



CASTLE OF DOOM

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CHAPTER I. CRIME OVER LONDON

THICK, smoke-laden fog had gained its grip on London. Night, descending like some black umbra through the mist, had added sinister gloom. Street lamps, their rays cast back upon them, were nothing more than blurred orbs of illumination that seemed to hang in mid-air.

Silence was heaviest upon a narrow street not far from Piccadilly Circus. This thoroughfare lay somewhere between the huge stores of Regent Street and the quality shops of Bond Street. The very obscurity of the section added to the lull; but with it, the unnatural calmness was foreboding. Stilled air seem to be waiting for some startlement. It came.

The shrill sound of a policeman's whistle cleaved the fog. Shouts came in muffled utterance. Harsh oaths were rasped in challenge. Then came the scurry of footsteps upon paving; after that, the heavy pound of pursuing feet. Other whistles trilled; then clatter faded.

Rogues of the night had countered with the law. Ghoulish plunderers, creeping out from hiding places, had been scattered back to cover. Patrolling policemen had converged, were staying close to the vicinity. Heavy, methodical footsteps were proof that the law remained.

Close by one of Piccadilly's corners, a stalwart uniformed figure loomed into the light. Steady eyes peered from beneath a helmet. Then the London bobby raised his arm as a pedestrian approached.

"Better not go through that way, sir," informed the officer. "There are prowlers about. They may be footpads, for aught that we have learned."

"Thank you, officer."

THE man who spoke was nattily attired. He was wearing a light-gray topcoat and a trim bowler hat. His face showed him to be no more than thirty years; and his features carried an aristocratic mark. High cheek bones, sharp nose and gray eyes that were dreary despite their friendly gaze. The bobby took mental note of that distinctive countenance.

"It's a bad night, sir," reminded the officer.

The young man nodded. He was nervous as he tightened the fawn-colored gloves that he was wearing. Then his jauntiness returned; he drew a light walking stick from beneath his elbow and swung it rakishly to indicate that he had at least a slight measure of protection should he encounter danger.

"I am going to the Acropolis Club, near St. James Street," he told the bobby. "Since I can reach there by continuing along Piccadilly to my turning point, I shall do so. Good evening, officer."

Fog swallowed the well-dressed young man as he swaggered along his way. The bobby resumed a short-paced patrol.

New footsteps clicked. A well-dressed young man came into the hazy light. The officer surveyed a clean-cut face; then took note of the arrival's attire. This passer stopped of his own volition. He addressed the bobby in American fashion.

"Hello, officer," he said, with a friendly smile. "I'm lost in this plagued fog. I wonder if you could give me directions?"

"Certainly, sir," acknowledged the bobby, "but first I must warn you to be careful hereabouts. There have been suspicious lurkers in this neighborhood."

"The newspapers have agreed upon that," laughed the American. "They claim that the mysterious burglars have accumulated everything that is worthwhile taking in this section and others. Rather an exaggeration, to my way of thinking."

"Quite right you are, sir." Ending his discussion of recent crime, the bobby changed the subject. "About your directions, sir. You are in Piccadilly, walking westward. What destination have you chosen, sir?"

"I should like to reach the Acropolis Club, in St. James Street."

THE officer stared, momentarily dumfounded by the coincidence. Then, politely, he covered his surprise and gave careful directions. The American set out upon the route that the previous man had taken.

Another bobby approached from the side street. He came with information from the restricted area.

"We have scoured the neighborhood," he stated. "The rogues have scattered back to shelter. The orders

to warn wayfarers are ended."

"No vans seen about?" questioned the first bobby.

"None," replied the second. "These were -"

The speaker paused. A pedestrian was strolling from the mist. He was a man of military bearing, that appearance being increased by his attire. He was wearing a khaki-colored overcoat; his felt hat was set at a slight tilt. His greeting was cheery as he approached the officers.

"Hello, there!" he exclaimed. "Trouble hereabouts?"

The first bobby stared. He had seen coincidence in the fact that two passers had been going on foot to the Acropolis Club. But that had been nothing when compared to the present puzzle.

The officer had remembered the first man's face. High cheeks, sharp nose and gray eyes. A voice that was brisk; but well accented. To his amazement, the bobby was staring at that face again, listening to the same voice!

Yet this could not be the identical Englishman. The first had worn a light-gray topcoat and bowler hat. This man was clad in a khaki coat and soft hat. The first had worn gloves and carried a walking stick; this man had neither.

Moreover, the first man had continued west. This chap had come from an easterly direction. Brief minutes had separated their arrivals. Yet, as he stared, the bobby realized that the first man might have stopped somewhere close by, changed his hat and coat, and then circled back.

"Beg pardon, sir," questioned the bobby. "Were you not the gentleman who passed by a short while ago?"

"I?" queried the sharp-faced young man, in apparent surprise. "Not at all. I have been strolling in this direction from The Strand. Enjoying London after a long absence."

"You have lost your way, sir?"

The bobby's query was cagey. It was an effort to learn the new arrival's destination. Gray eyes flashed.

"Ah! I have it!" The wayfarer's tone was jesting. "Some other chap, dressed like myself, strolled by here in the fog. Well, I must grant that my attire is a bit unusual for a Londoner. You see, I am just home from India."

THE bobby had stepped a trifle to one side, to gain a better view of the man's face. The wayfarer noticed this effort at closer scrutiny.

"You are wondering about India?" he laughed. "Wondering why my face is not a tanned one? That is because I came home on sick leave. I lost two stone in weight, thanks to the beastly fever spell that I experienced in Bombay. I turned as white as a ghost."

"It was not that, sir," confessed the bobby, stepping back. "It was your face, not your attire that made me believe you were the other gentleman returned. But I see that I am wrong, sir."

"Ah! My face is not the same?" The question was quick. "Perhaps you did not observe the other chap closely, then?"

"Your face is the same," expressed the officer, slowly, with a deliberate nod of his head. "Quite the same,

sir, except for one difference."

"And what is that?"

"Your paleness. Once you mentioned it, sir, I realized the truth of it. Had I been asked to choose which one of you had come from Bombay, I would have picked the previous gentleman."

"How was he dressed?"

"In the best Bond Street fashion, sir."

"Indeed. I suppose he was on his way to some club?"

"He was, sir. Quite swanky with his light-gray topcoat, his bowler and his walking stick."

"Ah! A walking stick!" The man in the khaki coat took up a bantering mood. "I fancy that he carries it quite rakishly, as though ready to cane any bounder who might disturb his passage."

The bobby had no reply. The description was so perfect that he again stood dumbfounded, able only to nod.

"And, of course, he was going to his club," resumed the young man from the fog.

The bobby found words.

"Yes, sir. The Acropolis Club."

"That was it, sir," added the second bobby. "There was another man also going to the Acropolis Club; but he passed by a trifle afterward. He was an American."

"And did he look like me also?"

"Not at all, sir."

The young man laughed heartily, while both bobbies smiled. Then, with a slight click of his heels, the wayfarer gave a friendly half salute. With that, he strolled away into the fog.

TRAMPING footsteps faded as the bobbies resumed their beat. Crime had been a false alarm tonight. The wave of robbery that had been discussed was rightly classed as something of the past. Yet crime had not been banished from London.

It hovered still, as menacing as the fog; and, singularly, that first bobby at the corner had come in contact with three men whom crime would soon concern. Grim events would involve those Englishmen who looked alike; the swanky Londoner and his double back from India.

Into that same picture would come the man who had appeared between; the American who had been directed to the place that the other two appeared to know more perfectly - the Acropolis Club near St. James Street.

CHAPTER II. CRIME DISCUSSED

CRIME talk was heavy at the Acropolis Club. It was the only subject among the members who had gathered in the smoking lounge. Fog had not kept these gentlemen from their accustomed meeting place; and in their discourse, they could find but one theme.

"Outrageous!" Such was the opinion given by a dignified man with a drooping, white mustache.

"Scotland Yard is not idle, however, Dunbarth," objected a roundish-faced club member. "Those audacious crimes were committed one after the other, with such expedition that the law could not keep pace with them."

"Quite so, Rutherwaite," acknowledged Dunbarth. "Nevertheless, crime may begin again. Mark my words!"

"What is your opinion, Cranston?" queried Rutherwaite, turning to a tall, calm-faced personage who was seated nearby. "Do you not agree that the miscreants will be content with the hauls that they have made?"

"Quite probably," was the quiet response, "so far as London is concerned. Their booty has been estimated at three hundred thousand pounds, I understand, and -"

"More nearly half a million," put in Rutherwaite, "according to the latest estimate of the Daily Sketch."

"The Sketch! Bah!" Dunbarth gave an indignant ejaculation.

"What of the American journals?" queried Rutherwaite. "Have they exaggerated the news from London?"

The question was addressed to Cranston. He made a quiet reply.

"I left New York," he stated, "two days after the crime wave began. At that time, the American newspapers estimated that half a million dollars in valuables had been taken. While I was making the voyage to England, the wave continued, to reach three times its original toll. A million and a half dollars would coincide with Dunbarth's estimate of three hundred thousand pounds."

"Precisely," nodded Dunbarth. "The Duke of Clandermoor's gold plates; the portraits from the Earl of Kelgood's gallery; the two jewelry shops on Bond Street; the jade vases housed in storage, that awaited shipment to the British Museum -"

"And the jeweled tiaras," added Rutherwaite, "that belonged to Lady Darriol; to say nothing of the Smith-Righterstone tapestries -"

"Which I intended to include," interposed Dunbarth, testily. "But why quibble over estimates? The vital point is: what has Scotland Yard learned through its well-known Criminal Investigation Department? Only that the robbers used motor vans in every expedition, to aid their entry and speed their departure."

"You term them robbers," observed Cranston. "I should deem them murderers."

"Quite right," agreed Rutherwaite. "A servant was slain at the Duke of Clandermoor's town house. An officer was shot in cold blood when the robbery was done at Pettigrew's shop in Bond Street."

"And new crime will come," began Dunbarth. "Mark my words. New robberies -"

"Not in London." The words were Cranston's, delivered in a tone of finality. "Murder, perhaps, in London. Robbery, perhaps, elsewhere."

THERE was an almost prophetic note in the speaker's voice, as though he had coolly calculated the future. There was reason why that should be. For this American who had arrived in London was not a chance visitor as the club members supposed.

He was a master sleuth, The Shadow. Learning of swift, mysterious crime in the British capital, The Shadow had taken on the guise of Lamont Cranston, for a prompt trip to London.

"That is it," nodded Rutherwaite. "Why should the bounders resort to further crime? They have made their haul. The proper course - the one that the Yard has taken - is to watch every port and every vessel leaving England and -"

"It will be useless," injected Dunbarth.

A young man had entered the lounge while Dunbarth was speaking. Rutherwaite waved a greeting. This arrival was the very man who had first met the bobby at one of Piccadilly's corners. Rutherwaite made the introduction.

"This is Geoffrey Chiswold," he told The Shadow. "Jeff, this is Lamont Cranston, recently arrived from New York."

They shook hands. The Shadow spoke.

"You are one of several Londoners whose names have attracted my attention," he told Chiswold. "Are you not the Geoffrey Chiswold who recently sold your property to a man named Barton Modbury?"

"Yes," acknowledged Geoffrey, with a nod. Then, bitterly: "It had been in the family for more than three hundred years. I was sorry to dispose of the old place."

"Why did you do so?" queried Dunbarth.

"The place had become a burden," explained Geoffrey. "The upkeep and maintenance of servants would have driven me into debt. I wanted to make journeys, particularly to Canada. I invariably lacked a sufficient surplus."

"I suppose the situation has changed," inserted Rutherwaite. "You should find present circumstances an improvement."

"I have," acknowledged Geoffrey. "I am prepared for my voyage. I sail tomorrow for Canada."

"I hope that you made out well with your sale of the castle?"

"I did quite well. Modbury is wealthy. He was willing to pay the price that I asked."

"Modbury is an Australian?"

Geoffrey shook his head.

"No," he replied, "Modbury is a South African from the Kimberley region. He is a specialist in the choice of gems. He particularly favors uncut diamonds -"

Geoffrey stopped abruptly. His face became troubled. Then, in a confidential tone, he added:

"That fact must not be mentioned, gentlemen. It is the reason why Barton Modbury chose to purchase Chiswold Castle. He wanted to be far from London."

"On account of the robberies?" queried Rutherwaite, in an undertone.

GEOFFREY nodded.

"Then," queried The Shadow, "Barton Modbury purchased Chiswold Castle because of the protection it offered?"

"He did," nodded Geoffrey, "and he has reopened it. He wanted me to be his guest there, for he is entertaining some of the finest folk to whom I introduced him. However" - Geoffrey smiled regretfully - "I could not fancy myself occupying a place in Chiswold Castle while I was no longer the owner. That is why I decided upon my trip to Canada."

Geoffrey Chiswold arose and shook hands in parting. He strolled away to chat with other friends. The Shadow, still standing, turned about as an attendant approached and handed him an envelope. The Shadow opened it.

"The gentleman is waiting at the door, sir," stated the attendant. "Will there be a reply?"

"Yes." The Shadow smiled slightly as he wrote a note of his own and folded it. "Give this to Mr. Vincent."

The attendant departed. When he arrived at the door of the club, he gave the message to a young man who was standing there. This arrival was the second passer whom the bobby had encountered in Piccadilly; the American who had inquired the way to the Acropolis Club.

He was Harry Vincent, agent of The Shadow. He, too, had come to London, to aid in the tracking down of criminals. Harry had brought in a report of certain investigations which he had conducted at The Shadow's order.

The message that Harry read at the door of the Acropolis Club referred to Geoffrey Chiswold. It gave the club member's name, described his appearance and attire with exactitude. It told Harry to wait until Geoffrey Chiswold came from the Acropolis Club; then to take up his trail through the fog and report where Geoffrey had gone.

For in Geoffrey Chiswold's mention of Barton Modbury, the South African diamond king, The Shadow had found cause for prompt investigation. Though The Shadow agreed with Scotland Yard upon the point that successful criminals intended to remove their swag from England, he also held to theories of his own.

He had heard of Chiswold Castle previously. Tonight, he had met Geoffrey Chiswold and had listened to brief statements from the former owner concerning Barton Modbury, the diamond king who had bought the old castle that stood far from London.

In picturing the coming trail, The Shadow had seen Chiswold Castle as a possible goal for men of crime. That was why he had deputed Harry Vincent to the task of learning all he could concerning Geoffrey Chiswold.

CHAPTER III. TWISTED TRAILS

THE SHADOW had expected Geoffrey Chiswold's stay to be a short one at the Acropolis Club. His calculation was correct. Within twenty minutes after his arrival, Geoffrey made his departure.

When Geoffrey Chiswold stepped from the Acropolis Club, Harry spotted him immediately.

He took up the trail. An easy one, at first, for Geoffrey's footsteps were a half shuffle from the sidewalk. As the trail continued, Harry allowed more leeway. At times, he loitered, then made swifter pace to draw close to his quarry. Guided by sound, Harry gained confidence, except when other passers added their

gaits to Geoffrey's.

Then came the incident that threw Harry off the trail. They had passed a side thoroughfare where Harry had been out of touch with the footsteps. As Harry closed in again, he saw the blurred light from a restaurant window, a place which offered him a chance to check upon the trail. He closed in upon the man whose footsteps he could hear. At the lighted spot, Harry stopped dead short.

He had caught sight of his quarry, but the man was no longer Geoffrey Chiswold. Though Harry could only see his back, he knew that the man was the wrong one. Footsteps had been deceiving; the light proved the fact. The man just ahead of Harry was not wearing a gray topcoat and Derby hat. Instead, he was attired in khaki coat and soft hat. Moreover, he had neither cane nor gloves.

Where had the trail been lost?

Harry could think of but one logical spot; the last street that they had passed. Turning, The Shadow's agent made as much haste as possible in the opposite direction. He still had hope to pick up the lost trail. Odd circumstance had tricked Harry Vincent. The other was the man who looked like Geoffrey Chiswold, a fact that Harry had not discerned by the lights of the restaurant, for he had seen the man's back and not his face. The chief deception lay in the fact that the man who intervened was walking in exactly the same fashion as Geoffrey. Harry had taken the second man's footsteps for the first.

UP ahead, Geoffrey Chiswold had maintained his pace. As he continued, he became conscious of a sound behind him; one that resembled an echo. He paused by a doorway and listened. The shuffling echo sounded from the corner; then stopped.

His right hand clutching his walking stick, Geoffrey edged back toward the light. He fancied that he heard sounds creeping toward him from the fog. He caught a momentary glimpse of a stocky form. Swinging the cane, Geoffrey bounded forward. As he did, the other man sprang from the opposite direction.

They met in the lighted patch. A khaki-colored arm shot forward and caught Geoffrey's wrist. As the young man writhed, unable to swing his cane, he came face to face with his antagonist. Geoffrey's struggle ceased. His lips phrased a name of recognition:

"Nigel!"

The other laughed harshly and thrust away Geoffrey's wrist.

"The Chiswolds meet," remarked Nigel, in a tone which was similar to Geoffrey's. "Two cousins reunited after an absence of five years. Well, Jeff, are you glad to see me?"

"I thought you were in India," replied Geoffrey, coldly. "What brings you back to London?"

"The call of home," returned Nigel, "plus a Bombay fever. Well, old chap, the prodigal has returned. As my only relative, you might provide the fatted calf."

"I suppose so." Geoffrey seemed reluctant. "What do you want, Nigel? Money?"

Nigel laughed. Nigel's laugh was not pleasant. Then his manner changed.

"Let us drop it, Jeff. Money does not matter; I changed my spendthrift habits while in India. I have gained a disappointment; one for which you are responsible."

"And what may that be?"

"About Chiswold Castle. Why did you sell the place, Jeff?"

"Chiswold Castle was my property, Nigel. It was part of my inheritance. You had no share of it."

"I shared memories of the place."

"Then you can keep them. That is what I have chosen to do. I am leaving for Canada tomorrow."

"So soon?" Nigel was studying his cousin closely. "Well, since you will be absent, do you think that Modbury would welcome me if I dropped out there and introduced myself?"

GEOFFREY'S fists clenched.

"So that is it!" he accused. "You wish to profit by my friendships. To use our relationship as a method of imposing upon wealthy persons, such as Modbury. You have heard about him, I suppose -"

This time, Nigel showed anger. Then, restraining himself, he questioned:

"Just what do you take me for, Jeff?"

"A rogue," returned his cousin. "One who was a black sheep when he left England. Whose return can be but a single indication. You are here to get money - by any means. I would put you above none."

"Burglary? With murder perhaps?" Nigel's query was sharp.

Geoffrey found difficulty in stammering a reply. Before he could become coherent, Nigel sneered contemptuously.

"I'm glad I located you," he scoffed. "I could not learn what club you belonged to, in the short while I have been in London; but a bobby saw you tonight and told me where you had gone.

"That's why I waited for you; to find out how much you knew. Well, Jeff, your mind sees possibilities, doesn't it? As soon as you encounter your cousin Nigel, your thoughts go back to the past. You see in me a potential criminal; one who has grown, magnified, enlarged; until now you connect me with actual crime -"

"I do!" challenged Geoffrey. "So will others, when they come to investigate you. They will realize what I realized; that every recent crime here in London involved places and spoils that you might know about.

"The gold plates at Clandermoor's! You dined off it ten years ago! The Kelgood gallery! We played hide and seek in there when we were youngsters! The jewelry shops, where our grand-aunt use to take us! The tiaras - the tapestries -"

"I have seen them all," interposed Nigel, "and so have you, my dear cousin. What would Scotland Yard say, should I tell them that?"

"You - you rogue -"

"And should I prove to them that I was aboard a P and O liner at the time of the robberies? Then whom would they question? Have you thought of that, cousin Jeff?"

GEOFFREY'S lips were twitching; he was gasping indignant words.

"Whether you did or not," remarked Nigel, "it does not matter. As for Modbury and his diamonds, I shall find out regarding them. Perhaps his wealth has been overrated. Possibly" - Nigel paused and curled a

disdainful smile - "possibly Modbury merely wanted seclusion and sea air. On the contrary" - Nigel's tone was reflective - "he may really be a chap of unusual wealth.

"If so, he may have possessions with which he can well dispense. If so, I shall learn. Because, Jeff, I intend to go to Chiswold Castle. If you refuse to introduce me to Modbury, I shall go there on my own initiative."

Geoffrey Chiswold had regained a grip upon himself. He was firm as he met his cousin's steady, narrowed gaze.

"One move, Nigel," he warned, "and I shall denounce you to the law. It is only to protect the Chiswold name that I restrain myself."

"The Chiswold name," snorted Nigel. "You always were hypocritical about it, Jeff. Go on. Denounce me to the law. It will prove a boomerang, if you do.

"Since you are leaving England, I shall make no trouble for you. Ah! You are eyeing me! You are pleased to see that I am down to your weight at last. You would like to thrash me.

"Why not try? I shall grant you privilege to use your cane. That would make a proper handicap. But remember, it might bring us to a police court. The Chiswold cousins would come into prominence. It would be better to restrain yourself, Jeff. Say nothing. Sail for Canada. Be away when scandal breaks."

PRODUCING a pencil and a card, Nigel passed them to Geoffrey. Calmly, he ordered:

"Write the address of your diggings. I may be calling there tomorrow, to see if you have left. Do not hesitate - I want the correct address."

Quivering with both fear and rage, Geoffrey scrawled the address and thrust the card into Nigel's hand. His own face pale, Geoffrey stormed:

"You are the one who should be leaving England. Heed my advice -"

"I never take advice," interposed Nigel. "I give it. Take mine and go to Canada, or else jump into the Serpentine. You never were a good swimmer, Jeff."

With that, Nigel Chiswold turned on his heel and strode away through the fog; leaving his cousin Geoffrey white-faced and quivering, like a man who had seen a ghost.

CHAPTER IV. THE HOUSE IN WHITECHAPEL

HARRY VINCENT, in his effort to regain Geoffrey Chiswold's trail, had run into various difficulties. Not only had he failed to pick up sounds of footsteps along the side street; he had run into an obstructing block that forced another choice.

A street ran left and right. Neither direction seemed the more likely. Finally, however, Harry had decided on the left, in the hope that he might regain the corner where he had first lost the trail.

A low-built corner light afforded a chance to locate himself. Harry made in that direction; then paused, confused. He saw a long, narrow street stretching away into a path of murky gloom; but he could not decide whether or not it would lead him from this puzzling region. It was while he chided himself upon his bewilderment that Harry heard the shuffling gait of a walker.

The footsteps were quicker than Geoffrey's; but they bore a resemblance. Harry drew back into a

doorway and waited. A man came into the range of the light, then stopped there. Harry stared completely amazed.

This was the man who had led him from Geoffrey's trail; the walker in the khaki topcoat. But as the man paused in the light, Harry caught a complete glimpse of his features. Like the bobby at the Piccadilly corner, The Shadow's agent mistook Nigel Chiswold for Geoffrey.

Watching, Harry saw Nigel draw a card from his pocket and study it as though memorizing something written there. Then, with a slight laugh, Nigel tore the card into eight pieces and tossed the bits of pasteboard to the sidewalk. Turning, he strode off through the fog.

Harry hurried forward. He scooped up the pieces of the card, but made no attempt to put them together. Instead, he hurried after Nigel. Soon, he was again on the trail of elusive footbeats. Nigel, however, proved too difficult a quarry.

His speed changed; his footsteps turned a corner, then faded. Following, Harry decided that the man must have changed his gait. Then he realized that he was following no one. Nigel must have guessed that he was being trailed and worked the trick of ducking into a doorway.

Harry's only clue was the torn card. Reaching a main thoroughfare, he found a hotel. He went into the lobby, sat at a writing desk and pieced the card together. It gave him the address of a flat in the Belgravia section, near Belgrave Square. Harry made a telephone call to The Shadow, at the Acropolis Club. He was told to investigate further, then report again.

MEANWHILE, Nigel Chiswold had arrived at an obscure hotel, not far from Soho, that foreign corner so curiously wedged into West End London. Ascending by a lift, Nigel went along a darkened hall and knocked softly at a door. The barrier opened; he stepped into a lighted room.

A huge, dark-skinned man greeted him. The fellow was a veritable giant who looked ill at ease in his English clothes. Had he been in native costume, he might have been taken for a Hindu; but he was not of that nationality. The man was an Afghan.

"Greetings, Amakar," stated Nigel. "I have good news."

"You have found the man?" queried the Afghan, slowly. "The one that you did seek?"

"I found my beloved cousin," laughed Nigel, "and that means a task for you. He says that he is going to Canada, Amakar."

"Canada is a place far away?"

"Too far away; and yet not far enough. What is more, the beggar does not trust me. After we had parted, he followed me. I ended that little game. It made me feel sure, though, that he had given me his correct address."

Nigel produced a map of London. He pointed out Belgrave Square while Amakar, looking over his master's shoulder, nodded his understanding.

"Do you remember Sannarak?" questioned Nigel, looking up. "The chap who made so much trouble for us at the Khyber Pass?"

"I remember Sannarak."

"And what you did to him?"

"I remember."

"Do the same tonight. To my cousin, Geoffrey, when he has left the place where he lives. He will have to go to the London docks." Nigel pointed out the spot beside the Thames. "Therefore, you may arrange the ambush in that vicinity. Do not take men with you to Belgrave Square."

"Speak to them in Soho, before you leave. Tell them to be ready near the docks. When they see you, they can follow. Use no more than necessary, Amakar. I rely upon your wisdom."

Amakar bowed.

"As for my cousin," smiled Nigel, wisely, as he stuffed a briar pipe with tobacco, "you will know him when you see me. Do you understand, Amakar?"

"I understand," replied the Afghan. "The face that will seem to be my master's will be the face of his cousin."

"That is the correct assumption. Afterward, Amakar, come back here and give me all the details. Then I shall decide upon our next step."

Nigel arose and opened the door. The Afghan went out into the hall. Nigel saw him go down a flight of rear stairs. Returning to the hotel room, Nigel stared from the window.

Below, dulled by the fog, lay a hazy spread of illumination that represented Soho. That section, with its varied flood of humanity, had been Amakar's habitat since he and Nigel had been in London.

It was a place where those of many nations rallied. Soho, where an Afghan might pass as a Hindu and where Hindus were not uncommon. Like other portions of London - the others in the East End - Soho was a spot where lurkers flourished. Amakar, the Afghan, had friends in Soho, who were not of his own nationality.

NOT long after Amakar had left the hotel, Harry Vincent arrived at Belgrave Square. Harry could actually discern the fronts of staid, old-fashioned buildings that loomed indefinitely up into the blackness. They were four-story structures; but the fog magnified them to gigantic proportions.

One of these houses bore the address number that Harry had pieced together from the card. From the outlet of the little cul-de-sac, Harry could see lights in the windows of the second story rear.

He recalled that the card had borne the reference "2 B"; and that fact proved that the building contained flats. Two to a floor, as Harry estimated; which meant that someone was at home in the place for which he had searched. Harry's next problem was to learn who lived there. While he was pondering upon some plan, the upstairs lights went out.

Harry circled to the front of the building, keeping far enough away to be obscured. While he was watching, a taxicab chugged up and parked in front of the house. The driver alighted and stood waiting upon the curb. The door of the house opened and a young man appeared.

It was Geoffrey Chiswold, wearing his gray coat and bowler. Geoffrey was carrying a huge suitcase, which he turned over to the taxi driver. He went back into the house and reappeared with a second suitcase of similar proportions to the first.

HARRY turned up his coat collar and shuffled into the light. With shoulders slightly stooped, he approached Geoffrey with the manner of a hanger-about who knew this neighborhood. Obsequiously, Harry tipped two fingers to his hat and asked:

"Help you with your luggage, sir?"

"Very well." Geoffrey nodded as he handed the suitcase to Harry, who carried it to the cab. "Wait here, my man, and you may help me with some satchels."

