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THE WITNESS OF THE SUN

BY

HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS

FRONTISPIECE

BY

C. LOTAVE

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1920

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Sunshine and Shadow in a Business Office	3
II.	A Valuable Autograph	16
III.	An Object Lesson With a Sequel	29
IV.	The Official Verdict	36
V.	A Pair of Hatpins	46
VI.	The District Attorney Takes a Hand	58
VII.	A Fresh Clue	76
VIII.	Enter the Gypsy	87
IX.	A Guilty Man or an Innocent Man with Imagination	93
X.	When Doctors Disagree	100
XI.	Jack Henley's Discovery and What Came of It	114
XII.	More Finger-Prints	125
XIII.	The Press and Dame Rumour	136

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CHAPTER		PAGE
XIV.	A Chance for Crosby	144
XV.	How It Looked to the Defence	154
XVI.	The Case for the Prosecution	185
XVII.	Dark Clouds — and a Streak of Silver Lining	210
XVIII.	The Case for the Defence	224
XIX.	Jack Henley as Unofficial Expert	236
XX.	The Witness of the Sun	246
XXI.	The Finger-Print Mystery	255
XXII.	A Curtain Hole and What It Revealed	267
XXIII.	The Airplane Gun	275
XXIV.	"Suicide Is Confession"	288
XXV.	A Matter of Fact	297

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The Witness of the Sun

Chapter I

Sunshine and Shadow in a Business Office

COMING events cast their shadows before—sometimes. But how much more frequently do events—significant events that is—seem to come unheralded, stealthily, like thieves in the night, or like the proverbial bolt from the blue.

Who, for example, could have foretold that tragedy lurked in the office of John Theobold that morning of July 8th, and was to claim her victim within the very hour? There was no hand's breadth of cloud in the sky outside, and there was no cloud-speck within the mental horizon of John Theobold himself as he entered his office at nine o'clock, in accordance with his unvarying custom. There was no trace of apprehension in his mind. Assuredly, no shadow of impending disaster fell across his path that serene summer morning.

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On the contrary, Theobold, who was always a man of buoyant spirits, appeared this morning to be in a mood even more than usually enthusiastic. He nodded and spoke cheerily to his private secretary, Frank Crosby, who occupied a desk at the right of the door.

"Harris and De Lage will be here at nine-fifteen. Show them in at once, and let no one else in while they are here."

He turned to his stenographer, Miss Cynthia Collins, a tall, slender, and exceedingly pretty girl who occupied a desk at the left.

"I will see you for a moment as soon as I am settled," he said.

Then he stepped briskly to a door at the other side of the room, and a moment later called out: "Hello, Jack; come here a moment please," as he disappeared into the private office.

Jack Henley, the person addressed, was just at that age when one is too old to be called a boy and too young to be called a man. To be explicit, he was but a few months past fourteen years, but he was grown pretty well toward the stature of a man—taller, indeed, than either Crosby or Mr. Theobold, the latter of whom was built along the lines of what might be described as liberality of longitude rather than of latitude.

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Jack Henley's face had the open frankness of boyhood combined with a certain keenness that came, doubtless, partly of heredity and partly of experience in a metropolitan business office. It was the type of clean-cut face—rather thin in contour, sharply chiselled, with straight nose, firm chin, and clear blue eye—that is regarded by some students of ethnology as typically American.

Other students of equal authority might cavil at such a characterization, however, and could find abundant support for their contention in a glance at the face of the man who had summoned Jack to his office. For John Theobold would have claimed himself as a "typical American," had the point been raised, and could have brought forward in support of his claim the fact that seven generations of his ancestors had lived in New England and New York; yet Theobold's face, like his entire figure, was sharply contrasted in character from that of the young man whom he had selected as his confidential office boy.

Not only was Theobold short of body and large of girth, but his head and face were apparently built on the same plan.

His was the broad, rather low, type of skull, matched by full, rounded cheeks, a rather coarse mouth, and a thick bulbous nose that is not in-

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frequently associated with business acumen and capacity for what has come to be airily spoken of as high finance.

It could be a very unpleasant face if its owner chanced to be out of sorts. It could take on an aspect of utter inscrutability if he were listening to a dubious project that he had been asked to capitalize; it could become fox-like in alertness, despite its contour, when he sought to drive a hard bargain—at which, it may be added, he seldom failed; and, on the other hand, it could beam with seeming benevolence and to-all-the-world friendliness, as it did this morning, on occasions when events had so shaped themselves that to John Theobold all the world seemed pleasing.

There was every reason why he should be in this holiday mood to-day, for within the coming half hour he expected to complete a transaction involving a project that he had financed and nursed for the best part of a year, which at first had seemed visionary and dubious, but which now gave full assurance of brilliant success. If arrangements made the afternoon before were carried through, as he had every reason to anticipate, he would be richer by a half million dollars before he was an hour older. Indeed, nothing more was now re-

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quired than the signing of two or three names to a document lying in his safe, and the thing would be done.

In effect, with a stroke of his pen, he could transform the document in question from a nickel's worth of typewriting to three quarters of a million dollars' worth of contract; and two thirds of said three quarter million would be his.

Under such circumstances, who would not be cheerful? Who would not say a gracious word to his secretary, give a pleasant smile to his stenographer, and call out cheerily to the youth who served him as office boy?

For how could any one know, any more than John Theobold knew this morning, that the fates which seemed to have dealt him a full hand of trumps had in reality determined to declare the game a misdeal when the hand seemed fairly won, and to claim as penalty no less a stake than a human life?

Even in our day of science it is as true as ever that "Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate." And we may thank our stars that it is so, for why should the evils of an unmaterialized future rob us of the joyous realities of the present—even though that future be as imminent and as insecurely posed as the sword of Damocles, waiting

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only a single move of the minute hand of the clock?

Such thoughts as these, however, had no place in the mind of John Theobold that morning. His thoughts were indeed concerned at the instant with the hands of the clock, but in no tragic or symbolical fashion. He had merely noted as he entered his private office that the hands of the clock on the wall beyond his desk indicated seventeen minutes after nine.

There was no need even to glance at his watch to see if the clock was wrong; for when had he been seventeen minutes late in coming to his office? His car came to the door with absolute punctuality at 8:45. At that hour the avenue was never crowded. If a cross-street was torn up and impassable, it was the business of his chauffeur to know it and to avoid that street. There might be a leeway of two or conceivably three minutes, accounted for by unsuspected blockades; but even that would be rare, and a delay of seventeen minutes would be without precedent.

Therefore the clock was wrong.

On another occasion such a discovery might have sufficed to throw Theobold into a fit of rage.

"A clock in my office seventeen minutes out of time?" he would have shouted. "Why, I won't

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tolerate for a minute having anything seventeen minutes out of plumb in this office."

And there would have been for an hour or two thereafter a sense of insecurity in the office that would have put the nerves of private secretary and confidential office boy under rather painful tension. It would not greatly have affected the nerves of the confidential stenographer, however, that young lady knowing herself to be indispensable, and feeling quite able to cope with bad temper of any and all comers, including the head of the firm.

On this morning, however, a little thing like a clock out of time could not for a moment disturb the equanimity of John Theobold.

To be sure, his eagle eye could not fail to detect the discrepancy at the very first glance (though he probably had overlooked it for a number of days before), but whereas it was a thing to be corrected, it certainly was nothing at which a master of high finance, who is by way of turning a half-million-dollar trick, would be disposed to cavil.

So the head of the firm of Theobold & Co. was still all smiles as he settled into his chair, threw open the cover to his desk, wiped the perspiration from his face in leisurely fashion, and turning to the tall youth who stood expectantly at his elbow, remarked quite casually:

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"It's a blame sight better to be ahead of time than behind it, Jack. But suppose you keep that clock neither ahead nor behind but just *on* time. I might go to catch a train by it sometime, and lose seventeen minutes. And seventeen minutes of my time are sometimes valuable. You understand that, I think?"

"Yes, sir; of course. I'll set the clock right away, and see if I can't regulate it."

"No; don't bother about it now. I am expecting an important man at any minute along with Doctor Harris. I don't want to be disturbed. I want you to run on an errand."

He stepped toward the safe that stood just behind his desk. Jack Henley was ahead of him in an instant and swung open the heavy door of the safe.

"Good boy, Jack. Always on the job."

The boy looked at once pleased and surprised. He had often enough opened the safe for Mr. Theobold, but he could not recall that he had ever before been commended for so doing. Assuredly "the boss" was in unusual mood this morning.

Theobold fumbled among the papers in one of the pigeon-holes and selected two or three documents covered with diagrams. He slipped these into a long envelope and, himself sealing the envelope, handed it to the boy.

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"Take that over and hand it to Señor Cortez," he said; "or, no; hold on. He won't be there yet. These greasers are slow-coaches in the morning. Put that in your pocket, and run up to Mrs. Theobold at the house. She wants to see you at ten o'clock about some errand or other. On the way back you can go to Cortez's office. I fancy he will be there by the time you get back. If he isn't, just write his name on the envelope and slip it under the door. Cortez doesn't seem to find it necessary to make an early start, like you and me and the other young fellows."

He grinned at his implied joke, and Jack grinned responsively; the point being that Cortez was not much more than half Theobold's age.

The financier made a further comment or two that to Jack seemed of not altogether obvious application, but to which he paid no particular attention, as the remarks seemed rather by way of soliloquy.

After the boy left the office, the stout, florid-faced man stood for a few moments at the open window, and as he looked out on the varied architectural panorama his face assumed an expression in which good humour was perhaps tinged with sensuality, and he mused aloud: "Maybe I wouldn't go to business quite so early

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either, if I had the same inducement to linger at home that Cortez has. However—one of these days—they all have their price."

He walked back to his desk and began fumbling the morning mail. Several letters passed under his hand with automatic precision, a pencil check on each indicated for his secretary the nature of the desired answer. But his mind seemed to linger on another subject, for he muttered: "They come high, but we must have them. If one must pay, one must," even as he appeared to scrutinize a letter that said nothing about money, but only asked the use of his name on some philanthropic committee.

Then he touched an electric button, and a moment later Miss Collins appeared at the door. He still seemed to scrutinize the letter in his hand as he said:

"I'll take you to lunch with me to-day if you don't mind, Miss Collins. I can save time by telling you about some of these letters there."

Miss Collins gave him a quizzical look, and bit her lip to keep from smiling.

"Very well," she said.

As she returned to her desk, she glanced across at the secretary.

"Frank certainly looks pretty cross now," she

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mused, "but it isn't a patch on the way he'll look when he sees me going out to lunch with the boss."

Then the smile left her lips, and she began to realize that after all she herself did not look forward to the lunch hour with any great satisfaction. But cart ropes and wild horses could not have dragged an admission to that effect from her—at least not when she was within earshot of Frank Crosby.

Crosby himself, a tall slender young man with clean-cut face and sparkling eyes, arose a moment later and came over to her desk.

"See here, Cynthia," he said, "did the old man ask you to go to lunch with him again?"

"He wants to talk over some letters and business matters."

"Business matters! A whole lot *business* has to do with it. You ought to be ashamed to say such a thing. And you ought to know better than to be seen going to lunch with a man like Theobold. You know his reputation."

"Never mind that. I know how to take care of myself, too. I wouldn't have worked up from a ten-dollar job to where I am if I didn't. See here, Frank Crosby, you might as well understand right now that I am not looking for you to tell me what I can do and what I can't. While I

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am holding down a job like this I must put up with one master, but I won't tolerate two; and you'd better understand that when I marry you—if I ever do—it won't be with the idea of changing masters but of giving up masters altogether."

Crosby's face flushed and his voice rose stridently.

"That's all right. But if you don't stop letting Theobold——"

At that instant the office door opened, and two men entered unannounced, with the air of being expected. Crosby turned toward them confusedly, and shook hands with them in turn, addressing one as Doctor Harris and the other as Captain De Lage.

"Come right in. Mr Theobold is looking for you," he said, leading the way to the private office.

Then he resumed his seat at his own desk, and bent angrily over his work in silence.

Miss Collins, in the meantime, hit the keys of her typewriter with needless emphasis. Once or twice she paused and looked up, as if about to speak. But she seemingly thought better of it, and maintained what might be termed a voiceful silence.

Jack Henley glanced wistfully from one to another as if he cogitated the advisability of essay-

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ing the rôle of peacemaker. But the face of the secretary did not suggest that the time was propitious; so Jack said nothing, and a moody silence, broken only by the spiteful clatter of the typewriter, reigned in the outer section of John Theobold's private office.

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CHAPTER II

A Valuable Autograph

AS THEOBOLD arose to greet the guests, his face wore the justly celebrated leather-mask look of inscrutability.

Far be it from a great magnate to show that he had more than a passing interest in a person—even a captain of the legions of France—who had merely come for the purpose of paying half a million dollars for a signature—or, to be quite accurate, to make possible such payment by his government.

Such a transaction might seem important to a mere inventor, like Maximilian Harris, Ph. D., or a mere captain of artillery invalided from the trenches just before the signing of the Armistice, and detached for the moment for diplomatic service; but to a great financier—it was a bagatelle.

Theobold's manner expressed all of this, and more. He shook the hand of the captain with well-tempered cordiality, and waved the inventor to a chair with an air intended to express well-bred condescension. Then he stood with his thumbs

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in his waistcoat armholes, regarding the visitors with a look in which just a shade of dubiousness as to the next move to be made tended to break through the mask.

Theobold knew very well the value of an impressive pause, whether one is about to address two men or two thousand.

The man addressed as Doctor Harris perhaps scarcely looked the part of the remarkable inventive genius he was credited with being. He was rather below middle height, very slender, with high cheek bones and sunken cheeks; a pleasing, thin-lipped mouth that seemed always on the verge of smiling; large, luminous gray-blue eyes that would have given him the aspect of a dreamer but for the rather startling effect of the mass of wavy hair pompadoured above the high, narrow forehead. The distinctly pleasing *ensemble* suggested a man of meditative frame of mind, imbued, however, with a sense of nervous energy that might readily make his dreams come true. And this, it would appear, was precisely what he had done in the present instance; for it was an invention of his own which Theobold had financed during its experimental stage, and which a representative of the French Government had now come to America to purchase.

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The official intermediary of this representative, on whom Theobold now focussed his glance and whom he addressed when he finally saw fit to speak, was a short, pudgy man, like a reduced model of the magnate himself as to figure, but with a face that left not a moment's doubt as to his nationality. It was long odds that Captain Garibaldi De Lage prided himself on his resemblance to Marshal Foch; and it was at least even money that he felt certain that chance alone, rather than merit, had determined that the man he resembled had risen to supreme command while he had reached only a captaincy.

Nevertheless, he felt himself now in the presence of an intellectual superior; and in any event, he was here for a diplomatic purpose, so he sat impassive, meeting the financier's eye expectantly. Presently Theobold cleared his throat and spoke:

"Captain De Lage, I want you to say to the representative of your government that Doctor Harris and I are practically making you a present of the Instantaneous Range-Finder. We have devoted years of time and thousands of dollars of good money to the development of this apparatus, which will revolutionize warfare. Imagine, sir, the importance of an instrument that enables you to locate the exact distance of an enemy to the

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yard, at a single glance; a machine that not only measures but registers the distance, so that a boy can read it, and the poorest gunner can aim his cannon with absolute accuracy.

"*Oui, Monsieur,*" assented the Captain. "I have seen it with my own eyes. It is *magnifique*. But, Monsieur, we are paying——"

Theobold disregarded the interruption.

"It will revolutionize warfare, I tell you, or go a long way toward making war impossible. Think of being able to locate the exact distance of a trench when only a single gun has been fired! Think of being able to locate instantly the distance of a submarine that comes to the surface for a moment or shows only its periscope! Yes, and think of even being able to locate the distance of an airplane, like the one that will be flying over here in half an hour! You can measure the distance of trenches and ships with your old apparatus, if you have time enough and space enough in which to work it. But you must sight from different places, compute your angles, make calculations! Here is a machine that you hold in your hand, that makes the calculation for you. You know how it was when you had taken one of the German trenches. You could not keep it because the enemy knew the exact range and could blow the

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entire trench and everything in it into atoms long before you could get the exact range of the enemy's gun——"

"It is true, Monsieur, I have seen it. Once there at Verdun——"

"Well, you won't see it any more, after you men are equipped with the instantaneous range-finder. In the next war you will locate the enemy's batteries in the wink of an eye. And that isn't all: You will get the range of their airships, too; and you can put their entire fleet of submarines out of commission! Every merchant ship should carry a small cannon, and one of our range-finders, and you can drop an explosive bomb right beside the periscope the minute it shows. Doctor"—Theobold turned to the inventor, who was shifting a bit uneasily in his chair, evidently wishing the monologue might come to an end, and the business of signing papers be substituted, but who was much too diplomatic to say so—"Doctor, you will show the Captain what the range-finder can do when that fool bomb-dropping airplane flies over this morning, won't you?"

"I have seen what it can do, Monsieur. I have seen it again and again. I am well satisfy. We have stood on the buildings of monsieur the Doctor's laboratory and have measured everything

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you can see for miles around, and I had the measurements verified from the map. I am satisfy. It is a large sum, but France is generous; it is her pleasure to reward genius. We will pay——"

"Pay? Why, man alive, we aren't asking any pay. We are making a present of the range-finder to the government of France because she was our associate in the World War. It's the other invention we are selling you, and we accept a paltry three quarter million merely as part compensation for our time. You will readily understand, sir, that the time of a man in my position is valuable. Why, sir, in an hour's time——"

"Exactly so, Monsieur, exactly so. We intrude, I feel that we intrude. But let us not take more of your time. Let us sign the documents. I will then take them to my chief. He is to meet us at Doctor Harris's office at 10 o'clock. Even now we shall have no more than time to reach him. I will leave the duplicate copy with Doctor Harris and he can return it to you. The other copy I will take to our ambassador at Washington, and within a week the money will be in your hands. But we must be at Doctor Harris's office to meet my chief at 10 o'clock. Shall we not sign the papers at once?"

The force of this argument appealed to the

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magnate. He glanced at the clock and—forgetting that it was ahead of time—noted that it lacked but a quarter of ten. He stepped briskly to the safe, which was still standing open, and returned with two official-looking documents. These he laid on the table for the inventor and the military expert.

"Here we are," he said, lapsing into business-like curtness. "We went all over it last time, so there is nothing to do now but put down our John Hancocks. Go ahead, Captain. Shall I send for a notary?"

"No, no, this must all be done very secretly. We can trust no one. Even now there are spies everywhere. But the word of a captain in the French Army is as good as a note of the Bank of France. See! There is my name on the paper. The money is already yours."

"I'll just have my office boy witness it, to make it legal, along with the Doctor here. He'll know nothing about what's in it," said Theobold, touching a bell.

In half a minute the signature of Doctor Harris and that of Theobold's were added, and after Jack had signed his name the Captain had placed the documents in his pocket.

"Now we must say *au revoir*, Monsieur. We must not be late."

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Theobold glanced again at the clock, and now he remembered. "Oh, you have lots of time," he said. "My car is at the door and will take you over in a jiffy. It's only about two miles, and there isn't much traffic if you go down the Bowery and over the Williamsburg Bridge. See here!"

Stepping to the window, he beckoned the Captain to his side. "We used to be able to see the doctor's laboratory—or the building it is in—from this window, until they put up that skyscraper between us just across Broadway there. It needed a telescope, of course, but on a clear day the doctor and I could almost shake hands—through a telescope. It is something less than three miles by the cyclometer, and as I said it isn't much over two as the crow flies. But a few months ago they put up that skyscraper that has it on us by three or four stories; and now we can't see each other until the doc invents his X-ray telescope. When are you going to get at that, Doc? An X-ray telescope would be worth at least a million, wouldn't it, Captain?"

The magnate's good humour had reached such a point that he was now waxing facetious. As the documents were actually signed, he had no longer need to wear his business face. He was effervescing like a schoolboy who has won his first prize, for he

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felt that he had the long end of the bargain. Notwithstanding his grandiloquent words, Theobold had no genuine belief that either of the inventions would revolutionize warfare, or indeed come anywhere near it. He knew that range-finders have long existed that serve an admirable purpose in ordinary warfare. What he knew of submarines did not lead him to suppose that even their periscopes are usually visible until after they have discharged their torpedoes. And he had imagination enough to realize that even if the instantaneous range-finder could take and record the location of an airplane at any given moment, the airplane, travelling a mile a minute, would be at a quite different range before a gun could be sighted.

Then, quite incidentally, he knew very well that this range-finder would do none of the things claimed for it, but could only be used by a trained hand in connection with an electric device. The Captain, as it happened, was equally well informed in the matter, so, after all, his speech was neither here nor there. The other device—the smoke-consumer and sound-silencer—was what they were actually selling, and what the French Government was willing to buy. But there were reasons why the financier did not want that fact recognized in the legal document.

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The main point was that the thing had been arranged quite to his satisfaction, in such terms that no court could fathom the real significance of the transaction—and he had stood out successfully for three quarters of a million.

The promoter's face was still beaming as he accompanied his visitors to the door and told his secretary to escort them to the automobile and give directions to the chauffeur.

"Don't forget to take a glimpse at the flying lady with the range-finder," was his parting comment. "She must be leaving about now, and she'll be going over this part of town by the time you get to the laboratory."

Miss Collins was alone in the office when Theobold returned, Jack Henley having just started on the errands. The financier stopped a moment at her desk.

"Don't forget you are lunching with me at one," he said. "I turned rather a pretty trick this morning, and we can afford to have all we want to eat." His good humour was wont to express itself in a kind of heavy jocularity. "But now you had better go up on the roof and have a look at the bird lady. I see people are gathering on the roofs all about us. Tell the girls in the big office they may go if they want to. If you get

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back by ten, it will be time to take up the dictation."

As Captain De Lage and Doctor Harris drove away in Theobold's motor, their faces gave evidence of suppressed elation.

"Eet is one fine morning's work," remarked the Frenchman.

"Not bad," said Doctor Harris, laconically.

"Monsieur Theobold has made a good bargain for himself also."

"He always does. No one ever knew him to get the worst of a bargain—at least when he was bargaining with men. With women—well, that is different. That's his blind spot."

"Blind spot? But no; he has a good eye for women. Have I not seen the charming mademoiselle his stenographer?"

The Captain's eyes sparkled. He twirled his moustache as he continued:

"Did you notice her this morning, Monsieur, when we entered? She was as beautiful as a red rose. But she was very angry. And Monsieur Crosby, the secretary, his face was like a cloud of war. And he spoke Theobold's name just as we interrupted their quarrel."

"A mighty nice girl, Miss Collins. And Crosby is a mighty nice fellow. They're engaged, I take

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it, and Crosby is jealous, like every other lover. Miss Collins doesn't care a snap of her finger for Theobold, but of course she knows which side her bread is buttered on, and she has to be decent to him; and that makes Crosby mad. A bully chap, but with an ugly temper."

"And the lady cares for Crosby—I can see that. Ah, I envy him. And if I were in his place, I would teach Monsieur Theobold to mind his own affairs."

"That sounds all right. But it isn't so easy when a man is your boss, and handles the purse strings."

"Even so, there is a way, and I would find it. So will Crosby, I predict."

The inventor seemed to turn the matter over in his mind.

"I wouldn't be surprised, the way he looked this morning," he said, presently. "He sure did have a grouch on. But it's no affair of ours. We have other fish to fry."

"Quite true, Monsieur. It is no affair of ours—*malheureusement non*," he added, reflectively, with a sigh. "But I envy the secretary. Mademoiselle is—what you say—a *pomme, mais non*, a peach. For her I would cross swords with Monsieur Theobold *très voluntairement*—or with Monsieur Crosby either."

"Forget it, Captain; forget it. I tell you we

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have other fish to fry," said the inventor, with a trace of irritation in his voice, in contrast with its customary monotone of imperturbability.

"Feesh to fry? I do not comprehend. We have no feesh—Ah, yes, yes, now I understand. It is only your droll *langue Américaine*. Monsieur does not mean real feesh; he means only feesh *imaginaire*. I have lived in London, and the English language I know. But your language Américaine, I shall never learn eet. Eet is *très drôle*."

"Well, it's a droll world, Captain. But it seems to be wobbling our way this morning. We've got the old man lashed to the mast, and after we clean up on this deal, you can scuttle the ship if you want to, and rescue the fair Miss Collins and take her away on the yacht you'll be able to buy with your share of the pirate money."

The Captain regarded his companion with an expression that seemed to combine astonishment and despair. He shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and raised his hands in the characteristic gesture of deprecation.

"It is useless, Monsieur; it is useless," he murmured. "In one thousand years I shall never comprehend the language Américaine. But to be with the beautiful mademoiselle on a yacht—that I can understand. That would be *magnifique*."

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Chapter III

An Object Lesson with a Sequel

MISS Sylvia Lawson, the aviatrix, doing her part in the celebration in honour of the triumphant home-comers, had promised to give New Yorkers something really worth while in the way of an airplane exhibit.

She kept her promise. Acting under the auspices of the Aero Club of America, and with a special dispensation from the terrestrial powers, she flew over New York that July morning; circled about above half of the city; zigzagged from the Battery to Central Park and back again, going higher and higher until to the onlookers in the street and on the tops of the buildings the bird-like airplane seemed no bigger than a swallow; and she sent out a never-ending shower of messages in the form of tiny wooden arrows, packages of confetti, miniature torpedoes, and sundry printed slips so shaped that they fluttered and darted about in the air like myriads of butterflies as they gradually settled through the mile or

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so of space that separated the aspiring aviatrix from her audience.

Her chief "stunt," however, consisted in dropping imitation bombs that were timed to explode harmlessly but with much noise a few hundred feet above the housetops.

