



THE DEATH GIVER

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. DEATH UNEXPLAINED

"EXTRY! Extry! Anudder moider on de Suboiban!"

The New York newsboys wigwagged a large-headlined journal in front of a stocky, swarthy-visaged man, who was walking hastily along the street. The man pushed the newspaper aside and growled aloud as he turned his steps into one of Manhattan's downtown canyons.

"Extry! Extry!"

All along his route, the swarthy man had been hounded by that cry. A product of sensational journalism that knew how to awaken public interest, the story dominated the front page, and brought inspiration to every hawker who peddled evening newspapers.

"Second moider on de Suboiban!"

The walking man restrained himself with difficulty. He glowered toward the leather-lunged youth who had shouted this new cry to the swarthy man, these were words of derision directed at himself. They were

utterances that foretold a stormy event in store for him.

There was a reason.

The swarthy man was none other than Joe Cardona, ace detective on the New York force; and this afternoon Joe was on his way to an interview with Police Commissioner Ralph Weston, regarding this very case.

Two successive, unexplainable murders on the Suburban Railway. Both had taken place at the same spot; both at the same hour of the day. One had occurred yesterday morning; the other had taken place this morning.

Joe Cardona, back from a fruitless investigation, had walked directly into the area where newsboys were blaring forth the latest details from the huge presses of the evening journals.

The cries waned as Cardona neared his destination. The silence of the elevator in which he rode upward to the commissioner's office brought him no ease of mind. To Cardona, this was the quiet preceding a hurricane. Joe Cardona dreaded his meeting with the police commissioner.

IMMEDIATELY after he announced his arrival, the star detective was ushered into the presence of the commissioner. Stepping into a large office, Cardona faced a stern, keen-eyed man whose firm face and mustached lip gave him the appearance of a business executive. This was Ralph Weston, whose power had been constantly increasing ever since he had taken over the duties of police commissioner.

Commissioner Weston was talking into a desk telephone. He noticed Cardona from the corners of his eyes, and motioned the detective to be seated.

Cardona took a chair opposite the commissioner and assumed his usual attitude—a poker-faced expression that served as a defensive. He made no move; he registered no change of countenance, even when Weston finished his call and turned from the telephone to stare squarely at the detective.

"Well?" questioned Weston. "What about it?"

"No clews, sir," responded Cardona gruffly. "We'll have to wait until tomorrow."

"Until to-morrow? Why?"

"To reconstruct the scene of the crime."

"Humph!" A derisive smile flickered on the commissioner's lips. "Wait until to-morrow, eh? Why didn't you do it to-day? You might have prevented the second killing."

"I know that now," responded Cardona grimly. "It simply looked like an accident—that first death. It looks the same now, commissioner, but two accidents like that one don't happen. We're watching the scene to-day—and I'll be there to-morrow -"

Ralph Weston settled back in his chair. The police commissioner, despite his sternness, had a great deal of confidence in Joe Cardona. Nevertheless, it was his custom to drive the detective.

When Weston summoned Cardona, it meant that the detective was being called to the carpet. The result was usually intensive effort on Cardona's part. An efficient trailer of crime, a man who had done great things on the force, Cardona, nevertheless, remained in constant awe of his superior, the brusque police commissioner.

"Give me the details," stated Weston.

"Pretty much as you've already had them," declared Cardona. "A Suburban commuters' train reaches Felswood station at eight thirty-eight in the morning. Yesterday, when the train was leaving the station, the conductor noticed a man slumped by the window. The side of his face was bruised and slightly scarred. Looked like it had been scratched with glass and burned by acid.

"The conductor thought the man was unconscious. It turned out that he was dead. A regular commuter, named Arthur Howley. Got on the train at Barbrook, two stations before Felswood.

"It had all the earmarks of an accident. Some object must have come through the open window, struck the man, and rebounded onto the right of way.

"It might have happened before Felswood; it might have happened after the train left the station. But we couldn't find anything in the car—nor along the tracks.

"The station is only a platform with a small waiting room. A vacant lot is near by, with commuters' cars parked. We searched the whole place on the accident theory. I looked at the body. Police surgeon found poison traces—but we couldn't figure what had hit the victim.

"We left it as an accidental death. This morning, the same thing happened again. Same train; same car—and almost the same seat. This time the dead man was discovered by a fellow sitting alongside of him.

"The new victim is Julius Forkney. He got on at Claytown, three stations up.

"Same marks—like scratches and burns. Same result—nothing to show what hit the victim. We haven't gotten to the beginning of an explanation, commissioner. That's why the only thing to do is watch the place carefully tomorrow."

"What details do you have on the slain men?" questioned Weston.

"Howley was the head waiter in an uptown restaurant," answered Cardona. "Married—wife and two children. Forkney was an ad writer, with an agency in the Stanford Building. Single man—lived with relatives.

"I have the reports on both of them"—Cardona paused to draw typewritten sheets from his pocket—"and there's nothing to show. They are both unimportant persons—apparently had no enemies—and didn't know each other."

"Which backs up the accident theory," remarked Weston.

"Yes," agreed Cardona, "except for the manner of death and the mystery about it -"

"Which indicates," interposed the commissioner, "that some one desired to kill, but didn't particularly care who the victim might be."

Cardona nodded. He had held the same idea himself, but had been loath to put it forth.

JOE CARDONA was noted as a practical detective. Commissioner Weston had little regard for his abilities as a deductive reasoner. But with the commissioner putting forth a theory, Joe was ready to agree with it.

"You think I am correct?" quizzed the commissioner sharply.

"Yes," replied Cardona, with emphasis.

"Why?" asked Weston shrewdly.

The detective clenched his fists. He had walked into the trap. Weston had put forward the theory simply to try him out. Cardona had no answer.

"A hunch again?" demanded Weston.

"I guess that's it," growled Detective Cardona.

"Cardona"—Weston's voice was critical—"we've talked over this hunch business before. You know what I think of you—you're the ideal man to take practical evidence and follow it up for facts. But when you come to theory, you take no basis. If an idea looks right to you, you lay it to a hunch."

"Hunches work sometimes."

"Perhaps—but not always. When you get them, see if you can find a tangible reason."

"There's a reason here, commissioner. Two men with no connection, killed at the same spot -"

"A reason to look for something unusual," interrupted the commissioner, "but not a reason to lay it on a killer instead of an accident. You're just where you were, Cardona. You know nothing. Find out something. Then talk to me."

"I'll get somewhere, after to-morrow," said Cardona gruffly.

"See that you do," said the commissioner dryly. "If you find facts, follow them. If you gain theories, substantiate them."

There was a long pause; then the commissioner spoke again, his voice still hard in tone.

"I admire good theory, Cardona," he said. "It clears the way to fact."

"If it's on the level," responded Cardona.

The commissioner winced. For a moment, he appeared angry; then a thin smile crept beneath his trimmed mustache. He knew the meaning of Cardona's subtle thrust. Once the commissioner had teamed the detective with a professor who had claimed great ability in the theories of crime. The professor had turned out to be a criminal himself!

Cardona was sorry that he had spoken; for the thought of the past pricked the detective's conscience. In the case to which Cardona referred, the detective had received credit for the death of the supercriminal. In reality, Cardona had been aided by a master mind who warred on crime—a strange being known only as The Shadow. In Commissioner Weston's mind, The Shadow was a myth. Cardona could tell by Weston's smile that reference to that fact was coming:

"AH, yes," observed the commissioner. "I recall that I made a mistake upon one occasion—a very serious mistake—in my handling of crime theory. We all make mistakes, Cardona. By the way, have you heard anything more of a certain person called The Shadow?"

"I haven't mentioned such a name in any of my reports," declared Cardona cautiously.

"Then we may eliminate all thought of such an absurd person," said Weston, looking straight into Cardona's eyes. "The Shadow—some one dressed in black— a hidden face—a mysterious being who

can be used very conveniently to fill a gap in reports that would otherwise be incomplete.

"The Shadow, as I remembered the accounts concerning him, had a penchant for bringing criminals to bay. But he did it in his own way— independent of the law. Such a person—if he exist—would be quite dangerous, Cardona. He might even turn crook himself.

"Perhaps—with the two mysterious deaths on the Suburban trains— The Shadow might be testing out his ability as a crime maker."

Commissioner Weston shook his head thoughtfully.

"I must desist from these thoughts," he said, in a sorrowful tone. "I am stepping into your error, Cardona. Theory without substantiation. So let us forget The Shadow—and let him remain forgotten. In the meantime"—Weston shrugged his shoulders—"go ahead as you are. Keep working on these deaths and see what you can learn to-morrow. I shall reserve further opinion until then."

The interview was ended. Joe Cardona left the office and departed from the building.

He threaded his way between mammoth skyscrapers. A few belated newsboys were still crying out their wares in terms of death unexplained; but Cardona did not notice the occasional shouts.

The ace detective was deep in thought. The reference to The Shadow had aroused old memories. To Cardona, The Shadow was an identity—a supersleuth who could fight crime as effectively as he could trace it - who never knew failure.

Death unexplained!

That was the lure that would bring The Shadow. These mysterious killings aboard the Suburban trains were the very type of crime that The Shadow had so often met and unraveled.

Perhaps to-morrow's investigation would bring a clew to the mystery. If so, Cardona would rise to his zenith. If not, the detective could see no possible way of tracing the unusual deaths, unless The Shadow should enter into their discovery.

The Shadow!

Who was he?

Where was he?

Cardona had never managed to trace the whereabouts of the mysterious stranger. There was no reason, at present, why The Shadow should even be in New York. But somehow Cardona, walking through the gloom of that later afternoon, gained a new hunch for his collection. He seemed to see the hand of The Shadow entering into a new perplexing mystery, of which these deaths were the forerunner. If it were only so!

Cardona was still thoughtful as he made his way to headquarters. He was wondering if, somewhere in great Manhattan, The Shadow was at work. The question persisted, even after he had reached his office.

WHILE Cardona sat at his battered desk, speculatively drumming with his finger tips, another man in a different part of Manhattan was also considering the Suburban train deaths in terms that included The Shadow.

In the inner office of his suite in the towering Badger Building, a chubby-faced investment broker named Rutledge Mann was carefully clipping items from a stack of evening newspapers. The columns which he chose were ones which referred to the strange killings at Felswood.

The windows of adjacent buildings were glimmering amid the dusk when Rutledge Mann slipped his accumulated clippings into a large envelope. Pocketing the packet, the investment broker left his office.

He rode by cab to Twenty-third Street, entered a dilapidated building, and went to the second floor. He stopped before a door which bore a name upon its smudgy glass panel:

B. JONAS

Rutledge Mann had never seen the interior of that office. His occasional visits terminated at the door. Here, Mann produced the envelope and dropped it in a letter slot. His work of the afternoon was complete.

An agent of The Shadow, it was Mann's duty to bring items on unsolved crimes to this particular place. Deposited there, such data reached The Shadow.

Whether or not The Shadow was in New York; whether or not The Shadow would display an interest in these reports—these were factors which did not concern Rutledge Mann.

The agent had performed his appointed task. The details of crime had been accumulated for use. Action now lay with The Shadow himself.

CHAPTER II. THE THIRD TRAGEDY

DETECTIVE JOE CARDONA stood upon the platform of the station at Felswood. His sharp, dark eyes were scanning the roadbed toward the curve near the station. The time was thirty five minutes past eight.

To all appearances, Cardona was merely one of the dozen or more commuters who thronged the station platform. But the detective was there with a more important purpose than that of a morning ride into Manhattan. He was the captain of a crew of able men who were here to study every detail that occurred when the eight thirty-eight arrived upon its westward journey.

A trackwalker was loitering on the curve. Standing aside, as though to await the train, the man was part of Cardona's scheme. The supposed trackwalker was a detective.

Cardona turned idly and glanced in the opposite direction. Another pretended trackwalker was strolling along the tracks, slowly nearing the station platform.

As Cardona swung and faced the parking lot, he saw a pair of men engaged in conversation. One was at the wheel of a roadster; the other was alongside. Both were detectives, studying the situation as it existed there.

Another car drove up while Cardona watched. It was an old sedan, and the driver parked it in the ample space, drawing it alongside the other cars which rested parallel with the railroad track. A nervous commuter hurried from the car and walked rapidly toward the platform.

This man, Cardona decided, would be about the last to catch the train. These electrics ran close to schedule, and less than a minute remained.

The commuter was a well-dressed individual—a man of middle age, with trim Vandyke beard and broad

fedora hat.

His face lightened as he saw the waiting crowd. The man appeared to be relieved because he was in time for the train. Joe Cardona laughed softly. A great worry—that of making the eight thirty-eight! Probably all that concerned these commuters in the morning!

Cardona turned his eyes toward the curve. He was just in time. A train of red cars was sliding into view, approaching with the stealthy speed typical of electric locomotion.

Cardona counted eight cars as each one swung around the bend; the rails were clicking, and the train was coming to a sharp stop. The fake trackwalker was swinging his arms in a signal that nothing had occurred.

Cardona, quickly noting the train, and then observing the commuters as they stepped aboard, could testify that nothing was amiss here. The detective glanced toward the parking lot. The two men at the roadster indicated that all was well in their field of observation.

Cardona grunted. He had hoped that something would happen at this station —some unusual incident that would serve as a clue to the strange accidents of the two preceding days. He watched the train, anxious for it to start so that he could observe what happened after the departure and get the report from the man waiting beyond. The train, however, did not start.

THE uniformed conductor, his face bewildered, came from one of the vestibules. With him was a man whom Cardona recognized instantly— Detective Sergeant Mayhew.

This police officer had been stationed on the third car of the train—the car in which both deaths had occurred. Mayhew's face was excited. It became even more so when the detective sergeant spied Cardona. Mayhew beckoned wildly. Cardona hurried forward.

Mayhew stopped Cardona and pointed to an open window in the car. Staring in astonishment, Cardona saw the form of a man slumped in the seat by the window. The upturned face was ghastly. It was scarred and puckered with red marks. The eyes were bulging.

The man was dead.

"I was looking back through the car," explained Mayhew. "I wasn't expecting anything like this to happen. Just watching for whatever might be unusual. Then—I saw him here. It must have gotten him just before the train stopped."

Joe Cardona grimly took charge of the situation. This mysterious death brooked extreme measures. There were other detectives aboard the train. None reported any untoward events in the cars where they had been riding.

With all his men assembled, Cardona quarantined the death car. Detectives took names and addresses of commuters, quizzing all as they worked.

Cardona demanded the cooperation of the train crew, and he received it. The seriousness of the killing was highly impressive. A man slain, for the third consecutive day; this time while thorough vigil had been kept! It seemed unbelievable.

Railroad orders were received over the station telephone. A supervisor was riding on this train, and he arranged to have the death car detached. The train was broken; the one car was shunted to a siding; and the rest of the train went on. The delay tied up traffic back along the line.

The passengers from the car in which the man had died were herded into the little Felswood station. There, one by one, they were allowed to leave, after being searched and quizzed.

Cardona was in charge; Mayhew remained in the sidetracked car. The car became Cardona's destination as soon as he had made certain that the examination of the passengers was being properly handled by his carefully selected subordinates.

Mayhew had learned the identity of the dead man. A search of his pockets had brought forth papers that showed him to be Danby Grayson, a public accountant with a Broadway firm. Identification cards gave his address as the town of Duxbury, several stations east of Felswood.

