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Triumphs of M. Jonquelle

by MELVILLE DAVISSON POST

THE THING ON THE HEARTH.

BEGIN HERE TO-DAY.

The occult power of the Orient came to the mysterious and incredible thing which had removed from the world one of its greatest intelligences—the brain of Rodman, who had startled scientists with his paper on the manufacture of precious stones by synthetic chemistry.

Rodman was dead. His attendant, that strange Oriental from the Shan monastery in Asia, told a story weird and incredible. Finally

M. Jonquelle, greatest of French detectives, was called to America and the Oriental rehearsed the story of what took place on the night when the man who could manufacture rubies and emeralds as cheaply as glass, met his death.

GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER III.

The Oriental as going on with a slow precise articulation as though he would thereby make a difficult matter clear.

"The night had fallen swiftly. It was incredibly silent. There was no sound in the Master's room, and no light except the flicker of the logs smouldering in the fireplace. The thin line of light appeared faintly along the sill of the door."

He passed.

"The fireplace, Excellency, is at the end of the great room, directly opposite this door into the hall, before which I always sat when the master was within. The fireplace is of black marble with an immense black marble hearth. And the gift which I had brought the master stands on one side of the fire, on this marble hearth, as though it were a single andron."

The man turned back into the heart of his story.

"I knew by the vague sense of pressure that the devotions of the thing were again on the way. And I began to suffer in the spirit for the master's safety. Interference, both by act and by the will, were denied me. But there is an anxiety of spirit, Excellency, that the uncertainty of an issue makes intolerable."

The man paused.

The pressure continued—and the silence. It was nearly midnight. I could not distinguish any act or motion of the master, and in fear I crept over to the door and looked in through the crevice along the threshold.

"The master sat by his table; he was straining forward, his hands gripping the arms of his chair. His eyes and every tense instinct of the man were concentrated on the fireplace. The red light of the embers was in the room. I could see him clearly, and the table beyond him with the calculations; but the fireplace seemed strangely out of perspective—it extended above me.

"My gift to the master, not more than four hand-breads in length, including the base, stood now like an immense bronze on an extended marble slab beside a gigantic fireplace. This effect of extension put the top of the fireplace and the enlarged andron, above its pedestal, out of my line of vision. Everything else in the chamber, holding its normal dimensions, was visible to me.

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After Every Meal



HE KILLED RODMAN SIMPLY BY CRUSHING HIM IN HIS ARMS.

I turned over with my face to the floor.

"But there is always hope, hope over the certainties of experience, over the certainties of knowledge. Perhaps the master, even now, sustained in the spirit, would put away the devotion. . . . No, Excellency, I was not misled. I knew the master was beyond hope! But the will to hope moved me, and I turned back to the crevice at the doorsill."

He paused.

"There was now a delicate odor, everywhere, faintly, like the blossom of the little bitter apple here in your country. The red embers in the fireplace gave out a steady light; and in the glow of it, on the marble hearth, stood the one who had descended from the elevation of the andron."

Again the man hesitated, as for an accurate method of expression.

"In the flesh, Excellency, there was color that would not appear in the image. The hair was yellow, and the eyes were blue; and against the black marble of the fireplace the body was conspicuously white.

"But in every other aspect of her, Excellency, the woman was on the hearth in the flesh as she is in the clutch of the savage male figure in the image.

"There is no dress or ornament, as you will recall, Excellency. Not even an ear-jewel or an anklet, as though the graver of the image felt that the inherent beauty of his figure could take nothing from these ostentations.

"The woman's heavy, yellow hair was wound around her head, as in the image. She shivered a little, faintly, like a naked child in an unaccustomed draught of air, although she stood on the warm, marble hearth and within the red glow of the fire.

"The voice from the male figure of the image, which I had brought the master, and which stood as the andron, now so immensely enlarged, was beginning again to speak. The thin, metallic sound seemed to splinter against the dense silence, as it went forward in the ritual prescribed.

"But the master had already decided; he stood now on the great marble hearth with his papers crushed together. And as I looked on, through the crevice under the doorsill, he put out his free hand and with his finger touched the woman gently. The flesh under his finger yielded, and stooping over, he put the formula into the fire."

Like one who has come to the end of his story, the huge Oriental stopped. He remained far from me, silent. Then he continued in an even, monotonous voice:

"I got up from the floor then, and purified myself with water. And after that I went into an upper chamber, opened the window to the east, and sat down to write my report to the brotherhood. For the thing which I had been sent to do was finished."

He put his hand somewhere into the loose folds of his Oriental garments and brought out a roll of thin, vellum-like onion-skin, painted in Chinese characters. It was of immense length, but on account of the thickness of the vellum, the roll wound on a tiny cylinder of wood was not above two inches in thickness.

"Excellency," he said, "I have carefully concealed this report through the misfortunes that have attended me. It is not certain that I shall be able to deliver it. Will you give it for me to the jewel-merchant Vandachik, in Amsterdam? He will send it to Mahadai in Bombay, and it will go north with the caravan."

I put the scroll into my pocket and went out, for a motor car had come into the park, and I knew that Jonquelle had arrived.

I met Jonquelle and the superintendent in the long corridor; they had been looking in at my interview through the elevated grating.

"Jonquelle," I cried, "the judge was right to cut short the criminal trial and issue a lunacy warrant. This creature is the maddest lunatic in this whole asylum. The human mind is capable of any absurdity."

Jonquelle looked at me with a queer, ironical smile.

"Perhaps," he shrugged, "there is some explanation in the report in your pocket, to the Monastic Head. It's only a theory, you know."

He smiled, showing his white, even teeth.

We went into the superintendent's room, and sat down by a smouldering fire of coals in the grate. I handed Jonquelle the roll of vellum. It was in one of the Shan dialects. He read it aloud. With the addition of certain formal expressions, it contained precisely the Oriental's testimony before the court and no more.

"Ah!" he said in his curiously inflected voice.

And he held the scroll out to the heat of the fire. The vellum baked slowly, and as it baked, the black Chinese characters faded out and faint blue ones began to appear.

Jonquelle read the secret message in his emotionless drawl:

"The American is destroyed, and his accursed work is destroyed with him. Send the news to Bangkok and west to Burma. The treasure of India are saved."

I cried out in astonishment.

"An assassin! The creature was an assassin! He killed Rodman simply by crushing him in his arms!"

Jonquelle's drawl lengthened.

"It's Lal Gupta," he said, "the cleverest Oriental in the whole of Asia. The jewel-traders sent him to watch Rodman, and to kill him if he was ever able to get his formulae worked out. They must have paid him an incredible sum."

"And that is why the creature attached himself to Rodman?" I said.

"Surely," replied Jonquelle. "He brought that bronze—Rodman's carrying off the Sabine woman—and staged the supernatural to work out his plan and to save his life. I knew the bronze as soon as I got my eye on it—old Franz Josef gave it as a present to Mahadai in Bombay for matching up some rubies."

I swore bitterly.

"And we took him for a lunatic!"

"Ah, yes!" replied Jonquelle. "What was it you said as I came in? 'The human mind is capable of any absurdity!'"

Another M. Jonquelle story, "The Fortune Teller," will follow this.

Ninety-Year-Old Woman Flyer

Harrow Nonagenarian Realises Wish Cherished For Fifteen Years

A long-cherished desire to fly was gratified recently by Mrs. Hannah Smith, of Harrow, who is 90 years old. Mrs. Smith, who has long silver locks, scarcely knows what illness means. She was taken down to the aerodrome in a bath chair, and to a Press representative, who made the trip with her, she said:

"I have wanted to fly for many years. While staying at Lincoln I first saw an aeroplane go up, and although I was 75 at the time I made up my mind that I, too, should fly."

Asked if she were at all nervous, Mrs. Smith said: "Of course, I am not. Why should not we old people enjoy our modern pleasures? Do you think," she added, "I am the oldest passenger?"

She waved her hand delightedly to the spectators as she flew off and upon landing expressed herself greatly pleased.

"I was most struck," she said, "by the beautiful view of the gardens below me, and I enjoyed every moment of the flight."

Flies are among the latest things used for trimming women's hats. And we thought there were no flies on Eve!

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British Research Causes Discovery

New Industry May Result From Treating By-Products from Tar

London.—New methods of extracting the by-products from tar are reported to have been discovered by research chemists at the Mond Gas Company's plant in Dudley, in the heart of England's Black Country, and it is likely that an entirely new industry will be created as a result.

It is also likely that the discoveries will have an important effect on the world's chemical supplies, and it is understood that a new company will shortly issue a new range of products, the derivatives of tar.

For some time the Germans and Americans have held a monopoly in this industry.



Not Now.
"I always used to do what my doctor told me."
"Well don't you do it any more?"
"Hub! I should say not! I married my doctor."

The older we get the more we learn and the more deeply we realize how little we know. Yet we are vain enough to think that our years of experience enable us to render our clients a worthy service.

"Prosperity is the fruit of labor property is desirable; it is a positive good in the world; let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."—Abraham Lincoln.

Sailing for Peru

When I told my friends I was going to Peru they became flippant. The most staid and serious immediately quoted Limericks about young men of Peru who had nothing to do and sent snakes to the Zoo. Others made puns about Peruvian bark and several declined altogether to believe that Peru existed anywhere but in a poet's fancy. I am still unable to understand why Peru, of all the countries in the world, should be treated as a geographical joke, but I know to my cost that it is.

Two or three people treated me seriously. One Fleet Street man said all he knew about Peru was that it was where ink came from. I asked him if he were not thinking of "Inca" rather than "ink." He said it might be so. He knew he had heard of Peru in connection with something allied to ink.

Another journalist said I did well to go to Peru. I should be a missionary of Empire.

"How so in Peru?" I asked.

"Why, isn't Peru part of the British Empire?" he demanded.

He was nonplussed to learn that Peru had somehow or other escaped absorption. "If it doesn't belong to us then," he said, "I suppose it belongs to the United States."

My literary agent had heard of Peruvian condors, cannibals, and crocodiles. She desired me to leave in London a full power of attorney. "Your return being so doubtful," as she explained.

The first shipping agent I consulted confessed himself quite in the dark as to how one travelled to Peru. "We have never booked a passage there," he said. He declared that I should in any case have to change ship at Panama; but after some searching discovered an Italian line which sailed from Genoa direct to Callao. Callao, I had explained to the agent, was the port of Lima, the capital of Peru.

The Genoese ship I selected was to call at Barcelona and take her last sight of Europe at Gibraltar. Thence she would skirt the coast of Africa to Tenerife and from there run down the trades to Trinidad. Who could resist the idea of first setting foot in America at Trinidad, so named by Columbus himself when he sighted its three hills on his third voyage?

So it came about that I left England for Peru by way of Newhaven. A thick mist shrouded the Seven Sisters as we left the harbor and spared us a pang, for no one would willingly leave the chalk cliffs of Sussex astern when they are shining, under an April sun. Farther out the sun was indeed shining, but the coast of England was already below the horizon.

Dieppe was showing up ahead when we began to overhaul a sailing boat whose bellying topsails instantly made me think of the Overland Passage into London River.

"Why, she is like a Thames barge," I said to a sailor.

"That is what she is," he replied, "an old Thames sloop bound for Dieppe."

A westerly breeze was carrying her forward at a good speed. Her red sails shone like copper and her great sprit, newly scraped and varnished, sparkled in the sun. I watched her as we overhauled and passed her, for of all the rigs in the world there is none which makes the same appeal to the Londoner as the Thames sprit-sail barge. With regret I saw her top-sail dim and fade away in our wake for I knew that with her had vanished the last sight of home.

The next morning I was crossing the French Alps into Italy and some time after dark reached Genoa. Outside the railway station stands the statue of Columbus and from a little way down the street can be seen the funnels of the ships in harbor.

We sailed for Peru at three o'clock the next afternoon. No mist veiled the exquisite city of Genoa from the eyes of the Italian exiles on board. Some were so much affected that they went down to their cabins.

"I am going out for five years," said one young engineer afterwards. "If I had as much as looked at Genoa as we went out of the harbor I should have jumped overboard."

The ladies heartily agreed with him, and a day among the splendid shops of Barcelona failed to revive their spirits. The lordly peaks of the Sierra Nevada, which we passed at sunrise, were not worth a glance, and even Gibraltar failed to interest.

Two days later the Peak of Tenerife rose on the starboard bow. The sun was setting as we approached the island and Sugar Loaf Rock off the north coast was silhouetted against a flaming sky. In a few minutes the blue-grey cliffs already shadowy in the dusk. The lights of Santa Cruz gleamed ahead, but while still a good way from the town we dropped anchor.

We sailed from Santa Cruz, at seven

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o'clock, on a bright spring morning. In the town we could see the tops of palms and other trees but the south coast of the island was composed of bare, red, volcanic rocks. We saw the opening into the crater on the Peak, and about the middle of the morning passed Red Point. Here were many flying fish, some about a foot in length and others smaller. They darted up from under the bows and skimmed away in flashes of silver over the waves, finally dropping with a sudden plop into the water. Seagulls followed us for some distance and then left us and schools of porpoises played alongside.

In the channel between Tenerife and Gomera Island we met a north-westerly wind and swell, but soon we ran under the lee of Gomera into smooth water.

Beyond Gomera is Hierro, or Iron Island, the westernmost of the Canaries and the last point of land to be seen in the Old World.

No one leaving Europe can look on the cliffs of Hierro with absolute indifference. On its inhospitable hills are patches of light green verdure, and here and there a few white houses. Ahead of the ship is the open Atlantic, and when Hierro disappears astern we shall see no speck of green and no human habitation until, all being well, we arrive at Trinidad.—Anthony Dell, in "Llama Land."



Just the Thing.
1st Fish—"What did they have for dessert at the banquet?"
2nd Fish—"Why jelly fish, of course!"

Fools at the Wheel

Ottawa Journal (Cons.): It is time we ceased being casual about automobile accidents, classing them more or less with inevitable natural occurrences like earthquakes and electrical storms. The plain fact of the matter is that the great majority of such accidents are caused by stupidity and recklessness and nothing else. The modern motor car is a splendid and powerful machine, but the manufacturer cannot protect the public against a fool at the wheel, nor protect the fool against his own criminal folly.

"Jack Pickford and I could have been divorced in America. We chose Paris because it gives us both a vacation while we are waiting."—Marylyn Miller.

If you can laugh at your own troubles, your neighbor's troubles won't seem nearly so serious to him.
I am a true laborer—I earn that I eat—get that I wear—owe no man aught—glad of other men's good-content.—Shakespeare.

Minard's Liniment for sore feet.

Several other American aviators are planning to fly to France. These heroic men are undeterred by the fact that Captain Lindbergh was kissed by several politicians on his arrival.

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