



HIDDEN DEATH

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CHAPTER I. CARDONA HAS A HUNCH

RALPH WESTON, police commissioner, was seated at his desk. With one elbow on the broad, glass-topped surface, he rested his chin upon his hand and stared intently at Detective Joe Cardona.

It was the first meeting between the recently appointed police commissioner and the ace detective, who was recognized as the best sleuth in New York.

Beside the commissioner's elbow rested a large stack of typewritten reports. He had been referring to these.

Now, with the detective actually present, Weston tapped the pile of papers as he spoke.

"I have been studying your records, Cardona," he said. "I wish to commend you upon the capability which you have displayed. You have been a most important factor in the combat against crime."

Cardona, swarthy and stern-visaged, showed no change of expression as he heard the compliment. Weston's commendation pleased him, but the detective had a habit of maintaining his poker face under all circumstances.

Weston, keenly observant, smiled thoughtfully as he watched the detective.

"I have made an exhaustive survey of your work," the commissioner continued. "I find that you possess a remarkable aptitude in the practical solution of crime problems.

"I note, however, that you seldom resort to theory. That is the matter which I wish to discuss with you today."

Cardona's eyes narrowed as he returned the commissioner's stare.

"Just what do you regard as theory, commissioner?" he questioned.

"All crimes," explained Weston, "demand a double treatment. Practical methods, such as arrests, grilling, dragnets, and the like, are useful in the majority of cases. Theory, in which crime is considered as a serious study, is just as essential as practice when one is confronted by a baffling problem."

"That's well and good, sir," declared Cardona. "I use theory, but I mix it with practice. My idea is to get at the facts in a case. The quicker you do that, the quicker you get results.

"I can track down half a dozen facts while I might be bothering around with one fancy stunt that would lead to nothing. Get the goods, and forget the rest of it. That's what works!"

The commissioner was silent. A slow, thin smile appeared upon his lips.

The smile made Joe Cardona uneasy. He felt that his emphatic statement was due for a criticism. He waited, resolved to stand by what he had said.

"You have given me your definite opinion?" questioned the commissioner.

Cardona nodded.

"You actually believe," continued Weston, "that the final report on a solved case should be free of all extraneous impressions and unsound notions?"

"Certainly," said Cardona.

"Then why"—Weston's voice was deliberate as he tapped the typewritten papers—"why have you frequently left an element of profound uncertainty in connection with cases that you have declared to be completely closed?"

Cardona looked puzzled. He tried to grasp the commissioner's thoughts, but failed. The detective did not know what to reply, and Weston seemed to enjoy Cardona's bewilderment.

"Let me speak more specifically," declared Weston, leaning back in his chair. "In at least six of your reports, you have referred definitely to one individual, whom you claim has played an important part.

"You have established this person in your own mind. You have linked him with widely differing affairs. Yet, you have not presented one tangible bit of evidence to prove that this person is a single individual.

"He might be one, as you suggest. He might be three. He might be six. He might"—the commissioner's voice slowed with emphasis—"he might be none at all!"

“You mean”—Cardona was speaking in a confused manner—“you mean that I—that in those cases—“

“I am referring,” interposed Weston, “to a person whom you have called The Shadow; an individual whom I am forced to regard as mythical.”

THE words were stunning to Cardona. The detective realized that the commissioner had picked his weakness.

To Joe Cardona, The Shadow was a most important personage—a living being who fought with crime, but who had always managed to mask his identity.

Often, during his career, Cardona had been aided by both information and action which had come from an unknown source. The similarity of these instances had convinced him that one man was back of them all.

So far, the detective's theory had not been seriously questioned at headquarters. Now, the new police commissioner had delivered a bombshell, and Cardona was at loss.

“You say that you deal in facts,” came Weston's voice. “Therefore, you should form your conclusions upon facts.

“So far as The Shadow is concerned, your only identification is that he is a man dressed in black, who appears and vanishes in a most fantastic fashion!”

“That proves that he is real,” declared Cardona.

“It proves nothing of the sort!” responded Weston. “Suppose, Cardona, that you had come into this office and found me sitting at this desk, wearing a black cloak and a black hat. In accordance with your past policy, you could have gone back to headquarters to report that you had seen The Shadow here. Actually, you would have seen me—with my identity hidden—not even disguised.”

“But the crooks know that The Shadow is real!” protested Cardona. “I've heard dying men call out his name. I've heard others testify—“

Weston held up his hand, and the detective ended his excited statement.

“What does that prove?” questioned the commissioner smoothly. “It shows one of two things: Either that certain criminals have been deceived as easily as you, or else that those crooks have taken advantage of your weakness, and have deceived you.

“Your fault, Cardona, is lack of analysis, so far as this one point is concerned. You have permitted yourself to fall into an error that could cause you disaster.

“Suppose that criminals at large should learn of this absurd notion? Suppose, also, that your mistaken judgment should be supported by our other detectives?

“Surely you can see the logical result,” continued the commissioner. “Any malefactor who chose to hide himself within the folds of a black cloak would enjoy virtual immunity.” The commissioner smiled.

“He could come and go at will—while in their reports, detectives would mention The Shadow—and that would be the end of it!”

“That's a bit exaggerated, sir,” objected Cardona. “You've got to see my viewpoint. The Shadow doesn't appear every day in the week—not by a long shot! But whenever he has shown up, it's always helped.

"I didn't have to mention him in my reports. None of that stuff went to the newspapers. At the same time, I'm positive that The Shadow was in the picture—and it was my job to say so!"

"Cardona," said Weston seriously, "I gave you an exaggerated impression merely to enable you to appreciate your own mistakes.

"No thinking man could share your views on this matter of The Shadow. Let us agree that some unknown person, or persons, can be connected with certain crimes that have occurred.

"To give that person, or those persons, an identity that is vague and uncertain is an unwarranted procedure.

"As your superior, I am instructing you at this time to make no such references in the future. Should you discover any one who has cloaked himself in black and has adopted the name of The Shadow, you may make a report to that effect.

"John Doe, alias The Shadow,' would be an actuality. The Shadow— as a personality—is nonexistent. Is that clear?"

Cardona nodded. He saw perfectly the commissioner's point. Weston was right. Nevertheless, Cardona could not fully reject his own impressions.

"Have you talked with Inspector Klein?" Cardona asked. "He knows something about this—"

"I have held a discussion with Inspector Klein," interrupted Weston, "and his views are in accord with mine. He has never accepted your view that The Shadow was an actual person.

"Nevertheless, Klein recognized your capability, and accepted your reports in a negative way. When I made it a definite issue with him, he admitted that the only logical viewpoint was the one which I hold.

"On that account, I decided to discuss the matter with you personally."

"Suppose," said Cardona, "that I run into another case in which The Shadow figures; that is"—he made a hasty correction—"a case in which I think The Shadow figures. What am I to do about it?"

"THAT is easily answered," smiled the commissioner. "You will merely be dealing with a person unknown.

"If that person could be apprehended, you should make it your duty to capture him. If there should be no reason to make an arrest of the anonymous person, then take no action.

"Forget your preconceived notion that you are dealing with a mysterious individual who possesses a fantastic identity. However, I do not think that you will encounter the difficulty in the future."

"Why, sir?"

"Because, Cardona, I have arranged to make a very valuable series of experiments. In going over your records, I find that your capability is unexcelled—so far as practical methods are concerned. Whatever theoretical ability you possess is chiefly intuitive."

"I follow hunches," said Cardona. "Is that what you mean?"

"Exactly," resumed the commissioner warmly. "But you do not possess the faculty of analyzing those impressions. Usually, your practical methods come to your aid. But they have failed—and will always fail - when circumstances depend solely upon deductive reasoning.

"I do not hold to the opinion that theoretical reasoning is the proper method of combating crime. I do believe, however, that when baffling and unexplainable mysteries occur, the ideal detective must turn to deduction.

"Therefore, I intend to combine practice with theory. I have selected you as the practical man. I have also selected a man who should prove to be an excellent theorist.

"He is Professor Roger Biscayne, whose experiments in psychology have included an exhaustive study of the criminal mind.

"I do not consider Biscayne a detective; but I am positive that, as an analyst, he can produce remarkable results.

"I am withholding my experiment until some unusual crime occurs. Then I shall have Biscayne cooperate with you in its solution."

As Weston finished speaking, he fancied that he saw resentment in Cardona's eyes. The commissioner could understand it.

There was every reason why the detective should regard this scheme as a form of interference with his work. Weston, accordingly, made a definite effort to curb Cardona's budding antagonism.

"You will understand," he said, "that Professor Biscayne is not seeking publicity, nor is he desirous of taking credit that should rightfully belong to you.

"He agrees with me in the opinion that he will learn more from you than you could possibly learn from him. He will not be officially employed in this work.

"He has always commended the methods of professional detectives. I can safely predict that when Biscayne publishes his next book on psychology, his references to your work will add greatly to the fine reputation that you have already gained."

The tone of the commissioner's voice as well as his actual words were pleasing to Joe Cardona. They showed him that Ralph Weston would be a valuable friend in the future.

He realized that he held a high position in the new commissioner's esteem, and that Weston's power and influence could be used to advantage.

"I get your idea, commissioner," said Cardona. "You can count on me. I'll be glad to work with the professor. I've got plenty to learn - I find that out the older I get!

"If the professor can figure out where my hunches come from, it will please me plenty."

"Excellent!" declared Weston. "I am glad that you like the plan. Should you encounter a crime that involves a mysterious, unknown individual, your contact with Biscayne will prove of advantage to you.

"Reverting to the matter of The Shadow, I want you to remember what I have said. Avoid references to such an uncertain quantity. The Shadow—as you have described him—can be regarded only as an impossibility!

"I shall instruct Inspector Klein to notify me of the first crime that seems well suited to my experiment.

"There is, at present, no case which calls for cooperation between yourself and Professor Biscayne. We may have to wait a considerable length of time."

"Maybe not, commissioner," declared Cardona suddenly.

The detective drew an envelope from his pocket. It had been cut open at the top. Cardona extracted a folded sheet of paper and passed it, with the empty envelope, across the desk.

THE envelope was addressed to police headquarters. It was typed in capital letters. Weston opened the sheet of paper and read the typed statement that appeared within:

IN MEMORY OF

S. H.

WHO DIED

LAST NIGHT

HE WAS THE FIRST

"When did this come in?" asked the commissioner, frowning at the document.

"Yesterday morning," declared Cardona. "It was mailed night before last. Postmarked ten o'clock."

"It looks like an ordinary crank note," said Weston. "We get hundreds of them. Did any person with the initials 'S. H.' die two nights ago?"

"Not to my knowledge. We looked through the obituaries yesterday and today. There was no S. H. among them."

"Then the letter is a hoax!"

"I'm not sure about that," stated Cardona. "It's different from the usual crank note. It makes no threats. It gives no warning. It carries no tip-off to any crime that is now being investigated."

"It is simply a statement of something that has happened. The last line is important. One person has died. Another death will follow—if the implication is correct."

"What have you done about it?" Weston asked.

"Nothing—as yet. It may be a crank note, as you say. If it proves to be otherwise, we'll investigate it. There's only one chance in a hundred that the letter means anything, but I have a hunch that that one chance is going to hit."

"A hunch," repeated Weston slowly. "Well, Cardona, from what I have ascertained, you attach too much significance to hunches. I prefer to accept the ninety-nine, rather than the one."

"Nearly forty-eight hours have now elapsed since this letter was posted. You believe that it may be important; I believe that it is not. We shall see who is correct."

Cardona felt a return of resentfulness as the commissioner tossed the letter and the envelope across the desk. He wisely veiled his feeling, but he did not like Weston's attitude.

It had been a mistake to mention this letter, Cardona felt; and to argue the subject would only make his position worse. So he placed the paper in the envelope and pocketed it.

He looked glumly toward Weston. Before the commissioner had more to say, the telephone rang.

Weston answered the ring and passed the telephone to Cardona.

"Inspector Klein is calling," he said. "I suppose he wants to speak to you, Cardona."

The commissioner saw the detective's eyes narrow as he received the message. There was eagerness in Cardona's voice as he gave short, quick response to the words that he was hearing.

"I'll be over right away!" said Cardona. "It's five thirty, now. I'll be there before six!"

He hung up the receiver and looked at the commissioner. Cardona spoke and reached in his pocket at the same time.

"An old man found dead," he said. "Shot through the heart. An old inventor. Living alone in an apartment at the Redan Hotel."

Weston looked up inquiringly.

"The dead man's name is Silas Harshaw!" added Cardona.

Weston noted an emphasis on the name. "Silas Harshaw?" he repeated. "Who is Silas Harshaw?"

Cardona flung the envelope triumphantly upon the table, and stared squarely at the commissioner.

"Silas Harshaw," said the detective, "is S. H.!"

CHAPTER II. A STRANGE DEATH

EARLY evening found Detective Joe Cardona in Silas Harshaw's apartment at the Redan Hotel. There, the detective anxiously awaited the arrival of Commissioner Ralph Weston.

The death of the old inventor was the very type of mystery that the commissioner had been awaiting.

Harshaw's suite occupied one entire side of the building. It was on the top floor of the old hotel.

Cardona stood at the entrance of the apartment, beside the door which had been smashed from its hinges.

Within the apartment was Detective Sergeant Mayhew, who was taking orders from Cardona.

A clinking sound announced the ascending of the elevator. The slow-moving car was on its way to the tenth floor. When it arrived, two men stepped out.

One was Commissioner Weston. The other was a tall, stoop-shouldered man, whose shrewd eyes peered through gold-rimmed spectacles. The man's high forehead and overhanging brow indicated him a scholar.

Cardona divined that this was Professor Roger Biscayne. The introduction proved him to be correct.

Cardona was about to lead the way into the apartment when the commissioner stopped him.

"Let us go over this, step by step," he suggested. "So far, neither Professor Biscayne nor myself know what has happened here.

"We have been discussing Silas Harshaw on the way to this place, and I find that Professor Biscayne knew the old man. Therefore, he may be able to give us some unexpected assistance."

“Very well,” said Cardona. “This afternoon, Doctor George Fredericks, Harshaw's physician, called at the hotel and asked if the old man was in his apartment.

“Harshaw had no telephone in the place. He wanted to be alone and undisturbed. A boy came up and tapped at the door. There was no response.

“Doctor Fredericks expressed anxiety. He stated that he feared something had happened to the old man.

“A policeman was summoned. It was necessary to smash the door off its hinges, as it was double-bolted on the inside. There is the wreckage.”

Cardona led the way into a plainly furnished living room and indicated another door at the rear of the room. Like the first, this door was broken also.

“No one was in here,” declared Cardona, “nor was any one in the room that Harshaw used as a laboratory”—he pointed to the other side of the living room —“so they broke into the old man's study. There, they found his body.”

The three men walked into the study. The doorway formed an entrance at one corner. The study was a long room, with a single window at the far end.

The window was open; but it was covered with an iron grating. It had a projecting sill, beneath which was a radiator. In front of the window lay the body of Silas Harshaw, sprawled face upward.

As the men approached, they saw a bloody wound in the old man's chest.

A SINGLE bullet had ended the life of Silas Harshaw. Here, in this locked and secluded room, he had been shot to death. Cardona pointed to a door at the side of the room.

“That's the bedroom,” he said. “It only has one door, opening off this room. It has two windows, both with gratings. Nothing in there. That's the layout, commissioner.

“Old Harshaw very seldom let visitors in here. He usually met them in the outer room.”

Commissioner Weston turned to Professor Biscayne.

“Tell Cardona what you know about the place,” he said.

“I am familiar with this room,” declared Biscayne. “I visited Silas Harshaw here, perhaps a half dozen times, in the course of the last six months.

“I suppose that you have learned a great deal about him already; let me give you the information which I possess. Then you can check with what you have discovered.

“Silas Harshaw was working on an invention—a remote-control machine. He was very secretive about his plans, and he had very little success in interesting people in them.

“He wrote to me and asked me to visit him, which I did, about six months ago. The old man took me to his laboratory and brought me in here. He showed me just enough of his work to arouse my interest.

“Then it developed that he wanted me to influence my cousin, Arthur Wilhelm, to invest money in the experiments.”

“Arthur Wilhelm, the soap manufacturer?” inquired Cardona.

“Yes,” replied Biscayne. “Arthur is very wealthy. He agreed to let Silas Harshaw have three thousand dollars as a preliminary fund. Harshaw went to work, and I came here occasionally to see how he was progressing. My last visit was two days ago.

“I came here late in the afternoon. Harshaw's servant, a man named Homer, let me in. Harshaw met me and brought me into this room.

“He said that he was going out for an hour, and asked me to remain here. He gave me a manuscript that he had written on remote control. I read it during his absence. It was crudely scrawled, in longhand, and was very vague in its details.

“After Harshaw returned, he asked me if I could obtain more money from Arthur Wilhelm. I said that I would find out; but I offered no assurance.

“I left at seven o'clock, and Homer went with me. The servant told me that he had been discharged, and that he was not coming back. He did not know why Harshaw had dismissed him. I could have told him, but I refrained from doing so.”

“Why was that?” asked Cardona.

“First,” explained Biscayne, “I think Harshaw must have mistrusted the man. I don't think he ever left Homer here alone. He insisted that I bolt the door while I was inside here, two days ago.

“Second, Harshaw was planning to take a trip to Florida, for his health. He told me that in confidence. Naturally, he would not need the servant while he was gone. He did not want people to know of his absence.”

“Do you think,” questioned Cardona, “that Harshaw was afraid some one might try to get in here and steal his plans?”

“Yes,” replied Biscayne, “I do. He told me once that he had a model of his remote-control machine, and that he had put it where no one could possibly find it. He also spoke vaguely of enemies.

“He said—I can recall his exact words—that he kept their names in his head, and that was where he kept his plans, also. He said that they would like to steal his model, but that he had planned to prevent them.

“He mentioned those enemies two nights ago, and his remarks might have been construed as threats against those unknown persons. But he was so vague and eccentric in all his statements that it was difficult to get his exact meaning.”

“Do you really think that he had enemies?” Cardona asked.

Biscayne replied with a broad smile:

“Perhaps they were actual only in his own head—as he himself said. Harshaw was an interesting but complex study in psychology, and my contact with him was too occasional to enable me to fathom him.”

CARDONA drew a report sheet from his pocket and referred to notations which he had made.

“We have covered just about everything that you have told me, professor,” said the detective. “We have tried to trace Harshaw's servant. The man's name is Homer Briggs. We have been unable to locate him.

“We learned at the desk that you and Homer left here two nights ago. About an hour afterward,

Harshaw came downstairs and made a telephone call. He went back to his apartment.

“He was not seen after that. The police surgeon who examined the body believes that Harshaw was shot some time before midnight—the same night.”

“Within the last forty-eight hours,” observed Weston.

“Yes,” said Cardona. “I am expecting Doctor Fredericks, now. He is coming in from Long Island. Perhaps he can give us more information.”

The police commissioner was walking about the study, examining the place with curiosity. Cardona began to point out certain objects, and Biscayne intervened to explain a few points of Silas Harshaw's eccentricities.

“The old man was a great student of chess,” he said, indicating a small table with an inlaid board and expensive chessmen.

“I don't think he played a great deal, but I know that he spent much time over problems. That is a sign of a mind that is both self-centered and unusual —perhaps an eccentric one.

“He was an expert mechanic, and he was constantly forgetting his important work to toy with other devices. You will find an odd assortment of peculiar contrivances in the room he used for both workshop and laboratory.

“He devoted a great deal of time to chemical experiments. One other oddity was a passing interest he had in crude modeling and sculpture. Here is an indication of it.”

Biscayne pointed to a table in the front corner of the room. Along with other crudely fashioned subjects was a bust of somewhat less than life-size.

It bore a striking resemblance to the dead man by the window. It was evidently an attempt at a likeness of Silas Harshaw, made by the old man himself. All the modelings were formed of hard clay, as Weston discovered by inspection.

The commissioner turned around to speak to Biscayne, and noted that the professor and Cardona had gone to look at the dead man.

Before Weston could join them, Detective Mayhew entered, accompanied by a stout, middle-aged man.

The newcomer was Doctor George Fredericks. He had already seen Harshaw's body that afternoon, but had been forced to leave when the police surgeon arrived.

Fredericks had been at a Long Island hospital until an hour ago. He had hurried back to the city.

“Tell us what you knew about Silas Harshaw, doctor,” said Cardona.

“He was a sick man,” said Fredericks solemnly. “His heart was bad; his blood pressure was high. He was in poor condition, generally. I advised him to take a trip South; to stay away from his laboratory and forget his experiments for a while.

“He called me up, two nights ago, to say that he was leaving the next day. I told him to call at my office for a prescription.”

“That explains the eight-o'clock phone call,” interposed Cardona.

“Yes,” said the physician, “I had told him to call me at eight. I was not at my office, yesterday. It was not until this afternoon that I learned Harshaw had not come for his prescription.

“Immediately, I feared that something had happened to him. He would not have gone without first coming to my office. That is why I came here and insisted that a search be made of this place.

“I expected to find him sick and helpless. Instead, we found him dead— murdered!”

Biscayne was examining the body. Now, apparently oblivious to those about him, he walked across the room to the door. He looked at Harshaw's desk, midway between the door and the window.

While the others were watching him, he came back slowly and spoke to Weston.

“It looks to me, commissioner,” said Biscayne, “as though some one had been waiting outside that door. When Harshaw opened it, the assassin shot him. Then the murderer dragged his body over here and opened the window, to make it look as though he was killed there.”

“How did the killer escape?” queried Weston.

“That remains to be discovered,” declared Biscayne.

JOE CARDONA smiled. He went to the body and made an examination of his own. He stared closely at the dead man's right hand. He looked at the radiator beneath the window ledge.

He clambered on the sill, and his flashlight gleamed about the bottom of the iron grating. He dropped back into the room.

“I disagree with you, professor,” he said pleasantly. “Silas Harshaw was killed right at this spot!

“If you care to look at the window ledge, you will see the evidence. There are two marks there that must have been made by sharp hooks.

“Then, perhaps, it would be wise to note the finger nails of the dead man's right hand. You will find a silver glint upon two of them.

“I shall tell you how I believe Silas Harshaw was killed. Some one tried to enter this room by hooking a ladder from the window of the room below. Silas Harshaw heard the noise.

“He opened the window to listen. He crouched behind the sill, then drew himself upward by gripping the radiator. The other man was at the window. He shot Harshaw through the grating, then made his get-away.”

Commissioner Weston nodded as he turned to Biscayne. Professor Biscayne also nodded. In spite of himself, the professor was forced to admit that Cardona's theory was too plausible to reject. The detective smiled.

His theory was supported by facts—facts which Roger Biscayne had not observed. Biscayne had known something of Harshaw; Cardona had known nothing. Yet the detective had scored in the first test.

“Let's go down and take a look at the room below,” suggested Cardona, eager to press his advantage.

They went along, leaving Detective Sergeant Mayhew in charge. They found the door of the room unlocked. It proved to be an ordinary hotel room, unoccupied.

Cardona raised the window and peered upward. While he was thus engaged, some one knocked at the

door. A bell boy entered in response to Cardona's order.

"Detective Cardona?" he queried. "There's a phone call for you at the desk. I was upstairs looking for you. The man up there told me you were here."

Cardona picked up a telephone from a table in the corner of the room, and asked for the call.

It was from headquarters.

"Yes... yes..." the others heard him exclaim. "Right away, inspector. Right away... We can come back here later."

He hung up the receiver and turned to the group.

"A man named Louis Glenn," he said. "Stockbroker. Died coming home in a taxicab. Only six blocks from here. I'm going over there to see what happened!"

"We'll go along," responded Weston. "Come, Biscayne. You, also, Doctor Fredericks. You might be needed."

There was something in Cardona's tone that had prompted Weston to this quick decision. The commissioner was beside the detective as they passed through the lobby. He spoke to Cardona in a low voice.

"Do you think there's a connection?" he asked. "Two deaths— Harshaw and Glenn—"

"Remember the note," replied Cardona cryptically. "Harshaw was the first. Glenn may have been the second!"

CHAPTER III. THE SECOND MESSAGE

Two policemen approached the commissioner's car as it stopped before Louis Glenn's apartment house. Cardona spoke to them as he alighted.

One of the policemen pointed to a taxicab. It was the car in which Glenn had died.

"The driver found him," said the officer. "He called the doorman. They took Glenn up into his apartment.

"They're up there now with the doctor. Glenn was dead before they got him out of the cab."

Two more policemen were in charge of Glenn's apartment. They were watching the cab driver, the doorman, and Glenn's valet. The body of Louis Glenn lay on the bed, its arms doubled, and its face distorted. A physician was making an examination.

While Fredericks spoke with the physician, Cardona began to quiz the witnesses. Weston and Biscayne watched in admiration while the businesslike detective made pointed notations.

Within a few minutes, Cardona had traced Glenn's movements up until the time of his death. Carrying notes, the detective went to a telephone in another room, to call the Merrimac Club, where Glenn had been that evening.

He was gone for fifteen minutes. Then he called to the commissioner. Weston and Biscayne joined Cardona.

Seated in Louis Glenn's sumptuous living room, Cardona gave a brief but definite summary of his findings.

“Glenn went out of town two weeks ago,” he declared. “He was in the Middle West—due back here to-night. He went directly from the train to the Merrimac Club, where he has a private room.

“He had made the trip East specially to attend a fraternity dinner that was being held to-night.

“He was going back to Chicago on a midnight train. So he left the club early to come here.

“There are a number of persons whom I shall have to question. I wanted to get the outline of Glenn's activities right away—and I did that by telephone.

“Glenn was met by several of his friends when he came into the club at six o'clock. Some one was evidently with him from then on. He seemed in good spirits and in perfect health.

“He ate the same meal as the others, and no one else has complained of any ill effects. When Glenn left, he stepped into a cab that the doorman called. The driver is known down there.

“I have checked the time, and I figure that they made a quick trip here. The driver saw Glenn doubled up on the floor when he reached out to open the door for his passenger.

“Whatever happened to Glenn took place while he was on his way here. Yet he was alone when he left the club, and alone when the cab reached this apartment house.

“I intend to hold the driver for further questioning. I have a list of names here”—he showed the paper—“and I'm going to quiz these men.”

Doctor Fredericks entered as Cardona finished speaking. The physician's face was both solemn and perplexed.

“Glenn unquestionably died from the effects of a most virulent poison,” declared Fredericks.

“I thought at first it might have been an overdose of some medicine or a narcotic, but now I regard those possibilities as being out of the question. What I should like to learn is how the poison was administered.

“An autopsy should reveal its nature, but it may not give a clue to how the dose was taken.”

Accompanied by Biscayne, Cardona descended to the street, and made a thorough inspection of the taxicab, which was being watched by one of the policemen. The search revealed nothing.

Back in the apartment, Cardona made a call to headquarters. He left orders there, then started a systematic search of Louis Glenn's abode. He found nothing that excited his suspicion.

He questioned the valet, and obtained information regarding Glenn's habits. The man stated that his employer had never, to his knowledge, indulged in narcotics, nor did he use liquor.

This statement was not only in keeping with the inspection which Cardona had made; it was also corroborated by a telephone call from Glenn's physician, who had been notified of the death.

Cardona learned that Louis Glenn had seldom used medicine of any description; that he had been in excellent health and particularly proud of his physical condition. He was a cigarette smoker, but mild in that habit.

During the search, Cardona came across some empty boxes that had contained cigarettes. These were of an imported variety, a blend which Glenn constantly used according to the valet.

Inspecting the articles in Glenn's pockets, Cardona discovered a package of the same cigarettes. There were three cigarettes in the box. There had originally been ten, packed in two layers of five each.

Cardona kept the package. He also took Glenn's handkerchief, expressing the belief that it might have been moistened with some liquid containing poison.

Cardona was seeking facts. He could not find them. When he had satisfied himself that he could accomplish no more at the apartment, he left for the Merrimac Club, to investigate there.

It was after midnight, and Commissioner Weston was driving homeward with his friend, Professor Biscayne.

"What do you make of these deaths?" was Weston's question.

"Both are baffling," declared Biscayne. "This man Cardona is a worker. He may hit upon a successful clew before he has finished."

"He obtains results," said Weston. "It is the first time I have seen him at work. His method is all fact—he uses theory only as a follow-up."

"In the case of Harshaw, he intends to find out what has become of Homer Briggs, the old man's servant. He wants to know whom the old man regarded as enemies."

"There, he is dealing with the death of a man who was eccentric. It will be hard for him to establish facts at their face value."

"But this case of Glenn is entirely different. Here is a man who was evidently well liked and prosperous. He has apparently fallen at the hand of some enemy. Everything about Glenn seems normal."

"So far as deductive reasoning is concerned," said Biscayne, "neither case is sufficiently developed to require it. You have said, yourself, commissioner, that Detective Cardona obtains results. I do not doubt it."

"By gathering many facts, he can pick those which appear pertinent to the case. One simple discovery may lead to the end of the trail."

"However"—Biscayne's tone became thoughtful—"the necessary facts may be totally hidden. We have seen two cases of what appear to be deliberate murder. We cannot be sure in either one."

"Sometimes men are killed by mistake. I am anxious to watch Cardona as he progresses. At this stage, I cannot help him; in fact, I am quite apt to hinder him. The work he is doing now does not appeal to me."

"I am more interested in the study of the facts themselves. To me, it is fascinating to take the details of a crime—particularly murder - to know that the elusive clew is among them, and to seek it by the pure process of deduction."

"Exactly!" exclaimed Weston. "I told Cardona, to-day, that that was his one failing—an inability to resort to scientific deduction when all other methods are insufficient. He claims that he has hunches—"

"Intuitive deductions," interposed Biscayne with a smile.

"- but," continued Weston, "from his past record, I have seen that he goes wide of the mark when pure theory is involved. Take, for example, the case of the man he calls The Shadow."

"The Shadow?" echoed Biscayne.

“Yes,” said Weston. “Cardona seems to believe in the existence of a superman called The Shadow—a terror of the underworld.”

“The Shadow,” observed Biscayne, “is the name adopted by a man who makes radio announcements. I have heard him over the air—he has a weird, uncanny laugh.”

“Well,” declared Weston, “Cardona has taken care of that. He actually believes that there is a connection between the radio announcer and the strange being who moves by night.”

“Not really!” exclaimed Biscayne. “That is too absurd, especially for a man so attentive to detail as Detective Cardona—“

“I mean it, Biscayne,” affirmed the commissioner. “Cardona claims that he has received mysterious information pertaining to certain cases which he has handled.

“He tells me that he has heard telephoned messages, uttered in that same weird voice. He says that he has encountered a man in black, but has never been able to discover his identity.”

“THAT is excusable, commissioner,” said Biscayne, in an indulgent tone. “We might almost regard it as a form of superstition with Cardona.

“You know, a great many people are so unimaginative that when they meet with the simplest facts that seem unexplainable, they seize upon the theory which is closest at hand, and none can shake them from it.”

“You have described Cardona,” declared Weston. “That form of susceptibility appears to be his weakness.

“When you first talked to me, a few months ago, about the higher methods of crime detection, I was extremely anxious to experiment along those lines.

“In Cardona, I have found the ideal man—from the practical standpoint. His records show that he utilizes facts to the utmost.

“You will have every opportunity to observe his methods. If he encounters difficulties that he cannot solve by his usual procedure, you can then make suggestions.

“Naturally, my first wish is that both these crimes may speedily be laid upon the guilty persons. Therefore, I hope that Cardona has immediate success.

“At the same time, it would intrigue me greatly if your cooperation should become necessary.”

“Particularly,” remarked Biscayne, “if one or both of these deaths should involve the man whom Cardona calls The Shadow.”

“Not The Shadow,” corrected Weston. “Say, rather, a man—criminal or otherwise—who might happen to appear upon the scene without revealing his identity.

“Should that occur, Biscayne, I shall give immediate orders to pursue him. But I feel convinced that Cardona's ideas regarding such a person are purely misconceptions.”

The car had arrived at Biscayne's home. After bidding the professor good night, the police commissioner rode to his own residence, feeling satisfied that the next day would bring interesting developments.

Biscayne, in leaving, had promised to call at Weston's office the first thing in the morning. By that time,

perhaps, Cardona would have more facts.

It was nine o'clock the following day when Weston reached his office. His idea about Cardona's activity was not a mistaken one. The detective had called up nearly an hour before, to leave word that he would be at the commissioner's office before ten o'clock.

While Weston was awaiting Cardona's arrival, a secretary entered to state that Professor Biscayne wished to see the police commissioner.

Biscayne entered, carrying a copy of the morning newspaper. Its report of the two murders were somewhat meager. Commissioner Weston had read the full accounts.

When Biscayne inquired if Cardona had discovered new data, Weston explained that the detective would arrive shortly. In the meantime, he produced the letter which had proclaimed the death of S. H., and gave it to Biscayne to examine.

"We believe that it refers to Silas Harshaw," declared Weston. "That is Cardona's belief. I feel that his opinion is correct."

"It may be," replied Biscayne quietly. "It is another evidence of Cardona's method. He chooses the simplest and most direct explanation that he can obtain from a fact.

"This letter states that a man designated as S. H. has died. The initials of Silas Harshaw are S. H. Therefore, it seems to fit. Yet I do not think it would be wise to be too sure on this point."

Scarcely had Biscayne finished speaking before Cardona himself was ushered into the office.

He had evidently arrived in great haste, but he curbed his impatience when the commissioner began to speak. Weston pointed to the letter which Biscayne held.

"We were just discussing this letter, Cardona," said Weston. "I was telling Professor Biscayne that we thought S. H. must surely mean Silas Harshaw. Biscayne is doubtful—"

"I should not be surprised," interposed Biscayne, "if this letter did actually refer to Silas Harshaw. But, theoretically, we cannot accept that belief on the evidence of the letter alone. It may be purely a coincidence.

"I suppose, Cardona, that you may have found some tangible fact about this letter that made you definitely believe it referred to Harshaw?"

"I had a hunch," replied Cardona. "I told you that much yesterday, commissioner."

"Last night," reminded Weston, "you also mentioned another hunch— that there might be a connection between the murders of Silas Harshaw and Louis Glenn."

"I am sure there is a link between them!" declared Cardona.

"Ah!" exclaimed Biscayne. "You have unearthed some new facts since we left you?"

"No," said Cardona. "I have found no worth-while clues. But I have received something that makes me sure these two deaths were engineered by the same parties.

"You speak of coincidences, professor. They don't happen twice in a row— not like this!"

As he spoke, Cardona drew an envelope from his pocket. It was identical with the envelope that Roger

Biscayne held.

From the envelope, Cardona extracted a sheet of paper. He unfolded it and laid it triumphantly upon the glass-topped desk.

"This letter," he announced, "arrived in this morning's mail!"

Weston and Biscayne were staring at the typewritten sheet. It was very similar to the letter that had come two days before, but the wording varied slightly:

IN MEMORY OF

L. G.

WHO DIED

LAST NIGHT

HE WAS THE SECOND

"L. G.!" ejaculated Weston. "It must mean Louis Glenn!"

Biscayne did not register surprise. He was thoughtful. Then he spoke aloud, although he seemed to be talking to himself.

"Louis Glenn," he said, "died a few minutes before eleven o'clock. This letter could have been written afterward—"

"Yes?" The sharp question came from Cardona. "Look at this envelope, professor. Notice its postmark. Ten o'clock!"

Biscayne seemed annoyed by the detective's remark; then he nodded, in spite of himself. Cardona's eyes flashed with pleasure.

"That letter," said the detective, "was mailed before Louis Glenn died. It was mailed by some one who knew he was going to die. It may have been mailed by the slayer himself!"

He paused to let his words make an impression. Then, momentarily ignoring Professor Biscayne, Cardona stared directly at Commissioner Weston, and added a prophecy.

"Silas Harshaw was the first. Louis Glenn was the second. The murderer is still at large.

"You may count on it—there will be a third!"

CHAPTER IV. CARDONA MAKES PLANS

LATE that afternoon, Detective Joe Cardona again conferred with Commissioner Ralph Weston and Professor Roger Biscayne, in that same office.

The detective had been busy all day, tracing the past movements of Louis Glenn. Detective Sergeant Mayhew had been left in charge at Harshaw's.

Cardona had stopped there twice, during the day.

There was a marked warmth of friendship between Cardona and Biscayne. This was due to two causes. First, because Cardona had proven his hunches, and therefore felt superior.

The second reason was because Biscayne had accompanied Cardona during the early afternoon, and had openly expressed his admiration for the detective's painstaking ability.

Any antagonism that might have arisen between the two men would undoubtedly have been forced by Cardona, for Biscayne was trespassing upon the detective's field.

Hence, Cardona, by demonstrating both intuition and competence, was secretly pleased with himself, and therefore quite willing to accept Biscayne's presence.

Now that he felt sure of himself, Cardona had slipped back to his natural tendency. He was both critical and glum. For his most active efforts had brought no tangible results.

In the commissioner's office, Cardona frankly admitted that the break he had expected had not arrived.

"I've been after the Glenn case," he told the commissioner, "because it seemed most alive. There's my report. Plenty of facts— but not a single tracer.

"I went through Glenn's room at the Merrimac Club, but I didn't find a thing that was worth while.

"There was another package of cigarettes there—in the coat pocket of his business suit. Only one cigarette left in it. I had it analyzed with the other.

"No traces of poison—no traces of any dope. Those cigarettes were Glenn's regular brand."

"What is your next step?" questioned Weston.

"The one step," declared Cardona, "is to get at the motive for these murders. In a way, I consider both cases as one. There's not a trace of a motive, so far, in the death of Louis Glenn. But there is in the case of Harshaw."

"Burglary?" suggested Biscayne.

"Right!" declared Cardona. "It's a sure thing that the old man expected some one to come in there after something. We've searched the place pretty thoroughly—that is, Mayhew has.

"We found a lot of half-finished contrivances in the workshop. We've left them where they were.

"Probably you'd like to look at them, professor. But we haven't located anything in the study—and that's the place that counts."

"What about Homer Briggs?" asked the commissioner, glancing at a report sheet on the desk.

"That's the point I'm coming to," stated Cardona. "With Glenn, there are lots of people who knew him. But with Harshaw, there are very few.

"We have located three who, like yourself, Professor Biscayne, knew the old man as an acquaintance only. Doctor Fredericks knew him only as a patient. Harshaw always came to his office, however. But Homer Briggs is the man we want."

"What do you think about it, Biscayne?" asked Weston.

"Cardona is correct," agreed the professor. "I told you of my own observations—that Harshaw seemed to mistrust Briggs. The old man was evidently anxious to guard something.

"Briggs might have stolen from him. Of course, we must also consider that Briggs is an ignorant type of

man. He may have read of Harshaw's death and become afraid—“

“We'll learn all that,” declared Cardona, “when we have arrested Briggs. I am also considering him in the light of an accomplice— connected in some way with the actual murder.

“Briggs left while Harshaw was still alive. After that, some one mounted to the window of the study and shot the old man.

“If the killer's purpose was merely to dispose of Harshaw, the job is ended. But I think there's more to it than that.”

“The burglary motive?” asked Biscayne.

“YES,” announced Cardona. “Some one wanted to get something out of that place. The grating, at the window, could be easily removed. Perhaps the murderer was preparing to remove it when Harshaw surprised him.

“Now, assume that the motive was burglary. Just as surely as the man killed Harshaw, just as surely he did not enter the apartment. Therefore, he didn't get what he was after.”

“Considering burglary as a motive,” said Biscayne, taking advantage of Cardona's pause, “the fact that the intended burglar did not enter, shows probably that he did not contemplate murder as well as burglary.

“He had to kill Harshaw; and when he did, he wanted to get away as quickly as possible.”

“Yes,” agreed Cardona, “and he still wants whatever he didn't get. Therefore—when he recovers his nerve—he will be back again.”

Biscayne nodded thoughtfully, and his heavy brow became furrowed. His eyes shone through his large-rimmed spectacles. He saw what Cardona was planning.

Commissioner Weston's brain was working slowly. His face still showed perplexity when Cardona resumed his speech.

“We're going to lay a trap for that fellow,” he said. “It will be baited tonight. I have said very little about the ladder from the room beneath, because a search of that room gave no tangible clew.

“The Redan Hotel is an easy place to enter. I have let it get about, that we are locking up Harshaw's apartment, and that there will be no police on duty there.

“But when the place is closed up, Mayhew will be in it. He's going to wait for that crook if he has to stay there every night for the next two weeks.

“He may have a long wait—but I don't think it will be more than a few nights. We're dealing with a pretty bold crook, I believe; and he'll be back as soon as he feels he can come there safely.”

“I think so, too,” said Biscayne. “I noticed this afternoon's papers said that nothing had been found in Harshaw's place. That's good bait. You aren't going to do any more searching, are you?”

“None at all,” said Cardona. “Not until after we get the man we want. Maybe we won't have to search—after we get through grilling him.

“Meanwhile, we're still looking for Homer Briggs.”

Commissioner Weston glanced at Biscayne. He saw that Cardona's scheme for to-night had captured the professor's imagination. Weston was highly pleased.

His smile began to fade, however, when Cardona brought up the subject of the mysterious messages.

"We've got to get results, quick," declared the detective. "Those letters were too cocky. Harshaw was the first, Glenn was the second. Somebody's going to be the third. When? How soon?"

"To-morrow night," said Biscayne.

"To-morrow night?" echoed Cardona.

"You've given me the hunch habit," said Biscayne, with a smile. "Maybe I'm wrong. Nevertheless, there was a lapse of exactly forty-eight hours between the first death and the second—one message two days ago; the other today. Our murderer seems to be methodical.

"And, now, Cardona, since I have spoken well of your plan for to-night, I am going to point out the fallacy of your reasoning."

Cardona's face clouded. Weston appeared interested. Biscayne was calm as he continued.

"I conceded," said Biscayne, "that burglary might have been the only object of the man who killed Harshaw. On that basis, the man should return.

"But if burglary was his motive, primarily, how do you explain the note telling of Harshaw's death? Especially as that note, like Glenn's, was probably mailed before Harshaw died?"

Biscayne's question dumfounded Cardona. The detective was at loss for a reply. He studied the professor grimly.

"Maybe there isn't any use, then," growled Cardona. "Keep Mayhew out of there. Is that your idea?"

"No," said Biscayne calmly, "he should be there, by all means."

"Then you're going back to my argument," insisted Cardona.

THE detective's tone showed that he realized his cause was weak. Biscayne had stated an evident fact.

He had shown Cardona's tendency to become weak when theory was involved. Cardona's remark was made in self-defense. Biscayne had a reply for it.

"I am not going back to your argument," the professor stated. "On the contrary, I am advancing an argument of my own.

"You will find that when these problems are solved—as I feel positive they will be—that Harshaw's death was not caused by the man who attempted burglary. We are dealing with cross-purposes."

"You mean some one else—"

"Precisely. I think that Harshaw was killed from within his apartment. Right now, I cannot suggest how it was accomplished.

"The other man—the burglar—may have been working at the window at the time. He may have arrived later and observed Harshaw's body. At any rate, he decided to keep away from there until later."

Cardona glanced at Weston and observed that the commissioner was favoring Biscayne's theory. Cardona realized that his own stand had been badly weakened. He forced a smile, and decided to make the best of it.

"Well," he said, "we'll take a chance on the burglar."

"Of course," agreed Biscayne. "Your discovery of the marks on the window ledge have proven of great value."

Cardona accepted the compliment a trifle sullenly. Biscayne might also have mentioned the silver marks on Harshaw's finger nails, he thought.

No one was speaking now, so Cardona used the opportunity to make a disclosure that would surely meet with commendation.

"Regarding these notes," he said. "If there's a third, we'll know where it came from. I've had the post office working on the letters."

"We know already that they were mailed from somewhere close to the Redan Hotel. They're on the watch now for No. 3."

"Good!" said Biscayne.

The commissioner nodded approvingly. "I've got plenty of work cut out tonight," said Cardona, rising. "But I'm going to be pretty close to the Redan Hotel, all along. There'll be other men around there, too - laying low. If Mayhew gives the signal, there won't be a chance for the guy to get away."

Biscayne arose also. He accompanied Cardona as they left the commissioner's office. The two men chatted in a friendly manner on their way to the ground floor.

When they reached the street, Biscayne hailed a cab. He paused to make a few low-voiced remarks as he shook hands with the detective.

"I'm making it my job to work with you, Cardona," he said. "You can count on me in any way. Whatever theories I have are for your benefit. You're the man who gets the results."

"All right, professor," said Cardona agreeably. "I'm going to get the murderer, no matter how big he is. I'll get him even if he happens to be—"

"The Shadow," interposed Biscayne, as he stepped into the cab.

Cardona stood dumfounded as the taxi whirled away.

What had Biscayne meant? Had he talked with Commissioner Weston?

Was his remark a jest? A suggestion? A challenge?

Cardona did not know; but he realized that if Biscayne had intended to make him think, he had succeeded.

For the name of The Shadow was buzzing now, through the detective's head.

"The Shadow," thought Cardona. "He's come in before, when I've been hitting it tough. The Shadow's on the up-and-up. He wouldn't be mixed in with murder."

“But it's the stuff he goes after; the smartest crooks are the ones he battles. I wouldn't be surprised if The Shadow shows up before this is all over!”

Try as he might, Cardona could not concentrate on his problems as he wended his way uptown. One thought kept dominating his brain. He was thinking of The Shadow.

Cardona was in a strangely abstract mood when he arrived at the Redan Hotel to give instructions to Mayhew.

CHAPTER V. DEATH IN THE DARK

DETECTIVE SERGEANT MAYHEW began his unusual duty the moment that Joe Cardona left Silas Harshaw's apartment.

The big door that led to the hall had been repaired; so had the door between the outer room and the study. They had been fitted with locks instead of bolts, and Mayhew had the keys.

Presumably, Mayhew left the hotel shortly after Cardona. The detectives held a brief discussion in the lobby, and there was no doubt that their words were overheard.

Mayhew stated that he would be at headquarters within an hour, and he turned in the keys of the apartment at the desk.

Cardona went out through the lobby. Mayhew went into the dining room.

From there, Mayhew went to a small side door, but instead of leaving the hotel, he doubled up the stairway, and returned to the murdered man's apartment. Duplicate keys were in his pocket.

There were several guests in the lobby when Cardona left. One of these was a tall, solemn-faced man who was resting leisurely in a large, comfortable chair.

Another was a powerful, thickset man who lounged in a corner, reading a newspaper. Shortly after Cardona's departure, this individual went out of the hotel.

The tall man remained for nearly an hour, then he strolled to the street. He did not return. He was not in the lobby when the thickset individual came back at midnight.

Only the clerk remained in the lobby. He was half asleep. At times he roused himself and glanced toward the front; then, gradually, his head lowered.

It was during one of these lapses that the clerk's eyes became suddenly focused upon a pillar midway between the revolving door and the desk.

A dull light projected from the top of the pillar, and its rays illuminated the entire post. As the clerk was watching, he saw a human shadow move slowly across the post!

Astounded, the man looked toward the floor. There he saw the same shadow; lengthening in an uncanny fashion.

It grew, then dwindled as it continued its even progress toward the interior of the lobby.

The clerk gripped the edge of the desk and shuddered as he watched that mysterious blot travel silently toward the darkened stairway.

Wildly, he sought to discover the living form that the weird shadow represented. He could observe

nothing but that moving blackness.

As the gliding shadow reached the bottom of the stairway, it rose against the wall. There, for a brief moment, the clerk fancied that it took on a human form.

Upright, the mass of blackness shrank and seemed to assume a solidity. Then it merged with the darkness—and was gone.

What could it be?

The shadowy shape was no longer visible as it moved upward. It did not appear again until it arrived at the tenth floor.

There it emerged from the stairway and slowly transformed itself into a tall, upright form. It approached the door of Silas Harshaw's apartment, where it assumed the proportions of a human being.

An odd-appearing figure, he stood beside the silent door. He was clad in a black cloak. He wore a black slouch hat that was turned down to cover his features.

There was a weird, sinister appearance in this man. In motion, his easy, gliding stride was uncanny. Standing still, he was even more mysterious.

Minutes ticked by, and the man of the dark gave no sign that he was alive. Then, from hidden lips, came a soft, whispered laugh.

The eerie sound throbbed through the hallway, and echoed back from the walls. It was the laugh of The Shadow!

The pulsating softness of those mysterious reverberations could not be heard through the barrier before which The Shadow stood.

Nor could Mayhew, on the other side of the door, possibly have heard the sound that followed. Metal clicked against metal, yet the noise was scarcely audible.

A key had been inserted in the lock. It worked as perfectly as the duplicate which Mayhew had retained.

The knob turned. The door opened, inch by inch.

THERE was a single light in the outer room of the apartment. The door to the study was closed. It was a tight-fitting barrier, and Mayhew was safe with his single light, for no rays could filter into the adjacent room.

It was not the light that The Shadow watched, however. The eyes that were hidden beneath the soft-brimmed hat were studying the detective.

Mayhew was comfortably seated in an easy-chair in the corner of the room. By turning his head from left to right, he could view either door, as he chose.

The Shadow was now inside the room. The door closed silently behind him.

Mayhew, totally oblivious, puffed deeply from his cigar, blew a cloud of smoke ceilingward, and rested his head against the back of the easy-chair.

Simultaneously, The Shadow glided directly in front of him.

The black-clad form seemed to dwindle as it swept noiselessly across the room. The man beneath the cloak had shrunk to half his former size.

While Mayhew still continued to speculate upon the swirling tendencies of heavy smoke, The Shadow arrived at the far end of the room.

Drawing himself up, he became a thin shape that stood motionless beside the door.

Mayhew shook himself and stretched. He glanced toward each door, shifted his position in his chair, and examined his cigar, which was commencing to come apart.

The detective grunted as he tried to repair the remains of the cigar.

While he was thus occupied, he failed entirely to observe what happened at the door to the study.

The Shadow moved over to cover the door. While his body blotted out the barrier, his black-gloved hand inserted a key in the lock. The slight clicking was muffled beneath the covering cloak.

The door opened inward—not more than a foot. The Shadow slipped into the study, and the door closed softly.

Perhaps it was a slight sound that attracted Mayhew's attention. The detective looked suddenly toward the door an instant after it had shut. He went to the door and listened.

There was no sound from the inner room. Mayhew went back to his chair.

Absolute darkness pervaded the room in which Silas Harshaw had been slain. It seemed like a chamber of death. Not a single sound disturbed the sinister silence. Yet, there was motion in that room.

A man who was an integral part of the darkness was moving here and there. A tiny ray of light appeared at intervals. It illuminated the old man's desk. It shone upon the bits of sculpture in the corner.

It rested on the chess board. It revealed the gas heater at the inner end of the room.

Only the reappearing light betokened the movement of the man who carried it. The gleaming spot came and went in haphazard fashion, arriving in the most unexpected places.

It disappeared for a full minute, then flickered in the bedroom that adjoined the study.

At last, it was back in the large room. It shone on the floor—at the very place where Silas Harshaw's dead body had been found.

The silvery radiator glittered as the light ran along it. Then the gleaming torch made a small spot that zigzagged along the sill.

It disappeared and left no trace. The Shadow had returned to the gloom of the room.

Now he was below the window sill, a crouching figure, stooping as Silas Harshaw might have stooped, the night he met his doom.

For one fraction of a second, the light again glimmered on the floor. Then it was no longer visible.

The cause of its disappearance was a muffled sound that had occurred outside the window.

There was a slight crackling; the noise of metal driven into wood. The Shadow arose and stood beside

the window.

SOME one was moving against the iron grating!

The window was a dim frame that provided very little relief from the blackness of the room, but now the vague outline of a man was visible there.

The sash had been left raised, exactly as it had been found by the police. Hence, a cautious, metallic noise was audible in the room.

The man who was working at the grating was a craftsman in his own line of endeavor. He was loosening the grating in expert fashion. Even when the iron barrier swung wide, its squeaks were repressed.

His difficult task accomplished, the man outside pressed himself through the window. He crawled along the sill, and as he did so, The Shadow drew back toward the nearest corner.

The man in black stood motionless, but his gloved hand gripped the handle of a hidden automatic.

The stranger had entered the room. He was crouched by the window sill. He remained there, listening. Several minutes elapsed before the newcomer was sure that all was well. His breathing, restrained though it was, made a wheezing sound in the darkness.

It was a marked contrast to the silence in the corner where The Shadow stood. No noise whatever came from that quarter.

Now a flashlight shone. It was turned toward the floor, and its bright circle reflected upward to show a huddled, stocky form.

Even in that dim surrounding, the man at the window might have been recognized as the one who had left the lobby after Joe Cardona had departed.

The light swung inward, and pointed at an angle along the floor. The increasing luminosity must have made the man fear it would betray his presence, for he clicked off the light.

He was cautious for a short time; then, again, the flashlight gleamed, but it was turned away from the room. It showed the floor and the base of the radiator.

It moved upward and went out as it began to shine on the edge of the window sill.

Silence reigned, but there was motion by the window sill. The man there was occupied in some mysterious work. He was totally oblivious of the presence of The Shadow. He did not know that a menacing form stood close by, with a loaded automatic in readiness.

The crouching man breathed quickly and eagerly. His lips were forming soft, incoherent words. A low exclamation—hardly more than a whisper—was uttered by him.

Then came the sound of a pistol shot.

It was a muffled report that seemed to be absorbed by the room itself. A wailing, gasping cry came from the window sill. A long groan followed.

This succession of startling sounds could hardly have been heard on the floors below, but they could not escape the listening ears of any one within the apartment.

A chair overturned in the outer room. Mayhew's police whistle shrilled.

The latch of the door clicked. The door opened. Mayhew pressed the light switch, and leaped into the illuminated room, revolver in hand. The detective sergeant stared in profound amazement.

Stretched upon the floor by the window lay the body of a man.

Face upward, arms sprawled, it might have been the form of Silas Harshaw, for it lay exactly as the body of the old man had lain.

The second victim had been slain within the walls of this mysterious room!

CHAPTER VI. DEATH UNEXPLAINED

STANDING in the doorway of the study, Detective Sergeant Mayhew gazed quickly about the room in search of an unknown enemy.

There was murder here—but where was the man who had committed the crime? Mayhew spied the open window. Even as he thought of it as an avenue for escape, he heard the strident treble of a whistle from the courtyard beneath.

Then came a banging at the outer door of the apartment. Mayhew hurried in that direction. A plain-clothes man entered.

“Two patrolmen coming up,” he explained. “I was out front. Heard your whistle. What's happened?”

“Stay right here,” ordered Mayhew. “Watch this door. There's been a murder!”

He rushed into the study and hastened to the window. He leaned across the sill, and gazed downward into the glare of a powerful electric lantern.

Mayhew's hands pressed against metal hooks, and he saw a collapsible ladder hanging beneath him.

“Hey—Mayhew!”

It was Cardona's voice from the courtyard. Detective Sergeant Mayhew shouted in response.

“Any one come down this way?”

“No,” cried Cardona. “I've been here five minutes. Thought I saw something that looked like a ladder up on the wall. Kept the glimmer off it. Was there a shot?”

“Yes!” shouted Mayhew. “The man must still be here! I have help!”

“We'll cover from down here,” answered Cardona.

Mayhew slipped back into the room. He hastened to find the man who was guarding the door.

“Stay posted here,” said Mayhew grimly. “There's a dead man in the other room. The killer couldn't have gotten out by the window. I'll look for him. Send the patrolmen in when I call.”

In the study, Mayhew looked about him. There was no place where a man could hide. It was impossible for the second man to have escaped by the window.

Yet there must have been a slayer, for there, almost at Mayhew's feet, lay the dead man, shot through the heart.

A flashlight lay on the floor beside him. The butt of a gun projected from his pocket.

Mayhew's bewilderment ended as he thought of the little bedroom. Perhaps the killer was there!

He could have reached it in ample time before the outer door was opened. Unless he had removed a grating from the window of the bedroom, the man must still be there.

Mayhew went to the door of the outer room and switched out the study lights. The patrolmen had arrived.

Mayhew beckoned to them, with his revolver as he drew a flashlight from his pocket. He indicated the door of the bedroom.

"One man here," he ordered. "Another at the door of the bedroom, there. I'm going in!"

Grimly, the uniformed men took their positions. Mayhew, known as one of the most daring of detectives, handed his flashlight to the patrolman beside him, and carefully turned the knob of the door.

"Have your gun ready," he whispered. "I've turned the knob. Give me the light."

Crouching, Mayhew pressed the door with his shoulder. As it opened slowly inward, Mayhew turned the torch to reveal the nearest corner of the room.

He opened the door more fully. No one was visible.

With a quick thrust, Mayhew pushed the door entirely open and strode into the room. As the detective sergeant advanced, something shot upward from the floor.

From the blackness in the foreground, a hand caught Mayhew's wrist.

Upward went Mayhew, lifted by the powerful strength of a man who had materialized from nothingness! The detective was helpless in the toils of an amazing hold that twisted his body sidewise and spun it back toward the door.

THE electric torch dropped to the floor. Mayhew's finger pressed the trigger of his revolver, but the shot drove itself harmlessly into the wall.

Then the detective lost his hold upon the gun.

The suddenness of Mayhew's Waterloo had left the nearest patrolman completely off his guard. The sound of the revolver shot awoke him to action.

He leaped forward, and as he did so, Mayhew's form was precipitated against him with terrific force. The patrolman was hurled to the floor by the impact.

The policeman at the door of the outer room could only see a mass of writhing figures. From them arose a vague form that swept across the room in the direction of the window.

It was lost in darkness the moment that it passed the range of light from the outer room, but the officer leaped after it, firing wildly as he went.

The blundering attacker was easy game for The Shadow. As the policeman dashed into the darkness, two quick hands grasped him by the ankles.

His shots ended as he plunged headforemost along the floor, his revolver flying out ahead of him.

Cool and cunning, The Shadow had outguessed his antagonists. There remained but one more—the

plain-clothes man at the outer door.

He, too, was playing into the hands of The Shadow. Knowing that the door of the inner room must be passed before the outer door was reached, the detective rushed to reinforce his comrades.

As he came to the door of the inner room, he stopped short and peered into the darkness. His leveled automatic was in his hand.

An arm swept downward from the wall beside him. There was a sharp clash as The Shadow's automatic struck the gun from the man's hand.

Before he realized that he was disarmed, the man at the door was caught in that powerful clutch. A forearm jolted against the back of his neck.

His body turned a sudden somersault, and he struck the floor flat on his back.

