

Out of the Darkness

By CHARLES J. DUTTON

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

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MYSTERY ON MYSTERY

"The district attorney rose to his feet, saying slowly, 'I am going to call Briffleur, who was chauffeur for Mr. Slyke. He will...'"

"Someone pushed back a chair, and then suddenly, rising above all else and ringing through the room with a horror that seemed to glue me to my seat, came a shriek of terror. It was sustained for a second, then died away in a long, sobbing moan."

"Bartley dropped to his knees beside Roche and gave one searching look at the man, then straightened up with a queer expression on his face. He pointed silently to the chauffeur. On his brown coat, slowly darkening and widening, was a splotch of blood, and from his breast protruded the hilt of a knife."

Here's an enthralling mystery story that piles mystery on mystery. Bartley, the famous criminologist, undertakes to establish the guilt or innocence of two convicts in prison for the attempted burglary of the house of Robert Slyke. Almost immediately thereafter Slyke is mysteriously murdered, and then, at the instigation of Briffleur, his suspected chauffeur, is stabbed to death in the midst of a roomful of people.

The author is Charles J. Dutton, a new writer, who made a name with "The Underwood Mystery."

CHAPTER I

In Which an Old Crime Again Comes to Light.

That Friday afternoon, as I came up the steps of John Bartley's house in Gramercy square, the sun was shining for the first time in seven days. Unlocking the door, I entered the hall and went up the stairs to my room.

This week of rain in the middle of June had spoiled Bartley's long-planned fishing trip, and had kept us in the city. It was a trip he had been looking forward to for a long time, since in the past few years there had been few opportunities for such things. In fact, since 1917 Bartley had passed very few nights in his own house. About a year before we went into the war, those who followed criminal mysteries noticed that Bartley's name was no longer connected with the solution of crime. Perhaps they wondered a little at this. When the full story of the work of the Secret Service in the war is told, recognition will be given to the part he played in bringing it to a victorious conclusion. Until then, all I can say is that when he returned to New York, in the spring of 1920, his work for the government had ended.

The first thing that he did upon his arrival was to clear up a pile of mail that ran back for several weeks; his next was to plan several weeks' fishing in the lakes of northern Maine. On the very day that we were to start it had commenced to rain, and never ceased for seven days. Telegrams told us that in Maine it was raining, too. In sheer disgust Bartley buried himself in his library and went to work on his long-neglected book, "The Galante Literature of the Eighteenth Century."

As I glanced out of the window of my room that Friday afternoon, I saw that the rain was at last over. I was wondering whether Bartley would go to Maine, after all, when there came a rap at my door. Opening it, I found Rance, Bartley's old colored man, who said with a grin, "Mr. John says, Mr. Pelt, that you are to come down to the library, for that man Rogers is coming."

As I followed him down the stairs, I wondered what it was that was bringing Rogers, chief of the Central office, to the house at this time of the afternoon. Although Rogers and Bartley were the best of friends, and the chief had been forced more than once to ask the aid of Bartley in his cases, he usually made his visits in the evening, after the day's work was over. A call at four in the afternoon seemed to promise that something unusual had happened, something of such importance that it could not wait. Could he secure Bartley's aid? I knew that Bartley had not intended to take up any more cases until he had had a long rest. Still, if Rogers has the problem of some unusual crime to lay before us, he might change his plans.

Bartley was at his great desk when I entered the library. He gave me a smile, then went on examining the books which covered its top. That morning he had received a great box from his French dealer, and he was busy with its contents. As he did not speak, I dropped into the great armchair by his side.

As I looked at him I wondered, as I had done so many times before, that he should be the great criminal investigator that he was. It was the last thing anyone would expect him to be. His breeding, his family, and above all his literary tastes, were not such as one would expect to find in a man who makes the running down of criminals his life work. His fine face

with its clear-cut features, telling of a long line of New England ancestors, might have been a bishop's, one that loved dogs and children, and who had a heart bigger than his creed. I picked up one of the six thin, narrow books in heavy gray paper covers that lay before him, and glanced at the title, "The Ragionamenti of the Divine Aretino." I was about to open it when the doorbell rang.

