

**"BLACKSHEEP"**

(Continued from Page 4)

"When a piercing scream, the shrill cry of a child in terror.

"Help! Help! Oh, Edith! Edith!" The cries sent him at a run toward the place in which he left the Congdons.

Rounding a curve in the path he saw a man rushing down the road with Edith in his arms.

Archie redoubled his pace, passed Mrs. Congdon and gained the car as the man with the child in his arms, jumped into it. The car was moving rapidly and a man's voice bade the driver hurry. Within the child's screams were suddenly stifled, the door swung open for an instant, and a blow, delivered full in the face, sent Archie reeling into the road.

When he gained his feet, Mrs. Congdon stood beside him moaning and wringing her hands. A mounted policeman rode upon the scene, listened for an instant to Archie's explanations, and sounding his whistle, set off after the car at a gallop.

Mrs. Congdon had fainted. Archie's nose bled from the rap in the face and his back ached where he had struck the earth. The sergeant plied him with questions which he answered carefully. When his name was asked he answered promptly.

"John B. Wright, Boston; stopping at the Hotel Ganymede."

"Business?"

"Broker, Nanonet Building, Boston."

Mrs. Congdon had recovered sufficiently to tell her story, and to Archie's relief cooperated his own version in a manner to dispose of any question as to his innocence. Her composure struck Archie as remarkable and her replies to the officer's questions were brief and exact. To Archie's surprise, she gave her name as:

"Mrs. George W. Kendall, 117 East Corning Street, Brooklyn."

It was incredible that any one could lie with so convincing an air. He was satisfied that she was Mrs. Congdon, and that the child she called Edith was the original of the photograph he had seen at Bailey Harbor. When the owners of several machines offered to take her home, she glanced about uncertainly and her eyes falling upon him seemed to invite his assistance.

"Pardon me, but if I can serve you in any way—"

"Thank you," she said with relief. "I must get away from this; it's unbearable."

He put her and the boy into a taxi, and instructed the driver to go to Brooklyn!"

For a few moments she was busy comforting the child and Archie, deep in thought, turned to meet the searching gaze of her gray eyes.

"You are a gentleman," I am sure of that; and I feel that I can trust you. I am in a strange predicament, and I'm forced to ask you help. The name and address I gave the police were fictitious. I know it has a queer look; but I had to do it. I know perfectly well who carried away my little girl. The man and woman you saw in the car were servants employed by my father-in-law who cordially dislikes me.

"Of course I'm not going to Brooklyn. Please tell the man to drive to the Altmore, ladies' entrance. I'll walk through the main door and take another taxi. I'm only sorry your name had to be brought into it."

"You needn't bother about that at all," Archie replied with a reassuring smile. "The name and address I gave were both false."

He looked at her covertly and they laughed with the mirth of children, planning mischief in secret.

"The little girl," he ventured; "you are not apprehensive about her?"

Not in the slightest. My father-in-law is most disagreeably eccentric, but he is very fond of my children. It was quite like him to attempt to carry off the little girl always a particular pet of his. I was shocked, of course, when it happened. But I am not worried. I meant to put the children quite out of my husband's way. It's rather odd, as I think of it, that my husband didn't personally try to take the child from me."

This, uttered musingly, gave Archie a perturbed moment. But the car had reached the Altmore, and he lifted the boy and accompanied them to the door.

"Thank you, very much," she said, in a tone that dismissed him.

**CHAPTER XI.**

Refreshed by a nap and shower, Archie was dressed and waiting for the Governor at seven, who arrived a few minutes later.

"Here's an extra I picked up downtown. The scream of the evening is a kidnapping—most deplorable line of business."

While Archie waited for the Governor to dress, he carefully read the account of the kidnapping in the park.

The police had not yet learned that the two most important witnesses had given fictitious names.

In spite of the Governor's frequently avowed assertion that he wished to know nothing about him, Archie felt strongly impelled to make a clean breast of the Bailey Harbor affair, the two encounters with Isabel and his meeting with Mrs. Congdon. His resolution strengthened when the Governor appeared, dressed with his usual care and exhilarated by his day's adventures. Baring retired after the dinner had been served, and the Governor, in cozy accord with his cigar, remarked suddenly:

"Odd, you might almost say singular! I've crossed old man Congdon's trail again! You recall him—the old boy we left to the tender mercies of Seebrook and Walters'. Well, I met today one of the most remarkable of all the men I know who camp outside the pale. Perky is his name—a jeweler by trade, he fell from his high estate and went on the road as a yegg—then entered into the game of boring neat holes in the rim of twenty-dollar gold pieces, leaving only the outer shell, and filling 'em up with a composition he invented that made the coin ring like a marriage bell. While he was still experimenting he ran into old Elphalet sitting with his famous umbrella on a bench in Boston Common. Perky thought Elphalet was a stool pigeon for a con outfit, but explanations followed and it was a case of infatuation on both sides. The old man was as tickled with the scheme as a boy with a new dog. He now assists Perky to circulate the spurious medium of exchange. Perky says he's a wonderful ally, endowed with all the qualities of a first class crook."

"You'll appreciate that better," said Archie, "when you hear what I know about the Congdon family. You've been mighty decent in not pressing me for any account of myself, but you've got to hear my story now. We'll probably both be more comfortable if I don't tell you my name, but you shall have that, too, if you care for it. So many things have happened since I left Bailey Harbor that you don't know about, things that I haven't dared tell you, that I'm going to spout it all now and here. If you want to chuck me when you've heard it, well enough; but I don't mind saying that to part with you would hurt me terribly. I never felt so dependent on any man as I do on you; and I've grown mighty fond of you, old man."

"Thank you, lad," said the Governor. He listened patiently, nodding occasionally or throwing in a question.

When Archie finished he rose and clapped him on the shoulder.

"By Jove, you've tossed my stars around like so many dice! I've got to consult the oracles immediately."

He darted from the room, and when Archie reached his study the Governor was poring over a map of the heavens.

"Your Isabel's all tangled up in our affairs!" declared the Governor with mock resentment. She will dawn upon your gaze again very soon—I feel it coming. Our next move is outlined—we must go to Rochester."

"Would you mind telling me just what Rochester had to do with all this?" demanded Archie testily.

"My dear boy, Rochester is one of the suburbs of Paradise. You may recall that I told you of a certain tile in a summer house where my adored promised to leave a message for me if her heart softened or she needed me. Well, the secret post-office is at Rochester; there the incomparable visits her aunt and about this time of year she's likely to be there. And if you knew the way of the stars and could understand my calculations you'd see that your Isabel is likely to have some business in that neighborhood just now."

"Rubbish! I happen to know that her business was all to be in northern Michigan this summer. Your stars have certainly made a monkey of you this time! You talk like a nonsense book! How much luggage are we taking?"

The Governor rang for Timmons to do their packing and fell upon a time table.

They wrote them selves down on the hotel register at Rochester as Saulsbury and Comly and were quickly in the rooms the Governor had engaged by wire. A short time later Archie found himself whisked away to a handsome residential area where the Governor dismissed the driver at a corner and continued afoot for several blocks.

The Governor ran his stock along the top of a wall that grimly guarded the rear of the premises. He caught the edge and was quickly on top. When Archie hung back the Governor grasped him by the arms and swung him up and dropped him into a dark corner of the garden. Then he left him with the injunction to remain where he was.

"Archie! Oh, Archie!" the Governor whispered excitedly, brushing an envelope across the bewildered Archie's face. "Strike a match before I perish."

He tore open the envelope and his fingers trembled as he held the note to the light. He read the two sheets

to himself eagerly, then demanded a second match and read aloud: (Continued on Page 6)



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