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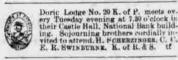
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# ABSOLUTELY PURE



His opportunity " and come to him this

It was at a carpet dance at the house of Mrs. Venable, a friend of his nucle, Mr. John Orde, that Marcus Gray, a young American over on his travels, having screwed his courage to the sticking place, proposed to Mary Lumsden, the eldest daughter of a well to do city merchant. They had met several times in the course of the preceding month, and it had not taken Gray long to discover that in Miss Lamsden be had lighted on the girl who, for him, was

'the fairest flower the sun shone on." evening, when he and Mary by some nappy chance found themselves alone in the curtained embayment of a proecting window. At any moment they might be disturbed by some other stray couple in search of a quiet nook, and what Gray had to say, if he did not wish the occasion to slip through his fingers.

must be brief and to the point. Presumably it was so, in view of the fact that not more than three minutes elapsed from the time of our people find-ing themselves alone in the alcove to that of their emergence. It may further be assumed that their conversation, brief as it was, had not proved unsatisfactory to either of them, seeing that, as Miss Lumsden's partner for the next dance came up to claim her, Gray contrived to whisper in her ear, "I will call upon your father in the course of to-

Mention has been made of Marcus

Gray's uncle, Mr. Orde. John Orde's dearest friend was Edward Lumsden, Mary's father. Their friendship dated back to their school days. They took to each other, as the saying is, from the first—so much so in-deed that some portion of the holiday of each was generally spent at the home of the other. When the time came for them to push their fortunes in the world, the city of London acted as a londstone to both; Lumsden found a stool in the office of a drysaltery firm in Upper Thames street, while Orde went under the tutelage of his father, whose business was that of a shipbroker. Years passed, bringing with them their inevitable changes and vicissitudes, but in no wise interrupting the current of their In the course of time Orde succeeded to his father's position, while Lumsden started in business on his own account, and to neither of them did fortune prove unkind.

We come now to a certain memorable ninth of June, the day immediately following that of Mrs. Venable's carpet Both Lumeden and Orde had deemed it advisable a little while before to put themselves in telephonic connec tion with such of their customers and property. The premises were in charge agents as preferred to specify their wants and wishes through that ready medium of communication, and accordingly a wire had been latid on the premises of each. Although Lumeden and Orde were in no way related in business affairs, they frequently used the telephone for messages about private matters, such as a little while before would have necessitated the writing of a note or the transmission of a telegram. For instance, Lumsden, having got inimself "switched on" at the exchange, would telephone Orde an invitation to dinner or a request to join him at his club at a certain hour, while Ords on his part, would inform Lumsden through the same medium that he had just had tickets sent him for a concert or the thea- follows: ter, and would specify when and where

he would look to meet his friend and wife unless they happened to be otherwise engaged.

At twenty minutes to two o'clock on the afternoon of the aforesaid June ninth, the telephone bell in Mr. Orde's private office signaled that some one was desirous of speaking with him. Mr. Max, attend to the instrument during his em-ployer's absence, at once responded to on there?

To this Max replied with the stereostranger or otherwise, having been seen to enter or leave the premises between typed, "Yes; who are your" 'Lumsden," was the answer. Then,

evidently recognizing that the voice was not his friend's, "Is not Mr. Orde there?"

every moment." "In that case I will keep the connec tion open for a few minutes. Tell him to signal me immediately he returns." "All right, sir," responded Max, and

with that the conversation came to an end for the time being. So far as could be ascertained afterward, it would seem to have been Lumsden's intention to ask Orde to meet him at his club and dine with him, his wife and daughter being under an engagement to accompany some friends

that evening to a concert. Four minutes later Mr. Orde pushed open the swing doors of the outer office and was at once informed by Max of the conversation that had passed beween himself and Mr. Lumsden. Gong forward into his room he took up he telephone tube with the intention of ignaling to his friend that he was there the fairest flower the sun shone on."

His opportunity had come to him this hand, and he was on the point of putting it to his lips when a sound which reached him through it arrested his attention and caused him to clap it to his ear instead. What he heard sounded to him like an inarticulate cry, as it might be, of surprise or fear, followed, the moment the tube touched his ear, by the words, "Oh, Harry, Harry-this from you!" Close upon which came a groan then a dull thud as of some heavy body falling, and last of all, after a brief

silence, but very faintly, what seemed like the clashing of a door. For a few moments longer Mr. Orde stood with the tube glued to his ear like a man stupefied, but no further sound of any kind reached him. Then his wits came back to him in some measure. He gave the signal he had been on the point of giving before and waited, with a sick ning suspense impossible to describe, for a response. But none came. Again he signaled, and again he waited; but with a like result, or rather with no re-

sult at all. The tube dropped from his fingers and he sank into his chair utterly dazed and confounded. What had happened to his friend? Had he been the unwitting auditor of a tragedy in which Lumsden had played the part of victim? If nothing had happened, why had the latter failed to respond to his summons? But the need for ascertaining, beyond the possibility of doubt, whether his fears had any foundation in fact was a spur to immediate action. He rang and ordered a hansom to be fetched with all speed. While waiting for it he signaled again through the instrument, hoping against hope to hear his friend's cheery "Halloof" in return, but the silence that ensued was as heart replete with foreboding the most dire that, a few minutes later, he found eleven o'clock he found there a gentlealley, in which narrow but important theroughfare Lumsden's offices were situated.

man dressed in deep mourning and an tural implements. Don't you need a entire stranger to him, who, at the monoist the monoist of th himself on his way to Saint Augustine's man dressed in deep mourning and an theroughfare Lumsden's offices were

But quick as he had been in reaching the table to Mr. Lumsden. The notes the scene, the tragedy which had been enacted there-for nothing less did if prove to be-had niready become public | cash book; neither could Mr. May throw | and all its kindred ailments. Every of the police, while the alley itself was blocked by a surging crowd of men and youths, each and all anxious to glean the latest particulars of a crime so startling and mysterious, for it is not often that a merchant of the city of London is murdered in his own office in broad daylight.