Grayson was a man of about fifty years of age. Cardona stared solemnly at the body. The appearance of the face, with its scarred cheek, was identical with the others that the detective had observed on the two preceding days.

"It looks like another useless death," volunteered Mayhew. "This man—by appearance and occupation—doesn't look like somebody a murderer would be out to get."

"We'll find out about that later," growled Cardona. "Have you searched the car?"

"Yes," responded Mayhew. "Nothing here."

Cardona went to work. He looked everywhere for clues. He could discover none. Leaving Mayhew in charge, the detective went out to the roadbed to talk with the subordinates who were searching there. They, too, reported no trace of any missile.

Commuters' trains, delayed by the hold-up which the death had caused, were coming into the station at close intervals; and Cardona watched the passengers from the death car continue their trip to Manhattan as rapidly as the police released them. There had not been a shred of evidence sufficient to hold a single person.

After ordering one of his men to obtain a complete report on Danby Grayson, Joe Cardona went over to the parking lot to confer with the men who had been watching from that point. They had made a thorough search of the premises, but had not found any one hiding there. Every automobile had been entered, to no avail.

THE events of the next few hours were trying to Joe Cardona.

A report received concerning Danby Grayson served to back up Mayhew's belief. The accountant was described as a widower who lived with two sons at Duxbury. News of his death had come as a great shock both to his employers and his family. There seemed no possible reason why Grayson should have been the victim of a murderer.

On top of that, Inspector Timothy Klein arrived with a police surgeon. In their wake came a tribe of newspaper reporters seeking details of the new death. Photographers aimed their cameras at the sidetracked car; and throngs of curious bystanders began to assemble.

Cardona put a curb to these activities. The reporters received terse, begrudged details. The camera men wisely cleared out, and the curiosity seekers were dispersed. Detectives saw to it that only persons who were prospective train passengers could approach and leave the station.

What was the menace that lay at this spot? Why had death struck only when a certain train approached, always killing a person in the same car?

Cardona, grim-faced and low-voiced, discussed the important problem with Inspector Klein. Although he growled of a hidden murder, Cardona was forced to admit that the deaths might be the result of some amazing accident. Until clues were gained, that must be accepted as the natural theory. Nevertheless, both mystery and menace remained as great as ever.

While Cardona was discoursing thus, a powerful roadster coasted up to the parking lot, and a tall man alighted. With a long, easy stride, this arrival walked toward the station platform. There he stood, apparently waiting for a train.

Cardona became suddenly aware of the man's presence, and turned to stare at him. The man's eyes met those of the detective. Cardona found himself gazing at a firm, calm face that was almost masklike in its expression. From the sides of a sharp, hawkish nose, gleaming optics sparkled with strange, uncanny gaze.

The appearance of the stranger was impressive. Cardona sensed a hypnotic power in those eyes. Instinctively, the detective was sure that this man had overheard his remarks to Inspector Klein.

But the detective was loath to make a move. This man was here to take a train; he had come hours after the death aboard the eight thirty-eight. Cardona could see no connection between this individual and the case at hand.

Inspector Klein did not notice the man toward whom Cardona was looking. The inspector was watching up the track; and now, at a moment when the stranger could hear, Klein made definite remarks without turning his head in Cardona's direction.

"Stick here until three o'clock, Joe," ordered the inspector. "If you haven't landed anything by then, there's no use wasting your time. You can leave a couple of men on duty; let them stay all night and watch for the same train in the morning."

"I'll be here to-morrow morning," promised Cardona.

AN approaching train, coming around the bend, ended the conversation. Cardona, glancing toward the hawk-faced stranger, noted that the man was watching the train intently.

The stranger stepped aboard, and that was the last Cardona saw of him. Yet, all during the remainder of his fruitless investigation, Cardona could not help but recall the remarkable appearance of the man whom he had seen upon the platform.

The detective had not noticed the stranger's arrival. He did not know that the powerful roadster belonged to that man. When Cardona had hunches, he did not hesitate to follow them; but in this instance, Cardona had no hunch. He was simply impressed by a chance observation; and he reasoned with himself that he should forget this detail which had no apparent bearing on the death that struck at Felswood. Hence Cardona did not inquire if any one had noted the stranger arrive.

It was shortly after three o'clock when Cardona reluctantly boarded a westbound train for Manhattan. Extreme measures had brought no result. Grayson's body had been removed from the death car; and the car itself was to be shunted from the siding.

Riding toward New York, Cardona mulled over the police surgeon's report, which corresponded exactly with those on the two previous deaths. Grayson's system had shown traces of a poison. There must be something odd and unexplainable about the unfound missile that had brought such immediate death.

As the train dipped into the tube beneath the East River, Cardona had a last thought of the stranger on

the station platform. He decided that the man must be merely a resident of Felswood—some late morning commuter. He wondered what time the man would be returning to the local station.

Cardona was sorry that he had not waited at Felswood; but he knew that it would be a great mistake to go against Inspector Klein's instructions because of a blind quest.

When the train pulled into the New York station, Cardona's thoughts were back at Felswood. Singularly enough, a train was just then stopping at the way station out on Long Island, and from it was alighting the very man who had been so definitely in Cardona's mind!

There was nothing suspicious in the man's carriage; indeed, his bearing and important appearance certified him as a person of influence. Cardona had merely noted the man particularly because he had chanced to come within earshot of the conversation between detective and inspector.

The hawk-faced stranger went directly to the expensive roadster and took his place behind the wheel. But he did not drive away.

Two men were still on duty; they did not pay special attention to this returning commuter. Hence the man sat unobserved, well back in the deep seat within the shelter of the blind sides of the long, heavy car. At times, he peered intently forth; and his sharp eyes were keenly observant.

Parked directly alongside of the roadster was the sedan which Cardona had seen come to the parking lot just before the eight thirty-eight had arrived at Felswood. The hawk-faced stranger was noting the position of that car; the fact that it was no more than forty feet from the railroad track; and that it rested parallel to the right of way, its position differing to some degree from that of other parked cars.

HALF an hour went by; another train arrived from New York. Several commuters stepped off, among them the nervous man with the Vandyke, who had just made the eight thirty-eight that morning. The man went to the sedan. He did not notice the eyes that were watching him from the roadster.

The sedan backed from the parking lot and turned up the road that led from the station. The motor of the heavy roadster now purred rhythmically but softly. The powerful car swung away and moved in the direction that the sedan had taken.

As the roadster came into a side street half a mile from the station, the sedan was turning up a driveway beside a new house. The driver of the roadster, leaning over the wheel, saw the sedan move into a garage. The roadster kept on along the street.

A block away, a strange, low sound came from the interior of the roadster. The whispered tones of a mocking laugh emerged from the lips below the hawklike nose. That laugh was one of understanding—a weird, mirthless cry that carried a chilling note.

Had Joe Cardona been there to hear that sinister burst of irony, he would have recognized the author of the weird laughter. He would have known then why he had been impressed by the tall, hawk-nosed stranger at the station.

For the eerie cry was the laugh of The Shadow—the strange, shuddering note of doom that had spread terror through every bailiwick of the underworld. The laugh of a superbeing, it betokened the power of that unknown personage called The Shadow.

To-day, Joe Cardona had failed. A third tragedy had occurred at Felswood station, under the very eyes of the ace detective. A squad of sleuths had failed to find the inkling of a clew.

But The Shadow had not failed. He had arrived after the crime had been committed; but, nevertheless, he

had shrewdly traced a connection between the deaths and an individual.

A man with a Vandyke beard who lived half a mile from Felswood station—a commuter who drove a large sedan, and left it parked on the lot beside the tracks. This was the man whom The Shadow had placed under observation.

Death would not strike again at Felswood. The Shadow, arrived from afar, would be there to prevent it!

CHAPTER III. ONE MILLION DOLLARS

WHEN the next morning dawned, Detective Joe Cardona was again at Felswood station, determined to watch the arrival of the eight thirty-eight. The detective was somewhat nervous—an unusual condition for one so stolid as Joe Cardona.

Mayhew had again been dispatched to the end of the line. He was there now, Cardona knew. This branch of the Suburban Railway terminated at the town of Belgrade, ten miles beyond Felswood. Mayhew had gone to Belgrade simply because it was the starting-point of the commuters' train, which left there at eight ten. There was no other reason why Mayhew should be there, in Cardona's opinion.

Nevertheless, that town of Belgrade was due to play an important part in the activities of both Cardona and Mayhew. For at the very time when Cardona arrived at Felswood—shortly before seven in the morning—new events were shaping in the town where Mayhew had gone.

One of the most imposing residences in Belgrade was the home of Henry Bellew, multimillionaire clothing manufacturer. Henry Bellew, a thin, cadaverous man of sixty years, was a firm believer in the adage of early rising. On this particular morning, as was his regular custom, Bellew was seated at his dining-room table, awaiting his morning course of bacon and eggs.

"The morning newspaper, Barcomb!" ordered Bellew, in an impatient tone.

"Yes, sir."

The quiet response came from a sad-faced butler. Barcomb, although he was scarcely forty, was a bald-headed man of patient demeanor, who always responded promptly to his master's bidding. Within a few seconds after Bellew had given his order, the newspaper lay upon the dining-room table.

Henry Bellew glanced at the headlines. His face clouded. He was reading the story of the third death aboard the commuters' train at Felswood.

That story struck home. It was annoying to Henry Bellew. He had been aboard the train on each day of tragedy. Although he had not been a passenger in the car where death had struck, Bellew had suffered the delay, and had listened to the awed comments of his fellow riders.

"Hm-m-m!" mumbled Bellew. "If this keeps on, no one will ride that train."

The remarks were addressed to no one. Barcomb had gone from the dining room to get Bellew's breakfast. The rest of the millionaire's family were not accustomed to rising at the early hour of seven.

As Barcomb arrived with the plate of bacon and eggs, the front doorbell sounded with a short ring. Henry Bellew made a motion with his hand and spoke to the butler.

"Get the mail, Barcomb."

The butler left the room, and returned with a stack of letters. Bellew clutched the mail and ran quickly

through each item.

Barcomb watched him closely, though unobserved. He knew that Bellew was looking for a postcard—not for a letter.

FOR three days in a row, Henry Bellew had received postcards, each bearing the same cryptic words. Puzzled, the millionaire had kept them in his desk.

By now, his curiosity had been aroused; in fact, it had reached a state of alarm. Perplexity mingled with relief as Bellew noted that postcards were absent from this morning's mail.

Suddenly, Bellew stopped as he was about to lay a letter aside. The written address looked familiar.

Yes it was the same as those on the postcards!

Forgetful of his steaming breakfast, the millionaire tore open the envelope and unfolded the sheet within. There, in capital letters like the typing of a telegram, appeared the same words that appeared upon the postcards previously received.

TOTEM DAYLIGHT AGAIN MANDATE WILLING DIET ONSET YOURSELF TRAINER
ITSELF CANTER BEHALF ANYWHERE ONESELF IRIS WISHING WATCHING OUTSIDE

Below, a simple statement explained the method of interpreting the message. Bellew's eyes bulged as he scanned the capitalized words again. His hand gripped the newspaper beside him.

Bellew now knew the menace that lay in those postcards which were in his desk. Each one had been a prophecy!

Dazedly, the millionaire read the rest of the letter. In plain, simple language, it explained why Henry Bellew had become the recipient of mysterious messages. It read:

From you I expect to receive the sum of one million dollars within two weeks from the present date. Unless I receive your cooperation, you will die. I have given death; I shall give death.

Unless you wish death, do not act against my orders. Have the full sum in readiness within the required time. Mention this letter to no one. Make no effort to communicate with the police. Disobedience will mean death from—

Below the unfinished statement came the signature—words that completed the letter and made Henry Bellew quiver with a sudden chill:

THE DEATH GIVER

The import of this strange message was evident to Henry Bellew. The millionaire knew that three men had been mysteriously slain aboard the train which he regularly rode. Evidently, this letter meant that the reign of terror was ended, so far as regular deaths were concerned.

Until now, the deaths had been indiscriminate. If another occurred, it would be purposeful. He, Henry Bellew, would be the victim of a strange fanatic who called himself The Death Giver!

What was to be done?

A mingled series of emotions flashed through Bellew's brain. The millionaire stared about him. Barcomb, in a corner of the room, was apparently unnoticing.

Bellew realized that he faced a tremendous problem. The Death Giver wanted money—the huge sum of one million dollars. But could the mysterious killer back up his threats?

Bellew realized that if he rode the regular train to-day and on succeeding days, he would come within a sphere of death every time the local passed Felswood station. At the same time, Bellew was shrewd enough to doubt The Death Giver's ability to extend that region of influence.

Death had been dealt at random. Could the murderer kill a specific person aboard that train? Could he reach a person who used the train no longer?

As the chills subsided along Bellew's spine, the millionaire began to reason shrewdly. He tried to analyze the method that lay behind The Death Giver's actions.

THREE deaths—news of the latest one shouting itself from the journal on the table. That was good psychology on The Death Giver's part. It had frightened Bellew. It should suffice to keep him worried for a time. The millionaire realized that his natural procedure would be to wait and say nothing.

With each succeeding day, his apprehensions would increase. Perhaps, by some new atrocities, The Death Giver would add renewed stimulus.

It suddenly occurred to Bellew that there was no time like the present. This very morning was the period when The Death Giver would least expect counteraction from the man whom he had threatened.

This thought came as an inspiration. Bellew was alone in the house, except for servants and family. He felt that he was safe for the present. The police were still bewildered by the deaths that had occurred at Felswood. If there was to be a showdown with the mysterious killer, the time to begin it was the present.

Bellew glanced at the note. He again read the words:

Make no effort to communicate with the police—

Such communication would be dangerous; but it might be inevitable. The longer that he waited, Bellew felt, the less effective would that communication be. The millionaire sensed the drawing of a mesh about him. He would end it before it was too late.

Disregarding his breakfast, Henry Bellew arose and left the dining room. Upon the table remained the folded note which the millionaire had just read. It was covered by a stack of letters. Barcomb still stood in the corner, alone in the cheery room, where a warm fire crackled in the fireplace. But the butler did not stay idle.

After a short interval, he followed Henry Bellew's course into the gloomy hall outside the dining room. A closed door at the other side showed where Henry Bellew had gone—to a little room that the millionaire used as a study. Barcomb, treading softly, reached that door and listened.

"Hello—hello -" came Bellew's muffled voice. "I want the police department in New York City -"

Barcomb swung away from the door. He hurried to the wall. There, on the floor, was a special telephone switch that was no longer used. It had been placed on the baseboard to cut off the telephone bell from Bellew's study, but the millionaire had never utilized the device. Sometimes the phone was cut off upstairs, but never down.

Stooping to the floor, Barcomb quickly turned the switch. Straightening, he hurried toward the dining room. He heard two sounds as he went: one, a cry from the study; the other, footsteps at the top of the stairs from the second floor.

COINCIDENT with Barcomb's action at the switch, a tragedy occurred within the study. Henry Bellew, speaking into the mouthpiece of the telephone, staggered backward with a cry upon his lips.

