

# WITH THE MASTER MIND

Being the Chronicles of Carlton Clarke, Telepatho-Deductive Solver of Criminal Mysteries. BY FRANK LOVELL NELSON.

## THE ZINC CASE

(Editor's Note: This adventure of Carlton Clarke, the Master Mind, reaches a high-water mark in exciting nature. It is concerned with opium smuggling, the Great White Plague, and a shrewd criminal. In this story one great mind is pitted against another in a hypnotic and telepathic battle. Two young lovers are brought together in the story.)

"ANYTHING in the papers besides campaign news?" asked Clarke one morning late in the Fall of 1904, as he came into the breakfast-room. I was deeply engrossed in the reports of a speech-making tour of half a dozen ex-Union Generals who were junketing through Illinois, and I was forced to tell my companion I had read nothing but politics.

"These are dull days for one of my trade," continued Clarke, as he picked up his paper and sat down to his coffee. "About the only thing left—Ah! Here's something you overlooked. Will it disturb you if I read it?"

"By no means," I answered. "Body found in trunk," began Clarke. "But I'll skip the headlines. Upon opening the trunk, the body had purchased at an uncalculated freight sale two young men residing in Austin were horrified yesterday to discover the body of a man. It was hermetically sealed in a zinc case which was inclosed in an ordinary round-topped trunk, which in turn was packed in sawdust within a pine dry goods box. Considering the fact that the box had remained for three years and a half in the freight warehouse, the body was in a remarkable state of preservation, due probably to the manner of packing it. There is no clue to the identity of the body other than that it was billed to a fictitious address on South Jefferson street and was shipped from Salt Lake City, having been rebilled there from Etteso. Wasn't that interesting?"

"That's the gist of it, but, of course, after the fashion of you reporters the story is told in several angles in order to fill the column. It looks like a promising mystery."

"Yes, but one that probably is impossible of solution considering the length of time it answers."

"I'm not so sure of that. Did it ever occur to you that any crime can be solved if some one is willing to expend money, time, and travel? Given unlimited resources, I believe I could organize punishment a certainty for every criminal. Crime goes unsolved because the men capable of doing effective work can make more money in other lines. Does your influence extend to the county morgue?"

"Deputy Coroner McNally in charge there is one of my particular friends. I am sure he will favor us."

"Suppose we call there this afternoon if you engage me, will you permit?"

I accepted, but shortly after breakfast something arose that put the matter entirely out of our minds for the moment. I was busy at my own devices, and Clarke was deep in a very erudite work on Oriental mysticism when there was a violent tug at our door bell. A man of command had admitted a handsome, athletic young fellow, square of jaw and keen of eye, but apparently laboring under the most intense excitement. "Where is Mr. Clarke? I must see him at once," he gasped.

"Knowing Clarke's rule to see all callers when possible, I immediately ushered him into the library."

"Oh, Mr. Clarke," he began, without awaiting an introduction. "I am sure I have a work for you. The police will have you. The police will have you. But calm yourself, my dear sir, and let me have your story connectedly," said Clarke. "Remember, I am ignorant even of your name."

"ardon me, forget. I am so full of this new case. My name is Richard Dudley."

He needed to say no more to Clarke as a mystery. The man had instantly disappeared, six months before of Evelyn Mason. The country had rung with it. The papers had been filled with it. The best of detectives in the country had struggled with it. Clarke himself, though not called in by the family had taken a deep interest in the progress of the case. Evelyn Mason, who, at the time she so mysteriously dropped out of sight, was traveling in the Orient. He had hastened home as fast as steamer and train could carry, and had taken up the thread where the police had dropped it in despair.

"Then you have a clue, Mr. Dudley?" asked Clarke, when he had assured our caller that his trouble was well known to us.

"I think so. Here is what I received this morning. I hurried to you at once."

And Dudley handed Clarke a slip of paper. "Clarke read the paper and handed it over to me. It contained but one word, 'Osette,' written in a sprawling hand."

"Where did you get this?" asked Clarke.

"It was slipped under my door last night. I have no idea by whom. I found it there this morning. Oh, Mr. Clarke, tell me that you have hope and that we will find her."

"What particular importance do you attach to this paper?"

"Oh, can't you see? But I forget. No one knows it but myself and her immediate family. Why, man! that's Evelyn's middle name! Evelyn Osette Mason. She never used it. No one knows it. Don't you see the must have sent this?"

"In that case, Mr. Dudley, you have indeed a most valuable clue; more valuable, I trust, than any suspect. It will, however, take time to develop it. I imagine it may take us to the Pacific Coast. Are you prepared to take such a trip?"

"At once, if necessary. Oh! we shall find her, shall we, Mr. Clarke?"

"That I cannot say. Calm yourself and hope for the best. The train will leave at 6 o'clock this evening. I hope before then to know whether the trip will prove advisable. In the meantime, keep your eyes and ears open. I can reach you over the telephone and let your mind be as nearly at ease as possible. I would not raise the hopes of Miss Mason's family too high. Better say nothing until we know more."

I was more than surprised when Clarke, after Dudley's departure, apparently dismissed the matter from his mind entirely and suggested that we go out to the county morgue.

When we reached the little red building whose every brick numbered a tale of tragedy, the inquest was already in progress. Strange as it seemed, two claimants had already arisen out of

the restless sea of humanity and were fighting for the glacially bit of wreckage it had cast up. Two men in flashy garments and displaying huge watch chains were put out of the court forthwith. Their missing friends had disappeared from Salem City. They had not read the newspaper reports carefully. He was two inches taller than the body in the trunk. Their eyes for measurement were bad. In fact, the entire course savored of a longing for a good museum attraction.

The other claimant, a middle-class family from a northern suburb, presented a remarkable case, remarkable as one of the strange coincidences which occasionally arise in police work in a great city. Corresponding one in the front, the difficulty of accurate identification and all other probabilities to the contrary, they described the body most exactly. "Look here," said Oliver Dike; he had disappeared three years and a half before from Etteso whence he had gone to take a position as attendant in an asylum.

For the want of a third and better claimant the body was turned over to the coroner. He had a family, at least, the case ended. The boy was but a second cousin and an orphan. Their grief was long since assuaged. A great round hole in the occipital bone, with a corresponding one in the frontal, told all too plainly that his death had been a natural one. Somewhere, perhaps, a fellow man with blood-guilt hands had driven him to his death, required to find him and the suburban family thought their full duty was done when they agreed to relieve the county of the body.

Before we left Deputy Coroner McNally, who, despite his gawky calling, was a most jovial, round-faced Irishman, led us to the basement to view his treasures, the exhibits in the case. The body already had been prepared for burial, and Clarke did not ask to see it. He finally was busy but long enough to read the fictitious address. The trunk also he passed with a look. When he came to the zinc case, he examined it closely every seam and corner of it.

"A neat job, that, Mr. Clarke," suggested McNally. "The murderous devil that done it has packed nappery a wad before he looks at it."

"Yes, and he may pack others if he isn't stopped," answered Clarke, grimly. "Look here, Sexton. Did you ever see a case just like this?"

I admitted that I had not. "Then it's safe to say you never have been to Vancouver?"

Neither had I, but I failed to see what it had to do with the zinc case, nor did Clarke see fit to enlighten me. He soon brought his examination to an end, thanking the genial McNally, who sought a more wholesome atmosphere.

We lunched down town, and from Clarke's silence I knew his busy brain was wrestling with one of the two problems. Which one I was unable to guess. In your must forgive me, my dear Sexton, he finally said, "I'll be in the dark for awhile longer. In fact, I have nothing to tell you as yet but a mass of odds and ends which may be meaningless. I am sure it will be sure time before the slender threads I now hold will lead me to the main cord. I wish to refresh my memory on two points. I am planning a business trip to the Coast. If you go I should like to have your company, for three men may be none too many for the work ahead. Do you think you can spare the time?"

"If anything is doing you know I shouldn't want to miss it."

"Thank you, Sexton. Let's see, it is now 4 o'clock. We'll prepare for the trip, anyway. You hurry out to the house and pack what clothes we will need and meet us at the station. I will have a call to make at your little newspaper office and a little matter to attend to down in Chinatown, which will admit me in part of the two, from which the usual weapons, and pick out a good one for Dudley. We may find desperate game."