The taxi driver glowered at Harry's interference; but The Shadow's agent made no comment. He shuffled back to the door of the building, relieved Geoffrey of two smaller grips and took them to the cab. He held the door open for Geoffrey to enter the vehicle. The taxi driver shrugged and took his place behind the wheel.

"Here is a shilling, my good fellow," said Geoffrey, passing a coin to Harry. Then to the taxi driver: "Take me to Liverpool Street Station. I must pick up a parcel that is checked there."

"Righto, sir," returned the driver.

Harry slammed the door of the cab.

"Thanks for the bob, sir," he said to Geoffrey. "Good luck to you, sir."

The cab swung around an isolated lamp post and the driver slowed to take directions. Harry, sauntering away, caught a last glimpse of the vehicle. Had the cab not been there, he might have spied a man who had stepped out from the sidewalk. This was a new arrival who had come up through the fog.

Amakar, the Afghan, had made good speed from the neighborhood of Soho. He had come by underground, arriving just as the taxi was pulling away from the house. Too late to hear Geoffrey speak to the driver, Amakar had moved swiftly when he saw the cab stop.

SIDLED UP beside the cab, Amakar peered into the interior. Geoffrey had turned on the dome light. In the feeble glow, Amakar spied the features that resembled those of his master, Nigel. His own dark features almost out of sight, Amakar watched and listened while he heard Geoffrey address the driver.

"Why the delay?" queried Geoffrey. "I am in no hurry; but I expect progress."

"Choosin' my way, sir," returned the driver. "There's roads as is better on a blarsted night than this one. Goin' to Liverpool Street is somethin' as needs a bit o' thinkin', sir."

"As for harfterward, sir, where is it that you'll be wantin' to go? If I knows as where to tyke you, when you 'ave picked up the parcel -"

"After Liverpool Street," interrupted Geoffrey, "I am proceeding to London docks. To go aboard the Steamship Borealis. But I shall walk from Liverpool Station, through Aldgate and east to the docks. It will be preferable to riding at a snail's pace, once I have obtained my package."

"A good plan, sir. I'd bet me last bob that you'd be reachin' the docks afore I'll be comin' with the luggage. This bloody pea souper is thick by the river -"

"Enough, driver. Choose your route and proceed."

The cab moved onward. Harry Vincent was out of sight in the fog. Amakar, stepping back from the lighted island, was seen by no one. The Afghan was gulped by the blackness, vanishing like some fabulous, gigantic jinni that had been summoned elsewhere.

Belgravia was a secluded island in the midst of London; but it was not far from that section to the jumbled hubbub of Victoria. It was thither that Harry Vincent had headed, knowing that he would find

two requisites - a telephone and an underground station. Despite the shortness of the walk, he had trouble finding his destination; but at last he emerged from the fog and located his surroundings.

From one of the railway stations, he called the Acropolis Club and spoke to The Shadow. Harry informed his chief that the Belgravia address had been Geoffrey's. This was information, for Geoffrey's only known London address had been the club itself.

Then Harry added that Geoffrey was bound for Liverpool Street Station, which formed a terminus of the London and Northeastern Railway. He mentioned that Geoffrey had gone by cab. Beyond that, Harry knew nothing else. He had not overheard the final conversation between Geoffrey and the driver.

The Shadow's order was to go to Liverpool Street. Taking the underground, Harry was soon speeding on his way. He was confident that he would reach the L.N.E. depot ahead of Geoffrey; he knew also that he would arrive there before The Shadow, who intended to join him there.

REACHING Liverpool Street, Harry began to watch for incoming cabs. This was a puzzling task, for it took him several minutes to determine where Geoffrey's taxi might arrive. At last Harry stationed himself at the right spot and was immediately rewarded. A cab pulled into view and Geoffrey alighted.

The taxi driver must have known streets where fog had thinned, for he had made surprisingly good time on the journey. Light traffic had unquestionably aided him along his course. So Harry thought as he followed Geoffrey into the railway station and watched while the young man reclaimed a light but bulky package from the parcel room.

Geoffrey went back to the cab with Harry following. He put the parcel aboard with his luggage and spoke to the driver. Then, instead of entering the cab, Geoffrey turned and walked away. For a moment, Harry stood rooted. Then, resolving upon the only course, he followed.

The taxi driver was ready to pull out. Another cab blocked his passage. He climbed out angrily to start an argument with its driver. The other driver gave a good-natured guffaw, delivered in cockney fashion.

Geoffrey's cabby could see no joke about the matter. He was about to force a quarrel with the jester when the other cabby himself brought an end to the forthcoming quarrel. Turning, he happened to see a tall arrival who had stepped quietly into view at the moment when Geoffrey's cabby had climbed out of his cab.

"Taxi, gov'nor?" queried the driver of the blocking cab.

A quiet reply in the negative. The tall stranger turned and strolled away in the direction of Houndsditch Road, the direct path to Aldgate. Quickening his pace to a long, easy stride, he set his lips in a thin, fixed smile as he fathomed the path of Geoffrey Chiswold.

This arrival at Liverpool Street was The Shadow. Still in the guise of Lamont Cranston, wearing a light cape and high silk hat, he had covered his evening clothes when he had left the Acropolis Club.

Reaching his goal just before Harry Vincent's departure, The Shadow had divined that the disputant with the luggage-filled cab was the driver who had brought Geoffrey Chiswold here. He had learned which way Geoffrey had gone; and he knew that Harry must be on the trail.

AT Aldgate, the eastern limit of the old city, Harry was close upon Geoffrey's heels. He was taking no chances upon losing his quarry. From Houndsditch Road, Geoffrey turned east into Aldgate High Street, as Harry had expected. Lights showed him hazily in the fog. A short walk carried Geoffrey to Whitechapel High Street. There Harry saw the young man hesitate. After a brief pause, Geoffrey

suddenly started into the Whitechapel section.

Once again, Harry was trailing by footsteps; and as he muffled his own tread, he fancied that he caught slight, scuffling sounds from across the fog-laden street. It seemed as though some heavy, long-pacing walker was keeping on a line with him.

Geoffrey turned a corner. So did Harry. Geoffrey's pace had quickened. The sound of the footsteps was decreasing. Harry hurried forward. Through blackened gloom, he caught other sounds, like voices engaged in muttering.

He lost the sound of Geoffrey's footsteps; then paused. Edging in from the curb, he thrust his hand through the solid murk and touched the dampened corner of a building.

No sounds of footsteps. Harry knew the answer. Geoffrey Chiswold had stopped in front of this house in Whitechapel. There was no noise ahead; that tread from across the street had ended. All that Harry could hear for the moment was the semblance of a sound in back of him, like a low, whispered hiss in the blackened fog.

THEN, before Harry could turn or answer, a buzz began ahead. Voices snarled; there was a protesting cry; then a wild, shrill scream that rent the fog-filled atmosphere. A responding shout broke automatically from Harry's lips.

The Shadow's agent sprang forward on the instant. He knew the author of that scream, the reason for its utterance. Geoffrey Chiswold had met with disaster at the hands of lurkers in the fog. The shriek that he had given could only have come from a man who had felt the arrival of doom.

Here, upon this squalid street in Whitechapel, in front of an obscure and crumbly East End house, murder was being done. To Harry Vincent, agent of The Shadow, belonged the duty of driving off those attackers who had set upon Geoffrey Chiswold.

CHAPTER V. DEATH AND STRIFE

IN his forward spring, Harry Vincent came suddenly into light. Like an oblong shaft that cleaved the solid darkness, the glow stretched from the rectangular opening of a doorway in the house itself. Beginning from a lighted hallway, the rays produced a square upon both the sidewalk and a short flight of steps that led into the house.

Struggling men half blotted the steps.

Half a dozen rough-clad thugs had fallen upon a lone opponent. Some had sprung up from darkness; others had plunged out through the doorway. In the center of that vicious throng was Geoffrey Chiswold.

As Harry leaped upon the group, the whole mass shifted to meet him; not face to face, but sidewise, lurched through some fierce impetus from the opposite direction. Harry's mind caught an instant flash: Geoffrey, in his struggle, must have hurled off some attackers. Then Harry had no time for other impressions.

A sprawling hoodlum twisted toward The Shadow's agent. With a mad yell, the rogue flashed a knife blade that was dripping crimson. Harry swung a sidewise stroke that sent the fellow against the house wall. Then he gripped another dirk-laden killer who dove headforemost toward him.

The whole surge carried Harry with it. Thrust backward, Harry saw four blades above him. Then, into

the twisting throng came a driving battler, who arrived within three seconds following Harry's spontaneous attack.

It was The Shadow. From beneath his cape, he had whipped an automatic; but he was not using the weapon as a firearm. Instead, he was delivering hard sweeps with his gun hand, while he used his other fist to pluck down hands that bore dripping knives.

With one hard jolt of his shoulder, The Shadow propelled Harry toward the curb, clearing his agent from the midst of battle. He wanted none but enemies about him; and his flaying fist sent ruffians scudding. Harry, stumbling as he reached the curb, managed to turn about in time to see this outcome.

The Shadow had met the heaving mass of fighters and had actually pitched the tribe back to the steps from which the lunge had begun. Then, with his plucking, swinging method, he had sent ruffians rolling everywhere.

One wild battler alone had gripped The Shadow. Upon the lowermost step, they formed a tableau. The Shadow's free hand held the ruffian's wrist, to withhold the knife stroke. In turn, the foeman was clutching at The Shadow's gun hand.

With a twist, the pair whirled away. Harry, coming in to aid, saw them clear his path. Rogues, coming to their feet, were ready to again wield knives; but they had no opportunity. The Shadow's .45 began to blast.

He was firing despite the man who clutched him, speeding bullets during the mad whirl. Like a turning turret, he swung from left to right, jabbing shots toward scattered thugs.

One rogue spat an outcry as a bullet clipped him. Another shouted a mad warning as a slug singed past his ear. Then, abandoning the foolhardy ruffian who was wrestling with The Shadow, the rogues took to their heels. They wanted the safety of the Whitechapel fog.

All this had happened in quick, amazing seconds. Harry Vincent, rallying, had first tried to aid The Shadow; then had gone toward free attackers only to see them scud like rats. He made a turn to come back toward The Shadow. His chief and the tenacious thug had already reeled beyond the steps.

To reach them, Harry's best course was to clamber over the steps themselves. He wheeled to do so; then stopped short. Before him, blocking his view of The Shadow's struggle, was a new adversary whom he had not seen until this very moment.

A DARK-FACED man was crouched upon the steps. He had been in the midst of that murderous group, obscured at the moment when Harry had driven into the fray. He was rising from his position and his glare was fixed upon Harry.

This last challenger looked like a Hindu, though not attired in Oriental garb. Harry had mistaken him for one of the Whitechapel ruffians, for he had not seen the man's dark face until this instant. Nor had he guessed at the man's titanic size. The fighter on the steps was rising; he loomed like a giant, towering above.

It was Amakar, the Afghan, huge and menacing; the very sight brought a gasp from Harry's lips. But with Amakar's rise came another view. The Afghan, rearing up from his half-seated posture had revealed another figure on the steps. There, sprawled face upward, lay Geoffrey Chiswold.

To Harry's staring eyes came the answer that explained the bloodstained knives. Geoffrey, lengthwise on the steps, was lifeless. His shirt front was dyed red. Projecting from above his heart was the handle of a

dirk. One deep-thrusting assassin had left his knife in the victim's body.

Amakar, in rising, had pressed his upper hand upon the stone step by Geoffrey's motionless shoulder. The Afghan's huge fingers were but inches distant from the knife itself. They possessed the strength required to wrest that blade from its lodging. A weapon lay almost in Amakar's grasp!

Harry Vincent came to double action. To offset Amakar, he sprang forward, bounding up the step edge to encounter the half-risen giant. At the same time, he yanked his own automatic from his pocket. The only way to deal with so formidable a foe was to gain the first advantage.

Amakar did not finish the rise. With a fierce cry in his native tongue, the dark-faced Afghan dived sidewise from his crouch. His long arms, shooting forth like grappling hooks, were instantaneous in their action. Bearing down from the steps like a toppling tower, Amakar caught Harry in his grip.

Harry had no chance to fire. His arm was trapped half lifted. Mammoth arms encircled him. As he went rolling backward, pinned to helplessness, Harry felt those engirding arms hoist him clear of the sidewalk. Then Amakar delivered a twisting heave, in the fashion of a discus hurler.

Harry Vincent cleared the curb in mid-air. He had reached the center of the narrow street when he struck, shoulder first. The power of the fling carried him onward.

Harry rolled over three times in quick succession before he finally stopped. Even then, it was the presence of the opposite curb that halted him. Harry's head cracked the edge of the sidewalk with a jarring velocity.

HALF dazed, Harry tried to rise, his only thought to get back into the fray. Hemmed in by the fog, he could see only that lighted stretch directly in front of the doorway across the street; against its background, he spied the looming bulk of Amakar. The big man was turning; apparently looking for another prey.

To Harry's dazed senses came the trill of police whistles. The Shadow's shots; the flight of vanished thugs - both had been heard by constables in the district. Harry tried to rise and failed. His right shoulder sagged; his right knee gave with his weight.

As Harry made the effort, a muffled gunshot sounded from the haze. The direction of the report told Harry that it must mean the finish of the fight that The Shadow was having with one lone assassin. Harry was right. Amakar, too, had heard the sound. The big Afghan had located someone in the fog.

Harry saw Amakar leap past the steps. At the same instant, a figure charged forward to meet him. It was The Shadow, hatless, his cape half torn from his shoulders. Despite his tallness, The Shadow looked pygmylike as he plunged toward Amakar. His lithe form looked slender enough for the Afghan to break in two.

A wreath of smoke was curling from above The Shadow's hand. The coil came from his automatic, its curling twist blended with the murkiness of the fog. Then Amakar met the advancing figure. Harry saw The Shadow's hand jerk backward.

Amakar had plucked The Shadow's gun hand while it was on the aim. He had gained the same advantage that he had with Harry. The Afghan's gripping arms surrounded Harry's chief. The Shadow's body was hoisted high in front of the patch of light which formed the background for the scene.

Harry's own gun was gone. It had spilled far from his hand during his long pitch. Helplessly, Harry could only watch; he saw The Shadow whirling like a straw puppet as Amakar prepared to fling him against the

house wall.

Whistles were shrilling close by at both ends of the street. Would the law arrive before Amakar could crush The Shadow into senselessness; perhaps do him to death?

Hoarsely, Harry shouted for aid, hoping to bring the officers in his direction. Answering whistles sounded; yet they seemed far away. All the while, Harry stared; to his amazement, The Shadow did not hurtle on a headlong trip into space. Instead, he was clutching Amakar, choking the Afghan's throat with agile fingers while the big man vainly sought to heave his tenacious adversary to the house wall.

Pounding feet upon the pavement. Shouts from arriving officers. Harry gave an answering cry. At the same moment both The Shadow and Amakar roused to fuller effort. The big Afghan jolted his shoulders upward. His head went back as The Shadow's clutch tightened. Then the two went sprawling sidewise, to slump at the steps.

Amakar's great bulk obscured The Shadow. For an instant, Harry thought that his chief had been crushed by the side of Geoffrey Chiswold's body. Then came the finale; so surprising that it seemed to be a move by Amakar alone.

The Afghan rolled sidewise toward the edge of the steps; then his body snapped upward and performed a tremendous somersault. Like an acrobat missing his cue, the big Oriental landed thwack upon the sidewalk, face upward.

THE SHADOW had gained a jujutsu hold. He had thrown all his strength into a scientific twist. His stroke had hoisted Amakar headforemost into such a sudden dive that the Afghan had turned completely over.

The Shadow, too, had lost his balance in the finish of the flip. Carried by his own impetus, he sprawled from the edge of the steps and landed on hands and knees.

Amakar was rising; The Shadow likewise. Six paces apart, they had a chance to come to grips again. It was Amakar who passed up a renewal of the duel. The reason for the Afghan's action was the sudden appearance of a helmeted officer who came jogging into the circle of light from out of the fog.

The bobby was beyond the steps; he was swinging a truncheon with his right hand while his left pressed a whistle to his lips. He halted momentarily at the sight of Amakar. The Afghan heard the whistle's blast and whirled about. Before The Shadow could leap forward to restrain him, Amakar had plunged into the mist.

Heavy footsteps beat a hard tattoo. Others sounded, coming toward them. There was a shout; a hoarse roar from Amakar; then the Afghan's pace was resumed, while a clattering sound reechoed in his wake. Amakar had encountered another bobby in the fog. He had sprawled the officer and was keeping on his way.

Harry saw The Shadow settle back beside the steps. For a moment, he thought that his chief had been worsted in the fight; that he could not have resumed the fray with Amakar. Then, as he himself crawled laboriously forward, Harry realized that The Shadow's action was a bluff for the bobby's benefit.

Pursuit of Amakar was useless; for the fellow had made a timely flight. The Shadow could only remain and tell his story, along with Harry's. Both would describe the struggle in the fog; with their chance arrival that had come too late to save Geoffrey Chiswold.

For the sprawled man upon the steps had never budged since Harry had first spied his prone form. Death

had been swift, hard given upon the sound of his first outcry. Geoffrey Chiswold was dead; his assassins, like ghouls of the nights, had scattered through the blanket of the midnight fog.

CHAPTER VI. AT CHISWOLD CASTLE

LATE the next afternoon, two passengers alighted from a branch line train of the London and Northeastern Railway.

The name of the station was Yarwick; and the train was losing no time to move away from it. The engineer seemed to begrudge the halt that he had made. The guard, peering from the rear window of the final carriage was looking back curiously when the train took the bend. A passenger let off at Yarwick was a rarity indeed. Two such curios, seen together, were worth a prolonged survey.

One of the two who had alighted at Yarwick was The Shadow, still in the guise of Lamont Cranston. The other was a keen-eyed, sharp-faced man, whose gaze roamed everywhere. He was Inspector Eric Delka, from the Criminal Investigation Division of Scotland Yard.

A one-horse carriage had creaked up to the station. The coachman who held the reins was eyeing the two potential customers. Even the worn-out steed that drew the rickety victoria looked hopeful as it turned its head toward the platform. The rig looked like a specter from the past; a coach that had met trains before the advent of the automobile age.

The coachman clucked to attract attention. Then, as Delka looked his way, he spoke in crackly, plaintive fashion:

"Carry you to the old Prince William Inn?" he queried. "A shilling apiece, your worships, and the luggage goes to boot."

"We do not want the inn," said the Scotland Yard man. "Our destination is Chiswold Castle. Do you know the place?"

"Chiswold Castle!" croaked the driver, turning about in his seat. "'Tis nigh a half league from here, your honor. 'Twill come high to ride that distance."

"How high?"

"A crown for the pair of you, gentlemen. With the luggage to boot."

"The price is suitable. Take us to the castle." Together The Shadow and Delka embarked.

THE driver lashed with the reins. The creaky victoria rumbled toward the town of Yarwick. A quarter of a mile produced a sleepy village, with a small tavern that carried a weather-beaten sign showing the likeness of Prince William of Orange. Eric Delka smiled as the carriage rolled by.

"A historic place, Yarwick," he told The Shadow. "In the seventeenth century, it was a meeting spot for Jacobites. That was when the inn took on its name. The proprietor was anxious that the authorities should know that he was not one of the plotters."

"What of those who lived in Chiswold Castle?"

"They were strong Jacobites, particularly in the time of Bonnie Prince Charley. They supported the pretender's claim; and legend states that Prince Charley stayed at times within the castle. That, however, is doubtful. It is more likely that the only visitor was the faithful Ned Burke, the servant who stood so close to the bonnie prince.

"But we have talked enough of the past, Mr. Cranston. Let me ask you a question that concerns the present."

The Shadow displayed a slight smile.

"Some time ago," recalled Delka, "you were present in London at the time when we were troubled by a notorious rogue known as The Harvester. (Note: See The Shadow Magazine, "The London Crimes," Vol. XV, No. 2.) You were instrumental in the exposure of that dangerous criminal. Am I right in assuming that your presence then was due to more than pure chance?"

"In a sense, yes."

"I believe I understand. Another question, Mr. Cranston. Last night, you and a friend happened to arrive in Whitechapel too late to save young Geoffrey Chiswold from death. Am I correct again in assuming that it was not luck that guided you there?"

"You are right."

"I thought as much," remarked the C.I.D. man. "That is why I saw to it that you and Vincent were relieved from too much questioning."

"Vincent needed rest and medical attention. He was badly bruised during the fray."

Delka nodded; then returned to his theme.

"Also," he reminded, "I asked you to visit Chiswold Castle with me. But before we enter, I should like to have your opinion regarding the unfortunate death of Geoffrey Chiswold."

"I have formed no full opinion," returned The Shadow, in the quiet tone of Cranston. "Last night, I chanced to learn that Geoffrey Chiswold was walking to the London docks. Having met the young man at the Acropolis Club, I felt some responsibility for him. It is not always healthy to venture too near the Thames, alone and afoot, in foggy weather."

DELKA nodded his agreement.

"Vincent and I followed after Geoffrey," resumed The Shadow. "He started at Liverpool Street; we traced him through Aldgate; then into Whitechapel. The last was hardly on his route."

"Young Chiswold probably lost himself in the fog," Delka said. "A pea souper throws a man off course in unfamiliar territory."

"Perhaps you are right," said The Shadow. "However, Geoffrey was attacked and murdered. The question, therefore, is whether the deed was done by chance or by design."

"We may find out when we reach Chiswold Castle," decided Delka. "Here is the proposition. Geoffrey Chiswold gained money by the sale of his castle. He was close to debt when he did so. Apparently, he saw no danger to himself. If he had, he would have stayed away from Whitechapel."

"Therefore, his death was due to chance; unless we can learn that he had enemies. If such were the case, those of the castle would know of it. Or there might still be personal effects - letters, perhaps - which would give us clues."

"What of Geoffrey's relatives?" queried The Shadow.

"He had none in England," replied Delka. "All are dead, except his cousin Nigel, who went to India and

stayed there. The matter of family, however, is entirely absent from this case.

"Geoffrey Chiswold had no remaining estate after he sold the castle. None except the money that he received from Barton Modbury and most of that was spent. Less than a thousand pounds remain to Geoffrey's bank credit. Not a sufficient sum to show a profit to a murderer.

"No. Unless we find direct proof that Geoffrey Chiswold had enemies, I shall investigate no further. I doubt that Modbury can tell us much; for he has known young Chiswold but a short while. Visitors at the castle, however, may give us facts."

"Who are the visitors?"

"Friends who knew Geoffrey Chiswold. One is Sir Rodney Ralthorn, who has firm hold upon one corner of the beet-sugar industry. His daughter, the Honorable Gwendolyn Ralthorn, is another guest at Chiswold Castle.

"Also, her fiance, Lord Cedric Lorthing, who is a wealthy Londoner. The last of the guests is a Spaniard, Francisco Lodera. Although he has no title, Lodera belongs to a family that held high rating during the days of the Spanish monarchy. He has money, though he is not wealthy."

A brief pause while the carriage rounded a wooded stretch; then took a straight road through the glade.

"How well protected is Modbury?" inquired The Shadow.

"Quite well," replied Delka. "He has a retinue of half a dozen servants, in addition to his secretary, a man named Luval. Moreover, Modbury has kept in close touch with the local police -"

DELKA paused. The carriage had rolled suddenly from the trees. It was skirting a level stretch of cleared land. Beside the field, a tiny white cottage nestled against the green trees; while in the center of the broad open area was an airplane, its metal wings glistening in the late sunlight.

"Lodera's plane," remarked Delka. "A swift one. That must be his pilot, standing beside it. The pilot's name is Dufour."

Another stretch of woods. The carriage came to a spot where the trees opened at the left. A tang of sea breeze was apparent. Delka pointed to a rocky gulch that curved its way between craggy walls of cliff. Blue water showed in the distance.

"Castle Cove," said Delka. "I saw it marked on the map. That crag far beyond is Parrion Head. A few miles along the coast lies Darban-on-Sea, which used to be a popular resort along the drier side."

The Shadow smiled at the reference. This eastern section of England, served by the L.N.E. Railway, was commonly termed the "drier side," due to its greater prevalence of fair weather.

Trees again. The old victoria was swinging a long circle that tended directly toward the coast. A mile would have carried to the shore; but the trip was interrupted in less than half that distance. The carriage clattered to a stop in front of a massive iron gate that hung between pillars of stone.

The road had twisted full about. The Shadow and Eric Delka were coming in by the front gate that led to Chiswold Castle, which, in turn backed upon Castle Cove.

"Hello, Jeremy," greeted the driver of the carriage, as a stoop-shouldered man hobbled from a gatekeeper's lodge. "Visitors to see the folks."

"Welcome to you, sirs," acknowledged Jeremy, tugging the gate inward. "Drive to the castle, itself."

BENEATH spreading trees; past shady nooks; finally the carriage rolled out into the final opening. There, framed gray and solemn against the setting sun stood Chiswold Castle, a massive bulk of masonry that looked its full age of three hundred and fifty years.

Centuries had mellowed the edifice, taking away its prisonlike appearance. Lower windows were grated throughout the ground floor; but ivy vines had entwined about the edges, to produce a pleasant, welcoming appearance.

The corners of the castle were rounded and topped by stone bulwarks; but these portions of the building afforded the most pleasant views. Their windows showed that the rooms within must gain their full share of sunlight.

In front of the castle, where a moat had once been, was a stretch of stone porch, with short steps leading to it. Back of the porch was a massive door; above it, an iron-railed balcony that paralleled the steps below. Broad windows behind the balcony marked a front room on the second floor.

One oddity alone stood out. This was a single turret that rose higher than the third story of the castle. The turret was thin; it was set off center, for it began at the left edge of the central wall wherein the door was set. The turret had no windows; merely slits that appeared just below the circling rampart which served it as a roof.

That turret was as useless as the forgotten moat. Once it could have served as an archer's tower. Now it was no more than an ornamental relic of the past.

Shade enveloped the carriage as it rolled up to the portal of Chiswold Castle. Gloom enclosed about the visitors, for the building blocked the rays of the setting sun. There was something somber about the atmosphere that chilled Eric Delka.

The Shadow did not feel the same sensation. Instead, the smile reappeared upon his lips. This was an atmosphere of mystery that carried the touch of darkness. Such elements were to The Shadow's liking.

CHAPTER VII. THE SHADOW'S CHOICE

THE door of the castle opened as the carriage arrived before the porch. A bulky servant studied the victoria; then turned and spoke to someone within. A long limbed man with spectacles stalked out on to the porch, craned his neck, then advanced to the halted carriage.

"Good afternoon," he said, in a brisk voice. "Are you visitors to see Mr. Modbury?"

"My name is Delka," informed Delka. "Inspector from Scotland Yard. This is Mr. Lamont Cranston. He came with me from London. Yes, we should like to see Mr. Modbury."

"Who is it, Luval?"

The query boomed in a bass voice from the doorway as a heavy set, baldheaded man stepped into view. This individual was wearing knickers. He looked the part of a country gentleman.

"Visitors, Mr. Modbury," replied the spectacled man. "Inspector Delka from Scotland Yard, and Mr. Lamont Cranston."

"I've read about both of you," rumbled Modbury, picking Delka and The Shadow, in turn. "The London newspapers arrived two hours ago. Told all about that affair in Whitechapel. Dark news to us, it was."

Geoffrey Chiswold was a likable young chap, with great promise."

"Have the others heard the news from London?" inquired Delka.

"You mean my guests?" returned Modbury. "No. They have not been about since luncheon. Sir Rodney Ralthorn and Lord Cedric Lorthing are hunting grouse. Gwendolyn Ralthorn and Senor Lodera are at the tennis courts."

Modbury turned to the servant who was standing at the door. The man went back into the castle and reappeared with a stack of deck chairs. He set them upon the porch; Modbury invited his new visitors to be seated.

They had hardly taken their chairs before the sound of voices came from close by. A blonde-haired girl in tennis clothes appeared from a corner of the castle, followed by a tall, slender man who was carrying tennis racquets.

The men on the porch arose. Barton Modbury was prompt in his introductions. He presented Delka and Cranston to the Honorable Gwendolyn Ralthorn and Senor Francisco Lodera.

GWENDOLYN RALTHORN was a girl who possessed a naive charm. Her attractive face lighted when she heard that Delka was from Scotland Yard. Her blue eyes enlarged with enthusiasm. Apparently, she linked Scotland Yard with adventure.

The Shadow saw a different reaction on the part of Francisco Lodera. A frown appeared upon his sallow face. The Spaniard's dark eyes narrowed; The Shadow saw him dart a glance past Barton Modbury, who was talking to Gwendolyn and Delka.

The only possible recipient of that glance was Luval, the secretary. The Shadow saw the spectacled man look quickly to see if Modbury was watching; then Luval made a motion of his hand that Lodera detected.

Neither Modbury nor Delka noticed the move. Only The Shadow saw. Lodera's response was a friendly smile that proved his immediate relief. Then, as he heard what Delka was saying, Lodera drew closer and his face took on a look of sorrow.

"It was murder." Delka was soberly referring to the death of Geoffrey Chiswold. "Foolhardy, indeed, for him to have ventured into Whitechapel in a thick fog. Prowlers had been about in many parts of the city _"

"Poor Jeff," choked Gwendolyn. "He was so likable. I have met him frequently in London. It was through Jeff that you met father, Mr. Modbury."

"I know," nodded Modbury. Then, to Delka: "Tell me, Inspector, does there appear to be some enmity behind this foul play?"

"That is what I wish to learn," replied Delka. "You saw Chiswold recently, Mr. Modbury. Did he ever speak to you of enemies?"

"Never," said Modbury, with a shake of his head.

"Poor Jeff," murmured Gwendolyn.

"I have talked with his creditors," acknowledged Delka. "They could not help me. Nor could members at his club. He seldom talked of personal matters. I wanted to meet those who were close friends to him."

"He was a real friend to father and myself," announced Gwendolyn. "We thought that everyone liked Jeff. Didn't you, Francisco?"

The girl had turned to Lodera. The Spaniard shook his head.

"I do not recall meeting Geoffrey Chiswold," he replied. "In fact, I scarcely ever heard his name mentioned except as the former owner of this castle."

"Don't you remember meeting Jeff?" exclaimed Gwendolyn. "Twice in London. Once right here -"

"Yes," added Modbury. "You met Chiswold here, Lodera. The day before he left."

LODERA chewed his lips. It was Luval who came to his rescue. The bespectacled secretary was quick and tactful.

"I do not believe that you introduced Mr. Chiswold to Senor Lodera," he reminded Modbury. "Therefore, it is not surprising that Senor Lodera should not remember him."

Lodera smiled suavely. The Shadow saw him flash a glance of thanks to Luval. The secretary's statement passed with Modbury.

"That was deuced stupid of me," stated the deep-voiced man. "I recall it, now that you have mentioned the circumstances, Luval. I thought that Chiswold and Lodera had met -"

"And so they had!" injected Gwendolyn. "Surely, you must remember it, Francisco! Once at Lady Allerton's you -"

"Please, Gwendolyn," protested Lodera. His tone sounded pleading. "I knew of Chiswold, certainly. I did regard him as a friend. His unfortunate death distresses me. Probably, I have met him. I begin to place the man, now that the occasions have been enumerated. But I knew nothing about his business, save that he sold his castle."

"That is all I need to know," declared Delka. Lodera's sudden appeal had sounded genuine. The Spaniard actually looked distressed. "I should like, however, to make inquiry of Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric."

"Which you may do," promised Modbury, "as soon as they have returned. Meanwhile, I shall expect you and Mr. Cranston to remain here for dinner. You are also quite welcome to stay overnight, if you so desire."

IT was dinner time when Sir Rodney Ralthorn and Lord Cedric Lorthing came in from hunting.

The news of Geoffrey Chiswold's demise came as a shock to both Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric. When Delka asked them about the dead man, the two agreed immediately that Geoffrey had lacked enemies.

"Preposterous!" was Sir Rodney's opinion. Tall, red-faced, with gray hair and side whiskers, he looked emphatic when he gave it. "That young man had no enemies. His one fault was that he sometimes proved himself a gadfly. A lightweight, when judged by brain capacity. But a gentleman, always, and well liked."

"Quite so. Quite so." Lord Cedric drawled approval. He was a middle-aged, long-faced man, who wore a monocle. "I knew Geoffrey well. He could not have had enemies."

Eric Delka was impressed. Barton Modbury, however, was not entirely convinced.

"Apparently so," boomed Modbury, "but in a case like this, no stone should remain unturned. When

Geoffrey Chiswold left here, I told him that I would keep some trunks that contained his personal effects. Perhaps there may be letters among them."

"Where are they?" queried Delka.

"In one of the rooms upstairs," stated Modbury. "I shall have Luval go through them thoroughly with you. Moreover, it might be well to look elsewhere, in some of the rooms which have not yet been refurnished."

"I shall have Mund show us about, sir," put in Luval. "He knows every portion of this old castle."

"Mund is one of the former servants," explained Modbury. "Very well, Luval. How long should it take?"

"A few hours at the most, sir."

Delka turned to The Shadow.

"That means we cannot catch the early train," said the man from Scotland Yard. "At least I cannot. You will have to return to London alone, unless you care to wait."

"I must go back to London," stated The Shadow. "In fact" - he glanced at his watch - "I must leave shortly after dinner."

"I shall have a car for you," said Modbury.

"No, no," returned The Shadow. "There will be moonlight tonight. I would prefer to walk. I noticed shortcuts as we rode here."

"Very well," smiled Modbury. "It is not more than a few miles. I think you will find the walk a pleasant one."

Then, glancing at his own watch, he added:

"You must stay long enough, however, to glance about the ground floor and see some of the furniture that I have installed."

THEY adjourned to a great room across the spacious hall. Here a crackly fire threw its light and drew the slight chill from the musty walls. The Shadow admired the furniture of which Modbury had spoken.

"These have added to the older furniture that was already in the castle," explained Modbury. "Later, I shall install a grand piano. That will help to reduce the mammoth proportions of this room. But I see that the time is passing. It would be best for you to start your walk to the station, unless you will alter your decision and ride back in one of my motors."

"I have made up my mind to walk," declared The Shadow. "I must thank you for your hospitality, Mr. Modbury."

Delka had gone with Luval to make his thorough check on all of Geoffrey Chiswold's remaining effects. The Shadow said good-bye to the others; and a servant ushered him to the door. The moon had risen; its silver glow produced a new beauty to the premises about Chiswold Castle.

Strolling down the driveway, The Shadow reached the fringe of the woods. There, he paused just beneath the trees to look back toward the vast building. Gray walls held a sheen tonight; a veritable reflection of the moonlight that came from stretches where ivy streaks were thin.

Quiet persisted, except for the faint murmur from the sea. Waves rolling against the English coast; a reminder of the days when bold boatmen had brought the young pretender and his followers to these shores.

The Shadow stepped farther beneath the trees. The distant tone of breakers faded. Instead, a sinister whisper crept amid the darkness; a sibilant laugh that issued from The Shadow's lips.

Circling, The Shadow came from the woods near a corner of the castle. He approached the porch. There, from an obscure spot, he produced his bag.

The coachman had left it, along with Delka's. But The Shadow had placed his own grip to one side, before following the others into the house. No servant had spied it. Thus The Shadow had regained it from its niche beneath the wall.

Back toward the woods. There, stooping, The Shadow opened the bag. From it, he produced cloak and hat of black. Obscuring garments enshrouded his head and shoulders. Garbed in this attire, The Shadow could move abroad tonight. Here, perhaps, he would find clues - clues that he would prefer to trace alone.

WHEN Delka arrived outside two hours later, he paused to say good-bye to Barton Modbury. A servant was carrying Delka's bag, to place it in the car. Delka had forgotten about The Shadow's piece of luggage.

Both Delka and Modbury expressed themselves upon one point; namely, that the search through Geoffrey Chiswold's trunks had produced no documents of importance. That fact served as final proof that murder could not have been prearranged.

Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric were also present; but both Lodera and Luval were within the castle. Delka stepped aboard the car; it headed back toward Yarwick. When the purr of the motor faded, only the faint sound of the sea remained. The door of the castle had closed; the men on the porch had gone inside.

Then, again, came the whispered laugh. Closer - so close that it was almost from the porch itself. After that, a streak of blackness moved - scarcely visible - toward the front trees between the house and the lodge keeper's gate.

The Shadow had seen; The Shadow had heard.

The Shadow had remained.

CHAPTER VIII. THE MAN AT THE INN

AT about the time when The Shadow was observing Eric Delka's departure from Chiswold Castle, the evening down train had pulled into the little station of Yarwick. Singularly enough, the branch line local had discharged a passenger.

The local cabby with the old victoria was waiting by the station. His luck during the afternoon had brightened him. The arrival of another fare upon the evening train was something that he had not anticipated, yet which he accepted with relish.

"Carry you to the inn, your worship?"

At the coachman's conventional greeting, the arrival turned about beneath the dingy glow of a platform light. For the first time, the coach driver discerned him clearly. He gripped the reins and stared.

Viewed from the back, the passenger had made a huddled figure, for his shoulders had held a definite stoop. When he turned, he produced a muffled sight, for the collar of his old overcoat was turned high above his chin, while the brim of his battered felt hat pointed almost perpendicularly downward.

He was making an effort to hide his face; yet the driver of the victoria spied it, thanks to the angle of the light. The features that he saw were waxlike; broad, yet expressionless, with lips that held a fixed position.

THE man on the platform must have noticed the coach driver's start, for he hastily closed the front of his coat collar with one gloved hand. When he spoke, his voice was gruff; it was also muffled deeply within the protecting cloth.

"Take me to the inn," he ordered, approaching the victoria. "To the Prince William Inn."

"A shilling's the fare," announced the driver, dubious about this odd-looking customer, "and the luggage goes to boot."

"I have no luggage," growled the muffled man.

He stepped aboard the old carriage. The driver clucked to the horse and the rubber-tired wheels jounced over the ruts of the old station road. They rolled through darkness; the coachman urged his horse to greater speed.

The dim lights of the little town came as a relief to the old coachman. He slackened his tiring horse and drew up in front of the Prince William Inn. When he did so, he nervily chose a spot close by one of the few lamp posts; then turned about to announce the destination. It was then that he saw the passenger's face again.

It no longer looked like wax. It was more like parchment, smooth and fixed. The eyelids appeared to be the only live portion of the rider's countenance. From beneath them, the coach driver caught a sharp, questioning gaze.

"Here we are, your honor -"

The passenger grunted something; then alighted from the victoria. He handed the driver a shilling and a sixpence for a tip. He managed the matter clumsily, for his hands were still gloved. Then, turning on his heel, the newcomer went into the inn.

THE Prince William Inn boasted a main room that might once have been occupied by its royal namesake, for the place looked to be three hundred years old. It was illuminated by kerosene lamps, plus a sparkling log flame in the grate. One corner formed a sort of desk; by that counter was a doorway that led into a small barroom, which was well lighted by lamps.

The proprietor, a man with a heavy black mustache, was behind the desk when the muffled guest approached. He eyed the stranger suspiciously; then brought a lamp from a ledge beside him and placed it upon the counter. The new guest shied away.

"How much are your rooms?" he inquired, gruffly, holding his coat collar more tightly to his chin. "By the week, I mean?"

"Two and six the night, sir," responded the proprietor. "Twelve and six by the week. A guinea for a fortnight -"

"By the week will suit me," gruffed the stranger. "Twelve and six, you say?"

The proprietor nodded.

"I have no luggage," stated the new guest. "I shall pay you in advance."

He drew a crumpled ten-shilling note from his pocket and thrust it across the counter. Then, clumsy with his gloved hand, he produced some silver and clattered a half crown in front of the proprietor. This coin, the equivalent of two shillings and sixpence, made up the necessary difference.

"Show me to the room."

As the guest spoke, his collar slipped slightly. The proprietor, for the first time, gained a fair view of his visage. The mustached innkeeper drew his breath with a sharp whistle. Then, as the guest moved toward a flight of stairs, the proprietor arose from behind the counter.

There was a registration book upon the desk; but the stranger had not signed. Nor did the proprietor care to press the matter upon this occasion. The face that he had seen might have been a plaster death mask, with coloring that looked like flesh-tinted grease paint!

Taking a pair of candlesticks from a corner of the counter, the proprietor lighted the wicks and led the way upstairs. The stranger followed him; the proprietor nudged open a door that stood ajar and placed the candles upon the mantel of a small room. He turned about and saw the guest staring toward the window. Gingerly, the innkeeper sidled to the door.

Leaving the room, the proprietor closed the door behind him, then moved slowly toward the stairs. Immediately, he heard the click of a key in the lock. The new guest apparently did not wish to be disturbed.

THE proprietor was nervous when he reached the desk. He heard voices from the barroom and went in there, anxious for company. By the bar, he saw the coachman who had driven the victoria. The fellow was holding a huge mug of ale.

"'Twas a great day," he was bragging. Then, seeing the proprietor, "Aye, a great day, Mr. Mullock. Comes two passengers to Yarwick platform and asks to be carried to Chiswold Castle. A crown is the cost, says I, with the luggage carried to boot."

"And this man tonight?" queried Mullock.

Chauncey spluttered; then coughed as he set his mug aside.

"'Twere different tonight," he confided. "'Twas only one fare that I brought from Yarwick platform. Not like their worships. 'Twas the face of him I did not like -"

The sound of a stopping motor came from outside the inn. A big Humber had halted; its chauffeur, a stocky man, was peering in at the door. Mullock and Chauncey recognized him as one of the new retinue at Chiswold Castle.

"When does the up train depart?" asked the chauffeur. "I have a gentleman here for Yarwick platform. He has noted that our time-table is an old one."

"One up train has gone," informed Chauncey. "'Tis an hour yet before the last will call at Yarwick platform."

Another man had appeared at the door. It was Eric Delka, in time to hear the coachman's statement. Delka turned to the chauffeur who had brought him in Modbury's car.

"Ride back to the castle," said Delka. "There is no need for you to wait. I can use this man's victoria to reach the station."

The chauffeur nodded and departed. Delka strolled past the bar and saw the door into the main room. He was about to enter there when he heard Mullock speak to Chauncey.

"The face of the man upstairs," queried the proprietor, in an anxious tone. "You saw it, Chauncey?"

"Aye," nodded the coachman, gripping the mug handle as he spoke. "Aye. Nor was it human; unless 'twas the face of a corpse."

Delka paused to listen.

"I saw the face, too," remarked the innkeeper in an awed tone. "It might have been wax, or plaster."

"'Twas like parchment," protested the coachman. "Save for the color of it. The cheeks were ruddy; the lips were straight."

"But did they move?"

"Nay. Nor could I see them. 'Twas close about his chin that he kept the collar of his coat."

Mullock raised his hands for silence. Footsteps were coming from the stairs, a steady, descending beat. Chauncey sifted along the bar and gripped his mug more tightly. Nervously, he began to gulp his ale.

Mullock withdrew. The barmaid looked frightened. Delka, fully stirred by these odd actions, decided to wait where he was. He edged back from the door. He heard the approach of footsteps; then saw the man who had been mentioned.

THE new guest was still wearing his hat and coat. From the position that he took in the doorway, he faced Mullock, Chauncey and the barmaid; and kept his features well hidden. He must have felt searching eyes upon him, for he pressed his collar to his lips before he spoke.

"I am going out to view the moonlight." The stranger spoke mechanically. "I shall return presently."

Delka, from his point of observation, caught a better glimpse of the man's face than did the others. Remembering their statements, the Scotland Yard man was able to note the parchmentlike features, from the half-face view that he gained. They were right. The lips did not move!

Turning about, the mysterious guest stalked out through the main room. They heard the front door close; then his footsteps vanished as they struck soft turf.

"'Tis a ghoul, he is!" breathed Chauncey. The coachman's hand was trembling. "A werewolf that seeks the moonlight. If we hear strange howls on this night, 'twill be the foul fiend in him -"

The barmaid uttered a half shriek. Mullock tremblingly moved forward and gripped Chauncey's arm.

"Hush!" he whispered to the coachman "Would you drive all guests from my inn?"

Eric Delka spoke to the proprietor.

"Have you a room for the night?" queried the Scotland Yard man. "I believe that I shall not go up to London. The Warwick air is healthy at this season."

The innkeeper looked grateful. The barmaid suppressed another shriek. Chauncey stared; then let his

mug jounce empty from his hand. He watched Delka go with Mullock into the large room. Then, with an air of satisfaction, the coachman nodded and spoke to the barmaid.

"'Tis a fine gentleman," he affirmed. "This one comes from London. 'Twas he that I took to Chiswold Castle, with a friend, this very day."

DELKA did not hear the approval. He was making his arrangements for the night. He signed the register. Mullock carried his bag upstairs, holding one lighted candle while Delka carried another. Delka saw the proprietor glance anxiously at a closed door; they passed it and came to another across the hall.

This was to be Delka's room; and the C.I.D. man knew that the other guest must be occupying the one where the innkeeper had shown anxiousness. Delka waited until Mullock had gone; then he snuffed out the candles and drew a large chair to the window.

From this seat, Eric Delka could see the front street outside the inn. He watched Chauncey come from the barroom and drive away in his clattery victoria. Silence lay outside the Prince William Inn.

Dim lamps still laid a glow beneath unstirring trees. Beyond, where branches thinned, patches of moonlight whitened the ground. Eric Delka gazed, a man on vigil.

He was waiting here to spy the return of the stranger with the wax-made face.

CHAPTER IX. JEREMY MEETS A GHOST

BACK at Chiswold Castle, the last light had blinked out shortly after the return of the big Humber landaulet. The chauffeur had driven the automobile into an ancient stable off from the castle; then a light had appeared in upstairs quarters above the improvised garage. Soon after, that light had been extinguished.

Moonlight still remained, and its mellow glow showed a rising shape that came from a narrow fringe of trees behind the castle. There, The Shadow had delved among the craglike rocks that topped the gorge called Castle Cove. He had returned toward the castle when he had heard the car return.

Moving between the castle and the stable, The Shadow followed a circling, well-planned course. He was keeping his tall figure inconspicuous, against the background of shadowy trees. There were spaces, however, where he was forced to come into the open. At those stretches, his glide became more rapid.

Nearing the front corner of the castle, The Shadow came to a sudden pause. He had caught a sound from above: the swinging clatter of a casement window. Halted, The Shadow became a blackened statue in the moonlight. His keen eyes peered upward from beneath the brim of his slouch hat.

Someone was at the second story, looking downward. Someone whom The Shadow could not discern. That person, however, had gained an opportunity to spy the blackened figure on the lawn. The Shadow had stopped because he knew that a moving shape would more probably attract attention than a stilled one.

Behind The Shadow, away from the castle, was the protecting shade of a large tree. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, he began a backward course. He was sure that eyes were watching him; that some wondering observer could not quite identify his shape as a human one. Hence The Shadow was deliberate in motion.

Branches, stirred by a slight sea breeze, were flickering their shaded mass upon the moonlighted turf. The Shadow, too, was wavering. His own shadow formed a blackened streak that extended forward from his

figure. The staring person from the second-floor window would have difficulty in determining whether or not The Shadow's form was solid.

Then, when The Shadow had eased back into shelter, all chance was ended. His own shadow withdrew a bit more rapidly, until it was blended with the streaky darkness from the boughs. Gliding deeper into blackness, The Shadow heard the casement window close.

Keeping to new patches of blackness, The Shadow rounded the front of the castle and held close to trees and shrubbery that formed a helpful line. He was nearing the woods about the front drive when he came to another pause.

The new reason for a halt was the bobbing of a lantern that came from between the castle and stable. The light was approaching the spot where The Shadow stood.

OBSCURED by darkness, The Shadow waited. The light drew nearer. By the lantern's glow, The Shadow recognized old Jeremy. The gatekeeper was carrying the lantern in his left hand; over the crook of his right elbow, he held an ancient fowling piece that looked like the modern replica of a blunderbuss.

The Shadow waited until Jeremy had passed; then followed. The gatekeeper kept on until he reached his lodge. The Shadow saw the lantern bob from view. He spied a gloomy window and approached it, to look into the main downstairs room of the gate lodge. Thanks to a broken, unpatched pane, The Shadow could hear as well as see.

Jeremy's wife had been seated by the firelight. Jeremy, entering, had kept the lantern lighted. He was placing it upon a table when The Shadow observed him. Holding close to the window, The Shadow saw Jeremy shake his head and pick up a clay pipe.

"Ill news, good wife," announced the gatekeeper, in a sorrowful tone. "'Twas in the castle that I heard it, from Mr. Modbury's own lips, ere I began my rounds of the castle ground."

"Ill news?" queried the woman, in a tired tone.

"Aye," nodded Jeremy. "Ill news from London town. Our good master, Geoffrey, was done to death last night."

The woman delivered a sad sigh.

"'Twas on his account that the gentlemen came down from London," concluded Jeremy. "Friends they were to Master Geoffrey, in hope that they might learn who did ill to him."

"Did they learn aught?"

"Nay. 'Twas bad men who roam through London that did the evil. They fell upon poor Master Geoffrey, amidst a great fog."

"'Twas good to us he was, young Master Geoffrey." The woman arose and took the lantern from the table. "Ah! 'Tis an ill world, Jeremy. May naught come to hurt the new master at the great castle. 'Tis he that we serve now."

Jeremy puffed sourly at his pipe.

"Mayhap if Master Geoffrey had held more money, he could have done better with us," observed the old gatekeeper. "'Twas kindness alone that he could give. 'Twould be a sin, Katrine, to think less of him than our new Master Modbury. Ah, Peace be to our dead Master Geoffrey."

The woman had started up the stairs, leaving old Jeremy mumbling and shaking his head. It was obvious that the bad news had hurt him more deeply. That was natural, for the gatekeeper was in closer touch with matters at the castle than was his wife.

The firelight showed old Jeremy seated with bowed head, puffing his pipe in disconsolate fashion. So deep was he in meditation that a new sound did not at first attract his attention. The Shadow heard the noise before Jeremy. It was a cautious tapping at the front door of the lodge.

JEREMY heard it at last. Watching from the side window, The Shadow saw the gatekeeper arouse himself and look toward the fowling piece. Then, disregarding the old gun, Jeremy went to the door and opened it. A man stepped into the darkened fringe of the room.

The newcomer was muffled, coat collar high and hat pressed low. His eyes sparkled in the dim light; but his face was difficult to see. As he stepped toward the fire, The Shadow caught an earlier glimpse than Jeremy.

The stranger's face was lifeless, almost waxen. His lips did not move when he mumbled a greeting; and gave the excuse of being cold, as a pretext to step past Jeremy and approach the fire. The late visitor to the gatekeeper's abode was the mysterious man who had recently left the old Prince William inn.

Jeremy followed the man and watched him peel off his brown kid gloves. The gatekeeper became suddenly suspicious. He reached for the fowling piece. The man at the fireplace stepped back and saw the action. He hissed for caution; the order made Jeremy act more stubbornly. The gatekeeper yanked up the gun.

As counter move, the man by the fireplace threw back his coat collar and whipped away his hat. Seeing the solidified features for the first time, Jeremy became more antagonistic. He thrust his finger to the trigger of the gun; then uttered an incoherent gasp.

The man by the fireplace had pressed both hands to his cheeks; then dropping them, he had carried away his face! In place of that mask that he had worn, he revealed pallid features that Jeremy recognized. Dropping his gun, Jeremy quivered. His lips blurted an awed whisper:

"Master Geoffrey!"

Another hiss for caution. The man at the fireplace stepped toward Jeremy. The gatekeeper tried to back away.

"Nay! Nay!" gasped Jeremy. "'Tis no ill that I have spoken! Nay! Do not haunt me! May your spirit rest _"

HANDS clutched Jeremy's arm. The gatekeeper's face became distorted. He thought that he was viewing a ghost; he expected a clammy, unearthly touch. Instead, this man whom he took for Geoffrey Chiswold was seizing him with the firm grip of a human being.

"'Tis alive!" panted Jeremy. "'Tis Master Geoffrey, in living flesh! Dead, you were so they said -"

"Geoffrey Chiswold is dead."

The words were cold as they came from slowly moving lips. Once again, Jeremy trembled, for he was staring at a whitish face. This was a ghost; he was sure a specter that had gained power to enter its forgotten corpse.

Too scared to even mutter, Jeremy sagged to his knees, his hands raised pleadingly. The Shadow,

watching steadily from the window, saw a smile appear upon the face of the man from the night.

The Shadow waited, never stirring. Strange though this scene might be, he had divined the outcome. He was ready for the explanation that was due to come.

CHAPTER X. THE MASK CHANGES

"GEOFFREY CHISWOLD is dead."

Again, the pallid man repeated his statement; and Jeremy's hands raised farther as they trembled. Then came added words:

"But I am not Geoffrey Chiswold."

Jeremy blinked and stared upward.

"Not Geoffrey," repeated the supposed ghost. "Look closely, Jeremy. You will remember me."

Thus encouraged, Jeremy arose. In the flicker of the firelight, he stared, still quivering. Then sheer puzzlement enabled him to speak.

"'Tis the face - the face of Master Geoffrey," stammered the gatekeeper. "'Tis the nose - the eyes - but -"

He paused; then, half questioning, he gasped:

"Master Nigel?"

The pale-faced man broadened his wise smile.

"Yes," he affirmed. "I am Nigel Chiswold. I am back from India. I have come to find you, Jeremy, as one would seek an old friend."

"Master Nigel! And 'tis cold you be, and pale from it. Warm yourself by the hearth, sir. 'Tis a nip I can find for you, against the cold -"

He was moving toward the stairs. Nigel stopped him.

"Wait. Never mind that, Jeremy. No one must know that I am here. Do not go upstairs until I have left. You would arouse your wife. Come! Sit beside the fire and hear what I have to tell you."

NIGEL sat down upon a three-legged stool and Jeremy chose a similar resting place. The gatekeeper watched his visitor shed his coat and throw it beside his hat. He saw that Nigel was heavily clad, wearing a sweater beneath the coat of his thick suit.

"I have come here alone," declared Nigel, eyeing Jeremy carefully, "because I must avenge the murder of my cousin. That is my mission, Jeremy."

"The murder?" echoed Jeremy.

"Yes," nodded Nigel. "Geoffrey was murdered. Those who slew him may be here, in Chiswold Castle."

Jeremy blinked; then shook his head emphatically.

"Nay!" he objected. "'Tis an honorable man, is Master Modbury. Nor was he in London, last night. 'Twas a good friend he was to Master Geoffrey -"

"I said nothing of Modbury," put in Nigel, quickly. "There are others here beside him."

"Good people all. Folk who would do no ill to anyone. Nor have they come or gone -"

"I understand. But you must listen, Jeremy. Geoffrey was killed by men in London. Someone dispatched them to that work. Those who ordered them to slay - whether one or many - are to be held responsible.

"I did not know that you had learned about Geoffrey's death. That is why I came here as I did, thinking that you would take me for Geoffrey, but not as his ghost. So you have learned, eh? At the castle, I suppose?"

Jeremy nodded and mumbled: "Aye."

"And upon whom did they place the blame?" queried Nigel.

"Upon no one," returned Jeremy. "So Master Modbury told me. Upon no one who sought Master Geoffrey's life. 'Twas bad men, roaming the fog, who slew him in London town."

"Footpads, eh?"

"Aye."

Nigel smiled and looked relieved. Then his tone became shrewd as he began new argument.

"That is the story that would be told," he declared. "Perhaps it is true. Yet there is a chance that someone in the castle knew that the attempt would be made."

"I cannot believe that to be so, Master Nigel -"

"Remember, Jeremy, that I talked with Geoffrey only an hour before he died."

"He feared ill?"

"He did. From the way he spoke, I decided that his life must be in danger."

"He spoke of those in the castle?"

"He warned me not to come here."

JEREMY pondered, puffing his clay pipe as he stared at the fire. The Shadow, watching Nigel's face, gained a full explanation of varied circumstances. First, he knew how Harry Vincent had happened to lose Geoffrey's trail; the agent had followed Nigel instead. Second, he had the answer to the strange puzzle of Geoffrey's change in attire. Yet The Shadow had already anticipated these discoveries. Delka had mentioned Geoffrey's cousin, Nigel.

A third point, however, was clear to The Shadow. He knew why Nigel Chiswold had become relieved when Jeremy had attributed Geoffrey's death to persons unknown. Nigel had feared that his own name might have been mentioned in connection. Learning that it had not, Nigel felt secure.

As a trump card, Nigel had told of his meeting with Geoffrey, an encounter which The Shadow had already pictured. The Shadow had thought it likely that Nigel would bob up. He had picked the gatekeeper's lodge as the point of contact; and had followed Jeremy for that reason. Nigel's visit had taken place sooner than The Shadow had believed it would.

"I came to Yarwick." Nigel was speaking again. "I wore hat, coat and mask, when I stopped at the

Prince William Inn. I told them I would remain there for a week. That was in case I could not find a friend here. You, Jeremy."

The gatekeeper looked up curiously.

"We owe it to Geoffrey," persisted Nigel, smoothly. "I, his cousin; you, his faithful gatekeeper. We must learn all that goes on within Chiswold Castle. We must be sure that no guilty person is staying there."

Jeremy was nodding. Nigel's tone was convincing, and the gatekeeper was recalling that the castle harbored several persons other than his new benefactor, Barton Modbury.

"Where will you stay?" queried Jeremy. "The gamekeeper's cot, would it do? 'Tis but half a mile along the path that leads from the castle drive. 'Tis the only place, for the cottage beside the distant field is taken. 'Tis there that the airman stays."

"The airman?"

"Aye. The one named Dufour, who guides the plane owned by Mr. Lodera."

"Francisco Lodera, the Spaniard? Is he a guest at the castle?"

"Aye."

"I have heard of him. He belonged to Geoffrey's set. But never mind Lodera for the present. I shall not stay at the gamekeeper's cot. I shall enter the castle."

"The castle!"

JEREMY looked astounded. Nigel smiled; then spoke after a moment's hesitation.

"There are secrets to the castle, Jeremy," he explained. "Secrets known to the Chiswolds alone. One is the old spy room in the turret. It can be reached."

"From within the castle?"

"Yes. From the large room on the second floor."

"But 'tis a task to enter there -"

"I know another means of entrance. The one used by the friends of Bonnie Prince Charley, when they came by sea. The way that Ned Burke used. Through the chamber where there was space for a hundred men should they be needed -"

Nigel broke off abruptly, as if telling Jeremy too much. He put a question.

"Who of the old servants are at the castle?"

"Only Mund," replied Jeremy. "'Twas one by one they left, when money came hard with Master Geoffrey."

"Mund would have been the last," nodded Nigel. "He could not have found position elsewhere. Dull and stupid, he would serve anyone who paid him."

Jeremy nodded in agreement.

"Since you know nothing of the spy room," chuckled Nigel, "I doubt that Mund does. Well, Jeremy, I

shall depend upon you. I have food for a while" - he patted the stuffed pockets of his coat - "and when I need more, I shall signal."

"From the turret?"

"Yes. With blinks of a flashlight, at night. I shall let down a cord that I have with me, together with notes. You can send up provisions, unless you feel that it would not be safe."

"'Twould be safe enough, Master Nigel. 'Tis my task to make the rounds at night."

"Good. And later, Jeremy, you may expect a visitor; I do not know what night he will arrive; but you will know him by his password. It is 'Khyber.' Can you remember it?"

"'Khyber'," repeated Jeremy.

Nigel arose from the stool.

"Take those clothes," he said, pointing to his hat and overcoat. "Hide them somewhere at once - outside this lodge. So that your wife will not find them. Put the mask with them, Jeremy.

"And remember" - his tone was low and emphatic - "I trust in you. Breathe no word of this meeting. Tell no one that I am here. No one, except the friend who says the one word: 'Khyber'."

JEREMY nodded firmly. Nigel studied him shrewdly; then clapped a friendly hand upon the gatekeeper's shoulder. With that, Nigel turned and left the cottage. The Shadow heard him go along the driveway, through the darkness; but The Shadow did not stir. He was watching Jeremy.

The old gatekeeper was standing stolid, holding his clay pipe. Minutes passed; then Jeremy came to life. He bundled the coat and hat and gingerly added the mask to them. He opened the door and tiptoed out into the darkness.

The Shadow moved to the corner of the lodge. He saw Jeremy moving toward the high picket fence that led from beside the gate. The Shadow followed.

Jeremy stooped in a patch of moonlight. He moved about; then arose without the bundle and went back into the lodge. The Shadow waited a few moments, then approached the spot where the gatekeeper had been. He found the hat, coat and mask wedged deeply into an abandoned drain pipe that was almost obscured by overhanging turf.

Carrying the bundle with him, The Shadow returned to the edge of the driveway and started toward the castle. He was too far behind to pick up Nigel's trail. He had another objective.

He stopped amid the trees, blinked a tiny flashlight and found his bag at a place where he had stowed it. Taking the bag with the bundle, he continued, giving new blinks cautiously until he found the path that Nigel had mentioned.

He followed this course until he had gone nearly half a mile. Then he used the flashlight regularly until he picked out an obscure building deep in the trees. It was the gamekeeper's cot; a tiny, one-room structure. The Shadow entered.

He found loose boards in the bare floor and pried them upward. Beneath them, The Shadow stowed his bag. He slid off his cloak and slouch hat, to put those garments in the same hiding place. Then he used the flashlight on the bundle that he carried.

A WHISPERED laugh stirred strange echoes within the narrow walls. A slight sound followed; then the flashlight blinked finally upon the barren boards. The bundle was gone; a huddled figure stalked from the little cot. It turned along the path, taking a shortcut toward the town of Yarwick.

Moonlight from amid the trees showed a duplicate of the figure that had entered Jeremy's lodge. The glow revealed the same expressionless face that Nigel Chiswold had worn, held in place by the same coat collar and the identical felt hat.

The mask had changed. It was worn by a different person than the one who had first used it. The mystery man with the corpse-like face was due to return to the Prince William Inn.

But the stranger who returned would not be the one that had left. The Shadow had replaced Nigel Chiswold.

CHAPTER XI. TRAILS DIVERGE

IT was morning. All was peaceful about the Prince William Inn, so far as external appearances were concerned. But the three men who occupied the lobby room were holding secret thoughts of their own.

One was Mullock, the innkeeper; he was solemn behind his counter. The second was Chauncey, the coachman. He was just within the door, toying with his whip, but anxious. The third, apparently the least concerned, was Eric Delka. All were waiting the descent of the mysterious stranger.

Mullock had heard him come in late last night. Chauncey had only guessed that the stranger had returned. But Delka had seen and heard. Watching from his front window, the C.I.D. man had once again observed the man with the mask.

He had listened while the curious visitor had come upstairs and unlocked the door of his room. He had heard him lock the door from within. Then Delka had napped until morning. He had come downstairs as early as the proprietor.

IN his upstairs room, The Shadow was seated before a mirror. Propped against the wall was Nigel Chiswold's mask, a piece of workmanship that commanded admiration. Nigel had certainly bought it in London. Made of a flexible composition, the false face formed an excellent replica of a human visage.

Except that it was lifeless. The mask maker had not prepared this device to serve the use to which Nigel had put it. That was why Nigel had made every effort to cover his lips while speaking. A bad feature of his impromptu disguise. One which The Shadow intended to remedy.

Upon the table lay two objects. One was the key to the room. The Shadow had found it in the pocket of Nigel's discarded overcoat; it had the door number, and because of that, The Shadow had experienced no trouble in locating Nigel's room. The other object on the table was a small, flat box.

A portable make-up kit. One that The Shadow had expressly carried for this journey. He had opened it; his nimble fingers were at work. They were kneading The Shadow's own visage, changing it from its former appearance - the features of Lamont Cranston.

Puttylike substance dabbed from finger tips. Grease paint was drawn from the box. Eyebrows changed their shape. The Shadow's countenance took on an amazing change, yet a swift one. The final touches were slower, with daubs of paint. Then the hands dropped; The Shadow stared at the mirror.

His face was the absolute image of the mask that rested against the wall!

A soft laugh from new lips. A slow, lifelike smile. A few more touches; The Shadow held the mask

beside his own countenance, to compare both as the mirror's range. The job was perfect.

The Shadow donned hat and overcoat; he tucked the mask out of sight, beneath his coat. Rising, he pocketed the make-up kit; then unlocked the door of his room and went downstairs. Solemn of expression, he pulled his hat a trifle forward when he saw the three men who looked in his direction.

Delka's presence was a surprise to The Shadow. One that thrust him into a campaign of strategy. He had suspected that persons at the inn would be doubtful about Nigel Chiswold. It had become his purpose to end that feeling, in order that no one might guess that the stranger was here for a secret purpose. But The Shadow had not known that Inspector Delka had chanced across Nigel's path.

His reasons for pretense had become much greater, now that The Shadow knew. For it was essential that the law should remain away from Chiswold Castle until after The Shadow had studied matters there. The Shadow knew that he must deal with Delka.

In muffled tone, The Shadow gave a good morning. He strolled to the fireplace and studied the dying embers. Then, with his back to all three men, he let his coat collar fall.

"Will you have breakfast, sir?" queried Mullock, suddenly.

The question was loud; intended to make The Shadow turn. As if startled, he swung about, groped at his coat collar but failed to raise it. Then, with a slow nod, he replied:

"Yes. I shall breakfast here."

THREE men gaped; Delka was as astounded as his provincial companions. The Shadow, in speaking, had moved his lips. His countenance, seen by daylight, lacked the lifelessness of the face that they had seen the night before!

Having decided to breakfast at the inn, The Shadow discarded his hat and coat. In removing the latter, he folded it so that the mask was lost beneath the coat. The proprietor called a servant; a table was laid in a corner of the main room.

Delka had not breakfasted. Strolling over, he introduced himself to The Shadow, who, in turn, announced himself as Professor Roderick Danglar, of Cambridge. In manner, in tone of voice, The Shadow's present guise differed from that of Lamont Cranston. Delka, when they ate together, did not suspect that this pretended professor was his companion of the day before.

He did, however, gain the impression that Professor Danglar would be a man worth watching. The Shadow, in fact, tried to convey that thought to the C.I.D. man; and he succeeded. As the meal progressed, Delka became more and more determined upon a duty; namely, to trail Professor Danglar wherever he might go.

The Shadow's breakfast discourse concerned the fen lands, which bordered on this district. His comments, delivered in the dry way of a pedagogue, brought Mullock over to listen.

"The fen region," stated The Shadow, "consists of an area which was once a bay from the North Sea. The estuary called The Wash is the last remaining portion. The silt-filled lowlands which have replaced the former bay now compose the fens.

"Originally, the fens were boggy. Since dykes now protect them from the sea and the rivers which flow through them, the fens are fertile land, much akin to the lowlands of Holland. Imagine it! Half a million acres of English soil, that match the famous Netherlands!"

"I have traveled across the fens," remarked Delka, "but I have seen nothing of great interest in the district."

"Because you have not studied it. The fens are interesting because of the old ruins. The Romans made efforts to drain the lowlands. So did the early British and the Danes. Ancient embankments and causeways still survive."

Mullock was nodding as he listened.

"Later," continued The Shadow, "windmills were used to pump water from the fens. Attempts at reclamation were conducted on a large scale; but at one period - during the time of Cromwell - they met with stiff opposition."

"From whom?"

DELKA made the query in a tone of real surprise. He had not studied the past history of the fens.

"From the fen dwellers," clucked The Shadow. "Rough men who preferred to walk about on stilts through the marshy land. These native fenmen had rights of commonage, fishing and fowling; also the privilege of turbary - otherwise turf-cutting."

"Aye." The statement came from Mullock. "And there are places where the fens are still wild, where men dwell yet -"

"I know," interposed The Shadow. "Those are the lands which I have come to visit. I wish to study the so-called islands of high ground that exist among the marshes. To search for Roman ruins and to hear the primitive dialect, speech of the fen dwellers."

Finishing his bowl of strawberries and clotted Devonshire cream, The Shadow arose and picked up hat and coat. He strolled from the inn so briskly that Delka could find no immediate excuse to follow. It was several minutes before the C.I.D. man could determine upon a purpose. Then he decided to go to the station.

Walking to that destination, Delka found a station agent on duty. The C.I.D. man dispatched a long telegram to Scotland Yard, asking for information concerning Professor Roderick Danglar of Cambridge. That done, Delka went back to the inn, hoping that his quarry had returned.

Hardly had Delka left the station before a figure stepped from a furze which formed a thicket near the road. It was The Shadow, no longer wearing coat and hat. Instead, he was carrying a package wrapped in a newspaper that he had purchased.

The Shadow entered the station and sent a telegram of his own. He left the package in the agent's keeping, to be delivered to a Mr. Ralph Jamison, whenever he should inquire for it.

The Shadow's telegram was addressed to Ralph Jamison, in London; and it mentioned the package at Yarwick. Hence the agent took the whole matter as one of mere routine.

BACK at the Prince William Inn, Eric Delka waited for half an hour. Then Chauncey appeared. The coachman had left while Delka and The Shadow were eating breakfast. He had come back with news. He spoke to both Mullock and Delka.

"'Tis a message I bring," declared Chauncey. "It comes from Professor Danglar. He is tramping off to Highchurch, nigh a league from here. From Highchurch, he will fare to the fens, another two leagues beyond."

Delka calculated in terms of miles. Three miles to Highchurch; six more to the border of the nearest fenland. Delka decided to hire Chauncey's victoria. Soon he was riding toward Highchurch over rough ground where progress was slow.

At Highchurch, Delka made inquiry. He learned that Professor Danglar had gone on to a hamlet where there were persons who knew the fens. Delka took up the trail by carriage; but he realized that the old victoria, following rough, twisty roads, could not beat the speed of a man on foot, who chose short-cut by-paths.

Reaching the hamlet, Delka talked with the natives. He found out that Professor Danglar had obtained a pair of stilts and had gone to visit the wooded Isle of Dean, close to the watery marshes of The Wash. Delka learned also that the Isle of Dean could be reached by boat, should anyone choose to take a roundabout route.

Delka paid Chauncey and sent the carriage driver back to Yarwick. Then he set out on foot, to take a ten-mile hike that would bring him to the channels where the boatmen dwelt. Chauncey started back along the road to Highchurch.

After one league, he heard a hail. Chauncey stopped and gaped when he saw a tall figure stepping from a path. It was The Shadow, still guised as Professor Danglar, carrying a pair of long stilts. He put them aboard the victoria, stepped into the carriage and ordered Chauncey to take him into Highchurch.

"I shall stop there for the day," The Shadow told Chauncey. "Tonight, I may walk back to Yarwick; or else remain in Highchurch. At any rate, I shall leave these stilts at Highchurch. They are a burden and I am already tired from my walk. It would be too great an effort to visit the fens today."

Chauncey no longer feared the stranger, particularly during daylight. As they rode into Highchurch, he told The Shadow of Delka's expedition. A smile appeared upon the lips that had failed to move last night.

Leaving the carriage at Highchurch, The Shadow went to a tiny inn for lunch. Chauncey drove back to Yarwick; hence he was not present to see The Shadow start out on another hike, without his stilts. This time, The Shadow again moved in the direction of the fens; but soon he altered his course. He took a short cross-country route in the direction of Chiswold Castle.

Trails had diverged. Eric Delka had gone off on a blind course. The Shadow, with mid-afternoon approaching, was returning to his only goal, Chiswold Castle.

CHAPTER XII. NIGHT BRINGS ITS SHADOW

DUSK had settled about Chiswold Castle. Heavy clouds had obscured the setting sun; though they did not threaten rain, those clouds predicted that moonlight would be absent. A huge lull had settled along the fringes of the woods. The only spot where light remained was in the broad clearing that served as a flying field.

Dufour, the pilot, was standing beside Lodera's monoplane. Puffing a cigarette, the airman showed a furrowed face as he looked toward the roadway that led from Chiswold Castle. Dufour had been staring frequently in that direction, during the last hour.

There was another person present near the plane, one whom Dufour had scarcely noticed. This was an old rustic, stooped of shoulders and dull of eye, who leaned upon an improvised cane that had recently been a tree bough. The fellow's face was fringed with a round rim of tangly whiskers. He was puffing at an old clay pipe.

Such visitors were not uncommon. They came at intervals to gawk at the plane. When children appeared, Dufour usually ordered them from the premises; but he never bothered about the older persons of this district. They could stand and gawk for hours, for all Dufour cared.

A clatter from the road. Dufour nodded to himself. The beat of horse hoofs thudded from dried ground. A trio of riders approached and drew rein. They were from the castle; and the group consisted of Lord Cedric Lorthing, Gwendolyn Ralthorn and Francisco Lodera.

The latter alone dismounted. Gwendolyn reached out and held the horse's bridle, while Lodera spoke with Dufour.

"You are to fly to London, tomorrow," Lodera told the pilot. "Take off at dawn. After you have reached Croydon, go at once to the city."

Dufour nodded. Lodera pulled a letter from his pocket and was about to hand it to the pilot when he noted the old rustic standing by.

"Who is he?" queried Lodera, in a low tone.

"Only a gawker," replied Dufour. "You can't keep these countrymen away during the daytime."

"Do they ever come about at night?"

Dufour shook his head. Lodera appeared relieved. Nevertheless, he made a gesture toward the cottage.

"You have pen and ink inside?"

Dufour nodded.

"Come along then," decided Lodera. "I shall give you another note of introduction. One that will make your task easier when you arrive in London. Remember: you must be back before nightfall."

"Quite a simple matter."

LODERA and Dufour went toward the cottage. The old rustic remained, smoking his pipe. Gwendolyn spoke to Lord Cedric.

"Really," declared the girl, nervously, "we should be riding back toward the castle. I hope that Francisco hurries."

"Bother the haste!" drawled Lord Cedric. "Why should we be troubled by a bit of darkness?"

"Because of what I saw last night. That weird figure, almost enshrouded by the trees near the castle."

"Come, come, pet!" Lord Cedric seemed annoyed. "You are too imaginative. You saw nothing from the casement. Nothing but a shadow."

"It was a shadow that lived!" persisted the girl, tensely. "It was like a ghost, Cedric -"

"It was old Jeremy, making his round. Gwendolyn, you must cease this childish chatter. I have no tolerance for such fanciful beliefs."

"Francisco was disturbed when I spoke to him about the matter."

"Lodera? Bah! He comes from a credulous, superstitious race. All Spaniards are alike!"

Gwendolyn was biting her lips. Lord Cedric leaned forward.

"I do not like these conferences between you and Lodera," he warned. "Remember, Gwendolyn, our marriage shall take place in the near future. I have allowed you to make friends as you chose; but when you become Lady Lorthing -"

"I never shall," blurted Gwendolyn. "I have told you that, Cedric. You know that I do not love you; that I agreed to marry you only to appease my father."

"Then why not speak to him?" queried Lord Cedric. "Sir Rodney still accepts me as your fiancee."

"I have spoken to him," retorted Gwendolyn. "He says that I cannot break the engagement, without your approval. That is why I am stating plainly that I do not love you. It is you who should speak to my father."

Lord Cedric laughed indulgently.

"You will change your mind," he drawled, "and I shall wait until you do. Love is not all that counts in marriage. Think of the station that you will hold when you share my peerage, as Lady Lorthing."

"That means nothing," protested Gwendolyn. "I warn you, Cedric, I shall never marry you. My mind is firm."

"Your mind is unsettled. Your talk of ghosts is proof that you are distraught. Come, pet; be wise -"

Lord Cedric broke off. Lodera and Dufour were returning. The Spaniard mounted his horse and the three riders started back toward the castle road. Lord Cedric proudly rode ahead, to show the way; while Lodera brought his horse close beside Gwendolyn's.

Dufour chuckled as he watched the departing cavalcade. A knowing grin appeared upon the pilot's hardened features. Then he suddenly remembered the old rustic. He swung about in the dusk, to look for the fellow. The stooped man had gone

DUSK had settled more heavily in the clearing; and it was pitch-black beneath the trees that fringed the field. In that darkness came the blink of a tiny light, which Dufour could not see because of the thick tree trunks. The person who carried the flashlight had penetrated deep into the glade before he brought his torch in action.

His path was leading toward the tiny cot off in the woods. When he reached the little one-room building, the light carrier entered. He wedged his flashlight across a nail in the wall, then stepped into the glow. His features were those of the old rustic who had listened at the flying field.

False trimmings came away. The face looked like that of the so-called Professor Danglar. Then molding fingers worked to produce a more familiar visage; that of Lamont Cranston. The Shadow had no need for other disguises.

Garbed as a rustic, he had wandered near the castle during the late afternoon. He had finally reached the airport; there he had noted Dufour's impatience. The Shadow had expected arrivals from the castle. They had come.

The Shadow had learned useful facts. Dufour was flying to London in the morning, to carry out some business for Lodera. Gwendolyn did not intend to marry Lord Cedric; and that fact also concerned Lodera. The Shadow knew that the girl loved the Spaniard.

Discovery of these facts was sufficient, particularly since The Shadow had also learned that it was Gwendolyn who had seen him from the casement. The girl's story of a ghost had gained no credence with Lord Cedric, although she believed that it had impressed Lodera. That, however, mattered little. Gwendolyn's description of the "ghost" had been sketchy at best.

Night had brought new opportunity. By moonlight, the evening before, The Shadow had investigated the grounds about Chiswold Castle and had seen Nigel contact with Jeremy.

By day, this afternoon, The Shadow had made further study of the outside situation. He was, at least, prepared for a visit within the castle itself; one that would allow him more scope than had his open entry in the guise of Cranston.

Hence The Shadow chose his invaluable cloak of black. The folds came from the suitcase beneath the floor. They slipped over his shoulders. He added the slouch hat; then donned thin gloves and plucked the flashlight from the wall. The glow clicked off; an invisible being glided from the gamekeeper's cot.

From the abandoned shack to the castle, The Shadow took the course that he had already followed. His flashlight blinked intermittently; its flashes became less frequent. At last, he reached the open grounds and glided toward the castle itself. Tonight, since moonlight was absent, the gray walls loomed like a shapeless hulk, to form a perfect covering for The Shadow's approach.

Barred windows blocked a ground-floor attempt; but The Shadow had already picked another spot for entry. Moving directly to the front door of the castle, he edged to one side and gripped the heavy ivy vines that fronted the wall. Slowly, noiselessly, he ascended to the long balcony above the door.

The Shadow was outside the windows of the front room. They, in themselves, were formidable barriers; for the sashes were of metal and the windowpanes were small. To break a glass would be an unwise step; one that The Shadow chose to avoid.

PRODUCING a thin, wedgelike piece of steel, The Shadow pried it beneath a window edge. These windows were of the casement type; they swung outward and they were affixed inside by clamped metal rods. The Shadow, by a levering motion, engaged a knob at the end of one rod. Inch by inch, he pried the fastening outward.

It was a difficult task, for The Shadow was dealing with a clamped device that yielded stubbornly. It would have taken a full hour, or longer, to have completely opened the window by this method.

The Shadow, however, gained his objective after a dozen minutes. He had the window wide enough for his hand to enter. He reached the stubborn clamp and loosened it. Then he opened the window without trouble.

Moving from the darkened front room, The Shadow reached a lighted upstairs hall. All was silent on this floor. Modbury and his guests were at dinner. A black shape that cast a silhouetted streak, The Shadow slowly descended the great stairs. As he neared the bottom, he heard the sound of voices. People were coming from the dining room.

Pausing in the blackness of an alcoved landing, The Shadow observed Barton Modbury stopping near the foot of the stairs. Sir Rodney Ralhorn and Lord Cedric Lorthing joined their host. Modbury boomed a cheery invitation.

"Come to the great room across the hall," suggested Modbury. "I shall have Tyson kindle the large fire, for this cloudy night may soon turn chilly. We can chat in comfort and plan for the coming fox hunt that will be held at Brindley Manor. When is the hunt to be?"

"Tomorrow," observed Lord Cedric.

"No, no," corrected Sir Rodney. "It will be upon the day after. Today is Thursday. The hunt is to be held Saturday."

Luval, the secretary, had approached. He spoke to Modbury just as the baldheaded host was starting toward the great room.

"Shall I complete the typing of those letters, sir?" queried Luval. "There will be time for Hasslett to carry them to Yarwick and catch the late post."

"Very good, Luval."

THE SHADOW had withdrawn from the niche upon the stairs. He was moving upward; and the act was timely. Luval had started toward the stairs. But when the secretary had reached the top, he saw no sign of The Shadow.

Luval opened the door of a side room. The Shadow, peering from the darkness of another doorway, saw the interior. The room was fitted like a small office; but it also had a partial atmosphere of a study. A desk occupied the center. Beyond was a safe, set in an alcove. To one side was a bookcase.

Luval closed the door behind him. The Shadow waited, expecting a new development. It came. Footsteps sounded from the stairway; a cautious, ascending tread. Then a man came into view and sneaked across the hall to tap at the door of the study.

The hall light showed the features of this visitor who had stolen up to talk with Luval. The arrival was Francisco Lodera. Here, in Chiswold Castle, intrigue was in the making.

The Shadow was prepared to become its secret witness.

CHAPTER XIII. THE CASTLE

LUVAL answered Lodera's soft knock. Opening the door, the secretary beckoned the Spaniard into the study. Lodera entered; but Luval did not close the door entirely. He left it ajar, as a guard against intruders.

That fact was to The Shadow's liking. Softly, he crept forward, his black form spectral in the dim light of the hall. A blotting shape, he peered past the lighted crack of the door edge. With keen eyes, he saw both Luval and Lodera.

The two men were facing each other across the desk. Luval was gazing wisely through his spectacles. He was looking toward The Shadow; but he did not discern those eyes at the door. Luval was too interested in his study of Lodera.

The Shadow, in turn, was viewing the men at Modbury's desk; but he was also discovering the possibilities of the room. Because of its mingled furnishings, it offered various nooks. The best was a darkened spot beyond a deep bookcase, where the slope of the roof forced the shelves to end.

That hiding place was more to The Shadow's liking than this doorway. He would have chosen it, had he known that this was the room to which Luval was coming. As it was, The Shadow could only keep his present position.

"I spoke to Dufour." It was Lodera who spoke. "He leaves for London at dawn. He will return before evening."

"Good," chuckled Luval. "Then you will be able to leave here tomorrow night."

"If I receive the money."

"You will have it."

Luval had drawn a card from a desk drawer. He arose and went to the safe in the alcove. He turned the combination, opened the front and drew out a folio which he tossed upon the desk. Then, turning back to the safe again, he lifted a fat bundle and tapped it with his finger.

"The money," he said wisely.

LUVAL replaced the package in the safe, closed the door and returned to the desk. He tossed the little card back into the desk drawer.

"Yes," he affirmed, "the money will be yours tomorrow. But remember" - he looked up and chuckled - "the money is not all that you intend to take with you."

"The rest is arranged," returned Lodera, suavely. "It is the money, alone, that troubles me."

"You have just seen it -"

"Yes. But it is not yet mine. Unless Barton Modbury likes the Spanish jewels -"

"They will satisfy him. I know his likes."

Lodera leaned back at Luval's words. His profile turned toward the door. The Shadow saw a keen gleam upon the Spaniard's handsome face.

"About Modbury," queried Lodera, "do you suppose that he has begun to suspect my game?"

"Not at all," returned Luval. "My only doubts concern Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric."

"They know nothing. Sir Rodney is a blundersome old tyrant; while Lord Cedric is a conceited dolt. The only person who might have made trouble for us was that Scotland Yard chap, Delka."

"Or his friend, Cranston."

"Agreed. You don't suppose that either will be back, on account of Geoffrey Chiswold?"

"No. They will not return. Wait a few minutes, Lodera, while I go over these letters from the folio. Then we can discuss the Scotland Yard angle."

The Shadow was still watching from the door. But with the pause of Luval's voice, he detected a new sound; one that came from elsewhere than the study. The Shadow edged back into the hall. He looked toward the front room. The sound was from there.

Cautious footsteps told of an approaching intruder; and The Shadow had seconds only to avoid discovery. Quickly, he glided back to his obscure doorway near the front of the hall. Immediately afterward, a man came creeping from the front room.

IT was Nigel Chiswold. Face strained, but alert; hands extended before him, like menacing cudgels, Nigel looked prepared for any encounter. The Shadow saw him glance toward the stairs. Then came the faint, indistinguishable buzz of voices from the study. Nigel heard and turned. He stole to the very listening post that The Shadow had so recently occupied.

Luval and Lodera had resumed their discussions; but this time it was Nigel Chiswold, not The Shadow, who was hearing the details. One interloper had replaced the other. The Shadow had no alternative; he was forced to leave the field to Nigel.

Yet the gleam of The Shadow's eyes was indication that he had heard enough for the present. He was willing to let Nigel listen. The Shadow knew that this episode would cause one cross-purpose to meet another.

Nigel had carried through his plan. He had come down from the spy room in the turret, to study matters in Chiswold Castle. The shrewd smile on his face showed that he was learning facts that suited him. Whatever Nigel's purpose was here, he was gaining results.

New footsteps. The Shadow heard them; but Nigel did not. The tread, though unguarded, was a soft one, coming up the stairs. The Shadow knew that it must be Gwendolyn Ralthorn. The girl's room was on the other side of the hallway. Chances were that she would not glance in the direction of the study.

Gwendolyn appeared at the top of the stairs. As The Shadow expected, she started in the direction of her own room. It was Nigel who spoiled his own chances of escaping discovery. He heard the footsteps in the hall. He spun about, alarmed.

The slight sound of Nigel's move caught Gwendolyn's ear. The girl stopped short. She looked squarely toward the door of the study. Against its background, she saw Nigel's pallid face. The girl quivered in terror; then gasped, aloud.

"Geoffrey!"

Like old Jeremy, Gwendolyn had mistaken Nigel for his cousin; and her reactions were the same. She thought that she was viewing the ghost of Geoffrey Chiswold. But Gwendolyn had greater reason to be horrified. Not only was the apparition inside the castle itself; but the appearance of the supposed ghost came as an added shock to one that she had already received.

Gwendolyn had not forgotten the blackened shape that she had seen upon the lawn in the moonlight. Despite Lord Cedric's skepticism, she had retained her qualms. Upon spying Nigel and taking him for Geoffrey, Gwendolyn had immediately connected this appearance with that of last night's.

"Geoffrey!"

GWENDOLYN'S second cry was a half shriek. With it, Nigel bounded forward, hissing for silence. Gwendolyn dropped back, burying her face in her hands; trying to scream, but failing. As Nigel reached her, she crumpled in a faint.

There was the sound of commotion in the study. The Shadow heard the muffled shove of chairs. Luval and Lodera had heard the noise in the hall. Alarmed, they were coming out to learn the trouble. Nigel heard their suppressed tones. He dived away toward the front room.

A creak of the stairs had passed unnoticed; but now it turned to sudden footsteps. As Nigel headed for the front room, a bulky man sprang up to stop his flight. The arrival was a hard-faced servant, whose eyes glinted with determination.

Nigel wheeled at the man's approach. With a scientific jab, he drove his fist to the big fellow's chin, sent the man sprawling against the wall. Madly, Nigel precipitated himself through the doorway of the front room.

Gwendolyn, opening her eyes, caught a blurred glimpse of his departure. She saw the big servant coming

up from the floor; then gasped again. As she sagged backward, Lodera and Luval reached the hall.

The Shadow remained an unseen witness to the scene that followed.

"Gwendolyn!" It was Lodera who spoke the name, his suave manner changed to one of dismay.

"Gwendolyn!" Then, to Luval. "She has fainted! Come - we must carry her!"

"Not into the study," warned Luval, peering anxiously toward the stairs. Then, seeing the servant by the wall: "Ah! Here is Mund. Help Senor Lodera, Mund."

The servant nodded. Lodera pointed to the front room. Mund balked for a moment; then helped the Spaniard carry Gwendolyn in that direction. Luval looked sharply from the stairs. Those below had heard no sounds, for the great room was distant. The secretary saw where Lodera and Mund had gone. He followed into the front room.

The Shadow moved forward. He reached a spot outside the door; but did not peer into the front room, for those within were using the light from the hall. Gwendolyn was reviving. The Shadow could hear the girl's words.

"The ghost!" The words were a gasp. "I saw it! The ghost of Geoffrey Chiswold! It came in here - it may still be here -"

Lodera was trying to calm the girl. Luval had lighted a candle; he was swinging the candlestick about the room. The flame threw long, grotesque streaks against the wall. Gwendolyn restrained herself with difficulty. To her startled gaze, every shadow looked like a solid thing of life.

"There is no one here," declared Luval, smoothly. "See for yourself. The room is empty. Try the windows, Mund."

The servant did so. He found none loose. The Shadow had reclamped the one by which he had entered.

"Mund must have seen it, too," expressed Gwendolyn, tensely. "I saw the ghost pass him. He had come from the stairs. When I saw you, Mund, I did not recognize you at first."

"Did you see anything, Mund?" queried Lodera, anxiously.

"Of course, not," put in Luval, eyeing the servant steadily. "There are no ghosts about the castle."

Mund shook his head.

"I saw no one," he said in a husky tone. "I heard her ladyship scream, while I was coming from the stairs. Nobody was in the hall."

GWENDOLYN gasped; then shook her head. Mund's testimony had left her speechless. Luval turned to Lodera.

"None should know of this occurrence," he said, cautiously. "Come, Mund. I have some letters that I wish you to take downstairs to Mr. Modbury."

The secretary set down the candle. He left the front room, with Mund following stolidly at his heels. They went into the study; the door closed behind them. The Shadow, drawn back from the doorway of the front room, heard Gwendolyn speak pleadingly to Lodera.

"Mund must have seen it," persisted the girl. "Why did Luval insist otherwise?"

"I don't know," replied Lodera, slowly. Then, in a troubled tone: "Luval is right, however. No one must know that you have seen a ghost. Your father might wish to leave the castle."

"But I cannot remain here, Francisco! Not while Geoffrey's ghost is still about -"

"Only tonight, Gwendolyn. You can make an excuse to stay up until dawn. I shall do the same. I have it! I shall say that I wish to make sure that Dufour takes off for London!"

"If we remain in the great room downstairs -"

"That is exactly what we shall do. Your father is a night owl. He will stay up, also. But say nothing about Geoffrey's ghost."

"But then tomorrow night -"

"We shall be gone tomorrow night."

Another gasp from Gwendolyn; but this was a happy one. Lodera laughed softly and the girl joined. She wanted to ask more questions, but Lodera calmed her.

"Go downstairs," he whispered. "Act as if nothing had happened. I shall talk with Luval. Leave all to me, Gwendolyn."

They came from the front room, just as the study door opened. Luval appeared with Mund. The servant started downstairs, carrying the letters that Luval had given him. The Shadow, black in a darkened corner, saw Lodera gesture for the girl to go down also. Gwendolyn followed Mund. Lodera and Luval descended a few steps to listen for results below.

WHILE the pair stood with heads together, a singular phenomenon occurred in the upstairs hall behind them. Blackness moved forward from a corner. It left a dull, dimly lighted patch of wall at the spot where it had been. Solidified, that shape became a living form; one that either Lodera or Luval might have taken for a ghost, had they chanced to turn and see it.

Weird was The Shadow, as he silently crossed the hall to the opened door of the study. His form made a mammoth blot against the light from the room. Then it faded from view, leaving only a streaked silhouette upon the floor.

Even the floor patch shrank as The Shadow moved into the hiding place he wanted. He was beyond the bookcase, merged with blackness. The burning gaze of his eyes was lost beneath the sheltering brim of his slouch hat.

Footsteps. Lodera and Luval were returning. The Shadow had chosen the vantage point from which he could view the sequel to Gwendolyn's experience with the supposed ghost of Geoffrey Chiswold.

CHAPTER XIV. THE FINAL VIGIL

FRANCISCO LODERA wore a strained countenance when he entered the study with Luval. The secretary motioned him to the chair before the desk; then took Modbury's chair for his own. Lodera was prompt with a statement.

"Gwendolyn saw something," he told Luval "What could it have been? Do you think that Geoffrey Chiswold is alive?"

"Geoffrey is dead," returned Luval, seriously. "That much is certain, Lodera."

"Then was it a ghost?"

Lodera's face had lost its darkish hue. The Spaniard had been impressed by Gwendolyn's story.

"It was not a ghost," replied Luval, "nor was it a human being. No one could have escaped from that front room."

"What did Mund tell you?"

"He swore that he saw nothing. He would have spoken differently if he had seen. Mund tells the truth to me."

Luval smiled wisely as he spoke. Lodera nodded, relieved.

"Of course," agreed the Spaniard, "he is the man whom you bought when you first came here ahead of Modbury. You told me about that, Luval. Gwendolyn imagined something; that was all. Of course, it could not have been Geoffrey Chiswold. He is dead, as you say. And if it were someone else -"

"Since Miss Ral Thorn could not have seen Geoffrey," interposed Luval, blandly, "we have proof that her imagination tricked her. Ghosts are not real, Lodera. It was a hallucination; that is all."

"But if she mistook someone for Geoffrey - someone who was outside this door - then that person might have listened -"

"There was no one. Forget the matter. All will be well; you can trust me for that, Lodera. Keep your mind centered upon tomorrow night."

"That is best." Lodera arose. "I must go downstairs. They will be wondering about my absence. Gwendolyn, too, is down there. I should be with her."

Luval was rising. He held up a warning hand as a cautious tap sounded at the door.

"It is Mund," declared the secretary. "He has come to tell me that Mr. Modbury wishes me downstairs. You must wait" - he glanced at a desk clock - "yes, wait for a full ten minutes before you come down."

LUVAL opened the door. Mund was standing there. The secretary spoke to the servant. Luval told Mund to station himself in the front room. The bulky man nodded his acknowledgment. The two departed, Luval pulling the door almost shut behind him.

Lodera began a troubled pacing back and forth in front of the desk. The Shadow, watching, knew that he was still thinking about the ghost; and Lodera's face showed deep perplexity. Five minutes passed. Lodera began to show restlessness. At the end of two minutes more, he had tilted his head to one side, as if listening.

Suddenly, Lodera made a dart for the door. He was too late; he stepped back from the threshold as the barrier opened. He was faced by a trio of men: Barton Modbury, Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric. Lodera chewed his lips for a moment; then gave a slight laugh that sounded hollow.

"I thought you were in here," he said to Modbury. "The light was on and the door ajar. I stepped in to look for you."

Modbury's face showed anger. Lord Cedric and Sir Rodney eyed Lodera suspiciously.

"Not finding you here, Mr. Modbury, I was about to come downstairs -"

Modbury cut Lodera short. Apparently, his anger had subsided. Modbury went behind the desk, sat down heavily in his chair. He motioned to the others to be seated.

"Quite all right," he told Lodera. "A bit unusual, to find someone in the study; but I suppose Luval's neglect to turn off the light is a sufficient reason. Since we had hoped to find you anyway, it is just as well that you are here."

Lodera smiled in a suave fashion. He produced a cigarette and placed it in the end of an amber holder. His nonchalance had returned. Modbury started to open the desk drawer; then changed his mind.

Going to the safe, he used the combination from memory. He brought out a chamois bag and a package. The latter was the one that The Shadow had seen before.

Back at the desk, Modbury opened the package. Crisp currency came into view. Modbury counted Bank of England notes; then replaced the money in the safe.

"Ten thousand pounds," boomed Modbury. "More than the price of your rubies, Lodera."

"Yes," acknowledged the Spaniard, with a smile. "My price is six thousand. By the way, Mr. Modbury, Dufour will have the gems here tomorrow. I thought it best to complete our transaction before the day of the fox hunt."

"Very well." Modbury paused and opened the chamois bag. He poured a mass of uncut diamonds upon the desk. "Here are my rough beauties, Sir Rodney. Worth twenty thousand pounds, at a conservative estimate."

Sir Rodney's eye lighted. His gaze was that of a connoisseur. Lord Cedric, too, was interested. He knew the worth of these rough stones.

"Egad!" exclaimed Sir Rodney. "I should like to purchase the lot. This one" - he held up a single stone - "will prove a beauty after it is fashioned."

"As a wedding present for your daughter," suggested Modbury.

"Excellent!" agreed Sir Rodney. "You heard that, Lord Cedric?"

LORD CEDRIC nodded. His dryish features showed a pleased smile. The Shadow's gaze centered upon Lodera. He saw a sudden tightening of the Spaniard's lips.

"I say, Modbury," drawled Lord Cedric, "how can you afford to part with these fine stones? What use have you for rubies such as Lodera's?"

Lodera darted an angry look toward Lord Cedric; then his eyes lost their irate flash as he steadied himself.

"Just this," explained the diamond king. "Uncut diamonds are plentiful in South Africa. The price that I ask for these stones is a normal one, judged by the local market. Moreover, my collection is sufficient. These are but a few of the stones that I possess. That answers one question, Lord Cedric.

"As for the other, rubies are much esteemed, at present, in South Africa. I am quite willing to pay a good price for Lodera's Spanish gems, because I can easily dispose of them when I return to Johannesburg.

"I am a business man from first to last. I shall show a fair profit on each transaction. Among friends, a reasonable profit is all that I expect. Well, Sir Rodney, our business can wait until after my deal with

Lodera. We can forget gems until tomorrow night."

Replacing the diamonds in the chamois bag, Modbury put the latter in the safe. He closed the door; then spoke to his companions. His heavy tone carried a chuckle.

"Quite a fortune here," said Modbury. "My uncut diamonds, at twenty thousand pounds; my bank notes totaling ten more. When Lodera's rubies arrive, we shall have six thousand pounds more in value to protect.

"That is why I have chosen trustworthy servants. To a man, all are competent. All my own servitors - with the exception of Mund - who came with the castle. But both Luval and I deem him reliant."

The group went from the study; and Modbury turned out the light. The Shadow came from his hiding place and moved toward the door. He listened there. Soon he heard footsteps coming up. Luval appeared and called softly to Mund. He spoke to the servant in a whisper. Mund went downstairs.

Luval waited. Soon Lodera appeared, coming cautiously from below. Luval drew him toward the door of the study. They stopped in the hallway; The Shadow heard their whispers.

"I had no chance to warn you," stated Luval. "Mr. Modbury told me to remain downstairs. You were out of here, I hope?"

"No," replied Lodera, softly, "but I managed to cover it. They were suspicious at first. I had better be on my way downstairs, Luval."

The secretary nodded. He followed Lodera to the stairs and descended almost to the alcove. The Shadow made a swift exit from the study; he reached the front room just as Luval gave a low call. Then came the secretary's footsteps; after that, Mund's.

The Shadow had no time to reach the window. Instead, he chose a corner of the darkened front room. Mund entered; then went out again. It was plain that he intended merely to keep guard over the door that led from the front room into the hallway.

TEN minutes passed. Luval had gone to the study. The Shadow heard someone else come up. It was Modbury. The diamond king walked into the study and closed the door. Soon Luval came out and beckoned to Mund. The servant approached from the door of the front room.

"Kindle the fire in the study," ordered Luval, in a low tone. "I shall keep watch here while you are busy."

Mund nodded and went into the study. It was ten minutes before he reappeared. When he came out, he was carrying a batch of sealed letters.

"For Hasslett to take to Yarwick?" questioned Luval.

Mund nodded and went down the stairs. Luval peered into the front room; then, hearing someone on the stairs, he sauntered back into the study. This time the arrival was Lord Cedric Lorthing going toward his own room. Luval had hurried into the study rather than have Lord Cedric see him here.

The Shadow went to the front window. Carefully, he unclamped it; then eased out upon the balcony. He closed the casement behind him, jamming it so tightly that it would pass ordinary inspection, yet would open again when necessary.

Mund's returning figure appeared in the hall light, just as The Shadow crossed the side rail of the balcony. Unseen by the servant within, the black-cloaked intruder descended the thick ivy stems and reached the

portico below.

From then on, The Shadow was part of the night itself. The big Humber left for the village, to return a half hour later. Old Jeremy went his rounds with swinging lantern. Lights went out in Modbury's study; but they still remained in the great room downstairs.

INVISIBLE in the darkness, The Shadow circled the castle. He stopped beside the crags to listen to the roar of sea that came up through the hollow of the cove. He passed the windows of the great room, where flickering firelight joined the mellow glow of electric illumination, to throw forth shaded outlines of the window bars.

At intervals, The Shadow returned to the front of the gloomy, blackened building. From long perspective, he gained occasional glimpses of Mund's head and shoulders beyond the lighted inner doorway. At times, The Shadow saw lights go on and off in various rooms.

Francisco Loder and Gwendolyn Ralhorn had gone through with their plan to stay up until dawn; and they had talked Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric into the same proposition. Hence The Shadow had an all-night vigil of his own; for he expected no move until all had retired. Frequently, The Shadow noted the barren blankness of the lone turret above the wall that edged the front door of the castle.

There were questions that might have perplexed an investigator other than The Shadow, had anyone else been able to learn as much as had the cloaked intruder. They formed an interesting medley.

Why had Mund said that he had seen no one, despite the fact that he had struggled with Nigel Chiswold? Why had Luval insisted that Mund had clung to his story; then kept watch, along with the servant, over the front room? Besides these questions, there were incidents that had a bearing. One - the most important - was the entry of Modbury, Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric before Loder had gained time to leave the study.

Diamonds, cash - soon rubies as well. The Shadow could see reason for coming crime at Chiswold Castle. But he could see other reasons more important than the fact that wealth was stored there. Reasons for crosspurposes; for deeds of violence.

The Shadow had ferreted the answers to the medley concerning all, including Nigel Chiswold. He knew that his vigil would end before dawn.

CHAPTER XV. DEATH AT DAWN

IT was the hour of dawn, yet darkness still reigned about Chiswold Castle. Clouded skies gripped the east and blocked the rays of the early, rising sun. The cover of night still served The Shadow as a deep-veiled shroud.

Long hours had brought no change to the castle until this very end of night. Then The Shadow had watched the lights blink out within the great room. Other lights had appeared in upstairs windows; but not for long.

Gwendolyn Ralhorn had evidently lost her fear of ghosts, with so little night remaining, or else the others had decided upon sleep while darkness still persisted. Whichever the case, all had retired; and the upstairs lights soon gave way to darkness.

At almost the same time, gray streaks appeared upon the horizon past the trees in front of the castle. While The Shadow kept vigil, hazy dawn widened, crept up through the sky to barely outline the grim shape of Chiswold Castle. Gray stones, however, caught no rays. The massive building still remained a

blotting hulk.

Suddenly tiny blinks appeared out of the darkness. They were coming from the slits in the tall turret. Nigel Chiswold was using a flashlight, signaling to old Jeremy, to draw the gatekeeper on his early inspection. Blackness clung heavily to the ground; Nigel still had time for final contact.

THEN The Shadow discerned a new phenomenon hard on the finished blinks of Nigel's flashlight. A wavering glow appeared in the front room on the second floor. Grotesque splotches flickered past the windows. Someone was moving in that room - someone, who carried a lighted candle in its stick.

The Shadow moved forward from a range of fifty yards. The candle light had sidled to an inner corner of the room. Keeping on, The Shadow gained the porch. Completely concealed against the darkened front of the castle, he climbed up by the ivy. The candle was muffed out just as he reached the balcony.

Softly The Shadow drew the casement window outward. He slid into the front room and blinked his tiny flashlight. He found exactly what he expected. Emptiness. Just as Nigel Chiswold had vanished, so had this new intruder. But it could not be Nigel again. The blinks from the turret had been almost simultaneous with the candle flickers from this room.

The Shadow went to the corner beneath the turret. His blinking flashlight picked out smooth surfaces of paneling. The Shadow saw the streaks of finger prints that had slid along the woodwork. Using them like arrow points, he pressed upward; then to the side, for the horizontal streaks had crossed the vertical.

Without a click, the wainscoating opened. The Shadow stepped into a musty, tomblike well. His flashlight showed a tiny landing with an opening that led to a spiral staircase. The steps came from deep below. They went corkscrewing upward into the turret itself. The Shadow pulled the panel shut by an inner catch. Extinguishing his flashlight, he ascended the spiral stairs.

They ended with a hinged trapdoor, which The Shadow pressed upward, inch by inch. Peering, he saw the interior of a rounded room where gray light penetrated through slits in the wall and from an opening in the ceiling.

Nigel Chiswold had gone up to the roof of the turret. The slits were too narrow to serve in sending a cord down to Jeremy. Nigel must be calling for a basket in return; hence he had chosen the turret top. But The Shadow was not the first to learn that fact.

A ladder had been placed from the floor to the ceiling; and another man had arrived to use it without Nigel's knowledge. The man was Mund. The Shadow saw his bulky figure at the ladder's top. It was Mund who had used candlelight to open the panel of the lower room.

The Shadow opened the trapdoor swiftly. He came into the spy room just as Mund reached the roof. The bulky servant did not look below. He was too intent upon the work that lay ahead. The Shadow delivered a low, hollow laugh, that came like a menacing taunt from within the spy room.

INSTANTLY, two sounds responded from above. One was a harsh growl from Mund; the other, an exclamation that was Nigel's. Both had heard the weird strain of The Shadow's mirth; they had swung about, to come face to face with each other.

A scuffle began as The Shadow gained the ladder. A snarled oath from Mund; a savage retort from Nigel. Whipping forth an automatic as he climbed, The Shadow projected his head and shoulders from the opening in the turret roof.

He was a witness to the opening of a vicious struggle. Nigel had locked with Mund. The two had ample

space in which to fight, for the top of the turret widened above the secret room; and the opening from which The Shadow peered was located at one side of the flat roof

A parapet protected the fighters as they swayed back and forth across the turret top. This parapet was the ancient battlement itself, a wall that was nearly three feet in height.

Its castellated crest was topped by solid posts called merlons, with cut-out sections in between - the embrasures, or crenelles, through which bowmen had discharged their arrow in bygone days.

The crenelles were narrow, too small for a body to squeeze through. Hence Nigel and Mund, in their struggle, were protected by the full height of the merlons. Realizing that, each man fought to beat down his antagonist.

Nigel had been forced into a prompt clinch by Mund. Wiry of frame and limb, the man from India had gained a strangle hold upon his foe. Mund, grunting like a choking bull, was bobbing his head back and forth. Meanwhile, he used his powerful arms to shove his antagonist away.

As they twisted, Mund gained the upper hand. Nigel's choking measures failed. The pair staggered against the parapet. Mund then drove Nigel downward and wedged his left arm in a crenelle. Then, as Mund twisted away, Nigel lost his grip on the bulky servant's throat.

LEVERING himself by gripping a postlike merlon, Nigel came up as Mund charged him. He clipped a savage uppercut against the bulky fellow's chin. Mund staggered backward. Nigel, steadying, pounced toward him. Mund swung his back to the wall and whipped out a long-bladed knife.

Evidently, he had not anticipated the need for this weapon; but had changed his mind in the fury of the fray. Nigel, seeing the dangerous dirk, was quick to clutch Mund's wrist. They locked and whirled about like dervishes, while The Shadow followed them back and forth with his moving automatic.

No one could have told which fighter was The Shadow's target. The cloaked watcher was deliberate, for the fray was even. Mund had no chance to use his knife; but Nigel, in clutching the fellow's wrist, could not repeat his choking tactics.

Increasing dawn revealed this vivid scene; a battle to the death. One man was sure to gain a kill.

Once, The Shadow's finger was almost ready to press the trigger, for the pair had leaned half across the parapet; and neither fighter had sure footing. Then the two sagged back. The Shadow was waiting until they broke.

That moment came in a startling fashion. Nigel, still attacking Mund's wrist, had jammed the stolid servant back to the parapet; but was still caught in his grasp. Wrenching his other hand free, Mund drove his heavy fist to Nigel's twisting shoulder. The blow was a lucky one. It sent Nigel sprawling.

Twisting, Nigel caught his footing and dived for the wall. He clamped hold of a merlon, then came up as Mund was turning. Nigel was ready for a long, diving drive.

Mund was still swinging outward as he turned to meet the edgewise attack. The Shadow's gun hand tightened. He was prepared to decide the fray. Then came a finish which anticipated his deed.

From the darkness beyond the front of the castle, a sharp crack resounded. Deep from the lower gloom it came; the report of a powerful rifle.

MUND fumed an oath and let his right hand drop. His knife clattered into a crenelle; then plopped to the turret top within the battlement. Mund twisted backward, both hands dropping to his side.

As Nigel plunged toward him, Mund went over backward. His bulky shoulders poised; then slid from the parapet. Headforemost, while he gasped a gargly cry, Mund went plunging clear of Nigel's clutch, to the stone portico fifty feet below.

Nigel paused to watch the finish of the fall. His hands clutching separated merlons, he stared into the blackened depths. Groggily, he turned about. The Shadow saw his shrewd eyes narrow. Nigel had recognized the sound of that distant shot; and The Shadow, too, could have defined it. The sharp crackle of an Afghan rifle.

A marksman, hidden almost at the verge of the front trees, had witnessed the struggle on the turret top. Amakar, the Afghan, had contacted Jeremy, with the password: "Khyber." He had accompanied the gatekeeper in answer to Nigel's blinks. The dusky sharpshooter had picked Mund from the struggle at a range of more than two hundred yards.

The Shadow had dropped from view, his own plan useless. He had been ready to save one fighter; but the fray was ended. Amakar's stroke had roused those in the castle. Departure was The Shadow's immediate course.

The Shadow was gone before Nigel had turned to the opening in the turret roof. By the time that Nigel had clambered down into the slitted spy room, The Shadow was through the trapdoor. Nigel did not see it lowered from beneath. It was solid floor when he reached it and began to pound wooden wedges into the cracks.

The Shadow, on the spiral staircase, heard the sounds. He knew that Nigel was preparing to offset new invaders. The Shadow continued his descent. He unlatched the panel at the landing and stepped into the darkened front room.

People were pounding down the stairway of the castle; none had stopped to survey the front room. The Shadow gained the window and jammed it tight as he departed. Over the rail, he reached the ivy vines and fairly dropped to the ground below. Obscured by the total darkness that clung to the indentations of the lowered wall, The Shadow still preserved the secrecy of his presence.

Doom had struck at dawn. The Shadow intended to learn its aftermath.

CHAPTER XVI. OLD JEREMY'S STORY

THE great door of Chiswold Castle had been flung open. A flood of excited persons - guests and servants - had arrived to learn the cause of the gunshot and the succeeding clatter of Mund's fall. When they reached the right side of the porch, they saw a bobbing lantern.

Flashlights glimmered. The added glare revealed Mund's crumpled, lifeless body, with old Jeremy beside it. The gatekeeper was pale and shaky. His fowling piece was resting loosely in his hand.

Luval, half dressed, was the first to recognize the dead man's face. The secretary blurted the name: "Mund!"

"Aye," old Jeremy spoke weakly, "'tis Mund. Nor ill did I intend to do him."

The Shadow, twenty paces distant, could hear the gatekeeper's words. He saw the looks of astonishment that appeared upon surrounding faces that clustered in the light.

"'Twas yonder he was," lied Jeremy, pointing toward the windows of the front room above the door.

"When I spied him, I laid aside my lantern at this very spot where now I stand. 'Twas a warning - aye, a

warning that I called to him."

"What is this?" The question came from Barton Modbury, who had arrived in a dressing gown. "Mund? Dead? You killed him, Jeremy?"

"'Twas I who fired the shot, sir, with this fowling piece that I bear. But 'twas a warning that I first did give him."

"That is right, Mr. Modbury." The statement came from Hasslett, the chauffeur. "I heard some shouts from the castle; then the sound of a gun."

"I spied him at the window," went on Jeremy. "'Twas whilst I was straight before the castle door. I saw the shape of him; and when he came to clamber on the vines, I called to him. 'Twas my duty to fire when he did not halt."

"Of course." Modbury was bending over Mund's body. "Hmm. He's badly racked. It's difficult to tell where the ball struck him. Where was he when you fired, Jeremy? By the front window?"

"Aye, Master Modbury."

"Then how does he happen to be lying over here?"

"'Twas from this side of the rail, sir, that he dropped. 'Twas the lantern that he saw and crawled to it. Like this, Master Modbury."

Graphically, Jeremy gave a lunging gait that resembled a long, crablike progress. It added emphasis to his story. Luval, eyeing Jeremy doubtfully, began to be convinced.

FRANCISCO LODERA had arrived from the castle. A few moments later, Gwendolyn appeared. The Spaniard saw the girl and motioned her back toward the door. He started to explain what had happened.

"Perhaps we should check this story, Mr. Modbury," stated Luval. "Mund is badly crushed. We ought to be sure about his fall. Was he on top of the rail in front of the windows, Jeremy?"

"Aye," the shrewd gatekeeper saw a chance for embellishment, "he was trying to clutch the vines ere he yielded his footing."

"It sounds true, Sir Rodney," remarked Modbury, turning to the man who was closest. "Would you consider that Jeremy had performed a duty?"

"Why not?" echoed Sir Rodney. "You are master here, Modbury. Jeremy is the man who patrols the grounds. Our task is to learn why this man Mund descended. Suppose we enter the castle."

Modbury followed Sir Rodney. Two servants came along and they went up to the front room. There, Sir Rodney tried the windows and found one that was loose. It was the window by which The Shadow had left.

"Halloo!" called Sir Rodney, to those below. "Look this way, gatekeeper! Was this the window by which the fellow left?"

"Aye, sir," called back Jeremy.

"That seems sufficient," decided Modbury.

When the men from above came out from the castle, Luval put a casual inquiry to Modbury.

"The window was unlocked, sir?" asked the secretary. "The one by which Jeremy said Mund had left?"

Modbury nodded.

"That makes it plain, sir," said Luval. "Mund has behaved suspiciously of late. Perhaps he was contemplating some theft; and wished to make sure of his exit."

"Some theft?"

"Yes, sir. He was about the second floor all evening, long after I had told him that there would be no more duty."

"Then look to the safe upstairs! Refer to the combination in the desk drawer. Mund may have found it. Open the safe, Luval; we shall follow to learn if everything is safe."

Luval hurried indoors. A few moments later, Modbury followed, accompanied by Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric. A cluster of servants still remained about Mund's body, while Jeremy stood by. Soon, Modbury himself returned.

"Nothing is gone," he told the servants. "The rascal had apparently postponed his theft until after he tested the ivy vines. What about your fowling piece, Jeremy? Have you reloaded it?"

"Nay, sir."

JEREMY handed the gun to Modbury. The Shadow could see a slight smile on the gatekeeper's lips. Jeremy had been wise enough to unload. As for the barrel, it had not been cleaned for weeks. Inspection would indicate that the gun had recently been fired.

"Hasslett," ordered Modbury, "drive into Yarwick at once and inform the local authorities. Have them come here and make a prompt inspection. Tell them that we shall hold the body until their arrival."

"Jeremy, you must come into the castle. I shall have the constables talk with you. I shall testify that you were acting in discharge of your duty. This affair will bring us no trouble. Mund had no right to be leaving the castle."

Luval had come out again. The Shadow could see the secretary's face, for Luval had picked up Jeremy's lantern. Luval was wearing a satisfied smile. The Shadow knew why. Mund had been supposed to leave the castle quietly after certain work was finished. Luval thought the servant had been doing so; that Jeremy had actually spied him, then shot him down at the window.

Jeremy's own testimony; the unlocked window; finally, the emptied fowling piece all were points of proof. Luval's satisfaction was expressed because an unneeded tool had been eliminated. Mund had been useful for a while; but that period was ended.

Luval was an absolute wretch; a crook who played a part in deep-laid schemes. He was one who pretended to be a man of integrity - a man fit to hold a position of trust. Yet in this course of crime, Luval, himself, was a tool. The real crook who must be met was the master whose secret plans Luval served. The Shadow knew.

Francisco Lodera was still standing upon the porch, with Gwendolyn beside him. The servants followed Luval into the castle. Lodera and the girl were alone. Daylight was painting the upper floors of the castle; the last remnants of night clung to the ground alone. The Shadow still held a position of security. He

waited. Gwendolyn spoke to Loder.

"Could Mund have seen the ghost?" queried the girl, anxiously. "Could the poor chap have fled because he feared the same creature that startled me?"

LODERA considered. The Shadow could see his face tighten, for Loder's profile was against the lights that came from the opened door of the castle.

"It might be so," decided Loder. His tone, slow and deliberate, was one that gave an impression of either doubt or fear. "Yes, it could have been that, Gwendolyn. Either the ghost, or his belief in ghosts -"

"Such could have driven him to flight. Francisco, it is only right that I should speak and tell everyone of what I saw. If Geoffrey's ghost is the mischief maker -"

"Hush!" Loder's command was a harsh hiss. "Would you spoil my plans, which you promised to aid?"

"But we must be honest -"

"Honest with ourselves." Loder had changed his tone to a persuasive purr. "You know, Gwendolyn, that my ways are honest. I have explained to you why I have trusted Luval. You know that I intend no ill to anyone."

"Sometimes I doubt -"

"Not my honesty?"

"Your idea of honesty. Can't you understand, Francisco? This poor fellow - Mund - has been accused of crime. If he -"

"He has not been accused, Gwendolyn. He has been suspected."

"It is just as bad. If he is innocent; if he acted through fear, he must be cleared. His name -"

"His name is nothing. He was the last of the former servants. If no evidence is produced against him, Mund will simply be classed as a man who acted unwisely."

"Yet I am troubled."

"So am I for old Jeremy. There is a man who really deserves your pity. Think of him, with his poor family. He did his duty; yet you would want to make him a murderer."

"I, Francisco?"

"Yes. By worrying about Mund. Can't you see that Jeremy's best defense is the fact that Mund may have been up to mischief?"

THE girl nodded slowly. Loder's clever twist of circumstances had begun to convince her. She was weighing the case of Jeremy versus Mund when a low roar came from beyond the castle. It increased; the whirr of an airplane motor. Loder pointed upward to the lightened sky. The girl saw the monoplane.

"Dufour, off to London," exclaimed Loder, with enthusiasm. "For us, Gwendolyn! For you, as much as for myself. Our cause is the same; a mutual one. You do as I tell you."

"I shall, Francisco."

"Say nothing about Mund, then. Do not mention ghosts. Remember, we shall be gone soon after dark tonight."

"You are right, Francisco."

Lodera and Gwendolyn went into the house; the last of all who had come out upon the porch. Hasslett had gone in the landaulet to Yarwick. The front of the castle was deserted. Now, it was illuminated by day, except for one angled sector that formed a blackened pathway toward the trees.

A shape stirred from the darkness of the wall and followed the streak of blackness. It was a cloaked figure, that of a being who had remained until the last fleeting moment in order to learn all. The tall, gliding form reached the trees just as the sun burst through the clouds to brighten the entire scene.

No darkness remained where the figure had been. The Shadow had vanished with the last vestige of night.

CHAPTER XVII. BELATED VISITORS

THAT afternoon, a new passenger stepped from the down train at Yarwick platform. The arrival was a well-dressed young man who surveyed his surroundings with interest. Chauncey, driving up in his victoria, was prompt to hail a possible fare. The young man shook his head, and Chauncey drove along.

When the squatly-carred local train had pulled from the platform, the young man went into the station. He saw the agent behind his counter; he also observed a package wrapped in a newspaper. When the agent looked up, the young man introduced himself as Mr. Ralph Jamison. He received the package.

Outside the station, the young man tore the newspaper and extracted an envelope which he found within. He discovered a message in the envelope and read its inked lines. The writing faded as he completed his reading of a simple code. Such was the way with all messages from The Shadow to his agents.

For it had been The Shadow, as Professor Roderick Danglar, who had left the package at the station. The young man who had received it, as Ralph Jamison, was none other than Harry Vincent.

Immediately after reading the instructions, Harry tucked the package under his arm and looked for a secluded lane. He found one, a narrow, hedge-flanked thoroughfare of the type styled a "smuggler's road." Stooping close to a hedge, Harry ripped the package fully open and extracted the garments which Nigel Chiswold had originally worn.

Harry donned the complete outfit, including the mask, which he managed in Nigel's fashion. With coat collar muffling his chin, he stalked from the smuggler's road and pulled his hat more firmly downward on his head. Harry had a hat of his own, an old soft one; and he kept it stowed beneath the bulky overcoat.

Following directions from The Shadow's note, Harry went to the Prince William Inn. He found Chauncey's carriage parked outside. The driver was evidently in the barroom. Harry, however, went directly through the main room of the inn. He saw Mullock behind the desk.

The proprietor looked up as Harry stalked by. He gaped at sight of the supposed Professor Danglar. A shaft of light struck Harry's face; Mullock spied the masklike visage, then gulped. He listened while the guest went upstairs and unlocked the door. Then Mullock wobbled into the barroom.

HARRY'S stay upstairs was a brief one. He came down immediately and walked through the lower room. With a sidelong glance, he spied the proprietor staring from the connecting door. As he passed, Harry grunted a statement:

"I am off to Highchurch; and afterward, the fenland."

Harry's face was turned. Mullock could not tell whether or not the fixed lips moved. Nor could Chauncey, who had regained his carriage, to gawk as the mysterious guest came from the inn. Harry turned on his heel and walked rapidly away. He started in the direction of Highchurch; then doubled through to the smuggler's road.

There, Harry discarded his disguise. He buried the garments and the mask beneath the thickness of a hedge. Cutting back, he strolled toward the inn, wearing his own hat and employing a leisurely gait.

The inn was buzzing when Harry reached it, but The Shadow's agent did not appear to notice the suppressed commotion. He entered the main room and inquired regarding Eric Delka. The proprietor told him that Delka was stopping at the inn, but was absent at present. Harry sat down to rest.

Half an hour drifted, during which time speculation subsided. All was quiet when a man came stamping in through the front door and growled a greeting to Mullock. Harry looked about. It was Delka, sour-faced and unshaven, his clothes crumpled, his shoes muddy.

"Inspector Delka!" exclaimed Harry, coming to his feet. "The very man I have come to see!"

"Hello, Vincent," returned Delka, in surprise. "What brings you here?"

"I called up Cranston," explained Harry, glibly. "He was gone from London, so I called Scotland Yard. I learned that you were up here."

"Humph. Sometimes they say too much at the Yard."

"I did not think that you would object to my coming here, Inspector."

"I don't. I am glad to see you, Vincent. Come on upstairs while I change my clothes. I want to talk to you."

Mullock had approached to hand Delka a telegram which had been delivered at the inn. The proprietor had heard Harry address Delka as "Inspector"; he had also caught the reference to Scotland Yard. As soon as Harry and Delka went upstairs, Mullock hurried from the inn.

DELKA became confidential as soon as he and Harry reached the room. The C.I.D. man opened his telegram, grunted, then began to change his clothes and prepare for a shave. He indicated that Harry was to read the wire. As a friend of Cranston, Harry was a man in whom Delka might confide.

"'Professor Roderick Danglar'," read Harry, aloud, "'not connected with Cambridge University.'"

"That's the good word," nodded Delka, with a sour look. "The fellow led me a wild goose chase all through the fen district. I lost his trail at a hamlet beyond Highchurch."

"Who is the fellow?"

"Some mystery man who came to Yarwick. He had people talking, here at the inn, so I followed him. I thought I would find him at the Isle of Dean; but he never went there. I was stranded over night."

A rap at the door. Delka, tugging on another pair of boots, gave an order to come in. Mullock entered, accompanied by a square-set, black-haired man.

"Mr. Delka," stated the innkeeper, "this is Mr. Hayman, our chief police Inspector. He is quite anxious to talk to you."

Hayman nodded.

"I heard that you were here," he said. "I know you by reputation, Inspector Delka."

Delka smiled. He realized that Mullock had caught the conversation downstairs and had passed the word to Hayman.

"Yes," declared Delka, "I have been here investigating a rather unusual person - a man who calls himself Professor Roderick Danglar."

"He was back here, sir!" exclaimed Mullock. "Only half an hour ago. He has set out once more for Highchurch."

Delka leaned back and laughed.

"So that's it!" he guffawed. "Postponed his trip to the fens and returned here. Gone on his way again, has he?"

Mullock nodded.

"He stopped last night at Highchurch," stated the proprietor, "for Chauncey saw him there. He had a pair of long stilts, the professor did."

"A harmless idiot," decided Delka. "No more a Cambridge professor than I am. Nevertheless, I shall go to Highchurch to look into the matter."

"Would it be asking too much," queried Hayman, "if I requested a postponement of your journey, Inspector Delka?"

"Not if you have a good reason."

"There is one. A death at Chiswold Castle."

Delka came to his feet and stared. Harry Vincent could not restrain his own expression. He knew that The Shadow was at Chiswold Castle. Great though the confidence that Harry held in his chief, he knew that The Shadow's life was hazardous.

"Not an alarming happening," added Hayman, quickly. "Just a servant - a man named Mund. The fellow was trying to leave the castle just before dawn. He was challenged by Jeremy, the gatekeeper, who shot him."

"I see."

Delka was thinking as he spoke. He remembered Mund; also Jeremy.

"I must prepare a final report for the coroner," explained Hayman, in a troubled tone. "I am anxious that it should be in proper order. There is no blame upon old Jeremy, as I can see. But since I am riding out to the castle, 'twould be a favor if you would be kind enough to accompany me."

"Of course."

TEN minutes later, Delka and Harry were riding with Hayman in a tiny automobile that took the ruts like a jack rabbit. The cloudy sky was dusking, and gloom enwrapped them when they reached the trees before the landing field. Then they passed the clearing; and Hayman pointed toward the monoplane, which was moving along the ground.

"The plane flew in only an hour ago," stated the local inspector. "It had been in London for the day. I heard it roar overhead when I was at the coroner's home, a few miles east of Yarwick."

New darkness under the next trees; then the little car skirted to the gateway. Old Jeremy, anxious-faced, came out to open the barrier. The gatekeeper bowed as the little car rolled past.

"We sent Jeremy back to his post," stated Hayman. "Mr. Modbury accepted responsibility for him. 'Twas troubled, I was, about doing so; but the man will not flee. Did I act rightly, Inspector Delka?"

"I can tell later," replied Delka, "after I have learned the full facts about Mund's death."

"That will be quite soon."

Hayman drew the tiny car to a stop in front of the darkening castle front. Harry and Delka alighted with the local officer. Hayman pointed out the front windows above the door.

"'Twas yonder," he stated. "Mund, they say, was clambering from the balcony when Jeremy spied him from this spot. He fired his fowling piece, Jeremy did, after a command to halt. Mund fell, wounded. The fall, we believe, was what caused his death."

The castle door had opened. Luval stepped out and nodded to the visitors. One of the servants was behind the secretary. Luval gave an order and the man went back into the building.

Delka was looking upward, eyeing the lone turret high above. He turned to Hayman with a query:

"What about that turret? Could Mund have been up there, instead of on the balcony? It is straight above."

"We thought of that, sir," expressed Hayman, "but Mr. Modbury and others discovered the window open in the front room. Old Jeremy swore that Mund crawled forward after he fell."

Luval entered the conversation, just as the servant arrived from the castle, bearing Jeremy's fowling piece. The secretary handed the weapon to Delka; then spoke words that carried a tone of true conviction.

"THIS weapon," he told Delka, "could never have carried to so great a range as the turret top. Moreover" - he pointed upward - "how could anyone have aimed for a person there? See how the battlements project?"

"Right," agreed Delka. "The fellow would have had to be hanging over the side."

"Clutching the merlons," added Luval. "Besides, there is no way to reach the turret. It is merely an ornamental addition to the castle. You must remember that this building was erected when few archers remained."

"True," agreed Delka. "Otherwise it would have had many turrets." Then, to Hayman: "I believe that you have acted in due accordance with the law, Inspector. Jeremy was acting in discharge of his appointed duty. By the way, was Mund up to any definite mischief?"

"We believe that he intended to rob the castle," put in Luval. "He had been acting oddly. We think that he came out to test the ivy vines as a mode of escape."

Delka nodded. The theory was logical enough for acceptance. Others were arriving from the castle: Barton Modbury and Sir Rodney Ralhorn.

"Ah! Delka!" exclaimed Modbury, in a tone of surprise. "I am glad to see you back here. Has news of our trouble here reached Scotland Yard?"

"No," replied the C.I.D. man. "I was merely coming back through Yarwick when I met Inspector Hayman. He wanted my approval of his handling of this case."

"And have you approved it?"

"Yes. In every detail. The law has no case against old Jeremy. His story was certainly an honest one."

Another man had arrived to hear the words. It was Francisco Lodera; the Spaniard showed a pleased expression in the hazy dusk. Then his manner changed as Modbury gave an invitation. Delka was introducing Harry when Modbury spoke.

"Come, all three of you," suggested the diamond king. "Dine with us here at the castle. There are matters which I should like to discuss with you, Inspector Delka; and you also, Inspector Hayman. I have valuables here, you know."

Lodera glanced anxiously at Luval. The secretary's face showed nervousness. Then, tensely, Luval gave a signal to Lodera, to indicate that matters could be handled. The group started into the house, all except Hayman and Harry. The former wanted to move his automobile from the drive. Harry stood by to join Hayman when he came indoors.

Something had caused Harry to remain; it was an odd impression that he could not have explained. But the answer came, when Harry stood alone, there in the blackness that fronted Chiswold Castle. From the gloom of the walls came a whispered tone:

"Report."

The Shadow!

CAUTIOUSLY, Harry spoke in brief fashion. Then came The Shadow's new instructions, delivered in low tones from a place where he stood invisible. Harry was to watch happenings inside; to signal from a window should unexpected developments occur. Then he could report when The Shadow arrived to contact.

That was all. There was time for no more. Hayman had parked his tiny car and was returning. Eyes from the darkness watched Harry go into the castle with the local police inspector. Dusk had settled everywhere; for the cloud-fronted sun was now obscured completely behind the bulk of Chiswold Castle.

Silent and shrouded, The Shadow moved away. He skirted the castle at the stable side and reached the crags above Castle Cove. Through an opening, he peered toward the lost outline of Parrion Head, the distant promontory that jutted into the sea.

Parrion Head was beyond the far side of the cove; though a long way from the castle, it could be reached by a two-mile walk from the landing field on the other side of the gulch. As The Shadow watched the darkness, a bluish flame flickered upon Parrion Head. An interval; then the flare was repeated.

The Shadow laughed softly in the darkness. Then, as he spied a third and longer flame, he turned about and moved toward the front of Chiswold Castle. He was heading for the front trees, where both driveway and path afforded means of leaving the estate. Suddenly, The Shadow stopped.

A blink had come from the slitted turret. It was repeated, the flash of an electric torch. The Shadow

waited. Again, the signal came. Once more, The Shadow delivered a whispered laugh. Then he changed his direction.

He had chosen a new destination: Jeremy's lodge.

CHAPTER XVIII. WITHIN AND WITHOUT

DINNER had been both prompt and informal within Chiswold Castle. Modbury and his guests had gone immediately to the table; they were half finished with their meal at the time when The Shadow had left the crags beside Castle Cove.

Then, during dessert, Barton Modbury had become loquacious. From the head of the table, he started talk of Mund's death; then, while his listeners were attentive, he had produced a small silver casket and had opened it.

Delka was on Modbury's right. The Scotland Yard man stared as Modbury poured forth a small pile of lustrous red gems that sparkled in the shimmering candlelight. Harry and Hayman both showed interest; and the regular castle guests delivered smiles.

"Fine rubies," explained Modbury, "which I purchased today from Lodera. That was why his plane flew to London. Dufour, the pilot, made the trip to bring back these jewels."

"How valuable are they?" queried Delka, examining the stones.

"I paid six thousand sovereigns for them," replied Modbury. That, to Harry, meant nearly thirty thousand dollars. "I consider them a bargain at the price."

"I had to sell them," remarked Lodera. "They represent about all of the fortune that remains to me. I lost a great deal of valuable property after the revolution in Spain. Next, I shall sell my airplane; then lead an economical life."

"Here in England?" queried Modbury.

"Perhaps." Lodera's eyes shifted momentarily toward Gwendolyn, who sat across the table. "Or maybe somewhere on the continent. I have not quite made up my mind. I think I shall first fly to London - say, in a day or so - and deposit my currency in the bank."

"You paid in cash?" asked Delka of Modbury.

"Yes," replied the diamond king, "but I am keeping the money in my safe until Lodera requires it. Come - we shall go up to the study and put the rubies away."

Delka and Harry went upstairs with Modbury. The South African diamond king opened the safe and showed the chamois bag, to give a brief display of its contents. He pushed aside the opened stacks of cash and tucked the rubies into a deep niche. Locking the safe, he led the way downstairs.

SIR RODNEY and Lord Cedric were in the great room, talking with Hayman. Delka caught their words; they were still wondering why Mund had avoided robbery until after making his test of the vines. Harry saw a sudden light gleam from Delka's eyes. The C.I.D. man spoke.

"I have it!" he exclaimed. "Tell me, Mr. Modbury, did Mund know that you intended to purchase those rubies?"

"He probably did," replied Modbury. "Why, Delka?"

"Because that would have meant a postponement of his burglary. It is quite plain. He wanted to wait until the rubies had joined the other wealth."

"Jove!" exclaimed Sir Rodney. "A clever stroke, Inspector Delka. That explains everything! The scoundrel knew that he would have six thousand pounds more for his bundle!"

"You are right," agreed Modbury, nodding. "Twenty thousand in diamonds; ten thousand in cash; six thousand in rubies. That sums the total. Last night, Mund was testing a means of escape. Tonight, he intended to rob my safe."

"Could he have cracked it, do you think?"

"I cannot say." Modbury spoke in troubled fashion, as he considered. Then, brightening: "But there is no need for further alarm. Mund was the only dishonest person who could possibly have been here in the castle. My other servants are all trustworthy."

Luval had entered from the hallway, in time to catch the conversation. Harry had noted the bespectacled secretary's face. Luval had kept a steady front. He sat down at the edge of the group.

Soon, Gwendolyn Ralthorn entered. Francisco Lodera was the only absentee. Five minutes later, he arrived, smoking a cigarette in the end of his long holder. Harry saw Gwendolyn gaze toward Lodera. The Spaniard gave a slight nod.

Conversation turned to the morrow's fox hunt. All joined, including both Gwendolyn and Lodera. At one interval, however, Gwendolyn left the great room and went upstairs. Soon afterward, Lodera strolled out through the hall. Both returned; but Harry had an idea that each might soon again go out.

Seated between Hayman and Delka, Harry could find no opportunity to leave. Nor did he wish to risk a signal to The Shadow; for as yet, he had observed nothing of alarming consequence.

Gwendolyn and Lodera appeared restless; but they were not the ones who Harry felt needed closest watching.

Harry had concentrated upon Luval; until the secretary made a move, Harry could see no need for action. Since Luval appeared quite content in an obscure chair near the flickering fireplace, Harry decided to wait.

At intervals, Harry's thoughts turned to The Shadow. He wondered exactly where his cloaked chief was located at this moment. He thought of various places, among them the gatekeeper's lodge. He rejected it as an unlikely place; nevertheless, that was where The Shadow stood at that very moment.

Despite the trees, there was one spot near the lodge from which the castle turret could be seen. Watching from that point, close by the fence, The Shadow had detected a repetition of the blinks. So had Jeremy; for the old gatekeeper had come out from the lodge. Coming through darkness almost to where The Shadow stood, Jeremy had spied Nigel's signal. But he had not detected the shrouded being who was present.

JEREMY had gone back into his little house; once again, he had come to the observation post, to mutter in troubled fashion because he saw no blinks. Then, as the gatekeeper turned to move away, The Shadow's ears caught the sound of a creeping approach. It was someone else, beside Jeremy; but the gatekeeper did not hear the newcomer until a low, accented voice whispered one audible word.

"Khyber."

Jeremy's gasp followed.

"'Tis thou," exclaimed the gatekeeper, in an undertone, "come from the gamekeeper's empty cot!"

"I have come."

The tone was that of Amakar, the Afghan. The dark-skinned giant was as blanketed as The Shadow, for the darkness here was thick. Jeremy's words explained a fact which The Shadow had supposed; but had not investigated by daylight. Amakar had occupied the one-room building that had been The Shadow's earlier headquarters.

"Look!" whispered Jeremy, to Amakar. "Master Nigel has sent the signal once more! Aye! 'Tis something he wishes; but I did not venture. 'Twould not be wise for myself to pass close by the castle."

"He signifies that all is ready," informed Amakar, soberly. "At times apart, my master will send his signal until I join him."

"Must that be soon?"

"I cannot tell. I, Amakar, shall approach and answer. Then will my master tell his need."

"How will you reach him?"

"He has long since told me the way."

Jeremy was blundering in the darkness. Amakar whispered soberly. Jeremy gave a grunt of understanding and went back to the lodge. The Shadow waited. He heard Amakar move softly forward through the trees.

With amazing precision, the big Afghan was picking a path through the woods, toward the castle. But his stealth was nothing compared with The Shadow's. Moving forward, the cloaked watcher kept silent pace with the Afghan. Amakar, because of his own tread, failed to catch the slight sounds behind him.

Amakar reached the outskirts of the trees. He paused; when Nigel blinked again, the Afghan delivered a strange, high-pitched wail. It was like the cry of a night bird, but one that differed from any heard in England. The wail, however, was restrained. The Shadow knew that Amakar had given it through cupped hands.

Moreover, the Afghan had turned his mouth upward. Through some uncanny ability, he had tuned the cry so that it scarcely reached the castle. His call had penetrated to Nigel; but it could not have been heard by those within the castle. Nor would others, by the stable or in the woods, have heard it. Amakar had given his wail a straight direction, with an effect that matched the ability of a ventriloquist.

Blinks from the turret. They were signaling an answer. Nigel had heard. Amakar, understanding orders, began a new course along the front fringe of the trees. He saw an opened patch of protected ground and moved across it. Struggling moonlight threw a faint and unexpected glow that revealed the Afghan's bulk.

Amakar stopped as he heard a hiss behind him. Swinging, the Afghan saw a shrouded shape. The Shadow, too, had stepped from the trees. His hiss had been a challenge to the man. With a bound, Amakar leaped toward a tree and lowered his arms. The Shadow divined the purpose of his move. This was where Amakar had hidden his rifle.

SWEEPING grotesquely forward, The Shadow came driving into conflict. His arms were wide, in front of him. Amakar changed tactics. Lunging up from the ground, he shot his huge hands forward, to grapple

with his eerie attacker.

The fighters met, as moonlight faded. Bare-handed, they struggled as they had in London. Amakar, huge of strength, again expected to crush his wiry foe. The Shadow, quick of action, sought means of countering the Afghan's power.

In this resumption of the duel, Amakar gained the first grip. As fierce as he had been in Whitechapel, the big man whirled The Shadow back and forth. With a furious lunge, he sought to fling his adversary against the nearest tree. The Shadow, however, clung. His choking hands caught Amakar's throat.

The Afghan doubled. The Shadow's feet struck ground. His body twisted; his arms worked like trip hammers. Amakar went sidewise; then The Shadow's footing failed. The black-cloaked fighter sprawled as Amakar rolled clear.

Regaining his feet, Amakar saw a slowly rising form that sank again in a shapeless fashion. A trickle of moonlight showed a waver; the shape rose again and faded sidewise. Amakar thought his foe was crippled. With a ferocious, half-hissed grunt, the mighty Afghan launched in a powerful plunge toward The Shadow.

His sweeping arms gripped nothingness. Plunging forward, Amakar sprawled rolling, his face and shoulders cluttered in the wrappings of a cloak. The Shadow had tricked him in the manner of a matador; for Amakar had come with the head-down attack of a bull.

The shape that Amakar had seen had been The Shadow's cloak, raised upward, forward, by a stooping figure beneath. The Shadow had given the cloak a sidewise shift, which had accounted for the wavering fade. Amakar had taken the bait. Releasing the cloak, The Shadow had twisted away, just as the Afghan charged.

Had this occurred upon a Whitechapel sidewalk, Amakar would have been stunned when he struck the paving, for the fury of his plunge was backed by all his weight.

Soft turf, however, was Amakar's final lodging. He was dazed by the force of his dive; but still ready for new fray. It was The Shadow's quickness that stopped Amakar's rise.

Bounding upon his fallen foe, The Shadow caught the big man's throat with one hand. With the other, he produced an automatic and jabbed the cold muzzle against Amakar's forehead. The Afghan felt the menace of the weapon. Groaning, he sagged backward to the ground.

A WHISPERED laugh sounded above him. The tone was weird; it stilled Amakar's hissed gasps. The overpowered Afghan expected death; instead, he listened to a voice that spoke in a sinister tone. Not in English; but in Amakar's own native tongue. The words that Amakar heard amazed him.

When The Shadow's speech was ended, Amakar replied. Unresisting, he blurted Afghan sentences that came in questioning tones. The Shadow replied. Amakar spoke solemnly. The statement that he gave was so important that when he had finished, he thought it best to repeat the words in English.

"You have spoken," stated Amakar slowly, looking upward with his head still prone. "I have heard. Your words bring those things which I did not understand. My mind has learned because your wisdom tells me much that was unknown.

"I, Amakar, shall serve you. You are the master; the one who knows. Whenever you speak, I shall obey. The little things that Amakar can tell, are to be yours. I, Amakar, obey."

Soon afterward, a shaft of moonlight showed the amazing sequel to the fray. The glow revealed the

cloaked form of The Shadow moving along the fringe of trees. Behind him, an obedient slave, came the mammoth Amakar bearing his long-range rifle.

The Shadow had gained a double victory. He had overpowered the formidable Afghan; then, triumphant, had won the powerful victim to his cause!

CHAPTER XIX. THE NEW ALLY

SWIFTLY, steadily, The Shadow chose his course, in the manner of one who had studied the terrain. Passing the castle, he reached the cliffs above the cove; and all the while Amakar followed, silent and obedient.

Choosing a craggy path, The Shadow skirted the inner end of Castle Cove and turned toward the road that led between the castle and the aviation field. This course had saved much longer travel.

It was when they left the cove's end that Amakar made his first utterance since his pledge of loyalty. Tightening his grip upon his rifle, the big man spoke in his native tongue. His words were half a question, half a warning. The Shadow paused.

From far away, carried through the funneled stretches of the cove came scraping, thumping sounds that were barely audible against the distant murmur of the sea. The cove was like a mammoth megaphone; The Shadow and Amakar were at the pointed tip of the great cone.

Listening, The Shadow knew that the sounds were far away. Amakar, trained to the ways of the Afghanistan wilderness, had actually caught the noise before The Shadow. That and the formation of the cove were proofs of distance.

The Shadow spoke to Amakar. Obediently, the big man followed. He knew that there was preliminary work to be performed. He trusted in The Shadow.

AT a swift pace, The Shadow and his new ally came to the roadway and followed it to the landing field. Dim moonlight gave a fleeting view of Lodera's plane.

The Shadow chose it as his objective. He paced rapidly ahead, with just sufficient noise to guide Amakar, for clouds had thickened; and the ground obscured The Shadow's figure. When they neared the plane, The Shadow hissed cautiously for a halt. They heard a voice: Dufour's.

"Head for the castle road," the pilot was ordering. "Lay low and cover. Close in after Lodera and the girl go by. You know the rest."

"Wot about the other blokes?" came a query.

"They'll handle their job," returned Dufour. "You'll cover them when they come along. The bunch of you can scatter after we take off."

"Back to the boats?"

"Gonzales will decide that for you. He's with the other crew because it's more important. After you join, he will hold command. If you can't use the boats, he will guide you to the fens."

Buzzes of approval. The men who had congregated with Dufour seemed pleased at this suggestion of an alternative. The aviator gave final assurance.

"The boats should prove all right," he declared, "unless some coast patrollers caught my flares from

Parrion Head. That is not likely, for I shielded them against view from the sea."

"But if blokes were staring from the castle -"

"Parrion Head cannot be seen from the castle. No one would have been on the cliff above the cove. Come! Along to the road. I'll point the way."

Dufour moved from the plane, with skulking men behind him. Then came a parting. The pilot was going to the cottage; his men were turning toward the road, to take their course toward the castle. The Shadow spoke to Amakar. Silently, they stalked after the men who had left Dufour.

There were six in that motley band; their low, gruff voices told their number. The Shadow gave them leeway until they were past the trees. He wanted to be far from Dufour's hearing. Then, when stilled blackness clustered overhead, The Shadow gave a soft whisper to Amakar. The giant drew up beside him.

The six men were moving slowly. One blinked a flashlight and pointed out the ground about. Bushes formed clusters beside the road. Here men could spread, yet keep within speaking distance. The ruffian crew was ready to form an ambush cordon between the castle and the landing field. The time had come for The Shadow's stroke.

The flashlight blinked off. Voices buzzed. Then came a sweeping avalanche in the shape of two forms that plunged into the clustered thugs. Side by side, The Shadow and Amakar swooped down upon their prey. Two against six, they struck with a tremendous fury.

RUFFIANS spun about at the first sound. The move added to their undoing. The Shadow, gripping the first foeman in his path, caught the fellow's body and swept it sidewise, like a human battering-ram. Before the helpless man could struggle, The Shadow had piled him upon one of his pals. The two sprawled flat. The Shadow's fists then started flaying.

Amakar, his long arms wide, had clutched two ruffians at the same instant. With tremendous strength, he was whirling them about, handling each with a single arm. One man came from his feet; then sprawled as Amakar flung him face downward.

Wheeling, the big Afghan gained a double grip upon the other and hurled him bodily through the air. The whirling body plunged through bushes in its flight; then thudded against a tree in the darkness. A choked cry ended abruptly.

The Shadow had known what the other thugs would do. Had they seen their opponents, they might have sought flight; but in the darkness, with nowhere to turn, they chose the natural course of pitching in to the attack.

The Shadow had punched one thug into submission; he was holding the other prone, half stooped above him, when Amakar flung the man into the woods.

The Afghan stood between The Shadow and the new attack. Amakar's bulk came staggering backward as two attackers struck him before he could regain his balance. The Shadow drove his second adversary downward. The fellow's head cracked the hard dirt of the road. Then rising, The Shadow twisted inward and fell upon the pair who were pummeling Amakar.

One man lost his clutch, turned to battle with The Shadow. Shoulders dropped. The ruffian gave a gloating cry. Then The Shadow whipped upward and somersaulted his antagonist headlong to the bushy bank. The man rolled over, too jolted to rise.

Amakar disposed instantly of the final thug. Gripping the fellow with both arms, he raised him high above his head; then delivered a long, powerful heave. An interval seemed to follow; then came a violent thud in the road far ahead. The silence was disturbed only by outspread groans.

The Shadow's flashlight blinked. It picked out the sprawled thugs. Three were still capable of action; though their motions were slow. Amakar took care of them.

He rolled the trio close together; their bulging eyes showed horror when they saw the darkened face above the mammoth shoulders. Ripping away belts and tearing strips from flannel shirts, Amakar began to bind the subdued enemies.

With the task half completed, The Shadow moved about with the flashlight. He found the senseless man whom he had first encountered and pushed the fellow against Amakar's feet. From the furze, he dragged forth the thug who had ended up against a tree; then, from the road, he brought the man whom Amakar had tossed into oblivion. These two did not need binding.

An order to Amakar, hissed by The Shadow. The Afghan hoisted the first pair that he had bound and plunged off through the glade, a burden on each shoulder. He was taking a straight route to the old gamekeeper's cot, which was only a few hundred yards away. The Shadow finished tying up the next two thugs. He had them ready when Amakar returned. Again, the Afghan carried away a double burden.

THE SHADOW waited, listening. No sound came from the direction of the castle. Amakar, tireless, returned with amazing promptness. He lugged away the thugs whom he had finished with his tremendous tosses. This time, The Shadow, listening, caught faint sounds from the road. He edged into the bushes and hissed as Amakar came toward him.

"Dufour," ordered The Shadow. "Make haste."

Skirting the road, they came to the clearing. Amakar crossed, went toward the airplane. The Shadow heard approaching footsteps; then voices. Two persons had come along the road through the woods. One was Francisco Lodera; the other Gwendolyn Ralhorn.

"We are in the clearing," Lodera was saying. "Look, Gwendolyn; see the sky above us."

"The darkness was dreadful," protested the girl. "It was as fearful in the glade as in the castle."

"Look. The lights of the cottage."

"Are we going there?"

"No. Dufour is waiting for us by the plane."

The pair stumbled on through the blackness of the ground. The Shadow heard their footfalls fade. Then came another, more cautious tread. It was Amakar, returning. The Afghan was lugging Dufour.

He had plucked the sturdy pilot from beside his ship; and had conquered him without allowing a cry. Amakar never had difficulty with a lone adversary, except the one whom he now acknowledged as his master.

The Shadow ordered Amakar to stow Dufour with the other prisoners; then to meet him near the head of the cove. Moving toward the plane, The Shadow stopped and turned in the direction of the cottage. Lodera and Gwendolyn were going there, since they had not found Dufour at the plane. The Shadow could hear their voices.

The two appeared at the lighted doorway of the cottage. The Shadow saw them go in; gliding close, he caught their words. Lodera was speaking in a tone that showed mingled anger and perplexity.

"Dufour should be here!" was his exclamation. "Where can the fellow be? We cannot take off without him. Remain here, Gwendolyn, while I search for him."

"No, no!" protested the girl, excitedly. "I shall not remain alone, Francisco! You must wait with me until Dufour comes!"

"Very well," agreed Lodera, in a troubled tone. "I shall not leave you, Gwendolyn. But if Dufour does not learn that we are here -"

"He will see you, if you keep pacing about the doorway."

The Shadow saw Lodera nod in agreement. The plan was sensible; it was obvious that the Spaniard intended to adhere to it. The Shadow had no further need to remain. Since Lodera intended to wait for Dufour, it was plain that he would have to remain at the cottage. The Shadow moved away through the darkness, to rejoin Amakar.

Lodera, staring from the cottage door, was sharp of gaze. But no eyes could have discerned the cloaked figure that was gliding away in the darkness. Whatever his opinion of Dufour's absence, Lodera did not suspect the departing presence of The Shadow.

CHAPTER XX. CHANCE BRINGS ITS ISSUE

NIGHT had enwrapped strange doings about Chiswold Castle. The flares from Parrion Head; the blinks from the turret; The Shadow's fight with Amakar - like the succeeding captures of Dufour and his crew - all had taken place unwitnessed by those within the great stone walls.

Yet something had happened within the castle; and Harry Vincent had noticed it. Francisco Lodera and Gwendolyn Ralthorn had again departed from the great room downstairs. They had gone separately; and this time neither had returned.

Luval had also left; but the secretary's departure had not been voluntary. Barton Modbury had sent him upstairs to find a booklet that dealt with the subject of the Kimberley diamond mines. Luval was presumably in the study, hunting up the prospectus.

Chance had it that Hayman decided to go out to his car. The local inspector had remembered a report sheet which he wished to show to Delka. Harry, looking toward the hallway, saw Hayman go across. Then he saw the local officer stop short, to listen suspiciously. A moment later, Hayman returned.

"Come to the hall!" he whispered to Modbury. "I hear sounds from upstairs. I caught a glimpse of someone creeping upward. It could not have been Luval."

Modbury arose. Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric followed. Delka motioned to Harry. The entire group went out into the hallway and approached the stairs. Like a faint echo from above, they heard the sound of creaking floorboards.

"Let us go up," decided Modbury.

Though the group ascended softly, the sounds of their footsteps was audible. When they arrived on the second floor, they found the hallway empty. The only opened door was that of the front room. Hayman entered and glanced about suspiciously. He tried the windows. All were clamped.

"How about the study?" queried Delka. "Is Luval in there?"

"He should be," replied Modbury. "Perhaps it would be wise to see."

They went to the study door. Modbury opened it. Luval peered out from a closet, where he was deep in a stack of boxes, hunting for the Kimberley booklet. When he saw the group, Luval dumped pamphlets back into their place and came out to receive Modbury's question.

"Did you hear anyone up here?" demanded Modbury.

"No, sir," replied Luval. "I closed the door when I came into the study. Were the sounds from the hall?"

"Yes," cut in Hayman. "But someone was on the stairs to begin with."

Luval's lips tightened. Harry thought that he detected a worried look upon the secretary's face. But no one else noticed it. Sir Rodney Ralsthorpe had started another query.

"Where is Lodera?"

SUSPICION tinged Sir Rodney's tone. Lord Cedric Loring showed immediate support. He looked about the group; then demanded:

"And Gwendolyn? Where has she gone?"

Sir Rodney's face showed anger. He strode to the door and shouted. He called Gwendolyn's name; hearing no reply, he crossed to the girl's room and pounded the door. At last he opened the barrier and turned on the light. He came back to the study.

"Gwendolyn is gone!" stormed Sir Rodney. "She has eloped with that Spaniard, Lodera! I feared that something such was in her mind; but I did not believe that she would dare it -"

"Lodera may still be here," broke in Delka. "Hayman saw someone on the stairs. Suppose we search for him."

"Let us go to the landing field!" roared Sir Rodney. "We must seize Lodera's plane -"

"One moment." It was Modbury who interposed. He was staring sternly toward Luval; and the secretary was backing away. "Come, Luval. Your face betrays you. Tell us what you know."

Luval reached into his pocket. He drew forth an envelope. He approached Sir Rodney, handed him the object. Sir Rodney recognized Gwendolyn's handwriting. He ripped open the envelope and read the message.

"I am right," he bellowed. "The girl has fled! Come! To the plane's landing field!"

Servants had arrived in the hall, brought upstairs by the commotion. Modbury motioned everyone into the study. He closed the door behind him.

"One moment, Sir Rodney," insisted the diamond king. "Let us make sure of this. Luval - how much more do you know?"

"It is too late to stop them, sir," confessed the secretary. "They have been gone half an hour. I knew their intent as soon as Miss Gwendolyn told me to keep this letter for her father."

"Why did you not tell me?"

"I felt that it concerned Miss Gwendolyn only. She asked for my promise. I could not refuse."

"You are a fool, Luval. Nevertheless, we cannot hold you to great blame. The plane has gone by this time. Pursuit would be useless."

"They have probably flown to the continent," put in Delka. "They could land anywhere. You are right, Mr. Modbury, nothing can be done to overtake them."

"I advised against it," protested Luval. "I told Miss Gwendolyn that I did not trust Lodera -"

"You did not trust him?" demanded Modbury, suddenly. "On what account, Luval?"

"Only regarding promises," put in the secretary, hastily. "Do not misunderstand me. I thought Lodera honest. I merely believed that he might have made false claims about his social position, because he knew that Lord Cedric was his rival."

"I understand."

MODBURY expressed satisfaction with Luval's statement; but Sir Rodney came through with an objection.

"The fellow is a blackguard!" he cried. "Such a man would stop at nothing! He has behaved in an outrageous fashion! Only last night, he ventured into this room without permission. That was when you should have taken him to task, Modbury!"

"And where was he tonight?" demanded Lord Cedric, hotly. "Going in and out of the great room. I would wager that he was snooping hereabouts again!"

"Was Lodera in here tonight, Luval?" demanded Modbury.

"I could not say, sir," replied the secretary. "He may have come here, however. I saw him coming downstairs alone."

Modbury yanked open the desk drawer. He fumbled among papers there. His eyes showed excitement. He wheeled and went to the safe.

"What is the matter, sir?" queried Luval.

"The card is gone!" exclaimed Modbury. "I meant to have you destroy it; but I forgot. If Lodera took it, he carried away something more -"

Modbury stopped short as he pulled the safe door open. Then, with a rumbled cry, he raised up and pointed wildly. The front of the safe was empty. Diamonds, rubies, and cash were gone.

"Lodera's work!" bellowed the diamond king. "He was the one who waited for tonight! Not Mund; but Lodera!"

"He may have taken his cue from Mund," put in Delka, hurrying over to study the rifled safe. "That is the more likely answer. He did not need his rubies here."

"Except to get them out of London," stormed Modbury, "and to lull us by bringing them here!"

HAYMAN had grabbed Luval. The secretary was sinking into a chair, his hands raised pleadingly.

"I swear complete innocence, Mr. Modbury -"

Modbury heard Luval's appeal. His rage subsided; his face became stern but kindly. He motioned Hayman to one side.

"Luval is honest," assured Modbury. "I am sure that he would not betray me. He had access to the safe. I have trusted him with large sums in the past."

"I swear to it," repeated Luval. "I plotted, yes; but not toward crime. I knew that the elopement was due to come. I could not have prevented it. I was for Lodera, up until tonight; then suddenly I began to mistrust him.

"I believed that he was duping Miss Gwendolyn; but I knew also that her decision was made. I have been a fool - a terrible fool -"

"No more to blame than the rest of us," inserted Modbury. "We caught Lodera red-handed last night; yet we were too thick to realize it."

"Quite right," agreed Sir Rodney.

Lord Cedric nodded gloomily.

Modbury began to question the servants. None had seen Lodera and Gwendolyn leave the castle. After a brief quiz, Modbury turned to Delka and Hayman.

"We must drive to Yarwick," he decided. "From there you can call London, since there is no telephone here. This is a case for Scotland Yard. I shall go with you; we can stop at the landing field on the way."

"With a certainty," added Sir Rodney. "Yes, with a certainty that we shall find the plane gone. Well, Modbury, my sympathy is with you. After all, my daughter had a right to marry whom she chose. But you have suffered a financial loss."

"Your daughter has married a rogue," returned Modbury, sadly. "You are the one who deserves the sympathy, Sir Rodney."

Delka, with Hayman, had turned toward the door. Harry Vincent saw the C.I.D. man pause. The barrier was slightly ajar. Delka must have suspected that someone was on the other side. With a sweep, he yanked the door open and sprang straight toward the hall. He was in time to clutch a stooping man, before the fellow could spring away.

HAYMAN leaped to Delka's aid. Together, they dragged the intruder into the light. Startled cries came from Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric, while Barton Modbury stared, astonished.

Harry saw a wild look in Luval's eyes. One that he could understand, for Harry, too, was frozen in amazement. There were details which Harry had not yet gained from The Shadow.

Pale-faced, weary in the arms of his captors, the intruder at the door looked like a veritable ghost. That was what those in the room half believed him to be. Not one had ever expected to see that countenance again in life.

The prisoner was Nigel Chiswold, down from the turret room. Even in this light, he could easily be taken for another. Feature for feature, Nigel remained the image of his dead cousin Geoffrey, the former master of Chiswold Castle.

CHAPTER XXI. BENEATH THE CASTLE

DELKA and Hayman were the last to see the face of the man whom they had snared. Dragging Nigel into the study, they had thrust him forward; hence they were behind his shoulders. It was the consternation reigning on other faces that caused both captors to realize that they had gained a startling prize.

Hayman, twisting past Nigel, stared at the prisoner's face. A look of incredulity came over the local inspector. Hayman cried out the name:

"Geoffrey Chiswold!"

Delka spun Nigel toward him. The Scotland Yard man stared in amazement. He had seen Geoffrey's dead face in a London morgue. Here was the same countenance - a countenance representing the features of a living man!

Sir Rodney Ralthorn, stepping forward, was quick to clutch Nigel by the shoulders. Studying the prisoner's visage, Sir Roger nodded, as though he understood. Then, turning to the others, he stated:

"It is Geoffrey Chiswold, returned. Let us be thankful that the rumor was wrong. Geoffrey, we thought that you were dead!"

"Geoffrey is dead," declared Nigel, calmly.

Sir Rodney dropped back at the sound of the voice, so like Geoffrey's. Lord Cedric recognized the tone also; his eyes blinked, and his monocle dropped to his waistcoat. Barton Modbury sank back in his chair, half gaping. Luval huddled by the wall, while servants stared at one another.

Nigel shook himself from Delka's grasp. Hayman made a grab; but Delka motioned him back. There was no chance for the prisoner to escape. Nigel smiled wanly.

"Any cigarettes here?" he queried. "I've been out of smokes for ten hours."

Harry produced some cigarettes. Nigel lighted one and puffed serenely. The layman started to speak to Delka; Nigel caught the word "Inspector"; he looked at the C.I.D. man.

"Are you from Scotland Yard?"

Delka nodded!.

"Good!" Nigel took another long drag from the cigarette. "You are the very man to hear my story. I am Nigel Chiswold, cousin to Geoffrey."

"I thought so." Delka's tone was firm as he nodded. "That idea just struck me. I saw Geoffrey's body in London. So you are Nigel Chiswold, back from India. You have been in England for some time, haven't you?"

"No," replied Nigel. "My paleness was due to the fever in Bombay. I came home on sick leave. I arrived just after a series of robberies had been committed in London. Those crimes impressed me; because I knew who could have had a finger in them."

TENSENESS had set upon all within the room. Delka stopped a buzz with a wave of his hand. He wanted to hear more.

"Clandermoor's - Kelgood's - Bond Street - Darriol's - the Smith-Righterstone's" - Nigel changed his enumeration - "gold plates - portraits - jewels - jade vases - tiaras and tapestries. I knew about them all

from the past. But there was someone who knew more than I; someone who could have told exactly where they were at present."

"Your cousin Geoffrey?" queried Delka.

"Yes," answered Nigel, "I guessed that he was in back of the robberies. That is why I looked for Geoffrey in London. I found him in the fog."

"Near Whitechapel?"

"No, near St. James Square. I talked to him, intimated what I knew. Geoffrey was cagey. He had the cheek to accuse me in return."

Lord Cedric started to drawl a question. Delka called for silence. Nigel resumed.

"Geoffrey was leaving England," he said, tersely. "That fact troubled me. I realized that he had done his job; that a master crook was behind him. So, afterward, I sent my Afghan servant, Amakar, to find Geoffrey, with instructions to capture Jeff and bring him to me. Just as he captured Sannarak, the famous outlaw, at Khyber Pass. Amakar did that job single-handed."

"I have heard of Sannarak's capture!" exclaimed Sir Rodney. "He was the trouble-maker who was brought to Calcutta; and afterward released, when he named Jahata Bey as the rogue behind the secret insurrections."

"Right," nodded Nigel, "and I intended to question Jeff as they did Sannarak. Unfortunately, Amakar failed to capture my wayward cousin. Geoffrey was murdered in Whitechapel, while Amakar was still on his trail."

HARRY VINCENT stared. Nigel's story was convincing. Harry remembered that surge of men who had come hurtling from the steps of the Whitechapel house. He realized that Geoffrey, already stabbed, could not have been the one who fought that group. It had been Amakar!

Harry had mistaken the big Afghan for an assassin. Then The Shadow had come to Harry's rescue. Amakar had fled; did The Shadow know that the Afghan was innocent of wrong? Had Harry been outside the castle tonight, he would have gained evidence of The Shadow's knowledge. The Shadow had divined the truth. That was why he had taken Amakar as an ally.

"Geoffrey was no longer useful to the master rogue who duped him," resumed Nigel. "That was why he was murdered. He was probably told to stop in Whitechapel on his way to the dock."

"Right!" exclaimed Delka. "It fits! I wondered what he was doing in that district. He must have gone there expecting to receive full payment for his part in crime. Instead, he was eliminated."

Again, Harry pondered. Delka had guessed this answer. Had The Shadow divined it previously? Harry felt sure that his chief must have seen through the game.

"Geoffrey had sold this castle," resumed Nigel. "He warned me not to come here. He even continued his nervy bluff to the point of saying that I might be out to rob Modbury. I saw through it. I sensed that the master crook must be here, intending to do such a job himself. My task was to offset it.

"I intended to inform the law. First, however, I needed facts. I came here, wearing a mask, for my face - so like Geoffrey's - would have been recognized in Yarwick. I stopped, temporarily, at the Prince William Inn."

DELKA smiled sourly. He thought that this explained the mystery of Professor Roderick Danglar. However, he chose to let the subject pass, which was fortunate, to Harry's way of thinking. Both Nigel and Delka would have been puzzled had they gone into more details.

"How did you enter?" demanded Delka.

"Through a hidden opening in the rocks above Castle Cove," explained Nigel, "then through a vault below the castle; a place arranged to hide a company of soldiers in the days of the pretender. I ascended a spiral staircase, straight up to the lone turret, where I occupied a secret chamber known as the spy room."

"Who else knew of this place?"

"Only Geoffrey. But he had informed the master crook. I gained evidence of that; and I learned that the man was here in the castle."

"Who is he?" demanded Barton Modbury.

"Francisco Lodera," returned Nigel. "Last night, I heard him talking to Luval -"

"He duped me!" protested Luval. "I swear it -"

"Silence!" ordered Modbury, in an indignant tone. "This refutes your story, Luval. You are in this deeply!"

"I do not think so," inserted Nigel, extinguishing his cigarette in an ash stand and reaching for another that Harry tendered. "Jeff was duped; and Luval could have been likewise. From the little that I heard, it looks as though Lodera left him here to take a false share of the blame."

Luval's bespectacled face showed a grateful expression.

"Gwendolyn saw me last night," added Nigel, "and thought that I was Geoffrey's ghost. Mund saw me also; and recognized me, for he was an old servant here. I fled back into the turret. Toward dawn, I signaled."

"To whom?" asked Delka.

"To Jeremy," replied Nigel, "because he had my confidence. Also I had expected Amakar. I was atop the turret; suddenly, Mund arrived. He tried to knife me. Amakar saw us against the sky; and finished the fellow with a rifle shot."

"So that was it," nodded Delka. "Jeremy took the blame."

"He did?" Nigel's eyes lighted. "Good, faithful Jeremy. I had an idea that he had managed things somehow, to cover Amakar. However, I barricaded myself in the turret. Tonight, I flashed signals again."

"To Amakar?"

"Yes. I wanted him to come through the secret way and up into the turret. He has not arrived; if he is about, he is probably waiting. He does not know why I signaled for him, particularly because I did not urge haste."

"You had a special reason?"

Delka's sharp question showed that he had detected a significance in Nigel's tone. The young man smiled.

"Yes," he nodded, "a most important reason. I saw signal flares over upon Parrion Head. It was only by chance that I spied them from a slitted opening of the turret; but I knew their purpose."

He paused, then stated:

"Flares were used there, in the days of the pretender, to bring men hidden in the inlet past Parrion Head. Another of Geoffrey's confidences in Lodera, I decided. That pilot at the landing field must have sent up the flares. Men are coming here to Chiswold Castle, to enter the secret vault from the passage by the cove.

"Wait. Hear me out." Nigel smiled serenely. "Geoffrey did not know the difficulties of boating through the cove. I did, for I navigated it often. It will take much longer than Lodera supposed. Men could have landed already on the far shore of the cove; but not on this side. They are not yet here from Parrion Head."

"But Lodera is gone!" stormed Modbury. "His plane has had time to take to the air. He is the man we must overtake -"

"And we are too late," inserted Sir Rodney, angrily. "Too late to save Gwendolyn. Why did you not come here sooner?"

"Lodera is not yet gone," replied Nigel, with a shrewd, wise smile. "He has to wait until his men complete their work; until they carry their burdens from the castle, then place the cargo aboard the plane."

"What cargo?" queried Modbury.

NIGEL leaned forward and advanced his right hand in a dramatic fashion. Harry Vincent could feel the spell which this keen informant placed upon his listeners.

"The swag from London," declared Nigel, emphatically. "The wealth that I expected to find here, once I knew of Geoffrey's complicity. The treasures that I knew would be more important to Lodera than the jewels and the money that I heard you speak about, not long ago.

"Gold plates - portraits - jewels - vases - tiaras - tapestries - all are stored below, in the place where I shall lead you. Three hundred thousand sovereigns' worth of swag, almost ten times the amount of wealth that Lodera has stolen from you, Modbury.

"Not too heavy - not too bulky. It's an easy load for Lodera's powerful plane. Lodera has duped your daughter, Sir Rodney. She has gone, to become the thieving Spaniard's bride. But Lodera, at this minute, is fuming because of the delay.

"He is waiting at the landing field, wondering why his men are so belated, not knowing how long it takes to land at Chiswold Castle after a trip from Parrion Head. Lodera will not go until he has his stolen wealth."

Pausing, Nigel turned deliberately, swung open the door to the hall. He pointed in the direction of the front room; then looked across his shoulder to the others.

"The path is open to the vault below," announced Nigel. "Follow me, and find the proof of all that I have told!"

CHAPTER XXII. CRIME STANDS REVEALED

SUDDEN exclamations burst from many lips. This time Delka raised no hand for silence. The dramatic finish of Nigel Chiswold's story had left the Scotland Yard man utterly dumfounded. Then, to Delka's ears came excited words.

"To the landing field!" Sir Rodney was shouting. "We must capture Lodera! At once!"

"Hold on!" Hayman had entered the argument. "We must not forget that men are coming here below!"

"A double attack!" put in Lord Cedric, coming from out of his shell. "Jove! We should do both!"

"Hear me!" boomed Modbury, in a commanding tone. Then, as excitement stopped, he turned to Luval. "Here is your chance to show your colors, Luval. Go and unlock the door of the gun room. Take the servants with you so that they may arm themselves. Have them bring other weapons here."

He passed a key to Luval. The secretary dashed out willingly, followed by a flood of servants.

"Our first task lies below!" exclaimed Modbury. "Once we have trapped this boat crew of Lodera's, the rest will be swift. We can capture Lodera." He turned to Sir Rodney: "And with no harm to your daughter Gwendolyn."

Sir Rodney stared puzzled, along with Lord Cedric. Harry Vincent caught the thought, however, and so did Eric Delka. The Scotland Yard man gave his prompt approval.

"Excellent!" affirmed Delka. "We can capture the crew by ambush. Then we, ourselves, can go to the landing field. Lodera will think his own men are arriving. We shall trap him with Dufour. The girl will be unharmed."

"Right, Delka!" approved Hayman. "As representative of the local authorities, we must use our full strength for that ambush. 'Twould be folly to break forces and send some to the landing field too early."

The servants were returning with the weapons. Revolvers, rifles, a varied assortment from which all could choose. Each man picked his weapon; Nigel then gestured impatiently toward the front room. Accepting him as the temporary leader, all followed.

The paneled wall was open. Nigel stepped through to the staircase. Modbury gave a hoarse whisper.

"Two of my servants should remain here," he suggested. "They can cover us in case Lodera or some others should return to the castle."

"Good," approved Hayman. Then, turning to Delka, said, "You shall be our leader, Inspector"

Delka nodded to Modbury, to place two men on guard. Nigel was wagging a flashlight from the spiral stairs. Delka reached him and beckoned for the others to follow.

THE corkscrew steps led to musty depths. The journey resembled a visit to an ancient tomb. Nigel's blinking torch stirred flapping bats from nesting places. These creatures flipped blindly upward while descending men beat at them with their hands.

Nigel extinguished his torch for the final stage of the descent. Then his carefully treading feet struck stone instead of iron. He whispered for silence. The others heard him creep forward. Finally, his flashlight came on to stay. The followers clustered in to join him.

Harry Vincent, next to Delka, was astounded by the size of this lower room. The vault was hollowed from the very rock upon which the castle stood. Its ceiling was high; its length and breadth were great. Nigel's flashlight threw but a weakened glow until other torches joined it.

At the far end of the chamber was a blocking barrier of wood, with a metal sheathing. It served only as protection against the elements, for its hinges were weak; its lock was useless. Nigel whispered an echoed explanation.

"Rocks hide the entrance," he said. "Only those who know of the door can find it. Geoffrey knew; so did I. He told Lodera, while I explained the way to Amakar. If my servant comes, you will recognize him. He is huge and dark-faced."

NIGEL'S light blinked on a stack of boxes at the side of the vault. He led the way and ripped back canvas sides to reveal the slats of crates. He tore at paper wrappings. Gold plates glittered under his light.

Delka, stooping, spied painted canvas in another crate. Square boxes, wedged in place, were containers for jewels and tiaras. Nigel raised one lid to show a sparkle of gems. Hayman ripped heavy paper from a tightpacked bundle to poke the cloth of gold-threaded tapestries.

Delka clapped Nigel on the shoulder. The Scotland Yard man was pleased. Wheeling about, he began to post his men. He took one side, with Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric. He sent Hayman to the other, accompanied by Harry and Nigel.

Modbury and Luval had four servants with them. Delka indicated that they were to guard the inner depths, at the foot of the spiral stairs.

"Keep contact with the two upstairs," ordered the C.I.D. man. "One man will do as messenger between."

Modbury spoke to Hasslett. The chauffeur had happened to be in the castle when the robbery of the safe had been discovered. Hasslett became the messenger. Delka gave word for the lights to be extinguished. In the darkness, he whispered final orders that toned through the vault.

"Let them enter. Once they are well inside, give them lights and cover them. If they throw a torchlight toward anyone, act in response. I shall watch and be ready with a prompt order."

Echoes died. Solemn silence persisted through the vault. Nigel, close to Harry, buzzed that the wait would not be a long one. Tenseness continued; only the trifling sound of Hasslett's footsteps could be heard from the spiral stairs.

Then, without warning, came the surprise.

A click. Light flooded the vault, from incandescents set deep in the high ceiling. Powerful bulbs had flashed from everywhere, exposing all within the underground room. A harsh snarl echoed; not from the outer door, but from the innermost spot, at the spiral stairs. Delka and Hayman wheeled, their companions with them. They stopped short.

Modbury's servants had crept forward, joined by the men from above. With leveled revolvers, they were covering both groups at the sides. Centered between were two gloating men, each with a raised rifle. Modbury and Luval!

NO words were needed to explain the changed situation. Barton Modbury's large face had taken on an evil glare which he had managed to suppress in the past. He stood revealed as a murderous master of

crime, while Luval, his teeth gleaming in a leering grin, proclaimed himself as the master rogue's lieutenant.

"Stand where you are!"

Modbury's rasp was menacing. Hayman and Delka dropped their revolvers; those beside them did the same. Resistance was useless; for they were under the very muzzles of looming guns.

"Fools!" sneered Modbury. "Not one of you would have guessed my game had Nigel Chiswold not blundered into it. Even he was tricked. But he learned enough to spoil my plans.

"I came to England bent on robbery. I wanted a tool. Geoffrey Chiswold served. He knew the places to rifle. He worked with my gang in London. But not until after I had bought Chiswold Castle; then had learned its secrets from Geoffrey.

"The swag came here, shipped with my new furnishings. Luval and these servants stored it here below. Mund was also in my employ, for we kept him after the old servants were gone. We knew Mund for one of our own kind.

"I invited guests to serve me as new dupes. You, Sir Rodney and you, Lord Cedric. The pair of you would do to vouch for my integrity. But that was not all. I wanted another; I chose Francisco Lodera, because I knew that he and Gwendolyn were in love.

"Geoffrey gave me all these details. He planned with me. I needed a way to get the swag from England. Lodera had a plane; I saw to it that Dufour was recommended as a pilot. Dufour is another of my men."

Chuckling, Modbury approached closer to the silent men whom he had tricked.

"Luval talked to Lodera," he added, "and offered to help him sell me the rubies and elope with Gwendolyn. Lodera fell into the snare. He needed money; he wanted the girl. All the while, we were framing him.

"I wanted him to be branded as a thief who had robbed me - not too much, however, for I did not want him to be classed as a crook with a great capacity. The jewels and the money were just right; for they would have appealed to a shrewd opportunist.

"What was to happen to Lodera? It has already begun. His fate - and the girl's - are settled. They were seized on their way to the landing field. Bound and gagged, they are aboard the plane. The swag will go there also.

"Dufour will fly to the continent and there unload the massed wealth for disposal. He will fly back to the coast, take to the chute, then let the plane crash with Lodera and Gwendolyn aboard. They will be found later, dead, the jewels and the money gone.

"No one will ever know that the spoils of London robberies went from England aboard that ship. I shall return to South Africa. There I shall receive the bulk of the money that the swag will bring."

Modbury paused. His face took on a look of disappointment.

"I SPOKE of matters as they were to be," he growled. "I had Geoffrey murdered after he was no longer useful. He went to Whitechapel, expecting payment, then received death instead. His former crew killed him - the men who had aided him in robbery and murder - and they came here, to lie in wait above Parrion Head.

"I had not reckoned with Nigel. When he bobbed up, Mund saw him and explained matters to Luval in the study. Later, I talked with Mund. He was kindling my study fire. I deputed Mund to murder Nigel; then to flee the castle. The body was to stay in the turret chamber.

"Old Jeremy fooled us. Neither Luval nor I knew that Mund had gone to the roof of the turret. We thought that he had finished Nigel in the spy room, for he had no knife upon him. We actually believed Jeremy's story, thinking Mund had been leaving by the front window.

"All was well tonight. We planted the blame on Lodera; but chance brought the issue too soon. I was delaying, pretending that there would be no hope of catching Lodera. I wanted to give my boat crew time to remove the swag and take it to the plane.

"When Nigel reappeared, the game was finished; at the very time when I had removed blame from Luval. The moment Nigel told that the London swag was in this vault, my plan was ruined. Why? Because the great point to conceal was the fact that the stolen goods were ever in this castle, or had ever been here.

"I had but one remaining course. To speed all of you into following Nigel. To make this vault a trap, where all of you will die and remain forgotten. As soon as the spoils have been removed, I and my servants shall quit this castle, leaving your dead bodies buried in this secret vault."

One last pause. Then Modbury sneered:

"Fools! Had anyone examined facts, he might have found the clues. Geoffrey, to begin with; then his death in Whitechapel. My furnishings in the great room. Luval plotting with Lodera, duping him all the while. How could Lodera have been the master crook, while I owned this castle and held full control?

"Luval talked to Mund; but Lodera did not. Luval talked with me; so did Mund. You fled too quickly to your turret, Nigel. Had you remained, you would not have made the mistake that you did. Had anyone of keenness examined all angles of my scheme, he would have guessed that I was the brain behind it.

"But no one was close enough; nor shrewd enough. You knew a little, Delka; but it was too little. You were less informed than Nigel. You knew nothing, Hayman. Why do you think I covered Jeremy? I shall tell you. Because the fellow had unwittingly rendered me a service - at least so I thought - in finishing Mund, who - like Geoffrey - was no longer useful.

"Jeremy will be handled later" - Modbury clucked in an evil fashion - "and he will lead us to the hiding place of Nigel's Afghan servant. We will deal with him as well.

"We have new plans, and they are completed; all successfully arranged, because no one was capable of noting the points that I have mentioned. Those points and many others - all so perfectly covered that I held success within my grasp.

"Until Nigel blundered. Nigel, the only one who might have guessed the truth. A proof that no one in the world could have divined my schemes. None of you need look for rescue. It is hopeless -"

Modbury stopped, staring. His hard eyes bulged.

A LAUGH had quivered through the vault, a mighty taunt that awoke horrendous echoes. A burst of challenging mirth that swept from the darkness by the forgotten outer door, the spot where Modbury had believed that his boat crew would soon arrive.

Swinging into the light of the vault's brilliant center was a figure cloaked in black. Harry Vincent gasped his recognition. It was The Shadow. He had come to rescue.

No one, Modbury had said, could have known the depth of crime. Modbury was wrong. The Shadow had long since guessed the game, through the very clues that the master villain had claimed no one could gain!

CHAPTER XXIII. THE DOUBLE STROKE

THE SHADOW, like Modbury, had planned with thorough purpose. A hidden being in the darkness, he had matched every move that the master crook had made. He had tabulated every fact that Modbury had mentioned; and more.

Upon that first night in the vicinity of Chiswold Castle, The Shadow had observed the meeting between Nigel and old Jeremy. He had heard Nigel's story, had recognized it as the truth. Nigel's mention of the vault below the castle, with the spy room in the turret above, had been sufficient to inform The Shadow that swag must be located here.

Listening to Lodera's talk with Luval; watching the moves by Nigel, The Shadow had recognized at once that Lodera was a dupe. He had known that Luval, like Geoffrey, was too small to be the master crook; that some stronger, hidden hand must have shaped this entire setting.

Crime in London - the purchase of the castle - the choice of guests who fitted perfectly into the scheme. Only one plotter could have framed the game. That one was Barton Modbury. No deep-dyed villainy could have been hatched and carried through without an inkling reaching the self-styled diamond king.

Modbury's close adherence to Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric had shown The Shadow that the supercrook was using those guests to have them support his alibi.

The Shadow, sole witness to the fray between Nigel and Mund, had been ready to protect Nigel. Amakar had saved him that necessity, by the long-range rifle shot. Listening later, The Shadow had heard Jeremy's bluff. It had passed with both Modbury and Luval. The Shadow had known that Nigel would be safe; for rogues believed him dead.

To counter Modbury's evil schemes, The Shadow had chosen Amakar as an aid, knowing the strength and loyalty of the big Afghan. The Shadow had recognized Amakar's true worth that night in Whitechapel. He had fought Amakar then, only because of Harry's blunder. Both Harry and Amakar had been mistaken; each thinking the other to be one of Geoffrey's assassins.

The Shadow's words to Amakar, tonight, outside the castle, had been given in support of Nigel Chiswold. That was why Amakar had accepted The Shadow as his master. Together, they had set out upon a triple mission.

First, to deal with rogues at the landing field, Dufour included. Then, to intercept and overpower the crew that was coming for the swag. Finally, to enter the castle, bring Nigel from the turret, and unmask Modbury in the presence of the law.

ONE man had unwittingly ruined The Shadow's threefold plan. He was the very one who had also thrown chaos into Modbury's scheme; namely, Nigel Chiswold. Neither The Shadow nor Amakar had learned that Nigel had seen the flares from Parrion Head. There had been no call for haste when Nigel had signaled Amakar. The Shadow had supposed that Nigel would stay placed until Amakar came.

Coming back from the end of Castle Cove, The Shadow had chosen a spot outside the secret entrance to the vault, which Amakar - informed by Nigel - had shown to him. There he was in wait for the belated landing crew. As Nigel had guessed, Modbury's mob had struck trouble with the rocks. They were still picking their way up from the cove.

Posted some distance from the hidden entrance to the vault, The Shadow had not detected the first glimmer of flashlights from within, nor had he heard the sound of whispered talk. But when Modbury had clicked the light switch from beneath the spiral stairs, The Shadow had spotted the lines of glow from the edges of the buried, battered door.

The Shadow had known the answer. Modbury. Servants of the master crook had installed those lights; and only Modbury would have risked their use. His outside men were coming; glimmering edges of light would hasten them, when they observed the glow. But Modbury had drawn a foe whose presence he had not suspected: The Shadow.

Approaching, The Shadow had dropped to the level of the secret door. He had edged past the broken barrier. Creeping inward, he had chosen the right moment for action. In uncanny fashion, he had revealed his presence. Through sinister mirth, he had drawn all eyes to himself.

Modbury and Luval, their rifles half lowered, were caught flat-footed. The servants - evil thugs in disguise - were more ready than the crooked chief and his bespectacled lieutenant. Those minions whirled when they heard Modbury's snarled gasp. Following their master's glaring gaze, they saw The Shadow.

This was the move that The Shadow wanted; the one that he had forced. His automatics were ready in his fists, pointing outward at an angle. His fingers pressed their triggers just as Modbury's henchmen aimed to fire.

ROARS boomed through the vault as big automatics stabbed their message. With The Shadow's shots came the answering barks of revolvers. Thugs were surging forward, shooting wildly as they came. The Shadow was thrusting carnage into their ranks.

Slugs found living marks with every jab, while hurried bullets from thug-gripped guns were sizzling close past The Shadow's fading form.

It was The Shadow's battle; and he would have cleared the field, but for the action of the men whom he had come to rescue. Of those huddled prisoners, only two used their heads: Eric Delka and Harry Vincent.

The Scotland Yard man and The Shadow's agent were at opposite stations. Both dropped to the floor and snatched up their lost pistols, to deliver a flanking fire that would break the surge of Modbury's eight servitors. Others, however, acted with less wisdom.

Sir Rodney and Lord Cedric from one side; Hayman and Nigel from the other - all four leaped forward weaponless to grapple with the driving mob. Before The Shadow could wither more than half of his opponents; before either Delka or Harry could aid him, future chance was ended.

Instead of four thugs charging hopelessly against a cannonade, there was a cluster of fierce, fighting men. Four against four, and half of them, men who must be saved.

Harry and Delka gained a simultaneous thought. From opposite sides, they pitched into the milling throng. Four unarmed men were wrestling valiantly to drag guns away from crooks. The odds were against success; but Harry and Delka changed the tide. Snatching at thugs, they used their guns as bludgeons, to smash down opposition.

Men sprawled everywhere, rolling, scrambling; while muffled gunshots told that tumbled crooks were trying to use their guns against the fighters who had downed them. Delka slugged one thug who wrested free from Nigel. Harry grappled with another who had managed to wound Lord Cedrick.

As he rolled, slashing at his antagonist, Harry saw both sides of another duel. Modbury and Luval had sprung forward with their rifles, under cover of the sprawling forms in the center of the floor. Then, as the path cleared, both were aiming. Their rifles had gained a single target: The Shadow.

Two against one. The Shadow's guns were leveled. But Modbury, shrewd in strategy, had chosen a position of security. He had dropped behind Luval; half crouched, the master crook had thrust his rifle barrel beneath the aiming secretary's upraised right arm.

Luval had become a living bulwark!

Two rifles were about to spurt as one. Should The Shadow beat them to the shots, it would be of no avail. His bullets could not reach Modbury until Luval had toppled.

As he had sacrificed Geoffrey and Mund, so would Modbury let Luval die in this emergency. Luval, intent upon beading The Shadow, was ignorant of Modbury's move.

In that tense instant, The Shadow fired. With split-second swiftness, he ripped bullets toward his foemen, while their fingers were still on the move. Luval was the only target; yet Modbury never fired in return.

Timed to the instant with The Shadow's gun bursts came a sharp crackle from the outer door. Amakar had followed The Shadow. The huge Afghan had thrust the broken barrier aside, to arrive just before the climax of the mad, swift fray.

Amakar, like Harry, had seen the final duel in the making. He had raised his rifle; like The Shadow, he had fired straight at Luval.

AMAKAR'S high-powered gun possessed a quality that The Shadow's automatics lacked. Luval's body could stop the bullets from The Shadow's pistols; but a human form was tissue against a close-range fire from Amakar's rifle.

Amakar had aimed for Modbury, through Luval. The Afghan, like The Shadow, had beaten the foemen to the shot. His timely bullet, winging through Luval's breast, found its lodging in the man beyond.

Luval was sprawling crazily, after a backward stagger. His rifle had clattered to the stone floor. Modbury had straightened; but his gun was lowered. Nerveless fingers clutched it, while bulging eyes stared glassy from a distorted visage.

Lips, curling uglily, sought to deliver a defiant snarl. They failed. Amakar's steel-jacketed missive had done its work. With a sickening gasp, Modbury collapsed upon Luval's body.

The master criminal, like his lieutenant, was dead. The Shadow and Amakar had gained a simultaneous triumph!

CHAPTER XXIV. THE LAST TRIBUTE

A SINISTER laugh wakened the echoes of the vault. A knell from hidden lips, that told of valiant victory. That mirth was solemn as a knell; for it betokened the delivery of doom that was deserved.

The Shadow had spotted the source of deep-laid crime. He had interposed to rescue trapped men from certain death. Backed by Amakar, he had completed a swift victory. All that remained was to end the efforts of underlings, who did not know that their evil chief had died

Not those who were still here in the vault; for their struggles had ceased. The battle on the floor was ended. The last of Modbury's servants had succumbed. The Shadow turned and spoke to Amakar. The

mammoth Afghan bowed and followed toward the outer door.

Thanks to the intervention of Harry and Delka, the stubborn crooks had been unable to dispatch any of the men who had surged upon them.

Lord Cedric Lorthing had received a bullet in his left shoulder; but he was managing to come to his feet, aided by Sir Rodney Ralthorn, who had come through the fray unscathed.

Nigel Chiswold was uninjured; and he was also giving aid to a companion who was weakly rising. This was Hayman, wounded less seriously than Lord Cedric, but dazed from the furious fray. Hayman was clutching his right forearm; the local inspector had suffered a flesh wound.

Harry Vincent, rising from above a crook whom he had subdued, was quick with a call to Eric Delka. Looking toward the outer door, Harry had seen The Shadow wheel. With Amakar beside him, the cloaked victor had left the vault. Harry pointed; Delka understood.

Leaving Nigel Chiswold and Sir Rodney in charge of the vault, Harry and Delka dashed for the secret door. Past the broken barrier, they clambered upon the ledge that partially hid the opening. Lights were blinking on the rocks, just below. Guns had begun to crackle.

Harry and Delka saw the issue. The Shadow and Amakar had separated. One from each side, they were flanking the delayed crew from the boat. Savagely, thugs returned the fire of booming automatics and sharp-cracking rifle fire.

Crooks sprawled wounded. As the flankers cut in behind them, those who were still unscathed came clambering up toward the entrance to the vault.

Flashlights spotted them when they reached the ledge. Delka's growled order stopped them. A quartet of vanquished ruffians threw up their hands. Delka and Harry marched them into the vault.

While they were lining up the prisoners, Amakar arrived, carrying two wounded prisoners from the cliff. The Afghan deposited his burdens on the floor; then solemnly went out to bring in more.

He made no comment while he performed this action. Amakar was acting under final orders. When he had brought in four other groaning captives, Amakar stood before Nigel Chiswold and delivered a salaam.

The bow meant that three trips were all that Amakar needed. It meant also - Harry Vincent understood - that Amakar's service with The Shadow was ended. The master of darkness had told Amakar to join those within the castle. From now on, Amakar's orders would come from Nigel Chiswold.

LATER, rescued men thronged the great room of Chiswold Castle. They had left the dead below; they had made the prisoners carry the wounded up the spiral stairway. Hard upon their assembly into the great room came the chug of motors from the front driveway; then pounding fists at the great door. Backed by Amakar, Delka opened the barrier.

Men had come from Yarwick. Local police and physicians, as well as the coroner. With them were the two who had summoned this aid: Francisco Lodera and Gwendolyn Ralthorn. Then came old Jeremy, with news of prisoners in the gamekeeper's lodge. With a smile, Lodera informed that men had already dropped off to bring in those captives.

"Dufour is among them," explained the Spaniard. "He had a small automobile in back of the cottage. We started for Yarwick, Gwendolyn and I, after we were told to go."

"Told?" queried Delka. "By whom?"

"By a ghost," smiled Lodera. "At least by someone whom Gwendolyn thought was a ghost."

"The weird person whom I saw upon the lawn!" exclaimed the girl. "He spoke to us at Dufour's cottage. He told us about Nigel Chiswold being here at the castle. He said that Barton Modbury was a plotter who had sought our deaths."

Pausing, Gwendolyn looked about for her father. At that moment, Sir Rodney appeared from upstairs. Happily, he embraced his daughter with one arm; then, from beneath the other, he produced a package that he was carrying.

"I found these stowed deep in the filing cabinet," said Sir Rodney to Delka. "The diamonds, the rubies, and the money. Luval must have buried them there after he took them from the safe."

"At Modbury's order," added Lodera. "We were told that also. We were to look for the gems and the money. As for the other treasure -"

He paused. Already, heavy footsteps were descending the stairs. Amakar had directed men to the vault. They were bringing the first crates from below, up by the spiral stairway, which was wide enough for the long boxes; then down by the front staircase to the hall outside the great room.

"This settles everything," chuckled Delka from the doorway, while he watched men from Yarwick pry open the first box and draw out stacks of gold plates. "All the stolen goods are intact. Modbury was smart enough to preserve everything. He wanted to dispose of his spoils at full value, on the continent. Yes, everything is settled."

"Not quite."

It was Lord Cedric Lorthing who drawled the statement. A physician had just finished binding his shoulder; though pale, Lord Cedric smiled as he adjusted his monocle. He approached Lodera and thrust forward his right hand.

"Congratulations," remarked Lord Cedric. "We did you an injustice, Francisco. Since Gwendolyn chose to elope with you, there is no question regarding whom she loves. Accept my wishes for a happy marriage."

Gwendolyn looked toward her father. Sir Rodney nodded his approval. Smiling happily, the girl nestled against Lodera's embracing arm.

"You are right, Inspector," nodded Lord Cedric, to Delka. "All is settled to everyone's satisfaction."

Hardly had he spoken, before a rhythmic buzz sounded from above the castle. Delka started for the front door; and others followed. Lodera and Gwendolyn joined the group, with an explanation.

"It is my plane," stated Lodera, "our friend has taken it to London. He told me that the ship will be left at Croydon Airdrome."

Twinkling lights against the darkened sky; at last, a broad-winged shape that swept beneath a faint trail of momentary moonlight. A blackened token high against the clouds, the departing plane seemed symbolic of the mysterious flier who manned it: The Shadow.

Eric Delka watched from Harry Vincent's side, as they stood upon the porch. Light from the doorway showed the set smile upon the Scotland Yard man's lips. Delka, like Harry, had long since recognized

The Shadow's prowess.

Two others watched; their silence betokened different thoughts. One was Nigel Chiswold; his face was one that registered deep gratitude. Nigel had seen the avenging of Geoffrey's death; the finish of Barton Modbury, master schemer who had lured the other Chiswold into wrong.

Deep had been Nigel's regard for Geoffrey, despite the latter's weakness. Nigel had come with hope of making amends for Geoffrey's misdeeds. His wish had been realized, thanks to The Shadow. Moreover, the settlement with Barton Modbury had paved the way for Nigel to gain an unexpected reward.

Instead of being a man who needed protection; Modbury had proven to be the hidden plotter, whose transactions would be repudiated by the law. Nigel Chiswold would soon receive a heritage. He would be recognized as the owner of Chiswold Castle.

THE other who watched was Amakar. Whatever the Afghan's memories of the past; whatever his desire for the future, no one could have told; for Amakar's face was steady and expressionless.

One gesture alone betokened Amakar's respect for the cloaked master whom the Afghan had served; and the huge fighter reserved it until the others had turned to enter the castle.

Then Amakar raised his huge right hand to his forehead. Slowly, in native fashion, he delivered a last salute. Harry Vincent, turning at the door, was the only person who observed the action.

Harry Vincent understood. The giant Afghan would not forget the mighty prowess of that cloaked leader whom he had followed and served amid successful frays. Nor would The Shadow forget the aid that his ally had given in return.

That was something that Amakar knew. That last salute had become the Afghan's privilege. In that gesture was embodied the respect of all who had profited by The Shadow's deed. This was the final tribute.

Amakar's farewell to The Shadow.

THE END