Bartley glanced up at the sound and said, "That must be Rogers."

The next moment Rance, bowing as he always did in announcing anyone, ushered Rogers into the room. Rogers had been at the head of the Central office for about five years. In that time he had built up for himself the finest reputation that any city detective had ever had. He was not a brilliant man, nor, for that matter, an educated one, but his rare common sense and his absolute honesty had won for him the respect of the people of the city.

He took a chair, and after saying, "Hello, John," to Bartley and a word to me, he took a cigar from the box that Bartley pushed over to him.

Then, leaning across the table, he picked-up one of the volumes. The book fell open at a picture; he started as he looked at it, then handed it to me with a sly wink.

"That's a fine sort of a book to show an honest and moral police officer. If I found a bookseller on the Avenue with one, I would have him pinched."

Bartley swung around in his chair, saw which book it was, and laughed.

"Well, Rogers," he said, "the man that wrote that book died a good many hundred years ago. He was the greatest



As He Did Not Speak, I Dropped into the Great Armchair by His Side.

adventurer of his day, the first real blackmailer, a man that made his living by his wits. Also, he happened to be a poet and dramatist, as well as a rogue."

Rogers took his cigar from his mouth and responded with a grin, "What we call today a crook."

I could see that there was something on the chief's mind, but just what it was we were not to learn for some time. He talked, first about the rain, then about the baseball team, in fact of everything but the purpose that had brought him. That was his way, as we both knew. It was not until he had lighted a second cigar and had been silent several moments that he turned to Bartley and said:

"John, I have a case for you."

Bartley threw me a quick glance, then answered, "But you know, Rogers, I don't care to take up any more cases until I have been away fishing and had a good rest."

The chief nodded, but added, "Well, this won't be much of a case. It's not my affair, anyway. I happened to see the governor the other day, and he asked me to get you to look into the matter and make him a report."

I glanced at Bartley. The governor of the state did not, as a rule, interest himself in criminal matters. If this was a case that he wished Bartley to investigate, then it must be something very unusual, indeed. By the little gleam of interest in his eyes, I could see that he agreed with me.

"What is the case?" he asked.

"Well," answered Rogers after a short pause, "I don't suppose you know anything about it; though you may have seen it mentioned in the papers since you returned. It all started a year ago. It was a robbery."

Bartley gave a little exclamation of disgust. "You know that robbery cases are out of my line. There is never anything of interest in them. Besides, a robbery that took place a year ago must be all settled by this time."

Rogers took his cigar from his lips, tried to blow a smoke-ring, failed, and simply said, "Well, the two chaps

that they say committed this robbery are now in jail with a seven years' stretch over them.

"You know, John, after all, I don't know such a devil of a lot about this thing myself. I got mixed up in it by accident. I happened to see the governor on another matter; and when I had finished my business, he told me he had received a good many letters asking him to pardon the men that were in jail for the Circle Lake robbery. Many of these letters were from lawyers, in which they said that, after they had read the evidence, they doubted if the men were guilty. Also, one of these reform societies has got mixed up in the thing. The governor had read the evidence brought out at the trial, and he believed himself that the men might not be guilty of the robbery. Then he asked me if you were in the city; and, when I said 'Yes,' he suggested that I ask you to look into the affair. If you, after having investigated the matter, think the men are innocent, then he will pardon them. He said, also, that there was some sort of a fund from which he could pay your fee."

Bartley gave me a curious look, then turned to Rogers. "That part's all right, Rogers. Only I haven't the faintest idea what you are talking about. Of course, I know where Circle Lake is. It's near Saratoga. A friend of mine has a summer place there. But beyond that, I have no idea what you are driving at. Why not start at the beginning and tell me what this crime was?"

With a grin the chief started at the beginning of the story.

"Of course, you know who Robert Slyke is?"

Bartley nodded; but, seeing that I did not recognize the name, he turned to me.

"Pelt, don't you remember the Wall Street broker who announced at a Billy Sunday meeting that he had been converted, and that he was going to give back to his clients the money they had lost in his office?"

Both Bartley and Rogers laughed, and the latter commented, "He never gave it back."

"No," said Bartley, "he never did. That conversion did not stick. Slyke is a strange sort of a chap. His friends are few and there have been wild rumors as to where he got his money. He has dabbled a bit in spiritualism, and has been fooled by several mediums."

Rogers nodded in agreement. "That's the chap. He has a place at Circle Lake. He has lived there for the last two years all the year round. No one knows exactly why he left the city, but it is said that he has lost a lot of money in stocks."

He paused, then continued, "It was Slyke who had the robbery. Early one morning, about a year ago, his step-daughter came to his room and said there were burglars downstairs. He jumped from his bed, and, without any weapon, rushed down the stairs, while the girl stayed on the top step. From then on, it becomes mixed up."

"Mixed up?" asked Bartley.

"Yes. Just what took place and how many men were in the room at the time, was a point of dispute at the trial. The girl says she is sure—that is, almost sure—there were two men in the room. On the other hand, Slyke says there was only one; though, he added, there might have been a second man whom he did not see. There was a bit of a struggle, and the men jumped out of an open window and got away."

Bartley, who had listened carefully, asked, "They did not get anything?"

"No, not a thing. The safe in the room was unopened."

"Are these men," asked Bartley, "the ones that are serving the seven years' sentence?"

Rogers paused long enough to light another cigar, and throw back his head to watch the smoke curl to the ceiling before he replied, "That's the big question."

He was silent for a moment, then continued:

"After the burglars got out of the window, Slyke called up the city police and also the state police. When the city police arrived at the house they made no arrests. But early that same morning the state police picked up two men about six miles away on the other side of Saratoga. They were both well-known characters who had been in trouble before. One of the men had a slight bruise on his head. Slyke claimed that in the struggle he hit one of the robbers with a cane. Both men refused to say where they had been during the night. The strange thing about it was that they were taken to their own homes before being locked up. When they were searched, the police found nothing on them whatever."

"To a student of criminal literature the finding of an old crime restaged is rather interesting. That's why I said I would like to look into it."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BOY SCOUTS



(Conducted by National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.)

BOY SCOUT ROUNDUP RESULT

For about three months past, the Boy Scouts of America in every part of the country have been engaged in what is known as the Anniversary Roundup. The main purpose was to make this program of scouting, which stands for character building and citizenship training, available to more boys in the country. In fact, a definite increase of twenty-five per cent net gain was aimed at, which would bring the membership of scouts up to the half million mark, exclusive of the 128,000 men who are giving service to this cause.

Although the main impetus of this drive was supposed to take place during February 8 to 15, the Thirtieth Anniversary Week of Scouting, and possibly the termination of the specified period then, the following information is forthcoming from the National Council office of the Boy Scouts of America.

The report to the National Executive board of the chief scout executive states:

"The Roundup has proven to be the most progressive and stimulating thing yet undertaken by the Boy Scouts of America. It has placed the scout movement before the general public perhaps more effectively than at any other one period in the history of the movement. It has caused all of our membership to think more definitely of the necessity of reaching more boys. As far as results are concerned, at this time it is impossible to say definitely what the net results are. As to how many troops and how many local councils have actually earned the award of the president's streamer for going 'over the top' with a 25 per cent increase is not yet known. From all sources there is evidence of a keen desire in securing the full net increase set up as the original objective, namely 100,000 more boys. Although not more than 30,000 to 50,000 of this net increase has actually been reported to the national office so far, it is known, from reports that have come in and from personal conferences in the field, from one end of the country to the other, that this represents but a portion of the net increase, which will eventually be reported to the national office."

