"RAFFLES, THE AMATEUR CRACKSMAN"

By E. W. Hornung, Author of "The Shadow of the Rope," "The Rogue's March," Etc.

No. V. Nine Points of the Law

66 W Fild," said Rafflez, "what do consideration, I am not sure that you are the stamp of men for sure that you are I read) the advertisement once more before replying. It was in the last column of the Daily Telegraph, and

TWO THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD-The above sum may be earned by any one qualified to undertake delicate mission and prepared to run certain risk. Apply by telegram, Security, London. "I think," said I "it's the most extraordinary advertisement that ever got into

'Not quite all that, Bunny; still, extra-

ordinary enough, I grant you."
"Look at the figure."
"It is certainly large."
"And the mission—and the risk!"
"Yes; the combination is frank, to say "Yes; the combination is frank, to say the least of it. But the really original point is requiring applications by telegram to a telegraphic address! There's something in the fellow who thought of that, and something in his game; with one word he chokes off the million who answer an advertisement every daywhen they can raise the stamp. My answer cost me five bob; but then I present another."

Do you know him, then?" "Merely by repute. I only hope he doesn't know me. He's the chap who got six weeks for sailing too close to the wind in the Sutton-Wilmer case; everybody wondered why he wasn't struck off the rolls. Instead of that, he's got a firstrate practice on the seamy side, and every biackguard with half a case takes it straight to Bennett Addenbrooke. He's probably the one man who would have the cheek to put in an advertisement like that, and the one man who could do it without exciting suspicion. It's simply something shady at the bottom of it. The odd thing is that I have long made up my mind to go to Addenbrooke myself if acci-

dents should happen."

You shall lunch with me when we've

Mr. Bennett Addenbrooke occupied suboffices in Wellington street,

"So you have bowled me out in my

"So you have howied me out in my turn?" said he. "Well, I don't think there's snything to explain. I am harder up than I wished to admit under my own name, that's all, and I want that thousand pounds reward."

"Two thousand." said the solicitor.
"And the man who is not above an alias happens to be just the sort of man I want; so don't let that worry you, my dear sir. The matter, however, is of a thing get into the papers; he has dis-

than two. I said I wanted that thousand We are both cursedly hard up, and we go into this thing together or not at all. Must you have his name, too? I should give him my real one, Bunny."

Mr. Addenbrooke raised his evebrows over the card I found for him; then he drummed upon it with his finger-nail. and his embarrassment expressed itself

fact is, I find myself in a diffi-

the stamp of men for me-men who be-long to good clubs! I rather intended to appeal to the er-adventurous classes. "We are adventurers," said Raffles, gravely

gravely.
"But you respect the law?"
The black eyes gleamed shrewdly.
"We are not professional rogues, if that's what you mean," said Raffles, smiling. "But on our beam-ends we are: we would do a good deal for a thousand younds antere. Burny?"

pounds apiece, eh, Bunny?"
"Anything?" I murmured.
The solicitor rapped his desk.

The solicitor rapped his deak.

"I'll tell you what I want you to do.
You can but refuse. It's filegal, but it's
filegality in a good cause: that's the risk,
and my client is prepared to pay for it.
He will pay for the attempt, in case of
failure; the money is as good as yours
once you consent to run the risk. My
client is Sir Bernard Debenham, of Broom
[161] Years."

Hall, Esher."
"I know his son," I remarked.
Raffles knew him, too, but said nothing,
and his eye dropped disapproval in my direction. Bennett Addenbrooke turned to

when they can raise the stamp. My answer cost me five bob; but then I prepaid another."

"You don't mean to say that you've applied."

"Rather," said Raffles. "I want two thousand pounds as much as any man."

"Put your own name?"

"Well—no, Bunny, I didn't. In point of fact, I smell something interesting and illegal, and you know what a caution chap I am. I signed myself Ghaspool, care of Hickey, 35 Conduit street; that's my tailor, and after sending the wire I went round and told him what to expect.

"You don't mean to say that you've applied."

"Rather," said Raffles. "I want two thousand pounds as much as any man."

"Put your own name?"

