

# The Chronicles of Addington Peace

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON

Co-Author with A. Conan Doyle of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, etc.  
Copyright by H. G. Cresswell

## THE VANISHED MILLIONAIRE

(Continued.)

I woke with a start that left me sitting up in bed, with my heart thumping in my ribs like a piston-rod. I am not generally a light sleeper, but that night, even while I snored, my nerves were active. Some one had tapped at my door—that was my impression.

I listened with the uncertain fear that comes to the newly waked. Then I heard it again—on the wall near my head this time. A board creaked. Some one was groping his way down the dark corridor without. Presently he stopped, and a faint line of illumination sprang out under my door. It winked, and then grew still. He had lit a candle.

Assurance came with the streak of light. What was he doing, groping in the dark, if he had a candle with him? I crept over to the door, opened it, and stared cautiously out.

About a score feet away a man was standing—a striking figure against the light he carried. His back was towards me, but I could see that his hand was shading the candle from his eyes while he stared into the shadows that clung about the further end of the corridor.

Presently he began to move forward. The picture gallery and the body of the house lay behind me. The corridor in which he stood terminated in a window, set deep into the stone of the old walls. The man walked slowly, throwing the light to right and left. His attitude was of nervous expectation—that of a man who looked for something that he feared to see.

At the window he stopped, staring about him and listening. He examined the fastenings, and then tried a door on his right. It was locked against him. As he did so I caught his profile against the light. It was Harbord, the secretary. From where I stood he was not more than forty feet away. There was no possibility of a mistake.

As he turned to come back I retreated into my room, closed the door. The fellow was in a state of great agitation, and I could hear him muttering to himself as he walked. When he had passed by I peeped out to see him and his light dwindle, reach the corner by the picture gallery, and fade into a reflection—a darkness.

I took care to turn the key before I got back into bed.

I woke again at seven, and, hurrying on my clothes, set off to tell Peace all about it. I took him to the place, and together we examined the corridor. There were only two rooms beyond mine. The one on the left was an unoccupied bedroom; that on the right was a large storeroom, the door of which was locked. The housekeeper kept the key, we learnt upon inquiry. Whom had Harbord followed? The problem was beyond me. As for Inspector Peace, he did not indulge in verbal speculations.

It was in the central hall that we encountered the secretary on his way to the breakfast room. The man looked nervous and depressed; he nodded to us, and was passing on, when Peace stopped him.

"Good morning, Mr. Harbord," he said. "Can I have a word with you?"

"Certainly, Inspector. What is it?"

"I have a favor to ask. My assistant and myself have our hands full here. If necessary could you help us

by running up to London, and—"

"For the day?" he interrupted.

"No. It may be an affair of three or four days."

"Then I must refuse. I am sorry, but—"

"Don't apologize, Mr. Harbord," said the little man, cheerfully. "I shall have to find some one else—that is all."

We walked into the breakfast room, and a few minutes later Ransom appeared with a great bundle of letters and telegrams in his hand.

Ransom said not a word to any of us, but dropped into a chair, tearing open the envelopes and glancing at their contents. His face grew darker as he read, and once he thumped his hand upon the table with a crash that set the china jingling.

"Well, Inspector?" he said at last.

The little detective's head shook out a negative.

"Perhaps you require an incentive," he sneered. "Is it a matter of a reward?"

"No, Mr. Ransom; but it is becoming one of my personal reputation."

"Then, by thunder! you are in danger of losing it. Why don't you and your friend hustle, instead of loitering around as if you were paid by the day? I tell you, man, there are thousands—hundreds of thousands—melting, slipping through your fingers, every hour, every hour."

He sprang from his seat and started his walk again—up and down, up and down, as we had first seen him.

"Shall you be returning to London?"

At the question the manager halted in his stride, staring sharply down into the Inspector's bland countenance.

"No," he said; "I shall stay here, Mr. Addington Peace, until such time as you have something definite to tell me."

"I have an inquiry to make which I would rather place in the hands of some one who has personal knowledge of Mr. Ford. Neither Mr. Harbord nor yourself desire to leave Meudon. Is there anyone else you can suggest?"

"There is Jackson—Ford's valet," said the manager, after a moment's thought. "He can go, if you think him bright enough. I'll send for him."

