The SEVEN DIALS MYSTERY

By Agatha Christie

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INSTALMENT XXXVIII

(Continued)

"You're very like a dog," said Bundle. "I like dogs. They're so friendly and faithful and warm-hearted. I think that perhaps I could just bring myself to marry you, Bill—with a great effort, you know."

Bill's response to this was to relinquish his grasp of her and recoil violently. He looked at her with amazement in his eyes.

"Bundle—you don't mean it?"

"There's nothing for it," said Bundle. "I see I shall have to relapse into unconsciousness again."

"Bundle—darling" Bill caught her to him. He was trembling violently. "Bundle—do you really mean it—do you? You don't know how much I love you."

"Oh, Bill," said Bundle.

There is no need to describe in detail the conversation of the next ten minutes. It consisted mostly of repetitions.

"And do you really love me?" said Bill, incredulously, for the twentieth time as he at last released her.

"Yes—yes—yes. Now do let's be sensible. I've got a racking head still, and I've been nearly squeezed to death by you. I want to get the hang of things. Where are we and what's happened?"

For the first time, Bundle began to take stock of her surroundings. They were in the secret room, she noted, and the baize door was closed and presumably locked. They were prisoners, then!

Bundle's eyes came back to Bill. Quite oblivious of her question he was watching her with adoring eyes.

"Bill, darling," said Bundle. "pull yourself together. We've got to get out of here."

"Eh!" said Bill. "What? Oh, yes. That'll be all right. No difficulty about that."

"It's being in love makes you feel like that," said Bundle. "I feel rather the same myself. As though everything's easy and possible."

"So it is," said Bill. "Now that I know you care for me——"

"Stop it," said Bundle. "Once we begin again any serious conversation will be hopeless. Unless you pull yourself together and become sensible, I shall very likely change my mind."

"I shan't let you," said Bill. "You don't think that once having got you I'd be such a fool as to let you go, do you?"

"You would not coerce me against my will, I hope," said Bundle grandiloquently.

"Wouldn't I?" said Bill. "You just watch me do it, that's all."

The Russian Again

"You really are rather a darling, Bill. I was afraid you might be too meek, but I see there's going to be no danger of that. In another half hour you'd be ordering me about. Oh, dear, we're getting silly again. Now, look here, Bill, we've got to get out of here."

"I tell you that'll be quite all right. I shall——"

He broke off, obedient to a pressure from Bundle's hand. She was leaning forward, listening intently. Yes, she had not been mistaken. A step was crossing the outer room. The key was thrust into the lock and turned. Bundle held her breath. Was it Jimmy coming to rescue them—or was it some one else?

The door opened and the black-bearded Mr. Mosgorovsky stood on the threshold.

Immediately Bill took a step forward, standing in front of Bundle.

"Look here," he said. "I want a word with you privately."

The Russian did not reply for a minute or two. He stood stroking his long, silky, black beard and smiling quietly to himself.

"So," he said at last, "it is like that. Very well. The lady will be pleased to come with me."

"It's all right, Bundle," said Bill. "Leave it to me. You go with this chap. Nobody's going to hurt you. I know what I'm doing."

Bundle rose obediently. That note of authority in Bill's voice was new to her. He seemed absolutely sure of himself and confident of being able to deal with the situation. Bundle wondered vaguely what it was that Bill had—or thought he had—up his sleeve.

She passed out of the room in front of the Russian. He followed her, closing the door behind him and locking it.

"This way, please," he said.

He indicated the staircase and she mounted obediently to the floor above. Here she was directed to pass into a small, frowsy room, which she took to be Alfred's bedroom.

Mosgorovsky said: "You will wait here quietly, please. There must be no noise."

Then he went out, closing the door behind him and locking her in.

Bundle sat down on a chair. Her head was aching badly still and she felt incapable of sustained thought. Bill seemed to have the situation well in hand. Sooner or later, she supposed, some one would come and let her out.

An Emergency Meeting

The minutes passed. Bundle's watch stopped, but she judged that over an hour had passed since the Russian had brought her here. What was happening? What, indeed, had happened?

At last she heard footsteps on the stairs. It was Mosgorovsky once more. He spoke very formally to her.

"Lady Eileen Brent, you are wanted at an emergency meeting of the Seven Dials Society. Please follow me."

He led the way down the stairs and Bundle followed him. He opened the door of the secret chamber and Bundle passed in, catching her breath in surprise as she did so.

She was seeing for the second time what she had only had a glimpse of the first time through her peep-hole. The masked figures were sitting round the table. As she stood there, taken aback by the suddenness of it, Mosgorovsky slipped into his place, adjusting his clock mask as he did so.

But this time the chair at the head of the table was occupied. No. 7 was in his place.

Bundle's heart beat violently. She was standing at the foot of the table directly facing him and she stared and stared at the mocking piece of hanging stuff, with the clock dial on it, that hid his features.

He sat quite immovable and Bundle got an odd sensation of power radiating from him. His inactivity was not the inactivity of weakness—and she wished violently, almost hysterically, that he would speak—that he would make some sign, some gesture—not just sit there like a gigantic spider in the middle of its web waiting remorselessly for its prey.