On the oblong mahogany table, at which he had sat for so many hours every week day, lay the dead body of Edward Lumsden, a terrible wound on his left temple, as if caused by some blunt instrument, revealing to all pres ent the nature of the foul play to which he had fallen a victim.

The particulars of the affuir, so far as they had yet been ascertained, were as

It had been Mr. Lumsden's practice

to charge number with the care or the establishment during luncheon time. which was limited to half an hour when, as a rule, he and an office boy were the sole occupants of the ground floor, which comprised a couple of rooms eventually returned. The funeral had -Lumsden's own office and a much taken place some days before. this ninth of June, about five minutes after the half dozen clerks had left in a affair on the part of the police, the par-

was sent by his master with a note to the head of a firm some distance away. gone just a quarter of an hour, during which time it must have been that Lumsden tried to open up a communicathe lad's return he was horrified at finding his master's body stretched lifeless on the floor. It was evident that Lumssignal that Orde had returned. ances led to the conclusion that the safe one of the staff, whose duty it was to notes and gold it might have contained, had been hurriedly rifled of whatever the door being open and the floor littered

the time of Houghton's quitting them and his return. And there, for the present, the affair rested.

As the dead man's oldest friend it "At present he is out, sir," replied duty to break the terrible tidings to his wife and family. wife and family.



"Hello, Garry: you here!" Marcus Gray had taken his ticket at Victoria Station and two more minutes would have seen him in the train on his way to Streatham, where the Lumsdens lived, when his attention was attracted by the placard of an evening newspaper Mysterious Murder This Day of a City Merchant" was the startling am ment which stared him in the face Now, his uncle was a city merchant, one of thousands of others, and that of itself was enough to cause him to invest a penny in the purchase of a paper.

penny in the purchase of a paper.

It is enough to say that Gray did now shoes, overshoes, rubber boots, etc. Drop go to Streatham that day, nor for many

weeks afterward

ing forthcoming, other than that which their first crude investigation had brought to light. That the safe had been rifled there was no longer any doubt, seeing that neither a note nor a coin of any kind was found in it; but in view of the fact that Mr. Lumsden had ed to keep on hand the freshest and been in the habit of keeping all cash choicest meats, sausages and bolognas. a matters connected with the business in his own hands, it was difficult to ascerthrough what moneys he had in hand at the time be came by his death. The chances, however, were that the sum was not a large one, the dead man having been in the habit of banking day by paid to his employer on the morning of the ninth; but, on the other hand, the silence of the grave. It was with a Houghton averred that on taking some letters into his master's room about

in question were not now to be found;

no entry of them had been made in the

At the inquest, which was more than once adjourned in the hope that further evidence would presently be forthcom-ing, a verdict of "willful morder against

PUB

Mr. Orde did not fail to impart to Inspector Fountain, who had charge of the body, the office boy, Houghton by name, ticulars of what he had so strangely was sent by his master with a note to heard through the medium of the telephone. The inspector appeared to be and, according to his own account, was much struck thereby and made ample entries in his notebook. There was reason for believing that during the next few days he devoted a considerable portion with his friend by telephone. On tion of his time to endeavoring to ascertain whether the murdered man had been on intimate terms with any one, either a friend or a relative, whose bapden had been struck down while seated close to the telephone waiting for the all such inquiries proved of no avail. To his initiative it was due that an advertisement was inserted in The Times and other newspapers requesting that should the same meet the eye of the person who on the morning of the ninth of June paid the late Mr. Edward Lumsthe summons, which was followed up by the usual preliminary question, "Are slightest evidence of any one, either a money in bank notes he would at once communicate with the police; but time went on and the advertisement seemed likely to remain a dead letter, the merchant had come by his death at the hands of some one who was aware that at that hour of the day he and the office boy had, as a rule, the premises to themselves, could scarcely be doubted. In all probability Houghton had been seen to leave the office, and advantage had been taken of his absence. But all such auppositions merely served to deepen the

### mystery which clung around the affair [CONTINUED.]

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The Buchler beer, 5 cents per glass, at Some days passed without any evidence on which the police could act better than a constant of the constant of

The M. L. & T. Co., since they have roofed all their platforms, have an im-mense storage capacity. This company mense storage capacity. This compar now deals in grain, lumber and wood. Since Shaw & McCarty purchased the meat market they have always endeavor

terprise avail in this wild west, if you tain with any degree of exactitude until cannot get big bargains? However, be certain books should have been gone fore giving up entirely, visit Minor Bros. emporium. Borg, the jeweler, is the man to fix up

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your watch or clock. Le keeps a full stock of everything pertaining to his business Thompson & Binns own the buss which no knowledge of any cash having been goes to and from the City hotel, but will call for parties desiring to go to train in any part of the city. Leave orders at City botel.

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