

The Chronicles of Addington Peace

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON

Co-Author with A. Conan Doyle of 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' etc.
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THE TERROR IN THE SNOW

(Continued.)

It was a quiet, moonless night, lit by the stars that blinked in their thousand constellations. Though the snow lay deep, the air struck mildly. Indeed, if it were freezing, it could not have been by more than two degrees. Upon the edge of the distant cliffs robes of confusing mist curled in vells as thin as moonlight; but in the foreground the raw walks and aisles of ancient laurel showed clearly upon the white carpet. About the central avenue of firs which carved the gardens into the darkness lay impenetrable pools of shadow. As I waited, the silence was startled by a bell. It rang the four quarters in a tinkling measure, followed by eleven musical strokes. I knew that the sound must come from the little church that lay to my right; but, though I leant from my window, the angle of the wing in which I was, hid the building from me.

I feel that the story which I have now to tell may well turn me into an object for ridicule. I can only describe that which I saw; as for the conclusions at which I arrived there are many more practical people in the world than myself who would have judged no differently. At best it was a ghastly business.

I had returned to the dressing-table and was changing my dress-coat for a comfortable smoking-jacket when I heard it—a faint and distant cry, yet a cry which was crowded with aghast terror that I clung to a chair with my white face and goggling eyes staring back at me from the mirror on the table. Again it sounded, and again; then silence fell like the shutter of a camera. I rushed to the window, peering out into the night.

The great gardens lay sleeping in the dusky shadows. There was nothing to be heard; nothing moved save the curling wreaths of mist that came creeping up over the cliffs like the ghosts of drowned sailormen from their burial sands below. Could it have been some trick of the imagination? Could it—and the suggestion which I despised thrust itself upon me—could it bear reference to that grim tragedy that had been played in the old fir avenue so many years ago?

And then I first saw the thing that came towards me.

It was moving up a narrow path, hedged with yew, that led from the gardens and passed to the right of the wing in which I stood. The yew had been clipped into walls some five feet high, but the eastern gales had beaten out gaps and ragged indentations in the lines of greenery, so that in my sideways view of it the path itself was here and there exposed. It was through one of these breaches in the walls that I noticed a sign of movement. I waited, straining my eyes. Yes, there it showed again, a something, moving swiftly towards the house with a clumsy rolling stride.

It was never nearer to me than fifty yards, and the stars gave a shifty light. Yet it left me with an impression that it was about four feet in height and of a dull white color. I remember that its body contrasted plainly with the dark hedges, but melted into uncertainty against a patch of snow. Once it stopped and half raised itself on its hind legs as if listening. Then again it tumbled forward in its shambling, ungainly fashion—now hidden by the yew wall, now thrust into momentary sight by a ragged gap until it disappeared round the angle of the house. Doubtless it would turn to the left, round the old chapel, across the snow-bound park, and so to the woods—where a wolf should be!

I was still staring from the window in the blank fear of the unknown, when I heard the swif tap of feet upon the road beneath me. Round

the corner of the wing came a man, running with a patter of little strides, while a dozen yards behind him were a pair of less active followers. What they wanted I did not consider; for at that moment the sight of my own kind was joy enough for me. The electric lamps in the room behind me threw a broad golden patch upon the snow, and as the leader reached it he stopped, glancing up at where I stood. The light struck him fairly in the face. It was Addington Peace!

"Did you hear that cry?" he panted; and then, with a sudden nod of recognition: "I see who it is, Mr. Phillips—well, and did you hear it?"

"It came from over there—in the fir avenue," said I, pointing with a trembling finger. "I don't understand it, Inspector; I don't indeed. There was something that came up that way walk behind you about a minute afterwards. I should have thought it would have passed you."

"No, I saw nothing. What was it like?"

"A sort of a dog," I stammered; for under his steady eye I had not nerve enough to tell him of my private imaginings.

"A dog—that's curious. Are all the rest of you in bed?"

"No; they're gambling."

"Very good. I see there is a door at the back there. Will you come down and let me in, after I've had a look around the gardens?"

"Certainly."

"If you meet any of your friends, you need not mention that I have arrived. Do you understand?"

I nodded, and he hopped away across the lawn with his two companions at his heels.

I slipped on an overcoat and made

I RUSHED TO THE WINDOW, PEERING OUT INTO THE NIGHT.



my way quietly down the stairs. From the roulette-room, as I passed it, came the chink of money and the murmur of merry voices. They would not disturb us, that was certain. I reached the garden doors in the center of the main building, turned the key, and walked out into the gloom of a great square porch.

As I have said, the temperature was scarcely below freezing-point, and if I shivered in my fur-lined overcoat it was more from excitement than any great chill in the air. For a good twenty minutes I waited listening and peering into the night. It was not a pleasant time, for my nerves were jangled, and I searched the shadows with timorous eyes, half fearing, half expecting. Heaven knows what hideous apparition. It was with a start which set my heart thumping that I saw Peace turn the corner of the right-hand wing and come trotting down the drive towards me. There was something in his aspect that told a story of calamity.

"Who has been killed?" I stammered out.

"Baron Steen. We found him on the cliffs yonder. He was badly cut about."

"It's impossible, Inspector," I cried. "He left the roulette-table not a quarter of an hour before you came."

"Ah—he was a cool hand, Mr. Phillips. It was like him to put off boiling till the last minute. The warrant against him for company frauds is in my pocket now. But some one gave the game away to him, for his yacht is lying off the beach there, with a boat from her waiting at the foot of the cliff. But we've no time to lose—come along."

Before the big garden porch the inspector's two companions were waiting. He drew them aside for a minute's whispered conversation before they separated, and disappeared into the night. What had they done with the body? I had not the courage to inquire.

We entered the house, moving very softly. In the hall Peace took me by the arm.

"You're a bit shaken, Mr. Phillips, and I'm not surprised. But I want your assistance badly. Can you pull yourself together and help me to see this through?"

"I'll do what I can."

"Take me up to your room, then."

We were in luck, for we thumped up the great stairs and down the long passages without meeting a guest or servant. Once in my room, the inspector walked across and pushed the electric bell. Three, four minutes went by before the summons was answered, and then it was by a flushed and disordered footman who bounced into the room and halted, staring open-mouthed from me to my companion.

"What is it?" I asked him, as he panted up.

"I want you—come along," he whispered, and started back by the way he had come.

We passed round the right-hand wing, under my bedroom window, and stopped where the yew walk ended. To right and left of the entrance two stone fawns leered upon us under the starlight.

"This thing you call a dog—could you see it as far as this?"

"No; the angle of the wing prevented me."

"You saw it pass in this direction. Are you certain it did not go back the way it came?"

"Yes. I am quite certain."

"Then it must either have turned up the road, in which case I should have met it; or down the road, where you would have seen it as it passed under your windows; or else have run straight on. If we take these facts as proved, it must have run straight on."

"That is so."

We had our backs to the laughing fawns. Before us lay a broad triangle of even snow, with the chapel and wing of the house for its sides, and for its base the carriage-drive on which we stood. There was no shrub or tree in any part of it that might conceal a fugitive. Close to the wall of the house ran a path ending in a small side door. The chapel, which was joined to the mansion, had no entrance on the garden side.

"If it entered this triangle and disappeared—for I am certain it was not here when I ran by—we may conclude that it found its way into the house. It had no other method of escape. Kindly stay here, Mr. Phillips. This snow is fortunate, but I wish the sweepers had not been so conscientious about their work on the paths."

He drew a little electric lantern from his coat, touched the spring, and with an eye of light moving before him, turned into the path under the wall. He walked slowly, bending double as he swept the brilliant circle now on the exposed ground, now on the snow ridges to right and left. The sills of the ground floor windows were carefully examined, and when he reached the door he searched the single step before it with minute attention. A curious

look came over his face as he stepped back.

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MANAGER FRED CLARKE



Noted Leader of the Pittsburgh Pirates Has Started on His Fourteenth Consecutive Year as the Pilot of That Team.

BILLIARDS

Speaking of De Oro, his next opponent for the pocket billiards title will be Thomas Hueston, who has posted his forfeit and will meet the Cuban.

Whatever your ambitions, if you are a foreigner you can't capture American amateur billiard titles any more. The national body has closed the gate.

Pierre Maupome, representing St. Louis, won his third consecutive match in the National Billiard league series. He defeated Charles Warren of Boston, 50 to 47, in a three-cushion match.

George Sutton has dug up a new style of cue tip and has hopes of re-acquiring a championship with it. Did you ever see a guy tear up a deck of cards after he had just had a queen full busted by four tens?

FOOTBALL

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Shorty Miller, the stocky little quarter for Penn State, has been elected to captain Bill Hollenbeck's team next season.

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Ralph Capron, one of Minnesota's famous quarters, is candidate for the position of coach at Purdue, vacated by the death of "Keckie" Moll.

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The advisory committee on Yale football, as announced by Captain Henry Ketcham, is composed of the following: Walter Camp, '80; William H. Corbin, '89; Lucius H. Biglow, '97; Buck Chamberlain, '87; Jack Field, '11.