His body was racked with the force of a powerful electric current. He writhed, stumbled against a table, and plunged headlong across it—the telephone smashing away from his paralyzed hands. Toppling to the floor, Henry Bellew lay dead.

The person coming down the steps heard the dying cry and called out in alarm. It was Bellew's wife; and in her fright, the woman shouted for Barcomb. The butler was standing in the dining room, by the table. He could not be seen from the hallway. He had reached this spot just in time.

"What is it, madam?" responded Barcomb.

The butler was picking up the letter from The Death Giver, as he called out his reply. Edging toward the fireplace, he tossed both letter and envelope in the flames.

"Something—I'm afraid something has happened in Mr. Bellew's study!" came the woman's voice.

"I'll be right there, madam."

Barcomb saw that the letter and envelope were already well consumed. Hurrying into the hall, he joined Mrs. Bellew. The two went to the study door. It was locked on the inside. Barcomb called; receiving no response, he began to crash the door.

The noise brought more people to the scene. Bellew's two sons dashed downstairs. Other servants arrived.

The door went down under added blows. The rescuers entered to see the millionaire dead upon the floor. The sight of the telephone brought a warning from one of the dead man's sons.

"Don't touch the telephone! I think father has been electrocuted."

The warning was heeded. A servant was dispatched to another house to call for aid. One of Bellew's sons and Barcomb alone remained within the room. The butler's solemn face seemed sad. Not for one instant did it reveal the man's true emotions.

For Barcomb, agent of The Death Giver, had put the written threat into execution. Stationed in Bellew's home, he had been in readiness to bear out the terms of the message which had arrived this morning.

More than that, Barcomb had destroyed the one important item of evidence: the letter which explained the cryptic postcards and also set forth The Death Giver's threat.

Let the police investigate! Once more they would find the victim of what appeared to be no more than an unfortunate accident!

CHAPTER IV. CARDONA SEES NOTHING

DETECTIVE JOE CARDONA was pacing the platform at Felswood station. It was eight thirty-five, and about a dozen commuters were present. Cardona noticed a man stepping from a taxicab, and recognized the nervous individual with the Vandyke beard. Yesterday, Cardona remembered, the man had driven up in his own car. Today, he had evidently decided to leave the sedan at home.

Detectives were on duty as before; three minutes later, Cardona saw the red cars of the local swinging around the bend. The train pulled into the station on time. The commuters walked aboard. Cardona

hurried up to the conductor.

"We'll go through the train," said the detective. "Let's find out if anything else has happened."

The search was made swiftly, but with precision. It brought a smile of relief to Cardona's tense face.

In no car—particularly in the third—was there any sign of a victimized passenger. Cardona met Mayhew on the platform, and arranged to have the detective sergeant report back from the next telephone.

The train pulled out several minutes later. Cardona waited in the little station until the telephone bell rang. He listened to Mayhew's voice.

"Everything all right," reported Mayhew. "I'm at Gridley, the next stop. Looked through the cars on the way. The train has gone on. I'm coming back."

"O.K."

Fifteen minutes later, Mayhew arrived on an eastbound train. He joined Joe Cardona on the other platform. Cardona shrugged his shoulders. This morning's investigation was satisfactory to the extent that it had brought no new death; but it had not given the slightest clue to the previous crimes.

The telephone bell rang in the station. Cardona went to answer it. He was surprised to hear the voice of Inspector Klein. The detective hastened to report that nothing had occurred at Felswood.

"All right," came Klein's gruff voice. "That's good, Joe—good because there's been a break in these mysterious deaths. I've got another job for you. Up the line at a place called Belgrade. A big manufacturer named Henry Bellew was killed by an electric shock while telephoning. Run out there and see about it. Send Mayhew in here."

It was nearly an hour later when Joe Cardona arrived at Henry Bellew's home. He found the people there anxiously awaiting his arrival. A telephone inspector and two electricians were present. Cardona made an efficient study of the situation, and told the electricians to go to work.

While Cardona was talking to the Bellews, a man entered the house, and the detective recognized Clyde Burke, reporter from the New York Classic. Cardona and Burke were good friends despite the detective's recent antagonism toward journalists. Cardona greeted Burke with a sour grin.

"Looking for a story, eh?" questioned the detective. "Too bad there wasn't one at Felswood. Well, stick around, Burke. You'll get the details when we find them."

The details came nearly an hour later.

The electricians, after tearing up the baseboard outside of the study, discovered the cause of Henry Bellew's death. The switch used to disconnect the telephone bell was loose; it was close to a wire that brought electric-power current into the house.

The turning of the bell switch had brought the connection which had sent a terrific voltage over the telephone wire. The telephone, itself, was a faulty instrument. Bellew's death was one of those rare occurrences which come from mistakes in wiring.

"The way I figure it," declared the telephone inspector, "is that some one turned the cut-off for the bell once too often. The result was that when Mr. Bellew went to telephone, he took the shock when he picked up the instrument."

Joe Cardona immediately began to question the members of the household. Most of them had forgotten the switch on the baseboard. Both this switch and the one upstairs had been installed while the family was away. Only Barcomb recalled that Henry Bellew had, on occasion, turned the switch.

"The master was in the study last night," explained Barcomb, in a methodical tone. "He said that he did not wish to be disturbed. I fancy, sir, that he may have turned the switch before he went into the study."

The explanation sounded logical.

Cardona also learned that Henry Bellew often went in the study in the morning, it being Barcomb's duty to call him at a set time. Contrasted with the strange deaths that had occurred at Felswood, this tragedy was both a let-down and a relief to Joe Cardona.

Ordinarily suspicious of crime in every commonplace accident, Cardona was in no mood to make an unsolved mystery out of Henry Bellew's death, especially where the element of accident seemed so obvious.

If some person had desired to kill off the millionaire, it was unlikely that such a roundabout method would have been employed, especially as the switch for the telephone bell had been installed a few months before.

Nevertheless, Cardona was exacting. He obtained detailed statements from each member of the household. These statements were the final factor that convinced Cardona the death was accidental. Barcomb, in his story, stated that Henry Bellew had left the dining room; that a few minutes later, Mrs. Bellew had called from the stairway.

The butler was convincing; and Mrs. Bellew's statement substantiated his words. Here, by curious irony, the one danger that Barcomb had encountered when scurrying back to the dining room now could be used to support his statement.

Barcomb had eluded Mrs. Bellew's observation, and the woman's story indicated that she had been on the stairway at the moment when the death had occurred.

The fact that no one was in the hallway near the switch was all that Cardona needed for his final decision. The detective eliminated members of the household, and merely decided to check up on Henry Bellew's affairs. He summoned Barcomb into the study and began an examination of the desk.

IN one drawer, Cardona came across odd items of correspondence. He examined several letters, and found them to be of no apparent consequence.

Beside the letters, he discovered three postcards. He turned these over and noticed that they each bore a series of jumbled words which made no sense. The detective's curiosity was aroused; then it waned momentarily. Cardona hesitated, pondering whether to drop the cards in the drawer or to study them further. It was at that moment that Barcomb spoke:

"Mr. Bellew kept important correspondence in the center drawer of the desk, sir."

The suggestion was sufficient. Cardona dropped the postcards, and opened the center drawer. Here he found business letters, and a thorough examination of them indicated that all had been well with Bellew's financial affairs.

There were reasons why Joe Cardona intended to sift every possible shred of evidence in the death of Henry Bellew. Although he could see no connection between this unfortunate tragedy and the killings aboard the local at Felswood, nevertheless it was a new and startling case of death. Henry Bellew was a

man of importance. His tragic end would make front-page news. It warranted exhaustive investigation.

Moreover, Cardona knew that his present position with Police Commissioner Ralph Weston was none too secure. He was positive that he would be summoned to discuss the Bellew death; and he wanted to leave no loophole for criticism on the part of the police commissioner.

Hence Cardona, with the study as his headquarters; began a series of lengthy conferences with the Bellew family, and with business associates of Bellew who were summoned to the house. Late afternoon was waning when Cardona had thoroughly convinced himself that there were no hidden enemies or dangerous negotiations in the life of Henry Bellew.

Riding into Manhattan on a Suburban train, Cardona read an account of Bellew's death in an afternoon newspaper. The report pleased him for two reasons. Bellew's death had not only been heralded as an accident, but it had also crowded out references to the unsolved mystery at Felswood.

Accidental death was Cardona's opinion. He had seen nothing to change it; just as he had seen nothing in the way of a clue to the deaths at Felswood. Yet, within the passage of a single day, Joe Cardona had actually seen much that pertained to deaths which it had been his business to investigate.

At Felswood, he had viewed the man who had delivered death to three persons aboard Suburban trains. At Belgrade, he had talked to the man who was responsible for the death of Henry Bellew. In the millionaire's study he had held direct evidence in his hand—three postcards that had been mailed by the hidden instigator of all four crimes!

Opportunity had been with Joe Cardona to-day. Still, he had not even learned of the existence of a hidden, insidious fiend who called himself The Death Giver.

Detective Cardona had seen nothing!

CHAPTER V. THADE STRIKES

THE gloomy hallway of Henry Bellew's mansion was deserted. Evening had come, and the last feeble rays of outside light that penetrated that dim spot sent long streaks of darkness flickering across the floor. The place seemed a veritable abode of death.

Barcomb, the butler, came down the stairs from the second floor. The man had been up there ever since Cardona had left the house. Barcomb crossed the hallway, solemnly heading toward the dining room.

If the gloom of the place impressed the man, Barcomb did not show it. He was used to this somber atmosphere.

The moment that Barcomb was gone, a silent motion occurred within the hall. A shade of darkness moved along the floor. It rose toward the wall, and developed into a tall, spectral shape of human proportions. A figure clad in black was gliding toward the closed door of Henry Bellew's study.

The portal opened under a master touch. The tall form moved inward. The door closed softly. A blackened outline showed against the window. A hand drew down the shade. A click sounded, and a light appeared above the desk. The rays of illumination showed the form of the black-garbed personage who had entered the room.

The Shadow had entered Henry Bellew's study. Unseen, unheard, this invisible stranger had made his way to the spot where death had struck. His blackened shape was a phantom figure, buried within the shrouding folds of a long, flowing cloak.

The features of The Shadow were obscured by the upturned collar of the cloak, and by the broad brim of a dark slouch hat. The only spots of light that appeared amid this mass of blackness were the eyes of The Shadow—burning orbs that sparkled as they studied the features of the room.

The telephone—a new instrument which had replaced the faulty one - rested innocently upon the desk. All else was as Henry Bellew had left it. Cardona's search had not disturbed the effects in this study. A low laugh came from The Shadow's hidden lips. Seating himself at the desk, the black-garbed phantom began a search through the drawers.

Minutes went by while long, white hands were at work. These hands had been incased in thin gloves; now they were unclad, and they seemed like detached creatures of life as they moved to and fro in front of that somber being of black. Upon the third finger of the left hand appeared a rounded spot of iridescence—a gleaming gem that sparkled with ever-changing hues.

This was The Shadow's girasol—the priceless fire opal which always adorned his hand. The token of The Shadow, this stone, with its altering colors, was as mysterious as the man himself. Sparkling vivid blue; then rich purple; finally changing to a deep crimson, this gem constantly sent forth shafts of light that resembled the sparks of a fire.

THE hands stopped as they came from a desk drawer. The eyes of The Shadow were focused upon three postcards. One by one, the hands lay these objects upon the table.

The keen eyes noted the postmarks. The cards had been received three days in a row—the last had arrived yesterday morning. All were addressed to Henry Bellew.

The hands turned over the cards. The eyes studied the cryptic messages. Each card bore a jumble of words that was identical:

TOTEM DAYLIGHT AGAIN. MANDATE WILLING DIET ONSET YOURSELF TRAINER
ITSELF CANTER BEHALF ANYWHERE ONESELF IRIS WISHING WATCHING OUTSIDE

The Shadow's finger ran through the words one by one. It stopped momentarily upon the words "yourself," "itself," and "oneself." These, to The Shadow, were a key. The finger indicated the words "willing," "wishing," and "watching."

A soft laugh came from the concealed lips. Upon a sheet of paper, the hand of The Shadow quickly wrote out the message which appeared upon the cards.

Then, with swift motion, the same hand began to cross out a portion of each word. In the message, only double-syllabled words appeared; and in each case the hand eliminated the second syllable. The result was this statement:

TO DAY A MAN WILL DIE ON YOUR TRAIN IT CAN BE ANY ONE I WISH WATCH OUT

"To-day a man will die on your train. It can be any one I wish. Watch out."

This was the word that Henry Bellew had received. Prophetic statements which had puzzled the millionaire. Why? Because he had not known their meaning until he had received a further message. When? This morning!

These facts were obvious to The Shadow. The shuddering echoes of a sinister, whispered laugh resounded through the room, awakening the very fears that had impressed Henry Bellew upon that fatal morning.

Some one had sent these prophetic messages, and had followed them with a threat that Henry Bellew had not heeded. That was why death had struck. To The Shadow, the slayer's insidious purpose was plain. The deaths of Felswood were undeniably linked with the killing of Henry Bellew.

But who had delivered the stroke of death? The Shadow's new laugh betokened wisdom. The facts of the supposedly accidental death had been printed in the newspapers. Statements of family and servants were public.

Well did The Shadow know that the actual murderer still lurked about this house; and also did he know—from the facts that he had learned here and at Felswood—that a master mind was the power behind it all.

The postcards disappeared beneath The Shadow's cloak. Thin, black gloves slipped over the long, white hands. The light clicked out. A swish sounded softly in the darkness as The Shadow moved toward the window, and raised the blind. Suddenly, total silence followed.

Some one was outside the door of the study!

THE SHADOW, invisible, listened to the slight sounds of a person opening the door. A few moments later, a man was within the room, the door shut behind him.

Like The Shadow, the newcomer made his way to the window, lowered the blind, and then went to the desk. The light clicked, and the cold face of Barcomb, the butler, appeared above the table.

The man exhibited only the slightest trace of nervousness as he opened the desk drawer and rummaged among the papers. He was looking at the very spot where he had seen Detective Cardona drop the postcards; but Barcomb could not find the desired objects. His breath came in long, sighing heaves; then broke off as the man realized that the postcards were not there.

"Gone! Gone!"

Barcomb's whisper was an awed one—a pair of words tinged with fear and disappointment. The butler drew back from the desk and started, wild-eyed, about him. He saw a darkened corner of the room, but did not suspect that a living being was there until he spied two glowing eyes that seemed to materialize themselves from the gloom.

With a frightened gasp, Barcomb cringed backward against the desk, and watched a tall figure emerge from that corner. The butler's bulging eyes were fixed upon the muzzle of an automatic that extended from a black-gloved hand.

"The Shadow!"

Barcomb's words were scarcely audible. They were questioning words that received an answer in the form of a low laugh that responded from The Shadow's mystic lips.

A cowardly villain was trapped. Barcomb had betrayed himself. An agent of the master mind who called himself The Death Giver, Barcomb was now in the toils of the grim avenger who feared neither threats nor machinations.

Barcomb's utterance, moreover, had proven that the butler was either a crook or one conversant with affairs of the underworld. All men of gangdom feared The Shadow. The gasp of recognition classified Barcomb as a criminal.

"Speak!"

The word came in The Shadow's sinister whisper. It made Barcomb quail. The butler tried to shake his head. He stared upward to see The Shadow moving forward. Barcomb's eyes seemed fascinated by the burning orbs that shone before him. Still, some hidden fear prevented him from succumbing to the hypnotic stare.

"There is some one whom you fear," came The Shadow's voice. "Some one whom you have obeyed. Some one whom you dare not betray."

The voice changed to a shuddering laugh. The sardonic mirth awakened new fears in Barcomb's mind. He saw The Shadow as a present menace—not as a hidden threat.

"You fear death," whispered The Shadow. "Speak to me, then. Otherwise you will receive death now!"

Still, Barcomb refused to open his lips. Again, The Shadow laughed as he divined the fear that was within the butler's mind.

"You fear terrible death from your master," were The Shadow's sepulchral words. "You fear torture before death. I promise you the same if you do not speak to me!"

THE tone was irresistible. Barcomb began to succumb. The Shadow had plucked his thoughts from his mind. Barcomb knew that he could expect no mercy. His head was nodding as he slumped into a chair.

"You will speak?"

Barcomb nodded as he heard The Shadow's words.

"Who is your master?" came The Shadow's question.

"Thade," faintly responded Barcomb. "Thade."

"Who is Thade?"

"The Death Giver."

"Where is he?"

"I do not know."

"Tell all that you know."

Barcomb's shoulders quivered as the man heard The Shadow's order. Try as he could, the butler was unable to avoid the glare of the eyes above him. In faltering phrases, spaced by futile attempts to dally, Barcomb spoke to The Shadow:

"Thade... He calls himself The Death Giver... He knows too much about me... I went to him—I was summoned there... He made me promise to obey... Death... Death..."

Barcomb's eyes had gained a wild, terrified glow. Even the present menace of The Shadow could turn his frenzied mind from the thought of some horror in the past. The man's face showed that he had become the minion of a mighty master—one who had gained complete domination over him.

"Death!" Barcomb's dry lips spat the word in a hoarse tone. "Thade gives death! When others kill, they kill for Thade! They kill like I have killed... Bellew... I came here to kill him. I arranged everything—a few months ago... Yes, I killed Bellew, because I was afraid Thade would kill me!"

With an effort, Barcomb raised his hands to his face. He covered his eyes to escape the stern gaze of The Shadow; and the blotting out must have brought a fierce vision to the man's brain, for his lips moved incoherently. The memory of a terrible scene had gripped his mind.

"I—saw—Thade—kill -"

In disjointed monotone, Barcomb made this statement. His lips trembled; and he added:

"Thade—will—kill—me—unless -"

Barcomb's hands dropped. His eyes, flushed with an insane glow, were staring at The Shadow almost unseeing. In a few moments of recollection Barcomb had gained the vision of another being—one whose power had been indelibly impressed upon him.

"Let me tell you about Thade!" gasped Barcomb, in a new tone. "He told me that I was to obey his orders. He gave me this -"

The butler was fumbling at his vest pocket. The Shadow did not stay him. Barcomb's odd actions indicated that his mind was wandering. His hand came forth, carrying a heavy watch, which he held before the eyes of The Shadow.

"Thade told me I must never tell," blurted Barcomb. "He told me that I must ignore all questions. He said that if great danger came, this would save me, when I pressed -"

THE man's thumb was on the stem of the watch. Pushing the swivel aside, Barcomb started to press the winder.

The man's action showed his thought. In his hand, Barcomb believed that he held a weapon that would kill his adversary!

The Shadow's arm had swung forward, but as Barcomb pressed the stem of the watch and grinned with fiendish hatred, The Shadow instinctively swung aside to avoid the throw which the butler was about to make.

The watch never left Barcomb's hand. The tall form of The Shadow dropped beside the desk, and a grip of steel caught Barcomb's forearm.

Had the watch been what the butler supposed—a deadly weapon which would bring doom to the man it struck, the effort would have been useless.

But something occurred which neither Barcomb nor The Shadow had anticipated. As Barcomb pressed the stem, the case of the watch sprang open, and a long, pivoted needle jabbed downward, deep into the butler's wrist.

With a terrified cry, Barcomb dropped the watch. It clattered upon the desk and dropped to the floor. Barcomb's body swayed and collapsed. The man's futile fingers spread out upon the desk as his falling head thumped against the woodwork.

The form of The Shadow was bending over Barcomb. Gloved hands raised the butler's face. Barcomb's eyes were glassy; a strange, unhealthy ruddiness was creeping over his features. His lips moved slowly, and his words came in a dying moan:

"Thade, The Death Giver. He has punished me. I have told... Told about Thade... Thade... He has...killed -"

As the gloved hands relaxed, Barcomb's head dropped to the table. The man was dead.

The Shadow stooped and carefully lifted the watch from the floor to examine the strange device beneath the light. The glittering needle told its story. Charged with a virulent poison, it had brought quick death to the man whose flesh it had entered.

Thade! The master mind who called himself The Death Giver! The Shadow had learned of such a being from the lips of the monster's minion!

Thade! A fantastic murderer, whose henchmen did his bidding. Barcomb had killed for Thade; and all the while, the butler had believed that in his pocket he carried a sure weapon that would enable him to foil the most formidable foe.

That was true. Barcomb had foiled The Shadow. But it had not been as Barcomb had expected; it had been as Thade intended. For this monster who called himself The Death Giver had provided a sure way to rid himself of any underling who might fail in an appointed task!

Barcomb had unwittingly died by his own hand. The real killer was Thade, The Death Giver, who had supplied the man with this strange weapon for emergency. The Shadow, by his uncanny presence, had brought confession to Barcomb's lips, only to have it ended incomplete by the master method which Thade had devised to do away with his servants and protect himself!

LONG, solemn silence followed. The death-dealing watch closed in The Shadow's hand. The object disappeared beneath the black cloak. Gloved hands lifted the telephone, and a whispered voice called a number.

A quiet tone came back across the wire:

"Burbank speaking."

The Shadow was in communication with his hidden contact man. Burbank was the aid who kept in touch with the active agents of The Shadow when they were engaged upon investigation.

"Report on Vincent," came The Shadow's whisper.

"Watching the home of Vernon Quinley," was Burbank's quiet reply. "Established communication from a store two blocks from the house. Last report fifteen minutes ago. Quinley at home. Vincent awaits instructions."

"Order to continue."

The telephone clicked. The Shadow, tall and spectral, stood viewing the dead form of Barcomb. Here, the hand of Thade had plucked a betraying agent from The Shadow's grasp. Premeditated death had intervened to seal the lips that were giving forth their story.

What new deaths might the future hold? To frustrate them, The Shadow must seek the man behind these murders. He must meet Thade himself.

Barcomb, who had slain Henry Bellew, was gone; but there remained another. Vernon Quinley, resident of Felswood, had been under The Shadow's surveillance for twenty-four hours. Perpetrator of the deaths aboard the Suburban's trains, Quinley, too, was an agent of The Death Giver.

The Shadow had been waiting for the man to betray himself; now, with the knowledge of the greater mind behind the crimes, The Shadow could force Quinley to a betrayal of his master!

The door of the study opened softly. The black shape glided through. The door closed. The Shadow was gone on a new mission. Alone beside the desk, awaiting inevitable discovery, lay the dead and silent form of Barcomb.

The instrument that had caused the butler's death was gone. The body remained, a new mystery to puzzle the police. Only The Shadow knew the truth.

Thade, The Death Giver, had struck down another victim!

CHAPTER VI. THE NEXT VICTIM

HARRY VINCENT was standing within a telephone booth at the Felswood Pharmacy. He had found this place an ideal one from which to establish contact with Burbank. The telephone booths were near a side door; and no one noticed those who entered or left. Moreover, the store was located beside a through-traffic street, and a constant influx of strangers patronized it.

Burbank's voice came over the wire. Harry delivered a brief report. The situation was the same at Quinley's house. Burbank's response was to continue watching. Harry hung up the receiver and left the booth.

Outside the store, he entered his coupe and drove toward Quinley's home. He parked across the street, and extinguished the lights. His car was inconspicuous here.

While watching the house on the other side of the street, Harry reflected upon the mission which he had undertaken for The Shadow. It was early evening at present. Only a few hours before, Harry had been summoned to the office of Rutledge Mann. There, he had received special orders.

In response, he had waited in the lobby of a small office building on Forty-eighth Street. There, he had picked up the trail of a man with a Vandyke beard. This individual, so Harry had been informed, was Vernon Quinley, a manufacturer's representative who had an office in New York, and a home in the small town of Felswood, Long Island.

It was obvious to Harry, from the time he began his trip in Quinley's wake, that this man must have some connection with the strange deaths at Felswood station.

For years, Harry had been a trusted agent of The Shadow. Time and again, he had aided his mysterious chief in relentless warfare against supercrime. Harry Vincent owed his life to The Shadow; and he was constant and fearless in his duty, for he had the utmost faith in The Shadow's prowess.

Harry had read accounts of the unsolved deaths at Felswood. He had expected The Shadow to take a hand. With instructions to follow Quinley, Harry was positive that The Shadow must have unearthed some hidden clew in connection with the unexplainable killings.

But how did Vernon Quinley figure in the matter?

Harry's orders were quite specific. He was to watch Quinley's home; to report any suspicious actions on the part of the man.

On the train, Harry had noted only that Quinley was nervous. At Felswood, Harry had found his own car waiting on the parking lot. It had been taken there by some one—probably The Shadow. Quinley had driven away in a cab; Harry had followed.

Another point referred to Quinley's garage. Harry had been told by Mann to watch all that happened there; and that if Quinley went out in his car, he was to follow. This duty involved frequent reports to

Burbank, and was to continue until Harry was relieved.

CONSIDERING the situation, Harry decided that some mission must have drawn The Shadow away from this spot. In the past, Harry had done vigil in The Shadow's stead. This appeared to be another instance. Because of it, Harry was confronted with a dilemma.

Two courses were open: one was to remain watchful, here in the car, as a passive spectator; the other was to play a more active part by approaching Quinley's house for closer observation. The first method was the safer; the second offered greater opportunity for tangible results.

The Shadow always permitted his agents to use their own judgment in a case like this. Harry, after a few minutes of waiting, decided to introduce the more daring procedure.

He slipped from his coupe and stole up the driveway toward Quinley's house. A lighted window lured him. Harry peered in through a screen. He saw Quinley seated at a table, talking over the telephone.

The window was open; despite that fact, Harry could barely distinguish the man's words. Quinley's tones were cautious and tense. Harry tried to make out the obscure conversation.

"It's all finished, then," Quinley was saying. "Good... Good... I'll get rid of it to-night... Yes, I'll pack it in the car... The other, for emergencies? No. Of course I haven't touched it... Keep it in case of investigators. Yes, I'll have to keep it... You had it installed. I don't know how it operates... I see... You will remove it later... Yes, I'll remember..."

Quinley's back had been toward the other side of the room. The man's face turned, and Harry could see a pallor above the Vandyke. Vernon Quinley was evidently listening to disconcerting words.

"Forget?" Quinley's voice was suddenly plaintive. "How could I forget... Yes, that thing that was not human... No, no! Don't remind me of it!"

The man was shaky when he set down the telephone. Harry saw him turning toward the window. It was time to drop from sight.

Lying beside the wall, Harry heard Quinley go from the room. A moment later lights appeared on the front of the garage. Quinley had turned a switch in the house.

The garage!

Harry knew that Quinley must be going there. The man had said something about the car. This was vitally important.

Springing across the driveway, Harry hid behind a bush just as Quinley emerged from the house. The bearded man went to the garage, opened the sliding door, and entered. A light appeared through the opening; then the door was shut.

In that brief glimpse, Harry had seen that the front of the car was toward the door of the garage. The place was large enough to accommodate two cars, and there was a large space in front of the garage, where Quinley evidently reversed his car. But there were no windows in the doors, and Harry could see that the shades were drawn on the side windows of the garage. Quinley had effectively blocked off all view from outside.

What was taking place within? Harry was determined to find out.

HE crept up to the door and slowly moved it. Well-greased and free of motion, the door slid

imperceptibly under Harry's touch. It enabled The Shadow's agent to peer within.

Harry could see no sign of Quinley.

This was because the car was close to the wall at the spot where Harry stood; and Quinley was evidently in the open space designed for a second car. There were two sliding doors, and the one which Harry was operating was outside the other.

Boldly, Harry wedged the opening until he was able to squeeze his body through. He began to close the door; then stopped and dropped beside the car. Harry could hear the man Quinley at work.

The man was operating something at the rear of the car. Creeping past the front, Harry peered along the fenders. He was astonished at what he saw.

Vernon Quinley was lifting the rear portion of the top. It formed a special compartment above the back seat.

From this space, Quinley removed a strange device. It consisted of a long barrel, with a mechanism at one end—a strange and unfamiliar type of gun. With it, Quinley held a peculiar box that had dials like those on a radio set. The man took out these objects by standing on the bumperette; and he carried each one to a table on the other side of the garage.

Drawing out what appeared to be a molding of the table, Quinley reached in a drawer and produced a long, flat box. He opened it carefully, and Harry could see that it was divided into a dozen compartments, like an egg crate. In all but three of these sections were glistening spheres that looked like tiny globes from a Christmas tree.

Quinley closed the box and laid it on the table. He turned toward the car and stopped short. By merest chance, the man had noted that the garage door was partly open.

His nervous eyes suddenly spotted Harry Vincent's head beside the front fender of the car. A gasp came from Vernon Quinley. It was the signal for Harry to act.

SPRINGING to his feet, Harry drew an automatic from his pocket, and leaped into view. He covered Quinley with the gun. The man's hands went up, and his face whitened; Quinley showed marked signs of cowardice. Harry had him cornered.

"What's the game, eh?" demanded Harry.

Vernon Quinley stared pitifully toward The Shadow's agent. In his trepidation, the bearded man mistook the intruder for a detective. Harry Vincent, a man of athletic build, looked ready for business. Quinley shrank away.

"What's the game?" repeated Harry, sensing the man's fear. "What are you trying to get away with?"

"Nothing," responded Quinley, in a weak, stammering tone. "Nothing - nothing at all."

Harry grunted his disbelief. He stalked forward and reached the table in the corner of the garage, while Quinley watched him with the eyes of a captured rat.

Without ceasing his vigilance, Harry managed to note the objects on the table. In an instant, he understood the purpose of the mechanism and the glimmering spheres within the flat box. A glance toward the rear of the sedan told him.

The long-barreled device was a special gun for shooting the glazed projectiles! An artfully made trap—now plain because the double top of the car was open—would allow the strange bullets to emerge! This was the device; these were the missiles that had brought death to three persons aboard the Suburban trains!

The moment that the thought occurred to him, Harry Vincent formed a plan. He had been forced to act quickly. His only course was to hold Quinley helpless until The Shadow might arrive.

Harry was here to watch Quinley, not to capture him; but the man did not know that fact. Therefore, the best policy was to bluff Quinley, and stall him with a quiz.

"So you're the fellow who is in back of it!" stated Harry gruffly. "Killed off three people, eh? Ammunition enough for a lot more. Come clean, before I drag you out of here! What was the idea?"

To Harry's surprise, Quinley seemed to welcome the interrogation. In a nervous voice, the man began a vague reply. Harry stopped him short with a motion of the automatic. Quinley's ratlike eyes shifted nervously.

"I want your story," demanded Harry.

"I—I did it," admitted Quinley, in a low voice. "That's the way I - I killed them."

"Go on."

"I—I always parked my car in the same place," confessed Quinley. "The box—with the dials. It's a special mechanism set to respond to heavy vibration. I—I—when I parked near the station to take the train, the rest was automatic. When the train pulled in, the vibration from the tracks threw the mechanism."

"Lucky for you it didn't go off while you were in the car."

"It couldn't. It's fixed—I had it hooked up with the ignition switch. It wouldn't work until—until the motor was stopped. I turned the key, and that set it."

"What's in those glass pellets?" queried Harry, nudging his free thumb toward the box.

"I don't know," pleaded Quinley. "They aren't glass. They're a special compound that goes to atoms when they strike. Loaded with poison, they are. I'm not—not responsible for this. I couldn't help it—I was trying to obey orders."

"Orders from whom?"

Harry's voice was stern. Vernon Quinley, caught, was a pitiful creature. He seemed incapable of resisting the questions that were put to him. The evidence was all against him.

"I—I made a mistake," he admitted. "A mistake that would have made trouble for me. A certain man discovered it. He threatened me— first with exposure; then with death—unless -"

"Unless you committed these crimes?"

"Yes."

"Go on," said Harry, in a quiet tone.

The order had a psychological effect upon Vernon Quinley. It indicated that Harry Vincent might be

lenient. The man with the Vandyke started to reveal a vital fact.

"It was Thade," he declared, in an awed whisper. "Thade, who calls himself The Death Giver. He had me brought to his den. He frightened me with his threats. He showed me -"

A strange effect came over Vernon Quinley. The man shrank back against the side of the sedan. He closed his eyes, and clawed frantically in the air. When he spoke again, his voice was a hoarse scream.

"I can't tell!" he exclaimed. "Thade—Thade will kill me. Thade is The Death Giver! He sees everywhere! I have told too much already!"

The man had lost all control. Harry Vincent sensed a pressing danger. If Quinley's voice became louder, it would be heard outside the garage. People would enter here, and Harry's position would be as embarrassing as that of Vernon Quinley.

With his automatic leveled toward the man at the car, Harry circled away from the table until he neared the door of the garage. To close that door necessitated either a shift of the gun to his left hand or a careful turn of his body with the automatic pointing over his left shoulder.

Harry chose the latter course.

WITH gun aimed alongside the car, he reached with his left hand to close the garage door. Before his fingers began their pressure, Harry heard a gloating cry from Quinley. The man's frenzied glare had become a cunning, fiendish look. As Harry paused, scenting danger, Quinley uttered startling words.

"You are fighting Thade," the bearded man exclaimed. "He is The Death Giver—and he has death for you! Do you think that Thade would leave me helpless? No! No! He has given me protection—a way to rid myself of enemies such as you! Only chance saved you before. Now I can act—and you will die!"

As he spoke, Quinley was shifting away from the car. Suddenly, he sprang up from his cringing position, and made a dash across the garage toward the corner beyond the table. As he ran, the man snatched a large, keylike instrument from his pocket.

The unexpected action put Harry in a difficult position. Only a shot could stop Quinley; and if Harry fired, it was more important than ever that the garage door should be shut. With his back half turned toward the running man, Harry would find it awkward to shoot. The predicament caused Harry to fumble.

Thinking of the garage door first, the young man turned to close it; but before he acted, his thoughts went back to Quinley as the greater menace. He realized that he must stop the man at any cost. Swinging away from the door, Harry aimed his automatic just as Quinley neared the corner.

"Stop!" came Harry's tense order.

A threat was better than a shot—if it worked. But Vernon Quinley could not be forestalled by any threat. He had reached his objective—a metal box set against the wall. With clutching fingers, the man thrust the big key into a slot in the center of the box. His writhing claws began to turn the key.

In an instant, Harry knew that this box must be a death-dealing machine installed for emergencies. Quinley had shouted his reliance upon Thade. Here was an instrument that had been reserved to forestall intruders. A shot was necessary now—vitaly necessary.

Harry pressed the trigger spontaneously. He wanted to warn Quinley, not to injure him. The Shadow's orders had been to watch—not to attack.

Harry's bullet flattened against the wall a foot from Quinley's head. The roar of the gun; the impact of the bullet—these made Quinley quail. His hand faltered on the key but with a hunted cry, the man tried to continue.

Another shot burst from Harry's automatic. The bullet clipped Quinley's left shoulder. The man nearly lost his grip; then, in frantic despair, he clutched the key more tightly with his right hand, and gave it a twist with all his strength.

Harry Vincent was pressing the trigger for a third time, but too late to forestall Vernon Quinley. Even had his bullet lodged in the man's body, it could not have stopped the turning of the lever. The futile shot, however, did not reach its mark.

Just as Harry was about to shoot, the door of the garage slid swiftly open behind him. Some one plunged in through the opening, at the same instant. Harry Vincent felt a powerful arm sweep in front of his body.

As Harry fired, he was lifted up as though he were a small child. His gun fired toward the ceiling. A man of tremendous strength had raised him in a mighty grasp, and for one fleeting instant Harry saw eyes that sparkled from beneath the broad brim of a black slouch hat.

Then Harry was carried from his feet, by a swift heave that swept him clear across the driveway outside the garage. A half second of rapid transit; the hold released, and Harry hurtled head foremost upon the grass. He struck upon his shoulder; his automatic sailed from his grasp; he rolled over twice, and crumpled into a thick bush.

In the space of a second, Harry Vincent had been carried nearly thirty feet from the garage door; and as his spectacular, involuntary flight came to its abrupt ending, a new and more terrific shock occurred.

A MIGHTY roar burst from the garage. A terrific explosion rocked the ground. Harry's eyes, staring back along the way which he had come, saw the structure split asunder from the force of a terrific explosion!

The whole building seemed to cave; showers of debris came thundering forth; and Harry huddled himself to escape the remnants of scattered wreckage.

The noise of the concussion reverberated back and forth, amid the shattering sound of breaking glass from all the windows in the neighborhood.

Harry was momentarily stunned; then he opened his eyes and stared at a rising cloud of thick dust and smoke where the garage had been. Not a remnant of life or property remained within the place where hidden dynamite had burst.

Pressure upon his arm brought Harry fully to his senses. Some one was helping him to his feet. He recognized the black-garbed form of The Shadow. His mysterious chief was drawing him away from this spot of doom. With The Shadow aiding him, Harry reached the coupe.

He slumped into the seat and lay there, while the car moved under The Shadow's guidance. Harry was just recovering from the effects of the driving plunge which he had taken before the explosion; but he realized now the importance of that deed.

The Shadow, arriving too late to stop Vernon Quinley's action, had swept Harry Vincent from the area of certain doom, carrying him far enough away to escape the destruction caused by the explosion.

THE car came to a stop several miles from Felswood. Harry stretched and looked toward the driver's seat. He fancied that he saw the door closing. He reached out his hand. There was no one behind the

wheel. The Shadow had gone!

With regained strength, Harry slid over to the wheel and drove slowly away. He knew The Shadow's purpose; the master of darkness had taken him away before the police arrived. Harry was safe; and The Shadow had departed.

Driving toward New York, Harry could but dimly recall the events that had taken place. They came back to him one by one; and he listed them mentally for the report which he must forward to The Shadow as soon as he got back to the city.

Harry knew only that Vernon Quinley had been instructed to dispose of the death-dealing instruments that were in his car; that the man, in desperation, had turned a switch that had demolished the garage and buried him in its wreckage.

Quinley—the strange gun—the glasslike poison bombs—even the sedan with its special top—all were gone. Not a shred of evidence could remain within the shattered garage.

But Harry Vincent did not know the power of the mind that had prompted Vernon Quinley to perform such drastic action. He did not realize that Quinley, the faltering coward, would not have deliberately destroyed himself along with the evidence.

That explosion had been planned by the master mind of Thade, The Death Giver. He had made Vernon Quinley believe that the device installed in the corner of the garage would bring destruction to intruders—not to the man who operated it.

Only The Shadow had known, because The Shadow had learned the ways of Thade by viewing Barcomb's death. Arriving just as Quinley's hand was turning the key of death, The Shadow had performed the superhuman task of saving Harry Vincent.

Once again, the hand of Thade had balked The Shadow. Vernon Quinley, from whose lips The Shadow could have gained new facts, had gone to his doom.

Another victim had fallen prey to Thade, The Death Giver. The fiend lay hidden—and The Shadow knew that his evil brain was plotting further death!

Six deaths: three useless, one with base intention, the other two a stroke of genius directed against men who had reached the limit of their usefulness.

The man who had devised such terrors was the one whom The Shadow sought to meet. What fiendish plots might lie within his brain of evil! What tragedies might he be planning now!

Before The Shadow could learn the lair of this insidious monster, new crimes would be on the way. The rule of doom was not yet over. But if The Shadow could not stay its immediate progress, the course of the future still might be diverted.

Thade, The Death Giver. Who was he? Where was he?

Only The Shadow could learn!

CHAPTER VII. THADE SUMMONS

STRANGE deaths on Long Island. That was the topic of the next day's newspapers. The mysterious killing of Barcomb, Henry Bellew's butler, indicated a hidden motive in the death of the millionaire. The journals intimated that Bellew's electrocution might be more than accidental.

The dynamiting of Vernon Quinley's garage—an explosion in which the owner had perished—brought forth new headlines. This tragedy had occurred at Felswood, the same town where death had struck aboard trains of the Suburban Railway.

Police were investigating. Inspector Timothy Klein and Detective Joe Cardona were active. A statement had been issued by Police Commissioner Ralph Weston. No effort would be spared in the sifting of these crimes. Yet not one clew had been unearthed!

Public alarm had passed the stage of police censure. People were calling on the authorities to prevent further crime. That seemed fully as essential as the tracing of previous murders. The two were linked; but chief apprehension reigned regarding the future. The menace of a mighty genius of evil was rising like an overhanging cloud of evil. Where would it strike next?

Deaths on Long Island. That was the topic everywhere. Millions of New Yorkers were scanning those dreaded headlines. It was only likely that some who read them might know the hidden truth. But how could the sight of a man reading what now concerned all excite the suspicion of onlookers?

This very thought occurred to a man who was seated in the lobby of the exclusive Merrimac Club. Twenty-four hours had passed since the explosion at Quinley's home. The headlines showed that the police were still baffled. The man at the Merrimac relished that thought also. He showed it as he read, for a thin smile appeared upon his sallow features.

This man was Paul Roderick, a club member of both social and financial standing. Attired in well-fitting tuxedo, suave in manner, and striking in appearance, Roderick possessed the ease of a polished gentleman. His face, despite its sallowness, was handsome; and his pointed mustache gave him a sophisticated appearance. His keen eyes had a disarming twinkle, but at times they could flash with shrewdness, as they were doing while their owner read.

Paul Roderick put the newspaper aside and strolled to the lobby. He entered a telephone booth and engaged in a low conversation which involved a number of oddly pronounced words. When he had finished, Roderick left the Merrimac Club and entered a coupe that was parked on the street.

He drove uptown until he reached a quiet street in the Nineties. There, he alighted and rang the bell of a somber house. He was admitted by a middle-aged, bald-headed man who started as he recognized his visitor.

"You—you -" the man stammered.

"You are alone?" questioned Roderick, in a low tone.

"Yes," the man responded.

"I have a summons for you," declared Roderick quietly. "The summons for Harlan Treffin. The summons that you have expected."

THE bald-headed man cowered. He could detect the malicious sparkle in Roderick's eyes. Harlan Treffin had the appearance of a man of courage; but there was something in this visit that had filled him with alarm. It required an effort for him to regain his composure. Finally, he nodded and ushered Roderick into a small room where both men seated themselves.

"Look here, Roderick," said Treffin, in a shaky voice, "I don't know what your game is—but if you're after money, I'll try to pay it -"

Roderick smiled and raised his hand.

"Money?" he questioned. "You have very little, Treffin. Even if you still had the fifty thousand dollars that you received from your uncle's estate -"

As Roderick paused, Treffin's face paled.

"Fifty thousand dollars," repeated Roderick, with a subtle smile. "A tidy sum, Treffin, to obtain through a doctored will. If you still possessed it, you might be able to restore it to the rightful heirs and beg them not to prosecute you. In fact, you might be able to leave the country.

"But that chance is ended. You squandered the money; and you are welcome to the little you have left, provided that you do as I request."

"You've got the goods on me, Roderick," responded Treffin, in a despondent tone. "I don't know how you found out that I forged the will; but you did -"

"Finding out facts is my specialty," interposed Roderick, still smiling. "I know how to turn facts to profit. You have two alternatives, Treffin: to obey my summons or to accept a term in prison. Which will it be?"

"Where do you want me to go?" Treffin asked.

"To visit one who can use your services."

"What will be required of me?"

"That you shall learn; but remember, once you proceed, there will be no turning back."

A look of resignation came over Treffin's face. The man arose and picked up a coat and hat that were lying on a chair. Roderick's smile broadened.

"One moment, Treffin," said the visitor. "There are reasons why you should not know your destination. My friend—he will be your friend soon—prefers to keep his whereabouts unknown. Therefore"—Roderick drew a small box from his pocket—"two of these pills would be advisable."

Treffin glanced suspiciously at the open box, which contained a dozen brownish pellets.

"What for?" he queried.

"Forgetfulness," answered Roderick. "They will not harm you."

Treffin took out two of the pills. Roderick watched him gulp them.

The two men went from the house and entered the coupe. Roderick drove eastward. He was watching traffic at the nearest avenue; he was also keeping a sidelong glance toward Harlan Treffin.

Roderick turned along the avenue and drove a dozen blocks. He noticed that Treffin was becoming weary. The man's head wavered; then slumped against his chest.

Roderick smiled. He drove on, threading his way through a maze of cross-town streets until he reached an alleyway that led from a narrow thoroughfare. Here he stopped the coupe, alighted, and opened the door beside Treffin. The man responded wearily as Paul Roderick helped him from the car.

The drug had produced a desired effect. Harlan Treffin was a man in a trance. He was able to proceed under his companion's guidance; but he had no distinct knowledge of his surroundings.

Paul Roderick led him into a narrow entry; then through a door into a stonewalled room. Here, in a

storeroom of a loft building, Roderick stopped before a grillework that appeared to be part of a ventilating shaft.

Roderick manipulated certain bars; the grille slid upward to show a steel door with a bell beside it. Roderick pressed the button.

A FEW minutes later, a wheezy burst of air came from the crevices. The door slid open to reveal a small elevator. Treffin, groggy, in the gloom that came from the lighted entry, stumbled into the lift when Roderick pushed him.

The clubman drew down the grille and closed the elevator door. He found another button in the darkness and pushed it.

The elevator moved upward. A Stygian cave, rising steadily through complete blackness, its motion seemed ceaseless. The mechanism was acting silently as the two men—one alert, the other dulled—continued their lengthy vertical journey. The elevator finally stopped with a slight jolt. Paul Roderick opened the door.

Dim, greenish light pervaded the room into which Roderick conducted his yielding companion. The sides of the room were hung with thick curtains of the same color. Ahead lay a door of jet-black, upon which a skull and crossbones glowed in luminous white.

Paul Roderick drew a small bottle from his pocket. He steadied Harlan Treffin and ordered the man to drink. Treffin gulped the contents. A bitter liquid brought him to his senses. He gasped and stared about as though awakened from a nightmare. He recognized Roderick's smiling features.

"We are here," announced Roderick. "You see the door ahead? It marks the abode of Thade, The Death Giver."

The strange name was unknown to Treffin, but the man appeared startled as he heard it. Steadying himself, he walked forward with Roderick, who stopped to knock upon the black door. Having thus announced himself, Roderick placed his finger tips against the portal and pressed upward. The door arose into the wall.

The room which the two men entered was the counterpart of the first, except that it was slightly larger than the anteroom. The same green light pervaded. The curtains about the walls were a deep green. Even the ceiling was hung with drooping folds of heavy cloth. Directly ahead was another door of black, which bore the same luminous insignia - the skull and crossbones.

Two men were in this room. They stood like sentinels, one on each side of the door. Their bodies were robed; their heads were bound with turbans. These garments were of white; but the skins of these men were a glossy black. They had the appearance of gigantic Nubian slaves, picked from some strange tale of the "Arabian Nights."

Harlan Treffin, by now completely aroused, gazed at these sentinels in wonder. He noted the green hangings; the green carpet which fluffed the floor; and finally his eyes came back to the weird design on the black panel before him.

He realized that he must be in New York, but he had never dreamed that such a strange place could exist within the confines of Manhattan. This was an amazing adventure that he had not anticipated. What was to be the outcome?

The answer lay in a movement of the black panel. Slowly, the barrier moved upward. It revealed a small

platform which showed its full width as the curtains raised to each side. A green wall was behind the platform, but in the foreground of this tiny chair, Treffin saw a weird creature seated in a chair.

THIS was the form of a wizened man—a person clad in a green robe. Yellow, scrawny hands extended from baggy sleeves. Upon the breast of the robe appeared a circle of black, with the design of skull and crossbones marked in white.

It was the face of the creature that startled Harlan Treffin. It made a striking contrast to the hands that rested on the arms of the chair. For the face was not yellow; it was green. It glowed with a luminous color that had evidently been dabbed there with some chemical compound.

The scene was so fantastic as to be almost unbelievable. In a sense, it was grotesque; but any ease of mind which Treffin might have gained was immediately dispelled when the creature in the chair began to speak.

"Welcome, Harlan Treffin!" The words came in a rasping voice. "Welcome to the abode of Thade. I am Thade! I am The Death Giver! You have come to obey my mandates."

The insidious tones of the monster's voice seemed to create a lasting spell. In the midst of this strange den, Harlan Treffin felt a sinking sensation that he could not overcome.

"I am Thade! I am The Death Giver!"

Those words carried an unknown menace. Harlan Treffin groaned. He understood now what Paul Roderick had said; that there could be no turning back. He already sensed the power of Thade. Silent, awed, and pressed by fear that he could not resist, Harlan Treffin awaited the commands of Thade, The Death Giver.

CHAPTER VIII. THADE ORDERS

"HARLAN TREFFIN."

Thade pronounced the name in a tone that betokened doom. The visitor shuddered.

"Remember!" Thade's voice came in an eerie monotone to Treffin's ears. "Those who serve Thade once, serve him always. You have come here because you wish to avoid an exposure of your past. You need not fear it so long as you obey the commands of Thade.

"You will receive instructions here. You will obey them. If you fail, your past will be exposed. Not only that, you will also receive the only reward that Thade gives. That reward is death!"

Ominous words! Treffin stared at the ghastly green face before him. He knew that those livid lips carried no idle threat. Thade, The Death Giver, had spoken.

"Death is something that men fear," continued Thade. "To some, it is a boon; to others, it is a misfortune. Death is the inevitable lot of man. It cannot be eluded; but it can be gained sooner than one anticipates.

"With death I have shown mercy to those who found life a burden. With death, I have ridden the world of those whose lives were useless. With death, I have gained riches; with death, I shall amass more wealth."

Thade's voice had reached a ringing note of assurance. It paused; then became low and conniving, an insidious tone that brought new alarm to the stranger who heard it. The hideous face of luminous green showed rows of gleaming, fanglike teeth as Thade spat forth a potent threat.

"With death I have wreaked punishment," hissed Thade. "Quick death to those weaklings who failed to do my bidding. Slow death to those who conspired to thwart my purposes. Behold!"

A clawlike hand went to the side of the chair and pressed a knob. Harlan Treffin stepped back in horror as he saw the floor slide slowly open.

Beneath the spreading surface of green was a thick sheet of plate glass. Under it, entombed in a coffin like a mummy in a museum, was the form of a living man!

A helpless, miserable being whose shroud-wrapped form was wasted with long suffering: that was the horrible sight that Harlan Treffin saw. There, beneath the floor of Thade's den, was proof of The Death Giver's power. A face with hollow, bony cheeks; its colorless eyes staring sightlessly upward; a pain-racked frame that had shrunk to the proportions of a skeleton: this was the exhibit that Thade uncovered.

"One month ago," came the cruel voice of The Death Giver, "that creature was like you—a strong, healthy man—a servant of Thade, The Death Giver. He planned to bring harm to me. He failed.

"When he was brought here, it was in his mind to betray Thade. Instead, he found this resting place. He is dying, as he has been since that night a month ago. He will continue to die, so long as I, The Death Giver, choose to torment him.

"Let this be a warning to you, Harlan Treffin. Thade, The Death Giver, bestows naught but death to such as you. I, Thade, shall reserve death so long as you obey my mandates. Should you fail, death will be swift. Should you exhibit the slightest sign of treachery, you shall die slowly—and painfully.

"As my underling, it shall be your duty to loose death when Thade commands. I shall give you instructions. I shall provide you with a means whereby you can protect yourself against formidable enemies. Remember the words of Thade, The Death Giver. I am your master, Harlan Treffin; there is no turning back!"

THADE'S voice ended, and the fangs showed in another gleaming smile as Harlan Treffin, his courage failing as he saw the sight beneath the floor, began to sway. Thade pressed the knob at the side of his chair. The green carpet closed, just as Treffin's body collapsed upon the spot where the opening had been.

The Death Giver uttered words in a strange language. The tall Nubians stepped silently forward and lifted the form of the man who had fallen senseless. They carried Harlan Treffin into the anteroom. Paul Roderick stepped forward to where Treffin had lain.

"He will do?" questioned Roderick calmly.

"He will do," responded Thade. "Like the others, he faltered. That sight is one that he will never forget. When he recovers from his faint, he will heed the commands of Thade."

Paul Roderick nodded as he approached the dais on which The Death Giver was seated. Here was one man whom Thade did not rule by awe; yet Roderick was careful in his manner toward the strange creature clad in green.

"Death!" remarked Thade, in a hissing tone. "That is the reward to all— except to you, Roderick. You, alone, shall share a portion of the vast wealth which I shall accumulate. That is because you are the one who aids me in my plans."

"We have failed for the present," declared Roderick solemnly.

"Failed?" Thade's question was one of hollow sarcasm. "Thade rules by death, and death has been dealt."

"Yes," admitted Roderick, "the killings at Felswood were perfect. The police were there for the third one, but they saw nothing. Yet Henry Bellew did not heed the threat. We have lost the million that we could have gained from him."

"Bah!" Thade's voice was scornful. "He was but one of many. I prepared for him to act as he did. My next subject will heed the warning. With Bellew's death as an added threat, he will be afraid to speak. I hold him as surely as I held Bellew. Death can strike him in a moment."

Roderick nodded in agreement; then his face clouded with momentary doubt. Thade detected the expression and scowled. Roderick hastened to explain his thought.

"Barcomb and Quinley," he remarked. "We thought that they were safe. But events proved otherwise. Both were killed last night. Each must have been trapped -"

"By the police?"

"No. I have read the newspapers carefully. The police know nothing. But some one knows. Barcomb was found dead in Bellew's study. Poisoned by an injection."

"The watch I gave him."

"Yes. It must have been that. He thought it was a weapon he could use in an emergency. Therefore, he must have faced a crisis. Some one confronted him and demanded the truth."

"He did not know this place of my abode."

"No. But he could have spoken the name of Thade before he died. He might have mentioned me. I brought him here, as I brought Treffin to-night."

"Perhaps his nerve failed him -"

"No," said Roderick emphatically, "Barcomb was in danger. Quinley's death was proof of that. Quinley was a coward. He wretched from the time I first confronted him with what I knew about his fake real-estate dealings. He was yellow when he came here.

"Last night, I followed your instructions to the letter. I phoned Quinley and told him to get rid of the apparatus. He must have gone to the garage immediately after that. He turned the key and blew the whole works. He would have done so only if discovered by some dangerous intruder. He thought—like Barcomb—that the device was for his own protection."

"It was for the protection of Thade," sneered The Death Giver.

Once again, Paul Roderick nodded. His face, however, retained its look of perplexity.

"We are up against some one," he declared. "Some one who knows much. Some one who knows more than the police. Some one who is keeping his knowledge to himself. It may be -"

"Who?" questioned Thade, as Roderick paused.

"The Shadow," asserted Roderick. "You have heard of him."

"THE SHADOW!" Thade's tone was scornful. "I do not fear The Shadow! He is a man who fights with

petty crooks. What if he did discover Barcomb and Quinley? He can not cope with Thade!

"One year ago"—Thade paused reflectively—"there was a poor inventor. A deluded man, who discovered marvels with poisons and with deadly gases. A man who understood explosives. He had hopes of doing great things for the government. He was told, in Washington, that his experiments were not of interest.

"That man died, Roderick. Died in heart, though not in body. His life work had been ridiculed. His spirit departed. Yet he lived, as a new being. He became Thade, a man who knew no country. Thade, The Death Giver!

"I, Thade, shall use my great knowledge to gain wealth. I have done so in a trivial way. This hidden refuge has been built by death. Now, I shall gather millions! You, Paul Roderick, are my aid. You have found men of wealth whom I can threaten. You have brought in dupes whose trivial secrets you have learned—men whom I can twist and mold until they are afraid to do other than my will.

"I, Thade, fear no one! I give death to those who would thwart me. I sent death to three unknowns that I might terrorize Henry Bellew. He failed to heed the warnings that I sent through you. He died. Barcomb's work was ended; it is well that he is dead. Quinley had served his purpose. It is well that he died also.

"The campaign against Henry Bellew was scarcely more than an experiment. The next will be Irwin Langhorne. He is richer than Bellew was. The warning will be greater. Mysterious death will strike more rapidly.

"You have brought me Treffin, to act as Quinley acted. Jarvis is ready to act as Barcomb did. The messages must go to-night. Thade, The Death Giver, has spoken! Thade fears no one. The Shadow! Bah!"

The Death Giver clapped his hands. Bowing, Paul Roderick withdrew.

One of the Nubians entered from the anteroom. Thade spoke in the foreign tongue. The man went back; a moment later, he and his fellow-servant returned supporting Harlan Treffin between them. Thade's new vassal was as pallid as before. The conversation between The Death Giver and Paul Roderick had barely given Treffin time to recuperate.

Thade raised his hand and beckoned. The Nubian stepped aside, and Treffin advanced unsteadily until he stopped before The Death Giver's dais.

His eyes stared like bulging bulbs toward the green-hued face of Thade. That ghoulish visage was terrifying; and Treffin drew back as the scrawny hands reached forward, bearing a square box. The lid opened, to show three transparent tubes of a substance that resembled glass. A gummy streak lined the upper surface of each tube.

The voice of Thade droned in steady words. Harlan Treffin was receiving his instructions. The man slowly nodded his understanding. The lid of the box closed. Thade thrust the container into Treffin's listless hands.

"Roderick will take you to your house," continued Thade, after he had completed his orders. "There, he will leave you the schedule upon which you will work. Be precise in your actions. The time is to-morrow. After that -"

One of the Nubians approached carrying a cylindrical container. Thade raised the cover, and drew out a table lamp that resembled an artillery shell, standing point upward.

"This," declared The Death Giver, "is your protection. While it rests upon the table in your little room, you will be safe from all intrusion. The lamp will not light; it has no connection. The switch up here is useless. But in the base -"

Thade's finger touched an ornamental spot in the rounded bottom of the lamp. The finger did not press. It merely indicated; then drew away.

"Should an enemy confront you," said The Death Giver, "you can thwart him by pressing this concealed button. Use the device only in case of extreme emergency. It will demonstrate the power of Thade. Your foe will learn the suddenness of death. You understand?"

Treffin nodded.

"Turn around."

Treffin obeyed the command. Staring downward, he saw the floor opening to display that gruesome figure of a dying victim. A scream came from Treffin; his body swayed at this repetition of the sight he had seen before.

The floor was closing. Thade's voice was speaking, and Treffin, although dazed, managed to nod his complete understanding of The Death Giver's words.

"You will obey my word," commanded Thade. "You will not betray me. You will act as I have ordered should danger come to you. Otherwise, the fate that you have seen will be your destiny!"

THE turbaned servants were supporting Treffin. Paul Roderick was there, holding the box of pills. He offered two of the brown tablets to Harlan Treffin, who managed to hold them between his fingers and gulp them hastily.

The coma that he had experienced before would be a grateful relief from the terror of this abode where Thade was ruler. The green walls whirled dizzily before Treffin's eyes. He steadied as the quieting drug took effect. He felt himself being led across the room, through the green-walled chamber beyond. He felt himself moving downward through darkness; then recollection faded, although he still possessed the strength of locomotion under Roderick's guidance.

An hour later, Harlan Treffin awoke to find himself in the little room at the rear of the first floor in his home. He was slouched in a chair beside the table. Before him lay a square box, which he recognized distinctly. Set upon the table was the oddly shaped lamp that he had received from Thade. Near him stood Paul Roderick.

All that had happened came back to Harlan Treffin in vivid memory. The interviews with Thade were a recollection that he could not forget. Every detail throbbed through his brain. But of the journeys to and from The Death Giver's abode, he remembered nothing.

Roderick advanced. He placed a sheet of paper in Harlan Treffin's weakened hand. Upon the paper were the names of three places in Manhattan. Each was listed with an exact time in the morning—certain minutes between eight and nine.

"You remember?" quizzed Roderick.

Treffin nodded and moistened his dry lips.

"Everything," he declared.

"The lamp?" questioned Roderick.

"Yes," answered Treffin.

A smile appeared upon Roderick's sophisticated face. His mouth formed a short phrase:

"Do not forget."

The furtive gleam in Treffin's eyes showed that the man could not forget. The power of Thade, The Death Giver, had impressed itself indelibly upon his brain. The thought of that dying man embedded in the glass-cased floor was a terror that had sapped his courage.

"You may communicate with me," declared Roderick, "after your work has been finished. Do so every night, after eight o'clock. You may have further duties. If I do not respond, wait for one hour. Unless you hear from me within that period, there will be no message."

With that, Roderick turned and strolled from the room, leaving Harlan Treffin pondering upon the strange events which had occurred to dominate his future.

Outside, Paul Roderick entered his coupe and drove to a large apartment house in the Forties. He turned his car over to an attendant at the door, and walked to the nearest corner. There, he deposited a large envelope in a mail box.