"Well—no, Bunny, I didn't. In point of fact, I smell something interesting and in that case I needn't tell you that he is a very peculiar man. He lives alone in a storehouse of treasures which no eyes but his ever behold. He is said to have the finest collection of pictures in the South of England, though nobody ever seem them to judge; pictures, fides and furniture are his hobby, and he is undoubtedly very eccentric. Nor can went round and told him what to expect. Is undoubtedly very eccentric. Nor can one deny that there has been considerable eccentricity in his treatment of his son. If that's it!" If that's it!"

And he was gone before a double knock on the outer door had done ringing through the rooms, to return next minute with an open telegram and a face full of news.

"What do you think?" said he. "Security's that fellow Addenbrooke, the police court lawyer, and he wants to see me lice court lawyer, and he wants to see me lice for the said in the server had been all right, and Sir Bernard paid his debts, and the other day, without the slightest warming, not only refused to do so any more, but absolutely stopped the lad's allowance. Well, I'll tell you what has happened; but first of all pour must know, or you may remember, that I appeared for young Debenham in a little scrape he got into a year or two ago. I got him off all right, and Sir Bernard paid me handall right, and Sir Bernard paid me hand-somely on the nail. And no more did I hear or see of either of them until one day last week."

The lawyer drew his chair nearer ours

and leaned forward, with a hand on either

"On Tuesday of last week I had a tele-gram from Sir Bernard: I was to go to him at once. I found him waiting for me in the drive; without a word he led me to the picture gallery, which was locked and darkened, drew up a blind, and stood simply pointing to an empty picture frame. It was a long time before I could get a word out of him. Then at last he told me that that frame had contained one of the rarest and most valuable nicone of the rarest and most valuable pic-tures in England—in the world—an orig-inal Velasquez. I have checked this," said the lawyer, "and it seems literally dents should happen."
"And you're going to him now?"
"This minute," said Raffies, brushing linfanta Maria Teresa, said to be one of this hat; "and so are you."
"But I came in to drag you out to another portrait of one of the Popes lunch." "You shall lunch with me when we've tiomal Gallery, where they had its hisseen this fellow. Come on, Bunny, and tory by heart. They say there that the we'll choose your name on the way, picture is practically priceless. And young Mine's Glasspool, and don't you forget Debenham has sold it for \$5,000."

"The deuce he has," said Raffles. The delice he has, has kannes. I inquired who had bought it.

"A Queensland legislator by the name of Cragge—the Honorable John Montagu Craggs, M. L. C. to give him his full title. Not that we knew anything about

santial offices in wearded first of the court"; and five minutes sufficed to produce a brisk, fresh-colored, reads in the had only just gone "over the way to the court"; and five minutes sufficed to produce a brisk, fresh-colored, reads in the sight of Raffics. Not that we knew anything about the pend wide at the sight of Raffics.

"Mr.—Glasspool?" exclaimed the law-yer.

"My name," said Raffics, with dry erfrontery.

"Not up at Lord's, however!" said the other of the most brasen manner image. It means to as You spoke of those clubs: In the most brasen manner image. It means to as You spoke of those clubs: In the price of this court of the most brasen manner image. It means to as You spoke of those clubs: In the price of this court of the most brasen manner image. It means to as You spoke of those clubs: In the price of this court of the most brasen and forward between Esher of the purchaser, and finding out took the week; but if did find out only get kicked out of them, but put in prison like common and jumped out the rest of the week; but id did find out only get kicked out of them, but put in prison like common, and jumped out took the week; but id did find out only get kicked out of them, but put in prison like common, and jumped out without a word to the man, I met him next minute at the lift gates, and he fairly pushed me back in two.

"Not up at Lord's, however!" said the out of the most brasen manner image."

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"Not up at Lord's, however!" said the out of the most brasen manner image day: threats, offers, prayers, entreaties

ant; so don't let that worry you, my even his picture than have the whole our sir. The matter, however, is of a rictly private and confidential charcter." And he looked very hard at me. "Quite so." said Raffles. "But there as something about a risk?" "A certain risk is involved."
"A certain risk is involved."
"A certain risk is involved."
"Then surely three heads will be better ian two. I said I wanted that thousand that thousand the control of the con the Queenslander, but Cragge simply tore it in two; the one old boy is as much a character as the other, and between the two of them I'm at my wite end."