While the footman who answered the bell was gone upon his errand, we waited in an uneasy silence. There was the shadow of an ugly mystery upon us all. Jackson, as he entered, was the only one who seemed at his ease. He stood there—a tall figure of all the respectabilities.

"The Inspector here wishes you to go to London, Jackson," said the manager. "He will explain the details. There is a fast train from Camdon at eleven."

"Certainly, sir. Do I return tonight?"

"No, Jackson," said Peace. "It will take a day or two."

The man took a couple of steps towards the door, hesitated, and then returned to his former place.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he began, addressing Ransom. "But I would rather remain at Meudon under present circumstances."

"What on earth do you mean?" thundered the manager.

"Well, sir, I was the last to see Mr. Ford. There is, at it were, a suspicion upon me. I should like to be present while the search continues, both for his sake—and my own."

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," growled Ransom. "But you either do what I tell you, Jackson, or you pack your boxes and clear out. So be quick and make up your mind."

"I think you are treating me most unfairly, sir. But I cannot be per-

suaded out of what I know to be my duty."

"You impertinent rascal!" began the furious manager. But Peace was already on his feet with a hand outstretched.

"Perhaps, after all, I can make other arrangements, Mr. Ransom," he said. "It is natural that Jackson should consider his own reputation in this affair. That is all, Jackson; you may go now."

It was half an hour afterwards, when the end of breakfast had dispersed the party, that I spoke to Peace about it, offering to go to London myself and do my best to carry out his instructions.

"I had bad luck in my call for volunteers," he said.

"I should have thought they would have been glad enough to get the chance of work. They can find no particular amusement in loafing about the place all day."

"Doubtless they all had excellent reasons," he said with a smile. "But anyway, you cannot be spared, Mr. Phillips."

"You flatter me."

"I want you to stay in your bedroom. Write, read, do what you like, but keep your door ajar. If anyone passes down the corridor, see where he goes, only don't let him know that you are watching him if you can help it. I will take my turn at half-past one. I don't mean to starve you."

I obeyed. After all, it was, in a manner, promotion that the Inspector had given me; yet it was a tedious, anxious time. No one came my way, barring a sour-looking housemaid. I tried to argue out the case, but the deeper I got the more conflicting grew my theories. I was never more glad

drawing touch of a hand groping in the darkness as some one felt his way along the panelled walls. It passed us and was gone. Yet Peace never moved. Could he have fallen asleep? I whispered his name.

"Hush!"

The answer came to me like a gentle sigh.

One minute, two minutes more and the room sprang into sight under the glow of an electric hand-lamp. The Inspector rose from his seat and slid through the door, with me upon his heels. The light he carried searched the clustered shadows; but the corridor was empty, nor was there any place where a man might hide.

"You waited too long," I whispered impatiently.

"The man is no fool, Mr. Phillips. Do you imagine that he was not listening and staring like a hunted beast. A noisy board, a stumble, or a flash of light, and we should have wasted a tirling day."

"Nevertheless he has got clear away."

"I think not."

As we crept forward I saw that a strip of the oak flooring along the walls was gray with dust. If it had been in such a neglected state in the afternoon I should surely have noticed it. In some curiosity I stooped to examine the phenomenon.

"Flour," whispered the little man, touching my shoulder.

"Flour?"

"Yes. I sprinkled it myself. Look—there is the first result."

He steadied his light as he spoke, pointing with his other hand. On the powdery surface was the half footprint of a man.

The flour did not extend more than



HIS ATTITUDE WAS OF NERVOUS EXPECTATION

to see a friendly face than when the little man came in upon me.

The short winter's afternoon crept on, the Inspector and I taking turn and turn about in our sentry duty. Dinner time came and went. I had been off duty from nine, but at ten-thirty I poured out a whisky and soda and went back to join him. He was sitting in the middle of the room smoking a pipe in great apparent satisfaction.

"Bed time, isn't it?" I grumbled, sniffing at his strong tobacco.

"Oh, no," he said. "The fact is, we are going to sit up all night."

I threw myself on a couch by the window without reply. Perhaps I was not in the best of tempers; certainly I did not feel so.

"You insisted on coming down with me," he suggested.

and filled a pipe. At eleven he walked across the room and switched off the light.

"If nothing happens, you can take your turn in four hours from now," he said. "In the meanwhile get to sleep. I will keep the first watch."

