



Copyright, 1927, by E. Phillips Oppenheim

INSTALMENT XXXX.

"A vein of weakness in this, I suppose," he began slowly, "of advancing age and ineptitude lately, Miss Brown, for the first time in my life, I have felt, I will not say the need of, but the desire of a confidante. Accidentally you know already more than any one else of the internal affairs here, except for our X.Y.O. friend at Scotland Yard and Nicholson at the War Office. Some of these affairs we are engaged upon may seem to you a little trivial, I will tell you the great object of all our work now and for the last week. We want to detach the respectables as far as possible from foreign influence.

"Last night's incident was only one of several. At every opportunity we are doing our best to discredit these fellows. There is nothing puts up the back of the workingman more than to have it proved to him that those who are supposed to be his leaders and friends are playing the fool in serious times, like Bretskopf last night. I hear, by the bye, that Bretskopf, or the leader of what they call the Action Committee, has offered secretly 10,000 pounds for distribution among the press to make as light as possible of last night's business.

"That won't make any difference?" Miss Brown asked anxiously. "I do," Dessiter assured her. "I suppose you succeed," Miss Brown asked — "supposing these envoys are discredited—do you think that the trouble will pass over?"

"I do," Dessiter assured her. "I suppose you succeed," Miss Brown asked — "supposing these envoys are discredited—do you think that the trouble will pass over?"

The SEVEN DIALS MYSTERY By Agatha Christie

A Detective Story with a Thrill in Every Chapter Wherein a Girl Helps to Trap an International Spy.

Commencing Soon in The Daily News

of Malakoff—how well she remembered it—Malakoff, stripped naked, the man, his cunning viciousness, his sinister malignity. There was the analysis of Bretskopf too—not pleasant reading. Some of it had been broadcast within the last few days—far-seeing preparations for what was to come.

There was the story of China—a closed chapter now—the story of the moment when the whole ferment of black fury and evil intent had been focused from that crime-drenched city in Russia upon England; stories of secret shipments of arms, of great stores of food brought in different capitals, shipped in different manners, to different warehouses, cases of inflammatory pamphlets to be translated copied and duplicated until they lay like poisonous but phantoms upon the land.

And behind all these revelations the figure of the man who had defied the secret services of the world and passed from capital to capital with an ever-increasing price upon his head, a man unrecognized among the great leaders of the cause for which he toiled, but a man whose name spelled terror to those who wielded their thunderbolts in the caverns of the underworld.

Miss Brown bought a newspaper and, notwithstanding the cold, sat down upon the edge of a moisture beaded seat while she read.

RAID IN NIGHT CLUB

Serge Malakoff, Bretskopf and Krassel Fined For Drinking With Women After Hours

Miss Brown, after her return to Whitehall, found the conference over and Dessiter himself absent. The pile of work by the side of her desk, however, had increased amazingly, and she started at once. With a keen sensation of pleasure she realized as she glanced through some of the letters to which she was to reply how completely she was trusted. At 1 o'clock Mergen appeared from somewhere in those mysterious premises beyond and brought her some luncheon upon a tray.

"Colonel Dessiter thought you probably wouldn't go out, madam," he said. "So we've done the best we could for you."

With an omelette, some cold meat, rolls and butter, some baked apples and half a bottle of claret, as compared with the bun and cup of coffee which Miss Brown had been contemplating, she found herself accepting the situation with equanimity.

"Do you know what time Colonel Dessiter is expected back?" she inquired.

"He was not able to say himself, madam," the man replied.

Miss Brown lunched moderately and with discretion, yet with a healthy appetite. When she had finished she recommended her work. She was disturbed by neither visitors nor telephone calls. Toward 5 o'clock Mergen brought her in some tea and a plate of hot toast, at neither of which she glanced. He lingered for a moment.

"If you will pardon the liberty, madam," he ventured, "your typewriter has been going since half-past one, and it is now 5 o'clock. Might I suggest that you have your tea over here by the fire and rest for a time?"

Miss Brown was suddenly aware that she was tired, physically weary, yet mentally stimulated by the continual reminders in her work of this amazing world into which she had plunged. She accepted Mergen's suggestion with a little gesture of relief, sipped her tea and munched her toast, curled up in an easy-chair near the fire. A pleasant and most insidious drowsiness possessed her. There was something which seemed like a mist before her eyes, a pleasant gliding away of the senses—rest.

She sat up with a start. She was conscious of the queerest, most unfamiliar sensation in the world, her heart was beating fast, the blood racing through her veins as though to some strange sort of music. A few feet away from her, in the darkened room, standing before the fire with his hands behind his back, was Dessiter.

"Heavens, have I been asleep?" Miss Brown exclaimed, terrified.

"It would appear so," was the noncommittal reply.

Again there was that surge of strange feeling. She was puzzled,

half comatose, half bewildered. "How long have you been here?" she asked, rising to her feet.

"Some five or ten minutes," "I am really very sorry," she confessed, "I worked without stopping all the afternoon, and I thought I'd have my tea by the fire. I never sleep in the daytime. I can't think what happened to me."

"In any case," he said, "you have done a very excellent day's work already. I have been looking through some of it. I congratulate you. I fail to find a single error. Your letters, too, express exactly what I intended to convey."

Miss Brown turned on the light and looked across at him gratefully. "It is very pleasant to hear you say so."

"As a matter of fact," he observed, making his way toward the inevitable cigarette box, "I can't think how I managed before you came. They used to send me up special young men from one of the departments, but none of my work was ever done so quickly or so well."

Miss Brown felt extraordinarily high-spirited. Apart from the joy of his praise, there was something else—a little singing still in the blood, a quivering of the senses for which she could not account. The wildest ideas found their furtive way into her mind.

She had had a dream—of course it had been a dream. She glanced up and looked half inquiringly across the room. Dessiter had resumed his place upon the hearthrug and their eyes met. His long, oval face seemed to gleam whiter than ever through the shadows, but his eyes had lost their steely expression. Suddenly he nodded thoughtfully as though in reply to Miss Brown's unspoken question.

"Yes, I did," he confessed. "I hope you're not angry."

POLITICIANS ENTER

A journalist idling about Downing Street in search of copy described the exodus of the various members of the Cabinet Council from No. 10 a few days later as the "half-terrified, half-stupefied exit of a flock of sheep with their dreaded yet revered canine protector at their heels." Certainly, though neither novelist nor journalist has ever presumed to attempt to disclose what may have taken place at a Cabinet Council, the events which immediately followed it clearly indicated the fact that it had been of a startling nature. Most of the little company made their hesitating way toward Westminster.

The Prime Minister, attended by a faithful subordinate, stepped into a taxicab and demanded to be driven to the Carlton. Safely unscathed in the smoking room, the former ordered a whisky and soda, filled his pipe and leaned back in his easy chair. The world would have loved to have heard

broadcast the first words of the Premier after the astounding events of the afternoon. Only the waiter who brought the whisky and soda and his companion, seated in the opposite easy chair, were privileged to hear them.

"Well, I'm damned!" His subordinate, himself a cabinet minister of high rank and unaddicted to the use of strong language, stretched himself out in his chair and looked helplessly up at the ceiling. His expression was still that of a man stricken dumb by the unexpected.

"What do you make of it all?" the Prime Minister demanded. His companion glanced round the room.

"At first I thought it was a bluff," he declared. "I am not sure that I don't think so now. In any case, it was the most outrageous attack upon a statesman of established reputation which I have ever heard from a young man attending his first Cabinet Council meeting."

The Prime Minister sighed. "Marabels has thrown a bomb-shell and no mistake. We are face to face with the worst crisis in history."

"His ultimatum is all very well," the other remarked, "but we still have our majority in the House of Commons."

"That isn't the point. Do you believe that we still have it in the country? Of course we have not, we're a well-meaning lot of guffers. Henry—that's what we've proved ourselves to be."

"What exactly are Marabels' demands?"

"The Prime Minister smoked furiously for a moment. "Demands such as have never before been made to any Prime Minister of an established government," he said, "a course of action as he may dictate."

"In other words, he is to be Prime Minister," the other remarked.

"Precisely, only he realizes the fact that there can be no general election just now. He wants to govern through me without it. I am to wear the sheep's head and he's to go to the roaring."

"When are you going to see him again?"

"At my house at midnight," the Prime Minister replied, with a grimace. "He insists upon it that no other minister is present. The only person he wants to bring with him is Dessiter, head of our new department at the Home Office, which, by the bye, was his idea."

At 11 o'clock that night Miss Brown was comfortably tucked up in bed, her curtains discreetly drawn, but her window a few inches open, the clothes which she had discarded neatly folded up on one chair, the clothes which she proposed to wear in the morning similarly arranged upon another. There were counted out ready for her bath in the morning six pennies on the corner of the mantelpiece, the kettle filled

standing by the side of the stove. Miss Brown was peacefully sleeping when she was awakened by the sound of a motorcar stopping outside, and the shrill summons of the electric bell. She sat up in bed, remembered her night dress—one of her recent purchases, which she had secretly considered immodestly transparent and décolleté—and sliding out of bed, hurried into a dressing-gown. She opened the door upon the chain and peered out. It was Mergen who stood there, his hat in his hand, his manner apologetic.

"Very sorry, Miss Brown," he announced, "but the Chief wants you at Whitehall at once. He wants you to go with him to a conference."

"You will have to give me ten minutes," Miss Brown decided calmly.

"That will do very nicely, miss," Miss Brown hurried back to her room, and in very little more than ten minutes she had prescribed what to do again and seated in the car. It was barely twenty minutes to 12 when she presented herself at headquarters. Dessiter was lounging in his chair by the fire; opposite him was a man whose appearance was vaguely familiar to her—a tall, sturdy man of fair complexion, clean-shaven, with features which seemed carved of granite.

(To Be Continued Monday)



THE TYPE OF BRITONS WHO BEAVE THE PERILS OF THE TRACKLESS AIR

The crew of the R-101, Britain's wonder airship photographed at Cardington, with their police-dog mascot "Tim." The fifth man from the left in the middle row is Mr. Johnston, navigating officer; next to him (sixth from left) is Mr. Scott, the officer in charge of test flights; next (seventh from left) is Flying Officer Irwin, Captain of the great airship.

Floral Dance and Drill, Division 6. Violin Solo, Billy Nelson, accompanied by Ruth Nelson, Division 3. Dance, Marybelle Stiles, Division 5. Recitation, Norma Archie, Division 5. Dance, "The Shoemaker's Dance," Division 4. Piano Duet, Beatrice and Helen McNaughton, Division 3. MacDonald's Farm, as interpreted by Division 2. Solo, "My Little Owl," Mrs. Kirkendall, accompanied by Myrna Fuller. The Rehearsal, from Burf's Christmas Carol, Division 1. "God Save Our King," the School.

BAPTISTS XMAS TREE

Large Gathering at Church Last Night For Interesting and Enjoyable Event

A large audience filled the auditorium of the Baptist Church last evening on the occasion of its annual Sunday School Christmas Tree and entertainment. The program was confined entirely to the scholars and the talent displayed was of the highest order. Santa arrived in due course and presented every scholar with a gift and a bag of candy. A feature was the presentation by W. Vaughan Davies of a gift to each of his junior choir members, who in turn, surprised him with a gift of a silver penknife to which he suitably replied. All present proclaimed the evening to be one of the most enjoyable affairs of its kind in a long while. Following was the program:

Grand selection Tom Johnston, Ken Green, Bud Green and Bishop Thibodeau. Recitation, Billy Smith. Violin Solo, Phyllis Hamblin. Vocal Duet, Bob and Dave Houston. Recitation, Amy Armstrong. Dialogue, Katharine Watson Class. Christmas Chorus, Primary Department. Recitation, Marlin Bussey. Recitation, Hazel Mastin. Pianoforte Solo, Russell Cameron. Recitation, Jean Krause. Exercise, Mrs. Thurber's Class. Recitation, Amy Armstrong. Violin Solo, Edith Johnston. Christmas Pantomime, Mrs. Hamblin's Class and Mrs. Liney's. Recitation, Jack Lindsay. Vocal Solo, Margaret Fossum, accompanied by Helen Hampton. Pianoforte Solo, Eileen Hamblin. Recitation, Bob Houston. Piano Solo, Helen Green. Recitation, Josephine Gay. Song, June Gilker.

BOOTH SCHOOL HOLDS CONCERT

Christmas Closing Exercises Took Place Thursday Afternoon

The closing exercises prior to the Christmas vacation took place Thursday afternoon at Booth Memorial School when the pupils assembled in the auditorium to enjoy a program to which each of the thirteen divisions contributed. Miss E. A. Mercer, principal presided. Accompanists were Miss E. Grassie, Miss E. A. Mercer and Miss Myrna Fuller. The details of the program are as follows:

"O Canada," the School. Carol, "The First Noel," the School. Action Song, Division 13. Dance, Hazel Smith, Division 13. "Jolly Old St. Nicholas," songs and dances, Divisions 12 and 10. Carol, "Good King Wenceslas," Senior Divisions. Action Song, "Heads and Heels," Division 7. Dance and Song, Division 11. Recitation, Ian Matheson, Division 8. Song, "Lullaby," Division 9. Dance, Jean Robertson, Division 9. Recitation, "The Boy Who Always Told the Truth," Beryl Birch, Division 8. "Carol of the Flowers," The Senior Divisions.

Embarassing Moments

