

THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

VOL. XLII

GRAHAM, N. C., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1915

NO. 1

The Million Dollar Mystery

By HAROLD MAC GRATH

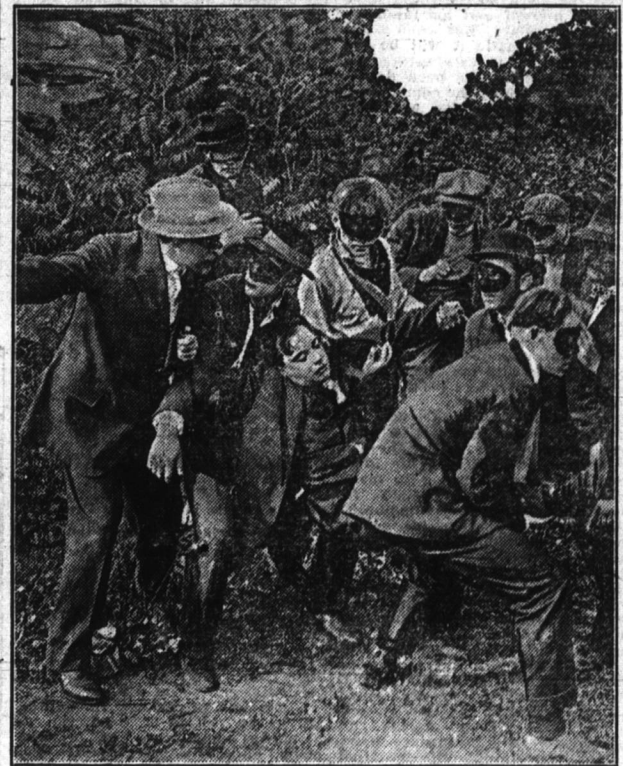
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CHAPTER XI.

When Jones received the telegram that Florence was safe, the iron nerve of the man broke down. The suspense had been so keenly terrible that the sudden relief left him almost hysterically weak. Three weeks of waiting, waiting. Not even the scoundrel and his wife who had been the principal actors in the abduction had been found. From a great ship in midocean they had disappeared. Doubtless they had hidden among the immigrants, who, for little money, would have fooled all the officers on board. There was no doubt in Jones' mind that the pair had landed safely at Madrid. As for Susan, she did have hysterics. She went about the room, walling and laughing and wringing her hands. You would have thought by her actions that Florence had just died. The sight of her stirred the saturnal lips of the butler into a smile. But he did not remonstrate with her. In fact, he rather envied her freedom in emotion. Man cannot let go in that fashion; it is a sign of weakness; and he dared not let even Susan see any sign of weakness in him. So the reporter had found her, and she was safe and sound and on her way to New York? Knowing by this time something of the reporter's courage, he was eager to learn how the event had come about. When he had not had a telephone message from Norton in 48 hours, he had decided that the Black Hundred had finally succeeded in getting hold of him. It had been something of a blow; for while he looked with disfavor upon the reporter's frank regard for his charge, he appreciated the fact that Norton was a staff to lean on, and had behind him all the power of the press, which included the privilege of going everywhere even if one could not always get back. As he folded the telegram and put it into his pocket, he observed the man with the opera glasses over the way. He shrugged. Well, let him watch till his eyes dropped out of his head; he would see only that which was intended for his eyes. Still, it was irksome to feel that no matter when or where you moved, watching eyes observed and chronicled these movements. Suddenly, not being devoid of a sense of dry humor, Jones stepped over to the telephone and called up "her highness the Princess Perigot. Who is it?" He was forced to admit, however

impassive face of the man vroom and closed her eyes and lay back in the chair. Well, ill and weak as she was, they should find that she was not without a certain strength. In the meantime Norton revived and looked about in vain for Florence. He searched among the crowd of terrified passengers, the hurt and the unharmed, but she was not to be found. He ran back to the princess and helped her out of the broken car. "Where is Florence?" she asked dazedly. "God knows! Here, come over and sit down by the fence till I see if there is a field telegraph." They had already erected one, and his message went off with a batch of others. This time he was determined not to trust to chance. The shock may have brought back Florence's recent mental disorder, and she may



Fell into an Ambush.