The time proved little enough, and it was within a few minutes of train time when I met Clarke and Dudley at the station. The man had evidently decided the trip, for he had tickets and berths for three straight through to Seattle. He explained the details of the tedious four-day trip. Dudley and I were very much in the dark as to Clarke's plans, and as he did not see fit to enlighten me, I was obliged to content myself with a conversation partook mostly of commonplaces designed to put Dudley's mind as far as possible from his trouble. This much only I gathered. Dudley's mind was fixed on the discovery of the body with the disappearance of Evelyn Mason. My mind struggled with the problem long before the train started. I was thinking of a name on my paper. "Etteso," the town from which the body was billed. "Osette" was "Etteso" reversed. But this was a slim excuse. I pressed Clarke gently for further details, and reluctantly, but without telling me all he had in mind, he gave them. His memory of the case was a blur of hazy memories. My first sensation was that some one was looking intently at the back of my head. Through no volition of my own I turned and found myself looking into a huge pair of eyes framed in a mass of black hair and beard. Those who had been with Winton Lackey's eyes in the death scene "Trilly" may realize a portion of the impression I carry of them. Then a soft, purring voice said: "Mr. Carlton Dudley and Mr. Paul Sexton, I believe; Dr. Witherbee is at your service."

When I awoke to consciousness some one was alternately snipping his fingernails in my face and roughly shaking me. I was in pitchy darkness, and the air was chill and clammy.

"Mr. Sexton, I'm ashamed of you," said Clarke's voice through the gloom. "You are a particularly easy subject. I should have given you some lessons in resistance before we started."

"Where are we? What has happened? Where is Dudley?" I asked in a breath. "Dudley is here. He recovered before you did," answered Clarke, a fact which Dudley's voice confirmed. "We seem to be in some sort of an oubliette, which I don't care to describe. We have prepared in the center of the hill under the sanitarium and demanding of its proprietor what knowledge he possessed of Evelyn Mason. Clarke vetoed this off-hand,



MY HANDS SHOT TO HIS THROAT.

After much discussion he gently reminded us that he was the leader and laid out our plans of action.

In the morning we would leave the town, and, ostensibly on a sightseeing tour, and by a roundabout way reach the sanitarium where Clarke, under an assumed name and accompanied by us as two friends, would seek an interview with Witherbee on the pretense of wishing to place a consumptive sister in his institution.

"If by any twist of the conversation I can get his mind running on either Evelyn Mason or Oliver Dike," he continued, "I will just forget us, or else he will remember us, either of which contingencies will be equally disastrous. A third possibility, though a slight one, is that we will go out of our minds."

"Yes, I learned some things before I was knocked out that may or may not prove of value to us. We must wait, though, to find out what sort of a place we are in and how we were brought here."

In single file we made the round of our dungeon. We found that he about 12 feet square, walled with masonry which dripped dampness, and floored with cement. On one side we came upon a door the height of my head. I found the tallest of the party. From the rivet heads we judged it to be of plate steel and it closed into a steel frame set into the masonry in a manner which offered no entrance for the point of a pick had we had one at hand. The absence of any keyhole, bolt or lever showed that it was never intended to be opened from the inside.

"Hadn't we better stand beside it and if the doctor comes we can jump on him and throttle him," suggested Dudley. "Sixty," answered Clarke, a fact which Dudley's voice confirmed. "We seem to be in some sort of an oubliette, which I don't care to describe. We have prepared in the center of the hill under the sanitarium and demanding of its proprietor what knowledge he possessed of Evelyn Mason. Clarke vetoed this off-hand,

lary crafty villain, who has at his command not only an unusually fertile brain but all the agencies of modern mental science. I am afraid I have met my equal, but I think I should have held my own with him if he had not taken an unfair advantage. We were having a battle royal of wit, and I felt that I was gradually besting him when one of his myrtdons felled me from behind, and I awoke in this darkness laid out side by side with you fellows. My head still aches from the blow. By the way, have you a match?"

I felt in my pockets and found none. "Ah, that is bad," said Clarke. "How about you, Dudley?"

Dudley reported that he had one lone match, and though we searched carefully, this was all the three of us could find. "Much that I would like to see our prison, we will save it for an emergency," said Clarke, handing the precious match to me. "The fact that our host robbed us of all our matches, but left us our arms seems to be a gentle hint that we go crazy and put ourselves out of the way to save him the trouble."

"What do you suppose we will do with us?" asked Dudley in a voice so steady that, with Clarke's apparent cheerfulness, it restored my fast ebbing courage.

"Over and over—over the monotonous hiss of the intermittent refrain. I felt my limbs growing rigid and I struggled with a pleading, but futile, influence which was creeping over me."

At last, after a wait which seemed an eternity, I heard a soft footfall outside of the door. Then iron bars clanked and grated. I heard the hinges creak and the door swung slowly open. A dark form framed in the doorway and was outlined through the gloom. Then it stepped into our midst. My hands shot to his throat, which was cold and clammy as that of a corpse. There was no resistance. I heard Dudley wrenching the lantern from his belt. At Clarke's command I released him. Dudley was about to strike a light when Clarke shouted: "Quick, Dudley; the door!" It was swinging slowly shut and in a second our prison would have held four victims. First Dudley's foot, then his powerful frame stopped it, and swung back. I heard the match strike and then the rays of the lantern flashed into the face of our prisoner.

It was the attendant who had admitted us to the vault, but with such a stare of abject terror in his face that I scarcely recognized him.

Clarke's voice broke the silence. Addressing our captive, he said in the same low, tense voice: "Oliver Dike, you are completely under my will."

The attendant nodded, his lusterless eyes fixed on Clarke's dark and earnest face. "There is another outlet from this place beside the asylum, is there not?"

"Again the attendant nodded. "You will lead us through it."

The face of the attendant was contorted with terror and I thought he tried to shake his head, but Clarke's powerful will gained the mastery. The attendant turned, and with Clarke's hand on his shoulder entered the passage. I followed, and Dudley with the lantern brought up the rear. The passage was a transverse gallery which cut the one we were in at right angles. Our guide turned to the right. Soon we found ourselves in a

labyrinth of passages all cut out of the solid rock. Our guide threaded first one and then the other, turning right and left, until we came to a large chamber. At last we entered a straight tunnel which declined about one foot in ten. The length of this seemed interminable, but at last I saw the light of the passage and we emerged on the rugged side of a hill overlooking the broad expanse of the bay. Clarke stood and looked out over the sea. Following his eyes I saw outlined against the horizon dark spars of a three-masted schooner. He looked fixedly into his hands.

"You think he will attempt it tonight?" he asked.

"Yes, tonight," answered the attendant. Clarke released him. Suddenly with a shout, "He's coming! He's coming! He's coming!" he turned, and, eluding the arms of Dudley and myself stretched out to catch him, dashed into the passage and was lost to sight in the byzantine blackness.

"What is it, Clarke? Was that Oliver Dike? Who was the man in the trunk?" I asked.

"Don't question me. I must keep this tension or we fall," hissed Clarke. "Quick to the south. See that ship! Witherbee is making his presence known. Miss Mason will be taken aboard it and lost to us forever."

This was enough for Dudley. Once on the shore he turned at a run. My heart was fairly bursting before the first mile. Clarke's wiry frame, entirely subservient to his powerful mind, seemed to fly over the water. He was a man, which Dudley and Clarke cleared at a bound, I dropped. "Wait for us here," shouted Clarke, as they sped on. "We'll come back."

My heart tugging and thumping, my breath coming in rasping gasps which seemed to sear at my throat, I waited, I knew not how long.

At last I was aroused by a soft "hello," and the nose of a swift gasoline launch shot into the creek. It was soon aboard and I found Clarke at the wheel and Dudley in the stern. On the seat beside Clarke was a covered wicker hamper. No one spoke.

Swiftly and noiselessly we cut through the water to a point about half a mile from the shore and perhaps three miles from the ship. Here we swung in the water, rocked by the back wash of the lights, and waited the coming of I knew not what.

We had not long to wait. Clarke lifted his eyes from his intent watch on the shore line and said: "He's coming."

I knew who "he" meant and I shivered at meeting Witherbee on the water. Then my ear caught the "puff, puff" of a launch.

Suddenly it came into view in the stern. I could see Witherbee's eyes in the bow and another figure in the stern. On it came out of the gloom with a rush which sent the water curling over its bow.

"Hold fast! He's trying to ram us," shouted Clarke, swiftly throwing over quickly on a line. The launch was now close upon the oncoming rush of our terrible opponent.

A sardonic laugh from the doctor rang out over the water. "You poor fool, get out of my way," he shouted as his launch turned most in her length and came at us again. This time one of his hands had left the wheel and I saw the glitter of a revolver.

"Dive into the boat, fellows, he's going to fire," shouted Clarke. Dudley and I dropped. Six times in rapid succession his revolver cracked. He was firing flying bullets. It is not easy to hit and we heard the bullets whistle overhead.

"Don't answer his fire," warned Clarke. I looked up and saw Witherbee throw down his weapon and again seize the wheel. Clarke had maneuvered our craft until Witherbee's boat was astern, and it was coming on us that the wind and waves had left us by leaps. Even at the pace we were traveling the impact should be ram us, would crush our frail craft like an egg shell. Dudley, revolver in hand, stood up and said: "Wait, wait, wait!"

"For God's sake don't shoot, Dudley! You may hit Miss Mason," shouted Clarke. "Lace your seat belt, and hold on!" Witherbee's boat was almost upon us when Clarke gave the wheel a quick twist and our pursuer shot past within the feet of our gunwale. He was firing at Clarke's right arm shot into the back of his side. I saw his hand come out holding a writhing black object. He swung it about and fired once more. It struck the doctor full between the shoulders. Witherbee dropped the wheel and stood up trying to fight the launch. He appeared in the black waters of the bay.

Clarke shot our boat over to the staggering doctor, reached over her side and stopped her engine. I held the gunwales together while Dudley leaped into the doctor's boat at his bound and returned bearing in the form of a young woman. The figure in the stern sat fixed and motionless.

Dudley swiftly cut the rope which held the launch to the launch. He muttered, "Clarke felt her pulse. 'She's only fainted,' he said. We fell to chafing her wrists and Dudley soaked her with a bucket of sea water and bathed her brow."

Then a new danger arose. From the direction of the ship we heard the regular rattle of machine gun fire. Miss Mason had aroused the opium ship," said Clarke. "Make a tow of the doctor's boat, Sexton, and we'll pull in to land. We can laugh at them. They dare not come in closer."

As we neared the shore our pursuers fell off, and soon we heard the sound of their oars dying away in the direction of the ship. Miss Mason had recovered consciousness and was clasped in Dudley's arms.

At Clarke's direction I pulled the doctor's boat alongside. Clarke then turned to the silent figure in the stern and snapping his fingers said: "Oliver Dike, you are free. Thank God, thank God!"

At the tavern, after Miss Mason had been safely carried away in a clean, patched together the ragged threads of the story over the best in the land-ford's cells.

"There is another attendant, a young fellow by the name of Frank Williams. We were very similar in appearance even to the fillings in our teeth. I think Witherbee picked us out that way so that if one of us disappeared a like so amenable the doctor's hypnotic influence as it was, and I think got too close to some of his secrets. I suppose Witherbee gave his opinion

crew orders to make war with him and they killed him and shipped him to a fictitious address in Chicago. I probably would have gone the same way tonight."

"How did you get in his power?" I asked.

"I answered an advertisement for a hospital attendant and came out here. From that moment I was under Witherbee's influence completely. Most of the time I was in a hypnotic state, but, which that Mr. Clarke had, was weak that I dared not break away from him. I knew when he brought Miss Mason there and that some of his Chinese agents had kidnaped her. I knew he was trying to force her to marry him."

"I didn't worry much about her, for he treated her well and she seemed to be in no danger from him, and I had seen so many terrible things in cases where he didn't want to marry them that I was sort of hardened to it anyway. I was a watchman on the whole place after Williams disappeared, and the only white man about the institution at that time was a Chinese agent with Miss Mason on the sly sometimes, but I paid no attention to her appeals until one day she mentioned the name of Ham Dong. I recognized one of my boyhood football heroes, and I determined to do something."

"One of the Chinks, by the name of Ham Dong, was going to Chicago to see some of the members of his tong and to sell opium. He and I were great friends, and I thought maybe I could send word to him by ship. At a run, I saw that the name of his town, and even then my courage failed me, and I spelled it backward. Ham Dong promised to slip the paper under Mr. Dudley's door without asking me for anything. I thought he would do it, but I figured if he did, Mr. Dudley would follow up the clew somehow. I was in mortal terror of Witherbee, and I knew that he would find my mind like a book. I tell you I was glad when I opened the door and saw you three men, for, even hypnotized as I was, I felt that you were my friends. I had sense enough to know that Mr. Clarke was reading my thoughts, and I gave him all the information I could."

"And you did it well," returned Clarke. "You have cleared up nearly all the points about which I was in doubt."

"But I'm still very much in the dark," I said. "It isn't fair. Dudley has known more all along than I do. He has been here since we left you at the creek," said Dudley. "I was as much mystified as you before then."

"But, Clarke never did you see through all this when we were in Chicago?"

"I didn't see through it by any means. Only I saw some things which you didn't. Last of it you saw a connecting link was the zinc case, which I recognized at once as one used in smuggling opium. I picked up the threads of Miss Mason's case where I had dropped them before, and the list of guests confirmed my hazy recollection that that was one from Etteso. The name of the town didn't strike me the first time, of course, but the name of the doctor did. I was turning the case over in my mind I thought of something which I should have remembered the first time. It was that once in a while a street opium dealer I had heard the name 'Witherbee' in a cautious whisper. My visit to Chinatown confirmed this. Have a Chinaman there that I depend on for my opium. He told me to my question of who was the greatest dealer in smuggled opium in the country he whispered, 'Witherbee,' swearing that he would never give up the name of the day for having told. After that the trail was easy."

"But what was that thing you hit him with which showed him over?" I first thought it was a bomb, but in reply to my question of who was the greatest dealer in smuggled opium in the country he whispered, 'Witherbee,' swearing that he would never give up the name of the day for having told. After that the trail was easy."

"Every man, as a disagreeable person named Shylock once remarked, no matter how strong his personality may be, has some one who is his enemy. I am in reply to your question of who was the greatest dealer in smuggled opium in the country he whispered, 'Witherbee,' swearing that he would never give up the name of the day for having told. After that the trail was easy."

"The fourth of the series of Adventures of Carlton Clarke, 'The Brothers of the Left Hand Path,' will appear next week."

Case of Identity.

Everybody's Magazine.

"It's a great help to be able to size up the men you come in contact with," said a business man to his son; "but it's more important still that you should first know yourself."

"For instance, a noisy bunch tacked out of their club late one night and up the street. They stopped in front of an imposing residence. After considerable discussion one of them advanced and pounded on the door. A woman stuck her head out of a second-story window and demanded, none too sweetly: 'What do you want?'"

"'Is this the residence of Mr. Smith?' inquired the man on the steps, with an elaborate bow. 'Yes, it is.' 'What do you want?'"

"'Is it possible I have the honor speakin' to Missus Smith?'"

"'Yes, what do you want?'"

"'Dear Missus Smith! Good Missus Smith! Will you—blime—come down an' pick out Mr. Smith? The rest of us want to go home.'"

Summer Sonnets.

I know a sylvan haunt, far, far from where the smoke of commerce ever reaches a nose.

Where woodland scents pervade each breeze that blows

And where the noonday sun, rebuffed of its glare, but faintly lights the long, arched vistas of the trees.

There, in a deep beside a stream that flows with tinkling merriment; ah, to repose upon its shaded bank, absorbed from care!

Yet, if I journeyed there I know my grief would speedily depart and I should hanker still.

For gladness that, alas, is not for me; the wood-creeper might emit its pleasing trill.

Some silly, crushing thing would surely be on hand, though, to give me a nasty thrill.

I know a shady porch with columns white, where easy chairs are set and hammocks dangle.

And men in wide, green stretchers gently roll as they pass.

And men in airy flannels delight in tinkling and telling how they might have shaded him from the sun.

Had played as they possess the skill to play.

Or if their clubs had been constructed right, but it is not for me; who courts the muse.

May never hope for joy upon the links; there are the costly balls that one may lose.

The caddies, too, come rather high, meagre as a poet hope to pay his dues. Not mentioning the price it costs for a drink. A. K. Kiser in the Chicago Record-Herald.