

UNLOCKING ADVENTURE

By Charles Courtney

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Charles Courtney is the world's highest paid legal Jimmy Valentine. This is the true story of his many adventures unlocking safes around the earth and under the sea.

CHAPTER X

THE strongest lock is useless if it is set in a rotten jamb or a thin piece of trim with nothing behind it.

One late Friday afternoon a wealthy broker telephoned me to give a lock to his chauffeur, adding, "Don't charge it. I'll stop by and pay cash." Whenever a customer says, "Don't charge it," I am fairly sure that he is going to tell me confidentially about a hideout in which he rests his jangled nerves when he can no longer endure the high tension of business life.

This time I did not receive any such confidences, for the chauffeur paid the bill. About six months later, the broker telephoned, saying indignantly that I had sold him a poor lock. He wanted me to replace it immediately, also change the combinations on all the doors.

The number he gave me was in the Bronx, a gray stone house surrounded by a maze of hedges and vacant lots. The place was locked as tightly as a bank vault, with shatterproof glass in the windows, steel shutters that could be let down over them, two outer doors with steel-lined vestibules between them, and pin tumbler dead locks, chains and bars on each. I wondered what was inside this fortress. Luxury in a Hollywood version of the Arabian Nights, carpets to wade in, old masters on the walls, silks and satins upholstering French gilt furniture, and a half-dozen or more blondes, brunettes, and redheads who looked like refugees from an Earl Carroll chorus.

The housekeeper showed me the door and the forced lock. The frame was heavy and had been well built in its day, but the jamb was so soft and rotten that it was no trick to force the lock. I blocked out the jamb, built it up with a solid four by four, and reset the lock.

After that I went frequently to the gray stone house, as I was called to change the combination whenever there was a shift in the inmates. The mansion, I learned, was run as a sort of syndicate by the tycoon and his friends. After a year or two the calls stopped coming, and the papers were full of the divorce suit brought by the owner's wife.

It is amazing how safe people feel when they have barricaded themselves behind a heavy door chain, never thinking to examine how the chains are attached to the door. More often than not, they are held by nothing but two small screws.

People may be careful about their locks and keys; they may have the combination changed every time they discharge a maid, move to a new house or a new apartment, or lose their keys, and still forget about their windows. Most modern windows are fastened with a broad cam on the lower sash that interlocks with a receiver on the upper one, but in old houses, especially in the country, the window fasteners are likely to be no problem to a thief.

"Do you want to know a way to keep out the kidnapper?" I asked a Wall Street farmer with two young sons for whom he was making a home in the country. "On each side of the sash," I told him, "drill a hole. Put it through the window sash and into, but not through, the frame. Stick in it a pin, a screw, or a nail long enough to engage the outside sash, and you will have a fastening that is difficult to tamper with."

FINE locks go on for an amazingly long time without giving trouble if we take care of them. Generally, when they won't work, the fine springs of the tumblers have been gummed up. The lubricant to use is a dusting of powdered graphite, squirted through an old perfume atomizer or blown in through a paper funnel. Or if you don't happen to have graphite, rub your key with a lead pencil. If graphite doesn't help your lock, never force it. Then you will need a locksmith. If you don't happen to live near a roo from which you can borrow a carpenter bird and a half-dozen monkeys.

One evening a friend told me solemnly, "Courtney, your business is being invaded from South America. A liner from Caracas docked this morning with 18 ring-tailed monkeys and a carpenter bird in full possession of the ship, and they can beat you at lock picking with nothing but a beak and a buttonhook."

"That bird has a beak like a pickaxe which it uses for a saw, a chisel, and a jimmy. Four times on the way up, it carpentered its way out of its cage. The last time, it went over to visit the monkeys, who were working away with a buttonhook that one of the sailors had given them. The monkeys had torn a hole in the netting next to the door frame and were fumbling with the padlock, but because the door was so wide that they could barely reach it, they were unable to get the buttonhook into the keyhole. In half an hour the carpenter bird had gouged a hole in the wood large enough for a monkey's arm. One of the monkeys worked the hook into the keyhole of the padlock and tripped the spring. When the boat docked, the carpenter bird was sitting dramatically in the rigging, whetting his beak on the mainmast, and the sailors were chasing the 18 monkeys, who had snapped the padlock on the crew's galley and were bursting out of the booby hatch."

(To Be Continued)

(From the book of the same name written in collaboration with Thomas M. Johnson and published by Whittlesey House, New York City.)