It is unlikely that Miss Sylvia herself was encumbered with any overweening sense of duty toward her fellow citizens in making this spectacular exhibit. She probably thought that it would be a jolly good lark to make such a flight in the eyes of a million or two of her townspeople and no doubt had an eye to the admirable advertising quality of the spectacle when properly interpreted in the vernacular of her press agent.

But whatever her anticipations, the exhibition had one result that she had not predicted—it landed her in jail that night, on a charge of manslaughter.

This suggests that the graphic lesson in bomb-dropping had certain realistic features that were not recorded in the original programme. Miss Sylvia had not intended to kill anybody. She had meant merely to show how easy it would be to kill a lot of people if she were the emissary of an invading army and the people were her enemies.

The missiles she launched had been selected with

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great care for their innocuousness, and if any one had told her that death might lurk in one of them, she would have thought it a joke.

"Gee-whiz!" she would probably have said. "What are you giving us? Tell that to the marines."

But then Miss Sylvia had probably never made a profound study of physics. Being an aviatrix, she must have given some thought to falling bodies; but chiefly, doubtless, with reference to the danger to craft and pilot, were they to fall, rather than to the hazards of the wayfarers on terra firma. She was very likely unaware that a falling body acquires speed and momentum at an alarming geometrical ratio, and that even a very small object dropped from the height of a mile or two will acquire the velocity and force of a rifle bullet by the time it reaches the earth's surface.

But if the aviatrix did not think of these things, there were those among her audience who did. For example, a young man with a blond complexion and a German accent who stood next to Miss Collins in the midst of a scattered company on the roof of the Schuyler Building, where she had gone to view the exhibit.

"I tell you it is downright dangerous," the man

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was saying, as along with the others he craned his neck, peering straight upward to the height where the airplane soared and circled. "Why, if she happens to lose a glove button or a hairpin, she might as well shoot at us with a pistol."

His companion laughed.

"Don't take it so seriously, Mr. Schwartz," she said. "There's a whole lot of space on the tops of these buildings and in the streets, and you could drop a good many hairpins without hitting anybody."

"I know you could. But that wouldn't make it any better for the one person it did hit. The hairpin would go through you just like one of those aërial darts they used over in Europe during the war. A fellow would never know what hit him. And if the littlest bolt or nut were to work loose and drop off the machine, I'll wager it would go through the roof of this building, even though it is made of reënforced concrete."

The girl shrugged her shoulders and assumed an aspect of mock gravity.

"All hands to the bomb-proof cellar! I didn't know I was going to war when I came up here to see the show. I'm glad our offices are two flights down. You don't suppose anything will drop through as far as we are, do you? Anyhow, I must

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beat a retreat, for there is some dictation due and if I'm not on hand there will be a worse explosion in the office than if a basketful of bombs came down from that airplane."

This remark seemingly brought the ideas of the young man down from aërial heights to mundane affairs, for he caught his companion by the sleeve as she started to go and detained her.

"Hold on a minute, Miss Collins. How about lunching with me to-day?"

"Not to-day. Got another date—with a man who isn't afraid of hairpins," she bantered, as she ran down the stairway.

A minute or so later the girl reëntered a door on the fifteenth floor bearing the legend "Theobold & Co." Its sole occupant at the moment was Frank Crosby who did not raise his eyes from the books at which he was working, but only waved his hand with irritating brusqueness in the direction of Theobold's office.

"He rang the bell for you five minutes ago," he muttered.

"Did he? I thought it wasn't quite time. I was up looking at the bird-machine drop bombs on us. That man from the office next door was trying to tell me that they would muss us up a whole lot if they hit us. He said that even if a hairpin

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dropped from up there in the clouds, it would kill a man."

"Hairpins may be compromising on occasion, but I never thought them dangerous. Here is one that the gypsy dropped when she was in here a little while ago."

The man had glanced up furtively as he indicated the hairpin, but turned instantly to his books, apparently absorbed in his work even as he spoke.

The girl turned quickly. She had taken up her notebook and pencil, and was starting for the door, but she stopped abruptly, and her voice was keyed a trifle higher as she said:

"The gypsy! Was she here again?"

"Surest thing you know. She was closeted with the boss for a quarter of an hour. Looked a bit excited when she came out, too. The boss came with her clear to the outer door. He seemed to be peeved about something when he came back, so you had better mind your p's and q's this morning."

"Huh! I don't need any advice about that; certainly not from you, Frank Crosby."

The girl's face flushed as she snapped out the words in a tone of defiance. Yet the wistfulness of her eyes belied her manner. She paused a moment,

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and seemed on the point of saying something more; then suddenly turned and opened the door marked "No Admission."

Glancing back over her shoulder she tossed her head contemptuously and passed through the doorway. The man had been watching her intently though he had only partly raised his head. His face was very pale, emphasizing, by contrast, the blackness of his eyes.

An instant later the girl re-appeared a transformed figure, her face blanched, her eyes staring, her hands extended in horror, the notebook and pencil clashing to the floor.

"Frank," she gasped. "Frank! Come here quick! He's been killed!"

The secretary was on his feet in an instant, and close beside the girl, with his arm instinctively about her, staring with her into the private office where John Theobold, senior member of the firm of Theobold & Co., lay flat on his face, his head against the wall beneath the open window, his arms outstretched, one pallid hand resting in a pool of blood. A glance at the figure told the story. It needed no expert, no test of pulse or breathing, to certify that John Theobold was dead.

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Chapter IV

The Official Verdict

BUT of course the experts were summoned in all haste. With various gradations of haste they appeared—an entire troupe of them.

The officious, bustling ambulance surgeon, most arrogant of all uniformed beings, arrived almost simultaneously with the quiet, unostentatious family physician and a policeman. A coroner's physician, a detective, and an inspector of police appeared a little later.

Meantime a bevy of girls and men from the neighbouring offices were grouped about the door, with scared, questioning faces, whispering or mumbling inquiries in subdued tones.

The family physician, seeing at a glance that nothing could be done, made way courteously for the ambulance surgeon, who knelt, ostentatiously, and pressed a stethoscope to the back of the fallen figure. He shrugged his shoulders casually, as if to indicate that mere death was nothing to get excited about for a man of his experience. He

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inspected the pool of blood by the man's hand and the stream that trickled out to it from beneath the body, with a glance at once critical and unconcerned. Then, as he arose, he nodded condescendingly to the nearest policeman.

"Your case, officer," he said. "Nothing for me to do here. So long." And with due pomp and ceremony he made his exit.