"So you put that advertisement in the paper?" said Baffles in the dry tones he had adopted throughout the interview.
"As a last resort. I did."
"And you wish us to steal this picture?"

It was magnificently said; the lawyer flushed from his hair to his collar, "The fact is, I find myself in a difficulty," he confessed at last. "Tours is the first reply I have received; people who can afford to send long telegrams don't rush to the advertisements in the Daily Telegraph; but, on the other hand, I was not quite prepared to hear from men like yourselves. Candidly, and on



"A REAL, GENUINE, TWIN-SCREW, DOUBLE-FUNNELED, COPPER-BOTTOMED OLD MASTER."

out as Sir Bernard himself. No, no-it's | So Raffles was back in town; at an ear- | as possible, Bunny, and talking all the

"We could try."

"But you have no"—
"But you have no"—
"Experience? Well, hardly!"
"And you would really run the risk for four thousand pounds?"
Raffles looked at me. I nodded. "We would," said he, "and blow the

pay," said Addenbrooke, growing firm,
"Then it's more than you can expect us,

"You are in earnest?"

"Say three thousand if you succeed!"
"Four is our figure, Mr. Addenbrooke."
"Then I think it should be nothing if

Well, that's sporting. Done!" Addenbrooke opened his lips, half rose, then eat back in his chair and looked long and shrewdly at Ratfics—never once at

"I know your bowling," said he, reflectively. "I go up to Lord's whenever I want an hour's real rest, and I've seen you bowl again and again-yes, and take the best wickets in England on a plumb pitch. I don't forget the last Gentleman and Players; I was there. You're up to every trick-every one. . . I'm in-clined to think that if anybody could bowl out this old Australian . . . bowl out this old Australian
Damme, i believe you're my very man?"
The bargain was clinched at the Cafe
Royal, where Bennett Addenbrooke insisted on playing host at an extravagant

function. I remember that he took his whack of champagns with the nervous freedom of a man at high pressure, and have no doubt I kept him in countenance by an equal indulgence; but Raffles, ever an exemplar in such matters, was more abstemious even than his wont, and very peer company to boot. I can see him now, his eyes in his plate—thinking— thinking. I can see the solicitor glancing from him to me in an approchamion of from him to me in an apprehension of which I did my best to disabuse him by reassuring looks. At the close Raffles applogized for his preoccupation, called for an A. B. C. timetable, and announced his intention of catching the 3:02 to Esher.
"You must excuse me, Mr. Addenbrooke," said he, "but I have my own ides, and for the moment I should much prefer to keep it to myself. It may end in a fixtle, so I would rather not speak about it to either of you just yet. But speak to Sir Bernard I must, so will you write me one line to him on your card? Of course, if you wish, you must come

down with me and hear what I say; but I really don't see much point in it." And as usual Raffics had his way. though Bennett Addenbrooke showed some temper when he was gone, and I myself shared his annoyance to no small extent. I could only tell him that it was in the nature of Raffles to be self-willed and se-cretive, but that no man of my acquaint-hnce had half his audacity and determination; that I, for my part, would trust him through and through, and let him gang his own galt every time. More I dared not say, even to remove those chill mis-

a moment more."

And he tore off his coat before flinging himself into the nearest chair.

"I'm fatrly on the rush," he panted; "having the very devil of a time! Not a word till I tell you all I've done. I settled my plan of campaign yesterday at hunch. The first thing was to get in with lunch. The first thing was to get in with this man Cragge; you can't break into a place like the Metropole, it's got to be done from the inside. Problem one, how to get at the fellow. Only one sort of pretext would do-it must be something to do with this blessed picture, so that I might see where he'd got it, and all that. Well, I couldn't go and ask to see it out of curiosity, and I couldn't go as a sec-ond representative of the other old chap, and it was thinking how I could go that made me such a bear at lunch. But I saw my way before we got up. If I could only lay hold of a copy of the pic ture I might ask leave to go and compare it with the original. So down I went to Esher to find out if there was a copy in existence, and was at Broom Hall for one hour and a half yesterday afternoon There was no copy there, but they mus exist, for Sir Bernard himself (there's 'copy' there') has allowed a couple to be made since the picture has been in his possession. He hunted up the painters' addresses, and the rest of the evening I I'm inspent in hunting up the painters themity could selves; but their work had been done on commission; one copy had gone out of the country, and I'm still on the track of the other."

"Then you haven't seen Craggs yet?"
"Seen him and made friends with him, and, if possible, he's the funnier old cuss of the two; but you should study 'em both. I took the buil by the horns this morning, went in and lied like Ananias, and it was just as well I did-the old ruffan sails for Australia by tomorrow's rufnan salis for Australia by tomorrow's boat. I told him a man wanted to sell me a copy of the celebrated infanta Maria Teresa of Velasques, that I'd been down to the supposed owner of the picture, only to find that he had just sold it to him. You should have seen his face when I told him that! He grinned all round his wicked old head. Did old Debenham admit the sale? says he word when enham admit the sale? says he; and when I said he had he chuckled to himself for about five minutes. He was so pleased that he did just what I hoped he would do; he showed me the great picture—lucklly, it isn't by any means a large one—also the case he's got it in. It's an iron map-case, in which he brought over the plans of his land in Brisbane; he wants to know who would auspect it of containing an Old Master, too? But he's had it fitted with a new Chubb lock, and I managed to take an enham admit the sale?' says he; and wher

picture—lucklly, it isn't by any means a large one—also the case he's got it in. It's an iron map-case, in which he brought over the plans of his land in Brisbane; he wants to know who would auspect it of containing an Old Master, too? But he's had it fitted with a new Chubb lock, and I managed to take an interest in the key while he was glouting over the canvax. I had the wax in the paim of my hand, and I shall make my duplicate this afternoon."

Raffics looked at his watch and jumped up, saying he had given me a minute too much.

"By the way," he added, "you've got to dine with me at the Metropole to might?"

"Yes: don't look so scared. Both of us are lovitod—I swore you were dining with me. I accepted for us both; but I shan't be there."

"His clear eye was upon me, bright with meaning and with mischlef. I implored him to tell me what his meaning was.

"You will dine in he private sitting-room," said Raffes. "It adjoins his bedroom," sai

"You're going for the picture while we're at dinner?"

shall certainly take a life-preserver."

"But it's ghastly:" I cried. "To sit ed 230 years? It has, though, my and talk to an utter stranger and to word! Old Johnson's face will be a

know that you're at work in the next Two thousand spiece," said Raffles, "Upon my soul, I believe I shall give it

"Not you, Bunny, I know you better than you know yourself."

He put on his coat and hat.
"What time have I to be there?" I

"Not you," he said again, "but I shall if

'Not you, he said again, but I shall it.
I waste any more time. I've got a deuce
of a lot of rushing about to do yet. You
won't find me at my rooms. Why not
come down to Esher yourself by the last
train? That's it—down you come with
the latest news! I'll teil old Debenham to
expect you; he shall give us both a bed.
By Jove! he won't be able to do us too
well it he's got his nicture."

well if he's got his picture."
"If!" I grouned as he nodded his adleu;
and he left me limp with apprehension,
sick with fear, in a perfectly pitiable condition of pure stage-fright.

dition of pure stage-fright.

For, after all. I had only to act my part; unless Raffles failed where he never did fail, unless Raffles failed where he never did fail, unless Raffles he neat and noise-less was for once clumsy and inept, all I had to do was indeed to "smile and smile and be a villain." I practiced that smile half the afternoon. I rehearsed putative parts in hypothetical conversations. I got up stories. I dipped in a book on Queensiand at the club. And at last it was 7:85, and I was making my bow to a somewhat elderly man with a small, bald head and a retreating bow.

"So you're Mr. Ruffles' friend:" said he overhauling me rather rudely with his light, small eyes. "Seen anything of him? Expected him early to show me something, but he's never come."

No mage evidently had his telegram.

him, and he'il have to buy his pig in a by touched it, but he drank copiously, poke, after all. Mind touching that hell?

Suppose you know what he came to see me about? Sorry I shan't see him again, for his own sake. I liked Raifes—took to him amazingly. He's a cynic. Iake cynics. One myself. Rank had form of his mother or his aunt, and I hope she'll go and kick the bucket."

I connect these specimens of his con-

mother or his aunt, and I hope she'll go and kick the bucket."

I connect these specimens of his conversation, though they were doubtless detached at the time, and interspersed with remarks of mine here and there. They filled the interval until dinner was served, and they gave me an impression of the man which his every subsequent utterance confirmed. It was an impression which did away with all remorae for my treacherous presence at his table. He was that terrible type, the silly cynic, his aim a caustic commentary on all things and all men, his achievement mere vulgar irreverence and unintelligent scorn. Inhered and ill-formed, be had (on his own abowing) fluked into fortune on a rise in land; yet cunning he possessed, as well as malice, and he chuckled till he choked over the misfortunes of less astute speculators in the same boom. Even now I cannot feel much compunction for my behavior by the Hon. J. M. Craggs, M. L. C.

But never shall I forget the private agonies of the sill of the private agonies agonies agonies agonies of the sill of the private agonies agoni

But never shall I forget the private agonies of the situation, the listening to my host with one ear and for Raffles with the other! Once I heard him—though the rooms were not divided by the old-fashioned folding doors, and though the door that did divide them was not only shut but richly cur-tained, I could have sworn I heard him once. I split my wine and laughed at the top of my voice at some coarse sally of my host's. And I heard nothleg more, though my ears were on the strain. But later, to my horror, when the waiter had finally withdrawn. Cragges himself sprang up and rushed to his bedroom without a word. I sat like stone till he returned.

"Thought I pared a door go," he said.

Thought I heard a door go," he said.

It was the picture at last; up to this point I had kept him to Queensland and the making of his pile I tried to get him back there now, but in vain. He was reminded of his great, ill-gotten possession. I said that Rafles had just mentioned it, and that set him off. With the confidential garrulity of a man who has dired too weil, he plunged into his darling topic.

I was the picture at last; up to robber, when all was said. And I had done it myself, single-handed—ipse egomet!

I pictured Raffles, his surprise, his delight. He would think a little more of me in the future. And that ferent. We had £2000 apiece-surely enough to start afresh as honest men—and all through me!

In a clow I sprang out at Eaher, and

yet. So there I sat the possess of t vitation I had dreaded all the evening.
"But you must see it. Next room.
This way."

This way."

To be deceived.

"I've got it!" I cried in his ear. "I've got it!"

Got what?" he asked me, stepping

"Isn't it packed up?" I inquired has-

Lock and key. That's all." "Pray don't trouble," I urged. "Trouble be hanged!" said he. "Come

And all at once I saw that to resist him further would be to heap sus-picion upon myzelf against the moment of impending discovery. I there-fore followed him into his bedroom without further protest and suffered ain: first to show me the iron map-case, which stood in one corner; ne took a crafty pride in this receptacle. and I thought he would never cease descanting on its innocent appearance and its Chubb's lock. It seemed an interminable age before the key was in the latter. Then the ward clicked. I must

word! Old Johnson's taction in the sees it; won't go brag-ging about his pictures much more. Hern Way, this one's worth all the pictures sard

form, in unreasonable terror till tae end. Then at last I sat back and lit a cigarette, and the lights of Waterloo

reeled our behind. Some men were returning from the theater. I can recall their conversation even now. They were disappointed with the piece they had seen. It was one of the later Savoy operas, and they spoke wistfully of the days of "Pinafore" and "Patience." One of them hummed a stave, and there was an argument as to whether the air was out of "Pa-tience" or the "Mikado." They all got ed where Raffles had failed! Of all our adventures that was the first in which "Must have, been mistaken.

'must have, been mistaken.

I had played a commanding part; and, of them all, this was infinitely the least discrelitable. It left me without a conscient of the constant of the c

garrulity of a man who has dined too
well, he plunged into his darling topic,
and I looked past him at the clock. It
was only a quarier to ten.

