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THE

COUNTERSTROKE

By AMBROSE PRATT

Author of "Vigorous Daunt, Billionaire."

(Continued.)

"I am not omniscient, young man. What I do know is this. Some twelve hours ago a steam yacht put in at Flushing and landed a young woman who was supposed to be very ill. No doubt they had drugged Miss Elliott, for she was put ashore lying on a stretcher, quite unconscious, and taken in that condition straight to an hotel. My agent there saw her face, and telegraphed me that their prisoner was not Madame. I arrived on the scene two hours later, by means of a special train, and acquired all the information I could from one of their agents who is my paid spy. Very soon afterwards they found out their mistake for themselves. None of the abductors apparently knew Madame by sight, but Kaputsky, having quite by accident (he is an old flame of Madame's) gone in to contemplate the sleeping beauty, discovered that his men had abducted the wrong woman. There followed the yacht, which weighed anchor of which I heard; but later I was not so fortunate. When Kaputsky recovered his temper, he became doubly careful, and although my room was directly overhead and the floor bored through and fitted with an ear trumpet as well, I was unable to gather more than an outline of his dispositions concerning Miss Elliott. He set off at once himself for Vienna, and very soon afterwards Miss Elliott was removed from the hotel and put on board the yacht, which weighed anchor within five minutes and steamed out to sea."

"My God!" cried Cressingham, "they will murder her."

"I think not; I hope not," said Oeltjen soothingly. "What object would they have in committing such a crime?"

Perigord glanced slowly from one to the other. "Ah," he said suddenly; "I forgot: you were once attached to Miss Elliott, my Lord."

"Once!" muttered Cressingham, his voice hoarse with despair.

Perigord smiled. "Have no fear on that score, my Lord. They do not intend to murder the young woman, but to take her for the present to some secret place of theirs. They would probably return her to England at once, safe and sound, but they are not ready to quit London yet, and they know that, Miss Elliott once free, the police would swarm about their ears."

"But where, where?" he cried distractedly.

"That I shall ascertain tomorrow night at latest. Before then Captain Klein, the deputy, Klein the murderer, will have fallen into my hands, and he shall be made to speak. Colonel Elliott will arrive in London in a few hours. Fortunately he is one of us and can be persuaded to grasp the situation. I shall make it my duty to explain to him, and to him shall be the task of rescuing his daughter."

"Ah, sir," cried Cressingham, "let me assist in that!"

"For you," said Perigord coldly, "I have another plan. Madame Viyella——"

"That cursed woman——" cried the young man hotly—"am I not yet rid of her?"

"Judge! At daylight, indeed about this time, yes she will be just about now getting into her carriage with her maid, in order to drive to Waterloo. He maid is mine, her coachman is mine, her footman is mine! You understand! Going through Hyde Park the carriage will stop the footman will get down and go to the door. Madame will ask the reason. The footman will dash in her face a mask of chloroform. The footman will then resume his place and the carriage will proceed, not to Waterloo, but to——can you guess where, my Lord?"

"Not, not —here" stammered Cressingham, pale as death and very miserable.

"But yes—why not? I have not had time to arrange for her another asylum. Here she will be quite safe. Your rooms are small but compact. The only difficulty is your servant. Him you must dismiss first thing in the morning. I shall provide a man to take his place whom you will find altogether trustworthy. It will be your pleasant task, when Madame recovers consciousness, to see that she wants for nothing; but she must not leave her room, you understand? Should Madame lose her temper, and scream out, I should suggest chloroform, or a gag, whichever you prefer. The man I shall send you has a stock of both."

"How long must I act the cad in this fashion?" grated Cressingham between his shut teeth.

"Until I send for Madame. I shall relieve you of her charge as soon as possible."

"And then?"

"I shall have other work for you, work more suited to your taste, I hope, that is if you care to assist in rescuing Miss Elliott."

Cressingham's whole face eagerly lit up. "Ah, sir!" he cried, "I should be grateful to you all my life."