A tall, black form stood silhouetted in the doorway. A low, jibing laugh came from unseen lips.

As Mayhew, groping on hands and knees in the darkness, found the patrolman's revolver, the man in the doorway seemed to fall away into the outer room. He was gone before Mayhew's shots could take effect.

The detective sergeant started in pursuit. The others, recovering from their daze, were seeking their weapons. They were too late to be of any use.

Only Mayhew was able to make the chase, yet even he was not quick enough. When he reached the door of the inner room, he fired futilely at a figure that was leaving the apartment.

Running to the hall, he caught a fleeting glimpse of a black form at the head of the stairway. Mayhew emptied his gun in that direction. He damaged nothing but the wall.

At the head of the stairs, Mayhew shouted into the depths below, but received no answering call.

While he was trying vainly to head off the escaping man, the elevator door opened and Joe Cardona stepped from the car.

Excitedly, Mayhew told what had happened. Cardona grimly drew him into the elevator, and ordered the operator to make a quick drop to the ground floor.

They found the clerk at the door of the elevator. He had heard Mayhew's shouts, and had been ringing the bell.

Cardona started across the lobby. The revolving door was turning. A plainclothes man was coming in. The fellow stopped, nonplused, as he saw the detective.

"I told you to watch out front!" cried Cardona angrily.

"You told me"—the man was stammering in bewilderment—"you told me that five minutes ago. But just now—when you came back outside—just a minute ago —"

"Come!" ordered Cardona.

He rushed through the revolving door, and reached the sidewalk. He stared in both directions along the lighted street.

There was not a soul in sight. Cardona turned to the detective.

“What do you mean?” he questioned. “You say I came outside? Just now?”

“Yes,” replied the man. “I thought it was you—it sounded like your voice. I heard you say: ‘Hurry in! Hurry! We need you!’ Then I came in through the door.”

“O.K., get going!” ordered Cardona. “Scour the place! Look everywhere! Don’t let that fellow get away!”

LEAVING his subordinates to take up the hopeless search, Cardona went back into the lobby. There he encountered the patrolmen who had been with Mayhew.

They had come down the stairway. Cardona dispatched them to join in the search. Moodily, he rode up in the elevator.

He found the plain-clothes man standing in the study near the window. The fellow had scarcely recovered from the swift and powerful attack which had overcome him.

The lights were on, and Cardona surveyed the body of the slain man. He noted how similar its position was to that of Silas Harshaw. Two men killed—on the same spot!

Cardona went to the window, and called down to the courtyard. Two of his men were on duty there.

They shouted up to say that no one had attempted to escape by the ladder. A head appeared from the window of the room below. Another of Cardona’s men was there.

He informed the detective that he had found a large suitcase—evidently the object which had contained the equipment of the collapsible ladder.

Cardona left the window, and again studied the victim. Shot through the heart, like Silas Mayhew.

The man’s face was well formed; even in death it carried a determined look. Cardona saw no resemblance to any of the many criminals whom he knew.

Could this be the burglar who had been anticipated? If so, who was the killer? Had two men entered here and quarreled? That was unlikely.

Some one must have managed to enter this place, in spite of Mayhew’s presence. Cardona chewed his lips as his mind reverted to the name that he could not resist—The Shadow!

Was he the man who had escaped? The circumstances did not fit. The Shadow was a man who killed only when he felt that justice demanded it.

Somehow, Cardona felt that if The Shadow had been here, he would have captured this man, rather than have slain him.

Turning to the plain-clothes man, Cardona questioned him about the fight. The man was unable to give a description of his assailant.

He had been struck down in the dark—that was all he could remember.

The odds had been four to one. Yet from the story, Cardona learned that the suspected killer had escaped without firing a single shot, although the minions of the law had blazed at him in vain.

That savored of The Shadow—the strange, mysterious man who had no quarrel with the police, but who battled crooks and defeated them on their own ground rather than operate by accepted police methods.

The Shadow! The very name was taboo, now, so far as Cardona was concerned. The report must label the escaping man as an unknown killer.

That would be the logical description, but if it had been The Shadow, why had he acted in such an amazing manner?

He had used a gun to kill an enemy. He had not resorted to the same device in order to escape. It did not seem consistent—unless one recognized The Shadow.

The sight of the dead man on the floor perplexed Cardona. He began to wonder. Perhaps, at last, the conditions had been reversed.

Given two men, one waiting in the room, the other entering by the window— which would be The Shadow? The man in the room, Cardona supposed.

This man on the floor had been facing the window. He could have been shot down by some one who had entered by the window.

Could this be The Shadow?

Mayhew entered. Cardona began to question the detective sergeant. Mayhew's story was of little help.

When he had entered the bedroom, he had been attacked in the dark. He had pursued a man, and had caught but a few meager glimpses of him.

The Shadow was elusive, Cardona knew, but The Shadow did not often resort to flight.

Doggedly, Cardona began a search of the premises in hopes of uncovering some new clew. The task was a vain one. He had sought to capture an expected burglar.

He had succeeded in effecting such a capture, but it failed to explain the mystery. The man on the floor of Silas Harshaw's study could never tell whatever he might have known.

A third death. Was this one, too, intended? That was a riddle that perplexed Joe Cardona as he looked down at the face of the dead man.

CHAPTER VII. DEATH CONTINUES

It was nine o'clock in the morning when Detective Joe Cardona left Silas Harshaw's apartment. It was exactly twenty-four hours afterward when he appeared in Commissioner Weston's office to discuss the only new development that might be a clew.

This was a third note, which Cardona had brought with him from headquarters.

The detective nodded grimly to both Weston and Biscayne, who was present. Without a word, he laid the letter on the table, so the other men could see it. It was in the same form of typing. It read:

IN MEMORY OF

T.S.

WHO DIED

LAST NIGHT

HE WAS THE THIRD

“What do you think of it, Cardona?” questioned Weston.

“It's a tough case,” declared Cardona glumly. “The further I go, the worse it gets. I only hope we're reaching the end of it.”

“What about the dead man up at Harshaw's?” questioned Biscayne.

“Well,” said Cardona, pointing to the note, “here's the way I figure it: He is the third victim. His initials must be T.S. But we haven't been able to identify him.”

“Wait a moment, Cardona,” suggested Biscayne. “How about the time element?”

“First, Silas Harshaw died; the next morning, you received a note. Second, Louis Glenn—just two nights after Harshaw was killed. You received a note the next morning.

“I expected a lapse of forty-eight hours before the third killing— if there was one. Instead of that, this man was shot twenty-four hours after Glenn was murdered.

“That seems wrong to me. He should have died last night—not the night before—if he is T.S.

“This note”—Biscayne glanced at the envelope—“must have come in this morning's mail.”

“That's when the sender expected it to reach me,” declared Cardona, “but I got in ahead of him.

“The post-office authorities sent that letter down to headquarters at eleven o'clock last night. They were looking for it, and they got it. Where do you think it came from?”

“Where?”

“From the mail box in the Redan Hotel!”

“What!”

The exclamation was uttered by Weston and Biscayne in unison. Cardona nodded.

“Sure enough,” he said. “The killer is somewhere around the hotel. We've been on the job up there all night—quizzing guests and watching the place. But we haven't got to first base.

“All we know is that the dead man in Harshaw's apartment had been staying at the hotel for five days. He registered under the name of Howard, or Horace, Perkins.

“You can't tell which from the way he scrawled his name on the register. That's an alias, of course.

“He brought the collapsible ladder in with him in the suitcase. He must have gone to 918—the room under Harshaw's study—on the night that the old man was killed.

“So, according to my theory, he was the guy that bumped Harshaw. But, night before last, he tried to gain entrance to Harshaw's suite again from 918 —and he got bumped himself.”

“Which supports my theory,” smiled Biscayne. “I said that the burglary and the murder were two different motives, involving separate persons.”

“Well, professor,” declared Cardona, “we’re getting to the place where we’ve got to figure on this theory stuff.

“I thought your idea of Harshaw being killed inside the apartment must be phony. But now—since night before last—your idea looks O.K.

“There was a fellow in there, somehow, but I can’t understand how he got by Mayhew.

“I’m going to tell you the way I dope it,” Cardona went on. “Somebody—the guy who has sent these notes—is the big brain in back of it. He’s bold, all right, for he’s operating right around the hotel.

“There’s three fellows he wanted to get: S. H., that’s Silas Harshaw; L. G., that’s Louis Glenn; and T.S. who must be the fake Perkins; the third dead man. I’m going to call T.S., the third man, because that’s who I think he is.

“I’m going to accept your theory about Harshaw. The big brain bumped off the old man. Then he killed Louis Glenn.

“But he knew that this fellow T.S. who was living at the Redan Hotel, had tried to get in Harshaw’s apartment. and would try again.

“So the big brain got in instead, and laid for T.S. Bumped him off and got away. What do you think of that?”

“It doesn’t explain one important factor,” declared Biscayne. “Why didn’t the murderer send the third note the same night, instead of waiting twenty-four hours?”

“I’ve doped that out,” said Cardona. “From what the post office says, all three notes were mailed from the Redan Hotel.

“Now, the murderer couldn’t have mailed that third note, very well, before he bumped off T.S., because he couldn’t be sure the man was coming up to Harshaw’s that very night.

“After the bump-off, he had to run from the hotel, and it was too late to send the letter. So he waited until last night—then sent it -”

Biscayne shook his head solemnly and peered, owl-like, through his spectacles. He slapped his hand upon the glass-topped desk.

“Cardona,” he said, in a convinced tone, “you are getting too much unsupported theory into this case. Do not think that I am criticizing, because I am not.

“You are working with facts and you are trying to make them lead you to the solution. You will get there, because there is bound to be a break sooner or later.

“But if you listen to me now, I think we shall arrive at some more definite conclusion much sooner.

“I still believe that it is a matter of cross-purposes. We shall commence with Silas Harshaw.

“For some reason, his death was desired by a person so sure of his invulnerability that he not only contrived death for the old man, but also sent an announcement of Silas Harshaw’s demise.

“The same person desired the death of Louis Glenn. Again, he arranged that death and sent a message.

“Now, our big brain, as you term him, has arranged the death of a third party—a death scheduled to take

place last night.

"He has again posted an announcement. He refers to the third person as T.S. We have not yet discovered the actual death of T.S., whoever he may be.

"Has the big brain, as you call him, contemplated more killings? Perhaps. We shall ascertain that fact later on. But I have given you, in compact form, the vital points that concern the deaths of Silas Harshaw and Louis Glenn.

"I have also considered the possibilities of a third death—which concerns a man whose initials are T.S."

"That's a clean-cut theory," admitted Cardona. "It rings clear, professor. But where does this other killing figure into it? What about the man who got away after he killed the fellow?"

"Cross-purposes," replied Roger Biscayne. "Some one had the burglary motive. He came in through the window. He entered a trap. He was shot and killed."

"By whom?"

"Well," said Biscayne slowly, "I can only believe that there were two men who entered the window. They might have been working together.

"Why one should kill the other is more than I can fathom, at present. It seems quite creditable that such purpose may have been present.

"You have the fact that one man died while the other escaped. He had to battle the police to flee to safety. He simply abandoned the window as a method of escape."

"Then you think that this is a separate affair?" Cardona queried.

"Absolutely! It doesn't fit in with the other progression, at all. Harshaw and Glenn were eliminated by cunningness. The murderer has remained completely hidden.

"Why should he have suddenly changed his method and performed a bold, reckless slaying?"

"You've got a clear idea of it, professor," said Cardona. "It's all right, from your standpoint, because you're working on these crimes like an observer. But I'm running up against the hard facts that we meet in all police work.

"I can't go ahead and forget this last shooting up at Harshaw's. It's a crime, just like the killing of the old man.

"It may be doubling my work, and making me go two ways at once, but - I've got to solve it!"

"Certainly, Cardona," interposed the commissioner. "We appreciate your position, and you may rest assured that I have already gained a first-hand impression of your efficiency.

"I have the utmost confidence in you, Cardona. While you are handicapped with these necessary details, Biscayne is able to study these problems from an advantageous position. I trust that he will be able to offer you valuable assistance."

"Thanks, commissioner," said Cardona warmly. "I've got flyers out, trying to get some dope on this fellow who was killed at Harshaw's.

"He isn't an ordinary crook, but I'm going to get his record, if he's got one at all. There was a telegram

that came in from St. Louis to-day—telling about a burglar and yegg that got away from them out there.

“Max Parker is the bird's name. They're sending a man out to see the body. Other calls are in from Buffalo and Atlanta.

“They're taking care of all that down at headquarters. But in the meantime, I'm figuring on this T.S. angle. I want to know what those letters mean.”

“The Shadow,” suggested Biscayne, with a smile.

A QUICK gasp came from Cardona. The detective glanced toward Commissioner Weston. He noted a stern look upon the commissioner's face.

Cardona picked up the letter on the table.

“I'm going to give this to the reporters,” he said. “They've been demanding to know all about these killings. I kept the notes quiet up until now.”

“Do you think that advisable?” questioned Weston.

“We've got to consider the newspapers,” declared Cardona. “They want to know what's going on. There have been three mysterious deaths.

“If we let them know that we've got letters and have traced them to the Redan Hotel, it's going to work to our credit—and that may prove to be an advantage. Especially, since we are watching the hotel and making no bones about it, now.

“We're going to nab the sender if he comes around the place.”

“What will you tell them?” asked Biscayne.

“I'm going to stick to my theory,” said Cardona deliberately. “Harshaw was the first; Glenn the second; the third may be the man that was killed night before last.

“You don't agree with that last point, professor, and I'm not rejecting your opinion. You think the real T.S. should have been killed last night. Well, he wasn't, so far as we know now.

“If you're right, the killer may have missed out on the job. If I let the newspapers play up the T. S; angle, we may get a tip-off from some fellow who has those initials.

“In other words, I'm going to play it safe all around.”

“Without mentioning The Shadow,” said Weston dryly.

“Right, commissioner,” agreed Cardona. “I'm working the way you ordered. I'm not going off on any wild trail.

“You say The Shadow is my weakness. All right, sir! If I get The Shadow on my mind, I'll talk it all over with Professor Biscayne.

“There's nothing I'd like so much as to have a keen fellow like him looking into The Shadow stuff. It would help me a lot, I'll tell you.”

“I think that the statement to the newspapers is an excellent idea,” declared Biscayne. “I still persist in my theory that the third killing—if there was one—took place last night.

“I believe that the dead man in Harshaw's apartment is apart from the regular series of crimes.

“That makes me all the more in favor of the newspaper statement. The murderer—whom Cardona has called the big brain—will have no knowledge of my theory if he reads the newspaper accounts.”

THE noon editions carried accounts of Silas Harshaw and his inventions; of Louis Glenn and his brief trip to New York; of the mysterious notes that had announced three deaths.

What did the initials T.S. mean? That was the great perplexity. But Cardona did not mention the name of The Shadow.

Secretly, the star detective believed that Roger Biscayne had struck upon a real idea. Cardona believed that the murderer had picked The Shadow for his third victim.

It might be that the unidentified man killed at Harshaw's was The Shadow.

It might also be that The Shadow, himself, had slain the man who had tried to murder him!

If so, it was The Shadow who had escaped. It was also possible that The Shadow, himself, had mailed the third letter, the next night, as a bit of irony.

For The Shadow invariably mocked those who sought to frustrate him.

Cardona also was almost convinced that Professor Biscayne had gone wide in his theory that these murders must follow a regular progression—forty-eight hours apart.

No news had arrived of the death of a man with the initials T.S.

The detective felt that the killings were over. It remained to solve the crimes—to apprehend the true murderer, unless the hand of The Shadow had already performed that task.

Cardona was anticipating some new break that would lead to the solutions.

The break came at one o'clock, just as Cardona was about to leave for the commissioner's office.

The telephone rang. When Cardona lifted the receiver, he was rewarded by an unexpected report from an uptown police station.

But the words that came over the wire left him dumfounded. In one short minute, Cardona's theories were shattered, and Biscayne's were supported.

A man had been found dead, in his home. The tragedy did not appear definitely to be a crime.

The victim was a retired railroad executive. He had gone into the closet under the stairway leading to the second floor of the house. The door had closed, trapping him. He had been suffocated.

A murder? Ordinarily, Cardona would have rejected the idea. But in this case, he knew, instinctively, that the death had not been accidental.

For Cardona had been given the name of the dead executive, and he stood by the telephone, mumbling that name again and again, while his mind seemed numbed and helpless.

This was the third crime! The victim had been trapped last night. He had not been found until half an hour ago. He had been killed by design.

For the victim's name fitted the initials that had appeared in the third mysterious note.

The dead man's name was Thomas Sutton!

CHAPTER VIII. A SINGLE CLEW

THE home of Thomas Sutton was located in an old residential district of upper Manhattan.

It was after two o'clock when Cardona arrived there, accompanied by Commissioner Weston and Professor Biscayne. He found two persons in the house.

One was a policeman, ordered stationed there by Cardona. The other was Richard Sutton, son of the dead executive.

Richard Sutton led the way to the upstairs room, where his father's body lay. There were no signs of foul play. It appeared to be purely an accidental death. But the three investigators thought otherwise, although they did not express their opinion to Richard Sutton.

"Tell me all about it," said Cardona.

"Father and I lived alone, here," said Richard, in a tired, choked voice. "It was his custom to go out every day, and to return after dinner. I suppose he did that yesterday.

"When I came in at midnight, I saw nothing amiss. I supposed that my father had retired.

"This morning I arose late. There was no sign of father. I supposed that he had gone out. I looked in his room. The bed was untouched. He had not slept there last night.

"I phoned a few places where I thought he might have stayed. He had not been seen.

"I called the police. A man came over here. We decided to search the house. We found no signs of anything being wrong.

"Somehow, we overlooked the closet under the stairs. At last we happened to open it. There we found my father's body."

Richard led the way downstairs, and the investigators examined the closet. The door was tight fitting. It had no knob; simply a latch on the outside. The door was closed.

Cardona opened it, and turned his flashlight into the interior. The closet was long, but the ceiling slanted downward, to a small shelf at the end.

While the detective was standing in the opening, something bumped against him. It was the door, closing of its own accord. Cardona stepped back.

Released, the door moved slowly, gathered speed, and shut with a slam. The latch clicked.

"So that's it!" exclaimed the detective. "Thomas Sutton went into the closet; the door closed while he was there; he was trapped."

Richard Sutton nodded soberly.

Cardona looked at the young man with a slight tendency toward suspicion. Richard Sutton was evidently broken by his father's death.

The affair looked like an unfortunate accident. But the coincidence of the initialed letter—the third that

had fitted in with circumstances—was too important to ignore.

Cardona began another inspection of the closet. He let the door shut with himself inside. He rapped against the barrier and called.

The noise was well muffled. Biscayne turned the latch, and Cardona emerged.

“Not much chance of any one hearing calls for help,” was the professor's comment. Weston nodded.

“The closet is empty,” observed Cardona.

“Yes,” said Richard Sutton. “We used it only to store old books. The house was painted about six months ago. I took the books upstairs, and never brought them down.

“Years ago, my brothers and myself used to keep our bicycles and sleds in there. The closet has never served any purpose since except for the books, which are no longer there.”

“Was the door always this way?” quizzed Cardona.

“Yes,” said Richard. “There used to be a hook on the outside—on the baseboard. The screw eye is still on the closet door.

“The hook was broken off a long while ago, and we never replaced it. The painters removed it entirely.”

“Why do you think your father went in there?” asked Cardona.

“I don't know,” said Richard. “That's the only thing that puzzles me. I cannot understand why he should have entered the closet.”

THE whole case was perplexing. On the face of it, Thomas Sutton had simply decided to look into the closet under the stairs.

He had neglected to put something against the door to hold it open. That brought up an important point. Again, Cardona questioned Richard.

“Did your father know that the door would close in this manner?” asked the detective.

“I don't think so,” responded Richard. “He might have noticed it once or twice, but I scarcely think that it would have registered with him. He was very absent-minded at times.

“Although rather methodical, he only paid attention to matters that directly concerned his thoughts of the moment. I feel sure that he had some definite reason for entering the closet, and therefore paid no attention to the door.

“If he had ever noticed it, his mind was so concerned with his specific errand that he forgot completely about the lock.”

Cardona looked in the closet again, and sniffed the smell of the fresh paint. He examined the bottom of the door, and saw that there was virtually no opening between it and the floor when the door was shut.

“Usually,” said the detective, “one should be able to obtain air in a closet like this. It is rather surprising that Sutton should have suffocated so easily.”

“How often has the closet been opened since it was painted?” questioned Biscayne, turning to Richard Sutton.

"I don't recall that it was opened at all," said the young man. "I may be wrong on that point. It may have been opened once or twice."

"Then don't forget the fresh paint," said Biscayne to Cardona.

"Why?" asked the detective, in surprise.

"Fresh paint," said the professor, "frequently produces carbon monoxide. That has been discovered recently.

"It was observed that men were taken sick while working in the freshly painted holds of ships. The cause was traced to the presence of carbon monoxide."

"I never knew that," exclaimed Cardona. "It seems impossible that this closet could be saturated with that deadly gas."

"Not saturated," corrected Biscayne. "But the fumes are probably present to a noticeable degree. That can be tested.

"Carbon monoxide is odorless. The presence of a limited quantity of the gas would account for a fairly rapid death of a person confined in the closet."

"We have a death," declared Cardona. "From what you have just said, professor, it is quite explainable as an accident.

"We must consider now if any one forced Thomas Sutton into that closet."

"We searched the house for my father," said Richard Sutton. "We found no traces of any one having been here.

"If my father met with foul play, I am keenly desirous of knowing it. But I have seen no indication."

"What about your father's financial affairs?" questioned Cardona bluntly.

"He was living on a pension," replied Richard. "Until a few months ago, he still had some wealth. But father had a failing in that he took great interest in speculative enterprises.

"He was constantly investing in gold mines, oil wells, and new inventions of doubtful value. The last of these failed recently, and he had nothing left except this house and his retirement income."

"Insurance?" asked Cardona.

"It was all in endowments," said Richard. "They all matured, and the money went into the enterprises that I have mentioned.

"Father was generous. He made gifts to myself and my brothers. While he was no longer wealthy, his pension was more than sufficient for his present needs. Father was quite satisfied with life."

"Did he have any enemies?"

"I AM positive that he had none. Of course"—Richard became reminiscent—"he dealt with unscrupulous speculators and fanatical inventors.

"He did have a few run-ins with people over money matters. But those occurred a long while ago—nothing within the past year; and they all concerned money that he had considered spending.

“Since he exhausted his resources, there were no occurrences of that nature.”

“Do you recall any definite incidents?”

“Not to a marked degree. I remember that a man visited father about two years ago, and they had a heated argument in the little living room upstairs. I heard the discussion through the doorway.

“The man wanted money for something, and claimed that father was trying to learn too much before he gave financial support. I do not know the nature of the matter.”

“What persons came here recently?”

“Only a few friends and acquaintances. How many, I do not know. They generally came on evenings when I was out.

“Father mentioned that he had occasional visitors, but he never brought up names.”

“I wonder,” said Cardona, “if any one was here last night. Let's look around the place.”

At Richard Sutton's suggestion, they went upstairs to the little living room. They found a check book in Thomas Sutton's desk. The stubs, marked with initials and abbreviations, referred to small amounts.

There were a few letters and other items of correspondence. These offered no real clew.

HERE was a case that seemed totally devoid of pertinent facts. The only person who could have come under suspicion was Richard Sutton. He knew that the door of the downstairs closet would close and latch of its own accord.

Richard Sutton appeared to be an upright young man. His statements had been direct, and were given without hesitation. They were the kind of statements that could be checked in detail.

The son of Thomas Sutton must be innocent, Cardona felt, although the methodical detective intended to obtain statements from the other sons whom Richard had mentioned.

The task at hand was to search for anything that might show that some one had been here last night, or any evidence to the effect that Thomas Sutton had been influenced to enter the death trap.

The peaceful nature of the old man's demise clearly indicated the possibilities of the master hand that had engineered the deaths of Silas Harshaw and Louis Glenn.

But this crime—if crime it was—seemed more perplexing than either of the other two.

Peering under the desk, Cardona spied a wastebasket and brought it forth. He saw a few papers in it. They proved to be printed circulars.

The detective shook his head as he looked at Roger Biscayne. Then he replaced the wastebasket.

As he did so, Cardona spied something on the floor beneath the desk. In another moment, the detective had stooped, and was exhibiting two crumpled objects—one an envelope, the other a sheet of paper.

Unfolding the paper, Cardona spread it upon the desk. With Biscayne peering over his shoulder, Cardona pointed quickly to the characters that appeared upon the crumpled sheet.

There were words there—typed in letters identical with those that had appeared in the death messages:

DEAR SUTTON:

YOU WILL FIND YOUR GOLD-HEADED CANE ON THE SHELF OF THE CLOSET UNDER YOUR FRONT STAIRS. DANA.

Eagerly, Cardona swung toward Richard Sutton, who was standing at the other side of the room.

"Did your father have a gold-headed cane?" questioned the detective.

"Yes," said Richard, in surprise. "He lost it a few months ago. He prized it very highly; it was a gift from a very dear friend."

"Who is Dana?" asked Cardona.

"Roy Dana is an old friend of my father's," answered Richard. "One of my father's best friends, in fact. He is a retired attorney, who lives in New Jersey.

"I called him before you came, to tell him of my father's death. I learned that he went to Florida, two days ago."

CARDONA was looking at the envelope. He noted that it was different from those which had contained the death messages.

The address was not typed. It was written in a rather shaky scrawl. But the postmark indicated the same office as the other letters.

"It was mailed two nights ago," said Cardona to Biscayne.

"In between the death messages," responded the professor.

"Yes," said the detective. "The post office paid no attention to it, because it was not addressed to police headquarters.

"It may have come in yesterday morning's delivery—perhaps not until yesterday afternoon."

"That is more likely," said Biscayne.

Richard Sutton had approached to look at the letter.

"If that came yesterday," he said, "I doubt that my father would have opened it until last night."

"Why?"

"Because he made it a practice to look in the mail box when he came home in the evening. I never use this address—I get all my mail at the club. What does the letter say?"

Cardona showed the message to Richard.

"Dana never sent that," said the young man emphatically. "But I don't think the fact would have registered itself with my father.

"Any statement of where the cane might be, would have caused him to act without question. That lost cane had become an obsession with him."

"Why don't you think Dana sent it?" asked Cardona.

Richard rummaged in the desk and brought out a greeting card that Cardona had tossed aside as unimportant.

It was addressed to Thomas Sutton, and was signed "Roy."

"There is Dana's handwriting," stated Richard. "Firm—not shaky. I always admired the old man's penmanship."

Cardona nodded in agreement. He looked at Biscayne, then at Commissioner Weston, who was standing by with anxious eyes.

Then the detective stood erect and faced Richard Sutton.

"Sutton," he said, "your father was murdered! Yes, murdered—not by any one who entered here, but by the man who sent this message.

"It led Thomas Sutton to the closet; it caused him to enter there with only one thought—to look on that shelf at the back. The door closed upon the unfortunate victim just as effectively as if some one had stood there to push it shut!

"Perhaps you have read of two deaths in the newspapers—Silas Harshaw and Louis Glenn.

"We have been notified of a third death. It has occurred. The murderer chose your father as victim.

"I have already given information to the newspapers. I am going to tell them that your father, too, was murdered.

"We cannot afford to neglect a single chance. Outside of the death messages, this letter is all that we have.

"But it is different. The others were received after death had struck. This one came before death." The detective tapped the note with his forefinger. "This is the weapon which killed Thomas Sutton!"

Cardona turned to meet the commending eyes of Commissioner Ralph Weston. Professor Roger Biscayne was nodding his full approval of Cardona's explanation.

A tenseness seemed suddenly to grip the room. For all three of the investigators knew that they were dealing with a supermind of crime—a slayer whose methods were as ingenious as they were deadly.

Three men had died. Their deaths had been announced. Would there be a fourth? That was the dread question menacing them at this instant. And the only way to thwart the murderer was to trace him through his own messages!

CHAPTER IX. THE SHADOW TAKES A HAND

THAT same evening, Detective Joe Cardona sat at a desk in headquarters. Before him lay a mass of penciled notes.

At one side was a stack of objects. The detective was puzzling over the intricacies of the three murders which had been perpetrated by some unknown killer.

Since this afternoon's investigation, Cardona had swung completely to the theory propounded by Professor Arthur Biscayne.

He agreed, now, that the unidentified man who had met death at Harshaw's was not an intended victim of

the master mind behind the three deaths of Harshaw, Glenn, and Sutton.

The telephone rang. Professor Biscayne was on the wire. Cardona spoke.

"To-morrow night," he said. "Yes, professor, that will be a crucial time... Another death may be coming... Well, we can prevent it if we catch any one around the Redan Hotel.

"My men are on watch up there... Covering the mail chutes on all floors... Yes, he may drop it somewhere else, if he sends it at all.

"Very good, professor. Thanks. I'll call you if anything develops."

Cardona hung up the receiver and resumed his work with paper and pencil. He was studying facts; yet he was not obtaining results.

A long shadow crept across the room and fell upon the desk where Cardona was working.

The detective looked up suddenly; then he smiled indulgently as he saw Fritz, the tall, stoop shouldered janitor. The man had entered the room, armed with bucket and mop.

Fritz made no remark as he gazed dully at the detective. The man was both slow-thinking and taciturn.

"Hello, Fritz," said the detective. "Thought you'd be gone long ago. You work all hours, don't you?"

"Yah," replied the janitor.

"Guess you've picked up the habit from the gang around here. How about it?"

"Yah."

"Always 'yah,'" said Cardona with a grin. "I don't know how you'd get along without it, Fritz! Well, don't mind me, old boy. I'm leaving in a few minutes."

While the janitor was mopping along the wall, Cardona turned from his notations to the exhibits that lay upon the desk.

First he picked up two cigarette boxes, which he had taken from Glenn's home. One was identified by a tag that said, "Tuxedo"; the other was marked, "Business Suit."

Cardona studied these articles that referred to Louis Glenn. He shook his head and tossed the boxes on the desk. One slid off and landed on the floor.

Fritz heard it drop. The janitor turned and stooped slowly. He picked up the cardboard box and carried it back to the desk.

He laid it beside the one that was there, setting the box down carefully as though it were something of value.

"Handle it easy, Fritz," laughed Cardona. "Those are exhibits. Evidence. Important. Understand?"

"Yah."

The janitor was scratching his head as he stared at the cigarette boxes as though their very existence was beyond him. The man's perplexity caused Cardona to chuckle.

"Trying to figure them out, eh, Fritz?" he asked. "Well, old boy, I've got nothing on you. I'll let you have

them, later on—in the wastebasket.

“In the meantime, I'm keeping them, even though they don't seem to mean anything.”

To Cardona, Fritz's head-scratching showed the man's dumbness. He did not divine the real purpose of the action.

With his hand at the side of his head, Fritz concealed the fact that he was actually studying the cigarette boxes with keen scrutiny.

Cardona would have been amazed had he seen the sparkle in those eyes.

When Fritz turned away to resume his mopping, his expression was as listless as before. But in that brief inspection, the man had observed something which Cardona had not noticed.

One cigarette box differed slightly from the other.

Cardona spread out four envelopes. Beside each was the message which it had contained. He studied these. They were the messages which had come from the unknown killer.

THE telephone rang. While the detective turned to answer it, Fritz shambled close to the desk. His eyes noted each envelope, while his ears took in what Cardona was saying.

“Yes, Mayhew,” were the detective's words. “Keep a close watch to-night. The apartment is important, but so is the hotel. See who mails letters—in the chute. Get me? Right.”

Fritz was moving away. Once again his amazingly alert eyes had observed something. On the end of each envelope were two tiny marks. These were details which Joe Cardona had not noticed.

The light was gone from Fritz's eyes as he took his bucket and mop to the other side of the room.

Ten minutes went by; then came another call. Cardona's voice showed keen interest.

“Great!” he exclaimed. “St. Louis had the right hunch, eh? Tell their man I'll be up to see him... In less than half an hour.”

Cardona pressed the hook; then dialed the phone number of Professor Roger Biscayne. He told the psychologist the news that he had just received.

“The dead man is Max Parker,” he said. “You know, the man who was killed up at Harshaw's... Yes... The St. Louis detective is here and he identified the body at the morgue...”

“They don't know much about Parker... He's a yegg whom they suspected out there. The town got too hot for him.”

Finishing his conversation, Cardona gathered up the articles on the desk. Fritz had finished his mopping.

Seeing the detective preparing to leave, Fritz hobbled from the room.

“Gute Nacht, Fritz,” called Detective Cardona.

“Yah,” came the janitor's response.

Fritz continued along the corridor. He turned into a side room and reached a locker. He opened it with a key. He removed his janitor's attire.

Beneath it was a dark suit. Fritz laughed softly as he took a black object from the shelf of the locker. In another moment he had donned a black cloak, and his head was covered by a slouch hat.

Fritz had become The Shadow!

The man in black reached the corridor. Silently, he gained the street. He became invisible as he went into a narrow alleyway.

The real Fritz had gone home, long ago. When The Shadow wanted information from headquarters, he played the part of the laconic janitor.

Not long afterward, a well-dressed man strolled into the lobby of the Merrimac Club. He stopped at the cigar counter.

The clerk nodded. He recognized the man as Lamont Cranston, a millionaire.

“Good evening, Mr. Cranston.”

The millionaire acknowledged the greeting. He stared toward the rack where packages of cigarettes were stacked.

“What do you have in imported cigarettes?” he questioned.

The clerk brought down several boxes. One was marked with the word, “Istanbul.” It was the same brand as the cigarette which had lain upon Cardona's desk.

“What are these?” asked Cranston.

“A special brand that Mr. Glenn used to smoke,” said the clerk solemnly. “You remember Mr. Glenn? He died a few days ago.”

“Oh, yes,” said Cranston.

“A detective was here asking me about them,” said the clerk. “He wanted to know who else bought these cigarettes. I told him no one, besides Mr. Glenn.”

“A few other persons tried them—a long while ago, when I had the last lot in stock. But that was not recently, and I never noticed who bought them when we first had them.”

“Mr. Glenn always insisted on this brand. I don't think you could get them anywhere else in the city.”

Cranston pushed the Istanbul box aside, and selected a packet of a different brand. A short while later he left the club and entered a limousine that awaited him.

There, in the darkness, Cranston laughed softly as the car rolled northward. It was the same laugh that the pretended Fritz had uttered in the locker room at headquarters.

LOUIS GLENN'S apartment was deserted. It had been closed since the broker's death. But to-night, less than an hour after Lamont Cranston had left the Merrimac Club, a light appeared in the empty apartment.

The rays of a tiny torch moved through the vacant rooms. They stopped here and there, and at one spot they rested upon an empty cigarette box.

A black-clad hand lifted the box. It was marked, “Istanbul.” It was identical with the box that had borne

the tag, "Business Suit."

The black thumb was beneath a series of Turkish characters. Eyes in the dark were reading them, as plainly as if they had been inscribed in English. Translated, the words declared:

Certified by the government.

That same statement was on the "Business Suit" cigarette box. It also appeared upon the box that Lamont Cranston had observed at the Merrimac Club.

It was, however, different from the single box that Cardona had labeled with the word, "Tuxedo." On that one box, the Turkish characters had stated:

These cigarettes are certified.

A soft laugh. The light went out.

A few minutes later, the mysterious presence had departed from the apartment which had once been occupied by Louis Glenn.

THERE was no one at home in the Sutton house. The lock of the front door clicked, and the door itself opened ominously.

The little light appeared and made its way across the hall to the closet where Thomas Sutton had met his unfortunate end.

There the light remained while an unseen hand opened the door and the rays enabled invisible eyes to scrutinize the interior of the closet.

The light went out. It reappeared in the living room upstairs.

Prying hands found the dead man's check book. The stubs showed beneath the light. Each stub was considered carefully.

The first inspection finished, a hand reviewed each stub in turn, and stopped on one that bore the amount of ten dollars, with a notation "Med."

The light was gone; the soft laugh of The Shadow rippled forebodingly through the silent room.

Some time afterward, there was a slight sound in a small, close-walled room. The noise—no more than a soft swish—was followed by the sudden appearance of a lighted lamp. Covered by a shade, the rays of the lamp were focused upon the plain top of a table. There, two white hands appeared.

They seemed to be living things—detached creatures that moved of themselves. Each wrist came from a jet-black sleeve.

The hands were long and slender, but the tapering fingers showed that they possessed great strength. Upon one finger—the third of the left hand—glowed a large, mysterious gem.

Its colors changed beneath the light. One moment it was a deep blue. Then the jewel shimmered and took on a crimson hue. It sparkled and seemed to emit shafts of flame.

The stone was a girasol called the fire opal, because of its resplendency. There was no other jewel like it in all the world.

As the girasol glimmered, the hands produced pencil and paper. The pointed fingers wrote three names: Silas Harshaw, Louis Glenn, Thomas Sutton.

Beneath these a blank space remained. The hand made a check mark beside the name of Thomas Sutton. There, it placed the letters "Med."

Now a small pamphlet came into view. Opened, it showed a list of the members of the Merrimac Club.

A low laugh echoed as the hand checked off a name in the book. Then the fingers added a check mark beside the written name of Louis Glenn.

Beside the written name of Silas Harshaw, the hand wrote the words:

Resume investigation.

The hand paused above the written list. Running to the bottom, it inscribed another name, segregated below. The name it wrote was Arthur Wilhelm.

Then the hand drew a circle about the name of Silas Harshaw. It drew another circle about the name of Arthur Wilhelm, and connected the two with a sweeping line.

On the right of the sheet, The Shadow inscribed the names of Max Parker and Homer Briggs.

Evidently there was some connection between the cracksman who had been killed at Harshaw's, and the servant who had disappeared after leaving the old inventor's employ.

A phone dial clattered. The light clicked out. A low, hushed voice spoke in the darkness.

"Ready, Burbank," it said. "Report on H.V."

The receiver ticked as a voice spoke over the wire. The report was short and definite.

"To-morrow night," came the whisper of The Shadow.

The phone call was ended. All was silent in the little room. Then came a shuddering laugh that crept to every corner, and died away in a ghostly echo.

It was the laugh of The Shadow—that ominous laugh that boded ill for men of evil!

CHAPTER X. THE WORRIED MAN

IN the dull light of an underground room, a man was seated, hunched on a wooden bench. He was smoking a cigarette, and the stone floor about him was studded with many butts that he had thrown away.

The man was nervous, and he appeared to be anxiously awaiting the arrival of another person. There was a reason for the hunted expression that the man betrayed.

He was wanted by the police. He was Homer Briggs, the servant whom Silas Harshaw had dismissed.

The door rattled. Homer's nervous fingers sought the handle of a revolver. He let the weapon slide back into his pocket as he recognized the man who entered the room.

The newcomer was a shrewd-looking, middle-aged man. His arrival eased Homer's worry.

"What's doing, Farley?" Homer asked.

“They've got a line on Max Parker,” replied Farley, with a gruff laugh. “How do you like that?”

“You don't think they'll trace him here?”

Farley stared contemptuously at the man on the bench. It was plain that he did not share Homer's trepidation.

Farley shrugged his shoulders as though the matter was of minor consequence.

“What if they do?” he asked. “I've given the cops the slip before. I'm ready to do it again. But they won't get here. Not those blundering flat feet! I'm not thinking about them. I've got other ideas on my chest.”

“Well, I'm glad of that,” said Homer, with an expression of relief. “I've been worried, Farley, ever since I knew they were after me.

“If they ever got me, they'd lay the killing of the old man on me, sure!”

“Look here, Homer,” declared Farley. “I'm going to give you something to worry about. But I want you to buck up. Get that? I don't like a guy that's yellow. You're going to get some nerve, or I'll be through with you.”

“Don't say that, Farley!” pleaded Homer. “Don't say that! I'm not yellow. But this thing has got my goat, the way it's broken against us.”

“Hank” Farley was a lone wolf of the underworld; a man who came and went without molestation. He ridiculed police and ignored mobsters.

No one knew his business—except when he required henchmen—which was seldom.

“So you think they'll trace you, eh?” questioned Farley. “Well, when they do, you'll be plenty of distance away from here.

“I'm referring to the coppers, now. We're a hundred jumps ahead of them. But we're not going to blow yet—not by a long sight.

“We're going to wait until we get what we're after; and we're going to fix the feet of a smart alec that's been causing all this trouble.”

“All right,” agreed Homer reluctantly. “I'll work with you, Farley, when I know what it's all about. But I've been doing nothing but lay low—and things have been going wrong.

“I played square with you, didn't I? I came to you a month ago and told you the old man had something we ought to get—and I told you where it was. But you said to wait—and we waited too long.”

“You are right,” declared Farley. “Sometimes people wait too long; sometimes they don't wait long enough. We've done both.

“I've been doing a lot of thinking, Homer. I'm going to give you the lay— and to make it clear, I'm starting at the beginning.

“You told me the old man had a machine that you figured would be worth a million,” Farley said. “Maybe you were wrong. But it sounded good enough to be interesting.

“I've grabbed off some mighty easy dough dealing with patent lawyers who didn't ask too many questions. I know plenty of big shots who are phonies, even though their businesses are O.K. with the

law.

“So I listened. When you told me where the gimmick was, I was ready to get it. You could have pulled an inside job, but you didn't have the nerve.

“We'll forget about that, because you haven't had experience, and we were dealing with a pretty cagey guy—old Harshaw. I didn't want to pull it, because I've got to be clear later on. So I wired to Max Parker.

“He came on to New York, and you met him at the Black Ship. I wanted him to get the lay straight from you. Then he joined me, here.

“There isn't a cop smart enough to find out that he was ever here. I play my cards too close for that.

“WHEN Harshaw gave you the sack, I figured we'd better act quick. That's why Max went on the job that night.

“When it comes to ladder work, there couldn't be any one slicker than Max was. You know what happened. Max heard a shot while he was going up the ladder.

“He waited a while; then went on up. He found the window open, like he told us. It's a sure bet the old man must have opened it to look out.

“Maybe he'd heard Max hook up the ladder. But when Max threw the glimmer in there and spotted the old man dead on the floor, he scrambled.”

“He lost his nerve,” declared Homer. “He was the yellow guy—not me.”

“Lost his nerve?” snorted Farley. “Not Max. He kept his head. Why did he want to go in there? Ten to one the guy that bumped off the old man was still around. No, sir. Max showed sense.

“He stayed right there in his room at the hotel, didn't he? That was nerve, wasn't it? He laid low until they found the old man's body.

“He had to wait three nights. Then he figured the dicks were gone. They were still around, but Max was too foxy for them.

“He went in that room again. He'd have got away with the old man's model, too, if he'd only been dealing with coppers. But somebody plugged him.

“I'll lay five grand to a fin it was the same bozo that gave the works to old man Harshaw!”

“That doesn't help us,” groaned Homer. “There's two been killed there now, and it's going to be tougher than ever to get in the place.

“The cops will never find the old man's strong box, but that doesn't help us.

“No,” agreed Farley, “and it doesn't help us to know that there's another guy snooping around. He bumped off Harshaw. That was a help.”

“Not for me,” objected Homer. “The cops are after me—“

“Forget those heels!” growled Farley. “Just remember that Harshaw can't raise a squawk now. When we get his model, it's ours. But there's a slick guy after it, too, and he's going to get busy as soon as we do.

“There's too many dicks around that hotel now. When they thin out a bit, I'm going in there myself. But I'm not going too soon, and I'm not going too late.”

“How will you manage that?” questioned Homer. “If the other guy is watching the place when the dicks leave, you'll go too soon.”

“If he slides in and hooks the model, before you do, you'll get there too late.”

“Right!” agreed Farley. “So I'm going out of my way to do a special job. I'm going to bump off the gazook that's caused us all this trouble. I'll get the guy that got Max!”

“You know who he is?”

“Know who he is? Say, Homer, anybody ought to know who he is. There's only one guy in New York who could have made the get-away that guy is supposed to have made.”

“Who's that?”

“The Shadow!”

Farley's revelation caused Homer Briggs to crouch back upon his bench.

A small-timer among crooks, Homer had never encountered the man in black. But to him—as to all the yellow rats of the underworld—the name of The Shadow was a greater deterrent than the fear of the law.

The Shadow was known to war on dangerous mobsters. Many denizens of the bad lands feared to join gangs of gunmen because they dreaded an encounter with The Shadow.

Homer Briggs was one of these; and when he heard Farley boldly say that he would get The Shadow, the very thought was appalling.

“You—you”—Homer was chattering—“you're going to get The—The Shadow!”

“Sure thing,” said Farley calmly. “What's more, it's going to be easy. And you're going to help me, yellow!”

Homer was too cowed by Farley's boldness to resent the insult with which the cunning-faced gangster had ended his statement.

The cringing man was unable to say a single word. Ignoring Homer's pitiful expression, Farley calmly unfolded the details of his scheme.

“Here's the way we'll work it,” said the gangster. “They know you down at the Black Ship. They know you met Max Parker there. But there's not a guy in that place who would spill a word to the coppers.

“That's one joint where a stool gets his the moment he pokes his ratty nose through the door.

“So I stopped down at the Black Ship to-night. Early. And when I left there, the word got buzzed around that you were going to stop in the place tomorrow night.”

“Me,” exclaimed Homer. “You want me to go back down there? Where I met Max?”

“Sure thing,” declared Farley. “When you're there, you're going to talk a bit, too. You're going to tell them that you're coming back here.”

“But if there's stools there—“

“There won't be any.”

“Then why—“

“LISTEN, Homer,” said Farley, in a cold tone. “Do you think The Shadow is asleep? He wasn't when he bumped off Max, was he?”

“You can bet that he knows somebody is going to tackle that room of Harshaw's again. Well—what's he doing with his time? Taking lessons in backgammon? Not on your life!”

“He's looking for us; that's what he's doing. Looking for you, Homer, because he doesn't know I'm in it. Get that? Looking for you!”

“No—no!” Homer was protesting, fear-stricken. “Don't say that, Farley! If The Shadow—“

“If The Shadow is really looking for you,” interrupted Farley contemptuously, “he's going to find you! But he's not going to grab you by yourself. One look at you—he'd know you were yellow.”

“The Shadow knows all the joints. Maybe he's got stools of his own - if he has, the mobs haven't wised up to who they are.”

“So it's duck soup that to-night The Shadow knows you are coming to the Black Ship to-morrow. But get this, Homer: He didn't learn it until after I got out—because I picked the right guys to spread the news.”

“He won't know where this place is until you begin to blab to-morrow night.”

“Then what?” questioned Homer.

“Then he'll come here,” said Farley, laughing, “but he won't get here right away. You'll be back first. You'll be here with me—and I'll be waiting for The Shadow!”

“He'll get you, Farley,” gasped Homer. “He'll get you, sure, like he's got guys before. You can't double cross The Shadow.”

“Listen, Homer. The word is out. Do you think I'm the only guy that wants to get The Shadow? Not by a long sight!”

“There's five hundred others with the same idea—that is, there will be by to-morrow night. If he gets into this place, he'll have to fight his way through the best rods in New York.”

“You know what we'll do? We'll lay low, right here—and wait for the news.”

“I get you, Farley,” said Homer, “but what if he does get through? What then?”

“Huh,” grunted Farley. “What can he do here? Look at these walls. He can't get through them.”

“How about the door?”

“Let him try it. I've got two big smoke wagons that will say 'No.' When I open up, boy, I know how!”

“He won't get in this place. If he manages to find his way back, he'll be ready for the works. He might slip through, but he won't slip out!”

Homer sat open-mouthed, not only because of the apprehension he felt, but also because of his admiration for Hank Farley's scheme.

The lone wolf had lined up the hordes of gangdom for to-morrow night. It was an ideal trap.

The Shadow, going forth on a minor skirmish, would encounter a mammoth ambushade.

Hank Farley puffed his pipe and grinned in anticipation. He was sure of results to-morrow night.

Homer, however, despite his chief's assurance, still quailed on the corner of the bench.

The worried man dreaded the task that lay before him. For he feared the wrath of The Shadow.

CHAPTER XI. AN INTERRUPTED WARNING

HANK FARLEY had been right when he had declared that The Shadow would be prepared to meet Homer Briggs at the Black Ship.

Early the next evening, a poorly dressed man sauntered into that notorious dive, and sat at a table in the corner of the main room.

While the man was apparently one of the riffraff who assembled nightly in that place, he was actually a person of a different sort.

The face beneath the pulled-down visor of the ragged cap was that of Harry Vincent, one of The Shadow's trusted agents.

To-night's work was no new experience for Harry. He was one of the eyes with which The Shadow pried into secrets of the underworld.

When he had first done duty for The Shadow, Harry had encountered trouble more than once. But now, a veteran of these adventures, he had learned the art of acting the part of a small-fry crook.

There were many places—dangerous locations—to which Harry had never gone. To those, The Shadow alone could penetrate. But in a gathering place like the Black Ship, Harry had often appeared with impunity, and aided his master.

The Black Ship was a dangerous spot for a stool pigeon. None dared to come there, for various police informants had been waylaid in that dive.

There were numerous stools in the bad lands who had avoided suspicion, but they were superstitious about the Black Ship, and all refused to go there.

Harry had no fear. The fact that stools did not frequent the place made it safer, in a way. Moreover, he was known only to The Shadow, and not to various detectives.

Harry was the operative of a man whose very identity was an unfathomable mystery. The veil of blackness that shrouded The Shadow was a mighty protection to his agent, Harry Vincent.

Last night, Harry had been at the Black Ship. He had caught the subdued buzz that had traveled among snarling mobsters.

Sitting with half-closed eyes, staring blearily at the wall before him, Harry had paid no attention to what was said around him.

When word had been whispered that Homer Briggs would show up on the next evening, Harry had shown no interest. Homer Briggs, the murdered man's ex-valet, wanted by the bulls!

There had been no talk about The Shadow. That was where Hank Farley had been crafty. Hence, when Harry had reported his evening's work, he had sent just one message.

He had said that Homer Briggs would be at the Black Ship to-night.

From Burbank, The Shadow's quiet-voiced contact man, Harry had received instructions to watch, and to report developments.

It was early in the evening, but there was no telling when Homer would arrive. Harry expected a long vigil.

He was slouched low in his chair, affecting the sightless stare of a man overdosed with dope.

The door of the Black Ship opened, and a man sidled in. One glance made Harry alert, in spite of his feigned disinterest.

He felt sure that this man was Homer Briggs. The man looked frightened, but he was making an effort to appear at ease.

A couple of gangsters waved to him in greeting. The man nodded and sat down at a table.

A grizzled gunman walked over to join him. The two began a mumbled conversation.

It was known in the underworld that Homer Briggs had met the St. Louis yegg, Max Parker, here. The death of Silas Harshaw was a subject of discussion in the bad lands.

Many had speculated on the matter of Max's death. None had any particular desire to muscle in on the opportunity, no matter what it might be. The death of Max Parker had curbed all enthusiasm for any one to test out an unknown enterprise.

The police were on the watch, which made it worse. But whatever the lay might be at Harshaw's apartment, Homer Briggs was the one man who could tell. Hence he was due for questioning.

In a short while, Harry Vincent discovered that his surmise was correct. He heard the name of Briggs whispered behind him.

Now, Harry's task was to learn where the man was hiding out. That meant that he must follow Briggs if necessary. He must manage to slip from the Black Ship when a good opportunity presented itself.

ANOTHER gangster joined Homer. The first one arose and strolled to a table near Harry. He buzzed a few words to the men sitting there.

His statement was inaudible to The Shadow's operative. Briggs had finished a drink and was nervously rising.

It would not do to follow him immediately. Homer had proven to be too much the center of interest here.

A chance remark behind him made Harry prick his ears in hope of unexpected information. A moment later he heard the news he wanted.

"Briggs is a nervy guy," a voice was saying. "Comin' here dis way— wid de bulls all trackin' him. He's hidin' out—an' he oughta keep his mouth shut. But he ain't."

“He ain't been blabbin' where his hideout is?” came a question.

“That's just what de guy has been doin’,” said the first voice. “Briggs must be dopey, because it ain't no phony steer, neither. You know de old hockshop—de one dat Moose Glutz used to run? Dat's where he is.”

“Where? Upstairs?”

“No. Down in de basement. Moose used to use de place for a storage joint. No windows—nothin' but a door. It's a good place for a hideout; but it ain't sensible to give away his lay like that!”

“Mebbe he's got his own reasons,” said the one gangster.

Harry recognized the location. “Moose” Glutz's pawnshop had been closed for several months. So that was where Homer Briggs was hiding!

That was all Harry needed to know. There was no necessity of following the man when he left.

Homer took another drink, then waved good-bye to two acquaintances, and hurried from the dive.

It was obvious that he was bound back to his hideout.

Harry waited. He was willing to bide his time, now. The information must go to The Shadow as soon as possible, but there was no reason to excite suspicion.

Rising unsteadily, Harry shambled away toward the door. He continued his pretense of unsteadiness as he walked down the street.

He went into an alley and gradually quickened his pace. Ten minutes later, he reached a cigar store several blocks from the Black Ship. There, in a phone booth, he dialed a number.

“Burbank,” came the low response over the wire.

“Vincent,” said Harry. “Report on Homer Briggs. Hiding out in basement under old pawnshop, formerly run by Moose Glutz.”

“Were you there?”

“No. I saw Briggs at the Black Ship. He told some one where he was hiding. The news got around.”

“Good. Call again. Ten minutes.”

When Harry made his second call, Burbank had instructions. The man had evidently communicated with The Shadow in the meantime.

He told Harry to go back to the Black Ship. His return there would allay any suspicion that might arise later. It would also enable him to observe if Homer returned.

Harry followed the order that he had received. He wended his way back to the dive and resumed his wavering gait as soon as he approached the place.

He was tottering slightly as he took his place at the table.

A half hour passed.

There had been a stirring in the place during the evening. This increased by degrees.

Harry gradually realized that something was afoot. Usually, the Black Ship was crowded at this hour. Now it was virtually devoid of patrons. What was up?

A nondescript gangster settled on the other side of the table. He looked at Harry and grinned.

“Hopped up, eh?” he questioned.

Harry made no response.

“Guess you're dead from the neck up,” was the man's comment.

“Huh?” grunted Harry.

“There's some life in you,” said the gangster. “Handle a rod, do you?”

“Sometimes,” said Harry.

He was staring ahead, answering the question in an odd voice as though he had heard the words through a dense fog.

“You ought to be out to-night, then,” was the next statement. “This is going to be a big night.”

“A big night?” echoed Harry.

“Sure,” said the mobsman, rising. “They're going to get a big guy. I'm going to be there, too.”

“A big guy?” asked Harry dully.

“A big guy,” the man repeated, leaning against Harry's shoulder. “A big, big guy. The Shadow! Ever hear of him?”

“The Shadow!”

THE gunman laughed at the startled tone in Harry's voice. He did not take the exclamation as anything unusual.

The name of The Shadow was important enough to rouse any dope fiend from a state of coma.

“Yeah, they're going to get The Shadow,” came the low, distinct words. “You picked a bad night to get hopped up. The smoke wagons are going to boom to-night!”

“The Shadow is after a guy named Homer Briggs—and Briggs came in here and spilled the news that he was hiding out under Glutz's old hockshop.

“The Shadow's due to crash into a mess of gats, believe me—and my rod's going to be waiting for him!”

The man was gone, and Harry was staring dead ahead with startled eyes. He saw it all, now!

The Shadow had been tricked. The man in black was trailing Homer Briggs. Harry knew that all too well.

The news had spread throughout the bad lands, and the hordes of gangdom had marked The Shadow for the spot!

The Shadow must be warned!

With this startling thought, Harry almost forgot the part he was playing. He rose steadily; then realized his mistake.

He shifted back into his tottering, uncertain pace. Two weasel-faced individuals—pickpockets—grinned as he went by their table.

“He's goin' to help 'em get The Shadow,” said one, with a raucous cackle.

On the street, Harry staggered a few paces; then, seeing no one, straightened up and increased his stride. He turned down an alleyway and headed for the next street.

Reaching it, he hurried toward a spot where he could make a phone call.

As he reached another alley, he bumped into a man who was stepping toward the street.

“Hey, you!” The fellow seized Harry's shoulder. “What's your hurry?”

“Nothing,” mumbled Harry.

“No?” As the question was uttered, two other men appeared. “Well, it looks phony to me!”

“We're looking for stools around here to-night. Maybe you're one. Let's take a look at your mug!”

Harry thought quickly. These men were tough mobsters. A delay must be avoided. An encounter might prove disastrous.

He had reached the fringe of the bad lands. A quick dash would mean safety.

Without waiting to reply, Harry swung a clean, swift blow to the point of the man's jaw. The fellow smacked against the pavement.

To have run at that instant would have left Harry open to gunshots. He knew it well, and so he adopted the opposite course.

He flung himself upon the nearer of the two men, and hurled the surprised mobsman upon his stunned companion. The third was pulling a gun from his pocket.

Harry shot a swift punch past the warding left arm, and caught his opponent in the face.

The second assailant was rising. The odds were impossible for Harry. But he had gained his chance. He dashed along the alley.

A revolver barked behind him. Harry took a zigzag course. More shots followed. A bullet zipped past his right ear. Then came a sharp pain in his shoulder. Harry had been clipped!

He staggered on; then he suddenly lost his footing, and sprawled headlong on the sidewalk of the next street.

He lay prone where he was. Numbed and half unconscious from his fall, Harry realized that his lack of motion might lead his enemies to believe him dead.

He heard the clatter of footsteps in the alleyway. They were coming, after all. Then he heard a shout beside him.

The footsteps stopped. They retreated up the alley. Harry understood that some one had come to his aid;

that the gunmen had decided to make a quick departure.

Their encounter had been a chance one. It would have been a mistake for them to remain.

A MAN was bending over Harry. He lifted the motionless form.

Harry felt himself being helped into an automobile. Then his senses faded.

When he awoke, he was lying on a hospital cot. His arm was being bandaged.

The man who had helped him was standing there, watching. Harry noticed that he was a keen-faced chap.

Harry knew that the man had probably told the details of what had occurred.

“Thanks,” said Harry weakly. “Those fellows landed on me hard. Guess they thought I was somebody else.

“They looked tough, so I ran away from them. Never saw them before.”

“How many were there?” the man beside Harry asked.

“Three.”

“What did they look like?”

