

THE MASTERMIND.

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

No. 5--The Squared Triangle

I certainly looked black for Arthur Edgerton. Even Clarke, who usually I find, is inclined to let his sympathies rest with the accused until all shadow of doubt is dispelled, was hard put to find excuses for him. We discussed the case, recorded in glaring headlines, over our morning meal.

"It's incomprehensible," he said, as he read the third time the damning details. "His whole life, his success, his approaching marriage, everything cries out against this crime."

"So they did in the case of Eugene Aram," I replied, "and yet Aram protested his innocence. He Edgerton is not guilty, it should be a simple matter for him to account for his whereabouts from 7:30 to 10 last night, but this he refuses to do. I am of the opinion that for once the police have shown commendable energy and nabbed the right man. Can you imagine a more convincing chain of circumstantial evidence?"

"I don't have to imagine. The history of circumstantial evidence contains many a more perfect chain which was only broken after an innocent man had been hanged."

"Then, again," he continued, "what do you make of the robbery? If through jealousy Edgerton killed Garner, why should he rifle his pockets, take out a diamond stud and wrench the ring off his finger like a common freebooter?"

"That might have been the work of someone else who arrived on the scene after the murderer had fled," I suggested.

"A stronger argument on your side would be that it was done to throw the police off the track. But we argue to no purpose, and I, for one, propose to await the sequel."

It was the old, old story, the fatal triangle, in the demonstration of which tragedy has been the corollary since the world began—two men and one woman.

Arthur Edgerton possessed the three almost priceless treasures of the gates of modern society—youth, good looks, and wealth, and these had won for him the master-key social position, despite the handicap of antecedents unknown, some said even doubtful.

Harrison Garner put into the balance against these: Wealth, a family name honored for generations, and an unblemished character. Edgerton's brilliancy he offset by unflinching good humor and wholesomeness.

Mae Morrison, secure in her own little social realm and with no lack of suitors for the hand of its queen, had played one against the other. She had finally silenced the gossip by accepting Edgerton, and then set their tongues wagging faster than ever by receiving both on equal terms, despite the cards and the ring and all the delightful, bothersome preliminaries to matrimony.

And then the sequel: Garner found shot through the heart in Edgerton's automobile on a lonely spot on the Lake Shore drive; Edgerton, blood bespattered, fled; Mae Morrison, distraught, in her pretty boudoir, stunned at the havoc her little hands had wrought in the world, sat at the picture I painted that Summer morning at the breakfast table. Later I found the canvas wanted touching sadly.

Ignoring the futility of the argument, Clarke and I prolonged our discussion of the case in the library over our cigars when we were interrupted by the sound of a motor. The wheels of Clarke's dark features lighted with expectancy. I wondered if his remarkable prescience told him that the vehicle had stopped at the scene of the crime, or was I absorbing a portion of his sensitive intelligence?

"Text! Mr. Morrison, you are here," rang and we heard our servant, who at this period chanced to be a Jap boy, blandly answering a feminine voice which inquired for Mr. Carlton Clarke. Our visitor was heavily veiled, and as Clarke stepped forward to offer her a chair, I was able to judge nothing of her personality beyond that she was young and coquettish, and even by suggesting through her dark costume animal-like lines and curves. Or was it the art of the dressmaker exemplified in a perfectly governed woman?

"I am Miss Mae Morrison," Mr. Clarke, she said, lifting her veil from a face, the beauty of which even the evident traces of tears could not mar, and brushing back her dark, rebellious hair with a dainty little hand on which sparkled an engagement ring.

"Yes, Miss Morrison, you are here," you have called on me. It is about the Edgerton case, I suppose," replied Clarke, while I discreetly retired behind the portiere and my hat commiserated.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Clarke. You have seen the papers. You know the terrible trouble I am in. It seems that no one can help me but you. My father and brother Joe talking about you, and you did for Richard King and I have come to you. I had a perfectly dreadful time slipping away from home. I am watched by my own family, but I know Arthur did not do that dreadful thing and I simply had to talk with someone who would believe me. You don't think he did it, do you?"