Perigord patted him kindly on the shoulder. "Let us go downstairs now and wait there to receive our prisoner. We must not run any risk of interruption or of being overlooked by servants."

"One moment, sir, I have forgotten to tell you something. Some few nights ago —Thursday, I fancy—Madame was visited by her father."

Perigord stopped suddenly. "Ha! who told you this?"

"She herself; she fancied that I saw her bid a man farewell at her own doorstep in the early morning, and thinking me jealous, she informed me it was her father."

"She lied. Prince Carlos, who has carried out his duties better than you, my lord, saw this man; it was Klein—a deputy."

"But is it not possible that Klein may be her father?"

"Bah, he is younger than she. By-the-by, you must bear with the Prince if you run across him; the man is mad with jealousy. Do you know what he told me this evening? He calmly informed me that he had discovered Madame's lover, one of the three infamous chiefs of the inner circle, in the person of Lord Francis Chessingman, and he earnestly begged to be appointed your executioner."

"But that is beyond a joke sir."

"Precisely, therefore I put you on your guard. Remember, he is a Prince, and his person is sacred. But let us go down. Oeltjen, your arm."

The three men noiselessly slipped down the stairs, and softly opened the street door. They had not long to wait. In about ten minutes a brougham drawn by two fine chestnuts drew up before the building; a footman sprang to the ground and opening the carriage door lifted bodily into the street the limp form of a woman whose face was covered with a wrap. A second woman followed quickly unassisted, and these two carried Madame between them, swiftly but with infinite care, into the house and up the stairs, guided by Lord Francis, to his room.

Perigord and Oeltjen departed arm in arm immediately the carriage had arrived.

Lord Francis recognized the sweet subtle smell of chloroform quickly permeating his rooms, and wondering idly at the lavish use of it, asked himself the question, would Madame wake at all perhaps? But he soon put that thought aside; somehow he felt his task less brutal and more easy since his last conversation with Perigord, in which he had learned of Madame's latest lie to him. It is always hard for an honest nature to sympathize deeply with a liar, and although he too had lately resorted to trickery, still there was excuse for himself, he argued, in the duty which demanded such diplomacy. He had at any rate deceived Madame in a good cause; she had deceived him, or striven to, for no cause at all—except that a lie had appeared to her the readiest pathway from a trying situation.

His lips tightened as he thought of her subsequent address in throwing herself upon his honor so as to avoid the questions which she could not answer. He felt almost glad that he had now a chance of squaring the account between them.

For a time he sat lost in marvel at the power of this strange creature Perigord, who knew how to win so many and divers instruments into his service. For the thousandth time he asked himself the question: "who—what is Perigord?" But with a smile at the bootless nature of the query he presently returnly returned to his apartment, and after double locking the outer door and carefully secreting the keys, he put on a heavy dressing gown and reposed himself to sleep upon the thick rugs by the fire.

The humbly apologetic rays of a weak and cloud-fogged sun were mildly discussing with the darkness a question of precedence when he awoke. The clock was striking ten, and some one was beating against the inner wall of the bedroom. At first half-dazed he got slowly to his feet, and memory came to him with a rush.

He saw that it was necessary to obtrude upon Madame's solitude, indeed she seemed anxious for such an attention to be paid her. Lord Cressingham was not a very vain man, but all men are somewhat vain. His first act was to seek a mirror, brush and comb, and fix himself up becomingly as possible considering the imperious nature of the noise Madame was making and his consequent impatience. Then he approached the bedroom door, gave a knock, a loud cough, waited a second, noisily turned the handle, then, observing that the hammering had ceased, he pushed the door a little open and cautiously poked his head round the corner.

(To be continued.)

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SANITARY ENGINEER SAYS FREDERICTON SEWAGE WILL NOT POLLUTE THE RIVER

Fredericton, N. B., Nov. 7—The local government this afternoon and evening heard the appeal of the city of Fredericton from the decision of the Provincial Board of Health refusing the city permission to empty crude sewage into the St. John river. The hearing took place in the executive chamber before a large crowd of spectators, including members of the city council and Warden Murray, and a delegation from Sunbury. C. N. Skinner, K. C., and City Clerk McCready appeared for the city, and J. D. Hazen, K. C., looked after the interests of the Sunbury people.

After the usual preliminaries, the city clerk read a letter from Prof. Mason, a sanitary expert, of Troy (N. Y.), who stated most emphatically that an analysis of the St. John river water, which he made a short time ago, satisfied him that in its raw state it is entirely unfit for domestic use. The water being already bad, he said the additional sewage of the city of Fredericton would really make little difference.

Dr. George W. Fuller, of New York, was next called, and gave strong testimony in support of the city's case. In reply to questions by Mr. Skinner, he stated that he was a sanitary engineer of eighteen years' experience, and had made a study of sanitary questions in America and Europe. He knew Dr. Mason and regarded him as one of the best men in the world in his line of work. From the information furnished him as to the population and geographical conditions of the St. John valley, he would say that the water in the river above Fredericton could not, with safety, be used for domestic purposes, because of the danger of typhoid and intestinal diseases. The infection of the water, he said, was due to human excrement being worked into the river. The water was polluted also by the sewage of Woodstock, although the excrement from farms was the greatest element of danger.

Dr. Fuller went on to say that he had investigated the water supplies of Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Buffalo, Chicago, and other American cities, and had also studied conditions in the large cities of Europe, and was familiar with the practice of sewage disposal. He had found that there were very few places either in America or Europe where they disposed of sewage other than by discharging it into rivers. In some places there are sewage purification plants, but they are put in to guard against offensive odors. It has been found by careful study that a flow of four cubic feet per second to 1,000 of population will remove foul stenches from water. No city in the world that had a river of this size for the disposal of sewage had installed a filtration plant.

He did not think it would be possible to carry on business along the banks of a river like the St. John without polluting the waters. He admitted that sewage from Fredericton would have some effect on the river, but dilution would be so little that it could not be detected. He knew of no city in the world with conditions similar to those of Fredericton that had been compelled to purify sewage. The flowage of water at Fredericton was estimated at 563 cubic feet per second for each 1,000 inhabitants, and he held that conditions like these did not call for a purification plant.

Dr. Fuller was subjected to lengthy and somewhat severe cross-examination by Mr. Hazen, but his testimony was not affected. He admitted, however, that if the sewage of Fredericton went into the river it would increase the danger to people living a few miles below the city.

Mr. Hazen intimated that he would probably call expert testimony to refute what Mr. Fuller had said. After some discussion, it was finally agreed to adjourn the hearing until Wednesday, Dec. 5.

The resignation of President Barker was presented at the annual meeting of the Fredericton Curling Club this evening, and the attendance was very large. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, H. V. S. Bridges; vice-presidents, Drs. Atherton and Jas. Hannay; auditors, A. S. McFarlane and John E. Page; chaplain, Rev. J. DeWolfe Cowie; secretary, J. B. Kinghorn; treasurer, T. G. Loggie; committee of management, S. D. W. Simmons, R. S. Barker, A. S. McFarlane, F. P. Hatt and the president and secretary. It was decided to take part in the bonspiel at Amherst.

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SLAYER OF WIFE KILLS HIMSELF

Physician Caught Administering Strychnine Hypodermically Blows Out Brains.

BALTIMORE, Md. Nov. 6—With the police hot on his trail and facing a twenty year sentence in the penitentiary for poisoning his wife while she was on her deathbed, Dr. J. B. Mathews, of Greensboro, N. C., blew out his brains today at a lodging house at No. 622 East Baltimore street.

Pending an appeal to the United States supreme court as to the physician's sanity he was out on bail and had been a patient at Mount Hope Retreat here. The court pronounced him sane last week and directed that he must serve a term of twenty years. He had left the institution and could not be found, although the police were closing in on him when the janitor of the lodging house found him dead in his room, with a revolver lying by his side.

The death of Mrs. Zola Mathews, at Greensboro, N. C., was sensational. Mrs. Mathews failed to appear among her associates for a number of days and her friends made an investigation.

Each caller at the house was received by Dr. Mathews, who said that Mrs. Mathews was indisposed.

Edward Gipman, a railroad conductor of Philadelphia, who had long been intimate at the house, called, and when refused permission to see Mrs. Mathews brushed Dr. Mathews aside. He was told by the stricken woman that she was being slowly poisoned by her husband. Gipman summoned three physicians, who diagnosed the case as a severe case of opium poisoning and made heroic efforts to save Mrs. Mathews.

Dr. Mathews pleaded to have a last word with his wife in private. This was refused. With the physicians present the husband knelt by his wife's bedside. The affadavit of Dr. Turner, who was present says:—

"We heard Mrs. Mathews utter a moan, and I seized Mathews and found his right hand clasping that of his wife, while his left hand, which was under the coverlet grasped a hypodermic syringe, the needle of which had been plunged into a vein of the dying woman's leg."

Dr. Mathews was then accused of murder and arrested, while Dr. Turner made an analysis of the contents of the syringe, which he avowed had contained sufficient strychnine to kill ten persons.

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About forty members of the shingle bunchers' union gathered in Union hall last evening at their annual smoker. Mayor Sears was present, and a rousing good time was enjoyed. Refreshments were served, and an excellent musical programme rendered. The programme included: Address by President George A. Chase; solo, In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree, J. Paul; solo, Would You Care, C. Betts; trio, Crow's Nest Pass, W. Craft, G. Upton and J. Paul; violin solo, N. O'Connor; piano solo, Harry McQuade; solo, Lost in the Fog, A. Armstrong; reading, Kennedy's Line, G. Lipton; song, C. Savage. Walter Grey presided at the piano.

Col. J. J. Tucker went to Montreal last evening.

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WEDDINGS

Long-Burpee.

Last evening at 8.30 o'clock at the home of Thomas N. Burpee, No. 1 Alma street, his youngest daughter, Vera Belle, was united in marriage to Murray Walker Long, son of Councillor Long, of Lancaster. The nuptial knot was tied by Rev. George Howard, of Havelock, uncle of the bride. The bride looked charming in a costume of white silk coline. She carried a bouquet of white roses and had as her attendant her little nephew, Paul Williams, of Woodstock.

The wedding gifts were numerous and among the number was a beautiful piece of cut glass from the choir of the Carleton Presbyterian church, of which the bride was the leading soloist for some time. The Carleton Cornet Band, of which the groom is a member, presented a fine chair. Mr. and Mrs. Long will reside with the groom's parents while their new home in Prince street, West End, is being made ready for them. Mr. and Mrs. Fenton, of the West End, sent to the happy couple a beautiful bouquet of chrysanthemums.

Mayor Sears will address the Presbyterian Ministers' Association at their monthly meeting next Monday. His subject will be The Clergy in Relation to Civic Affairs.

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RECENT DEATHS

Olinville, Queens county, Nov. 6—On Saturday, Oct. 20, Elsie Maude, aged five years and two months, the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Donald, passed away. The funeral was held on Sunday, Rev. Mr. Larde conducting services and interment being in the burying ground at Lyon's. Father and mother, one sister and one brother are left to mourn their sad loss.

After a lingering illness, John Sullivan, of this city, passed away yesterday at his home, Drury Lane, leaving a wife and three children, two brothers—Cornelius and Jeremiah—and one sister, Mrs. James Gallagher, to mourn their loss. Deceased was a laborer and worked on the I. C. R. The funeral will take place on Friday afternoon at 2.30 from his late residence, 15 Drury Lane.

Moncton, N. B., Nov. 7—At a meeting of the council of the board of trade this evening, a communication was read from the St. John Board of Trade respecting the Atlantic mail service. A resolution was passed, expressing the view that the interest of the whole dominion would be best served by the mails being landed at Halifax.

Miss Helen Pedley, of Andover, came to the city yesterday.