Meantime the family physician, who chanced to have earned a national reputation before the ambulance surgeon was born, had been standing quietly in the background, obviously studying the situation. Presently he turned to Miss Collins, the stenographer, who, thoroughly composed, was hovering on the outskirts of the official coterie.

"How did it happen?" he asked.

"Nobody knows. I came in to take dictation, and found him lying here just as you see him. Nobody had been with him this morning except Doctor Harris and Captain De Lage, who went away half an hour before, and a woman who left ten minutes or so ago. He went with her to the door. After that he was in here alone. He must have leaned out of the window to look at the airplane, and been struck by a bomb."

"A bomb?"

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"Well, anyhow, something that dropped from the airplane. There were little torpedoes and things falling on the roof up there, and they struck like bullets. A man told me that even a hairpin or a glove button dropped from way up there would kill any one. I don't see what else could have happened for there was no one here."

One of the policemen interrupted:

"Wasn't any one in the outer office?"

"No one but Mr. Theobold's private secretary, Mr. Crosby." She indicated the dark-haired young man. "Everyone else was up on the roof watching the flying machine."

The policeman, Finnigan by name, turned to the secretary:

"Do you mean to tell me you didn't see the guy that did the shooting?"

"The shooting?"

"Sure; the shooting. Don't you see the blood? And don't you see that hole in the back of his coat? Someone put a bullet through him. And who's to know who did it if not the only feller that was handy by? Come, come, me boy; out with it; what have you done with the gun?"

"My God, officer, you don't think I—you don't know what you are saying."

"I know what I'm saying, all right. And it's a

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close eye I'll keep on you until the Inspector gets here. He'll attend to your case."

"But, officer," broke in Miss Collins, in obvious alarm, "Mr. Theobold wasn't shot. He was hit by a bomb that came from that airplane."

"Air-nothing. What do you take me for? Do you suppose a cock-and-bull story like that will go down? Not with Finnigan. You may be just fooling, young lady, or you may be in cahoots with this man here, but you can't get away with that kind of a story. Our young friend here will tell what he knows or go to the jug. And the sooner he tells his story the better it will be for him."

At this moment the Inspector arrived, and with him came a plain-clothes man, who, as it presently transpired, was the big-gun detective of the precinct, Mel McFalcon by name; an athletically built man with steel-blue eyes that conveyed the impression of penetrating all he looked at with an X-ray type of scrutiny. The two had been watching the airplane exhibit from the top of the police station over in 31st Street when the murder call had been turned in.

The Inspector glanced casually about the room. His eyes rested on the prostrate body for a fraction of a second, and he queried: "What you got,

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Finnigan?" The Inspector was a man of few words.

"A case of sunstroke, according to our young friend here." He leered disagreeably and tapped Crosby on the shoulder. "This guy was in the outside office, but didn't see no one go in or out. Didn't hear no shots. All the same here lies our old friend with a bullet hole through him, dead as a door nail. Never knew a sunstroke to happen just like that before, did you, Inspector?"

"How do you know the shot didn't come through the window?"

"The young lady here says it did come through the window, but she claims it wasn't a shot. She has it doped out that the young woman in the flying machine dropped a bomb on our old friend."

Miss Collins interrupted.

"He must have been leaning out of the window. Everyone was looking at the airplane. You saw things dropping, didn't you?"

"By Jove!" broke in the detective, whose face hitherto had worn a somewhat bored expression. "This looks as if it might be interesting, after all. You remember what I was telling you, Inspector?"

He leaned over and examined critically a little hole in the dead man's coat, just over the left shoulder. Then he lifted the body partly and

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peered under the right side, where a larger hole showed, just below the lapel of the coat, from which blood was oozing.

"Went plumb through him, sure as shooting," was his comment.

He meditated a moment, then arose and leaned out of the window. Turning his head, he regarded his own shoulder critically.

"Guess that's about the way it happened, Inspector. Turned his head like this to the left, to watch the flying machine. That twisted his body a little; and the thing in dropping struck him in the shoulder, coming out through the right breast. He probably never knew what hit him. Just about an even dice whether he took a Brodie from the window or toppled back into the room here."

The Inspector nodded approvingly, and McFalcon rubbed his hands together with an air of satisfaction, as one who had again vindicated his reputation.

But the case was not to be settled so easily, for Finnigan also had a reputation to sustain, only second to that of McFalcon, and he had already committed himself to another line of reasoning. So he assumed a very fair imitation of a contemptuous sneer as he said:

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"Holy smoke! Do you fall for that kind of bunk!"

"Bunk nothing! That's what happened. And it's lucky that a lot of other guys didn't get theirs in the same way. A pretty kettle of fish, letting that skirt go up there and chuck things down on us. Might as well be at war and done with it."

The Inspector stepped to the telephone and called the police station.

"Hello! That you, Mike? Pinch that skirt that did stunts in the sky as soon as she lands . . . Never mind that. Just get her in the jug until I see her."

Thus it happened that Miss Sylvia Lawson spent that night in jail instead of celebrating her successful demonstration with a company of admiring friends as she had planned. However, she did not at the moment know the gravity of the charge against her, thinking that she had probably violated some city ordinance against making a noise on Tuesday, or what not; and she reflected philosophically that a record of a night in the station house would not lessen the theatrical effect of the story of her day's adventure.

Meanwhile, though overruled, Finnigan was apparently by no means convinced.

"McFalcon's usually right," he muttered. "But

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that looks mighty like a bullet hole to me, all the same."

He was scrutinizing every part of the room in search of a bullet hole. The missile had evidently gone clear through its victim, and must have lodged somewhere. But Finnigan could find no trace of it. He stood by his colours, however, and said aloud:

"My guess is that the fellow was standing by the window and looking out all right, and that someone shot him in the back. And I think I know who the someone is."

He gave a meaning glance in the direction of Crosby, who met his glance with a look that might have been interpreted as defiance or anger or bravado, though his face was very pale and his hands were clenched.

"Forget it, Finnigan," said the detective. "Don't you see that the hole in the man's back is way above that at the front? If any one shot him from behind while he was standing here, he would have to be a giant about twelve feet tall. Or do you think he was hanging from the ceiling by the lamp bracket?"

McFalcon was waxing sarcastic. He had a rather ugly temper, and he could brook no rivalry in his own field in the presence of his chief.

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"I guess you're off the track, Finnigan," said the Inspector with customary laconicism.

Finnigan made no direct reply. But snatches of muttered sentences that fell from his lips from time to time showed that he held to his opinion, despite adverse testimony. He might have no answer ready to meet McFalcon's objection to his theory, but it was a good theory none the less. Undoubtedly the bullet had travelled downward, striking Theobold well up toward the shoulder. Not an easy matter to explain, certainly, but mighty suspicious all the same.

