

proper air of nonchalance. It would serve to annoy the altruistic and optimistic Mr. Hazlitt. And the girl was distinctly good looking.

"And my part in the arrangements—?" McDevitt paused and Kiplinger filled in the tentative silence.

"Is simply to walk ahead of me now and give her every opportunity to accost you. She'll want to know the address of a maiden aunt in Brooklyn or the way to the nearest tube terminal or some such information. The crowd will jostle her against you and she will exclaim at the annoyance. She'll have your watch, stickpin and sundry other trinkets before she says good-by. Then I happen along and give her a chance to explain. Are you game?"

♦ ♦ ♦

McDevitt nodded and strode briskly ahead. His heart pounded with positively amateurish trepidation. He seemed to hear it beating above the scuffling of hundreds of feet on the cement and the shrieking of newsboys anent the allied offensive and the Staunton murder. The head wind blew the flexible rim of the girl's wide white hat low into her eyes, and glancing covertly at her he could see only the tip of a retousse nose and very determined lips and chin outlined against a background of white fur. A trim fitting suit of blue serge, an enormous muff and tiny Russian boots completed her attire. She turned a casual glance upon McDevitt and he noted that her cheeks had been buffeted to a very vivid pink, and that her eyes were very large and very dark. Strands of curly golden hair whipped about her white forehead and the tiniest frown appeared between her delicate dark eyebrows as she brushed them back with one white gloved hand. Anon she stole other glances at McDevitt's lean profile, and he found himself stirred with a vague regret that Fresno Fannie could not be all she seemed, and that he should be a willing volunteer in the law's league against her.

He graduated his gait to her short, quick steps, and quite ostentatiously drew out and consulted a jeweled watch. The light from a department store window caught the inlaid diamonds in a thousand dazzling scintillations. Quite as deliberately, and staring straight ahead, he returned the timepiece to his pocket.

A moment later Fresno Fannie Halloran was speaking.

"I trust that you will pardon my presumption," she began in a low, musical voice, "but you have the appearance of being indigenous to your surroundings. I am not. Could you tell me the way to the Herald Building? I promised to meet my brother there and go on down town with him. He has worked here for a number of years, and I am visiting him."

"Certainly," replied McDevitt, lifting his hat punctiliously. "In fact I was of a mind to stroll down that way myself. Shall I call a taxi?"

The girl shook her head in smiling negation. "Not unless it's awfully far," she said. "I am used to walking, and even walking here is such a novelty."

"Five blocks," responded McDevitt. "We'll walk."

The eyes she turned upon him were wide, dark and as ingenuous as those of a child. She laughed with youthful abandon at McDevitt's quizzical utterances, and the parted lips revealed large white, even teeth. Inscrutable shadows came and went in the violet depths of her eyes, and she had an appealing way of shrinking half unconsciously into the protection of one's arm as the elevated trains roared by.

"I just hate them," she confided with a merry gurgle; "positively every time one goes by I have an idea that I am being run over."

The crowd jostled her slender form against him time and again, and the wind blew the trailing ends of her furs into his face. Whenever it happened she would murmur apologies, and the tiny crease would appear between the eyebrows. Then the next moment, in re-

sponse to some cryptic utterance of McDevitt's, her whole countenance would light up in one of her glorious smiles. McDevitt wished that she was what she had represented herself to be—a very pretty and very guileless girl from the hinterland, on her first visit to the metropolis, very frankly amazed and interested by everything she saw. For Fannie was pretty. And her features were too fine and her laugh too merry and her eyes too wide and innocent to be wasted on the person of a clever female crook.

They were entering upon the square when Kiplinger sauntered up. "I think the old man's awfully lonesome for you at headquarters, Fannie," he suggested. "Suppose you cheer him up by an informal call."

The girl gasped and shrunk back against McDevitt.

"What—what do you mean?" she asked, but her lips trembled, and her tones carried no conviction of outraged innocence.

"Approximately what I have said," responded the detective, smiling slightly. He laid a detaining hand upon the girl's arm. "I'd suggest, however, that you return to the gentleman all those pretty souvenirs," he coaxed. "The matron will get them anyhow."

She turned wide, tear-filled eyes indignantly upon McDevitt. "Please tell him," she choked, "to stop annoying me."

McDevitt's flaccid muscles grew tense, and he was suddenly conscious of a great desire to smash Kiplinger upon his lean, leering mouth. She couldn't be other than she seemed. And she was entreating his protection. But the impulse passed. Kiplinger was speaking.

"No use stalling, Fannie," he said crisply. "It might work in Frisco, but it's obsolete in these parts." He indicated the girl's muff. "Shell out!" he commanded peremptorily, "and let's be leaving."

