

# THE SILK ENIGMA

BY  
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AUTHOR OF  
"ZORA, THE INVISIBLE,"  
"DEATH IN THE STALLS," &c.

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**CHAPTER XXIII  
MORNING OF MANY MOODS**  
Peter Oxtan sat in his office frowning across at Supt. Beck.

"I think, Superintendent," he announced, "that I'm growing somewhat weary of this business. I had imagined that the whole affair would have been cleared up days ago, but what have you done? So far as I can see, Mr. Beck—and you must forgive me if I speak plainly—you have done nothing. First a valuable member of my staff is murdered; then another equally valuable employee disappears, and now, this morning, I hear that young Slater, who is missing. If affairs continue like this I shall have no staff left. I'm afraid I must ask you for some assurance in this matter, Mr. Beck."

The Superintendent had every reason to be irritable, and on this occasion it was not due to a cut chin or to cold bacon. He had been informed by ten o'clock that Philip Slater had not turned in to work; that an inquiry at the address where he had a room had elicited the information that Slater arrived home late last night and left again very early without giving his landlady any explanation for his early rising. Now he was being rated by Oxtan because, it appeared, he had done nothing about it. What did the fellow expect him to do? He'd done everything he possibly could regarding the girl's disappearance, and he couldn't reasonably be expected to do anything more. But that Oxtan should—more or less—charge him with neglect of duty . . . well, he certainly liked that! Of course, he realized that it must be disconcerting for Oxtan, but if it was disconcerting for Oxtan, how much more so it was for himself. Oxtan wasn't answerable to a superior authority. He was a private citizen, not a public servant.

Beck leaned forward. "I can understand how you feel, Mr. Oxtan," he began, "but let me first point out to you that, at your own request, I withdrew police protection from these premises. By doing so I broke one of our regulations and laid myself open to reprimand and, possibly, dismissal. I did that because the safety of your daughter had been threatened. Very well, I think I can say—and with some certainty—that had I been allowed to go about this job in my own way, neither Miss Varley nor Mr. Slater would be, at this moment, missing. Neither, too, would some unauthorized person have entered these premises last night and taken away a quantity of your Chinese silk. You have to admit, Mr. Oxtan, that under the circumstances you have only yourself to blame. You speak of talking plainly. So do I. No other course is left open to me, but whether you like it or not, I'm going to proceed with this case along my own lines. What happens as a result of that, I and I alone, will assume responsibility for."

Peter Oxtan's face, that a moment ago had been outrageously red, paled somewhat.

"But what about the threat?" he demanded nervously. "You know what the threat was. If anything should happen . . ."

"Nothing will happen if I'm left to do the job in my own way. I was a fool to take any notice of you before. But then I've always had an absurdly soft heart and I've realized before to-day that it would be my undoing before very long. Now about the affair last night. What quantity of silk was taken?"

Peter Oxtan consulted a report that lay on his desk in front of him.

"Three rolls of Suchow silk," he announced. "It's value was in the neighborhood of fifteen pounds."

"I suppose the rolls would have been fairly substantial?"

"No, not very. One man could have taken them out without much trouble. Of course, he might have been noticed walking through the streets."

"He wouldn't," snapped the Superintendent. "He'd have a car parked nice and handy. How did he get in?"

Peter Oxtan shook his head. "I suppose in the same way that Nolescue's murderer got in," he said weakly. "The watchman says there's no sign of anything being out of order."

"It was probably the same man," decided Beck, dismally. "Now if I'd had my men on duty as I'd arranged . . ."

"Yes, I know," protested Oxtan, "but can't we do something about it? It's not the silk I'm worrying about; it's my staff. I can't think they're concerned in all this."

"They're not," said Beck decisively. "I believe that their disappearance has some connection, though; particularly that of Miss Varley. As for Slater, I don't know what to think. You may be interested to know that round about midnight last night he phoned the Yard and left a message for me. That message has been worrying me for hours. From what I gathered he must have seen someone in the store and went after the fellow. He said something about being trussed up for his pains but managed apparently, to free himself. Then he informed the desk sergeant that he was following up a clue and that when he found anything he would let me know."

Peter Oxtan's face visibly brightened.

"Then it's not so bad after all. He's a smart young fellow, Slater. It would be something of a feather in his cap if he pulled it off under the noses of Scotland Yard. What would you say about that, Superintendent?"

The Superintendent grimaced. He felt that Oxtan was now laughing at him and such conduct was unforgivable.

"I may as well tell you, Mr. Oxtan, that I asked Slater to keep an eye on the place as often as he could. That was because, at your request, I had no men on duty. I like young Slater. He's a good type of kid, but all the same I'm worried about him. If he'd only told me what the clue was he was following, I'd be feeling a whole heap happier at this moment. You see, Mr. Oxtan, the amateur detective can do incalculable harm to a case of this kind unless he's very, very careful. He might get himself into serious trouble, too. My own view is that we're dealing with a gang of highly dangerous fanatics who want to get hold of some information by way of the Suchow silk you have in this store. They are that type of fanatic that stop at nothing to get what they want. We've had one murder already, and I don't mind admitting that I'm uneasy. However, I can't see what more we can do at the moment, but whether you like it or not, Mr. Oxtan, my men are now on duty in and around the store. They won't be in anyone's way. They're good fellows who know their respective jobs. Two of them will remain behind here tonight when the store closes. You need not worry about them; they will be as unobtrusive as shadows. There will be others outside the store. I'm doing this purely as a precautionary measure. I don't anticipate that there will be any further break-ins. I don't imagine that any other members of your staff need fear abduction. My only regret is that it's rather like closing the stable door after the horse has wandered away. I'm going back to the Yard. If Slater turns up here, let me know immediately. And you might deal gently with him, remembering that I'm responsible for his absence this morning."

Peter Oxtan passed a hand across his eyes and nodded.

When Beck returned to his office he was surprised to hear that Professor Karmen was waiting to see him and he hurried to his room.

The Professor was not alone. He was accompanied by a tall, gaunt-looking Chinaman.

"Ah, good morning, Mr. Beck, allow me to introduce an old friend of mine, Professor Kan Fu who has just arrived from China."

The Chinese professor bowed elegantly and smiled, displaying a set of perfect teeth.

"And what can I do for the two professors?" questioned the Superintendent with a smile.

Professor Karmen answered, "You remember, Superintendent, our little talk the other day about the Five Eyes of Medichus. Well, Professor Kan Fu is the head of the temple sect who are the rightful owners of the jewel, and it has come to the professor's knowledge that powerful counter-influences are at work in London at this very moment in a desperate effort to obtain possession of the secret."

"He tells me that the head of the organization at present operating—and the one without doubt responsible for the murder of Nolescue—is none other than the great bandit Sen Yat Soh, whose name alone in certain parts of China is sufficient to strike terror into the hearts of his opponents. He tells me also that Nolescue was employed by the Golden Eagle Tong, rivals of Sen Yat Soh, and that having investigated at first hand the assassination of Lao Ti, the silk weaver of Suchow, he is convinced that on a certain roll of Suchow silk, which was consigned recently to London, the secret has been woven in the form of a trade-mark to escape detection."

Professor Kan Fu nodded his head in agreement as his friend finished his narrative.

"And what am I expected to do about it, Professor?" asked Beck, helplessly.

"It's quite the most amazing tangle I've ever encountered."

Professor Karmen had little idea what he ought to suggest. He had been confident that, having substantiated their early theory concerning the death of Nilescoe, the Superintendent would put his official machinery into motion to secure the arrest of Sen Yat

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Soh and his gang. "I thought it might not be so difficult now that we are certain," he suggested, lamely.

The Superintendent laughed. "It wouldn't be difficult if we knew what we were about. All I can tell you is that a large quantity of Suchow silk was stolen last night from Oxtan's store and, at the moment, we haven't an inkling who stole it and where it might be."

"But this is terrible," wailed Professor Kan Fu, in quite delightful English. "Already Sen Yat Soh must have found the answer."

"It would be a great help if I knew where to find this mysterious gentleman," suggested Beck, mildly.

The two professors looked at one another anxiously.

"That's just what we don't know," Professor Karmen told him. "We thought that Scotland Yard . . ."

"Could find a needle in a haystack," supplied the Superintendent. "According to my information," he went on, opening a folder and taking from it a foolscap document, "no Chinese alien of that name is known to us. All I can suggest is that either he is registered under another name or else he came to London uninvited. You appreciate my difficulty, gentlemen?"

