



CHAPTER XIX—POLICE

Peter used the ropes with which he himself had been tied to secure Bates. And when he finished Bates and his big chair were practically one. Then he hurried upstairs again and got Warden's razor.

He had to shave in cold water, yet even so he made a fair job of it. He also had a rapid and much-needed wash and had just changed his dirty collar for a clean one of Warden's when he saw the headlights of a car at the drive gate. He ran down. Christine was waiting for him.

"What are we to say to the doctor?" she asked breathlessly.

"Simply say we don't know anything about it. We are friends of Warden. Drove out here to see him. Found him lying shot."

Christine had only time to nod agreement before there came a ring at the bell. Peter opened the door to a brisk young man with a small, fair moustache and pleasant blue eyes. He carried a black bag.

"Dr. Sankey?" said Peter.

"Yes."

"My name is Hastings. This is Miss Grant. We came here to-night on our way back to town to see our friend Mr. Warden and found him lying on the floor of the sitting-room. He has been shot in the head but is not dead nor, so Miss Grant thinks, fatally injured. Will you come and see?"

Dr. Sankey gave them both a quick glance which seemed to satisfy him; then he followed Peter into the sitting room. He dropped on his knees beside Warden and began to examine him. Peter saw that he evidently knew his job. In about two minutes he had finished.

"Miss Grant is right," he said. "The bullet has only grazed the skull. There is, of course, considerable concussion and it will probably be some time before Mr. Warden is able to talk and tell us what has happened. We must get him to bed and I will dress the wound. After that it will be only a matter of keeping him quiet for a few days."

"His room is on the first floor. Shall I help you carry him up, Doctor?" said Peter. "Or would it be better to put him on the sofa here?"

"We can carry him up—it won't hurt him."

They took him up, undressed him, and Sankey attended to the wound.

"Someone ought to be with him," said Sankey. "Are there any servants?"

"Warden has only a man. He is in the kitchen, tied up. He is very drunk." Sankey frowned.

"A queer business, Mr. Hastings. Very queer," said Peter, grimly. "Incidentally, the house was afire when we got here. At least a lamp had been upset and the oil was burning. Luckily the flames hadn't got hold, and we put it out without much trouble."

"You didn't meet anybody as you came up?"

"No."

"I shall, of course, have to inform the police, Mr. Hastings."

"Of course, but I don't see what they can do until Warden comes round and is able to tell who his assailant was."

"He will probably come round before morning. I think you and Miss Grant must remain here for the present. It's awkward, but it can't be helped."

"Of course we must," said Peter readily. Sankey stood looking at Peter. He seemed to be struggling with some recollection.

"I know you," he said suddenly. "You're the Mr. Hastings who was attacked the other day at Cranham."

Peter shrugged.

"I plead guilty," he replied. "That's the awful part of having one's picture in the daily papers."

Sankey still seemed puzzled.

"But this Mr. Warden," he said. "He is amazingly like you. No one could help noticing the resemblance."

"That's how we came to know one another," Peter told him; "but we are not related in any way."

"These likenesses are very strange," Sankey said. "You probably have a common ancestor." He paused, then went on: "I must be getting back. I will send a nurse as soon as possible. I must see our superintendent of police, too."

He turned to go, but Peter stopped him.

"Your fee, doctor? Poor Warden may not be able to attend to that sort of thing for some time to come."

"A guinea, Mr. Hastings. I think that will meet the case. But I shall, of course, come again to-morrow."

"You will find me here, but as soon as the nurse comes, Miss Grant must go home."

The other nodded. Peter saw him to the door and he drove away.

Peter found Christine busy in the dining-room. She had lit the fire, which was welcome, for it was still raining. Also she had got out some food and laid a cold supper on the table. A kettle was on the hob.

Somehow she had changed the whole atmosphere of the gloomy room.

"Splendid!" said Peter warmly. "I'm simply starved, Christine. Had nothing since lunch time and not much then. Bates got drunk quite early in the afternoon."

"The blast!" Christine exclaimed. She was looking at his eye.

"Was it he who hit you, Peter?"

"That was yesterday. I managed to get loose. We had a peach of a scrap but he was too strong for me."

"Sit here and have some of this tonight," Christine said. "And tell me what happened—how Warden got you here and everything."

"I'm still more keen to know how you got on my track, Christine."