show all manner of effusiveness. Just keep your head and play the game. "She lied about you to me." "No matter." "O!" cried the princess. She seized Florence in a wild embrace. She was an immitable actress, and Norton could not help admiring her. "Your butler telephoned me. I ran to the first train out. And here you are, back safe and sound! It is wonderful. Tell me all about it. What an adventure! And, good heavens, Mr. Norton, where did you get those clothes? Did you find her and rescue her? What a newspaper story you'll be able to make out of it all! Now, tell me just what happened." She sat down on the arm of Florence's chair. The girl had never suspected. He had not recognized Norton at all. It was only when Bannock explained the history of the shanghaied stoker that he realized his real danger, Norton! He must be pushed off the board. After this episode he could no longer keep up the pretense of being friendly. Norton, by a rare stroke of luck, had forced him into the open. So be it. Self-preservation is a law no wise man looks upon as criminal. The law may have its ideas about it, but the individual recognizes no law but his own. It was Bannock whom he loved and admired, or Norton whom he hated as a dog with rabies baying water. With Norton free, he would never again dare return to New York openly. This meddling reporter aimed at his case and elegance. He left the freighter as soon as a boat could carry him ashore. The fugitives would make directly for the railroad, and thither he went at top speed, to arrive ten minutes too late. "Free!" said Florence, as the train began to increase its speed. Norton reached over and patted her hand. Then he sat back with a sudden shock of dismay. He dived a hand into a pocket, into another and another. The price of the telegram he had sent to Jones was all he had had in the world; and he had borrowed that from a friendly stoker. In the excitement he had forgotten all about such a contingency as the absolute need of money. "Florence, I'm afraid we're going to have trouble with the conductor when he comes." "Why?" He pulled out his pockets suggestively. "Not a postage stamp. They'll put us off at the next station. And, with a glance in the little mirror between the two windows, 'I shouldn't blame them a bit.' He was unshaven. He was wearing the suit substituted for his own; and Florence, sartorially, was not much better off. She smiled, blushed, stood up, and turned her back to him. Then she sat down again. In her hand she held a small dispirited roll of banknotes. "I had them with me when they abducted me," she said. "Besides, this ring is worth something." "Thank the Lord!" he exclaimed, relieved. So there was nothing more to do but be happy; and happy they were. They were quite oblivious to the peculiar interest they aroused among the other passengers. This unshaven young man, in his ragged coat and soiled jersey; this beautiful young girl, in a wrinkled homespun, her glorious blonde hair awry; and the way they looked at each other during those hushes in conversation peculiar to lovers the world over, impressed the other passengers with the idea that something very unusual had happened to these two. The Pullman conductor was not especially polite; but money was money, and the stockholders, waiting for their dividends, made it impossible for him to reject it. The regular conductor

arms and nearly crushed the breast out of her. And she was so glad to see him that she kissed him half a dozen times. What if he was her father's butler? He was brave and loyal and kind. "They tied him to the track," she cried. "Look at my wrists!" The butler did so, and kissed them tenderly. "And I saved him." Jones stretched out a hand over Florence's shoulder. "When the time comes," he said, "when the right time comes and my master's enemies are confounded. But always the rooks, never the hawks, do we catch. God bless you Norton! I don't know what I should have done without you." "When a chap's in love," began Norton, embarrassed. "I know, I know," interrupted Jones. "The second relief train is waiting. Let us hurry back. I shan't feel secure till we are once more in the house." So, arm in arm, the three of them went down the tracks to the hand car which had brought the police. And now for the iron bound chest



"Be Silent, You Scum."

(To be continued)

You're the man who had me shanghaied. The voice is enough." "Very good. That's what I wished to know. Your death warrant. We'll do it like they used to do it at the old Academy; tie you to the railroad track. We shall not hurt you at all. If some engine runs over you heaven is witness we did not guide the engine. Remember the story of the boy and the cat? With sinister ability. 'The boy said he wasn't pulling the cat's tail, he was only holding it; the cat did the pulling. Bring him along men. Time is precious, and we have a good deal to do before night settles down. Come on with him. The track is only a short distance.' "Jim, Jim!" cried Florence in anguish. "Never you mind, girl; they're only bluffing. They won't dare." "You think so?" said Vroom. "Wait and see." He turned upon Florence. "He is your lover. Do you wish him to die?" "No, no!" "We promise to give him his freedom twelve hours from now on condition that you tell where that money is." "Florence!" warned Norton. "Vroom struck him on the mouth. 'Be silent, you scum!'" "It is in the chest Jones, the butler, threw into the sound," she said bravely. And so it might be, for all she knew. Vroom laughed. "We know about where that is." "Florence, say nothing on my account. They are not the kind of men who keep their word." "But," said Vroom, "We'll see about that." He glanced at his watch. "In half an hour the freight comes along. It may become stalled at the wreck. But it will serve." Norton knew very well that if need said must they would not hesitate to execute a melodramatic plan of this character. It was the way of the Slav; they had to make crime abnormal in order to enjoy it. They could very well have knocked him on the head then and there and have done with him. But the time used in conveying him to the railroad might prove his salvation. Nearly four hours had passed since the sending of the telegram to Jones. They bound Florence and left her seated in the chair. As soon as they were gone she rolled to the floor. She was able to right herself to her knees, and after a torturous five minutes reached the fireplace. She burnt her hands and wrists, but the blaze was the only knife obtainable. She was free. Jones arrived with half a dozen policemen. Vroom alone escaped. The butler caught Florence in his



"They Tied Him to the Track."

out what has become of Florence. Is there a deserted farm-house hereabouts?" he asked of the farmer. "Not that I recollect." "Why yes, there is, Jake. There's that old hut about two miles up the fork," volunteered the wife. "Where the Swede died last winter." "By Jingo! I'm going into the village and see if that man brought in

GERMANY AND GREAT BRITAIN GET NOTES

DIPLOMATS AND OFFICIALS AT WASHINGTON ARE DEEPLY INTERESTED.

WAITING FOR THE REPLIES

Believed That Great Britain Will Give Assurances She Will Not Sanction Use of Neutral Flags.

Washington.—Reading of the official text of the two notes from the United States to Germany and Great Britain, developed in intense interest among officials and diplomats in the question of what would be the nature of the replies from the two belligerent Governments. That Great Britain would give assurance of no intention to sanction the general use of neutral flags by British merchant ships was the belief of many officials. But the widest sort of speculation, based on a variety of conceptions of German plans to wage a submarine war on merchant ships, was heard as to the probable response of the Berlin Foreign Office. Count von Bernstorff, German Ambassador, declined to discuss the note to Germany as he had received no advice from Berlin concerning it. The British Embassy also was silent. What excited most attention in Congress and among diplomats, however, was the serious tone of the notes even though qualified by the polite terms of diplomatic usage. The determination of the United States Government to have the American flag used only by ships entered to fly it and the warning that Germany would be held "to a strict accountability" if American lives or vessels were lost in the attacks on merchant vessels in the newly-delimited sea zones of war, practically were the sole topics of discussion in executive and congressional quarters as well as among the Ambassadors and Ministers of belligerent and neutral nations.

RUSSIAN INVASION CHECKED

Moving Back From German Territory, Also in Poland.

London.—The Russian incursion into east Prussia appears to be as short lived as the previous Russian invasions into German territory. German's superb equipment of strategic railways have enabled her within a few days to throw immense bodies of troops against the invaders. In the present case the German soldiers appear to have been rushed into east Prussia from both Poland and interior points. The situation in the Carpathians looks favorable to the Russians who in spite of snow blocked roads, are pressing against the Austrian defenses at three of the most important passes. Berlin admits the Russians have entered Hungarian territory at several points in the Carpathian district but declares these positions were most dearly bought.

Big Spectacular Aerial Attack.

London.—Aerial warfare was waged on the largest scale in its history and under adverse circumstances from the standpoint of the weather. British airmen, buffeted by snow in the air, swept over cities of Northern Belgium held by the Germans, dropped bombs on Ostend, Bruges and other places. Thirty-four aeroplanes and seaplanes of the British navy took part in the operations and all returned to their base, without casualties to their drivers, although two machines were damaged. The raid was made to prevent the development of submarine bases and establishments which might further endanger British warships and merchantmen. Although no submarines were seen the British admiralty statement indicates that the raid had satisfactory results for considerable damage is said to have been done to German positions, railway lines and railway stations. At various points the airmen were received by a German fire from anti-aerial guns and rifles. None of the airmen is reported by the admiralty to have been wounded.

Citrus Fruit Record Broken.

Tampa, Fla.—Shipments of citrus fruits from Florida this season total more than 20,000 carloads, according to figures announced here. Present estimates indicate this year's crop will break all previous records.

FLASHES FROM THE WIRES.