Miss Morrison, I do not know, but for your sake, I propose to find out if there is any hope."

"Oh, do, Mr. Clarke, and I will pay you anything. I am wealthy in my own right and they cannot prevent me from leaving home to see Arthur."

"The question of payment, Miss Morrison, is of the smallest consequence. Services such as mine cannot be ticked off at a price and my hat commiserated. I will serve you just as willingly if nothing is said on the financial side. Now, if we are to fight this battle against circumstances, first let us get an account of our resources. I will repeat to you the evidence contained in the newspaper reports, and you are to tell me whether it tallies with the facts and to give me any further information you can. Are you strong enough for the ordeal?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Clarke. I am strong enough for anything if it will prove Arthur innocent."

"Then I will call my conferees, Mr. Sexton, to take notes and we will go over the case in detail."

I was easily found, for though pretending to read, I admit I was taking in the conversation from my position behind the portiere.

"Now then," continued Clarke, "the papers say that Mr. Edgerton called at your apartment building, the Patio, at 10 o'clock last night. That he found Garner there and stayed only about ten minutes. That he and Garner left together, entered Edgerton's automo-



TWO MEN WERE LOCKED IN DEADLY EMBRACE

reason's work that he was not jealous, and the testimony of the levers that he was not in the car."

"And against this," I said, "the police are holding a man who stood in the car with Garner, who was arrested in his apartments after a lapse of ample time for him to have returned by cars from the scene of the crime, and the deep breathing of men in deadly battle. The one customer, who had pricked up his ears at the mention of the inspector, fled inconspicuously. The barkeeper, schooled by long experience to no interference with the law other than to break it where safe, wiped glasses as if nothing was happening. I pushed the doors aside and rushed in."

The scene that met my eyes was over in less than the time necessary to describe it, but it was thrilling while it lasted. Two men were locked in deadly embrace, reeling about the room, overturning tables and chairs, while a third circled around them watching for a chance to administer the quietus with the butt of a pistol. The man in the embrace of the inspector was Clarke. The one with the pistol the inspector. The stranger had a long knife in his right hand which he was trying to bring to bear on Clarke's anatomy, but I was pleased to note that the wrist of the hand that held the blade was encircled by four fingers and a thumb that I knew possessed a grip like a pipe-wrench.

The affair could have but one ending. Here I met a stumbling block of formidable proportions. Inspector Ship returned with the word that the prisoner absolutely refused to see anyone.

"Then, inspector, I wish you would lock me up in the cage next to Edgerton, and preferably on the side his bunk is on, if that one is empty. You can do that, can't you, and leave me there for an hour? I may be able to interest him through the grating."

"Well, I guess I can, but it isn't often they come here asking to be locked up. Come on down stairs."

"Better go out and have your lunch in the meantime, Sexton," said Edgerton, and then drag my own prisoner out of that room and force me to slug him!"

"I didn't lead you on a false scent, inspector," returned Clarke, with a grim smile. "I gave you my word of honor that if you would come with me I would give you the privilege of arresting the murderer of Harrison Garner. There he is, and all you have to do is to handcuff him. He'll be coming around in a minute. Though I don't think there's much fight left in him. The police can't get a good deal for this. I imagine the morning papers will have a good deal to say about the wonderful piece of work accomplished by Inspector Ship. It isn't too late for an extra, even."

"That's all very well, Mr. Clarke, but what does it mean?"

"I'll tell you—ah, he's coming back to earth. That was a scientific crack you gave him, just hard enough but not likely to interfere with the later duties of the hangman. Inspector and Mr. Sexton, I have the pleasure of introducing to you Arnold Edgerton, the twin brother of a most estimable man, who has risked his own neck for you, and is absolutely worthless. Now, inspector, you may take the case and Mr. Sexton and I will retire again to private life."

"He's taking me as I expected him to, for 'a Jap cop,' said nothing but jerked his thumb expressively in the direction of the depths beyond.

Just as I was about to enter the awning doors an awful hubbub arose from within, the sound of chairs hurled violently to the floor, the crash of breaking glass and overturning tables, cries, and the deep breathing of men in deadly battle. The one customer, who had pricked up his ears at the mention of the inspector, fled inconspicuously. The barkeeper, schooled by long experience to no interference with the law other than to break it where safe, wiped glasses as if nothing was happening. I pushed the doors aside and rushed in."

The scene that met my eyes was over in less than the time necessary to describe it, but it was thrilling while it lasted. Two men were locked in deadly embrace, reeling about the room, overturning tables and chairs, while a third circled around them watching for a chance to administer the quietus with the butt of a pistol. The man in the embrace of the inspector was Clarke. The one with the pistol the inspector. The stranger had a long knife in his right hand which he was trying to bring to bear on Clarke's anatomy, but I was pleased to note that the wrist of the hand that held the blade was encircled by four fingers and a thumb that I knew possessed a grip like a pipe-wrench.

The affair could have but one ending. Here I met a stumbling block of formidable proportions. Inspector Ship returned with the word that the prisoner absolutely refused to see anyone.

"Then, inspector, I wish you would lock me up in the cage next to Edgerton, and preferably on the side his bunk is on, if that one is empty. You can do that, can't you, and leave me there for an hour? I may be able to interest him through the grating."

"Well, I guess I can, but it isn't often they come here asking to be locked up. Come on down stairs."

"Better go out and have your lunch in the meantime, Sexton," said Edgerton, and then drag my own prisoner out of that room and force me to slug him!"

"I didn't lead you on a false scent, inspector," returned Clarke, with a grim smile. "I gave you my word of honor that if you would come with me I would give you the privilege of arresting the murderer of Harrison Garner. There he is, and all you have to do is to handcuff him. He'll be coming around in a minute. Though I don't think there's much fight left in him. The police can't get a good deal for this. I imagine the morning papers will have a good deal to say about the wonderful piece of work accomplished by Inspector Ship. It isn't too late for an extra, even."

"That's all very well, Mr. Clarke, but what does it mean?"

"I'll tell you—ah, he's coming back to earth. That was a scientific crack you gave him, just hard enough but not likely to interfere with the later duties of the hangman. Inspector and Mr. Sexton, I have the pleasure of introducing to you Arnold Edgerton, the twin brother of a most estimable man, who has risked his own neck for you, and is absolutely worthless. Now, inspector, you may take the case and Mr. Sexton and I will retire again to private life."

"He's taking me as I expected him to, for 'a Jap cop,' said nothing but jerked

"I hesitated to tell Mae of my family skeleton. I had no intention of deceiving her, and would have told her all before our marriage, but I sought to put off the evil day."

"It wouldn't have made the least bit of difference, dear," said Mr. Edgerton, with an affectionate pressure of her husband's arm. "I would have married you if you had had a whole penitentiary full of good brothers."

"Before I asked Mae to be my wife," Edgerton continued, "I called my brother into my office and made a compact with him, a consideration of a major increase in his allowance he was to leave Chicago and not return for five years. I almost hoped that before that time was up he would have been shot, or hanged, or killed in some brawl."

"He has always shown himself incapable of keeping his word, and I was scarcely surprised when he broke it. The day of the tragedy, he walked into my office. I was angry and lost my temper. I told him he would never get another cent out of me. He first whined and begged, but when he saw I was firm he became furious and opened upon me a torrent of abuse. I ordered him to leave or I would kick him out of the house."

"He went, vowing the most terrible vengeance against me. When I cooled down I was filled with remorse and felt that I had been unkind and begged, but when I reasoned that his desire for money would bring him back."

"When I got to my apartments that evening the janitor looked at me in surprise. 'Why, Edgerton,' he said, 'you're back early. I saw you leaving in the automobile not 15 minutes ago. Did you find your keys in the night?' I knew at once what had happened. My brother had gone to the garage and taken out my car and made the excuse of losing his keys to get the keys and had led him into my room. I went up stairs and found my worst fears realized. His own clothes were there and a black suit, the mate to the one I was wearing, was missing. He was out to make trouble for me."

"I had no thought of his calling on Miss Morrison, although I knew he knew of her and had seen her with distance. I think that she was indeed in his first scheme of vengeance, and that had the presence of Garner not offered richer prey he would have enticed her out in the automobile and dealt violently with her."

Mrs. Edgerton shuddered and drew up closer to her husband.

"I was a hopeless task to attempt to track him, so I went to the resort in Fourth avenue, where you found him, and where I knew he would turn up some time during the night."

"Sure enough he came about 11 o'clock. He tried to pass it all off as a joke, and

A Giant Task for Explorers

THERE is still plenty of work for explorers. In spite of the remarkable discoveries effected during the second half of the 19th century, vast portions of this globe have still to disclose their secrets. And it must be remembered that the beeline journey which a Stanley makes across Africa or a Burton through Brazil really leaves those countries practically as unexplored as before the journey was made.

In fact, it may be said that while the courses of the great African rivers and of the equatorial lakes were traced more or less accurately by Burton, Speke, Baker and the rest of that galaxy of mid-Victorian explorers, otherwise the dark places of the world remain pretty well as they have been since the dawn of planetary life. That popular opinion should hold otherwise is due to a conspiracy of mapmakers. Examine any old map of Africa, and you will see that the Niger, which really makes a bend at right angles itself so that its whole course sweeps in a semicircle round the west coast of Africa, is brazenly depicted as flowing straight across the continent, and joining the great lakes thousands of miles from its actual source.

The same error is manifested to-day. Africa, the "dark continent," is scarcely whiter than before it was divided among the powers of the world. In fact, old Portuguese maps of three centuries ago display with passable accuracy the intricate system of equatorial rivers which flow into the Gulf of Guinea, the Niger, the Congo, the Nile, and the Amazon. The Nile, the Niger, the Congo, the Nile, and the Amazon are still as unexplored as before the journey was made.

When we add to these regions the enormous continent of Asia, the north polar regions whose existence, dimly conceived by the first travelers of 10 years ago, was only demonstrated during the first years of the 20th century, and whose existence is hardly more than a guess along the edge of a pathless wilderness of mangrove swamps, Mexico, Lower California and the North American deserts, and the vast unexplored interior of the continent of Asia, the task of the explorer is a giant task.

How the Flies Carry Bacteria

FLIES are wonderful transportation systems. Each of the fly's six legs has two pads, and each of these carries 1500 hairs. That makes a total of 7500 hairs, each one of which secretes a sticky fluid. The sticky contents of the pads slide through the hairs at every step, thus enabling the fly to maintain a position either on window pane or ceiling. If the pads existed alone the insect would experience difficulty in removing them. As matters stand, however, the claws are raised when the pads are raised, thus enabling the fly to maintain a position either on window pane or ceiling. If the pads existed alone the insect would experience difficulty in removing them. As matters stand, however, the claws are raised when the pads are raised, thus enabling the fly to maintain a position either on window pane or ceiling.

How the Flies Carry Bacteria

FLIES are wonderful transportation systems. Each of the fly's six legs has two pads, and each of these carries 1500 hairs. That makes a total of 7500 hairs, each one of which secretes a sticky fluid. The sticky contents of the pads slide through the hairs at every step, thus enabling the fly to maintain a position either on window pane or ceiling. If the pads existed alone the insect would experience difficulty in removing them. As matters stand, however, the claws are raised when the pads are raised, thus enabling the fly to maintain a position either on window pane or ceiling.