

The HIDDEN DOOR

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

Colin... Germaine... a mysterious letter... a conversation which tells them that the "club" to which they were going is a den of thieves, controlled by the Mask, New York killer whom Colin is trying to bring to justice. They turn back, but Colin is determined to find Lazarre. He also has discovered that he is in love with Germaine.

Chapter 18 THE TWO VISITORS

COLIN sat up in bed with a start, conscious at the same time both of voices and that he had overslept himself. He had flung himself down on the bed after supper solely with the idea of relaxing a little while before strolling over to spend an hour or two with Germaine, and then, later, to pay a surreptitious visit to this Anatole Bouchard of whom she had spoken.

It was dark now. The voices came from the next room through Madame Frérier's flimsy partition. Two men—speaking in French.

He knew who they were. They had arrived on the Belle Fleur late that afternoon. Madame Frérier had introduced them to him at the hotel. Laroque and Bolduc, their names were. They had come over from Gaspé, they said, to catch the Bonaventure, which was due tomorrow, and were going up the coast to Seven Islands. A brown-looking pair. They were talking in low tones, but even low tones in the Hotel du Canada were little less than a broadcast throughout the entire establishment.

"Sacré nom!" exclaimed a gruff voice. "I tell you, I do not like it. It was to be tonight if he discovered anything at that devilish club, but all afternoon there has been no sign of him. He should have been here. What do you think, eh?"

Another voice answered—Bolduc's obviously. "How do I know what to think?" returned Bolduc irritably. "It is one of two things. He has become afraid and has run away with the money Dollaire paid him in advance—in which case Dollaire will slit his throat for him if he ever finds him again; or else he has been caught down there at the club."

Colin's bed was against the partition that separated the two rooms—and so, too, now was Colin's ear. It was plain the man these two were talking about was the spy at whom Lazarre had taken a pot shot yesterday.

But what was it all about? It was clear that these men were not police who were trying to round up the club. The police did not sit the throats of their stool pigeons—or, at least, they weren't supposed to. "It is that of which I am afraid—that he has been caught," Laroque responded with an oath. "They will make him talk. A man talks—eh—when they begin to gouge his eyes out."

"Bah!" exclaimed Bolduc. "What can he talk about? He knows nothing—except that he has been well paid to find out what he can." "Damnation!" swore Laroque. "But that is enough, isn't it? They will be on their guard."

"Bah!" Bolduc spat out again. "And suppose they are? They will not know what to expect, and we will be too many for them, anyway. That was a bad night for them two weeks ago when Dollaire put in at the club to sell some of the whisky we had on board. Two of the crowd there were swell crooks that were pointed out to Dollaire in a night club the last time he was in New York selling a cargo.

opened and closed. Footsteps jumped down the stairs. Colin stared into the darkness. He was thinking fast now. It was clear enough that this Dollaire was the head of a bootlegging outfit of which this precious pair were a part. And what was obviously in the wind now was a sort of hi-jacking expedition. He could have looked on with utter complacency, not to say applause, had it not been for Lazarre.

There would be a fight—and it would not be a bloodless one. Dollaire had evidently come prepared. A choice crowd aboard that schooner, beyond question! It would probably result in a shambles. Well, the world would not miss the passing of any one of them, except that there was Lazarre.

He could not afford to risk anything happening to Lazarre. He must warn Lazarre. That was imperative. The fog last night had lifted just after midnight, and Germaine and he had returned to Cap à l'Orage without further mishap. He had had the whole day in which to talk to Bouchard, but caution, perhaps an exaggerated caution, had prompted him to wait until darkness had set in.

But he wished now, in view of what he had just heard, that he had gone during the day. He would have known now what to do—he would have known whether or not he cared to trust Bouchard in the first place; and, secondly, whether or not Bouchard would be willing to act as guide.

If the trip overland were feasible, it had, apart from the element of time, one incalculable advantage over a boat—it could be done much more secretly.

HE STRUCK the match now and looked at his watch. Half-past eight. Not so bad! He had thought it much later than that. It would take him, say, half an hour all told to reach Bouchard's shack and have a talk with the man. There was time enough. If everything sized up all right, he and Bouchard would be off at once, and he would have to make his peace later with Germaine for not keeping his appointment with her this evening.

If, on the other hand, Bouchard, for whatever reason, did not fit into the picture, that was another matter and another way must be found. There was always the possibility, of course, that Bouchard might not even be at home—But one thing at a time.

He swung himself off the bed, paused to slip an extra box of cartridges into his pocket, went down the stairs, and out into the street. It wasinky black. Cap à l'Orage boasted no street lamps, and there was as yet no moon. But the lighted windows of the scattered houses marked the way. At the end of the street, remembering his walk with Germaine, he turned into what was no more than a wagon track that led through a stretch of sparse timberland.

Here the going was not so good. The track was full of ruts and full of holes, which in turn were filled with water. He could see practically nothing at all. The land here was marshy, and, besides, it had rained heavily during the past few days, so that once, verging from the track, he went in over his boot tops—and swore heartily.

There was nearly half a mile of it; but finally, as he rounded a sharp turn in the wagon track, he saw a light glimmering through an open window no more than a few yards away.