EASY—DIFFERENT



7616

Beautiful in design... beautiful in sentiment are these new and different looking chair sets. Your friends will delight in the extra look of hospitality that fillet crochet gives your home. And it's as easy as falling off a log to do! Pattern 7616 contains charts and directions for set; list of materials needed; illustrations of the chair set and stitches.

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Because of the slowness of the mails, delivery of Herald and News Household Arts patterns may take two weeks to reach you after your order is mailed in. We're sorry.

Taormina, on Sicily's eastern coast, was established by Greek settlers about 700 B. C., and until World War II was a tourist resort.

Negro Hanged For Fatal Stabbing of Montana Woman

MISSOULA, Mont., Sept. 11 (AP)—Philip J. (Slim) Coleman, 25-year-old St. Louis negro, was hanged Friday for the fatal stabbing of Mrs. Roslyn Pearson, 30, at Lothrop, Mont., July 25.

The tall, soft-spoken negro shook hands with each of the few witnesses and said he had no "hard feelings."

Coleman, who admitted he had killed the wife of a section foreman to rob her, was outwardly calm.

Western Manpower Shortages May Hold Up War Production

WASHINGTON, Sept. 11 (AP)—Because of manpower shortages on the west coast, assurance no longer can be given that war production schedules can be met, Laurence Appley, executive director of the war manpower commission, told a senate military affairs subcommittee Friday.

Appley said thousands of workers are leaving west coast production centers because of inadequate living conditions.

Norwegian Patriots Sink Nazi Ships

NEW YORK, Sept. 11 (AP)—The Moscow radio said Friday that three German destroyers had been sunk in Norway's Trondheim harbor by Norwegian patriots.

"A big fire broke out on the embankment," said the broadcast, recorded by U. S. government monitors. "That is the Norwegian patriots' reply to the Germans' new even more vicious measures in Norway."

Unique Cornerstone
Cornerstone of Bentley Hall, Allegheny College, Pa., contains a piece of Plymouth Rock, marble from Dido's Temple in Carthage, mortar from the tomb of Vergil, and a portion of brick from the Tower of Babel.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



BALLOON
CROSSED THE ENGLISH CHANNEL 158 YEARS AGO... 124 YEARS BEFORE BLERIOT DID IT IN AN AIRPLANE!
A FRENCHMAN, JEAN PIERRE BLANCHARD, AND DR. JOHN JEFFRIES, AN AMERICAN, MADE THE CROSSING IN 1785, IN A BALLOON EQUIPPED WITH OARS, TO AID IN STEERING IT THROUGH THE AIR.



SHOES
WORN BY AMERICAN WOMEN?
ANSWER: Six and one-half.

NEXT: A 4000-mile crack in the earth.

U. S. NAVAL AIR UNIT INSIGNE

HORIZONTAL

- 1 Depleted is insigne of _____
- 2 Scouting Squadron 2, U. S. naval aviation
- 3 Struggle
- 4 Unmanageable
- 5 Irritates
- 6 Babylonian deity
- 7 Dutch city
- 8 Huge
- 9 East (Fr.)
- 10 Stag
- 11 Saint (abbr.)
- 12 Drone bee
- 13 Accumulate
- 14 Scorch
- 15 Ester of nitric acid
- 16 Those persons
- 17 Amount (abbr.)
- 18 Exist
- 19 Knock lightly
- 20 Vigilant
- 21 Hoop
- 22 Mediterranean island
- 23 Social insect
- 24 No other than
- 25 Arabian
- 26 Company (abbr.)
- 27 Beetle
- 28 Dip in liquid
- 29 Situated
- 30 Legal point

VERTICAL

- 1 System of religious belief
- 2 Motive
- 3 We
- 4 Native of (abbr.)
- 5 Her
- 6 Beret
- 7 Entangle
- 8 Head cook
- 9 Narrow flit
- 10 Topmost
- 11 tufts of trees
- 12 Skill
- 13 Important metal
- 14 Altitude (abbr.)
- 15 Baby's bed
- 16 Bronze
- 17 Grows pallid
- 18 Kind of beet
- 19 Woody plant
- 20 Coin
- 21 Mine shaft hut
- 22 French article
- 23 River in Latvia
- 24 Senior (abbr.)
- 25 Head cover
- 26 Head cover
- 27 Head cover
- 28 Head cover
- 29 Head cover
- 30 Head cover

Out Our Way

By J. R. Williams



Our Boarding House

With Major Hoople



HOLD EVERYTHING!



Red Ryder



Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



Wash Tubbs

By Crane



Boots and Her Buddies

By V. T. Hamlin



Allep Oop

By Martin



Little Orphan Annie

By Harold Gray



FUNNY BUSINESS



"I was afraid I'd lost you in the blackout, dear!"