

THE SILK ENIGMA

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"ZORA, THE INVISIBLE,"

"DEATH IN THE STALLS," &c.

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CHAPTER XXVI TRIUMPH

Two days later Superintendent Beck sat in his room at The Yard humming a gay tune. He had just returned from a conference with the Assistant Commissioner and that gentleman had expressed regret that he had ever doubted the Superintendent's word. He appreciated now that he had read Beck's final report on the case, the killing of Nikola Nolescue had been no ordinary killing; appreciated, too, that the Superintendent's seemingly fantastic theory had been moderately right after all, which just goes to show, as he had told his subordinate officer, that crime detection follows no hard and fast rule after all.

Of course, as he had explained to Beck, there was some cleaning up to be done. Sen Yat Soh had been captured by the Tonbridge police when they had thrown a cordon around the house and he had willingly admitted that his search for the Suchow silk had been directed towards discovering the secret of the Five Eyes of Medichus. His regret that he had been unsuccessful was tempered somewhat by the knowledge that, so far, no one else had discovered it either. He had proved, too, that he himself, while the mainpring behind the Tong organization, had had no hand in the murder of Nolescue. He had confessed that Wu Ti, one of his minions, had been guilty of that crime. As Sen Yat Soh expressed himself, Wu Ti was a blunderer. He admitted that Wu Ti was acting under his instructions, but Wu Ti would never be brought to the bar of English justice. During the raid on The Beeches the Chinese killer, realizing that the game was up, had obligingly jumped from the roof in his terror and they found his body on the gravel at the rear of the house. Ling Foo, too, was dead, but the Home Office had decided that his death had been what might be legally termed an accident and Philip Slater was likely to be exonerated at the Coroner's inquiry at Tonbridge. The police certainly would offer no evidence against him. But what the Home Office did propose to do was to arraign Sen Yat Soh before a magistrates on a charge of abduction and also with being an undesirable alien, so that after serving whatever sentence the courts might impose upon him he would be forthwith deported. The Home Secretary had made a few caustic comments anent the ease with which some undesirable aliens could land in Britain under false passports, and recommended that a stricter surveillance should be kept so that repetition of this sort of thing might be avoided.

But there was a further point that still intrigued the Superintendent's mind and that was the secret of the silk. If the theory that had been evolved by Professor Karmen and himself—that the Suchow silk weaver had actually committed his secret of the whereabouts of the famous jewel to the silk he had been weaving—was an accurate one, he felt that only the disclosure of that silk could vindicate him no matter how pleasant the Assistant Commissioner had been. So far every inch of silk in the possession of Oxtons had been subjected to the closest scrutiny by Professor Karmen and his friend Professor Kan Fu, as also had been the stolen rolls found at The Beeches. None of the silk disclosed any marks other than the regulation ones. Both the professors had been disappointed at this result and yet both were confident that that particular roll of Suchow silk had been purchased by Peter Oxtan's buyers.

To Beck the puzzle was a bewildering as ever and though he had promised to give a full-dress review of the case for the benefit of interested parties in Peter Oxtan's private office that night, he felt that it must necessarily be incomplete unless he could prove that his theory had been the right one. There was no more relieved man that day in the whole of London than Peter Oxtan himself. On hearing from Beck that Phyllis Varley and Philip Slater were both safe and that the hunt by Scotland Yard was now over, he had been curious to know the details. To that end he had invited Beck, with the permission of the Assistant Commissioner, to visit everyone interested in the case at his office at nine o'clock that night. He had willingly agreed to his two employees who had both played a conspicuous part in the affair, being granted two weeks leave of absence, but he had also hinted to Beck that, in all fairness, he would like them to be present.

That night when Superintendent Beck and Inspector Graves arrived at Oxtan's, the store did not wear so forlorn a look as it had done previously. Lights were burning here and there and Peter Oxtan's private office wore a gay look. A number of comfortable easy chairs had been moved in and there was hot coffee, whisky, and even bottled beer for those who preferred it as accompaniments to the varied plates of dainty sandwiches.

Beck found in addition to Oxtan, Phyllis Varley and Slater, that Professor Karmen and his friend Professor Kan Fu were also installed.

Phyllis and Philip looked little the worse for their nerve-racking experience at the hands of the Chinaman, Sen Yat Soh. In fact, Beck noted that the girl had a pleasant flush on both cheeks.

Beck looked around the assembled company and smiled.

"We're one short at the moment," said Peter Oxtan. "I've asked Miss Lennard to come along, too. Miss Varley felt sure she would be interested."

SECRET OF THE FIVE EYES

"Of course she will," conceded the Superintendent. "She's a very plucky woman."

"From what she told me," added Inspector Graves blushing for probably the first time in his life, "she must certainly have been through it. I admire that woman."

Beck looked across at his colleague sharply and deliberately winked at Peter Oxtan.

Miss Lennard came bustling in, shepherd by the doorkeeper who was on duty.

"I'm so sorry I'm late," she smiled. "You will forgive me, won't you?" she added, turning her smiling face on the Inspector.

"Of course we will, Miss Lennard," Peter Oxtan told her, "and now perhaps the Superintendent will tell his story. I'm sure we're all rather in the dark about this unfortunate affair."

They listened long and intently to the Superintendent, who refreshed his memory repeatedly from the sheaf of official notes he had brought along with him.

When he had finished there was a moment of silence. Suddenly Phyllis turned to Peter Oxtan.

"I've just thought of something," she announced. "I wonder if Mr. Oxtan would excuse me for a moment while I go down to the store."

"Of course," agreed Oxtan, perplexed. Phyllis hurried from the room and returned a few minutes later with a small brown-paper parcel. Her face was flushed and her eyes were bright.

"I want to explain," she said, as she unwrapped her package, "and I hope Mr. Oxtan will forgive me. Four days ago when the last consignment of Suchow silk came in I was attracted by one of the rolls. I liked the colour and I wanted some for myself. I am perfectly aware that it is a rule of the firm that any employee wanting to purchase anything for her own use must obtain permission from her immediate superior, but that is usually after the store has closed to the public. In this case I'm afraid that if I waited there was just a chance that all the silk on that particular roll would have been sold. So in a slack moment I cut myself a length from it. It was just then that I encountered the Chinaman standing at my counter. I was so shocked—knowing my guilt that I bundled it in a piece of paper, stuffed it at the back of the shelf under the counter intending to see the manager about it later. Unfortunately, as you all know, events tumbled over themselves so swiftly that it quite slipped my memory and it's only since hearing Mr. Beck that I thought—"

Professor Kan Fu leaned forward eagerly in his chair. "May I see that piece, Miss Varley?"

The girl unfolded the remainder of the wrapping and handed him a dress-length of Suchow silk.

The Chinese professor almost snatched it from her in his eagerness and, taking a magnifying glass from his pocket, ran the lens rapidly along one edge. Suddenly they saw the glass halt in its journey. They saw, too, the professor's body stiffen. Then he looked up, and when he spoke there was a tremor in his voice.

"Thank you, Miss Varley," he said, simply. "It is here. If you had not cut off this length we should never have found it because the remainder of this roll was stolen by our rivals."

Professor Karmen, eager as a delighted child took the silk and the lens from his contemporary's hand.

"He's right. Here it is. It looks like an ordinary trade-make, but it isn't. The Chinese characters are woven so minutely that they can only be deciphered by the aid of this powerful lens. I too, thank Miss Varley. It is the working of a bountiful Providence."

A murmur of satisfaction rippled through the company.

"I don't think Miss Varley need have fear of any consequences," laughed Peter Oxtan. "As you say, Professor Providence moves mysteriously."

Miss Lennard's eyes were bright. "And will you really be able to restore lost youth?" she asked.

Prof. Kan Fu smiled across at her. "It is a story in our mythology, dear lady," he told her. "It has never been tested. Some day perhaps, we may be tempted to do so, but for the present—"

"Youth is often a desirable estate," he went on, "but for myself I think there is something equally gracious and fascinating about age, about that leaven of maturity that only age can bring to us."

Miss Lennard nodded in agreement and looked up at Inspector Graves.

"Well," said Beck, "that's what I call fine. If you'll give me a few lines of a report on this, Professor, I'll pop in and explain it to the Assistant Commissioner first thing in the morning."

"I think this is an occasion for a toast," announced Peter Oxtan. "I'm sure the Superintendent's thirsty, too."

When the glasses had been filled—and Oxtan insisted that coffee was quite unsuited to the moment—he gave the toast: "To Miss Varley whose disobedience to rule has solved a problem for Scotland Yard."

Phyllis felt herself blushing at the company clinked glasses.

"And now one for Superintendent Beck—the man who refused to be shaken off the scent."

More toasts were drunk and the happy little party did not break up until close upon midnight.

"Coming along, Inspector?" asked Beck, touching his colleague's sleeve. "If you don't mind, sir, I think I'd better see Miss Lennard home to Battersea."

Miss Lennard blushed because the Inspector had not been able to conceal his own blushes.

Philip Slater had been somewhat overcome by the occasion. There were lots of things he wanted to say and there had been a particular toast of his own he had wanted to drink.

"You're coming my way, Phyllis?" he inquired, in a low voice.

The girl smiled at him and nodded. They left Oxtan's together and on her way through the quiet streets he told her a great many intimate things that have no right to be recorded here be-

cause they concern the happiness of two quite ordinary but nevertheless very likeable people.

On a doorstep in Moor Street, however, they kissed for the first time.

"I'm so glad it's happened like this," Phyllis told him, as he released her, "and if you must have an answer to that other question, I think I would like just a small, single diamond."

(The End)

If You Like Books

(By A. H.)

Why do you love life? Archibald Lampman gives his reasons in the poem "Amor Vitae," quoted:

I love the warm bare earth and all That works and dreams thereon: I love the seasons yet to fall: I love the ages gone.

The valleys with the sheeted grain, The river's smiling might, The merry wind, the rustling rain, The vastness of the night.

I love the morning's flame, the steep Where down the vapour clings, I love the clouds that float and sleep, And every bird that sings.

I love the purple shower that pours On far-off fields at even: I love the pine-wood dusk whose floors Are like the courts of heaven.

I love the heaven's azure span, The grass beneath my feet: I love the face of every man Whose thought is swift and sweet.

I let the wrangling world go by, And like an idle breath Its echoes and its phantoms fly: I care no jot for death.

Time like a Titan bright and strong Spreads one enchanted gleam: Each hour is but a fluted song, And life a lofty dream.

Globe and Mail:—One happy consequence to be expected from Mary Pickford's marriage is that she will not have time to write any more books in the near future.



That Body of Yours

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

Inflammation of the Mouth—Stomatitis

Inflammation of the mouth in adults is usually caused by indigestion, jagged teeth, poorly fitting dental plates, decayed teeth, food that is too hot or too highly seasoned and sometimes by an infection of some kind.

There is redness, swelling and tenderness of the gums, an increased amount of saliva (the mouth digestive juice), pain and bad taste in the mouth. This type lasts a few days, and clears up with ordinary boric solutions and soft mild foods.

However a more severe type of stomatitis is now recognized as a separate disease in itself, and is called Vincent's stomatitis.

Drs. G. W. Farrell and W. A. McNichols, a dentist and a physician respectively, in the Journal of the American Medical Association record results obtained in nearly 800 cases (704 in an institution and 90 in private practice).

"There was pain and swelling in the gums, and a bad or fetid odor to the breath. The gums were often covered with a gray substance, which, when removed, produced profuse bleeding. There was sometimes a slight temperature and also at times chills and fever. The saliva or mouth juice was thick andropy. The patient was listless and irritable and refused to eat at times. In a few cases there were severe complications such as bronchopneumonia and lung abscess; six of the cases died."

Drs. Farrell and McNichols outline the various methods of treatment—ultra-violet rays, chromic acid, acetic, iodine and chloroform, aniline dyes, tincture of benzoin and others—but the most brilliant and successful results were obtained by the use of hydrogen peroxide. This is explained by the fact that the Vincent's organisms (cannot live in the presence of oxygen or air).

The hydrogen peroxide was always used at least four times a day, full strength—used as a mouth wash and gargle.

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Authority Given to City of Sudbury to Issue Bonds

Holders of Sudbury debentures which are overdue have agreed to purchase a new issue of \$409,000, bearing 4½ per cent. interest, for a 15-year period, under a final settlement of the Northern Ontario city's debt problem announced Friday night by Premier Hepburn.

The new issue will replace debentures formerly hypothecated and held by the Royal Bank of Canada for a capital loan bearing from five to six per cent. interest.

The debentures will be callable at par, thereby allowing the municipality to reduce its obligations before final maturity, Mr. Hepburn said.