Reluctantly the girl's hand stole out

of the muff. She passed something to Kiplinger. He glanced at it, laughed shortly, and handed it to McDevitt. It was a watch, and from it dangled McDevitt's jade 'varsity fob. He turned into the crowd with his "pinch."

"Nice work," he said tersely. "You'll do."

The girl turned and glanced over her shoulder. Her piquant little face was set in hard lines now, and the soft red lips sagged cynically at the corners. "I didn't know," she remarked caustically, "that professional 'stool pigeons' used such excellent English, or wore that kind of clothes." Then the shifting, shuffling throng swallowed them up.

McDevitt passed his hands wearily over his aching eyes, and stared for several minutes toward the exact vortex of humanity that had enveloped Kiplinger and the girl with the cynical twist to her red lips. Then he sauntered on. There had been a thrill, no doubt. But it tended to hurt rather than to exhilarate. And McDevitt, who had laughed at "Mick" Murphy's methods and scored his ignorance of psychology, was in no wise exultant. In fact, he was rather ashamed.

A stranger stepped out of a doorway. He laid a light hand upon McDevitt's arm. "You're coming down to the central office," he remarked dispassionately.

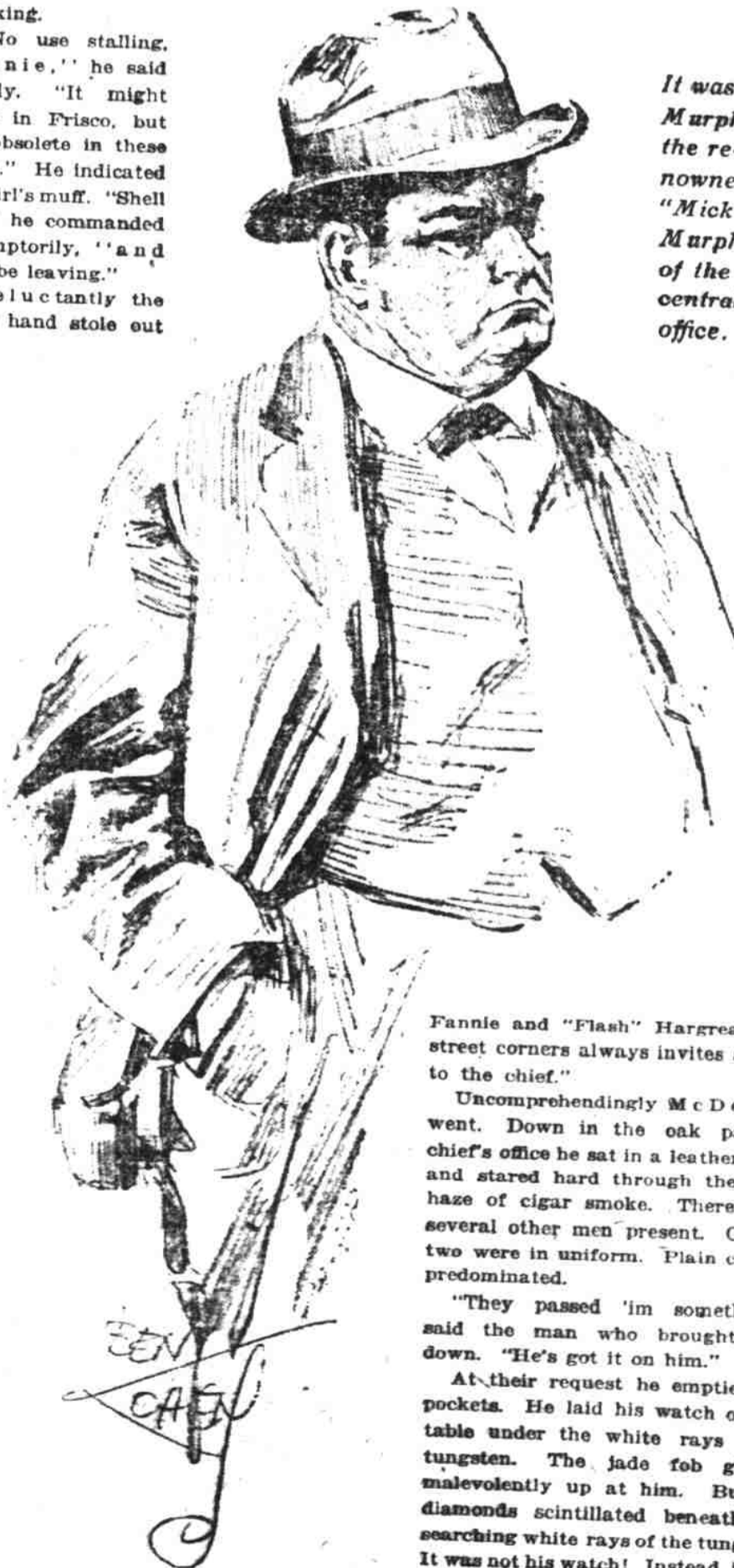
♦ ♦ ♦

McDevitt started. It was not an invitation. Neither was it a question. It was merely stated as a fact.

"Why?" said McDevitt.

"We don't like the looks of your friends. Getting intimate with Fresno

*It was
Murphy,
the re-
nowned
"Mick"
Murphy,
of the
central
office.*



Fannie and "Flash" Harreave on street corners always invites a visit to the chief."

Uncomprehendingly McDevitt went. Down in the oak paneled chief's office he sat in a leather chair and stared hard through the gray haze of cigar smoke. There were several other men present. One or two were in uniform. Plain clothes predominated.

"They passed 'im something," said the man who brought him down. "He's got it on him."

At their request he emptied his pockets. He laid his watch on the table under the white rays of a tungsten. The jade fob glowed malevolently up at him. But no diamonds scintillated beneath the searching white rays of the tungsten. It was not his watch! Instead, it was

a plain hunting case, with the initials H. H. S. worked in scroll. Some one behind him muttered and then broke out in an ejaculation. He pounced upon the watch. A spring snapped and the case flew open. It was not a watch at all. Instead, there reposed within a folded tissue paper. The man spread it out. Upon it—it was as large as a handkerchief—were numerous parallel lines in red, with blue dots and dashes and asterisks. "The Cavite plans!" said the stranger knowingly. "Mick" Murphy stared through the cigar smoke at McDevitt and grunted. "And Staunton's fake watch," he added. "I seen him with it."

♦ ♦ ♦

McDevitt licked his stiff white lips and strove to speak naturally. "I've got an airtight alibi," he said. "I was at the club. There's a frameup somewhere. A girl—"

The men laughed. Murphy guffawed coarsely. His heavy red, lowering face was close to McDevitt's. "Ye've got an alibi, have yuh?" he sneered. "Well, you've got the plans, too, for which your gang croaked Staunton."

He heard Murphy explaining to the others as they led him out. "It certainly isn't money that mixed him in. He's got plenty o' 'jack.' I seen it happen before, too. Just crazy for excitement. A man'll do most anything when he gets tired o' girls and cocktails, and don't have to rustle for a livin'."

And thus, perhaps, should the tale end. You'd rather guess, wouldn't you, whether McDevitt was innocent or guilty? You'd rather wonder whether police vigilance, relaxed through his "capture," had enabled the others to escape. But the editors say "happy endings." And under protest we proceed.

McDevitt sought to telephone that night. But his captors refused to permit it. He stormed and raved and pleaded, but they were adamant. He didn't eat breakfast. He had lost his appetite.

There was a different crowd in the chief's office the next morning. A girl in white furs was there. So were Hazlitt and Borroughs and Murphy. They stared long at McDevitt, and then Hazlitt laughed. So did Borroughs and Murphy. The girl in the white furs with the appealing violet eyes started to laugh, but beholding McDevitt, wan and pallid and hollow eyed, she desisted.

"So here's the conspirator," said Hazlitt.

"The volunteer Holmes," amended Borroughs. And then they both laughed.

"The Staunton murder!" gasped McDevitt.

"It took place, all right," said Murphy dryly, "only the Jap who turned the trick lost his nerve and committed harakiri. We—we borrowed Staunton's case. It served a purpose."

McDevitt collapsed into a chair proffered by Hazlitt. "And Fresno Fannie?" he demanded. "The detective—"

"My niece, Edith Hazlitt," said his boon companion. "She maintains that the super-sophisticated New Yorker is the most guileless person on earth. She's from Omaha, and offered to prove it."

"We've been telling Murphy what you think of central office methods," added Borroughs, "so we framed to give you a tryout."

And again they laughed. A slow flush mounted into McDevitt's pallid face. Then he looked at Miss Hazlitt. He stared fixedly at the piquant little face framed in golden hair. His eyes sought hers, with their enchanting lights and shadows. And McDevitt ceased to be a misanthrope. He even forgot to be indignant. It would have been a pretty crude piece of work if only Hazlitt and Borroughs and Murphy had been implicated. But the girl, somehow, made it different.

[Copyright, 1916, by J. Keeley]

Germany claims to lead the world in the use of machinery directly driven by electric motor