In common decency I could not go
yet. So there I sat (we were still at
port) and learnt what had originally
fired my host's ambition to possess
what he was pleased to call a "real,
the common decency is a bed
forced." It's all right. There's a bed
forced. Sir Bernad's sitting up to shake

"The picture!"
"What?" "The picture. He showed it me. You had to go without it: I saw that. So I determined to have it. And here it is."
"Let's see," said Raffles grimly.

"Let's see," said Raffles grimly.

I threw off my cape and unwound the canvas from about my body. While I was doing so an untidy old gentleman made his appearance in the hall and stood looking on with raised eyebrows.

"Looks pretty fresh for an old master, doesn't she?" said Raffles.
His tone was strange. I could only

His tone was strange. I could only suppose that he was jealous of my suc-

"So Craggs said. I hardly looked at it

Well, look now-look closely. By Jove,

we're at dinner?"

"I am."
"If he hears you!"
"He shan't."
"But if he does."
And I fairly trembled at the thought.
"If he does," said Raffles, "there will be a collision, that's all. Revolver would be out of place in the Metropole, but I shall certainly take a life-preserver."

"Interminable age before the key was in the key was in the latter. Then the ward clicked, and my pulse stood still.
"By Jove!" I cried next instant.
The canvas was in its place among the maps.
"Thought it would knock you," said Craggs, 'Irawing it out and unrolling it for my benefit. "Grand thing, ain't imposed upon Craggs, and might have made him happy for life. And you go and

rob him of that!"
I could not speak.
"How did you manage it?" inquired Sir
Bernard Debenham. "Have you killed him?" asked Raffles

Way, this one's worth all the pictures in Colony o' Queensland put together. Worth 150,100 pounds, my boy—and I got it for five"

He dug me in the ribs, and seemed in the mood for further confidences. My appearance cheeked him, and he rubbed his hands.

"Have you killed him?" asked Rames sardonically. I did not look at him: I turned to Sir Bernard Debenham, and to him I total my story, hoursely; excitedly, for it was all that I could do to keep from breaking down. But as I spoke I became calmer, and I finished in mere bitterness, with the remark that another time Raffles might

"What time have I to be there?" I asked him, with a groan.
"Quarter to eight. There will be a telegram from me saying I can't turn up.
I He's a terror to talk; you'll have no difficulty in keeping the ball rolling; but head him off his picture for all you're worth. If he offers to show it you, say you must go. He locked up the case elaborately this afternoon, and there's no cartely this afternoon, and there's no cartely this afternoon, and there's no cartely the shall I find you when I get a way?"
"I shall be down at Esber. I hope to catch the \$155."

"But surely I can see you again this afternoon?" I cried in a ferment, for his hand was on the goor. "I'm not half coached up yet? I know I shall make a mess of it!"

"Not you," he said again, "but I shall it I was a said, and in this head and was a mess of it!"

"Not you," he said again, "but I shall it I was a said, and the said, and it is keys jingled back into his pocket.
"It goes straight into the strong-room."

"It was in the decided in time and shall want of the strong-room."

"It goes straight into the strong-room."

"It was in the decided in time and shall into the strong-room."

"It goes straight into the strong-room."

"It goes straight into the strong-room."

"For the last time." he went on, as his keys jingled back into his pocket. "It goes straight into the strong-room on board."

For the last time. If I could only send him out to Australia with only its legitimate contents in his prectous man-case! If I could but succeed where Raffles had falled!

We returned to the other room. I have no notion how long he talked, or what about Whisky and soda-water became the order of the hour. I scarce
became the order of the hour. I scarce
made my pile."

on a fellow! I was in the detice of a hurry, and didn't know that I should ever get what I should ever heart in the serves me right that you should have gone and undone one of the best things I ever did. As for your hand! work, old chap, you won't mind my saying that I didn't think you had it in you. In future—

"Don't talk to me about the future!"

I cried. "I hate the whole thing! I'm going to chuck it up!"

"So am I." said Raffles, "when I've made my pile."

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The C. GeeWo Medicine Co 253 Alder St., corner of Third, Portland, Or.