Cast. Brewer of the American steamer Wilhelmus, bound for Germany with a food cargo, said that the voyage from New York was the roughest he had known in 25 years experience. Extra watchmen have been employed at Portland, Me. to protect the bridge between the city and the Canadian boundary. Mrs. Fannie Crosby, famous hymn writer died in her 95th year at her home at Bridgeport Conn. The cornerstone of the two million Lincoln memorial structure at Washington has been laid. The 1916 convention of the National Association of Merchant Tailors has been awarded to St. Louis. A bill for statewide prohibition was passed 39 to 10 by the Iowa senate. It now goes to the house.

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GERMANY WANTS FOOD UNHAMPED

HINTED BY AMBASSADOR THAT WARFARE ON MERCHANT SHIPPING BE RELAXED.

BUT ONLY ON CONDITIONS

Conditional Contraband Designed For Civil Population Is Not to Be Molested.—War Zone Measures.

Washington.—The importance which the German Government attaches to the unrestricted shipment of foodstuffs for its civilian population was emphasized at the State Department by Count von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, who conferred with both Secretary Bryan and Counselor Lansing. While no formal statement regarding the Ambassador's call was issued by the Department, it was said afterward that he had hinted that warfare on merchant shipping might be relaxed if Germany could be assured of a continuous food supply for her non-combatant population. The position of the German Government, it was explained, is that the proclamation of a war zone and campaign against enemy merchant ships was simply a retaliation against England's alleged violations of the Declaration of London in hindering conditional contraband for civilians from reaching Germany. This, according to the German Ambassador, is no less inhumane than the campaign on merchant vessels. While declining to authorize any statement, officials admitted that the American note to Germany was open to the construction that no vessels, either belligerent or neutral, should be sunk unless previously visited and an opportunity given for the taking off of passengers. It was reiterated that while the rules of international law clearly compelled such steps, the position taken was based largely on humanitarian grounds. An official who helped prepare the American note to Germany pointed out that the strong warning tone of the communication was not intended as a threat, but was a friendly act in a spirit of precaution lest the sinking of an American vessel with Americans aboard inflame public opinion in the United States to a degree which could not be estimated in advance.

ENGLAND CELEBRATES VICTORY

Great Britain Has Advised Using American Flag for Emergency.

London.—Berlin is celebrating the evacuation of East Prussia by the Russians, which is hailed in the German capital as another great victory for Field Marshal von Hindenburg. England is not attempting to hide its elation at the success of her airmen's raid on the German positions in Belgium, and all Europe is eagerly discussing the American notes to Great Britain and Germany and contemplating what the replies will be. Great Britain has already intimated that British merchant ships have been advised to use neutral flags only in case of emergency, and no general use of such flags is anticipated. The German minister of the Hague has issued another warning to neutrals to the effect that in view of the alleged declaration of all the British ports as war ports, and the use of neutral flags by British ships it would be dangerous for neutral merchantmen to visit the proscribed waters after January 18.

Serbian Fortress Blown Up.

Berlin.—By wireless to Sayville.—The Overseas News Agency says that according to Italian newspapers, the Serbian fortress of Semendria has been blown up by the explosion of its powder magazine after being shelled by Austro-Hungarian artillery. Smallpox in County Jail. Charleston, W. Va.—The Kanawha county jail here was quarantined when four cases of smallpox were found among the prisoners. Seven prisoners were taken to the state penitentiary at Moundsville after having been exposed to the disease here.

Albanians Invade Serbia.

London.—A large force of Albanians have crossed the Serbian frontier into the Department of Priesland, forcing the Serbian troops and local authorities to withdraw, according to a Rester dispatch from Nish, Serbia. Cotton From Wilmington. Wilmington, N. C.—The Greek steamer Elin called from this port for Liverpool with a cargo of 5,500 bales of cotton taken on here. She arrived here from Savannah with a part cargo to complete loading.

Battle at Castano.

Washington.—Enrique C. Llorente Washington representative of General Villa receiver advices from Piedras Negras declaring that the Villa troops had defeated the Carranza forces at Castano, 18 miles south of Monclova. Food Scarce at Tampico. Washington.—A report to the state department from Tampico says the food situation there is serious. The local government has imported corn from Vera Cruz and sold it to the needy at a nominal price. How to Prevent Illness Attacks. Coming events cast their shadows before. This is especially true of bilious attacks. Your appetite will fall. You will feel dull and languid. If you are subject to bilious attacks take three of Chamberlain's Tablets as soon as these symptoms appear and the attack is warded off. For sale by all druggists.

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