Therefore, the executive board unanimously adopted the recommendation that the time of the Roundup be extended until the full 100,000 net increase has been secured, with the understanding that the president's streamers are to be awarded to all councils which have already qualified, and as soon as they qualify, until a period when records show 100,000 net increase.

It is believed that this plan will serve to meet the equitable claims of many localities, where because of sickness and other difficulties not unreasonable in depending so largely upon volunteer leadership, registrations could not be completed by February 15; and make possible a very wholesale result for all concerned, and at the same time in no way detract from the prestige and honor of those who have actually earned the right of award with the time originally specified.

It is "over the top" that the scouts are going without a doubt!

BOY SCOUT SAVES COMPANION

On a recent rowing trip Scout Lewis Wood of East St. Louis, Ill., and a companion had gone about fifty yards from shore to a point of land that was not covered with water, and believing it was an island, had gotten out of the boat to talk to some fishermen. Wood's companion was standing at the edge of the water when the bank suddenly gave way, throwing him into water beyond his depth. He grabbed a piece of driftwood but it was not large enough to support him. The current was strong at this point and carried him 50 feet or more from the shore. When Scout Wood saw his companion go down he plunged into the water and swam to him. The drowning boy had gone down the second time when the scout reached him. After a hard struggle in the water Wood managed to secure a grip around his companion's neck and swam to shore with him. There Wood applied the Schaefer method of resuscitation to the boy, who was unconscious, and within about fifteen minutes had his companion able to stand. The National Court of Honor has issued a letter of commendation to Scout Wood in recognition of his valor and skill.

BOY SCOUTS AID CITY

With the preparedness that has gained for them the nation's confidence, boy scouts have again rendered significant aid in time of disaster. In the recent \$12,000,000 fire that swept the business section of Astoria, Ore., and left 2,500 people homeless, every active troop of boy scouts and every scout who has been a member of the organization since 1916, were on duty throughout the night and assisted in guard, errand and messenger service.

VARNISH HARMED IN WASHING CAR

Improper Methods Are Sometimes Worse for the Finish Than None at All.

TEMPERATURE OF WATER

Cleaning Solutions Containing Ammonia or Any Kind of Lye Soap Should Be Avoided—Loosen Mud and Dirt Gently.

The purchaser of a motorcar, proud of its resplendent luster, is prone to make many commendable resolutions pertaining to its frequent washing and cleaning and then actually do more harm than good in the zeal with which these operations are carried out.

If one could watch the minute care with which the final surface is built up at the factory, where coat after coat of expensive material is deftly applied and carefully rubbed, the car owner would be more specific when he gives instructions to have the car washed.

Do Not Use Brush.

He would make sure that the water is no warmer than 60 degrees, for no varnish will withstand sudden application of hot water. No matter how much mud or dirt is on the car, it should not be scrubbed off with a brush. Cleaning solutions should be avoided, especially if they contain ammonia or any kind of lye soap. And the practice of removing mud and dirt by a harsh water blast is decidedly detrimental because the blast drives the grits of dust and mud into the finish.

The integrity of the varnish is impaired by every scratch it receives. Because these scratches often are so small that they are not apparent to the eye does not lessen their danger to the finish. Examine a car with the aid of an enlarging glass after it has received a thoughtless "rush" washing and the apparent glasslike surface is found to be actually broken up into countless cuts and scratches. The process need be continued only a comparatively few times when these scratches will be worn through the coats of finishing varnish, allowing moisture to seep into the undercoats, and the finish will begin to check, crawl and disintegrate.

Right Water Pressure.