A sudden inspiration came to Harry. Here might be a chance to save The Shadow!

He rubbed his hand over his forehead as though recalling something.

“I think I know why they grabbed me!” he exclaimed. “They were talking when I bumped into them. I heard them say something about putting a fellow on the spot—to-night—“

“Where?” came the eager question.

“Glutz—something,” said Harry. “I remember now. Glutz's hockshop. Did you ever hear of it?”

“No,” said the man, “but maybe the police have.”

He was gone for the telephone. Harry sank back, dizzy. His head was swimming. His shoulder pained.

He was incapable of action, and it would be impossible to communicate with Burbank. He had done the next best thing. If a squad of police arrived at the pawnshop, the mobsters would fade away.

Harry leaned his head sideways upon the pillow and half opened his eyes. A slight smile had been forming on his lips.

It disappeared now. A clock on the wall showed that it was more than an hour since he had left the Black Ship.

He had given the word too late. The police could not arrive in time to save The Shadow!

CHAPTER XII. DEATH TO THE SHADOW!

THE hordes of gangdom were out for blood. Old feuds had been abandoned to-night. There was but one objective toward which every mobman was working.

“Death to The Shadow!”

That was the whispered battle slogan. It had begun at the Black Ship shortly after Homer Briggs had gone. It had spread as though carried by the wind.

While Harry had been calling Burbank, to tell of Homer's hideout, evil tongues had been uttering the same message in every quarter of the underworld!

Hidden dives had disgorged their quota of mobsters. Hard-visaged, snarling demons of the bad lands were gathering, intent upon a single purpose.

To-night, some one would gain the highest fame that the underworld could offer. The man who killed The Shadow could ask his own reward!

The archenemy of evil was doomed. The trap had been laid.

Somehow, every gat wielder knew, word must have gone to the mysterious man in black, whose eyes and ears were everywhere. But this snare had been timed. Word had been withheld until the proper moment.

The Shadow, it was known, went to his objectives as soon as he had learned of their location.

The knowledge that Moose Glutz's old pawnshop was where he could find the cringing Homer Briggs was something The Shadow would never ignore.

Even though he might exercise caution, it was conceded that he would prowl in that neighborhood soon after Briggs had returned to the hideout.

The scheme had come from Hank Farley—one of the craftiest of all gangsters, a man whose games were so big that his activities were invariably few and far between.

Homer Briggs, picayune crook, was not waiting there alone. Hank Farley would be with him!

Even should The Shadow reach his objective, Hank would be sure to put up a fight. Gangsters galore were assembling, working as though in unison, stationing themselves at intervals.

If they missed The Shadow going in—they would get him coming out!

Every alleyway hid snipers. Every parked car concealed sinister mobsmen. Every obscure doorway held its guntoter.

The area surrounding the abandoned pawnshop was like a huge net. No man could have walked through that mesh and lived.

Many fingers rested on hair triggers. Should any one appear who might be taken for The Shadow, death would be his!

The entrance to the basement of the old pawnshop was at the end of a short blind alley. It was a tiny cul-de-sac, no deeper than twenty feet. No one was in that spot.

All were wise enough to avoid it. For that—in all probability— would be The Shadow's place of death. The single opening in the brick-walled alcove was a door, which was locked.

Beneath that door was the room where Farley waited with Homer Briggs.

No less than twenty revolvers and automatics were trained upon that black space. The Shadow could enter it only from the street. Then the gats would blaze.

Should he manage to open the locked door, and pass within, he would not only encounter the indomitable Hank Farley—he would have no other means of escape except by the door through which he had come! For the hideout was a stone-walled chamber!

None were too close to the alley. All gangdom wanted The Shadow to enter it.

There were powerful electric torches among the waiting gangsters who covered the vital spot. These were to reveal the scene when the gunfire began.

There was a street light just away from the entrance of the cul-de-sac; that, too, was of value. It revealed clearly the brick walls of the building, where they fronted on the street. If The Shadow once stepped into that light, he would be visible.

Even as a shadow, he would not be immune, for revolvers would spit flame at the slightest sign.

Many gunmen were in the offing. Those who had first arrived had taken the most desirable spots. The others had scattered through the surrounding neighborhood.

Why wait for The Shadow to reach his destination? Bump him off as soon as he had entered within the outer cordon!

There was one faint hope for the man in black. Should he sense danger on the way, he might abandon his excursion.

All experienced mobsters, however, were sure that their enemy would get within the danger zone. The Shadow was no mean antagonist.

The sight of a few waiting gangsters would spur him onward, rather than deter him. He could not possibly know the size of the tremendous trap that awaited him. It had exceeded, many times, even the expectations of those who sponsored it.

Both bold and stealthy, The Shadow would dare the risky undertaking. But he was due for a surprise. Never, in the history of the underworld, had such a mob assembled!

Men who were sworn enemies—members of rival gangs—rubbed elbows and exchanged whispered greeting.

“Death to The Shadow!”

The sentence had a double meaning. Its declarers might well have added:

“Life to crime.”

For The Shadow was crime's worst enemy. He was its most feared antagonist. The mighty turnout told those facts more graphically than descriptive words or slogans.

“Death to The Shadow!”

THE main portion of the old pawnshop was located on a corner. The little alleyway was twenty paces down the side street.

That one thoroughfare massed gangsters. All points of the crossing were covered. So was the other

street.

The outer cordon took in four complete blocks. There were scattered gangsters beyond it, but they were not regularly posted.

At the portion of the block most distant from the expected scene of action, a pair of gangsters waited in a narrow alley on the far side of the street.

They were in pitch blackness, talking in low whispers.

"Maybe he'll come down this alley," said one.

"There's a guy up at the other end," came the reply.

"He might slip by him."

"O.K.! You watch in back. I'll keep an eye on the street."

The men resumed their conversation as they assumed this new watch.

"If he ever gets to Glutz's place, it's curtains for him," was the comment.

"Sure thing. If he was in that little hole away from the corner, he'd be all right. But let him try to get in!"

"And let him try to get out!"

The men's whispered voices, guarded though they were, sounded loud in the alley. Their noise was sufficient to drown near-by noises. Hence the men did not hear as something glided along the center of the alley, to stop between them.

Even had they been silent—as they now became—they could not have detected the presence of the form.

For the man who was concealed in the darkness crouched low. Not even his breathing was audible.

The entrance of the alley was particularly dark, because the nearest street light was on the other side of the corner of the near-by crossing.

A deserted house stood across the street. It was one house of a closely built block. The gloom of the alley seemed to project itself, like a flood of darkness; across the street.

The figure that had stopped by the gangsters was moving again. It was on its way, straight ahead.

It sought the path of darkness. Had it wavered from it, the figure would have been a target for half a dozen hidden watchers. But the slow, gliding motion of the jet-black form made it totally invisible. Free from observation, it reached the old house.

There it stopped by the low stone steps. A hand reached up and pressed against the door of the house.

The hand was as invisible as the man. It was covered with a thin, black glove. It was the hand of The Shadow!

Working from below, The Shadow inserted a small steel instrument into the lock of the old, battered door.

The slight clicking of the sharp device escaped all hearers. Even the specially made master key of thin

steel was painted black.

The lock responded. The hand sought the knob and turned it with painful slowness. The door was loose on its hinges.

It opened gradually, inward. The space widened to a foot. Had there been any glow from within the house, the opening of that door might have been discerned by keen, observing eyes. But the door opened into blackness.

And blackness it was that entered there, as The Shadow crept a serpentine course into the old house, turning his body sidewise as he progressed.

The door closed gradually behind him.

Even the tiny searchlight was absent as The Shadow groped his noiseless way to the stairs of the old house. He ascended silently to the second floor; then went up to the third.

By intuition, as much as by actual search, he discovered a trapdoor that led to the roof.

THE SHADOW had chosen this house cleverly. Fronting away from the block, well removed from the scene of action, no gangsters had stationed themselves within its portals.

Now, emerging on the roof, The Shadow crouched, alone and obscure. His sharp eyes glowed beneath his slouch hat as he picked his way along the housetops.

Every waiting gangster would have been perplexed if some one had told him that the very center of the danger zone had been left unguarded. Yet that fact was literally true. The housetops were devoid of mobsters.

The explanation was simple. The entrance to Glutz's old strong room was on the ground. It could be approached only from that quarter.

The Shadow took no chances. If there should be gunmen here, he would be prepared for them. But he encountered none.

The Shadow, all believed, was coming into a trap unknown to him. That had been true when The Shadow had approached this area.

He had passed the most distant cordon, purely by his natural method of approaching places unnoticed. He had picked the alley through which he had come.

Seeing a gangster at one end, he had slipped by, along the wall of the building. Alert from then on, The Shadow had arrived and listened to the conversation of the watchers.

Divining the significance of their words, he had chosen the roofs for his method of approach.

The old pawnshop was in the bad lands, and The Shadow was traveling toward familiar terrain. Well did he know all the important spots of this undesirable district.

Continuing his course, he reached the flat roof of the building next to the old pawnshop. There, his body formed a human bridge as it moved over a narrow, yawning gap below. Groping his way with amazing deftness, The Shadow, lying prone, peered from the roof above the cul-de-sac.

The blackness of the alley was a veritable mass of solidity. To many, it would have been a fearful, forbidding sight.

To The Shadow, it was luring. Thirty feet of brick offered a scant, impossible footing—even for a skilled human fly.

Now, at night, a fall would be inevitable for any one who might undertake the descent.

But not for The Shadow! The man of the dark was busy. From his cloak he was drawing certain objects which he fitted to his hands and feet.

Feet foremost, he let his body over the edge of the roof. Unseen in the darkness, he clung to the side of the building.

As one hand drew away, there was a slight squash. As the hand pressed the wall, again, the sound was slightly different.

His hands and feet garbed with his special suction cups, The Shadow was creeping safely downward into the blackness of the alley.

He was entering the heart of the trap, but he was arriving unseen!

Foot by foot, he made the precarious descent. He reached the bottom. He again crouched low as he removed the suction cups that had served him well. They went beneath the cloak—round black disks that fitted in a special holder.

Now, working with consummate care, The Shadow toyed with the lock. It was a formidable obstacle, yet his efforts were noiseless.

His body scarcely moved, as it covered the black-clad hands. Even had it swayed in that darkness, it could not have been seen by the waiting men stationed in the street.

The Shadow took no unnecessary chances. Daring though he was, he risked only what was demanded.

The lock yielded; but The Shadow was cautious as he opened the door. A single ray of light, coming from within that barrier, would have meant betrayal.

There was no light beyond the door. The Shadow edged his way into darkness and let the door close noiselessly behind him.

He was standing on stone steps that led downward, but his descending feet made no sound.

THE SHADOW came to a closed door. It was the only door here. Behind that door was the hiding man—Homer Briggs.

Presumably, he was alone; and The Shadow had business with him to-night. But The Shadow had divined the nature of this hunted creature.

Homer was not alone in the center of this trap, he knew.

The door was not locked. It yielded by the fraction of an inch as The Shadow pressed. That was a sure indication that Homer was not alone.

To meet his quarry, The Shadow must first dispose of a more formidable opponent.

The black-clad hands were busy. They worked at the back of the cloak. They slipped from the sleeves of the garment, but the cloak remained, attached to the hat.

The hands held a rod of steel, no larger than a pencil. They drew it out to the length of four feet.

The slender shaft was pushed up into the hat, which tilted forward to the collar of the cloak. A body slipped low, beneath the cloak.

One hand held the rod; the other an automatic, while the man crouched low. The muzzle of the gun pressed against the door. It swung inward.

The answer was a revolver shot; then another. In quick succession, Hank Farley had fired from the opposite side of the room, shooting the instant that the door had swung.

His shots were aimed at the body of the form he saw. They whistled through the folds of the black cloak. Then came an answering shot.

Farley's right arm dropped. A second bullet struck his left shoulder. The man lost his grip upon his automatics. He crumpled to the floor.

Homer Briggs, revolver in hand, was standing at the end of the room. He saw the flashes of flame come from the lower border of the black cloak.

He aimed in that direction, but before he could fire, a bullet caught him in the hand. The gun he was holding clattered from his grasp and lay on the floor.

The black form swayed at the door, then gained substance as The Shadow rose within it. Through the door stepped the dread man in black, his two automatics covering the surprised gangsters.

He turned toward the cringing, moaning form of Homer Briggs.

Before The Shadow could move another pace, a startling sound was heard from without. The muffled gunfire had reached the ears of the waiting gangsters.

They did not know that The Shadow had arrived, yet they had realized that something was amiss within the stonewalled den.

They were storming the heavy door that The Shadow had barred behind him. Soon it would give beneath their blows.

The Shadow turned. There was no time to question Homer now. The sounds of the shots had carried farther than he had anticipated.

The Shadow was trapped, doomed. He was virtually at the mercy of the attacking enemy. In a few minutes, he would be fighting a hopeless battle for life.

He moved stealthily toward the breaking door—where a losing cause awaited.

Yet, from beneath the black hat came a long peal of gibing, taunting mirth —The Shadow's challenge to the mobsmen who sought his death.

The weird sound reechoed amid the stone walls, as though a thousand imps had taken up the cry.

The Shadow had laughed. That laugh meant death—for others!

CHAPTER XIII. HOMER SPEAKS

THE stout door was yielding as The Shadow approached it. The tall man moved swiftly.

He laughed softly as he pressed his form against the door, and reached for the knob of the strong latch. The knob turned beneath his fingers.

The door gave inward. A mass of surging men plunged down the steps. Two of them sprawled headforemost in the glare of flashlights.

Others piled over them. The lights were turned directly on the inner door ahead, at the end of the short, wide entry.

That door was closed. Guns in hand, mobsmen scrambled for it.

As the door opened, a shot came—not from the inner room—but from the entrance at the alley. One gangster fell at the door of the inner room.

Another turned angrily, and his light glared back toward the faces of those who still stood at the top of the steps.

Crash! A bullet shattered the glass of the flashlight. Another shot followed. Cries came from the men who had dashed to the inner room.

All they knew was that the shots were coming from the top of the steps. Were they trapped by other mobsmen? Was this a phony scheme perpetrated by double-crossers of the underworld?

Gangsters all, they did not wait to ask. Sharp barks responded, and the men at the top of the steps scattered away from the danger spot.

Those who had gone before were returning the fire. They had not seen that the first shots had come from behind the door—not from the open doorway.

There, The Shadow had swung, with the opening of the door. Hidden in the niche of the wall, he had dealt the initial stroke.

Now his automatics raked the cursing mobsters who were at the inner room. Quick, staccato shots came from behind the door.

Each bullet found a living target. Outside, wounded gangsters were being tended by their fellows. Others were waiting, away from the door of death.

They did not know what was happening within, they were waiting until some one tried to come out.

Of ten men who had entered that pit of death, only two staggered forth. The trap that had been laid for The Shadow had proven a trap for those who entered.

Some had been laid low by shots from excited gangsters at the outer doorway, but The Shadow himself had accounted for a full half dozen.

The odds that were against The Shadow had proven in his favor. Not one bullet had been aimed toward his place of safety.

The number of men that he had encountered was better than a mere two or three. He had thrown consternation into the midst of his enemies; and with that consternation had come disaster.

Not a light glowed into the death trap, for no one dared approach. Friends could be mistaken for enemies, there.

Only now, since the last echo of the final shot had died away, two grim-faced gunmen were cautiously approaching to peer within.

The Shadow worked more rapidly than they. From his place behind the door, he sprang forward and stopped beside the dead body of a gangster that lay at the foot of the stone steps.

His cloak was tumbling from his shoulders. His hat came also. His automatics were empty; they dropped to the floor.

His gloved fingers clutched the loaded revolver that had fallen from the limp hands of the slain man.

Before the slow-approaching gangsters had shown their lights, a call came from within the stone-walled entry.

It spurred on the advancing men; for it indicated that there was no menace there—no hidden form about to fire from the dark.

“Come in! Come in! We've got him!”

That was the burden of the shout. It brought an eager throng.

Flashlights showed the scene. The dead and wounded were lying about. At the far door, one man was resting on his knees, clutching an injured arm. But in the foreground, face downward, lay a form covered by a black cloak.

Half upon the head was a slouch hat. Stooping beside the victim was a man garbed in a thin, dark sweater.

This man was capless; in his hand he held a gleaming revolver.

Five gunmen scrambled in, uttering shouts in unison. The Shadow had fallen in the fray!

The man in the dark sweater drew aside and hunched himself backward up the steps, to make room for the eager throng. Flashlights shown in the hands of those who crouched around the black-clad form.

The body was heaved over. Rays of light revealed its face. Then came a cry of rage from one of the peering mobsters.

This was not The Shadow! It was a gangster known as “Jigger” Jarvis. He had been one of the first to rush into the entry when the door had yielded.

“The Shadow! Grab him! He's outside! Don't let him get away!”

These were the cries that came from those who were beside the lifeless form of Jigger Jarvis.

One quick-witted gangster recalled the man in the sweater, who had come up the steps, and who had been mistaken for a gangster.

“Get him!” shouted this informant. “Get him! The guy in the dark sweater!”

THE description answered more than one in that mob. As lights showed everywhere, quick attacks were made; but one keen gangster spotted the true quarry.

Off at the edge of the sidewalk, leaping toward the street, was a tall man, heading for the darkness of an alley beyond!

The man who had spied the sweated figure fired. His shot missed.

Others saw the direction of his aim. More shots rang out as the running man reached the alley.

Mobsters sprang in pursuit. They had found The Shadow! He was in flight! He would never reach the other end of the alley alive!

As the first pursuer reached the spot where The Shadow had disappeared, a shot came from the corner of the building.

The chasing gangster pitched headlong. A second shot brought down another mobster.

Two leaped forward together. One fell as a bullet struck him at close range. The other dived for the shelter of the wall, along the street.

The pursuers stopped. Dropping to places of safety, they edged along to cover the entrance of the alley.

Others, organizing, hurried around the block, to cut off The Shadow's retreat.

As tense seconds passed, and no more shots were fired, three gangsters arose and dashed forward in a mass.

One turned on a flashlight. It revealed a momentary glimpse of a tall figure clambering to the roof of a low porch that adjoined a house on the alley.

Shots rang out. The figure was gone. It reappeared again, springing upward to the roof of the two-story building.

A bullet struck close beside the clambering form. From the sound, it seemed to graze the man as he swung himself to the top of the house.

One pursuer hoisted himself to the roof of the porch. A shot rang out from the edge of the housetop. The mobster fell.

Then The Shadow was gone; he had taken to the housetops of another block, and gangsters were scattering wildly in hope of preventing his escape.

From far above, they heard the wild echoes of a mocking laugh. The Shadow, with the distance he had gained, was ready now to foil all pursuit with his elusive skill.

The frenzied gangsters were spreading and calling to their fellows. There was still a chance to trap the man they hated; and they were determined to use it.

A sudden end came to their last opportunity. A police siren sounded. A patrol rolled up, and uniformed men leaped from it.

Harry Vincent's rescuer had sent in word that trouble was brewing near the old pawnshop. A detail of police had been dispatched to that locality. The officers opened fire upon the scattered gangsters.

Mobsmen were fleeing from the scene. Disorganized, they sought to escape this menace. And The Shadow was forgotten.

The main drive was directed toward the blind alleyway beside the old pawnshop. Some of the gangsters who were there fled in the face of gunfire. A few, trapped, opened a determined attack upon the police. They were quickly overpowered.

Uniformed men hurried in through the open door. They stumbled over dead and wounded gangsters.

Shots came from the inner room. A policeman staggered. Another officer approached the door, and blazed straight at a propped-up man who lay against the wall. It was Hank Farley, resisting to the last.

He had fired his final shots with his left hand. The policeman's bullet finished his career of crime.

AWAY from the scene of battle, skulking gangsters reported the carnage that had taken place with the advent of the police.

Few dared to risk a conflict, but there were those of the underworld who, by practiced caution, were not afraid to continue a stealthy search for the man who had eluded them.

The Shadow, it was said, would probably be headed away from the danger zone.

Watching gangsters lurked about decaying buildings. Each hoped that he might catch a glimpse of the mysterious man in black.

It was the safety of numbers that so inspired them. With remnants of gangdom's horde at large, each searcher was keyed to his task.

Each man knew that if he should fire a warning shot others would come to his aid. All were willing to risk an encounter with the police, since The Shadow was the stake in the desperate game.

But they reckoned without their foe. The Shadow had not fled. He had simply retreated in the face of massed numbers.

With The Shadow, an attack was the best defense. But he chose his own ground for the onslaught.

Creeping along the housetops, swinging himself miraculously across wide spaces, The Shadow was grimly seeking a suitable spot from which to begin his next operation.

A full block from the old pawnshop stood a crumbling building that had a small courtyard in back. This spot was reached through a narrow cranny between two projecting walls.

Here, two toughened gunmen had sought a breathing space. Sheltered below the two-story building, they were planning secret action.

One pointed to the dim, projecting roof above. There were windows in the walls. A supple man could reach the roof by that route.

"Sneak out to the street," said one. "See that it's all O.K. Then back here again. We're going up."

The man's companion growled in assent.

While the first man waited, the other crowded his way between the walls and made a brief inspection. The gangster in the little court was peering through the crevice, and his shape was dimly visible in the light that filtered from the street.

A head peered downward from the room above. A lithe form slipped softly over the projecting edge. Sure feet found the ledge of a window.

The Shadow clung to the walls of the second floor. Doubling his body, he prepared to continue the descent. His hidden eyes watched the man below.

Something prompted the gangster to gaze upward. His startled eyes spotted the form crouched by the window. Before an exclamation could escape the gangster's lips, the clinging, batlike form had loosened from its hold.

It shot through the air—a flight of almost ten feet downward and landed squarely upon the surprised gangster. The waiting man could not avoid the precipitated attack.

It was the gangster who bore the brunt of The Shadow's leap. He was flattened beneath the swift-moving body.

He collapsed as his head beat against the stone paving of the court. He lay insensible.

One trickling ray of light showed The Shadow, in his grimy sweater, leaning over the unconscious gangster.

The thud of the impact was the only noise that had occurred. It was not heard by the man who was returning through the crevice.

Arriving at the courtyard, the second gangster spoke to the vague shape that he saw there.

“O.K.,” were his words. “Let's get goin' up. We'll get—“

At that instant, the man's feet stumbled against the form of his laid-out companion. Instinctively, the gangster looked downward.

“What's this—“

His head came up in sudden understanding. Before his gun hand could rise, The Shadow's revolver gleamed in the trickle of light.

The handle of the weapon landed flat against the gangster's head, behind the ear. The crook collapsed beside the form of his insensible companion.

SOFTLY, The Shadow wedged his way toward the street. He stopped as he neared the sidewalk and waited. Faltering footsteps were echoing on the paving beside the curb.

A man, staggering, was trying to run away. His strength was giving out. Ten feet from the opening where the gangster stood, the man tumbled headlong.

His body lay in a patch of darkness. Only his head, face downward, was near the glimmer of light.

Some denizen of the underworld, this fellow; a wounded mobster, fleeing from the minions of the law.

Noiselessly, The Shadow emerged and glided along the wall. A moment later, he was crouched above the helpless man.

Prying hands discovered a revolver. This The Shadow needed. He drew it from the man's pocket. Then, a sweated arm crept into the fringe of light.

A black-clad hand turned up the head of the prostrate man. The flickering illumination showed the bloodstained features of Homer Briggs!

The yellow, cringing crook had crawled from his hideout when he had heard the cry that The Shadow had been captured.

He was one of those who had still been in the trap when the police had made their attack. He had been among the first to flee.

He had been winged by bullets as he reached the nearest alley. Staggering, gasping, he had been rising and falling, seeking to clamber away to a place of safety.

The last of his spasmodic flights had brought him to this spot.

The Shadow's hands slid Homer's face into the patch of darkness. The man's head was lifted by those hands.

A low voice was whispering into an unhearing ear. Homer's eyes half opened.

His lips tried to form a response to the question he had heard.

The words were repeated. Homer vaguely caught the name of Harshaw. Some one was asking him about the old man.

Automatically, inspired more by instinctive reflex action than by fear, Homer's voice came in a low, choking gasp. His words were barely coherent as he responded to The Shadow's question.

Then came another quizzing remark. Homer's lips trembled. He did not know why he was being questioned. He only knew that he could not move his body.

Dying, he tried to form a name. It quivered on his lips. Articulated, it ended with a gasp.

The body of Homer Briggs slipped to the sidewalk. The cowardly crook was dead.

The sweated form arose. Even without cloak and hat, The Shadow was a man of darkness. His tall form flitted eerily across the street.

A policeman came rushing from the alley. He spied the body of Homer as he turned an electric lantern in that direction.

But the officer did not see the slender, swiftly moving form that had departed.

The policeman was viewing the body of the slain crook. There was blood upon the sidewalk where Homer lay.

There was a tiny drop of blood a foot toward the curb; another beyond it.

This meant nothing to the policeman, for he thought it had come from the wounds of the dead man.

But those drops of blood were the beginning of a trail. They were a trail which wild hordes of gangsters would have followed in exultation, had they seen the drops and had they known what they meant.

The Shadow had been wounded. Gliding through the darkness, he was leaving a traceable path behind him!

But no one knew of that trail. Onward, forgetful of the clips he had received from gangsters' bullets, The Shadow swept toward a new destination.

Homer Briggs had spoken. What the man had known, The Shadow knew now!

CHAPTER XIV. THE SHADOW SEEKS

EVENTS had moved swiftly that night. It was not yet ten o'clock. Homer Briggs had visited the Black Ship shortly after dark. Gangland's vigil had begun at an early hour.

Far from the scene of the shooting, other officers of the law were on duty. They were watching the floors of the Redan Hotel.

Only one was on duty at Harshaw's apartment. This was Mayhew, in charge of operations. All others were on the floors below. There was a man behind the hotel.

The mail chutes were important tonight. Cardona had given word that they should be watched.

If a fourth message were due, it might be slipped surreptitiously into one of the slits that marked the path of the long chute from the tenth floor to first.

Mayhew arose from a chair and went carefully through the apartment. He noticed everything in sight. He left the apartment, and locked the door behind him.

No one was in there. The window of the study had a new grating. Some one was watching from in back of the hotel. The apartment was safe from intruders.

There were rooms across the hall, but they, too, were locked. They had been inspected to-night.

Mayhew went to the stairs and called softly to the floor below. There was an answering response.

A man on the ninth floor was doing double duty. He was guarding the foot of the stairs; he was spying the mail chute on the same floor.

Mayhew went down the steps. This floor was safe. It could be reached only by the elevator, and the elevator operator had orders not to go above the ninth.

Mayhew knew that his presence was urgent below. There were not enough men to watch all the floors.

It was nearing ten o'clock, the hour when the mail would be collected.

The ground floor needed no watching by police. A man was stationed outside. The clerk and hotel attendants were eyeing the mail box itself.

The balconied mezzanine was deserted. The mail chute there was blank, without a slit through which a letter could be dropped.

While Mayhew was coming downward, a man was moving upward. He had entered the hotel by the door from the empty dining room.

Unseen, he had gained the stairway. He stopped when he reached the mezzanine.

It was The Shadow—again garbed in dark cloak and hat. The only difference in his usual stealth was the slight hesitancy in his gliding step.

Only the right arm was active as The Shadow felt his way along the darkened stair. He had been wounded in the arm and in the thigh—flesh wounds that had slowed, but not incapacitated, his actions.

The elevator shaft was twenty feet from the stairway. There, The Shadow crouched. The lights of the descending car went by as the elevator dropped to the ground floor.

Quickly, The Shadow was at work, his right hand bearing the brunt of the effort as he wedged a piece of

steel between the sliding doors and pried them apart.

He glided through the opening, and his form slipped to the top of the elevator below. Black-clad hands closed the mezzanine doors.

Detective Sergeant Mayhew was arriving at the mezzanine. His form was plainly visible as he reached the lighted area in front of the stairway.

He was seen by the hidden man who crouched upon the top of the elevator. But that figure in the darkness of the shaft was totally invisible.

The elevator moved upward. It ascended floor by floor until it reached the ninth. There it stopped, in accordance with orders. Then it moved downward.

The black figure was no longer with it. The Shadow had abandoned the top of the elevator. He was clinging to the doors of the tenth floor.

There, his work was difficult. He supported himself with his right arm, while his left painfully worked to spread the doors.

Under the exacting circumstances, he did not totally avoid a noise; but the opening of the doors was no more than a dull sound. The Shadow emerged from the elevator shaft.

He closed the doors carefully, and moved slowly toward the door of Harshaw's apartment.

By his ingenious artifice, The Shadow had reached the tenth floor without running the gamut of watching men. The only obstacle now might be some one stationed in the apartment.

That was unlikely. The Shadow had a divining mind. Mayhew's descent was a sign that the tenth floor was deserted, but that the path to it was blocked. Nevertheless, The Shadow was cautious as he unlocked the door of the apartment.

He slipped within. There was a single light which Mayhew had left burning. The Shadow crossed the outer room and opened the door of the study. It closed behind him.

As on another night, the mysterious man was shrouded in pitch-black darkness.

ONCE again, The Shadow started an inspection. It was brief, covering details that had been interrupted on that other night. Soon after he had begun, The Shadow arrived at the window.

The Shadow ignored the window. His light glimmered upon the radiator. He had inspected that spot before.

Now his hand rested upon the knob that controlled the flow of heat. Through the thin glove, he sensed that the radiator was cold.