She shivered and as she did so Mosgorovsky rose. His voice, smooth, silky, persuasive, seemed curiously far away.

"Lady Eileen, you have been present unasked at the secret councils of this society. It is therefore necessary that you should identify yourself with our aims and ambitions. The place 2 o'clock, you may notice, is vacant. It is that place that is offered to you."

Bundle gasped. The thing was like a fantastic nightmare. Was it possible that she, Bundle Brent, was being asked to join a murderous secret society? Had the same proposition been made to Bill, and had he refused indignantly?

"I can't do that," she said bluntly.

"Do not answer precipitately."

She fancied that Mosgorovsky, beneath his cloak mask, was smiling significantly into his beard.

"You do not as yet know, Lady Eileen, what it is you are refusing."

"I can make a pretty good guess," said Bundle.

"Can you?"

It was the voice of 7 o'clock. It awoke some vague chord of memory in Bundle's brain. Surely she knew that voice?

Very slowly No. 7 raised a hand to his head and fumbled with the fastening of the mask.

Bundle held her breath. At last—she was going to know.

The mask fell.

Bundle found herself looking into the expressionless, wooden face of Superintendent Battle.

(To Be Continued.)

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SERVICE OF CAPT. DONALD

Has Sailed Over One Million Miles On This Coast in C.N.R. Boats — Some Personal History

When the "Prince Rupert" warps into her berth at the Canadian National dock, Vancouver, on February 17, Captain Dan Donald, commodore of the Canadian National Steamship Services on the Pacific Coast, will chalk up a record mileage in the service of the company, says the current number of Canadian National Railways Magazine.

His personal log shows that since he joined the service, in 1910 he has guided ships of the company through approximately 1,150,000 miles of the tortuous waters known as the Inside Passage, and famous throughout the world as one of the most picturesque waterways known.

Despite the youthful appearance and alertness, which is apparent to many thousands who have been aboard the ships he has commanded, the Captain is a veteran sailor. Born in Greenock, Scotland, the home of hardy salts and daring clippermen, when the whitewinged sailing vessels resounded to sea chanties, Captain "Dan" started his nautical career aboard the full rigged clipper "Abercarne," a vessel that sailed to Australia in the wool trade.

It was a hard school but one in which the youngsters learned truly and well the art of handling sailing ships in all weathers. From this trade, to an equally ardous one came the young Scotsman, for next he sailed from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and during a voyage on "Celectial Burrel," a noted clipper of the port, he was, during a typhoon, wrecked on the island of Formosa, in the China Sea. Shipped homeward from Hong Kong to Yarmouth via Victoria, B.C., he dreading the long train journey, chose to remain on the Pacific Coast. Obtaining a mate's place aboard a tug, employed in the salmon packing industry, he gained his first knowledge of the inlets and bays of the 7,000-mile coast line of British Columbia. Later he served with the Union Steamship Co. on various boats and when, in 1910, the Grand Trunk Pacific organized a boat service between Vancouver and Prince Rupert, he shipped as first officer on "Prince Albert," following being master of the "Henriette," which carried stuctural steel for the bridgework on the railway between Prince Rupert and Jasper. Later he was master of the "Prince Albert," then the "Prince George" and for the last seven years has been on the bridge of the "Prince Rupert."

A total of 907 voyages is credited to Captain Dan Donald with ships that belong to the Canadian National Services. Through foggy winter weather, through dark nights, with high seas running between rocky walls, and in fair days, he has captained on the scenic seas many thousands of passengers who marvel at the seamanship which carries them through the archipelago of islands down narrow passages and by frowning heights that rise in sheer grandeur above the ships.

In 1913, after valiant efforts, Captain Donald, was instrumental in saving the crew and 33 passengers from a storm-tossed steamer in the Gulf of Georgia.

During the war years, the "Prince George" was taken over by the British Admiralty and, with Captain Donald at the helm, was so employed for some time. He wears a naval decoration for this service.

SCOTT'S EMULSION
A FOOD and TONIC
TAKE IT ALL WINTER

CITY COUNCIL DECIDES TO DELEGATE ON PEACE RIVER OUTLET.

(continued from page 1)

River outlet. Yet he honestly believed that, outside of the gesture, it was throwing money away to send a delegate. In the final analysis, engineers of the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific railways were bound to decide in favor of the outlet to Prince Rupert and he believed that the decision with respect to the outlet would be made not until after the next federal election.

Moral Affect

The strong point that Ald. Macdonald saw was the moral effect of sending a delegate upon the people of the Peace River.. If Prince Rupert failed to send a delegate the people of the Peace River might feel that they were not getting the support they were entitled to in advocating the outlet to this port.

Mayor Orme, speaking again, said that in a certain section of the city there were not enough water pipes to give domestic supply. The city was wondering where it was going to get the money to instal the pipes. Under the circumstances, he questioned the advisability of sending a delegate to Ottawa.

Ald. Pullen referred to the good results that had been obtained by the mayor when he was sent last month as a delegate to Victoria. Maybe, if a delegate were sent to Ottawa, he might get similar encouragement. Ald. Pullen thought that Ald. Collart was the man who should be sent. He had the work at his finger tips, was energetic and had the advantage of being able to talk French so would be able to meet the French-Canadian members with their own language.