"No, you first, Peter. I'll tell you afterwards." So Peter told how he had spotted Warden at "The Merry Men" and followed him down, and been doped and tied.

"Warden himself wasn't so bad, Christine. All he wanted was to keep me here until he had 'cleaned up,' as he called it. Even Bates was possible until he got drunk. Then he was sheer brute."

"Well, I was right about your having a real double," said Christine. "Warden is the man who swindled you in Malaya."

"Yes, he's admitted that. Small wonder the native chief was deceived. We're practically doubles."

"And it was Warden whom Miss Vidal saw at that dance," Christine went on. "I expect it was," Peter answered. "but now you've heard my story, Christine, and I'm burning to know how you managed to track me."

"I'll tell you but, first, I must go and have a look at Warden. The kettle is nearly boiling. Will you make the tea while I'm gone?"

Peter made the tea, and had just put the pot down by the fire when there came a loud crash from the kitchen. He ran there to find Bates had roused and, in a frantic effort to get loose, had upset himself and the chair to which he was tied on the flagged floor. He was still in a half dazed state and at first thought Peter was Warden.

"Some swine's tied me up while I was asleep," he growled. "Let me loose, Mr. Warden."

Peter stood over him.

"I was the swine who tied you up," he said crisply. "As for your master he's shot in the head."

Bates stared—one might better say—glared at Peter.

"Blimey, if it ain't 'Astings!' he gasped at last, and Peter saw his ex-

pression change to one of absolute dismay.

"Yes, it's Hastings. I told you I should get my own back, Bates."

"Then you shot my boss." He turned suddenly ferocious. "You'll hang for that."

"No, Bates, I didn't shoot him. You are just as likely to be accused of it as I am."

"Me shoot Mr. Warden! Me shoot my boss, the best friend I ever had! You're loony!"

Bates was so angry that he became quite sober. Peter looked at him a moment. There was not a doubt the man's anger was genuine. He was really devoted to Warden.

"A good mark for both of them," was Peter's thought. Aloud he said:

"I'm glad to say Mr. Warden is not dead. We've had the doctor here, who says he will recover. We have put him in bed and a nurse is coming from Waltham."

"A nurse—a woman!" Bates looked so horrified that Peter nearly laughed.

"We don't want no women 'ere," Bates declared fiercely. "I'll look after the boss."

"And get drunk again and let him die," said Peter.

Bates was furiously indignant.

"I only got drunk becoss I knew as he was away for the day. You don't catch me drinking so long as the boss is bad."

Peter saw he meant it, every word.

"The nurse is coming, anyhow," he said. "The question is what to do with you."

"Let me loose and I'll fix things up a bit."

"And start by knocking me over the head," said Peter drily.

Bates looked at him.

"I won't touch you, Mr. 'Astings, so long as the boss is bad," he declared, and Peter laughed.

"I'm not really afraid of you, Bates," he said, "and I don't want you to be tied up when the police arrive."

Bates gave a gasp of horror.

"The cops!" he cried. "What do you want with them?"

"I don't want them. But the doctor's sending them. He's bound to in a case like this. They've got to find out who shot Mr. Warden."

"I'll find that out. And when I find him I'll take him to pieces with my hands," remarked Bates.

Peter nodded.

"I shan't prevent you," he promised. "All right, Bates. I'm taking your word you'll behave and turning you loose."

As he spoke he picked up a big kitchen knife and cut the ropes.

Bates climbed to his feet, went across to the sink and drew a bucket of cold water and stuck his head in it. While he wiped himself dry with a very clean towel, Peter gave him a few directions, then Bates set to work to get rid of the beer bottles and other mess.

Peter went to find Christine who was upstairs with Warden. She met him at the door of the room.

"He's come round," she told him. "I've told him about things, and he is not going to mention Lanyon to the police."

"Did you put him up to that, Christine?" Peter asked.

"No, but I quite agree," she said frankly.

Peter nodded.

"So do I. If we put the police on Lanyon and if they caught him he'd spill everything and the publicity—well, it would be pretty beastly."

"I wasn't thinking of that so much as I was of Warden," Christine told him.

"Warden?" Peter repeated.

"Yes. He stood up for you, Peter, and Lanyon shot him because he refused to let Lanyon murder you. I don't want Warden to go to prison, as he will if Lanyon is arrested and informs about him."

Peter whistled softly.

"That was a point of view I hadn't thought of, but of course you're right. All the same we must be careful what we say to the police."

"There's a car coming now," said Christine quickly. "I expect it's the nurse."

"I'll go and see," replied Peter, and he ran down.

It wasn't the nurse; it was Bill Norman who must have broken all records on his journey down. His keen eyes lit at sight of Peter, but his voice was the usual quiet drawl as he spoke.

"Been mixing it again," he remarked with a glance at Peter's black eye.

"Never mind that," said Peter. "I've got to put you wise before the police arrive. They may be here any minute. Warden isn't dead. He isn't going to die. Lanyon made a bad shot this time. Warden's come round and he's not going to mention Lanyon. He'll simply say that he was attacked by a burglar."

Bill pursed his lips.

"Bit risky telling lies to the police."

"We've got to," Peter answered urgently. "If we tell them of Lanyon everything comes out and that will be rotten for Christine. Incidentally, Warden will go to quod, and we don't want that, for he was shot in trying to save me."

Bill stood frowning, evidently thinking hard; then he nodded.

"I get you. I don't like it, Peter, yet I see your point of view. It would be rotten for Christine. But if you must

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lie, for any sake be sure all tell the same lie. Remember, the police will question each of you separately. I think I'd better see Warden myself, and find out exactly what he is going to say."

"There's no time," Peter answered. "Here they come."

A car crunched up to the front door and a glare of headlights shone through the curtains. Here were the police, and Peter, feeling anything but happy, went to open the door for them.

(To Be Continued)

Address on "Fear" at Timmins Ecotor Club

Wins Points for Evening Interesting Talk on Ethiopia. Insull and Aviation Among Other Subjects.

Lake Tsana, treasure spot of Ethiopia, is situated only a short distance from Addis Ababa, yet it requires a hard three weeks' journey by mule train to reach it from the Ethiopian capital. J. W. Spooner told the members of the Ecotor club at the regular meeting on Thursday. As the source of the Blue Nile, a mile high in the mountains, Lake Tsana is a health spot of the African monarchy and many monasteries of the Ethiopian Christian religion are located there.

The Blue Nile itself, though a small stream in the dry weather, is a source of valuable silt, taken by process from the mud, the speaker said. The White Nile, farther west in Ethiopia is the district's only source of irrigation water in the dry season.

Fear in Daily Life
"Fear" was the subject of an address given by Leo Lalonde, a speech which gained the highest number of points of those delivered during the evening. Fear of one's own capabilities is one of the worst social afflictions a man can have, Mr. Lalonde said. Once that fear is conquered, the world is there for the taking.

C. Copps outlined the career of Samuel Insull who built the mid-west American empire of utility companies whose crash was one of the major ones of recent years. Insull, the speaker said, in 1878, was a stenographer in England. At 30, he was president of the Edison Electric company. Mr. Copps explained in brief form the holding company system through which Insull was able to build up the immense financial control system.

C. B. Alton reviewed the history of aviation, going back as far as 1265 when Roger Bacon predicted the invention of the aeroplane and the automobile. In 1783 the first balloon ascension was made in France. In 1903 the Wright brothers' aeroplane made history as the first successful heavier-than-air craft. The climax of 1919 when the first flight was made across the Atlantic has been the starting point for more branches of commerce in the air than the beginning of the century thought possible in wildest imagination.

Father McManus, as critic for the evening, complimented the club and stated that he believed the speakers were showing gradual improvement in their presentation of subjects and forcefulness of speech.

P. H. Laporte, Father McManus and O. E. Alton, judges for the evening, awarded the highest number of points to Mr. Lalonde.

Jimmy Ormston was introduced to the club by P. H. Laporte, as visitor for the evening.

Sudbury Star—A Sault Ste. Marie alderman charges that between 75 and 100 bootleggers are doing a flourishing business in the Sault. They are probably getting set to vote for abolition of the sale of beer and wine under government auspices when Premier Hepburn submits his proposed plebiscite on the question.



Lions Preparing for the King's Birthday

Although the next big Schumacher Lions event is three months away yet, the members of the club are hard at work selling tickets in the big draw, for which worthwhile prizes, like a trip for two to the Olympic Games in Germany, are offered. The Lions intend to make June 23rd, King Edward VIII's birthday, a big day in the Porcupine and are planning a programme that will last from morning until late at night. Winning tickets will be drawn at the street dance during the evening.

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