The settlement is the result of many conferences between the Department of Municipal Affairs, now headed by the premier; representatives of debenture holders' committees and Sudbury civic officials and bankers. It provides for full payment all debenture obligations matured to the present and for financing the city by way of bank credit on the basis of agreed-upon expenditures.

North Bay Nugget:—Indicative of the importance of traffic over the roadway leading from Callander to the Dionne Nursery, home of the famed quintuplets, is the deep tar and rock surface being laid opposite the nursery and which will dress the new route now being cut out.



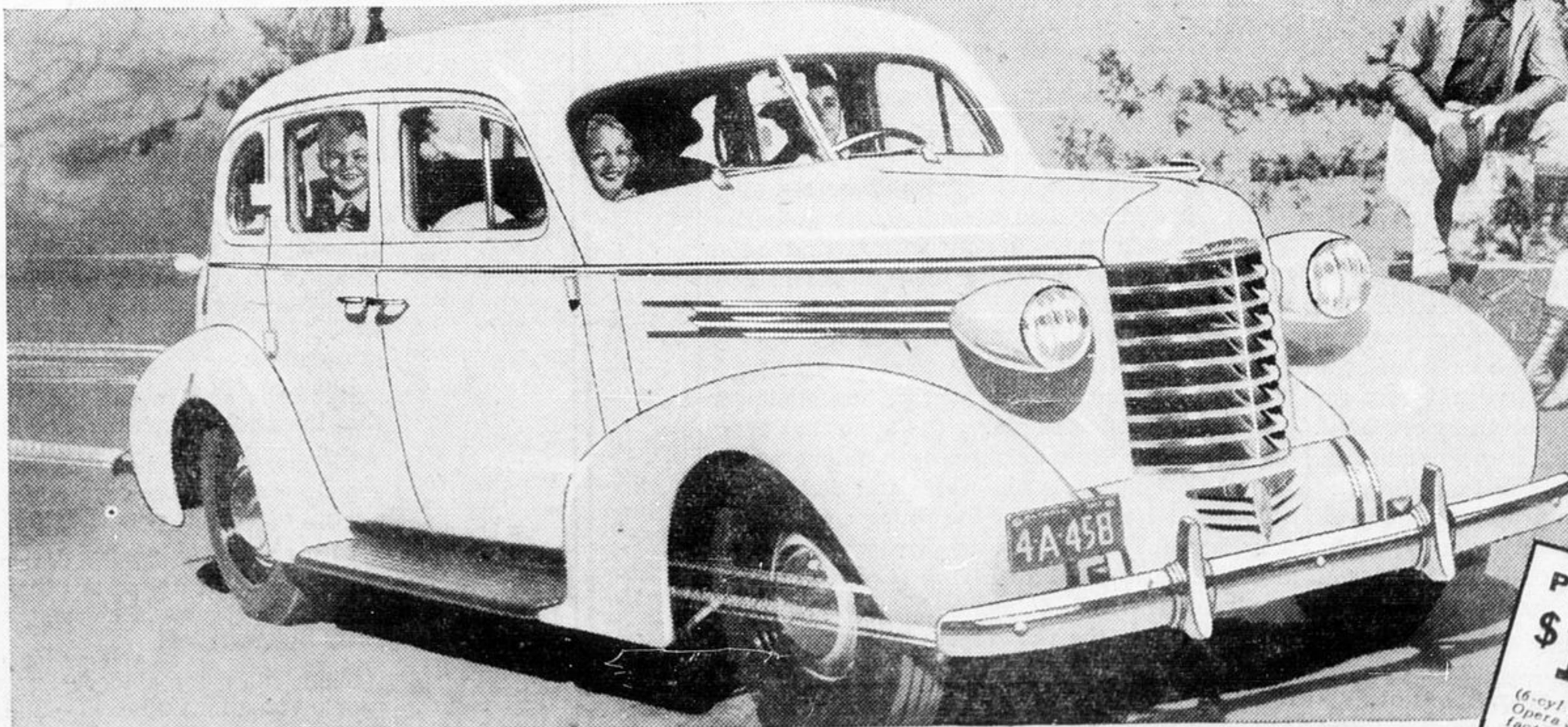
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Illustrated—Oldsmobile "6" four-door Sedan with Trunk.



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