There was no doubt about it being Bouchard's shack, because no one else lived out this way; at least it was the only dwelling, or pretense to a dwelling, that he had seen on his walk with Germaine that day; and there was no doubt but that Bouchard was at home—his fears on that score were set at rest.

And then abruptly he halted. It was a warm, muggy night—which accounted for the open window. Bouchard was at home undoubtedly, but Bouchard was not alone. Voices, speaking in French, floated out to him on the night air. He could not hear what was said from where he stood, but his muscles tensed suddenly, seemingly of their own accord. There was something familiar about two of those voices.

Colin discovered a dangerous ally, Monday.

FEWER FAMILIES REQUIRE RELIEF

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17.—(AP)—A steady decrease in the number of

needy families receiving public aid was shown today in the first official checkup by the federal emergency relief administration and was noted by Harry L. Hopkins, the administrator, as "very encouraging." The report showed 3,745,397 families received relief in June, Hopkins said this would show around 15,000,000 persons were being assisted in the country in May and 4,445,838 in April. Expenditures of federal, state and local funds for relief totaled \$60,191,530 in June, compared with \$70,323,506 in May and \$72,651,929 in April.

Sheets of copper one twenty-thousandth of an inch thick can be manufactured.

PORTLAND POLICE MUST TAKE REST

PORTLAND, Ore., Aug. 17.—(AP)—Effective immediately Portland po-

licemen will take a "vacation" without pay one day a week for the rest of the fiscal year. By unanimous vote the council approved an ordinance proposed by Mayor Joseph K. Carson, providing for such leave. Carson said "if it were possible to make it mandatory on those who are advanced in age or not qualified to give efficient po-

lice service to retire, this would not be necessary. "This vacation system must be put into effect or the alternative must be invoked of laying off 35 of the younger and more active men." The hundredth anniversary of the Christian Index, Baptist church publication, will be celebrated at Atlanta in September.

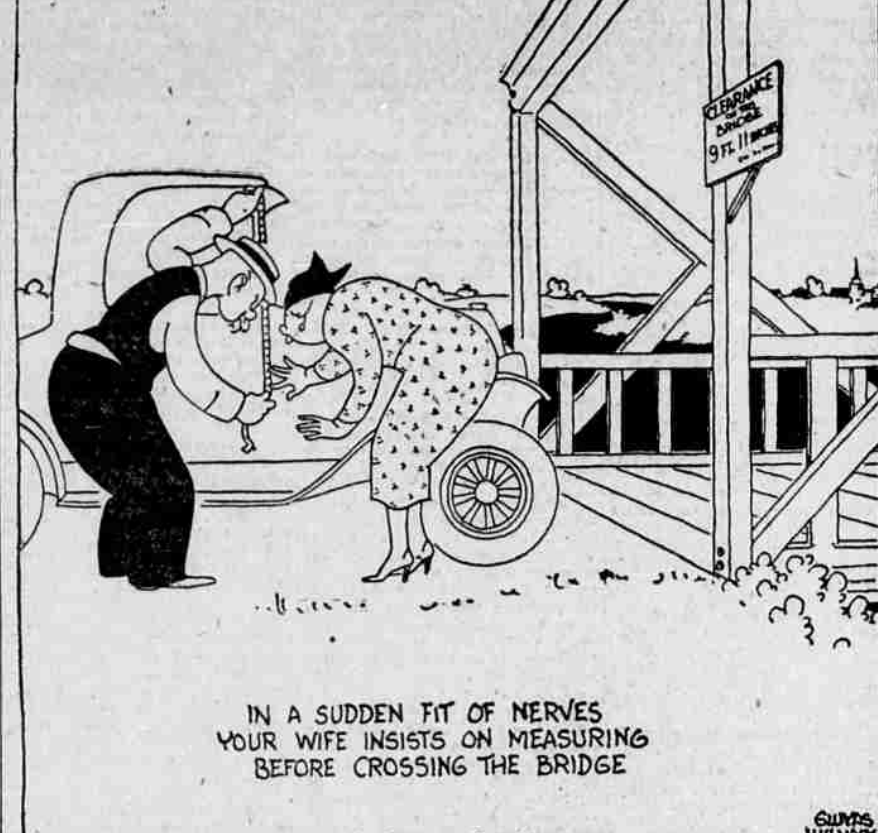
'SMATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPI NTOMMY—Pirate Life Had Its Seamy Side

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—The Warrior Carries On!

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—The Old Alibi

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



ORCHARD GRANTS INCREASE IN PAY

MERCED, Cal., Aug. 17.—(AP)—Apparently climaxing the strike of 2,500 fruit pickers in the huge orchards of the California Packing Corporation at Tuttle and Atwater, Willard Griffin, manager, today announced the orchards would be reopened on an increased pay scale. He did not announce the amount. Griffin's statement followed a previous announcement that the company would let its fruit rot before meeting the demands of the strikers for 80 cents an hour for picking. The workers previously have been paid 17 1/2 cents an hour for a ten-hour day.

BURSTING EMERY WHEEL KILLS TOOL DRESSER

GENERAL GRANT PARK, Calif., Aug. 17.—(UP)—August Wynn, 33, San Francisco tool dresser employed in a convict camp, was killed late yesterday when an emery wheel burst into pieces. His body was riddled by the flying slugs.

There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation