

The First of the Great Struggles Between Nayland Smith and the Sinister Fu-Manchu

GENTLEMAN to see rou, dector."

From across the complex a clock sounded the half hour.

"Ten-thirty!" I said. "A late visitor. Show him up, if you please."

him up, if you please."

I pushed my writing aside and tilted the lamp shade as footsteps sounded on the landing. The start measure I had jumped to my feet, for a tall, lean man, with his square-cut, clean-shaven face sun baked to the lam of coffee, entered and extended both hands with a cut.

"Good old Petrie! Didn't expect me, I'll swear!"

It was Nayland Smith, whom I had thought to in

"Smith," I said, and gripped his hands hard, "this is elightful surprise! Whatever-however-'
"Excuse me, Petrie!" he broke in. 'Don't put it en to the sun!" And he put out the lamp, plunging the room into darkness.

I was too surprised to speak. "No doubt you will think me mad," he continued, and dimly I could see him at the window, peering out into the road, "but before you are many hours older you will know that I have good reason to be cautieum. Ah, nothing suspicious! Perhaps I am first this time." And stepping back to the writing table, he relighted the

"Mysterious enough for you?" he laughed, and glances at my unfinished MS. "A story, ext From which I gather that the district is beastly healthy—what, Potrier Well, I can put some material in your way that, if sheer sprancy mystery is a marketable commodity, ought to meanny mystery is a marketable commodity, ought to make you independent of influence and braken legs and distinct nerves and all the rest."

shattered nerves and all the rest."

I kurveyed him doubtfully, but there was nothing in his appearance to justify me in supposing him to suffer from delusions. His eyes were too bright, certainly, and a hardness now had crept over his face. I get out the whicky and siphon, saying:

"You have taken your leave early?"

"I am not on leave," he replied, and slowly filled his like." I am of duty."

"I am on duty."
"On duty!" I exclaimed. "What, are you moved to ondon, or something?".
"I have got a roving commission, Petrie, and it doesn't set with me where I am soday, nor where I shall be to-

There was comething eminous in the words, and put-ig down my glass, I faced round and looked him

ing down my glass, I hadd round and looked appropriate the ages.

"Gut with it!" I said. "What is it all about?"

Smith suddenly stood up and stripped off his coat.

Boiling back his left shirt sleeve he revealed a wickedlooking wound in the fleshy part of the forearm. It was
guits healed, but curiously striated for an inch or so

"Ever seen one like K?" he asked.
"Not exactly," I confessed. "It appears to have been
ply cauterised."

"Right! Very deeply! A barb steeped in the venom of a hamadryad went in there!"

A shudder I could not repress ran through me at men-

tion of that most deadly of all the reptiles of the east.
"There's only one treatment," he continued, rolling his eleeve down again, "and that's with a sharp knife, tch and a broken cartridge. I lay on my back raving for three days afterward in a forest that stank with malaria, but I should have been lying there now if I had sesitated. Here's the point. It was not an accident!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that it was a daliberate attempt on my life, and I am hard upon the tracks of the man who extracted that venous-patiently, drop by drop—from the poison glands of the snake, who prepared the arrow, and who caused it to be shot at ma."

"What fiend is this?"

"A fiend who, unless my calculations are at facil, is ow in London, and who regularly wars with pleasant was in London, and who regularly wars with pleasant sapons of that kind. Petrie, I have traveled from urms not in the interests of the entire white rese, and honestly believe—though I pray I may be wrus—at its survival depends largely upon the success of my

To say that I was perplexed conveys no idea of the mental chaos created by these extraordinary statements, for into my humdrum suburban life Nayland Smith had brought fantasy of the wildest. I did not know what

"I am wasting precious time!" he rapped decisively, and, draining his glass, he stood up. "I came straight to you because you are the only man I dare to trust. Except the big chief at headquarters, you are the only person in England, I hope, who knows that Nayland mith has quitted Burms. I must have some one with ms. Petric, all the time-it's imperative! Can you put me up here, and spare a few days to the strangest busi-men, I promise you, that ever was recorded in fact or

I agreed readily enough, for, unfortunately, my proal duties were not onerous. "Good man?" he cried, wringing my hand in his im-

"Tonight! I had thought of turning is, I must admit."
I have not dared to sleep for forty-eight hours, except in afteen-minute stretches. But there is one move that must be made tonight and immediately. I must warn Gir Crichton Davey."

"Sir Crichton Davey-of the India-" "Petrie, he is a doomed man! Unless he follows my structions without question, without hesitation—before eaven, nothing can save him! I do not know when the w will fall, how it will fall, nor from whence, but I show that my first duty is to warn him. Let us down to the corner of the common and get a taxi." that my first duty is to warn him. Let us walk

"What's this?" muttered my friend hoarsely. Constables were moving on a little crowd of curious adlers who pressed about the steps of Sir Crichton Davey's house and sought to peer in at the open door. Without waiting for the cab to draw up to the curb, Nayland smith recklessly leaped out, and I followed closely at his beats.

"What has happened?" he demanded breathlessly of

in the recklessly leaped out, and I followed closely at his heats.

"What has happened?" he demanded breathlessly of a constable.

The latter glanced at him doubtfully, but something in his voice and bearing commanded respect.

"Sir Crichton Davey has been filled sir."

Smith lurched back as though he had received a physical blow, and clutched my shoulder to evolutively. Beleasth the heavy tan his face had blambed, and his eyes were set in a stare of horror.

"My God!" he whispered. "Just be late?"

With clenched fists he turned and, pressing through the group of loungers, bounded up the steps. In the hall a man who unmistakably was a Scotland Yard official stood talking to a feotman. Other members of the household were moving about, more or less aimments, and the childy head of King Fear had touched you official and the childy head of King Fear had touched were over their shoulden, as if each shadow cloaked a meante, and listened, as it seemed, for some sound which they dreaded to hear.

Smith strode up to the detective and showed him a card upon giancing at which the Scotland Yard man and somewhile in a low voice, and, nodding, touched his hat to Smith in a respectful manner.

A lew brief questions and answers, and, in gloomy glismes, we followed the detective up the heavily carpeted stair, along a corridor lined with plotures and busis, and into a large dilivary. A group of people were in this room, and one, in when I recognized Chainners Cleeve, of Hardy streat, was benefits over a metionless form stretched upon a couch. Another hear communicated with a small study, and through the egaster I could see a man on all four examining the carpe. The uncomfortable sense of husb, the group about he payadam, the birarre figure rewinds the stream that he manners of death, he said, at this case that exhibit last indebly or my mind.

As we entered, heater the venture any opinion at a case the exhibit last indebly or my mind.

Trankly, I do not care to venture any opinion at a case the could be a sense of the could be a

to the right arm. It was unscarred, but on the back of the hand was a faint red mark, not unlike the imprint of pallited Eps. I examined it closely, and even tried to rub it off, but it evidently was caused by some morbid process of local information if it were not a birthmark. Furning to a pale young man whom I had understood

Furning to a pale young man whom I had understood to be Sir Crichton's private secretary, I drew his attention to this mark and inquired if it were constitutional.

"It is not, sir," answered Doctor Cleeve, overhearing my question. "I have already made that inquiry. Does it suggest anything to your mind? I must confess that it afforded me no assistance."

"Mething," I replied. "It is most curious."

"Excuse me, Mr. Burboyne," said Smith, now turning to the secretary, "but Inspector Weymouth will tell you that I act with authority. I understand that Sir Crichton was seeind with liness in his study?"

"Yes, at half-past 18. I was working here in the library and he incide, as was our custom."

"The communicating door was kent closed?"

"Yes, always. It was open for a minute or less about ten-twenty-live, when a message came for Sir Crichton, I took it in to him, and be then seemed in his usual health."

health."
"What was the massage?"
"I could not say. It was brought by a district measure, and he placed it beside him on the table. It is there now, no doubt."
"And at half-past 10?"
"Bir Crichton suddenly burst spen the door and threw himself, with a screen, into the library. I

run to him, but he waved use back. His eyes were gisting horribly. I had just reached his side when he fell, writhing, upon the floor. He seemed past speech, but as I raised him and laid him upon the couch he pasped semething that sounded like The red hand! Before I could get to the ball or telephone he was dead!"

was small?

Mr. Surporns's voice shoot hi he spale the words and hunth seemed to find this explance contains.

"You do not think be referred to the mark on his

"I think not, From the direction of his last glance I feel sure he referred to something in the study."

"What did you do?" study. But there was nothing unusual to be seen. The windows were closed and fastened. He worked with closed windows in the bottest weather. There is no other door, for the study occupies the end of a narrow wing, so that no one could negative have gained access to it while I was in the library unseen by ma. Had some one concealed himself in the study easter in the evening—and I am convinced that it offers no hiding place—he could ealy have come out again by passing through here." windows were closed and

time?"
Yes. Sir Origiton was

"Yes," and Mr. Bur-boyne with ardient per-plexity, "though I at-tached so importance to it at the time. Three nights

at the time. Three hights ago Sir Crichton came out to, me and appeared very nervous; but at times his nerves—you know? Well, on this occasion he asked me to search the study. He had an idea that something was concealed there."

"Bomething" was the word he used. I searched, but fruitlessly, and he seemed quite satisfies and returned to his work."

fruitlessly, and he seemed quite satisfies and returned to his work."

"Thank you, Mr. Burboyns. My friend and I would like a few minutes private investigation in the study."

Sir Crickton Davey's study was a small one, and a glance sufficed to show that, as the secretary had said, it offered no hiding place. It was heavily carpeted, and everfull of Burmess and Chinese ornaments and curios, and upon the manispiece stood several framed photographs which showed this to be the sanctum of a wealthy bacheler who was no misogynist. A map of the Indian empire occupied the larger part of one wall. The grate was empty, for the weather was extremely warm, and a green-shaded lamp on the littered writing table afforded the only light. The air was stale, for both windows were closed and fastened.

Smith immediately pounced upon a large, square envelope that lay beside the hlotting pad. Sir Crichton had not even troubled to open it, but my friend did so. It contained a blank sheet of paper!

"Smell!" he directed, handing the letter to me.

I raised it to my nostrile. It was scented with some pungent perfume.

"What is it?" I asked.

I raised it to my nostrils. It was scented with some pungent perfume.

"What is it?" I asked.

"It is a rather rare essential oil," was the reply, "which I have met with before, though never in Europe. I begin to understand, Petrie."

He third the lamp shade and made a close examination of the scraps of paper, matches, and other debris that lay in the grate and on the hearth. I took up a copper wase from the mantelpiece, and was examining it curiously when he turned, a strange expression on his face.

"Put that back, old man," he said quietly.

"Put that back, old man." he said quietly.
Much surprised, I did as he directed.
"Don't touch anything in the room. It may be danger.

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"Don't touch anything in the room. It may be danger.

Something in the tone of his voice chilled me, and
I hastily replaced the vase and stood by the door of the
study, watching him search methodically every inch of
the room—behind the books, in all the ornaments, in table
drawers, in cupboards, on shelves.

"That will do," he said at last. "There is nothing
here and I have no time to search further."

We returned to the library.

"Inspector Weymouth," said my friend, "I have a
particular reason for asking that Sir Crichton's body be
removed from this room at once and the library looked.
Let no one be admitted on any pretense whatever until
you mear from me."

It spoke volumes for the mysterious credentials berne
by my friend that the man from Scotland Yard accepted
his orders without demur, and, after a brief chat with
Mr. Burboyne, Smith passed briskly downstairs. In the
hall a man who looked like a groom out of livery was
waiting.

Mr. Burboyne, Smith passes triany covanitate, an an hall a man who looked like a groom out of livery was waiting.

"Are you Wills?" asked Smith.

"Yes, air."

"It was you who heard a cry of some kind at the rear of the house about the time of Sir Crichton's death?"

"Nes, sir. I was locking the garage door, and, happening to look up at the window of Sir Crichton's study, I saw him jump out of his chair. Where he used to ait at his writing, sir, you could see his shadow on the blind. Next minute I heard a call out in the lane."

"What kind of call?"

"A sort of wall, sir," he said at last. "I never heard anything like it before and don't want to again."

"Like this?" inquired Smith, and he uttered a low, wailing cry, impossible to describe.

"The same, air, I think." Wills said, "but much louder."

"That will do," said Smith, and I thought I detected a note of triumph in his voice. "But stay! Take us through to the back of the house."

The man bowed and led the way, so that shortly we

found ourselves in a small, paved countyard. It was a perfect summer's night, and the deep blue vault above was jeweled with myriads of eterry points.

"Up youder are the study windows, alr. Over that well on your left is the back lans from which the cry came, and beyond is Regent's Park."

"Are the study windows visible from there?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Who occupies the adjoining house?"
"Major General Platt-Houston, sir, but the family is

The man, whom the unexamy happening clearly had frightened, seemed puzzled for a suitable description,

You, sir." "Then send come one to make my business known to the major general's housekeeper; I want to examine

Singular though my friend's proceedings appeared me, I had ceased to wonder at anything. Since Nayls Smith's arrival at my rooms I seemed to have been my ing through the fitful phases of a nightmare. My friend account of how he came by the wound in his arm; the scene on our arrival at the house of Sir Crichton Davey; the secretary's story of the dying man's cry, "The rec

him any more tonight!"

Before I could find words to reply she gathered up her clock and run. Before I could determine whether or not to follow her (for her words had aroused anew all my worst suspicions) she had disappeared! I heard the whir of a restarted motor at no great distance, and in the instant that Nayland Smith dame running down the steps I knew that I had nodded at my post.

"Smith!" I cried as he joined me, "fell me what we

And rapidly I acquainted him with the incident. My friend looked very grave; then a grim smile crest

"She was a big card to play," he said; "but he did not know that I held one to heat it."

"What! You know this gir!? Who is she?"

"She is one of the finest weapons in the enemy's armory, Petria. But a woman is a two-edged sword, and treacherous. To our great good fortune, she has farmed a smiden predilection, characteristically oriental, for yourself. Oh, you may smile, but it is evident. She was ampleyed to get this letter placed in my hands. Give it

Sr. 'I have collowed your lead blindly in this southle business and have not pres-ed for an explanation, but

of for an explaination, be I must insist before I a step farther upon knowing what it all means."

"Just a few store in ther," he rejoined. This is as a cab. We are hard safe here. Oh, yet is not fear shot or knive. The man whose serving are watching up now score.

ing ours, I think."

Nayland facilh iny tack
and inughed unmarthfully.

"Petris," he said, "if I
ecospe alive from this buildies I shall know that, I
bear a disjuned life."

I made no copty as he pulled out the disapidate pouch and filled his pipe.

explain matters," he con-tinued, tand I will do a to the best of my ability. You no doubt wonder why a servant of the British sov-ernment, intely stationed in Burms, suddenly appears in London in the character of Petrie-and I bear creden-tials from the very highest sources—because, quite by accident, I came upon a clew. Following it up in the ordinary course of routine, I obtained evidence of

the existence and malignant activity of a certain man. At the present stage of the case I should not be justified

the collinary course and the case I should not be justified in terming him the emissary of an eastern power, but I may any that representations are shortly to be made to that power's ambasader in London."

He paused and gisness back toward the pursuing cab. "There is little to fear until we arrive home." he said samily. "Asserwand there is much. To continue: This man, whether a familie or a diffy appointed agent, is, unquestionably, the most malign and formidable personality existing in the known world today. He is a linguist who speaks with almost equal facility in any of the civilized languages and in most of the barbaric. He is an adept in all the arts and sciences which a great university ould teach him. He size is an adept in certain obscure arts and existing on the brains of any three men of genius. Feiris, he is a meant again."

"Tou amasse me?" I said.

"Tou amasse me?" I said. Because he had peech head of he sid the key to the secret of. Tousking. When because he had peech head against the heid the key to the secret of. Tousking. When because he had peech head against the heid the key to the secret of. Tousking. When because he had peech head against the heid the key to the secret of. Tousking. When because he had not head to the said the work he was engaged upon ever seen the light, it would have shown him to be the only living Englishman who understood the importance of the Tibetan frontiers. Is here's and who would arrouse the west to a sense of the swatzning of the cast, that the millions only awast their leader? He will die. And this is only one phase of the devillah campaign. The others of an importance of the cast for the west to a sense of the swatzning of the cast, that the west to a sense of the swatzning of the cast, that the would arrow not be not a sense of the swatzning of the cast, that the west to a sense of the swatzning of the cast, that the west to a sense of the devillah campaign.

this the travelers is stituated by this ground. You will notice that the perfume chings to whatever it touches. I doubt if it can be maded off in the ordinary way. After at least one unsuccessful attempt to kill Sir Crichton-you recall that he thought there was something concealed in his study on a previous occasion!—Fu-Manchu hit upon the perfumed envelopes. He may have a supply of these green writids in his passession—possibly to feed the

"What creature? How could any creature have got into Sir Crichton's room tohight?"

"You no doubt observed that I examined the grats of the study. I found a fair quantity of fallen soot. I at ence assumed, since it appeared to be the only means of entrance, that something had been dropped down; and I took it for granted that the thing, whatever it was, must still be concealed either in the study or in the library. But when I had obtained the evidence of the groom. Wills, I perceived that the cry from the lane or from the park was a signal. I noted that the movements of any one seated at the study table were visible, in shadow, on the blind, and that the study occupied the corner of a two-stories wing and, therefore, had a short chimney, What did the signal mean? That Sir Crichton had leaped up from his chair and either had received the Zayat Kiss or had seen the thing which some one on the roof had lowered down the straight chimney. It was the signal to mithdraw that deadly thing. By means of the iron stairmy at the rear of Major General Platt-Houston's I

units stally gained access to the roof above Bir Cricks.

Lon's study—and I found this."

Out from his poster Nayland Smith drew a tangled place of filk, mixed up with which were a brass ring and a number of unusually large-sized split shot, hipped of in the manner usual on a fishing line."

My theory proven. The resumed. "Not anticipating troh on the roof, they had been careless. This was light the line and to prevent the creature's clinging the walls of the chimney. Directly it had dropped in grate, however, by means of this ring I assume that weighted line was withdrawn, and the thing was only the weighted line was withdrawn, and the thing was only hed by a siender thread, which sufficed, though, to draw it back again when it had done its work. It might have get tangled, of course, but they reckoned on its making straight up the carved leg of the writing table for the prepared envelope. From there to the hand of Sir Crichton.—which, from having touched the envelope, would also be possible with the perfume—was a certain move."

scented with the perfume—was a certain move."
"My God! How horrible!" I exclaimed, and glanced
scalesaively into the duaky shadows of the room. but is your theory respecting this creature what "It is something that moves rapidly and ellently.

have observed that the rear of this house is lyy covered right up to and above your bedroom. Let us make osten-lations preparations to retire, and I think we may rely upon Pu-Manchu's servants to attempt my removal, at "But, my dear fellow at the very least!" dear fellow, it is a climb of thirty-five feet

The remember the cry is the back lane? It suggested something to me, and I tested my idea—successfully, it was the cry of a dacoit. Oh, dacoity, though subsects, it is no means extinct. Fur-Manchu has decoits in his train, and meanably it is one who operates the Zayat kins, although the events. To such a main an typecovered unit is a traine statement. To such a main an typecovered unit is a traine statement. The such a main an typecovered unit is a traine statement. Having removed all increases the scent of the orchidatrom our hands with a charge of ammonia, Smith and I had followed the program and down. It was an easy matter to reach the rest of the house by simply climbing a fence, and we did not done that, seeing the light go out in front, our names watcher would proceed to the back.

hack.

The room was a large one, and we had made up my camp, bed at one said, stuffing edds and ends under the clothes to lend the appearance of a sleeper, which device we also had adopted in the case of the larger bed. The perfumed envelope lay upon a little codes table in the center of the floor, and Smith, with an electric pocket lamp, a revolver, and a brassy beside him, sat on cushlons in the shadow of the wardrobe. I occupied a post between the windows.

The distant clock struck a quarter-past 2. A slight

The distant clock struck a quarter-past 2. A slight breaze stirred the ivy.

Something rose, inch by inch, above the sill of the westerly window. I could see only its shadow, but a sharp, sibilant breath from Smith told me that he, from his post, could see the cause of the shadow.

Every narve in my body seemed to be strong tensely. I was icily cold, expectant, and prepared for whatever horror was upon us.

The shadow became stationary. The dacoit was studying the interior of the room.

Then it suddenly lengthesed, and, craning my neck to the left, I saw a lithe, black-clad form, surmounted by a yellow face, sketchy in the moonlight, pressed esgallist the window panes?

One thin brown hand appeared over the edge of the lowered tash, which it grasped, and then another. The man made absolutely no sound whatever. The second hand disappeared—and reappeared. It held a small square box.

There was a very fame click.

There was a very faint click.

The dacoit swung himself below the window with the agility of an ape as, with a dull, sickening thud, something dropped upon the carpet!

"Stand still, for your life!" came Smith's voice, high

Stane still, for your life; using the room and stoked.

A beam of white light leaped out across the room and sayed fully upon the coffee table in the center.

Prepared as I was for something horrible, I know that paled at sight of the thing that was running round the paled at sight of the thing that was running round the paled at sight of the thing that was running round the paled at sight of the thing that was running round the paled at the anyelone.

"The body of a lascar, dreased in the manner usual on the P. & O. boats, was recovered from the Thames of Tilbury by the river police at 6 o'clock this morning. It is supposed that the man met with an accident in leaving his ship."