Professor Karmen certainly appreciated it. Until Sen Yat Soh was given an address he must remain the elusive personality that he was throughout the Far East. Neither was it comforting to Professor Kan Fu. His friend, Professor Karmen, had given him to understand that Scotland Yard could assuredly have put their fingers on the fellow immediately they knew who they were looking for.

"If it will be of any help to you," Beck suggested, "I can arrange for both of you to inspect whatever stock of Suchow silk Oxtan may still have, and of course, I'll get our alien officers on the hunt immediately, but they're not going to thank me for doing that, believe me."

And with that the two professors took their departure.  
(TO BE CONTINUED)

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## Sixth Troop Scouts and Cubs Foregather

Enjoy Hike Thursday Night. . . . So do the Mosquitoes who Join Them.

Report of meeting on June 17. The Scouts and Cubs of the 6th Troop and Pack joined together in an evening hike. Scouter Lacy with a group of Cubs and Scouts set a trail for us to follow. While we waited for them to get a lead we played a game of French tag.

This trail was easy to follow until we got half way, then the trail mysteriously disappeared.

But seeing that the Scribe knew where to go we found the place. We tried to steal up to them but the whistle sounded and spoiled the fun.

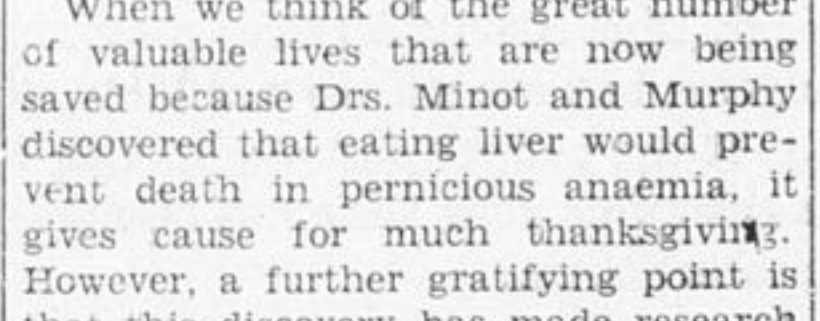
We were going to have the going up ceremony but a few were missing so we decided to have it after we ate. Scouter Lacy and yours truly went to hunt for them and found them. Then we went to work on the hot dogs with the mosquitoes helping us. But we did not think much of their help because they ate the wrong "dogs."

The Scouts formed a horseshoe and the Cubs a circle. Going up ceremony. Five Cubs came into the Scouts. They are John News-ham, John Tonkin, Ronald Taylor, George Smith and Ross Macintosh.

After this we started for home. Scouter Fisher said we had a "bitey" time and I think we will agree with him, and we also had a "bitey night" says I.

Akela Wheeler said that his own mother wouldn't know him. If you see any of our troop or pack notice the crop of lumps they have.

—Troop Scribe.



Jas. W. Barton, M.D., Toronto

**A Healthy Active Liver Prevents Intestinal and Other Upsets**  
When we think of the great number of valuable lives that are now being saved because Drs. Minot and Murphy discovered that eating liver would prevent death in pernicious anaemia, it gives cause for much thanksgiving. However, a further gratifying point is that this discovery has made research workers give further study to the effects of liver and liver extract and they have found that in other conditions than pernicious anaemia, liver or liver extract is most effective.

Of course the liver is an important if not the most important organ in the body anyway and is rightly named the "king of organs." As mentioned before,

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And now research physicians, stimulated by the results in pernicious anaemia, are using liver for other ailments. Dr. E. Hammerschlag, in The Art of Medicine, analyses the various effects of liver in the treatment of different ailments.

"One of the principal factors (as mentioned above) is the way the liver can remove poisons from the blood or destroy poisons taken in by the mouth in food, drugs or other substances. But the liver also stores the various important substances found in the stomach and intestines." This is most essential to the health and comfort of the individual as these substances, thus stored, make the individual less sensitive or less allergic to certain foods which otherwise would cause distress if not actual poisoning.

This would explain why some individuals by using liver extract are able to keep free or greatly lessen the severity of attacks of asthma, hay fever and various intestinal disturbances.

This means then that if you keep your liver in good condition by not overeating and by breathing and bending exercises, thus stimulating the circulation of the blood in the liver, it will not only do all the regular jobs mentioned above, but will prevent "biliousness," intestinal upsets, attacks of seasickness, and perhaps attacks of hay fever and asthma also.