After that, Roderick returned to the apartment house and went up in the elevator. He was smiling as he alighted on the sixth floor.

He had served Thade well, to-night. The roving agent of The Death Giver, Paul Roderick had acquired a new and useful henchman; and he had also dispatched a note of mystery to the next millionaire on Thade's list.

Within a few weeks, Roderick was sure, he would receive a tidy share of new wealth that would be in The Death Giver's hidden coffers! New wealth which would come as a result of the work to start to-morrow!

CHAPTER IX. DEATH IN MANHATTAN

AT quarter past eight the next morning, a steady stream of people were passing through a short arcade that led to an uptown subway entrance. Among them was Harlan Treffin.

The man had recovered from his fright of the night before. At present, he was a trifle nervous; but he steadied himself as he stopped at a telephone that jutted from the wall.

Treffin jiggled the receiver with his right hand. His left, within his coat, came suddenly forth and pressed beneath the telephone box. It rested there; performed a slow twisting motion, and moved away.

Treffin stepped from the telephone. He almost bumped into a short, stocky man who stepped aside to avoid him. Treffin caught a glimpse of a heavy-jowled face, a bristling gray mustache, and a derby hat above.

Both men moved on. The throng continued to pass. Fully five minutes elapsed. Then something strange occurred. A young man passing through the arcade stopped short within a few feet of the wall telephone. He pressed his hands against his chest. He drew a long, gasping breath and tottered. He fell to the floor before approaching persons could come to his rescue.

A crowd congregated within a few minutes. Wild voices called for a doctor, an ambulance, a policeman. The last named was the first to arrive. A ruddy-faced officer pushed his way through the excited group, and leaned over the man upon the floor. The practiced eye of the policeman told instantly that the young chap was dead.

WHILE excitement still reigned in the arcade, and little groups of people were talking about the tragedy which had occurred, Harlan Treffin was entering the lobby of an office building on lower Broadway. Twenty paces ahead of him was the heavy-jowled man with the derby hat. Treffin did not notice him. His watch concerned him more. It showed twenty minutes before ten.

Treffin stepped up to a telephone just inside the door. The instrument was at the left of the lobby. Treffin's arm was shielded by the wall. Quickly, the man performed the same operation that he had used in the arcade. He walked away from the telephone and left the building.

Five minutes later, a man came through the revolving door of the office building, faltered, and plunged headlong to the tiled floor. Two attendants rushed forward and lifted him to his feet. The man collapsed in their arms.

They carried him to a drug store that adjoined the lobby. The pharmacist in charge expressed immediate concern. He believed that the man was dead. He sent a hurry call for an ambulance.

Meanwhile, on the twentieth floor of the skyscraper, the gray-mustached man had entered a luxurious suite of offices. Employees bowed and nodded as he went by. He opened a door that bore the name:

IRWIN LANGHORNE

A stenographer greeted the stocky gentleman with a cheery "good morning." Irwin Langhorne smiled.

"Good morning, Miss Price," he said. "I am checking in, as usual. You may notify the executives that I shall return after my usual cup of coffee."

Replacing his derby upon his head, the mustached man left the office and walked back through the suite. Smiles were exchanged among the employees as he passed.

Every morning, Irwin Langhorne, millionaire importer, arrived at quarter of nine. He always came via subway. Immediately after his arrival, he invariably left to obtain a morning cup of coffee. This was accepted as a matter of office routine; but the early employees never failed to watch for Langhorne's reappearance after he had entered his private office.

Descending to the lobby, Langhorne left the building by a side door, and walked to a little restaurant that was wedged in the side of a towering building. He seated himself at a table halfway back, and quietly ordered a cup of coffee.

He did not notice a man who was lounging by the door; nor did the other observe Irwin Langhorne. That man was Harlan Treffin, who had entered scarcely a minute before the millionaire. Treffin was waiting to use the telephone by the wall.

A woman left the phone, and Treffin fumbled with the receiver. He made a pretense of dropping a nickel in the slot. Leaning forward, he pressed his left hand beneath the box. Hanging up the receiver, he left the restaurant entirely unnoticed.

People were coming in and out. A middle-aged man in a checkered suit stopped directly across from the telephone and rattled a coin on the cigar counter. The cashier, busy making change several feet away, did not respond immediately. When he turned, he stared as he saw the peculiar expression which had

appeared upon the face of the man at the counter.

The coin was no longer clicking. Its owner was slumping toward the floor. The cashier leaped to the rescue, but too late; the man in the checkered suit fell sidewise, and his head thudded when it struck the floor. Excitement reigned for several minutes; then the body was carried into the restaurant manager's office.

Irwin Langhorne, who had been a witness of all this, stopped to pay his check at the cashier's window. He inquired about the man who had fallen.

"He's dead," said the cashier in a low voice. "It must have been a heart attack!"

IRWIN LANGHORNE was ill at ease as he went back to his office. He had reached a period in life when friends were dying at frequent intervals. He had known two who had succumbed to apoplexy. The thought of sudden death perturbed him. To witness it was a serious experience.

But there was another worry that now impressed itself upon Langhorne's mind. That morning, the millionaire had received a strange, cryptic letter. With it had been clippings that pertained to three deaths upon Suburban trains, the passing of Henry Bellew, and two other deaths.

Death! It seemed to be in the air today. He had been reminded forcefully of it; now he had seen it strike! Was this coincidence or fate?

In his private office, Langhorne managed to shake off the worries that beset him. He forgot about the unfortunate episode that had occurred in the restaurant.

THREE deaths had occurred that morning, each in a different place. All New York was to discuss those deaths before evening. New mystery perplexed the police by noon. Eager reporters took up the story.

Three deaths in public places were enough to start a police investigation; and when, in each instance, the surgeon's report showed that gas poisoning was responsible, the result was high excitement at headquarters.

Late that afternoon, Detective Joe Cardona paid a visit to the office of Police Commissioner Ralph Weston. A stack of newspapers was piled upon the commissioner's desk when Cardona entered. On this visit, there was very little ceremony. Weston eyed Cardona coldly, waved his hand toward the heap of journals, and asked a single-worded question:

"Well?"

Cardona sat wearily in a chair. His face was solemn. It showed that he was beaten. In despair, the detective came out with the facts as he had found them.

"I don't know anything," he confessed. "It looks like the railway stuff all over again. There were three killed there, commissioner. Three here in New York. Poison on the trains; gas this time. But we haven't found a single clew."

The commissioner stared through the window and thoughtfully thrummed the desk. When he faced Cardona, there was a new expression on his countenance.

"Cardona," he declared, "you're up against something big. When you couldn't get any evidence on those train killings, I was considerably disappointed. But when I went over your reports, I became convinced that you had taken every step that was humanly possible.

"There were other deaths out there. Henry Bellew looked like an accident. His butler dying was a mystery. This fellow, Vernon Quinley, bombed in a garage, looked like something different. You didn't connect the three with the train murders, nor did I.

"But now I'm convinced that there was a connection. One man is back of the whole shebang. These three deaths in Manhattan show that he is at work again. A master schemer. That's evident."

"I agree with you, commissioner," said Cardona.

Weston arose and paced the floor.

"The newspapers are on it heavy," he remarked. "It means that you're on the spot, so far as they are concerned. But I'm with you this time, Cardona, and I'll tell you why. The way that you went after the Suburban trains was proof that you were on the job. Frankly, Cardona, it's too much for you. But there isn't a man at headquarters who could do half what you have done.

"I'm in your boots now. Working on hunches. That's all we appear to have. I can only hope that you will get a hunch that works. But I'm warning you in advance"—Weston paused emphatically—"when I tell you that your hunch had better be a quick one. This talk of a hidden fiend whose ways are beyond detection is going to raise havoc all the way up the line. You'll be the first to feel it if it brings a shake-up. You're on the spot, Cardona!"

"I know it," said Cardona grimly.

WESTON resumed his chair. For the first time, a real understanding had been gained between the commissioner and the ace detective. When Ralph Weston spoke again, it was in a quiet, meditative tone.

"What have you learned?" he asked.

"Nothing," Cardona admitted. "It looks like the hit-or-miss racket again; We've searched high and dry for bombs and suspicious characters. We can't find either. My men have gone over every inch, commissioner."

"Can you find any possible reason why the deaths should have occurred at those particular spots?"

"Not one," responded Cardona. "I've caught a glimmer on the Felswood mess. Quinley was a commuter; so was Bellew. Maybe the aim was to get them. But here are three men—all unimportant, as before—and I can't figure why three of them were bumped in one day."

Weston nodded.

"I read the newspaper accounts," he said, picking the uppermost paper from the pile. "Guy Bradley, a cigar-store clerk. Harold Eggesworth, a life insurance salesman. Peter Blossom, a wholesale poultry dealer. I can't see why any one would be the victim of a widespread plot."

"Something's bound to follow," remarked Cardona. "That's the only hunch I've had so far. I've got men watching the places where the victims dropped dead—but it won't do any good."

"Why not?"

"Because the whole system has changed. At Felswood, there were deaths one a day, all at the same place under the same conditions. Now it's three in one day at different spots. I'm looking for one man in back of it all, but he's foxier than before. It's a muddle, commissioner; a real muddle."

"Stick to it, Cardona," said Weston tersely.

THE detective left the office. He started wearily along the street, glancing at headlines as he passed the frequent news stands. Death— death— death! That was all Cardona saw. What could be done to stop it?

The Shadow!

Cardona shrugged his shoulders. Here was crime that should surely lure the mysterious phantom who battled with the lawless. Yet so far— to Cardona's way of thinking—the hand of The Shadow had not appeared.

Cardona was weary as he made his rounds. He went from one place to another, to talk with the men who were on watch.

Starting from the little arcade uptown, he rode by subway to the office building; then went to the little restaurant in the wall of the skyscraper. All places seemed barren of clues.

But while Cardona was going through this hopeless formality, another man was following the same trail. A tall, hawk-nosed individual paused in the uptown arcade to light his brier pipe. As he lingered there, his sharp eyes looked everywhere. The only object that seemed conspicuous to them was the telephone box extending from the wall.

The tall man put in a telephone call. His long left hand, upon which glowed a strange, color-changing gem, moved along the side of the box, and then beneath. It emerged as the man completed his call.

Walking through the arcade, the tall man descended to the subway. He glanced at his left hand. A long streak of gluey substance had made a slight impression upon his palm. Quietly, the man drew a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped away the mark.

He made another telephone call in the lobby of the building, where the second death had occurred. As he strolled through and headed for the side entrance, he again wiped a line of gum from his left hand. The man's last stop was in the little restaurant where Irwin Langhorne had seen the stroke of death.

Another telephone call. The sharp-eyed investigator went to the back of the restaurant and ordered a cup of coffee. While he awaited it, he picked up a paper napkin and carefully wiped a third smudge from his hand.

An hour later, a light clicked in a darkened room. A bluish glare was reflected above the top of a polished table. Those same hands appeared beneath the glow. The strange, changing gem, The Shadow's girasol, sparkled its iridescent hues.

The Shadow was in his sanctum. His hands were at work. To-day, The Shadow had solved one factor in the mystery. He had discovered a new weapon in The Death Giver's armory.

The right hand wrote beneath the blue light:

Three deaths to intimidate Henry Bellew. All on the regular train which Bellew took.

A pause; then the hand added:

Three deaths to intimidate another man. Along the route which that man must regularly follow.

The final notations were:

Poison contained in shattering globes.

Gas contained in self-destroying envelopes.

Death by liquid. Death by vapor.

The writing was in ink. Letter by letter, these notations began to disappear. That was the way when The Shadow inscribed his thoughts. The ink that he used was a chemical fluid that evaporated in the air.

A final remark appeared upon the blank sheet:

Find the man whom The Death Giver threatens. To-morrow.

The writing glared blue; then faded. The light clicked out. A tiny spot of illumination appeared as a set of ear phones were drawn across the table. Burbank's quiet voice came over the wire.

The Shadow spoke instructions. Burbank's responses followed. The conversation ended. The little signal disappeared. A swish came through the darkness as The Shadow moved across the sanctum.

Then came the laugh. A strange, sinister shudder awoke reverberations throughout that silent room. The laugh rose to a strident, mocking cry. Invisible walls threw back the eerie sound. When the quivering mirth had ended with a myriad of ghoulish echoes, The Shadow was gone.

To-morrow. The Shadow had planned. To-morrow, his amazing mind would meet the challenge of The Death Giver!

Where Joe Cardona had placed useless watchers, seeking for a needle in a haystack, The Shadow would use scientific skill.

To-morrow, he would trace the man over whom the threat of death was impending. Through that man, The Shadow would follow the trail back to Thade, The Death Giver!

CHAPTER X. EYES OF THE SHADOW

SHORTLY before eight o'clock the next morning, a light coupe with a boxlike extension at the rear, pulled up on a side street in Manhattan. Just around the corner was the entrance to the little arcade where tragedy had arrived the day before.

A lank individual, whose most noticeable articles of apparel were checkered cap and leather puttees, stepped to the curb. He looked about, spied a man approaching him, and put forth a query:

"You Mr. Vincent?"

"Yes," replied the man who had been waiting. "I've been expecting you. All ready to take the shots?"

"Sure thing."

Harry Vincent watched the man in puttees open the rear of the car to unlimber a camera apparatus.

"Let's see what time your watch shows," he said.

The camera man exhibited his wrist watch. It corresponded with Harry's timepiece. Seven fifty-two.

"Get this right," ordered Harry; "I want a continuous series of shots beginning at eight ten and running until eight twenty-five. Keep yourselves inconspicuous. I want to get pictures of this arcade just like it is every

morning."

"What about sound apparatus?"

"There won't be any. I'm preparing a script for an announcer who will talk along with the pictures."

"I get you. Showing them the scenes where these mysterious deaths occurred and -"

"That's the idea exactly. I want continuous shots so I can pick out a suitable length of film."

"What about in the arcade itself?"

"That will come later," declared Harry. "I've got another cameraman for that. Just a close-up shot of the spot where this fellow Bradley dropped dead. We'll get that when the crowd has thinned."

A few minutes later, Harry Vincent left in a taxi just after the cameraman and his assistant had picked a suitable point from which they could shoot photographs of the arcade.

"Good idea this fellow Vincent has," remarked the cameraman approvingly. "He's a free lance in the film game—one of those small-time producers who pop up every now and then with a good idea. Called me up late last night. Had a red-hot stunt in mind."

"He's shooting other pictures?" queried the helper.

"Yeah," said the cameraman. "He's going to frame a reel showing the busy places where the mysterious deaths occurred yesterday. He'll sell it to the newsies all right. Maybe he'll make a short of it."

IN the meantime, Harry Vincent was riding downtown in his cab. He left at Forty-second Street, to make swifter time in the subway. He arrived at the Stellar Building—where the second death had taken place—shortly after quarter past eight.

Here he found another cameraman awaiting him. Harry made arrangements for shots from across the street, beginning at eight thirty-five. Walking around the corner, Harry encountered a third photographer already established in an entry across the street from the little restaurant.

"Mr. Vincent?" questioned the man.

Harry nodded.

"All set," said the photographer. "I've fixed it to make shots from the fire tower over here. I can cover the restaurant O.K. When do you want me to begin?"

"Quarter of nine," stated Harry.