The Shadow laughed softly. His inspection here had been interrupted and postponed. He had divined a secret of this place.

To-night he had learned of it from the dying lips of Homer Briggs. But the man's reply to The Shadow's question had simply substantiated what The Shadow already knew.

The Shadow, however, had divined something else—a most important fact which Homer had not known.

Upward clambered The Shadow. His body rested on the window sill. His feet were against the window. The black-clad arms hung downward toward the floor.

They moved in the darkness, spreading gradually apart as a dull glimmer appeared above the floor. Slowly, gradually, the strange, gleaming object stopped on its upward way.

The muffled report of a pistol shot sounded through the room. The Shadow's motion ceased. His whispered laugh joined with the echoes of the shot.

Headforemost, The Shadow slipped downward to the floor. He waited there, listening; ready to take action had the shot been heard.

To-night, as on the night when Silas Harshaw had been killed, no ears were close enough to hear.

The Shadow's flashlight glimmered. It followed his right hand, which was moving toward him, holding a stack of papers. Some of these were letters, in unsealed envelopes.

The Shadow removed them one by one, and read their shaky scrawl. He understood their import. The light went out.

Now, The Shadow was gone from the spot beside the window sill. He was approaching the side wall.

There he waited for a moment. He was creeping along the wall, measuring. There was something about his careful calculation that corresponded to the slow strides he had made when he had left the elevator shaft.

The Shadow stopped. His light glimmered on the floor. He was prying up the tight-fitting flooring.

At this time, The Shadow was working on his own. He had no clew from Homer for this task.

It was a thought in that hidden brain that was guiding the man of mystery in his search. He was seeking an elusive clew. He found it.

Close against the baseboard was a bit of flooring that commanded close inspection. A small, black piece of steel was moving beneath the glare of the light.

The Shadow's hand forced a piece of wood downward from the baseboard. Nimble fingers pressed into the space. They pushed upward. The baseboard swung outward on a hidden hinge.

There, in a cache less than a foot square, was a metal box. The Shadow's ear detected the slight ticking of muffled clockwork.

Below the box projected an envelope. Its end was directly above a thin slit in the floor—a slit that turned at an angle toward the wall.

The light of The Shadow's torch gleamed full upon the white envelope. Those eyes in the dark read the name and the address.

The envelope was addressed to police headquarters. Then the flashlight went carefully past the envelope.

In the shallow space behind, fingers held the light so that it shone through the sealed packet. It showed two typed initials that were significant.

Those letters were J. T.

They meant much to the keen brain of The Shadow. Among those loose letters that he had previously viewed had been one with the name of James Throckmorton scrawled upon it.

The Shadow knew the name and address of the next victim!

THE SHADOW'S hand reached forth to grasp the projecting letter. It was an instant too late. The mechanism of the clockwork whirled.

A sharp click, and the letter dropped into the slit below. It was on its way from its hidden source, off through a narrow opening that led into the mail chute to the hotel letter box!

As the envelope traveled free, another missive moved down to take its place. Like the first, this was held by two small clips that pressed against the upper end.

These were the devices that had made those tiny marks which Detective Joe Cardona had not noticed!

The Shadow ignored the new letter. One had just gone out on schedule— forty-eight hours after the note that had proclaimed the death of Thomas Sutton.

The next one had two days to wait. It was not urgent now.

The baseboard moved down; the bit of flooring came up. The hidden cache was closed. No longer did The Shadow's flashlight twinkle.

Death was stalking to-night. Another victim was marked for oblivion. The Shadow alone knew his identity!

Out of the apartment went The Shadow. Back, past the mail chute, to the elevator shaft. He crept between the doors as he opened them.

He must wait for the car to ascend. It meant delay, but a dash down the stairs might involve more serious consequences.

The elevator was coming up at last. It reached the ninth floor. Down it went. When it reached the ground, The Shadow slipped from the mezzanine.

There, on the steps, he waited for an instant. There was excitement in the lobby. The mail box had been opened. In it had been found the letter to the police.

"J. T.!" Mayhew was shouting. "Who is J. T.? Give me that phone quick. Shoot upstairs, you. Find out who's been around the mail chute -"

The Shadow drew into seclusion as a plain-clothes man came dashing upward. The elevator, too, was rising. With the way now clear, The Shadow glided quickly to the ground floor.

He was nothing more than a thin black silhouette—an untraceable phantom as he swept from the hotel.

He had been detained too long. He had discovered the riddle of those death notes.

He must make use of what he had learned. For death hovered over a helpless man—and The Shadow alone could prevent it!

What was that death to be? That was the mystery. There was not far to go. Only in person could The Shadow thwart the intended crime.

The time element was uncertain; there was no telling what had been intended until the scene was reached.

A coupe shot westward from the street behind the hotel. Five blocks it sped, then it stopped. From it emerged a man in black, who disappeared swiftly into the surrounding gloom, toward an old, four-storied house.

The Shadow was racing death!

CHAPTER XV. THE FOURTH VICTIM

IN a top room of his secluded home, James Throckmorton was seated at a table which served him as a desk. Throckmorton was a man past middle age. He was a student of many subjects, a hobbyist of set ideas.

To-night, he was alone, wrapped completely in his immediate interest. He was reviewing the first proof sheets of a book which he had prepared on ornithology.

To Throckmorton, this was a task that required the utmost care. The proofs had come from the publisher that afternoon, in exact accordance with a promised delivery.

The study of birds had been a lifelong joy to this man. His comments on the habitats of certain avifauna were matters to which he had given wholehearted consideration.

So absorbed was James Throckmorton that he had paid no attention whatever to the passage of time. This was his one chosen spot when he had work to do, this little room at the top of the house.

Throckmorton had locked himself in this room shortly after eight o'clock. Armed with his favorite pipe, he had set to work to review his writings.

Tobacco smoke clouded the atmosphere; but the man was oblivious to it.

Besides his penchant for a pipe, Throckmorton had an old-fashioned tendency in favor of gas illumination. True, his house was wired with electricity; but when it came to serious work, Throckmorton believed that the best of gas lamps were unsurpassed.

Such a lamp now rested on the table. It was connected by a hose to a special gas jet on the floor. With this illumination, Throckmorton could read for hours without tiring.

More than once, in the past, his first knowledge of the passing of time had been the rays of morning as they issued through the thick glass skylight that formed the only window for this upper room.

As Throckmorton made marginal notations on the proof sheets, he shook his head a bit and glanced at the pipe. He noticed the cloudiness of the room.

The pipe in his hand was the cause. He set the brier on the table. He had been smoking too steadily, he realized.

Once more he became attentive to his task, but a weariness fell upon the man as he worked.

The atmosphere of the room seemed stifling. Perhaps it would be wise to open the skylight for a few minutes.

Stepping upon the chair, Throckmorton fumbled with the fastening of the skylight. He felt dizzy. Breathing deeply, he detected the odor of illuminating gas amid the heavier, more pungent aroma of tobacco.

He sniffed again; then swayed and clutched the handle of the skylight. It refused to budge.

The man's efforts weakened him. The chair seemed to wobble beneath him. With a gasping cry and a wild grab to save himself, James Throckmorton toppled from the chair and sprawled upon the floor.

The fall half stunned him. Already weakened, the man could make only a feeble effort to regain his footing. He tried to crawl in the direction of the door.

He failed. Footsteps came pounding up the stairs from the floor below. Throckmorton's manservant had heard the crash of the body and the chair. He was coming to ascertain the cause.

Knocks sounded at the door. The man's excited voice was crying out. Throckmorton did not respond. He was past the point of speaking.

His body, half turned toward the door, was incapable of further motion. He was overcome by the fumes of gas that had insidiously filled the room while he had been at work.

The door was firmly latched, and Throckmorton had the only key. It was an old habit of his—a sure device that eased his mind against unwanted disturbance.

The servant's pounding was in vain. It could neither arouse the master, nor could it avail against that heavy barrier.

The footsteps clattered down the stairs. The servant was running for help.

Only the quick action of powerful men could burst through to the room where Throckmorton lay helpless. The task was too great for one, alone.

AS the servant rushed from the front door of the house, he looked in both directions. It was a deserted neighborhood. The lights of the avenue offered the nearest and quickest aid.

The servant hastened in that direction. Running, he did not notice the man who had been hurrying from the opposite direction.

It was not surprising that the servant failed to see this stranger, for the newcomer was dressed entirely in black, and was scarcely discernible in the darkness.

The door of the house was open. The man in black lost no time entering. He saw the stairs ahead and dashed upward. He reached the deserted second floor, and kept on upward.

On the third he paused; then, as he detected a light from the final stairway, he hurried to the fourth.

The servant had turned on the light in the small hallway outside Throckmorton's study. This guided The Shadow.

Limping from his speedy exertion, he drew up before the door of the little room.

The lock was a special one. Most persons would have smashed the door in preference to losing time with the lock. But no lock could balk The Shadow.

The gloves were off his hands; the fire opal glistened as the supple fingers pried with a tiny, keylike pick.

The lock clicked. The door swung wide. The Shadow, tall and weird, stood above the prone form of James Throckmorton.

He looked like a figure of death, did The Shadow; but his purpose here was to thwart death. He swung upward upon the chair which Throckmorton had used.

His firm hands struggled with the fastening of the skylight. The rusty metal yielded to the power of flesh. The iron frame dropped. Fresh air swept down into the room.

The Shadow turned off the lamp. His fingers ran quickly down the rubber hose and found another handle at the floor. He turned it.

Then he reached Throckmorton and stooped beside the senseless man.

Futilely, The Shadow worked. He sought by his skill to revive Throckmorton, but the escaping gas had done its deadly work.

A slight leak in the hose was at fault. Engrossed in his labors, Throckmorton had realized the danger only when it was too late.

A noise from far below. The servant had arrived with rescuers. Distant footsteps sounded; then came closer. Still, The Shadow would not give up hope, even though his task seemed entirely hopeless.

Men had been revived before, when death seemed to have taken its toll. The room was cleared of gas; cool air was swirling all around.

The Shadow, hearing footsteps at the bottom of the final flight, leaped to the door and closed it.

Pounding fists beat upon the door. A heavy object crashed against the barrier. The stout wood was giving.

Yet, in the dark room, The Shadow still sought to aid the man from whom life seemed totally gone.

Crash! A hole appeared in the center of the door. Another smash. The Shadow arose. A hand, coming through the door, released the latch.

The door swung open. A flood of light came through from the hall. The Shadow was upon the chair. His left arm clutched the edge of the skylight.

It was then that the injured arm failed. The Shadow dropped back into the room—just as three rescuers piled in!

One was a uniformed policeman. The second was a chance passer-by. The third was Throckmorton's servant.

All had rushed directly to the body that lay within the range of light. They had not seen The Shadow as he stood poised upon the chair away from the door.

Crouched beside the chair, the man in black recovered from his unexpected fall. Now, with all eyes upon the lifeless body of James Throckmorton, he again sprang toward the skylight.

His right arm gripped the edge of the frame. It did the heavy effort. The skylight clattered.

The policeman looked in time to see the vague form poising for its upward leap. He made a dash to stop the escaping figure.

With right arm firmly holding to the edge of the open skylight, The Shadow swung his body forward like a catapult. His feet struck the policeman squarely in the chest.

The Shadow's form recoiled from the blow it had delivered. Then the black-clad body wriggled upward through the skylight.

The staggering policeman was too late to stop The Shadow's escape.

Pulling a revolver, he fired through the opening; then he clambered to the chair and managed to raise his head and shoulders to the level of the roof.

He fired twice, toward where he thought he saw a fleeting form. The only answer was a rippling, fading laugh.

THE officer had scarcely viewed the departing assailant. But for the blow that he had received, he would have sworn that the vague figure was no more than a phantom shape.

The weird returning laugh was an incredible, fantastic sound.

Descending into the room, the police man noted that the two men were hard at work, endeavoring to resuscitate Throckmorton.

The presence of a man who had escaped placed a serious aspect upon this tragedy. The officer hurried down the steps and called headquarters.

Fifteen minutes later, the message was relayed to Joe Cardona at the Redan Hotel, where the star detective had been summoned by an urgent call from Mayhew.

Word of this new tragedy brought a grim expression to Cardona's lips. The name of James Throckmorton fitted with the new initials on the fourth note.

J. T. could be no one else!

Leaving orders with Mayhew, Cardona set out at once. His subordinate put through phone calls in accordance with brief instructions.

When Cardona arrived at Throckmorton's, he found the group of three men still standing by the body of the asphyxiated victim.

There was no doubt that Throckmorton was dead; nor was there doubt as to the manner of his death. Faint traces of the gaseous odor were still apparent.

Cardona listened to the statements of the men gathered there. He went to the gas lamp and attempted to light it. He found that it was turned off at the floor.

Carefully twisting the handle, Cardona started the flow of gas, then lighted the lamp. Stooping, he sniffed the trickle that oozed from the base of the lamp.

This indicated the manner of Throckmorton's death—unless it had been faked by the man who had been discovered in the room.

What part had that unknown person played? Had he entered by the skylight? How long had he been with Throckmorton?

These questions were unanswerable. They threw a cloud of perplexity over the whole affair.

Cardona was studying every angle; the more he considered the case, the less he could understand the stranger's presence.

A companion of Throckmorton's would not have attempted an escape. An enemy—if he had come here to kill—would surely have adopted a quicker and more effective course than this one.

Facts again—but disconnected facts. A case that would have appeared as accidental death, but for the appearance of an unknown intruder and the definite link of the fourth death announcement.

Cardona was puzzled.

While the detective vainly tried to reason, more persons arrived in the house. Footsteps approached. Police Commissioner Weston appeared with Professor Arthur Biscayne.

Cardona had ordered Mayhew to notify them both. The detective sergeant had called Weston's home. Biscayne had been there.

With stern, troubled face, Cardona extended the fourth note toward Weston and Biscayne. It said:

IN MEMORY OF

J. T.

WHO DIED

LAST NIGHT

HE WAS THE FOURTH

Cardona pointed grimly to the dead body on the floor of the little room.

“James Throckmorton,” Cardona said slowly. “He is J. T. He was the fourth. We arrived too late. No one could save him.”

Cardona was right. The rescuer whom he indicated had arrived too late. One other had arrived before them—The Shadow.

He, too, had been too late in his race with death.

CHAPTER XVI. THE SHADOW'S WORK

EARLY the next evening, a gentleman in evening clothes was reading a newspaper in the tomblike library of the Cobalt Club. The few members who happened to pass by recognized the calm, dignified features of Lamont Cranston, multimillionaire.

When he was in New York, which was only occasionally, Lamont Cranston spent much of his time at the Cobalt Club.

He also appeared frequently at the Merrimac Club, which was less exclusive, and one which had a larger and less select membership than the Cobalt Club.

Even those who had seen Cranston most often knew very little about him. The man was a great traveler. A trip around the world was a mere jaunt for him, and he would set out on a long journey in a moment's preparation.

He had a large mansion in New Jersey, where he entertained on rare occasions. He came and went as he pleased. When he was away, no one—not even the servants at his pretentious home—knew where he was.

Thus Lamont Cranston was a puzzling personage, and most of his acquaintances considered him a mystery. But none had ever fathomed the amazing secret that shrouded his identity.

It was one that surpassed belief—so incredible that even Cranston's own servants did not suspect it.

There were two Lamont Cranstons: one, the genuine; the other, an impostor, who boldly appeared as the multimillionaire whenever he so chose.

The real Cranston was a traveler, indeed. At the present time, he was in India. The false Cranston was a man unknown—The Shadow!

Here, in the Cobalt Club, in the guise of Cranston, The Shadow spent hours of leisure, his mighty mind at work, his very identity concealed.

To-night, he was reading the details of a case that involved himself; and, as usual, his purpose in that affair had not been fathomed.

He was reading the latest reports on the tragic death of James Throckmorton, the fourth victim of an unseen hand.

Joe Cardona, in accordance with his determined policy, had let the facts of the case be known.

James Throckmorton had been asphyxiated by illuminating gas. The leak had been discovered. It might have been caused by accident.

There was no evidence to prove that the hose had been loosened by a murderer's hand. But mystery had hovered in that top-story room last night.

Some one had been seen in Throckmorton's secluded sanctum. The sinister figure had escaped by the skylight; it was probable that he had entered by the same route.

The police were investigating. That was the same old story. They had investigated other cases before this one, and they had been balked.

The link between this tragedy and three other well-timed deaths was admitted. There was every reason to expect another killing to-morrow night— perhaps more after that!

The only factor that saved Detective Cardona from a merciless grilling by the newspapers was his willingness to give information to the reporters.

In return, there was a tendency to soft-pedal belittling thrusts at Cardona's capability. One tabloid journal indulged in condemnation, but the other sheets withheld their scorn.

There was nothing in James Throckmorton's career to class him as a marked man. He had possessed wealth, but much of it had been expended in his hobbies.

He was a harmless person, whose chief weakness was ornithology. On various occasions, the members of the Falcon Society had visited his home.

These men were interested in the study of birds. It was mentioned, in the reports of the society, that Throckmorton had completed his book on ornithology a few months before. He had shown the manuscript to the members of the society at that time.

Not even the most painstaking reporter had been interested in the minutes of that meeting.

Birds and murder did not seem closely related. But to The Shadow, those minutes were of importance.

They would be recorded, in all probability, in the Avifauna Journal - a small publication of limited circulation which went to keen students of bird life.

Laying the newspaper aside, the man who appeared to be Lamont Cranston strolled to a corner of the extensive library.

The Cobalt Club subscribed to all sorts of unusual publications. These were kept on file until ready for binding.

Hanging from an obscure rack, the searcher discovered back numbers of the Avifauna Journal.

It was not long before a tapering finger rested upon the account of the meeting which had been held at Throckmorton's home a few months previously.

The report of the Falcon Society was dry and dull. But included with it was a list of those who had been there, both members and friends.

The pointing finger rested upon a name that was included in the latter group.

SHORTLY afterward, Lamont Cranston's limousine rolled northward from the Cobalt Club. The man in the back seat was invisible. Only the moving glow of a cigarette betrayed his presence.

He alighted from the car near the home of James Throckmorton and ordered the chauffeur back to the club.

The Shadow had hastened twenty-four hours ago into Throckmorton's home. To-night, he entered stealthily. He crept easily up the stairs and reached the room with the broken door.

There was something about that room which The Shadow had noticed— for no facts of consequence ever escaped his eagle eye.

He had observed the partly opened door of a closet, with piles of loose-leafed notebooks stowed within.

It was in that closet that The Shadow sought. One by one, volumes were removed—some large, some small. Most of them were records that pertained to James Throckmorton's hobbies.

Among them, The Shadow discovered a few dusty volumes that appeared to be diaries. These were the books The Shadow placed upon the desk.

By the light of that same gas lamp, The Shadow began his search. His gloved thumb left no imprint as it ran through page after page with surprising rapidity.

The eyes that watched did not stop to read. They were looking for a written name.

James Throckmorton had been copious in his notations. If that name entered into his life, it should be here.

The moving thumb stopped. There, on a page dated nearly two years ago, was this written statement:

Discussed inventions with Silas Harshaw at his home. Told him my decision was final. Unwise to invest money in so doubtful an undertaking.

Harshaw seemed piqued and erratic. Said I was like others. We would all see, some day. He talked about people stealing his inventions. Seemed to consider me as a suspect. He is a very queer old man.

The black-gloved thumb dog-leaved the pages. The various volumes were put back in the closet. But the diaries were now on top, instead of beneath the other books.

This one volume lay closest at hand. In fact, it was leaning from the top of the stack when The Shadow closed the door.

Then the room of death was once more deserted. The Shadow had gone - not by the skylight, however. He had taken to the stairs, moving silently downward through the darkness.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT MAYHEW was still on duty at the Redan Hotel. Tonight, the vigil seemed hopeless. The plain-clothes men had been withdrawn.

It was a ruse; for they would be back to-morrow—the night when a fourth note was due to be mailed. The forty-eight-hour interval was now recognized.

The Shadow smiled as he glided up the stairs of the Redan Hotel.

He knew that Cardona's men were gone. He knew that the detective was right in his assumption that there would be no note to-night. For The Shadow knew the source of those mysterious billets. He also knew when the next would be on its way.

The shadowy form reached Harshaw's apartment and entered with accustomed ease. The flashlight glimmered while The Shadow worked.

To-night, he did not visit the death spot by the window. Instead, he pried into the little cache where muffled clockwork ticked.

With careful touch, The Shadow removed the letter from the clips that held it. From beneath his robe, he drew a vial of liquid.

With a tiny brush, he forced the fluid beneath the flap of the envelope. The flap peeled back. The message was removed by a gloved hand.

With a pen, The Shadow wrote four words across the typed lines. He refolded the message and put it back into the envelope, which, in turn, he replaced between the clips.

The Shadow was laughing softly as he prowled about the room. He came to a point directly opposite the window. There he stopped, and his flashlight searched the wall.

The glow revealed the spot where a bullet had buried itself in the woodwork.

This spot was less than three feet from the floor. In the corner of the room, The Shadow's light showed a footstool.

The hidden man moved to the corner where old Harshaw's sculptured objects still rested undisturbed. Again, that low laugh. The light went out. Something was lifted softly from the table.

Now, The Shadow was gone from the study. He was in another part of the apartment—the room which had served Harshaw as laboratory and workshop.

Here, the man in black made a careful survey. He discovered a drawer that bore the letter "E." That was the drawer for which The Shadow searched.

He slid it open, and discovered several papers. They were mostly crude, hand-sketched diagrams that meant nothing, in themselves.

They might have pertained to some contrivance, but without the actual apparatus, they were useless.

The Shadow paid but little attention to these sketches. He replaced them carefully.

Then, from his pocket, he drew an envelope. It was sealed, and on its face it bore the words:

DETECTIVE CARDONA—IMPORTANT

The characters were written in a shaky scrawl. They had been formed by the hand of The Shadow.

They were identical with the writing that had appeared upon the envelope that had been received by Thomas Sutton—the wrapper which had contained the notation concerning the gold-headed cane.

The Shadow had seen that envelope in Cardona's office. Strangely enough, its scrawl coincided exactly with other envelopes that The Shadow had found in this apartment last night!

Those envelopes were in the hiding place by the window, where The Shadow had discovered and replaced them.

What was The Shadow's purpose?

Only time could tell, but the soft, sinister laugh that echoed now was the forerunner of some clever scheme.

The Shadow's work was now completed. The softly moving form swished from the workshop.

It traveled to the outer door, and made its exit from the stairway. The Shadow was seen no more that night.

But his voice was heard by one who had not expected the sound of those weird, whispered tones!

At headquarters, Joe Cardona was puzzling over the facts of the Throckmorton death, trying vainly to link them with the other killings.

Within twenty-four hours, another letter would be on its way, announcing one more death!

The telephone rang.

Listlessly, Cardona answered it.

The detective gasped as he recognized the voice from the other end. It was a voice he knew—a voice that he had heard before.

A voice in which he believed, despite the doubts of others.

It was the voice of The Shadow!

“Cardona?” came the weird whisper.

“Yes,” replied the detective.

“Five deaths!” were the sinister words.

“Five?” questioned Cardona.

“One: Silas Harshaw,” tolled the voice. “Two: Louis Glenn. Three: Thomas Sutton. Four: James Throckmorton. Five—”

The voice ended.

“Quick!” cried Cardona. “Name the fifth!”

“You shall know the name to-morrow night,” came the low, deliberate voice. “It is not necessary now. Death—will—not—take—place!”

Cardona pressed the receiver close to his ear and listened intently. Was there more to come? Yes! The voice was speaking again!

“Think of death that has occurred,” said the voice of The Shadow. “Do not consider death that I shall thwart. Think of those that went before.

“Listen!” The voice was hissing. “I shall go back. Throckmorton kept a diary. Sutton made out checks. Glenn smoked cigarettes. Do you understand?”

“Yes,” exclaimed Detective Cardona eagerly. “I understand. Throckmorton's diary—I haven't looked for it. Sutton's check book—I passed it up.

“Glenn's cigarettes I have them here. But what”—Cardona paused breathlessly—“what of Harshaw?”

A low laugh tingled in Cardona's ear.

“Harshaw?” questioned the eerie voice. “What of Harshaw? The answer to his death remains in his apartment.

“You will find it if you search. But be careful. Heed this warning.

“The death dealt to Harshaw was dealt to another. It will strike again to those who use no caution. Go back, Cardona, to your first clew.

“Seek for death at the place of death. There you will find the trail.”

The receiver clicked at the other end of the wire. Joe Cardona sank back in his chair.

The detective's face was white and tense. Every word that the mysterious voice had spoken echoed through his brain.

There were clews to every death! Danger still lurked at the apartment where Silas Harshaw had been slain! These statements, meager though they might seem, meant worlds to Cardona.

But more important than them all was that one emphatic utterance that pertained to to-morrow night. Those words had been spoken by The Shadow—the man who never failed!

“Death—will—not—take—place!”

CHAPTER XVII. THE THREE CLEWS

IT was the next afternoon when Professor Roger Biscayne entered the office of Police Commissioner Weston. Accompanying the spectacled psychologist was a droopy-faced man of about fifty years of age.

The man was bald-headed, save for a fringe of gray above his ears; and he was dressed in a light-brown suit, cut in a youthful style that ill became his elderly appearance.

“Well, well!” exclaimed the commissioner cordially. “You’ve brought Mr. Wilhelm with you as you promised, eh?”

“Yes,” said Biscayne. “My cousin was anxious to join us here. He has been quite concerned over the death of Silas Harshaw.”

“Terrible tragedy, commissioner,” Wilhelm was saying, as he shook hands. “Terrible, sir, terrible. Think of the man—murdered!”

“Of course, Roger has told you that I was financing his work. A genius, that man—but a bit eccentric. Too bad he’s gone. Too bad! Couldn’t find anything about his invention, could you, Roger?”

It was evident that Arthur Wilhelm mourned the loss of the remote-control machine as well as the death of Silas Harshaw.

The few thousands that the millionaire soap manufacturer had invested was a paltry sum to him, but he had counted upon them producing many times their value.

“No news, Arthur,” declared Biscayne. “But when Detective Cardona arrives, we may hear something. You say he has obtained results, commissioner?”

“So he has stated,” replied Weston. “He has been investigating all day, and will be here, soon.”

“A detective, eh?” queried Wilhelm, resting back in his chair. “There isn’t a one can come up to Roger here, commissioner.”

“That’s what he should have gone into—detective work—instead of wasting his time with a lot of highbrows. How about it, Roger?”

“Maybe you’re right, Arthur,” said Biscayne, with a smile. “I’ve been doing a bit of detective work lately, though, and I can’t say I’ve accomplished much.”

“You need more practice, Roger,” bantered Wilhelm. “Any time you want to start an agency, I’ll give you a few thousand for a beginning.”

“I understand you were out of town, Mr. Wilhelm,” said the commissioner.

“Yes,” replied the bald-headed man. “Took a trip to California. Had to get back by this morning, for a directors’ meeting.”

“Well, New York is the place! Especially with Cousin Roger around. We’ve been good pals, he and I. Closest in the world even though he has gone highbrow!” He laughed.

A secretary entered to announce Doctor Fredericks. The stout physician entered and shook hands with Weston and Biscayne. He was introduced to Wilhelm.

“Something new in reference to Silas Harshaw?” was his question.

“We think so,” declared Weston. “Detective Cardona reports results. He wants to get back to the start—to go over all the original details. He requested me to send for you.”

“Good!” said the physician. “I hope that I can be of assistance.”

Cardona was announced, and a minute later the detective joined the group. His face showed eagerness as he sat down opposite the commissioner.

He looked quizzically at Arthur Wilhelm, and expressed pleasure when he learned the man's identity.

"Fine!" he exclaimed. "We'll have to get back to the Harshaw murder. Any one who knew the old man will be valuable.

"I've been checking up on the others to-day, and I've got a thread toward each of them. Don't expect too much, commissioner—we're just at the beginning.

"But I think that with Professor Biscayne on the job, we're going to gain results.

Cardona picked up a brief case that he had brought with him. He removed a sheaf of notes and referred to different pages.

"I shall go back," he said. Without realizing it, Cardona was echoing The Shadow. "Throckmorton kept a diary. Not one—a lot of them.

"I found some of the books this morning. Right in the first one I picked up, I found a clew."

"Where did you find the diary?" queried Biscayne.

"In the closet of the room where he was when the gas got him," said Cardona. "Here's the book"—he produced it from the brief case—"and here's the dope. Throckmorton knew Harshaw!"

"What!" Biscayne was peering at the written page. "Look at this, commissioner!

"Throckmorton visited Harshaw two years ago—refused to give money to the old man. You remember, I said that Harshaw talked vaguely about enemies?

"Maybe Throckmorton was one of them. Maybe he knew too much about the old man's ideas.

"Cardona, have you found any connection between Harshaw and the others?"

"No," said the detective.

"Well," declared Biscayne, "they didn't keep diaries! I remember, now, something that young Richard Sutton said.

"His father was bothered by speculators continually—by people with unsound ideas.

"There's a link, there. Positively! Between Harshaw and Thomas Sutton!"

"YOU'RE right," replied Cardona solemnly. "Dead right, professor. We didn't find it out, because the son didn't know.

"I'm putting that point down"—he made a notation—"and you'll see that it fits in later. Because I've got another line on Sutton."