It appeared, moreover, from Finnigan's muttered soliloquy, that he determined that no one should go in or out of the office without being carefully inspected. As he was left in charge at the door he had full opportunity to put his resolution into effect. But his search revealed nothing.

"A clever guy like that wouldn't leave a gun lying round. I suppose he had a pal to help him get away with it," was his mental comment.

So far as Finnigan was concerned, the mystery of the death of John Theobold was no mystery at all. Crosby had shot him. That was the long and the short of it. Just how he managed to shoot him from above, and just what he had done with the weapon—these were details for the Dis-

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trict Attorney to work out. A police officer's duty is finished when he points out the criminal.

But what was the use of pointing out the criminal, when the Inspector had ears only for that upstart of a detective, McFalcon? Not that Finnigan was jealous of the detective. Not a bit of it. He was only plain disgusted. Such, at least, was the policeman's own verdict, as delivered *sotto voce* to himself.

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CHAPTER V

A Pair of Hatpins

MEL MCFALCON was a typical representative of that ultra-modern school of detectives who owe their existence to the creator of Sherlock Holmes.

They are the men in real life who attempt to rival the detectives of fiction, by applying logical reasoning and a superficial knowledge of science in solving the mysteries that attach to substantially all crimes. But McFalcon, although assuredly not a literary man, had been a great reader, and he owed his reputation in considerable part to the fact that he had a somewhat wider knowledge of literature and science than his fellows—or perhaps it would be a more accurate phrasing to say that his ignorance of these subjects was somewhat less abysmal than theirs.

It was, in reality, his exceptional reading that led McFalcon to an instant decision in solving the mystery of Theobold's death. Only a short time

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before he had read a story by Frank R. Stockton that had made a strong appeal to his imagination. It was a story involving an incident in which a man far down in the depths of a diamond mine had been killed by a pin that fell from the surface and acquired such momentum that it drove directly through the man's body.

That story had flashed into McFalcon's mind the instant the suggestion had been made that Theobold's death had resulted from something dropped from the airplane.

McFalcon knew very little about physics, and could have only vague notions as to what momentum a body might acquire in falling from the machine; but he felt certain that any man who could write such a story as the one he had in mind was intelligent enough to make sure of his facts; so he confidently appropriated the information, carefully keeping quiet as to where he had gained it, and retailed it now in modified form for the edification of his associates.

"You know, Inspector, even a pin dropped away up there where the bird-lady was could go right through a man and kill him dead as a door nail. The momentum a falling body acquires is something terrible. And I reckon that this thing was bigger than a pin."

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He interrupted himself to inspect critically the aperture in the back of the dead man's coat.

"I reckon," he continued, "that this might have been a lead pencil or"—a brilliant idea striking him—"or a hatpin. Yes, by Jove! I'll bet that's just what it was—a hatpin."

"But a bird-lady wouldn't wear a hat, would she?" commented the Inspector, dubiously.

"She might not wear a hat, but she'd probably wear a veil and pin it on with a hatpin. Anyhow, I'll bet she had one concealed on her person somewhere, and that it dropped down in just the wrong place for our friend here."

As he spoke the detective was looking out of the window. He seemed to fix his gaze intently on something on the roof of the adjacent building several stories down.

"I think I'll slip down and see what I can find on that roof," he said, presently.

An hour or so later McFalcon had an interview with Miss Sylvia Lawson in the police station, at which it was divulged, after such measure of circumlocution as seemed to the detective in keeping with his quest, that the aviatrix in point of fact had used a hatpin to fasten on her cap; that she had purposely loosened the pin in order to remove the cap and wave it in answer to salutations

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as she came up over the crowds down by the battery; and that presumably the pin had thereafter been somewhat insecurely replaced, inasmuch as it had disappeared before the flight was finished.

At all events, she admitted that she had no recollection of finding the pin—in fact, had given it no thought when she removed her cap at the landing, and she had not the remotest notion as to where the pin might be now.

Whereat McFalcon enlightened her by producing the pin; or at all events a hatpin that he thrust forward with calm assurance, remarking coolly:

"Well, what do you say to this? Do you recognize it? Take your time before you answer, for remember that whatever you say may be used against you in court." McFalcon prided himself on being able to temper the stern winds of justice when they buffeted one of the weaker sex, quite after the manner of his fictional prototype.

But Miss Lawson wás quite accustomed to buffeting the winds of fortune, both physical and symbolical. She neither asked nor expected that either type of wind should be tempered. The mention of court did not disconcert her in the least, and the corrugated brows above the eagle eyes

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with which the detective peered into her face represented a sheer waste of energy. Meeting his gaze with an amused smile, she replied:

"It does look like mine, and I guess I'll claim it. Thank you for returning it. It looks like a lot of others, too, for it cost a nickel at the 10-cent store. Where did you find it?"

Such imperturbability nettled the detective. He was not accustomed to having his professional eye met with so unflinching a gaze, and his Socratic questionings with such flippant response. Still he felt that he must not be outdone in composure. So he assumed a manner of great dignity, and spoke with conscious deliberation:

"I found it on the roof of a building, where you dropped it; but between the time that you let it go and the time when it landed on the roof, it went through the body of a man and killed him."

But even that shot failed to produce the effect he was looking for. The aviatrix did indeed change expression for a fraction of a second, and her muscles just perceptibly tightened, then she laughed aloud.

"Good stuff," she said. "I'll hand that on to my press agent. It listens bully."

Such is the nervous organization that goes to the making of a champion aviatrix. Or such, at

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any rate, was the quality of fibre of this particular girl.

Not all the well-toned nerves are reserved for flying ladies, however. Some of them are apportioned to young ladies who act as stenographers to business men, who often have quite as much need of them as the most daring of aviators. And when nerves of this superior fibre were given out, it would appear that Miss Cynthia Collins had received her full share. No one could doubt that who looked into her steel-blue eyes, or noted the determined set of her very comely lips, or the angular even though graceful contour of her chin.

The girl's nerves had proved fully adequate to the occasion when she found her employer lying dead in his office, and in the subsequent interviews with the representatives of the law. And now it chanced that, not long after the nerves of the aviatrix had been tested by the detective, those of the stenographer were being subjected to a test no less severe, though of a quite different kind.

The testing process had begun when she read the account of the death of her employer in the evening papers. Naturally the papers had made the most of the event. Mr. Theobold was a man

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of some prominence, but even if he had been the most obscure citizen, the spectacular nature of his taking off would have appealed irresistibly to the censors of the columns of the press. To the metropolitan reporter nothing is sacred; and even the gravity of the event could not banish the feeling that a kind of malevolent humour attended a demise brought about, however inadvertently, with the aid of that traditional weapon of femininity, the hatpin.

One paper even had the audacity to print a veiled but fairly transparent allusion to the measure of poetic justice attending the exit by so romantic a channel of one whose gallantries were somewhat proverbial.

It was not the tone of these newspaper stories, however, that set Miss Collins's nerves on edge. It was the statement of fact with regard to the hatpin. The detective had not made known the result of his search on the roof to any one but his chief; and Miss Collins had had no inkling of it until she read the evening paper, at the very moment, as it chanced, when McFalcon was presenting his evidence at the official inquest in the inner office.

Then she called Jack Henley out into the hall.

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Once outside the door Miss Collins turned to the youth with an eager question.

"Jack, have you seen that thing in the evening paper about the hatpin?"

"Yes; but I don't take much stock in it. Do you?"

"That's what I want to talk to you about, Jack. I don't know just what to do. You've got a lot of sense, Jack. I want you to advise me."

She paused a moment; then hurried on:

"You see, I don't believe that hatpin was dropped by the airplane girl at all. I think it was mine. Don't you ever tell anybody, Jack, but I was standing in there by the window yesterday noon before we went to lunch. He called me in just as I was putting on my hat and—well, Jack—you know what I mean, he got kind of fresh, and I had a hatpin in my hand, and I threatened to scratch his face with it if he didn't keep away. Then all of a sudden he caught my wrist and gave it a twist, and the hatpin slipped from my fingers and fell out of the window."

The boy seemed to give the matter very serious attention.

"Golly!" he said, presently. "Then it must have been your hatpin they found."

"But listen, Jack. You know a hatpin *might*

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have done it. There's an interview here in the paper with a Columbia professor, who says it might."

"But if it's your hatpin, Miss Cynthia——"

"Yes, Jack, but the trouble is this. If that hatpin didn't cause the death of Mr. Theobold, then something else did. And if they don't find something else on the roof that might have been dropped from the airplane, they'll begin to look for other ways Mr. Theobold might have been killed, and then that horrid policeman, Finnigan, will begin talking again."

"That's so," said Jack, looking very grave. "And that would mean that Mr. Crosby would be under suspicion, wouldn't it?"

"Of course it would. Did you see how the policeman sneered when he asked how the shooting could have occurred in the private office without the only man who was in the adjoining office knowing about it?"

"Yes; and I wanted to hit him when I saw the way he looked at Mr. Crosby."

"Oh, Jack, so did I. I wanted to *kill* him. But I suppose he couldn't help feeling that way as long as he thought Mr. Theobold was shot. Of course, if a pistol had been shot in there, Frank must have heard it, with only that board partition

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between. And that proves that he wasn't shot, doesn't it?"

"Unless maybe the bullet came from outside somewhere."

"But, Jack, there isn't anywhere for it to come from, except from that airplane. It *must* have been something dropped from the airplane. If it wasn't the hatpin, it was something else. A hairpin or a shoe button would have done it, coming from 'way up there. Don't you think so?"

"Maybe so, Miss Cynthia. That's what that Columbia professor said that told about it in the paper."

"Well, then, it must have been *something* the girl dropped, and what difference does it make whether it was the hatpin or something else?"

Miss Collins was obviously arguing the case with herself. She was seemingly trying to prove to her own satisfaction that no real injustice would be done anybody if she kept silent about the hatpin. She lowered her voice instinctively as she said:

"Jack, let's not say a thing about it. No one need know."

But even as she made the suggestion, she glanced about her suspiciously as if with a sense of alarm. Her look suggested that in concealing this bit of information she felt herself in a way acces-

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sory to the crime—or accident, if accident it had been.

Jack's face did not reassure her.

"I am afraid we ought to tell, Miss Cynthia," he said. "Everything's bound to come out all right, but we ought to tell."

"Well, let me think about it a little first." She seemed on the verge of tears.

The boy was obviously distressed.

"Everything will be all right, Miss Cynthia. Don't you worry," he said, soothingly.

"Oh, Jack, I can't help worrying. And, Jack, please don't say anything about the hatpin."

"I won't say a word, Miss Cynthia. But you must tell, and Mr. Crosby must tell everything he knows. It's the only way. Everything will come out all right."

There is something beautiful about that elemental sense of the triumph of justice, that innate confidence that the truth is mighty and must prevail, which is the heritage of normal youth. But seemingly the words failed to carry conviction to Miss Collins, for the tone of her voice belied her words as she answered:

"I know it will, Jack. Oh, Jack, I *will* tell. But not just yet. And please, Jack, don't you say a word about it."

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"All right, Miss Cynthia. I won't say a word."

As the tall girl and the yet taller boy came back into the office, where the policemen had gathered, each glanced furtively about and masqueraded an air of nonchalance. The face of the boy was very grave. That of the girl was ghastly almost as the face of John Theobold himself who was lying there in the inner office with his muscles stiffening in death.

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CHAPTER VI

The District Attorney Takes a Hand

MISS CYNTHIA COLLINS was not the only person who read with exceptional interest the account in the evening papers of the alleged spectacular manner of John Theobold's death. The District Attorney of the City of New York was another interested reader. After he had finished the account, he smiled grimly, and sent for one of his assistants.

"Webster," he said, when his aid appeared, "have you read this tommyrot story of the killing of a man in an office building up near Herald Square by a hatpin dropped from that airplane?"

"Yes, I read it. Also we had a report on the thing from the Inspector."

"I suppose McFalcon was on the job?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. McFalcon has the finest moving-picture imagination on the whole force. I suppose it's better to have that kind of an imagina-

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tion than none at all, like most of the others, but there are limits. Suppose you take this case in charge, and run up there the first thing in the morning and find out something. Know anything about this man Theobold?"

"Only that he was a kind of promoter. One of the fellows that will furnish any amount of ocean if you will furnish just a few ships—and let him have the long end of the profits. Average type of man of that sort. Honest enough to keep out of Sing Sing, but without a very wide margin. A bit of a woman chaser."

"I see. The same old story. Probably had a few business associates on one hand or husbands of women friends on the other who wouldn't worry much if a hatpin or a bomb or something—or perhaps a bullet—did go through him. Well, see what you can make out of it."

Thus it happened that David Webster, credited with being the most logical-minded member of the District Attorney's staff, put in his appearance at the office of Theobold & Co. at an early hour the next morning, and began an investigation of the circumstances attending the death of the senior partner.

He began by getting the lay of the land. A public hallway leading to the elevators separated

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