

Through the Wall

By CLEVELAND MOFFETT

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"Here you are, blocking the corridor at No. 4." He made a mark on the plan at that point. "By the way, are there any other exits from the banquet room except these two corridor doors?"

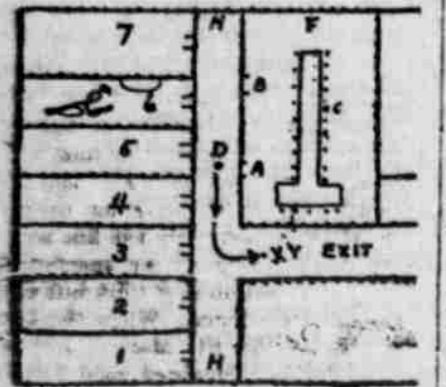
"No, sir."

"Good! Now, pay attention. While you were listening at this door—I'll mark it A—with your back turned to No. 6, a person might have left the banquet room by the farther door—I'll mark it B—and stepped across the corridor into No. 6 without your seeing him. Isn't that true?"

"Yes, sir, it's possible."

"Or a person might have gone into No. 6 from either No. 5 or No. 7 without your seeing him?"

"Excuse me. There was no one in



WEST WING OF ANSONIA HOTEL.—FIRST FLOOR.

No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, private dining rooms opening on corridor H H.

No. 6, private dining room where body was found.

F, large dining room occupied at time of tragedy by Americans gathered at Fourth of July banquet.

C, seat at banquet occupied by Kittredge and left vacant by him.

A, B, two doors opening into corridor from banquet room.

D, point in corridor where the waiter Joseph stood with back turned to No. 5 while he looked through door A during Fourth of July speeches.

X, Y, arrows show direction taken by man and woman who passed Joseph in corridor going out.

No. 5 during that fifteen minutes, and the party who had engaged No. 7 did not come.

"Ah! Then if any stranger went into No. 6 during that fifteen minutes he must have come from the banquet room?"

"Yes, sir."

"By this door, B?"

"That's the only way he could have come without my seeing him."

"And if he went out from No. 6 afterward, I mean if he left the hotel, he must have passed you in the corridor?"

"Exactly!" Joseph's face was brightening.

"Now, did any one pass you in the corridor, any one except the lady?"

"Yes, sir," answered the waiter eagerly; "a young man passed me. I supposed he came from the banquet room."

"Did any one else pass you either going out or coming in?"

"No, sir."

Joseph heaved a sigh of relief and was just passing out when the commissary cried out, with a startled expression: "A thousand thunders! Wait! That woman—what did she wear?"

The waiter turned eagerly. "Why, a beautiful evening gown, sir, cut low, with a lot of lace and—"

"No, no; I mean what did she wear outside? Her wraps—weren't they in No. 6?"

"No, sir, they were downstairs in the cloakroom."

"In the cloakroom?" He bounded to his feet. "Bon sang de bon Dieu! Quick! Fool! Don't you understand?"

This outburst stirred Joseph to unexampled efforts. He fairly hurled his massive body down the stairs and a few moments later returned panting, but happy, with news that the lady in No. 6 had left a cloak and leather bag in the cloakroom. These articles were still there.

"Ah, that is something!" murmured the commissary, and he hurried down to see the things for himself.

The cloak was of yellow silk, embroidered in white, a costly garment from a fashionable maker, but there was nothing to indicate the wearer. The bag was a luxurious trifle in Brazilian lizard skin, with solid gold mountings, but again there was no clue to the owner.

"Don't move these things," directed M. Pougeot. "It's possible some one will call for them, and if any one should call—why, that's Gibelin's affair. Now, we'll see these Americans."

It was a quarter past 10, and the majority of the proceedings at the Fourth of July banquet (no ladies present) had reached its height. A very French looking student from Bridgeport, Conn., had just started an uproarious rendering of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," with Latin quarter variations, when there came a sudden hush and a turning of heads toward the half open door, through which a voice was heard in pre-emptory command.

A moment later there entered a florid faced man with authoritative air, closely followed by two policemen.

"Gentlemen," began M. Pougeot, while the company listened in startled silence, "I am sorry to interrupt this pleasant gathering. While you have

been feasting and singing an act of violence has taken place within the sound of your voices. I am here as an officer of the law, because I have reason to believe that a guest at this banquet is connected with a crime committed in this restaurant within the last hour or two." Then, after the first dismay, came indignant protests. This man had a nerve to break in on a gathering of American citizens with a fairy tale like that! "Silence!" rang out the commissary's voice sharply.

CHAPTER IV.

"IN THE NAME OF THE LAW."

"WHO sat there?" He pointed to a vacant seat at the long center table.

Heads came together in excited whispers.

"Bring me a plan of the tables," he continued, and when this was spread before him, "I will read off the names marked here, and each of you will please answer."

In tense silence he called the names, and to each one came a quick "Here!" until he said "Kittredge!"

There was no answer.

"All here but M. Kittredge!" cried the official. "He was here, and—he went out. I must know why he went out; I must know when he went out—exactly when; I must know how he acted before he left, what he said. In short, I must know all you can tell me about him." Then began a wearisome questioning of witnesses, not very fruitful, either, for these Americans developed a surprising ignorance touching their fellow countryman and all that concerned him. As to Kittredge's life and personality, the result was scarcely more satisfactory. He had appeared in Paris about a year before, just why was not known, and had passed as a good fellow, perhaps a little wild and hot headed.

A few minutes later the unexpected happened. One of the policemen burst in to say that some one had called for the lady's cloak and bag.

"Well?" snapped the commissary.

"I was going to arrest him, sir," replied the other eagerly, "but—"

"Will you never learn your business?" stormed Pougeot. "Does Gibelin know this?"

"Yes, sir; we just told him."

"Send Joseph here—quick." And to the waiter when he appeared: "Tell the woman in the cloakroom to tell this young man where the things. Don't let him see that you are suspicious, but take a good look at him."

"Yes, sir. And then?"

"And then nothing. Leave him to Gibelin."

A moment later Joseph returned to say that he had absolutely recognized the young man downstairs as the one who had passed him in the corridor. Francois, the head waiter, was positive he was the missing banquet guest. In other words, they were facing this remarkable situation—that the cloak and leather bag left by the mysterious woman of No. 6 had now been called for by the very man against whom suspicion was rapidly growing—Lloyd Kittredge himself.

When Kittredge, with cloak and bag, stepped into his waiting cab and for the second time on this villainous night started down the Champs Elysees he was under no illusion as to his personal safety. He knew that he would be followed and presently arrested. He knew this without even glancing behind him. He had understood the whispers and searching looks in the hotel.

The driver grumbled and cracked his whip, and a moment later, peering back through the front window, he saw his eccentric fare absorbed in examining a white leather bag. He could see him distinctly by the yellow light of his two side lanterns. The young man had opened one of the inner pockets of the bag, drawing out a flap of leather under which a name was stamped quite visibly in gilt letters. Presently he took out a pocketknife and tried to scrape off the name, but the letters were deeply marked and could not be removed so easily. After a moment's hesitation the young man carefully drew his blade across the base of the flap, severing it from the bag, which he then threw back on the seat, holding the flap in apparent perplexity.

As they neared the end of the Rue de Valenciennes the American opened the door and told the man to turn and drive back. He wanted to have a look at Notre Dame, three full miles away.

On the way to Notre Dame, Kittredge changed their direction half a dozen times, acting on accountable impulses, going by zigzags through narrow dark streets instead of by the straight and natural way, so that it was after midnight when they entered the Rue du Cloître Notre Dame, which runs just beside the cathedral, and drew up at a house indicated by the American. Another cab observed by Kittredge drew up behind them.

"Tell your friend back there," remarked Kittredge to his driver as he got out, "that I have important business here. There'll be plenty of time for him to get a drink." He disappeared in the house, leaving the cloak and bag in the cab.

ADD now two important times happened, one of them unexpected. The expected thing was that M. Gibelin came forward immediately from the second cab, followed by Papa Tienol and a policeman. The shadowing detective was in a vile humor, which was not improved when he got the message left by the Lippant American. Gibelin turned to Kittredge's driver "Here's your fare. You can go. I'm from headquarters. I have a warrant for this man's arrest."

Meantime Kittredge had climbed the four flights of stairs leading to the sacristan's modest apartment. And in order to explain how he happened to be making so untimely a visit it is necessary to go back several hours to a previous visit here that the young American had already made on this momentous evening.

After leaving the Ansonia banquet at about 9 o'clock in the singular manner noted by the big doorkeeper Kittredge, in accordance with his promise to Alice, had driven directly to the Rue du Cloître Notre Dame, and at twenty minutes past 9 by the clock in the Tavern of the Three Wise Men he had drawn up at the house where the Bonnetons lived. Five minutes later the young man was seated in the sacristan's little salon assuring Alice that he didn't mind the rain, that the banquet was a bore anyhow and that he hoped she was now going to prove herself a sensible and reasonable little girl. Alice welcomed her lover eagerly. Alice had never seemed so adorable. Then came a sudden and ominous entrance of Mother Bonneton. She eyed the visitor with frank unfriendliness and proceeded to tell him that his attentions to Alice must cease and that his visits here would henceforth be unwelcome.

(To Be Continued.)

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