"What's that?"

"His check book—the stubs—here. I went over it with his son to-day. We placed every check except one. Just a small amount—ten dollars. Look here!"

"Med," read Biscayne, in a puzzled tone. "What does it mean?"

"I don't know," said Cardona, "but I do know this. Here are all of Thomas Sutton's canceled checks, which we found in another drawer. That one check wasn't cashed!"

"That's significant," nodded Biscayne. "Small though it is, it shows a transaction that was not completed. I'd like to see that canceled check—to know whose name is on it."

"So would I," agreed Cardona.

"M-e-d," said Biscayne, looking at the stub. "An abbreviation—not initials. It might mean 'medium'—'medal'—'medicine'—that's probably it. Medicine.

"That doesn't help us much, Cardona. Probably Sutton ordered some medicine from a druggist, and gave him the check."

"Then why hasn't the check ever been cashed?" demanded the detective. "That's what makes it important!"

"Perhaps the druggist can answer," said Biscayne dryly. "Maybe the check was mislaid. Sutton may have forgotten to give it out.

"Many things can happen to a check. If you think it's a live clew, Cardona, inquiry is the only method.

"What about Sutton's druggist—or his physician?"

"I asked his son about the physician," declared Cardona. "He said the old man was often fussy about his health. Tried first one doctor; then another. Never satisfied.

"It was his practice to pay cash for everything; he issued checks only when he was short of ready change.

"Perhaps you have treated Mr. Sutton, doctor," said Biscayne, turning to Fredericks, with a smile.

"I don't recall him as a patient," said Fredericks seriously. "From what Detective Cardona has said, I don't regret the fact. Changeable patients are always a bane to a physician."

Cardona laid the check book aside. He began to feel that he had made a wide mistake; that he was placing himself open for ridicule. Yet he was still convinced that the clew was there.

The diary had been dog-eared at the proper page. So had the stub, with the notation, "Med." Both clews had come from The Shadow. Cardona felt that one must be as significant as the other.

He noted that the expression of interest was fading from Commissioner Weston's eyes. Anxious to regain confidence, the detective turned to his next statement.

"About Louis Glenn," he said, "I have found a clew there. I have had the evidence all along; but both you and I passed it up, professor. Look at these cigarette boxes."

Cardona placed the two pasteboard boxes on the desk. Biscayne picked them up and noticed the attached labels: one with the word, "Tuxedo"; the other marked, "Business Suit."

"What do you make of these?" Biscayne asked.

"To-day," Cardona resumed, "I talked to Glenn's valet. I found out that Louis Glenn was very careless about leaving things in his pockets.

“He never removed an article from a suit when he took it off. He paid no attention to his clothes. Placing them on a hanger, seeing that they were kept in press—that was the valet's job.

“I talked with two men who were with Glenn, at the Merrimac Club, before the dinner.

“They state that he came in with them, changed suits in his room and went directly to dinner. One remembers that he reached in his pocket for a cigarette, on the way downstairs.

“That means that this box of cigarettes—the one that is marked, 'Tuxedo' —was in Glenn's pocket when he put on the suit.

“Glenn was poisoned, by a poison that worked powerfully and swiftly, once it started to act.

“Suppose that the box of cigarettes was planted there. One cigarette, only, dipped in poison, and that cigarette replaced somewhere on the bottom row.

“Glenn, I understand, smoked not more than ten cigarettes in the course of an evening. The taxi driver seems to remember Glenn lighting a cigarette in the cab.

“Maybe he lit more than one. At any rate, he picked the poisoned one. He smoked it, tossed the butt from the window; and then the stuff acted.

“He was dead before he reached his apartment.”

BISCAYNE was on his feet.

“Jove!” he exclaimed. “I think you've struck it, Cardona! That's piecing it together. We looked for poison in those cigarettes, and there wasn't any!

“A cigarette butt—lying on a New York street! Who could discover that? Excellent, Cardona, excellent!”

Then the professor became less enthusiastic. “It will be an impossible job to trace it, Cardona!”

“Professor,” said the detective, “we're up against some crook who has a big brain.

“I've picked up three clues that I think are good. You've put the O.K. on two of them. But they are just straws—that's all.

“Now, I'll tell you where we're going to get the real evidence.”

“Where?”

“Back at first base. In Silas Harshaw's apartment. That's where the answer is. We'll find it”—Cardona was paraphrasing *The Shadow*— “we'll find it if we search.

“Look for the trail at the inventor's apartment. That's why I wanted this talk to-day. We've got to go through Harshaw's with a fine-tooth comb.”

“I think so,” said Biscayne. “I begin to see your logic.

“Harshaw's servant has disappeared. A cracksman was killed in the place. Burglary seemed to be the motive. But—are we entirely sure?”

“We are not!” replied Cardona emphatically. “Maybe Homer Briggs was in the racket. Maybe some

evidence was left there.

“A man got away out of the place, but he didn't have much of a chance to take anything with him. I'm going through every nook in the joint; and I want you to be with me.”

“Excellent,” said Biscayne. “By the way, Cardona, what has developed in the search for Briggs?”

“There was a big gang fight two nights ago,” said Cardona. “A bunch of gorillas mixed; some were killed.

“There's one bird in the morgue I saw to-day. Looks something like Homer Briggs, according to the description of bellhops from the Redan Hotel.

“They're pretty sure about it, but that makes it all the worse. If Briggs is dead, he can't talk.

“As for this St. Louis bird—Max Parker, the yegg—he was a stranger in New York, and we can't seem to get a thing on him.”

“Coming back to Harshaw,” said Biscayne, “when do you propose to begin this search?”

“To-night,” replied Cardona promptly. “I want to go there with the idea of finding something. Take the study first.

“If we don't get results there, we'll go through the rest of the place. You've got to be with me, professor. You helped the first time.

“I'd like you to be with us, too, Doctor Fredericks. We're liable to uncover something that will give us a line on the old man. You knew him as well as anybody.”

“Probably,” said Fredericks. “I knew he was a very sick man. I had to tell him so, to make him realize how careful he must be. I shall be glad to be present.”

“Certainly,” added Biscayne enthusiastically. “Be with us by all means, doctor!

“You have aroused me, Cardona. I realize that we have been neglecting the real opportunity.”

“What time do you propose to begin?” asked Commissioner Weston, speaking to Cardona.

“Before ten o'clock,” said the detective. “We'll all be there if another death note is dropped in the mail chute. Remember—it's to-night!”

“I REMEMBER what you said yesterday,” remarked Commissioner Weston glumly. “You stated that you would frustrate another death, if one was scheduled to occur.”

“Things will be different to-night,” declared Cardona, with a confident air. “Death will not take place!”

“I hope not,” said the commissioner.

“Ten o'clock, then?” questioned Biscayne.

“Make it before that,” said Cardona. “I'll be at the hotel at eight. I'm anxious to get started.

“I'll wait a while for you, but there's no time to be lost.”

“Professor Biscayne and I shall be there immediately after dinner,” declared the commissioner.

Biscayne turned to his cousin, Wilhelm.

“Sorry you won't be with us, Arthur,” he said. “You might be interested in seeing Harshaw's place.

“You financed it a bit, you know, although the old man always wanted more money.”

“I have to be at home,” said Wilhelm. “But give me a ring if you uncover anything. This sounds interesting to me.”

“To-night, then,” announced Cardona, rising. “We're going back to first base. Right where the trouble started.

“I've got a hunch that we'll hit something big. One real break— and we'll win!”

“The old man knew a lot,” said Biscayne thoughtfully. “He had his secrets, and he retained them. I'm thinking now—recalling his queer talk of enemies.

“I agree with you, Cardona, that a good find will clear every cloud that has formed.

“Harshaw's enemies—and Harshaw's plans,” continued Biscayne, in a low voice. “In his head. I can hear the old man talking now. Did he ever speak that way to you, Fredericks?”

“Not often,” replied the physician. “Our discussions usually concerned his physical condition.

“But I believe that the proper suggestion might arouse some recollection in my mind. I shall be there this evening, professor.”

“Yes,” said Biscayne, “to-night is most important. We shall do our utmost to end this chain of murders.”

CHAPTER XVIII. THE HAND OF THE SHADOW

ARTHUR WILHELM lived on Long Island. His home was a pretentious mansion located not far from Flushing.

There was a driveway in back of the house. This vehicular entrance came in from a side road.

Late in the afternoon, a man came up the drive in a delivery truck. He took a package in the back gate. A servant signed for it. The package was addressed to Arthur Wilhelm.

The servant recognized the package. It bore the label of a large New York tobacco firm. It was a consignment of fresh cigars for the millionaire.

These boxes came in every week. This one had been delivered a day earlier than usual.

Wilhelm had a standing order with the tobacco shop, and the goods came by local express.

There was nothing significant in the early delivery of that package, but the package itself was important. No one, in all the household, was allowed to tamper with those packages.

The millionaire paid a high price for his imported cigars. He felt that this was his own special brand. He liked to see each package in its original wrapping.

So the servant entered Wilhelm's private room and left the package on the desk. That was in strict accordance with instructions.

It was known that Wilhelm had dismissed one servant who had let one box lie unnoticed for two days by

putting it in the hall, instead of placing it in the private room.

When the servant had gone, a tall, thin personage stalked through the room—a man clad in black. Only one man had that mysterious guise and carriage.

It was The Shadow!

Although there was light here, no outside observer could have seen the figure that had entered. The square box lay upon Wilhelm's mahogany desk.

The Shadow lifted it and examined it with utmost care.

Then supple hands were at work. Delicately, carefully, the wrapping of the package was removed. A stamped cigar box was disclosed.

Between the side and the top of the box, The Shadow inserted a slender piece of steel and probed within.

He stopped his work, and placed the box aside while he carefully removed his black gloves.

The sensitive fingers, white in the gloom, seemed to feel and understand the motion of the flat steel within the box as the probing was resumed.

One might have said that the steel was a projection of the hand that plied it—a living thing, with nerves of its own.

For, while The Shadow worked, he paused and searched alternately. It was a long, painstaking labor. In the other rooms of the house, twilight came; lights were switched on. Still, The Shadow took his time.

At last, the delicate task was accomplished. Slowly twisting the steel, The Shadow's hand wedged it into a crevice that he had detected.

He held it there carefully, while the other hand, using a second implement, pried open the lid of the box.

AS the lid came up, there was a click. The top of the box swung open to show a boltlike bit of metal that had been actuated by a spring.

This controlled a little hammer, which had fallen with the shock. But the hammer never reached its mark.

Below it was the piece of steel that The Shadow had inserted. This, alone, had stopped the descending hammer.

With right hand steady, The Shadow reached forward with his left and pinched the little hammer. The bit of steel was removed.

The gripping fingers, firm as steel itself, let the hammer descend slowly. The motion was imperceptible.

There was no striking force when the hammer had completed its descent.

The hand drew away, but remained motionless above the box.

Even in the gathered darkness, the fire opal glowed mysteriously. Its dull-red rays were like the reflection of the sun that had set.

The lid of the box went down. The Shadow replaced his gloves.

His black-clad fingers wrapped the cigar box within its original paper, so perfectly that there was no change in its appearance. It rested on the table exactly as it had been before.

A single light shone in the living room when The Shadow glided through the door from the small private room.

The black-clad man stopped short and pressed his body against the wall.

By the side of a large fireplace, he became a thing without motion - another of the long, uncertain shades that lay upon the floor and walls and ceiling of that gloomy room.

ARTHUR WILHELM was at the telephone. He had just came from the city.

His back was turned toward the spot where The Shadow stood. He was speaking to Professor Roger Biscayne.

"All right, Roger," Wilhelm said. "I'll dig up those agreements that Harshaw signed. Funny we didn't think of them while I was at the commissioner's office.

"Sure, I know where they are... No trouble at all. They're in my desk. You'll want them to-night?

"Oh, I see. Call you at the Redan Hotel, at ten o'clock."

There was a pause; then Wilhelm continued in response to some statement that had come over the wire.

"You mean the little chess set that Harshaw gave me for a present, when he was tickled because I said I'd help him out... The little board, with the chessmen?

"I don't know what became of that thing... No—I don't know anything about the crazy game. I had to take it to make the old fellow feel good.

"That's right... You're right, I remember now... I put it in the closet of my room... You think it might be important?

"I'll take a look for it right now. If it's there, I'll find it right off... All right, hold the line."

Wilhelm laid the phone aside. He called, and a servant appeared.

"Hang on to this phone," ordered Wilhelm, "until you hear me talking upstairs."

With that, Wilhelm ascended to the second floor. The servant stood by for a few minutes, then hung up. Evidently Wilhelm had found the object that he sought.

The servant was gone. As soon as the room was empty, The Shadow glided toward a wide window.

He raised the sash and slipped out into the darkness. He became a phantom shape, amid the long patches of blackness that spread across the lawn.

His work had been accomplished. He was bound on some new mission.

ARTHUR WILHELM was dining alone that evening. He liked to dine alone, in solitary state.

He ate slowly and thoughtfully. His mind was considering the strange death of Silas Harshaw.

Wilhelm had seen the old man only a few times. Twice, Silas Harshaw had been in this house. Roger Biscayne had conducted most of the negotiations that pertained to Harshaw's work.

Biscayne had known how to handle the eccentric old inventor. Good fellow, Cousin Roger, thought Wilhelm.

It was well after eight o'clock when Arthur Wilhelm arose from his chair and strolled into the living room. He had dined heavily.

He sat down in the gloomy room and rested. At night, he became drowsy and lethargic. Then he bethought himself of the papers that Roger Biscayne wanted.

He walked to the little private room and turned on the light. He sat at the desk and unlocked a lower drawer. He rummaged there for several minutes.

At last, Wilhelm discovered that which he wanted. It was a folder that contained the agreements he had made with Silas Harshaw.

Dully, Wilhelm read over the papers. He could not see how they would be of any value, for they were not at all specific in their statements, so far as any definite invention was concerned.

They applied to all Silas Harshaw's labors. They were virtually an option that had expired with Harshaw's death.

Arthur Wilhelm had brought the small chess set with him. He laid it on the desk with the papers. The wrapped box from the tobacconist was in plain view.

Wilhelm's eyes glowed in anticipation. Fresh cigars had arrived. One would be enjoyable right now.

He picked up the box and undid the paper wrapping. He held the uncovered cigar box between his hands, admiring it with the eye of a connoisseur.

Setting the box on the desk, Wilhelm, as was his custom, removed a knife from his vest pocket. Opening the blade, he carefully pried the lid of the cigar box.

Both hands lifted the top. Wilhelm was staring toward the box, a glowing smile upon his countenance. The smile vanished. Wild concern replaced it.

Instead of the cigars that he had expected, the box contained a round-shaped metal object.

Its purpose dawned on Arthur Wilhelm. The object was a bomb! The apparatus on the top was a detonator! This box had been sent to blow him into eternity.

Somehow—almost miraculously—the hammer had fallen, or had not been set.

The raising of the lid should have caused the explosion. It had failed because the spring had already acted!

Death had been planned to-night. Arthur Wilhelm was to have been the victim. This time, death had failed to strike.

The hand of The Shadow had intervened!

CHAPTER XIX. THE WORD OF THE SHADOW

HALF PAST NINE at Silas Harshaw's apartment. Joe Cardona was pacing the floor of the study, nervously puffing a cigarette. Weston and Biscayne had not arrived.

Doctor Fredericks was here, reading a newspaper in the outer room. Cardona was anxious to begin operations, but he had thought it best to bide his time until the others arrived.

Detective Sergeant Mayhew entered. Cardona knew what he wanted. The thought worried the star detective.

Mayhew was here to state that the men were at their posts in the hotel, again watching the mail chute. Another letter was due to-night!

That letter would bring an announcement of death. Its arrival would be a crucial test for Joe Cardona.

He had stated that the killings had been ended. He had given no proof to support his statement.

The proof was one that Cardona dared not reveal. His proof was— the word of The Shadow!

Why did Cardona trust that strange, mysterious voice that had spoken over the telephone from nowhere?

The detective's only answer was that he had heard the voice in the past; and its words had always proven true.

"I'm going down to the lobby," said Mayhew. "We're not going to miss out to-night. That chute has a glass front. Every time a letter drops, it will be reported.

"Before, I had the boys looking for people. To-night, they're watching for letters, too. There's a post-office man down there, ready to open the box.

"Good!" said Cardona. "I'll come down with you. I want to meet the commissioner when he comes in."

Doctor Fredericks joined the two detectives as they went to the elevator. The three descended to the ground floor.

Mayhew instructed the operator not to go above the ninth story. While Cardona waited in the lobby, Mayhew went up the stairs.

A few minutes later, Commissioner Weston entered the hotel with Professor Biscayne.

The two men joined Cardona. The detective explained why he was waiting. It was nearing ten o'clock, the time when the mail would be collected.

Cardona watched the mail box while he talked with Roger Biscayne. The professor stated that he expected certain documents that might throw some light on the death of Silas Harshaw.

He agreed with Cardona, however, that the search of the apartment was the most important step.

"Let's go up," suggested the detective, with a gesture of impatience.

He turned toward the elevator. At that moment, the clerk at the desk announced a phone call for Professor Arthur Biscayne.

"Who is it?" asked Biscayne.

"The name sounded like Williams," replied the clerk.

Biscayne took the telephone. His voice, usually calm, became excited.

“Arthur!” he exclaimed. “What! On your desk! It couldn’t—“

His voice broke off. His face was pale. Biscayne turned toward Cardona and motioned with the telephone.

Before he could speak to the detective, the professor was listening intently, and he was anxiously resuming conversation.

“That’s right... The local police... Yes, yes... Come in here. Have them bring it... Everything. Wrappings and all.

“What’s that? A cigar box? Like one you get every week... Don’t delay... Get here at once!”

The phone dropped from Biscayne’s hands. The startled man seized Cardona by the shoulders.

“A bomb!” he cried. “A bomb, on Arthur Wilhelm’s desk! Set to kill him! Wrapped in a cigar box. He opened the lid—the detonator must have failed.

“Wilhelm! I can’t believe it—he was to die to-night!”

Cardona was bewildered. He was trying to piece the riddle.

It seemed incredible that Arthur Wilhelm could have been the fifth man— Wilhelm, with whom they had chatted in the commissioner’s office. Yet with perplexity came remembrance.

The word of The Shadow! Death would not strike to-night!

A call echoed from the stairway. It was answered by another cry. Mayhew rushed down from the mezzanine. He pointed wildly toward the mail box.

“A letter!” he exclaimed. “They saw it flashing by; but no one saw it dropped into the chute. They called all the way down from the ninth floor.

“It must have been dropped at the tenth. The men are going up to see.”

The man from the post office was unlocking the mail box. Cardona was trying to regain his composure. He heard Biscayne talking excitedly to Weston and Fredericks.

He was telling them of the attempt on Arthur Wilhelm’s life. With such startling news announced, the three had no thought of the letter.

But Cardona was thinking of it. With Mayhew at his side, he was crowding toward the mail box.

THE man at the box brought out a letter. Its address was identical with those that had been received before. It was typed with capital letters.

Cardona seized the envelope. He ripped it open and pulled out the paper. He spread the sheet with shaking hands.

It bore a typed announcement, but Cardona’s eyes were unseeing so far as the typewritten words were concerned.

Across the center of the sheet, written in well-formed characters of bright-blue ink, were these words:

Annulled. By The Shadow.

“There's writing on it,” exclaimed Mayhew, peering at the letter from Cardona's elbow. “What does it say?”

Eagerly, Cardona pressed Mayhew aside. He dashed up to Commissioner Weston and thrust the paper into his hands.

“Look at this!” gasped the detective. “See what it says!”

Weston was reading, with Biscayne and Fredericks moving close. He read aloud: “In memory of—“

“I don't mean the typing!” exclaimed Cardona. “I mean the writing!”

“The writing?” questioned Weston, in perplexity. “What writing do you mean?”

“Across the message”—Cardona was gripping the paper—“right in the center—“

The detective's words froze on his lips. His voice became an inarticulate stammer.

There was nothing upon the paper now except the typing! The written words had vanished!

A disappearing ink; that was the only explanation. Some quick-acting chemical agent that faded almost instantly the moment that it encountered air.

But to Joe Cardona, it seemed miraculous. It was as though The Shadow had spoken to him alone; then an invisible hand had wiped away the words, so that no doubting eyes could see them.

Cardona's face was worried. He thought he would have to explain his excited statement. That would make him look ridiculous, particularly so in the eyes of Commissioner Weston.

How could he explain? To say that he had seen the name of The Shadow written there, would incur the commissioner's rage. It would prove beyond doubt —so far as Weston was concerned—that Cardona's mind was shaky.

Mayhew, alone, had glimpsed the writing, but had not read it.

By good fortune, Cardona was saved from his dilemma. It was Biscayne who rescued him, without knowing it.

The professor was pointing to the typed lines. His finger rested upon the inevitable initials.

This message read:

IN MEMORY OF

A. W.

WHO DIED

LAST NIGHT

THE FIFTH—AND LAST

“A. W.,” said Biscayne soberly, “means Arthur Wilhelm. He was to be the last victim. He has been saved—saved from a horrible death— saved by luck alone!”

Commissioner Weston nodded. The reign of terror had ended. This was to be the final crime. Unlike the

others, it had failed.

Joe Cardona said nothing. His statement of yesterday was vindicated. The hand of death had failed to strike tonight. Luck or no luck, he had been right.

But he knew that it was not luck that had saved Arthur Wilhelm. Some one had frustrated the scheme of the perpetrator of these murders.

That some one was The Shadow. The mysterious, unknown man of the night had been true to his word.

His eyes half closed in thought, Cardona saw a blank before him. Upon that blank were inscribed the words that had disappeared—words that were gone forever now. Words that Cardona would never forget.

Annulled. By The Shadow.

The Shadow had proven mightier than the hand of unseen death!

CHAPTER XX. THE SHOT THAT TOLD

THE tide had turned. In the brief space of a few thrill-packed minutes, Joe Cardona and his fellow investigators had reached solid ground.

The news from Arthur Wilhelm's home told that death had failed. The intercepted note announced that the frustrated killing was to be the last.

The note, itself, had been mailed from the tenth floor of the hotel.

Cardona knew that The Shadow was right. The trail led back to Harshaw's. But it led there in more ways than one.

Wilhelm had described the death package and its delivery. By the time the millionaire, pale-faced and excited, had arrived at the Redan Hotel, the police had trailed the package to its source.

The menacing bomb had lain in the express company's office for nearly two weeks! It had been collected, with a note of instruction that it should be held until to-day.

The bomb, with its charge removed, had been brought to the Redan Hotel. The note was there also—a sheet of paper typed with capital letters.

According to the evidence at hand, that package had been taken up originally from this very hotel!

The clerk at the Redan remembered, now, that Homer Briggs had brought a package down from Silas Harshaw's apartment, and had left it at the desk.

The old man had mentioned the package later. Unless a substitution had been made, the source of that mysterious bomb was Silas Harshaw himself!

Up in the old inventor's apartment, Detective Joe Cardona was summarizing the matter.

With him were Commissioner Weston, Professor Biscayne, Doctor Fredericks, and Arthur Wilhelm. Detective Sergeant Mayhew was on duty outside the apartment.

"It looks foxy to me," growled Cardona. "Briggs was mixed in it; but it's so dumb it looks foxy.

"All the deaths before this were cleverly hidden. This one— straight to the source."

“Don't forget,” declared Biscayne, “that if the bomb had exploded, this would not have been so easily traced.

“If there had been a mysterious explosion at Arthur's house, the chief evidence—the bomb itself—would have been destroyed.”

“The trail would have led here, anyhow,” persisted Cardona. “Packages would have been the first thing to ferret out and trace down. That bomb was charged heavily enough to blow up only one room— not an entire house.”

There was a long, deliberate pause. Roger Biscayne was thoughtful, considering deeply.

His eyes began to glow. His hand was moving up and down. He was preparing to speak. But Cardona anticipated him.

“We've got to hunt here,” said the ace detective. “This place is phony. That letter that was mailed here tonight—“

“Wait!” interrupted Biscayne. “It's clearing in my mind! The final death— to-night. Why should the murderer worry about covering it up?

“His work was ended, by his own admission. The fifth death, and the last!”

“That doesn't keep us from getting him,” responded Cardona. “A clever man would leave no clew.”

“These deaths were planned ahead,” declared Biscayne seriously. “This one was framed two weeks ago.

“The others—so far as we can ascertain—were prearranged. The murderer has had time to be far away—“

“Not far enough,” said Cardona grimly. “We're going to get that guy, wherever he is! He won't get away from us now. Not unless he's dead, himself!”

The chance remark kindled a new burst of thought in Biscayne's mind.

“Dead!” he echoed. “Dead! Suppose the murderer is dead! Cardona, you have struck it!”

“The solution?”

“Yes!” Biscayne was speaking emphatically, now. “Think of these crimes as one continued chain. Carefully planned, neatly executed— but inconsistent in one important point.”

“The notes,” remarked Cardona.

“Right!” resumed Biscayne. “Those death announcements, mysterious though they have been, were inconsistent. They could betray the man who sent them— unless he feared no betrayal.”

“I get you!” exclaimed Cardona. “If Homer Briggs thought he was going to be bumped off—“

“But I am not thinking of Homer Briggs,” interrupted Biscayne. “I am thinking of Silas Harshaw!”

“Silas Harshaw!” exclaimed Cardona.

All eyes were upon Professor Biscayne. His startling announcement was the most extraordinary idea that

had yet been introduced into this case.

"I believe, now," said Biscayne solemnly, "that Harshaw knew that he surely was going to die. He was the first to go.

"If any of the five marked men had known the truth, Harshaw would certainly have been the one."

"HARSHAW was facing death," declared Doctor Fredericks. "I told him so— when he asked me. He said he didn't care. He had lived long.

"He talked about his inventions at the time; said his great work was completed. I recall some such talk—but the old man was always vague—"

"Facing death," remarked Biscayne. "Death from failing health. It is always a terror to an active man, no matter how old he may be. I'm fathoming Harshaw's thoughts, now.

"Perhaps he chose a quicker, surer death. He may have faced death that night, in this apartment. Faced it—knowing that his work was done—"

"He faced the window," interposed Cardona, in a matter-of-fact tone. "He faced a shot through that grating."

"Are you sure?" questioned Biscayne. "Come! Let us view that scene again. Let us reconstruct Harshaw's death!"

The professor led the way to the study. He and Cardona stood beside the window. The detective, going back to his theory of death from without, crouched in front of the window sill.

He reached out and clutched the radiator. He drew himself upward.

Biscayne took Cardona's place when the detective stepped aside. But as Biscayne duplicated Cardona's action, he stopped suddenly and pressed his hand against the radiator.

"This radiator is cold," he said. "That is strange. The one in the other room was sizzling."

He turned the knob of the radiator and waited a few moments. There was no sound of entering steam.

Cardona stooped to the floor, and noted the radiator pipe. His examination was a close one.

"This isn't connected," the detective said. "It must have been out of order for a long time.

"There you are"—he pointed to the other end of the room— "there's the gas heater the old man used. That's why he had it—a bum radiator in this room."

"Harshaw always kept the piece hot," said Biscayne reminiscently. "Why should he have a faulty radiator here? The hotel would certainly have repaired it.

"He did not dislike steam heat. He used it in the other rooms—"

Biscayne broke off to watch Cardona. The detective was tapping along the radiator, examining it with his customary thorough method.

He had come to the center. There, between two sections, he was making a close inspection.

"Looks like a crack," he said. "But it's too straight to be a crack. Look at this thin line, professor. Does it

mean anything?"

Biscayne saw what Cardona had indicated. The detective had his powerful flashlight directly against the center of the radiator.

The glare revealed a thin mark no wider than a penciled line.

"Something's phony," growled Cardona, trying to budge the sections of the radiator. "It's a break all right, but something's holding it. Give me a minute. I'll figure it."

Biscayne looked at the handle of the radiator. He turned it one direction, then the other. He pulled upward, but the knob did not move.

Then he twisted and pulled upward at the same time. The knob clicked slightly, and came up a full three inches.

"That got it!" cried Cardona. "The radiator splits! It's coming apart!"

THE two sections of the radiator were opening toward the detective like the front of a cupboard. But before the detective had spread the segments more than a few inches, Biscayne sprang forward and thrust him aside.

Cardona, crouching, lost his balance, and tumbled ignominiously on the floor.

The sections of the radiator sprang back into place. The detective glared angrily.

Biscayne, anxious-eyed, was extending his hand to help Cardona to his feet.

The others, amazed, were awaiting the explanation of his action. It came.

"Sorry, old man," said the professor. "It just occurred to me that you were taking a mighty grave chance.

"Harshaw was by this radiator; maybe he was opening it the way you were doing right now. And Harshaw was killed—"

The thought dawned on Cardona.

"Thanks!" he exclaimed. "Harshaw wasn't the only one, professor. That other fellow—the yegg—Max Parker was—"

Nodding, Biscayne urged the other men to back away from the radiator.

He motioned to Cardona. He pointed to one side of the radiator.

"You take that half," he suggested. "I'll take the other. Pull together— and stay away from the front!

Cardona nodded. Together, he and Biscayne reached forward, one from each side of the radiator. They slowly drew the separate sections.

Cardona's face was tense. Keen anticipation showed on Biscayne's brow. Slowly, the radiator swung apart on hinges at the end.

Simultaneously, Cardona, peering toward the wall, could see a little panel moving upward. This sliding device had been concealed behind the radiator.

“Easy,” urged Biscayne. “Don’t let these sections spring back!”

The panel reached the top of the opening, as the radiator portions reached a half-opened angle. The moving slide clicked.

There was a sharp report from a pistol. A puff of smoke whisked from the space behind the raised panel.

The sound was startling. Cardona gripped his half of the radiator. Biscayne did the same.

The watching men stared. But as the smoke thinned, all eyes turned instinctively to the other end of the room.

For their ears had heard an answering sound—a sharp crack that had followed the report of the gun. It had come with the pistol shot, sharper even than the explosion from behind the radiator.

The clay bust of Silas Harshaw had been shattered by the bullet from the hidden weapon. Its broken pieces were upon the footstool and upon the floor.

Amid the chunks of hardened clay lay two compactly folded wads of paper.

Biscayne called to Wilhelm to hold the one side of the radiator. Springing across the room, the professor seized the wads of paper.

He rapidly unfolded one and thrust it in the hands of Commissioner Weston.

“It looks like plans,” said the commissioner. “Diagrams, traced on thin paper—“

Biscayne was opening the other wad. His spectacled eyes peered eagerly. He showed it to Weston.

The paper bore a written statement that was headed by a list of names.

“Harshaw’s enemies,” declared Biscayne soberly. “The plans—the men he feared—they were in his head. That is what he said.”

Dramatically, Biscayne pointed to the broken chunks of clay that had composed the modeled head of Silas Harshaw.

The professor softly repeated the statement that he had made before.

“In Silas Harshaw’s head!”

CHAPTER XXI. THE HIDDEN TRAP

PROFESSOR ROGER BISCAINE was reading the list of names from the sheet of paper that had been discovered.

All were listening, including Cardona, although the detective appeared to be otherwise engaged.

Wedge between the sections of the radiator, he was examining the space that had been hewn in the wall.

“Here are the names,” declared Biscayne. “Louis Glenn. Thomas Sutton. James Throckmorton. Arthur Wilhelm.

“Listen to this statement, written beneath:

"I, Silas Harshaw, sound of mind, do declare and proclaim these men as my enemies.

"Louis Glenn urged me to spend my little pittance in stock that proved worthless. Thomas Sutton refused to listen to me, when I told him of my great invention.

"James Throckmorton questioned me suspiciously, and demanded that I tell him all my plans. Arthur Wilhelm furnished me with funds, but did so grudgingly, expecting much from little.

"I believe that any one of these men would steal my brains if they could do so.

"Hence if any one of them should fall into the snare that I have laid, his death will be on his own head.

"Let them beware! Alive or dead, I can thwart their plans of theft!"

"The man was crazy!" exclaimed Wilhelm. "I would have given him all the money he wanted, if he had shown some results. But I wasn't going to throw my cash away.

"To think of it! He tried to kill me!" Joe Cardona was calling from the spot beside the window.

Biscayne placed the paper in the hands of the commissioner, and hurried to the other end of the room. The others followed.

Peering into the open space, they saw the muzzle of a revolver. The weapon had been mounted at the back of the space, set between braces.

It was connected to the sliding panel by a neatly fashioned contrivance that was to set to press the trigger of the gun every time the slide came up.

Cardona removed the gun and brought it out. As he stepped away, he released pressure on the sides of the radiator, and they swung back to their original position.

A sharp click told that the sections had automatically locked.

"Five chambers," remarked Cardona. "Wonder where the old guy dug up this rod. A .32. Hm-m-m. Four cartridges used.

"One for Harshaw. One for Max Parker. One just now. Wonder when the other was fired."

"That hardly matters," said Biscayne. "Let's look in that compartment again."

He pulled the knob of the radiator. This time, Cardona opened the metal sections with impunity, for the menace had been removed.

He discovered a small stack of letters and some papers. Also another object, which Cardona seized with a sharp exclamation.

It was a cigarette box, bearing the name, "Istanbul."

"The brand that Glenn smoked!" proclaimed Cardona.

Biscayne was looking at the envelopes. There were only three.

One was addressed to Louis Glenn; the second to James Throckmorton; the third to Arthur Wilhelm. They were written in a scrawl—a scrawl which Cardona recognized as the writing on the envelope which had been found by Thomas Sutton's wastebasket.

That envelope had borne the instructions to seek the gold-headed cane in the fatal closet beneath the stairs.

The envelopes were not sealed. Biscayne read the letter addressed to Louis Glenn. It was full of vague remarks Biscayne quoted in part:

“We have not met for years... You have forgotten me... You made me lose my money, but I shall be wealthy, now! My brain will bring me millions...”

Laying the letter aside, Biscayne took the one addressed to James Throckmorton. He read these statements:

“You wanted to know about my inventions... They are completed now... The one will bring me millions. You will know all about it then...”

The letter to Wilhelm carried a different tone as Biscayne read it:

“My task is done... My model lies complete, where it is safe... It is at my home...”

“Here's another letter,” remarked Cardona, going through the odd papers which he had found. “It's to Thomas Sutton, but it has no envelope. Listen. “It says that Sutton had no faith; that he will hear great things from the man whom he had ignored.”

Biscayne nodded as he received the letter and quoted aloud:

“My visits to you were in vain. You failed me. All have been against me... I have prevailed... You missed your greatest opportunity...”

Cardona was pondering. He smacked his fist against his other palm and looked up at his companions.

“These letters were going to be mailed,” he declared. “The old man must have changed his mind. He sent Thomas Sutton a typed letter, but used the envelope that he had prepared for this one.

“All those death notes must have come from Harshaw—even the one about himself! But who sent them?”

“Harshaw sent them,” declared Biscayne suddenly. “Sent them from this apartment. He must have intended to send these letters, too— probably while he was away.

“When did you advise him to take a trip, Doctor Fredericks?”

“Often,” said the physician. “He never wanted to go. He said he was afraid to leave. When I urged him, he said that he would make plans so he could go.

“When I finally told him he must go away, he agreed to leave at once—“

“That's it!” exclaimed Biscayne. “He had these letters ready. He wanted them to be delivered while he was away, so that his enemies would think he was at home.

“Then, with death staring at him, he turned to another scheme more insidious than idle threats or inferences.

“He arranged the killings—and sent the death notes!”

“But how?” came Cardona's question.

"One came from this floor to-night," said Biscayne thoughtfully. "There was no one here to mail it.

"Look at the side wall of this room. The mail chute must be on the other side—"

Cardona was tapping at the wall. Eagerly he searched, and the others joined with him. Keen though these men were, the secret mocked them.

"We'll smash that mail chute!" exclaimed Cardona grimly. "Wait until I get Mayhew. We'll find it from the other side—"

"Here!" The cry came from Biscayne. He was rapping at the baseboard of the wall. "This may be it!"

Cardona was with the professor. Together, they pried effectively. The small portion of flooring yielded. The baseboard came open.

The little cache was disclosed. The clockwork was still ticking, but now there was no letter projecting from the clips.

Fumbling with the mechanical box, Cardona pried off the lid.

The interior of the box showed a set of thin sections, more than twelve in number, each slightly larger than an envelope.

"One every forty-eight hours," said the detective to Biscayne. "That's how it was set—"

"No," said Biscayne, "it must have been gauged for twenty-four. That's why the Sutton letter came in between the death notes.

"By leaving empty spaces, the deliveries could be interrupted on days they were not needed."

"Right," declared Cardona.

Biscayne began to pace up and down the room. His mind was at work.

"If I had known Harshaw well," said the professor, "I might have divined some of this beforehand.

"Three men have died because of his fiendish plotting. We can be thankful only that the fourth was saved—my cousin, Arthur Wilhelm.

"Silas Harshaw was unquestionably eccentric," Biscayne continued. "He imagined enmities, and saw schemes where there were none.

"He wanted to protect that hiding place behind the radiator—that is evident. So he not only made it difficult to find. He placed the apparatus there, to thwart any man who might come."

"What about Max Parker?" queried Cardona.

"A cross-purpose," responded Biscayne. "There might be a connection between Max Parker and Homer Briggs. It seems evident that Parker must have blundered in upon the trap that was laid for others."

"If he was an enemy, the old man would have mentioned it," commented Cardona. "How do you figure that Harshaw worked the big killings? He must have bumped himself off to start."

"Undoubtedly," declared Biscayne. "Knowing that he had not long to live, he used his own trap for

suicide. But he must have wanted the others to die, too.

“Take Glenn, for instance. The old man was a chemist. Those cigarettes which—“

“I was right,” interrupted Cardona. “Harshaw must have got a couple of packs—we found one in the strong box, here. Then he must have planted it in Glenn's Tuxedo; that box that Glenn had with him.

“One poisoned cigarette in the box! That's what did it. I had it right. But how did Harshaw put it there the box—in the Tuxedo—“

“That we may never learn,” replied Biscayne. “We have the motive. We have evidence. That is sufficient for the present.

“Let us consider Thomas Sutton. The old man went to his house, according to the letter. He must have heard Sutton speak about the cane.

“He must have noticed that closet door. He was a shrewd man, was Silas Harshaw.”

“We've linked him there,” agreed Cardona. “We've already tied him up with Throckmorton. Do you think he fixed the hose on the gas lamp?”

“In all probability,” said Biscayne. “Of course, a man was discovered in Throckmorton's home. There are details that are still bewildering.

“The attempt upon my cousin Arthur's life to-night, however, settles the case against Silas Harshaw.

“That bomb is crudely fashioned. Perhaps it was made in the old man's workshop, right here.”

“We'll look!” cried Cardona.

“Not yet,” said Biscayne. “We have work to do first. Perhaps there is more to find.”

“The old man's model?”

“Yes.”

Cardona looked around the room. He spied the closed radiator. He turned quickly to Biscayne.

“That shooter behind the radiator!” he exclaimed. “It wasn't there just to keep people from finding a few papers and envelopes. That's where the model is, I'll bet!”

Eagerly, the detective pulled the knob of the radiator and opened the sections.

He realized again the efficiency of this trap. A man shot here would topple backward—falling, he would lose hold, and the radiator would close!

It had happened with Silas Harshaw. It had happened with Max Parker. But it could not happen now, since the clamped revolver had been removed.

Peering in the light of his torch, Cardona spied the flat bottom of the shallow hole inside the wall.

His fingers pried, and were rewarded. The bottom of the strong box swung upward. The glow of the flashlight spotted a square wooden box.

Dropping his light, Cardona drew the box out and set it in the middle of the floor. He lifted the lid.

Inside was a metal device, more than one foot square. It seemed strangely light as Cardona removed it from the box.

It had dials and knobs, with little posts for the attachment of wires.

It was the model of the remote-control machine—the invention of which had been the life work of Silas Harshaw!

CHAPTER XXII. THE SHADOW INTERVENES

PROFESSOR ROGER BISCAYNE took immediate charge. The discovery of the remote-control machine was of the greatest moment now.

The details of the killings could be worked out later. For Silas Harshaw, dead, could no longer be a menace:

His work was ended; his fiendish schemes had been disclosed, made harmless forever.

The little model, with its complex contrivances, was a perplexing subject.

Biscayne had the paper that showed the plan, but as he compared the diagrams with the metal box, he saw discrepancies.

His knowledge of Silas Harshaw's mechanical methods might avail, however. Roger Biscayne was the only man who could solve the intricacies of the device.

After several minutes of studying the device and the plans, Biscayne pressed various knobs with no result. The machine was not hooked up; but he seemed to be hoping for some action. None occurred.

Biscayne ended his experiments for the moment. He asked to see the papers that had been found within the hole behind the radiator.

Cardona produced them.

One sheet bore a short, written reference that said, "Model." Beneath it were these words:

Keys to arrangements are in drawer E.

"Drawer E," said Biscayne thoughtfully. "Where is that? Ah! I recall! There are some drawers in the workshop. They are designated by letters. Will you find it, Cardona?"

"Sure," said the detective.

He was starting for the door when Biscayne called him.

"Wait," said the professor. "I'll go with you. There may be something else, of importance in there. You can keep looking after I come back to continue with my experiments."

As he reached the door, Biscayne turned thoughtfully and pointed to the model on the floor.

"That plug is evidently arranged for an electrical connection," he remarked. "If you screw it into the outlet by the table, it will save time."

Commissioner Weston picked up the model and carried it carefully toward the wall.

Biscayne left the room, accompanied by Cardona. The door closed behind them.

Weston removed the plug of the table-lamp wire from the plug hole in the baseboard.

Fredericks was ready with the plug that extended, on the end of a short wire, from the metal model. Wilhelm was looking on.

The men did not notice what was happening behind them.

Scarcely had Biscayne and Cardona gone, before the door of Silas Harshaw's bedroom had opened. Across the floor stalked a man clad in black—The Shadow!

As Fredericks finished screwing the plug into the baseboard, the three men watched the apparatus with interest. Nothing occurred, apparently. Then there was a click at the other side of the room.

The lights went out. The glare of a flashlight revealed the three men by the wall.

Staring into the bright illumination, they could see a hand in front—a hand that held a leveled automatic.

The light swung across the room. The startled men were afraid to move. The burning glare was upon them. The gun, threatening, seemed to force them backward.

“Move,” came a low, sinister voice. “Move back. Keep moving.”

With hands upraised, the three men backed away from the gun, forced to the door of the little bedroom. They did not know who this mysterious intruder menacing them could be. Only the hand of The Shadow was visible in that light.

The three were forced into the little room. The light clicked out; the door was drawn shut by an unseen hand. The key turned in the lock.

A soft laugh rippled through the study, where The Shadow was alone.

On came the lights of the room. Beside the door, The Shadow stood and watched the metal box that lay upon the floor beside the wall.

Deliberately, he opened the door to the outer room and stood there, waiting. There was no noise from the bedroom.

Weston and his companions were not yet bold enough to give the alarm.

The Shadow was expecting something. The innocent-looking object on the floor boded no evil; yet toward it, his gaze was focused.

But for his arrival and subsequent action, three other men would be watching here now—watching idly while they waited the return of Biscayne and Cardona.

The box clicked. Its top sprang apart. From its interior emerged a greenish shape that spread in all directions.

Swirling, sweeping, a vast cloud of deadly gas spread through the room!

The Shadow had expected this. He slipped into the outer room, closing the door behind him.

The spreading gas seemed to batter at the barrier, like a ghoulish, living creature thwarted of its prey.

No living person could have survived that killing vapor.

Three men had been doomed by this, the last of the insidious traps that had been made for murder.

They had been saved, by the intervention of The Shadow!

The window by the grating was open. The fumes thinned; then whirled in the direction of the opening. Sucked by the cool air outside, the deadly gas was gradually drawn from the room.

A stifling odor still persisted, but the menace of death had passed.

Commissioner Weston and his companions were pounding madly at the door of the little room.

They had smelled the pungent odor that had trickled from the study into the bedroom. They had sensed the cause, and had flung wide the windows to protect themselves.

With fresh air close by in emergency, they were trying to break down the barrier that restrained them.

No one heeded their cries.

Detective Cardona and Professor Biscayne were in the most distant part of the apartment. With two thick doors between, the shouts could not be heard.

They were not even audible to The Shadow, who stood in the outer room. He, too, was far away.

He was standing by the open door of the laboratory. Peering from the gloom, his keen eyes were studying the men who were searching there.

The eyes of The Shadow gleamed.

For the brain behind them knew!

CHAPTER XXIII. MURDER WILL OUT

JOE CARDONA had found the drawer marked E. From it, he was drawing papers that appeared to be what Professor Biscayne wanted.

Just as Cardona was about to call to Biscayne, his eyes noted an envelope that was among the papers in his hand.

A surprised look appeared in the detective's eyes as he saw the scrawled notation:

DETECTIVE CARDONA—IMPORTANT.

From where had this come? The room had been searched quite thoroughly, although nothing had been removed.

Until now, the papers in drawer E had not seemed to possess importance. They had been regarded merely as rough, unfinished diagrams. But this envelope had not been seen.

It must have been placed here since the death of Silas Harshaw!

The word “important” prompted Cardona to action. Without calling to Biscayne, he tore open the envelope.

It contained a folded sheet of paper. Opening this, Cardona viewed a series of neatly inscribed words, that declared short, startling statements.

This is what Cardona saw:

Request Professor Roger Biscayne to tell:

- (1) Why he has never stated that he knew everything that Silas Harshaw did.
- (2) Why he has not stated that he is a member of the Merrimac Club and had a key to Louis Glenn's room.
- (3) Why he arranged the letter that told Thomas Sutton to look in the closet under the stairs.
- (4) Why he risked the decision that asphyxiation was a sure death for James Throckmorton.
- (5) Why he has not mentioned that he is the sole legatee in Arthur Wilhelm's will.

Below was another series of closely formed tabulations:

Request Doctor George Fredericks to tell:

- (1) Why he claims to have warned Harshaw of a serious illness that did not exist.
- (2) Why he has said nothing about his knowledge of the deadly poisons that killed Louis Glenn.
- (3) What he did with the check he received from Thomas Sutton, in return for two professional visits.
- (4) What he did the night he was a guest of the Falcon Society, at James Throckmorton's home.
- (5) How much he expected to receive from Roger Biscayne in return for certain services.

These statements struck home as Cardona read them. The keen-eyed detective did not miss a single word.

His mind was now grasping the vital details of a vile plot—the schemings of two men who had laid their crimes upon the first man whom they conspired to murder!

Cardona looked at Biscayne, who was working at a spot in the far corner of the room. He looked at the list again.

Before his eyes, the writing was disappearing. A moment later, the paper was a blank! But those statements were still complete in Joe Cardona's mind!

The detective slipped his hand into his coat pocket and gripped the butt of a revolver.

At that moment, Biscayne yanked at the side of a bench and pulled open a concealed drawer. He drew forth a small, round object, that appeared to be a miniature bomb.

“Look at this!” he exclaimed, turning toward Cardona. “Just by a chance, I discovered it. A small edition of the bomb that was sent to Arthur Wilhelm.

“By the way, did you find papers in the drawer where you were looking?”

“Stand where you are,” said Cardona coldly.

The detective knew now that he was dealing with a murderer. He wanted to ask questions at once; to confound Biscayne before he joined his confederate, Fredericks, in the other room.

“What is the matter?” questioned Biscayne, in a surprised tone.

“There are some things I want to know,” asserted Cardona with strange, slow emphasis. “Just how well did you know Silas Harshaw?”

“Only as an acquaintance—“

“Stop the bluff! I’ve got you, Biscayne. Got you with the goods!

“You were in back of this. All of it. I’m going to make you squeal, you rat! You killed Harshaw. You killed Glenn. You—“

Still holding the little bomb, Biscayne smiled and shrugged his shoulders. His eyes shone harmlessly.

Cardona paused, sensing that the man was about to speak.

“I guess you have trapped me, Cardona,” he said. “But why talk about it. There is enough for you in this.

“It is large game, Cardona—and it is finished now.”

BISCAYNE was calm as he resumed. There was no hurry in his speech, no worry in his tone. He seemed assured that he had nothing to fear.

“Silas Harshaw was virtually insane,” said Biscayne. “His invention was useless. I knew it. But I wanted to obtain money from my cousin, Arthur Wilhelm.”

Cardona, keenly alert, played a clever game. The detective possessed amazing intuition at times—and he displayed that faculty now.

He was showing every appearance of being ready to side with Roger Biscayne —if the proper terms were offered.

“While I was working that way,” said Biscayne, “everything turned the way I desired.

“Weston was appointed police commissioner and wanted me to work on special cases. Silas Harshaw, who told me all he knew, spoke of his enemies.

“I came here more often than I have stated. I helped the old man arrange that pistol device. But we never loaded it; because afterward, I thought of something better.

“At my suggestion, the old man prepared the clockwork to release letters down the mail chute. I helped him to sculpture his bust. He was like a child in my hands, Cardona.

“Harshaw thought he had four enemies. He wrote all that data himself, and prepared the letters that were not sent. All were genuine.

“Wilhelm, he believed, was an enemy, because of his reluctance to invest large sums.

“I wanted Wilhelm to die. I wanted his money. In order to kill one, I needed to kill five—Harshaw’s enemies and the old man himself. I required assistance. I found it, through Fredericks.

“I was here alone, the day before Harshaw was to go away—at the false advice of Fredericks. I prepared everything.

“I loaded the clockwork apparatus with death letters. I put bullets in the gun behind the radiator—the gun

which Harshaw had decided not to use.

“That was a clever idea, that radiator. I suggested it. Harshaw prepared it, working for himself, he thought. Actually, he was working for me.

“I knew that Harshaw, going on a trip, would put his own prepared letters in the chute. That meant that he had to open the radiator. He did so, after I had left. He died.”

Ending his statement of one death, Biscayne paused leisurely. Cardona seemed eager and attentive. The professor resumed his discourse, as though speaking in a classroom.

“I knew enough about Louis Glenn to plant those cigarettes in his pocket. I bought two packages of the same cigarettes months ago.

“One for Glenn's pocket. The other, for Harshaw's strong box. Fredericks poisoned the cigarette. Glenn died.

“Fredericks was useful with Thomas Sutton. Knowing that the old man changed physicians often, he called there, as though by a mistake. The ruse worked.

“Fredericks heard the old man talking about the gold-headed cane. The second time he was at the house, Fredericks noted the closet, while coming out alone.

“He opened the door, and instantly noted its peculiarity. It was a perfect trap. That was nicely prearranged. I cooperated with the special letter. Sutton died.”

BISCAYNE'S eyes were gleaming with malicious pleasure. For some reason, he was not concerned with time. Cardona was remembering all he heard. He wanted to hear more.

“We worked long in advance, Fredericks and I,” continued Biscayne. “Fredericks did well in the case of James Throckmorton.

“He went to a bird-society meeting at Throckmorton's home. One of his patients was a member of the Falcon Society. Throckmorton showed them the private upstairs study, and its gas lamp.

“He told them that he was not going to work there again, until the proofs of his book returned.

“Fredericks, the last to leave, did a neat, quick job with the hose. Throckmorton died.

“So we come to the last. The simplest of all. I left the box that contained the bomb in Harshaw's study. The typewritten note was with it.

“I told Harshaw—when I phoned him later—to see that the express company received it. He did so.

“Arthur Wilhelm should certainly have died. He was the only one who should have died. He was the only one who failed to die.”

There was a calm sureness in Biscayne's tone. It puzzled Cardona. He waited for the explanation.

“The trail led back here, Cardona,” said Biscayne, “because I wanted it to come back here—when the deaths were finished. I had my troubles.

“That intruder—Max Parker—was killed by the trap. How and why he came, I do not know, unless Homer Briggs prompted him.

“Homer once saw the old man working at the radiator. I thought that would be useful, later on. I did not realize that Homer might be plotting, too!

“The great misfortune was the fact that Arthur Wilhelm eluded death. So, to-night, I have rectified the error.

“I have sprung my most effective weapon—old Silas Harshaw's dummy model. That model is a fake, Cardona.

“Harshaw and I put it there to deceive his enemies. The presence of the model made it unnecessary to load the special revolver above it.

“That model has dealt death—to Arthur Wilhelm, whose death was necessary; to George Fredericks, whose death was desirable.

“I am worth millions, Cardona! I offer you the same share I offered Fredericks. Five hundred thousand dollars!”

The mention of the sum stopped Cardona. His thoughts had gone back to Silas Harshaw's study, where Biscayne had said death lurked.

Cardona, however, was too wise to risk a sudden rush in that direction. He listened once again, feigning eagerness.

“I brought you here so you would not die,” declared Biscayne. “I wanted a witness who could explain all about Silas Harshaw—as we had falsely realized him.

“You were the best witness, I thought, because I believed you ignorant. But when I discovered—just now—that you suspected, the only course was to tell you all.

“Work with me. If you do, half a million is yours.

“We will go to the other room. There we will find three men dead from poison gas. The victims—so we will declare—of Silas Harshaw's last fiendish scheme. I offer you wealth. Will you accept it?”

A sudden rage came over Joe Cardona. He repressed himself for the moment, and eyed Biscayne warily.

The professor detected the change. He slowly raised his hand—the hand that held the bomb.

“Wealth if you accept it,” declared Biscayne firmly. “But if you refuse— death!”

Cardona's response was sudden action. His hand began to come from his pocket.

His gun was on its way, ready to deal death to this fiend who so deserved it. But Joe Cardona was too late.

Roger Biscayne had a more effective weapon—the bomb that was in his hand. Before Cardona's gun was brought into action, Biscayne's arm swung forward.

The bomb was on its way, hurtling through the air—to wreck the far end of the room, where Joe Cardona was trapped!

But though Cardona failed—though his doom seemed already here— another person acted. As Biscayne's arm swung forward, a pistol shot cracked from the doorway.

The Shadow had fired.

Had he aimed for Biscayne, he could not have saved Cardona, for the assassin's arm had made its fling. But The Shadow's sterling aim was toward the object that Biscayne had hurled.

As the bomb left Biscayne's grasp, The Shadow's bullet shattered it!

A roar burst through the workshop. Tables, benches, cabinets—all were overturned. Bottles and glassware crashed everywhere. The place was shattered.

Joe Cardona, prone upon the floor, was half stunned by the terrific shock. But his end of the room had escaped the real force of the explosion.

The bomb had burst within three feet of the spot where Roger Biscayne had been standing!

Buried beneath the wreckage was Cardona's enemy. Dead, perhaps; injured, certainly.

Cardona clambered to his feet. He pushed aside the debris. He found a motionless form. He dragged Roger Biscayne from the smoke-filled room.

The door burst open from the study. In dashed Commissioner Weston, followed by Arthur Wilhelm and Doctor George Fredericks.

Cardona raised himself to see the face of Fredericks—the man whom Biscayne had named as his accomplice!

CHAPTER XXIV. THE LAST DEATH

To Doctor George Fredericks, the expression on Cardona's face meant much. He had seen the detective stooping over the form of Roger Biscayne. Had the dying man confessed?

The physician stooped beside the helpless body.

Weston and Wilhelm stood back, supposing that he was giving aid and attention. But Fredericks had a different purpose. Too well did he know the true nature of Roger Biscayne.

“Damn you!” he whispered. “You tried to double-cross me. To kill me, eh? What have you told? Answer me! What have you told?”

None but the dying man heard the words. To Roger Biscayne, they brought an evil satisfaction.

His mind could not grasp these strange events that had thwarted his efforts to kill by gas and by bomb. But his eyes glared glassily as he realized the dilemma that had confronted his accomplice.

“I—told—all—”

These were the words that came in slow gasps from the dying man's lips.

Fredericks gripped the other man's throat. Dying or not, he was enraged at the man who had double-crossed him.

Weston and Wilhelm thought the physician had gone mad. Cardona, alone, understood.

He seized Fredericks by the shoulders and jerked him from his helpless victim.

Cardona's lunge flung Fredericks half across the room. The stout man staggered and fell against the wall.

He seemed too helpless to return the attack. But in that, Cardona was mistaken.

Rising slowly, Fredericks suddenly jerked his hand upward. A stub-nosed revolver shone in his hands. He covered Joe Cardona. Weston and Wilhelm were also in line as targets.

“Got me, eh?” questioned Fredericks. “Think you’ve got me?”

He glowered as he sidled toward the door. His quick recovery had caught Cardona weaponless. The detective’s gun was in his pocket; he could not obtain it now.

Fredericks was at the door that led to the hallway. He opened it slightly, with his left hand, which was bent behind his back.

“So Biscayne double-crossed me, eh?” Fredericks snarled. “Double-crossed me. Wanted me to die with Wilhelm. Squealed to you, too, did he? You know too much—all three of you, now. So this is the end of you!”

Fredericks had his finger on the trigger. A shot resounded. Smoke appeared about the physician’s gun. But it was not from his revolver.

An automatic pistol had spoken. Thrust from behind, its muzzle had pressed against the physician’s arm.

The hand of The Shadow had delivered that shot. Through the opening of the door, the man in black had sent the bullet that thwarted the intended crime.

Fredericks staggered forward. His revolver fell from his helpless fingers.

Joe Cardona was firing, now, taking no chances, pumping bullets into the man who menaced three lives.

Fredericks lay dead upon the floor.

The Shadow was gone. No one in that room caught even a fleeting glimpse of his departing figure.

FOOTSTEPS were coming up the stairs. Mayhew, in the lobby, had heard the explosion. He had not waited for the elevator, which was somewhere in the shaft.

He had hurried upward with all possible speed. But events had been moving swiftly in the apartment of death.

From the moment of the explosion until now, action had come and gone in split seconds.

Cardona was explaining all to Commissioner Ralph Weston and Arthur Wilhelm. They were listening with bated breath. Roger Biscayne, archfiend, was dead. So was his accomplice, George Fredericks.

As the truth dawned, Commissioner Weston was loud in his praise for Joe Cardona, whose excellent use of facts and keen intuition, said the commissioner, had brought these strange events to their amazing finish.

Joe Cardona was honest. He liked credit, but did not want that which he did not deserve. Yet he was forced to claim all honors for himself.

Once again, only the hand of The Shadow had been seen. The man himself had remained a mystery. Yet, it was he who had performed the deeds of action.

But Joe Cardona could not state that fact. The Shadow, Cardona realized, must still stand unacclaimed.

The Shadow, alone, knew—and still he was the unknown.

THE END