When running water is used the pressure should be just sufficient to keep the water moving six inches from the open hose. Then the mud and dirt should be gently loosened with a soft, clean cloth or sponge. If soap must be used, it should be pure castile. When the car is clean it should be showered with cool but not cold water, especially if warm water has been used at the beginning of the work or if the car is to be run out into cold weather. It is advisable to wash one section at a time, drying with a good chamol. In using the chamols the motion should be in straight lines rather than circular. The chamols should be kept clean throughout the operation, washing it out frequently with soap and water and rinsing thoroughly with clean water. Do not rub a varnished surface after it is dry.

Every time the car comes in after a muddy trip it should be washed before the mud has a chance to set or harden.

PLAN TO CLEAN UPHOLSTERY

Many Automobile Owners Make Mistake by Using Gasoline—Plain Water is Favored.

Many automobile owners make the mistake of trying to clean leather upholstery with gasoline. This method cracks the leather and destroys the good appearance of most leather. Just plain water, mixed with a little ammonia, is recommended by those who have had experience in cleaning upholstery. After this has dried, the leather should be rubbed with a soft cloth in order to get a polish. Service stations will recommend good prepared leather dressings.

RAIN WATER FAVORED FOR AUTO RADIATORS

Its Use is Recommended as Less Scale Results.

Driver Should Remember That Proper Supply is Just as Important as Supply of Gasoline and Oil—Keep Close Watch.

There is always a day of reckoning for those who neglect details in the care of their car, and that day is likely to come when you least expect or desire it. What you think you have saved by neglect will be spent in expensive roadside repairs. Attending to details is thrice cheaper, and, what is more, relieves future worries.

And one detail of your car which you should watch carefully is your radiator. Trouble is sure to come unless it is kept full at all times. Form the habit of inspecting and refilling the radiator before the car is taken from the garage. When on long tours, especially if you have been doing considerable hill climbing, keep a weather eye peeled toward the water supply.

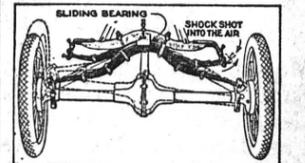
Remember that the proper amount of water is as important as your supply of gasoline and oil. It is not a bad plan to examine the water supply every time you stop for gasoline or oil. Use clear water, and if rain water is obtainable employ it, as less scale and deposit will result.

The cellular openings always should be kept clean. Keep mud from remaining in them, as it cuts down radiation and prevents proper cooling. You should occasionally flush the entire circulating system. This may be done by disconnecting both the upper and lower hose connections and allowing fresh water to enter the filler neck and flow down through the radiator and out the lower hose. The motor water jackets can be flushed out in the same way.

ADAPT REAR-SPRING SYSTEM

Said to Act in Capacity of Shock Absorber in Lessening Effects of Hard Jolts.

A new rear-spring system for light-weight cars is said to act in the capacity of a shock absorber or snubber in lessening the effects of a jolt when one of the rear wheels drops into a depression or strikes an obstruction, as well as to serve the primary function of the usual spring which it replaces. It consists of two separate cantilever springs, the ends of each being attached to the rear axle and frame in such a way that they cross



Illustrating Action of New Rear-Spring System When Left Wheel of Car Strikes an Obstruction, Shock Being Deflected to Right.

at the center of the rear cross member of the frame, which they support at that point by means of a sliding bearing.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

AUTOMOBILE PAINTS

An emergency cotter pin can be made from a common hairpin by a few twists of the pliers.

It is not advisable to use a nonskid tire on one rear wheel and a plain tread on the other.

It is necessary to have a rather light-bodied, free-flowing oil when the splash type of lubrication system is used.

Don't turn the hose on your car in order to wash it. Water, forced out in this way, gets into impossible-to-reach places and doesn't improve the car.

MASCOT FOR ENGLISH AUTOMOBILES



The famous sketches of a dog in the London Daily Sketch is reproduced as a mascot and decoration for the radiator of automobiles. This noted figure, which is known the length and breadth of England, is mounted on a cap, and rides triumphantly on the hood of the car. It was first introduced at the London automobile show in Olympia hall, and now is the most popular thing abroad.