Ald. Linzey thought that Ald. Macdonald had clinched the matter when he referred to the moral effect upon the people of the Peace River. Probably this would be the last blow that would have to be struck in the fight. Though he was not generally in favor of sending delegates, he did think it would be wise in this case and that the city should strain a point in order to do so.

The Peace River outlet was the life and soul of Prince Rupert, Ald. Black said, and, while he did not much favor sending of delegates, he thought nothing should be done to prejudice Prince Rupert's case in this matter.

There was further discussion before the question of sending a delegate was put and carried. It was decided to limit the expenses of the delegate to $500.

YOUTH WILL BE SERVED

Only One Beard in Cabinet of Old France Now

PARIS, Feb. 18.—The young New Year's coming to Paris finds youth being served, in more ways than one..

The new year sees only one beard in the new Tardieu cabinet and that's a pretty fair symptom of a new state of things. The beard belongs to Henri Cheron, minister of finance, indicating youth ultilizes the caution of age.

Seen from an airplane Paris hasn't changed her broad general outline, but her face has been lifted and she is massaging her wrinkles; she needs a little more color.

Modern art has hit the stores. New fronts of geometrical angularity stick out like lighthouses. Green, blue and violet lights illuminate shops and even the opera. The old bourgeoisie is afraid "the traditional beauty of old Paris" will be destroyed. There has even been legislation to protect historic spots from the ambition of those who want modern quarters.

Yet the thirsty traveler can rest as usual on cafe's sidewalk "terrasses." Many old landmark places are gone, replaced by nice, new shiny ones with higher-priced beer and brisk, prosperous looking waiters. Soon the shabby friendly garcon who liked to gossip with his customers and always said "Merci, Monsieur," will get his place in a museum.

"English spoken," no longer attracts attention on store windows. Foreign shoppers take for granted they can find in any store some one with enough polyglot to take their money. Even the cops are learning English.

Visitors who like their native hits—well-seasoned by a couple of years delay—can see them here. The theatre, in fact, now runs largely to English, Russian, German and American shows and about half the French actors and three-fourths of the singers are out of work. Baron de Rothschild has given Paris the best-equipped playhouse in the world but modernism hasn't gone so far as to use printed tickets with seat checks. Illegibly pencilled flimsy still is used and the three solemn judge-like persons in evening clothes still sit in a rostrum and assign seats to those who pay as they enter without knowing where they can sit.

Strangely, although there are more cars, there is less noise. Buses are getting pneumatic tires and the police have forbidden horns after 1 o'clock in the morning. Paris, being a 9 o'clock town, most people have had half their sleep by that time and don't mind the silence.

But the real youthfulness of France is in other directions—in government, business and social life.

Andre Tardieu, the new premier, although 52, is a young man, young in manner and method. He took on more younger men than ever before ran the government. He cut a lot of red tape and shocked his political ancestors by deciding taxes could be lowered and yet more money could be spent on things that would increase prosperity, such as better roads, modern ports and more telephone and electricity.

Looking ahead the young premier decided Paris must have room to grow and he got behind the plan to build a boulevard out west from the edge of town along a new fast suburban express line so people could live in the air.

Youth is in business both because of the after-war awakening and the heavy toll of death. A large proportion of the men who would be 40 to 45 today were killed so their places have been taken by those who were too young to be sol[illegible]

Woman, likewise, came out of war with a taste for work [illegible] women are everywhere, cro[illegible] men in the universities and [illegible] in business. As the women ha[illegible] business traditions of their own [illegible] are exuberant in their new [illegible] dom, they accept new ideas [illegible] idly.

Coupled with all this is the [illegible] of modern art. There are [illegible] pictures than ever before. [illegible] force of quantity overwhelms [illegible] ditional art so that Paris, and [illegible] ually France, is ever seeking [illegible] "new" in all things.

Yet the Eiffel Tower still [illegible] and the opera sings on and [illegible] Louvre is full of old pictures [illegible] Paris is Paris and French con[illegible] to be spoken.

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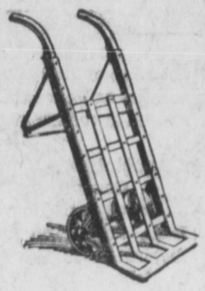

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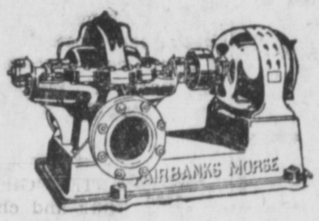

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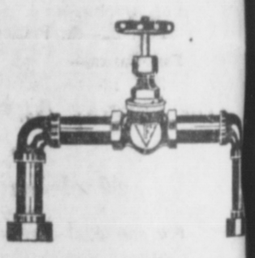

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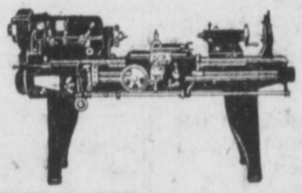

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