I shut my eyes; but there was no rest in me that night. I lay listening to the silence of the old house with a dull speculation. Somewhere far down in the lower floor a great gong-like clock chimed the hours and quarters. I heard them every one from twelve to one, from one to two. Peace had stopped smoking. He sat as silent as a cat at a mousehole.

It must have been some fifteen minutes after two that I heard the faint, faint creak of a board in the corridor outside. I sat up, every nerve strung to a tense alertness. And then there came a sound I knew well, the soft "I know all about that," I told him.

"I haven't complained, have I? If you want me to shut myself up for a week I'll do it; but I should prefer to have some idea of the reason why."

"I don't wish to create mysteries, Mr. Phillips," he said kindly; "but, believe me, there is nothing to be gained in vague discussions."

I knew that settled it as far as he was concerned, so I nodded my head

## THE CHILDREN



### VALUE OF WELL-TRAINED DOG

Beagle Hound, Not Much Bigger Than Big Rat Terrier, Distinguishes Himself on Hunt.

(By ISAAC MOTER.)

Last summer when on a vacation trip to the old home I had a never-to-be-forgotten Saturday afternoon squirrel hunt, which opened my eyes to the value of a well-trained dog, a dog trained on one kind of animal. A neighbor boy owned one of these beagle hounds, not much larger than a big rat-terrier.

My youngest brother had had a good deal to say to me during the ear-



"Steady."

lier part of my visit, about this wonderful little dog, so one afternoon he borrowed the dog for a squirrel hunt in the woods near town.

I went along more to please my brother than because I expected much success, for I did not believe we could find any squirrels so near town.

Beside I did not think the wood was very good squirrel hunting ground, even if it had been at a distance from town, for the land was flat and poor, covered with a growth of post oak and blackjacks.

Then it was somewhat near the prairie, where I knew there were no squirrels. There were no hickory trees, nor chestnuts, nor pecans, and I did not see what a squirrel could live on in that flat, uninviting reach of scrub timber and thin clay soil.

But before we got two hundred yards from the home of the boy who owned the dog that little "flee" began to distinguish himself. He threw himself into the woods and began literally to tree squirrels as fast as we could shoot them out of the trees.

A few sharp "yip yipping" barks and the squirrel was treed, and when we shot it out the little dog hardly noticed it but dashed off after another squirrel. And he would simply stand and watch a rabbit run away from him and never show the least inclination to chase it.

We were in those flat post-oak woods not two hours, and we got twenty-six squirrels, and had to take the little dog by the collar at last and carry him home to make him stop hunting.

Grieved, but Polite.

Dorothy was so homesick at her first party and cried so bitterly that the hostess' mother suggested that it would be better for her to go home.

Dorothy accepted the idea, but a few minutes later, upon answering a timid ring at the door, the hostess found Dorothy bathed in tears.

"Well, Dorothy, I am glad to see you again. Did you decide to come back to us?"

"No'm'm; I forgot to say I h-had such a nice time!"

## RIDDLES

Why is an amiable and charming girl like one letter in deep thought, another on its way towards you, another bearing a torch, and another singing psalms?

Because she is A-musing, B-coming, D-lighting, and N-chanting.

What is the difference between a bell and an organ?

One rings when it's told (toll), but the other will be blown first.

Why is love like a potato?

Because it springs from the eyes. Why are young ladies so partial to sunset and twilight?

Because they are daughters of Eve. When is a schoolmaster like a man with one eye?

When he has a vacancy for a pupil.



### WAS HIS TURN TO LAUGH

Uncle Aaron Allred Wanted Nothing to Disturb Him During Period of Enjoyment.

"It's a matter of total indifference to me whether Capper beats Hodges, or vice-versa!" triumphantly exclaimed Uncle Aaron Allred. "The Bulgars may put the Turks to the sword as fast as they can catch up with 'em, for all I care. I am not troubled about Stubb's defeat by What's-his-name. My nephew, Claud Duval Sisson, who looks just that way, and has lived on

me ever since he graduated from the village academy, three years ago, b'cuz I didn't have the nerve to give him both barrels in a vital spot, and differed with and from me in politics and religion and for the same length of time, and acted superior to me b'cuz he didn't have to work and I did, has just married, under the impression that he is going to enjoy a good home and a vacation all the rest of his life, a large and eminently able red-headed widow lady with masterful methods and six children, do-blast him! Hi-lo! Hi-lo! Oh-lay-ee-hoo! Lay-he-e-e-e!"