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WASHINGTON GOSSIP

Uncle Sam Wants Goats for Service in the Army



WASHINGTON.—Whether for administrative purposes a short-haired goat should be classified with a paste pot, a fumigator or a six-inch gun is a question now demanding the serious attention of the wise men of the war department.

The war department wants goats. Goats that will eat mosquitoes, or at least that will eat the foliage where the mosquitoes breed and congregate, are particularly desired. Just how many goats the department will want has not yet been settled because the acreage capacity of a goat for weeds and browsing has not yet been accurately determined. However, the officials are looking for goats if they can find the right appropriation to charge them to, and it has not yet been decided whether this should be equipment, sanitation or miscellaneous expenditures.

The root of the trouble is Fort Washington, down the Potomac. This has long been known as one of the most unhealthy posts in the army. The hospital there usually has the

Beads Like Amber.

Beads which look rather like clond amber, but which have the quality of wood, are picked from the Chinese (Jinko fern); they are pierced and strung for necklaces or long chains; they are said to obtain a natural polish like ivory with a little wear. They are fairly light in weight and cost so much per bead, so that the string is priced according to length.

All that seems to all the fort is malaria. Now, as every one knows by this time, the malaria mosquito is the only insect to carry malaria. Usually it is a rather simple matter to get rid of the mosquitoes by eliminating their breeding places, which are always collections, large or small, of stagnant water. But in the case of Fort Washington there has been trouble getting at the breeding places. There is a stretch along the water front that is not wet enough to drain and yet is too wet for sanitary purposes. The grass and weeds there have been cut and recut, but they will not stay cut, and an impoverished government cannot let the war department have money enough for a sea wall or other sort of permanent binding on the edge of the river.

So the war department has put in a requisition for goats, twenty of them, and they, being cheerful and pretty constant feeders, it is thought they can be depended on to keep the vegetation in check so that the sanitation experts can find the wet spots on the ground and standard oil the mosquitoes out of existence.

This start of twenty sounds modest, but it is as many healthy goats as the government can afford to buy. Billies and nannies both are desired.

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There Is Balm in Gilead and Salve in Africa

LET joy expand like a choking canary and pleasure spout forth as water from a broken pipe. There is still balm in Gilead and salve in Africa. There will be a grand inaugural ball. It will be such a scene of gaiety as the modest electric light bulb seldom smiled upon.

The die is cast. The gorgeous event will come to pass despite the prohibition of President-elect Wilson. Preparations are going forward like a detachment of Turks retreating from the Balkan frontier. While the event may prove a trifle disappointing to the ultra fashionable set, and somewhat dazzling to the new chief magistrate, there will be all sorts of compensations. The tickets will cost less. There will be more room in which to swing partners.

The colored brother has beaten everybody to it. He has put the inaugural committee on music up a tree and circumvented Governor Wilson. He has chartered Convention hall, the largest auditorium in this city. He will have an affair that will make former events look like pine cones falling from a redwood tree.

The National Negro Woodrow Wilson league of Richmond, Va., has taken the initiative. Also it deposited the necessary cash guarantee. Giles B. Jackson, the negro millionaire, is president of the league. The inaugural ball under negro auspices is scheduled for the night of March 5. It was deferred a day in order that all might recover from the frolics and follies of March 4.

Gold pieces at half price never went off like the tickets for this ball. Between five and six thousand have already been sold. The price per is \$2.50.

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Spirit Squad Is Needed as Adjunct to Police

ences, but the police hear and see more that tends to question humanity than employes in any other line of work.

It seems strange, but nevertheless it is true, that persons have dreams and hallucinations which are reported to the police as facts for investigation. Dreaming of robbers, they have awakened suddenly with all the excitement and alarm that would attach to the genuine case, fired revolvers at the supposed intruder, and only been reconciled to their mistake after close inquiry proves it such.

The greatest imposition is that which occurs a great many times a year when persons who cannot or do not want to pay their just debts report that they have been robbed of sums of money. They will prearrange to give color to the truth of their report, but are generally found out in the end.

The public should not believe everything they read and hear about burglaries and highway robberies, for many of the cases so reported, after investigation, are shown to be without foundation.

"So, the 'spirit squad'."

AS AN innovation, a "spirit squad" has been suggested as a desirable addition to the Metropolitan police force. This, it is argued, would greatly tend to clear up some mysterious robberies that have been reported to the central office.

The reason why a spirit squad is necessary was told the other day by Maj. Richard Sylvester, superintendent of police. Major Sylvester declares that many of the robberies which have been reported to the police occurred only in the dreams of those who reported them.

Speaking of the queer kink in the human brain which permits such things to happen, Major Sylvester said: