if you please, I'd rather not say any more about it, just now, but I'm going to make a proposal to you. Will you—and Mr. Viner, if he'll be so good—meet me tomorrow morning, say at noon, at my solicitors' offices?"

"Carless and Driver, Lincoln's Inn Fields," answered Lord Ellingham. "Friends of ours," said Mr. Pawle. "We will meet your lordship there at twelve o'clock to the minute.'

Viner went thoughtfully homeward, ruminating over the events of the day, and entered his house to find his two guests, the sisters of the unlucky Hyde, in floods of tears, and Miss Penkridge looking unusually grave.

She silently handed to her nephew an early edition of one of the evening newspapers and pointed to a paragraph in large type. And Viner rapidly read it over, to the accompaniment of the younger Miss Hyde's sobs.

"A sensational discovery in connection with the recent murder of Mr. Ashton in Lonsdale Passage, Bayswater, was made in the early hours of this morning. Charles Fisher, a greengrocer, carrying on business in the Harrow Road, found in his woodshed, concealed in a nook in the wall, a parce? containing Mr. Ashton's gold watch and chain and a diamond ring. He immediately communicated with the police, and these valuables are now in their possession. It will be remembered that Langton Hyde the young actor who is charged with the crime, and who is now on remand, stated at the coroner's inquest that he passed the night on which the crime was committed in a shed in this neighborhood.

Viner read this news twice over. Then a sudden idea occurred to him, and he turned to leave the room. "I don't think you need be particularly alarmed about this," he said to the weeping sisters. "Cheer up, till I

Minard's Liniment for backache.

return-I am going round to the po-

CHAPTER XVI.

THE OUTHOUSE, Drillford, discovered alone in his office, smiled as Viner and Felpham walked in to see him. There was an irritating I-told-you-so air about him. "What is it that's been found, exactly?" asked Felpham, directly.

Drillford opened a locked drawer, lifted aside a sheet of cardboard, and revealed a fine gold watch and chain and a diamond ring.

"There you are!" said Drillford. "Those belonged to Mr. Ashton; there's his name on the watch and a mark of his inside the ring." "Were these things loose?" asked

Viner. "Wrapped loosely in the paper they're lying on," replied Drillford. Viner took the paper out of the drawer, examined it and lifted it to

"I wonder if Hyde really did put those things there," he said, "how Hyde came to be carrying about with him these sheets of paper which had certainly been used before for the wrapping of chemicals or drugs? These papers have at some time been used to wrap some strong-smelling

"No doubt of it!" said Felpham, who was applying the papers to his

"You really think that!" he ex-"That's a mere detail," remarked

death, all his effects were gonetim, as you say he did, he would have -he was starving when he went to Ashton knew Lord Marketstoke's se- truth-he never had anything but the

> "Good!" muttered Fe.pham. "Another thing, Inspector," continplaced in the position he is, would be such a fool as to tell you about that particular shed if he'd really hidden

"You" have that to prove!" retortham to her elder son, the Lord Mar- that'll surprise you," said Viner

> He motioned Felpham to follow, and going outside, turned in the direction of the Harrow Road.

> "I'm going to have a look at the place where these things were found," They walked along until they came

to the shop on Harrow Road. "We have just found them-Mr. The greengrocer, a dull-looking feling what his callers wanted. He led Lord Ellingham handed the letters Viner and Felpham round to the yard and opened the door of the shed.

"You think that this Mr. Ashton "I reckon that's where the fellow got

The greengrocer pointed to a shelf

"Just folded in the papers that you handed to the police?"suggested Viner. Lord Ellingham looked at Viner in "Well, there was more paper about 'em than what I gave to Inspector "You do not know him?" he ex- Drillford," said the greengrocer.

He pointed to some loose sheets of "No," replied Viner, "I don't. But paper which lay on the sacking, and

He slipped some silver into the greengrocer's hand and led Felpham away. Once out of sight of the shop, he pulled out the papers which he had picked out of the corner in the shed and held them in front of his companion's eves.

"We did some good in coming up "Mr. Pawle," he said at last, "I'm here, after all, Felpham!" he said, immensely surprised by what you've with a grim smile. "Now, then, look at these things. That's a piece of newspaper from out of a copy of the



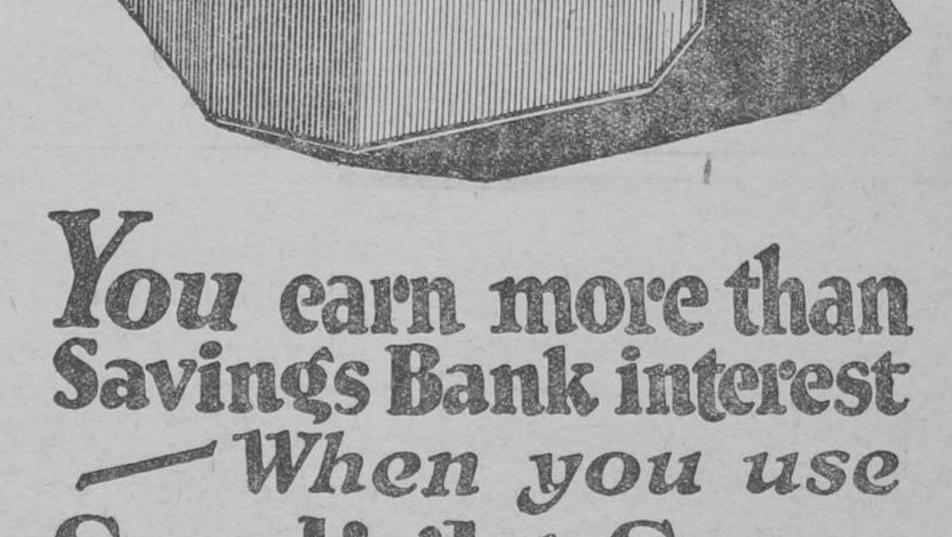
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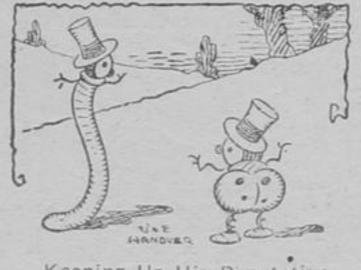
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last. Likely thing for Hyde to be carrying in his pocket, eh? Here's a sheet of brown wrapping-paper with the name and address of a famous firm of wholesale druggists on one sideprinted. It's another likely thing for Hyde to possess, and to carry about, isn't it? This gives me a new theory

to work on." Viner, by the time he went to bed, had evolved an idea, and it was still developing when he set out next morning to accompany Mr. Pawle to Lord Ellingham's solicitors.

(To be continued.)



Keeping Up His Reputation.

often?" Worm-"Because the (worm will turn, you know!

Not Dead Yet.

Beggar-"Spare a copper, sir. I've 'ad no food for three days, an' my widder an' two orphans is starvin.'

it places its own punishment on a of the afternoon!" chance which is sure to occur-L. E.



Job's Patience. "Job was a medical man, you know."

"I don't know-explain." "Haven't you ever heard of the patience of Job?"

Love's Labor Lost.

Slowly and carefully the young man strode up and down the little lane at the back of his house pushing the perambulator before him.

He had fixed a weird kind of bookrest to the handles, and was perusing Bug-"What makes you start out the latest novel at the same time. and then go back—the other way so | Presently a window was opened and a voice hailed him from the house. "Henry! Henry!" it called.

> But Henry heeded not. An hour later the same voice called again. "What do you want?" asked Henry, glancing up from the book.

"I know, dear," answered the voice "But it's time to take baby out now. It is the inevitable end of guilt that You've been airing Harrier's doll most

| Minard's Liniment for burns.

A Poem Worth Knowing. "Ships That Pass in the Night."

This is one of the shortest and most beautiful of the poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the New England poet, whose popularity has never waned in this country. He is not regarded as one of the world's supreme poets, but his appeal, which is a simple one, is to the multitude and not only to the few.

Ships that pass in the night and speak each other in passing; Only a signal shown and a distant

voice in the darkness;

So on the ocean of life we pass and speak one another. Only a look and a voice; then darkness again and a silence.

Blue sponges have appeared. They harmonize nicely with the color scheme of the cold-bath devotee.

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