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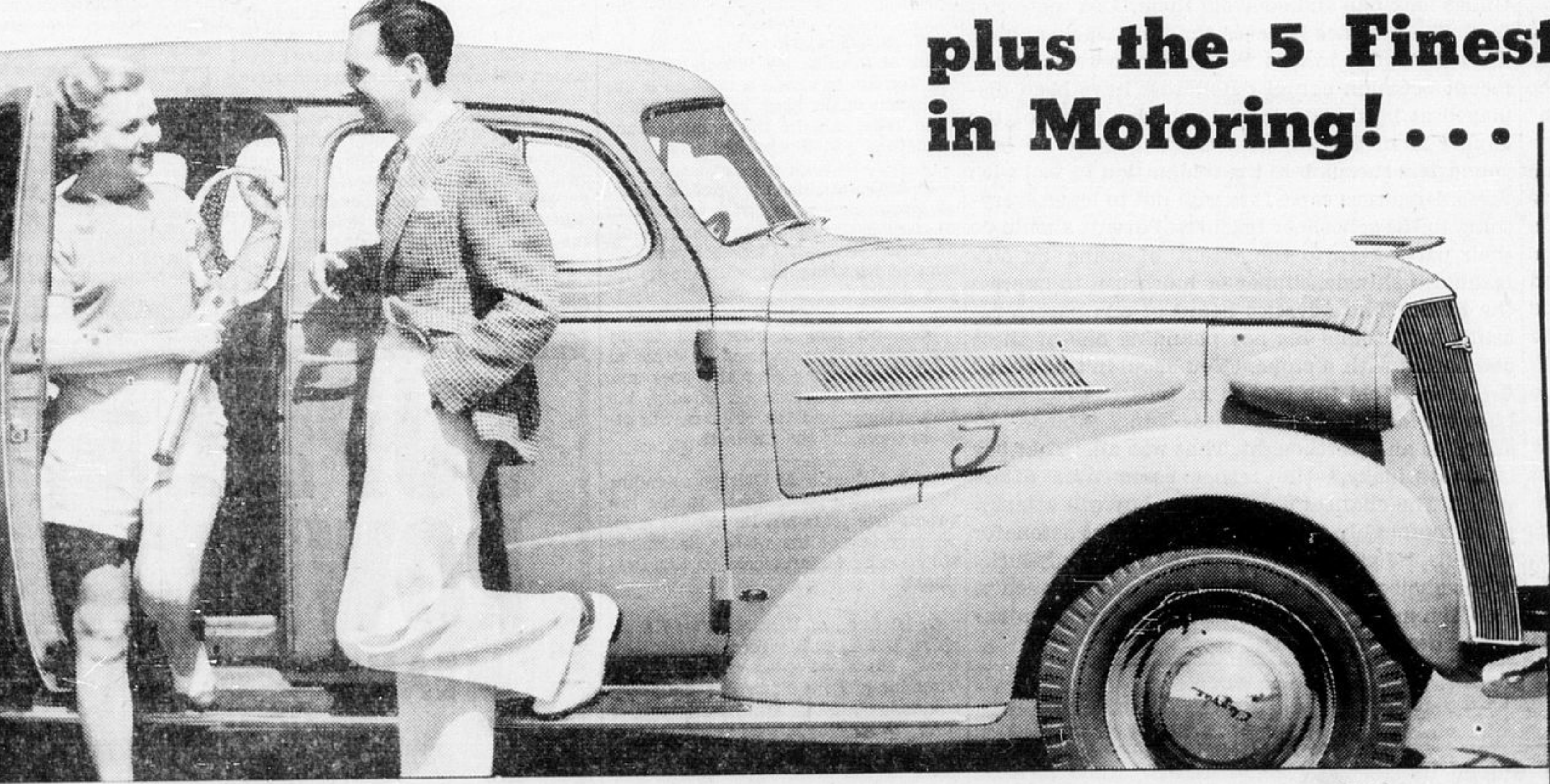
## Man and Woman Arrested for Police at Magog, Que.

Timmins police have apprehended Mrs. Enid Knowlton and Harold Holendbeck, both of Magog, Quebec. The arrest followed information from Montreal police that both people were wanted for deserting their respective families.

Chief of Police Paul made the arrest, and the couple are being held until the arrival of Montreal police who will escort them back for trial.

Toronto Telegram:—Man is funny. When he prospers, he attributes it to his business ability; when financial reverses come, he blames conditions.

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