The first part of Harry Vincent's unusual assignment was completed. He was acting in accordance with instructions from *The Shadow*. Boldly, Harry had arranged for the planting of cameras at the three places of death, in order to show the morning scenes.

It was all in the work of the newsreel men. There would be swift action after this: the prompt development and delivery of the films. A timely subject for news-reel distribution required rapid attention; and the men whom Harry had hired knew their business. The finished reels were to be delivered at an uptown office early in the afternoon.

Harry Vincent left the vicinity of the Stellar Building immediately after giving instructions to the camera men. He rode uptown to the building, where he had ordered delivery of the films. He smiled as he

reached the fourth-floor hall. A painter was just completing a title on the door:

*H. VINCENT
CINEMA ENTERPRISES*

Harry walked into the furnished office. It consisted of three rooms: an outer office, a private office, and an inner chamber that served as a projection room. Harry had arranged to take this place for a month. In so doing, he had followed instructions from Burbank.

Harry had called a rental agent who specialized in quarters for independent motion-picture concerns, and had found that this place was vacant. He had insisted upon immediate occupancy.

By the time the cameraman arrived with their finished reels, the paint would be dry upon the door, and the entire place would have the appearance of an established enterprise. Those in The Shadow's service worked quickly when they received orders.

While Harry was surveying his office, the door opened and a girl entered. Harry recognized her as the stenographer who worked for Rutledge Mann. The girl announced that her employer had sent her over to assist Mr. Vincent.

"Of course," said Harry. "My regular stenographer is away. It was very kind of Mr. Mann to send you here for the day. I am expecting some visitors. You can announce them when they arrive."

NO one came during the morning. Harry spent most of his time in the private office. He sent the girl out to lunch at twelve. When she returned, Harry went out. Arriving back at the office shortly before two, Harry found the first of the cameramen awaiting him.

"Here are the reels," the man said, handing Harry two circular metal boxes.

"Fine," responded Harry. "Let me have the bill. I will mail you the check."

After Harry had gone into the private office, the girl entered to announce the second cameraman. The reels were delivered; and the third lot arrived by three o'clock. This was in accordance with the promised schedule.

At three fifteen, the stenographer entered and tendered Harry a card. It bore the name:

*L. BURBANK
MOTION PICTURE OPERATOR*

Harry did not go out to greet the visitor. He gave the card back to the girl with these instructions:

"Tell Mr. Burbank that he may go into the projection room. The reels are waiting there. I will view them later."

At three thirty, the girl arrived to announce that Mr. Lamont Cranston was in the outer office.

"Show him into the projection room," was Harry's order.

Harry caught a glimpse of the second visitor as the girl went through the door. He saw a tall man, with keen, well-molded face, and fancied that he observed the sparkle of brilliant eyes.

Lamont Cranston! Harry had heard the name before. He knew that this was an identity which The Shadow sometimes assumed.

Lamont Cranston was a man of reputed wealth, a mysterious individual who traveled frequently. There was no proof that Lamont Cranston was The Shadow. But there were times when The Shadow appeared in the guise of Lamont Cranston.

Harry was thinking of this several minutes later, when he went into the projection room himself. The Shadow was a master of disguise. In his adventures, Harry had met The Shadow—sometimes as a figure clad in black; but on other occasions, the mysterious phantom had appeared in various identities.

The projection room was dark. Staring through the gloom, Harry caught the light of two burning eyes that were turned in his direction. Those eyes seemed to flash a command. Harry found a chair and sat down; then turned toward the screen at the end of the room.

"Proceed."

The word came in a whisper from some unknown spot. At The Shadow's command, a shaft of light flickered on the screen; the mechanism of the movie projector began to hum. Within a few minutes, the scene in front of the little restaurant manifested itself.

At first, Harry wondered why this episode was coming last. Then he realized the reason. The picture showed many persons passing the restaurant, but only a few entering it. As the reels progressed, Harry could count no more than twenty people who went in or out. The flickering picture ended.

"Repeat," came the voice of The Shadow.

Harry watched intently during the second showing. By the time the picture was completed, he felt sure that he could recognize most of the persons who had gone into the eating house.

THERE was a short wait; then another scene appeared. It was the lobby of the Stellar Building. Here, many people were passing in and out. A stocky man separated himself from the edge of the crowd. The Shadow's monotone broke in with a single word:

"Slow."

The reel lessened its speed. Harry saw the stocky man laboriously wending his way toward the door of the building. He noted the derby hat, the heavy-jowled countenance; the short-cropped gray mustache.

"Comment," came The Shadow's word.

"That man went into the restaurant," blurted Harry. "I recognize him from the other reel -"

"Change," ordered The Shadow.

A view of the arcade appeared, taken from an angle. Three minutes elapsed; then Harry uttered another remark of recognition. Coming directly into the camera was the man with the gray mustache and derby hat.

"Slow," came The Shadow's quiet order.

The motion became lethargic. Once again, Harry caught a perfect impression of the face. Here, in three different places, the camera had recorded the countenance of one man.

Another command from The Shadow. The showing ended. Harry sat quietly in the projection room for several minutes; with half-closed eyes, he seemed to see the face that he had viewed in the pictures.

When he finally left the projection room, Harry found the stenographer alone in the office. The girl looked

inquiringly at her temporary employer.

"Both Mr. Burbank and Mr. Cranston have gone," she said. "Mr. Cranston went into your private office for a moment -"

Harry nodded. He went into the little office, and there he found an envelope upon the desk. He opened it to read a coded note, inscribed in ink. A message from The Shadow—in special cipher that Harry understood. Hardly had Harry digested the new instructions before the writing began to disappear.

Harry glanced at his watch when he returned to the outer office. It was four o'clock. He told the girl that his work was finished for the day and instructed her to return to Mann's office.

"Mr. Mann may expect a call from me later," added Harry.

THE SHADOW'S agent made his way downtown. He reached the door of the Stellar Building, entered the lobby, and waited there. Office workers were beginning their departure. Half an hour passed while Harry idled. It was nearly five o'clock. A gleam of recognition flashed in Harry's eyes.

Coming across the lobby was the man of the pictures. Stocky, mustached, and wearing a derby hat, this was the very person whose course had been traced by the unerring reels. Harry sauntered after him. The man entered the subway. From then on, Harry Vincent continued the trail.

It was nearly six o'clock when Rutledge Mann received a telephone call in his office. Mann, the chubby-faced, languorous individual who specialized in investments, raised his eyebrows when he recognized the voice of Harry Vincent.

"Irwin Langhorne," came Harry's word.

Mann wrote down the name; the address followed. When the information was fully recorded, Mann concluded the call. He wrote a brief report; inserted it in an envelope; and donned his hat and coat.

Shortly afterward, Rutledge Mann visited the office of B. Jonas, in a secluded building on Twenty-third Street. The investment broker dropped his message into the letter slot beneath the grimy, cobwebbed window.

The Shadow and his agents had performed swift work to-day. A purpose had been detected behind the strange murders in Manhattan. Irwin Langhorne was revealed as the man whom death now threatened.

Eyes of The Shadow! To-day, the lenses of recording cameras had served as eyes, to gain unerring evidence that had led to the tracing of one man among a multitude!

CHAPTER XI. THE SHADOW WARNS

IRWIN LANGHORNE was seated in a little office on the second floor of his Manhattan home. His flat-topped desk, with its sheet of plate glass, reflected the glistening light of a heavy crystal chandelier that hung from the ceiling above his head.

This room had once been a portion of a reception hall. A partition had been erected, but otherwise Langhorne had left the room very much as before. It was here that the millionaire importer attended to those details of work that escaped his office routine.

A stack of mail was lying on the desk. Langhorne ran through the envelopes and stopped at one. He tapped a bell beside him. A few moments later, the door opened to admit a slender, sleek-faced man who gazed questioningly at the millionaire.

"Jarvis," demanded Mr. Langhorne gruffly, "when did this mail arrive?"

"At five o'clock, sir."

"Very well. You may wait outside. I shall call you later."

Langhorne laid the envelope aside. He opened a drawer of the desk and methodically brought forth two similar envelopes, both of which had been previously opened.

From one, Langhorne shook forth a mass of clippings. He went through them, one by one. Sinister items these, they referred to mysterious deaths upon Long Island. With them was a sheet of paper which bore a cryptic message:

DEATHLESS WILLING BEHALF YOURSELF LOTTO

Irwin Langhorne frowned and laid the clippings in one pile, the envelope on the other side of the desk, and the message in front of him. This material had arrived yesterday morning.

Langhorne shook the second envelope.

Out came new clippings. The millionaire examined them. Every one referred to deaths in Manhattan.

A perplexed look appeared upon Irwin Langhorne's brow. He had received these clippings this morning. He had mulled over their meaning all day at the office. For every one of these mysterious deaths had occurred along the route which Langhorne followed in the morning, with punctual regularity!

The note that accompanied the clippings was inscribed in the same cryptic capitals:

DOOMING ISLAM INTAKE YOURSELF WAKEFUL

Once again, Langhorne performed his methodical sorting. He put clippings, envelope, and message in their separate places, and picked up the new letter that had arrived this afternoon.

Langhorne felt positive that an explanation must lie in this new envelope.

HE was right.

The envelope contained a letter. It was written in plain words. Its opening remarks stated:

My previous notes were sent as tokens of my power. The first syllable of each word will tell the meaning.

Langhorne quickly referred to the messages on the table. With pencil, he crossed out the last syllable of each word. Meaningless jargons now made sense:

DEATH WILL BE YOUR LOT DEATH IS IN YOUR WAKE

Irwin Langhorne studied the facts. He realized instantly that he was confronted with tremendous danger. The first note had come before the Manhattan killings. It was a boast of what the murderer had done.

Directly afterward—after a space of only twenty-four hours—had come the boast of a new achievement: three deaths which concerned Irwin Langhorne.

The millionaire knew that he could easily have been made a victim. What was the purpose of these terrors? Money? The millionaire sensed that such would be the answer. He continued his reading of the

new note.

Death has struck. Death will strike again. Death threatens you. You can elude it by a simple method. Within ten days from this date, you must arrange for the delivery of the sum of one million dollars. Otherwise, you will die. Should you mention this matter to any one, should you attempt to inform the police, you will die.

Below the message appeared a fateful signature. Langhorne stared as he read the words:

THE DEATH GIVER

Irwin Langhorne was confronted by the same terror that had gripped Henry Bellew not many days before. But in this instance, the evidence of The Death Giver's power was more dynamic than in the past.

Bellew's death was clear in Langhorne's mind. The importer knew that the manufacturer had been murdered—obviously because he had not heeded The Death Giver's words of warning.

Hence Langhorne pondered long over the sinister threats that lay before him on the desk. At last, he replaced the items in their particular envelopes and put them away in the desk drawer. He continued to study the situation until the ringing of the telephone bell ended his reverie.

AN unfamiliar voice was on the wire. Langhorne heard the speaker introduce himself as Lamont Cranston. A few words of explanation followed. Mr. Cranston, a great traveler, had importing interests. He would like to call upon Irwin Langhorne.

"I shall certainly be pleased to meet you, Mr. Cranston," stated the importer, in a voice which was calm despite his nervousness. "I hardly think that I can do so this evening. I intend to dine alone—I shall be leaving here within a half hour. Could you call me at my office in the evening?"

"Certainly, Mr. Langhorne," came the quiet response over the wire.

When Langhorne hung up the telephone receiver, he noted that Jarvis was standing within the door. The sleek secretary smiled sheepishly.

"I may have heard the telephone, sir," he said. "I thought that you were ringing for me.

"It's all right, Jarvis," responded the millionaire; "I am going out to dinner right away. I shall return about eight thirty."

"Yes, sir."

Irwin Langhorne went through the rest of his correspondence. He became calm as he proceeded; and when he finally arose to leave the room, he showed not the slightest sign of nervousness.

Jarvis phoned for a taxi. The vehicle was awaiting Langhorne when he stepped to the street. The millionaire entered the cab and sank back in the cushions as he gave his destination as the Hotel Albion, an uptown hostelry that boasted an excellent cuisine.

The night was chilly, and the windows of the cab were closed. As the vehicle rode along, Langhorne became conscious of a peculiar aroma that was pervading the interior of the cab. Black spots seemed to float before his eyes. Then he heard a quiet voice, speaking in his own tones, through the narrow slit to the cab driver.

"Take me to the Bastion Hotel, instead of the Albion."

"Yes, sir."

The cab driver's response seemed far away. Irwin Langhorne wondered at his own inability to protest. The aroma was pungent now; it seemed to lull him into quietude. Wearily, the millionaire turned his head to face a pair of gleaming eyes that shone from beneath the brim of a dark slouch hat.

"Irwin Langhorne"—hidden lips pronounced the name in a whispered tone— "do not fear. Obey my bidding, and all will be well. I am here to meet the danger which confronts you."

Vaguely, the millionaire sensed that this hidden companion must be a friend. Some one must know The Death Giver's purpose. It was useless to resist; it was easy to obey. The exotic perfume which had charged the atmosphere was soothing. Langhorne nodded to show that he understood the stranger's words.

The cab drew up in front of the Bastion Hotel. At his companion's urging, the millionaire stepped to the street. The cab driver stared wonderingly at the cloaked person who placed the fare in his hands. In the dim light, the cabby could barely distinguish the outline of Langhorne's companion.

THE Bastion was a secluded hotel, with a sleepy clerk at the desk. Langhorne accompanied the cloaked figure that conducted him across the lobby. Together they ascended a flight of steps and entered a small room on the second floor.

A single light shone in the corner. Irwin Langhorne slumped in an easy-chair; then, his slight daze fading, he stared wonderingly at the tall shape that loomed before him.

"Why have you brought me here?" he demanded. "Who are you?"

A soft, whispered laugh was the response; then came cryptic words of explanation.

"My identity is that which I choose it to be," was the reply. "I have brought you here to protect you. I have brought you here to study you. As for my present personality—you can look to yourself for the answer!"

Irwin Langhorne stared at The Shadow. He could not understand the meaning of the final words, even though he saw a strange transformation taking place. The black-cloaked form seemed to be shrinking; the burning eyes were losing their amazing light. Then came the astounding revelation.

The Shadow's cloak dropped away. The black hat fell to the floor. Before his very eyes, Irwin Langhorne saw a man who was almost the exact image of himself!

The heavy cheeks were there; the close-clipped gray mustache was perfect in its detail. The suit which the standing man wore was similar to Langhorne's own attire. The man was speaking now, and his enunciation was very much like Langhorne's own.

"You are in danger," said The Shadow. "You have received messages from a man who calls himself The Death Giver."

"How do you know that?" queried Langhorne, in alarm.

"Do not fear," replied The Shadow, still affecting Langhorne's tone. "I am not in league with The Death Giver. My purpose is to thwart him."

"How?"

"By acting in your stead. By taking your place, I can meet the present danger. I shall act to-night. Where are the messages?"

"In my desk—in the little room I use as an office."

"Give me the essential details of your house," ordered The Shadow; "the plan of the rooms; the names of your servants. I am going there to-night. It was I who called you, Langhorne. When I learned that you were going out to dinner to-night, I arranged to meet you."

Methodically, Irwin Langhorne began to disclose the details which this strange being required. The millionaire became more and more impressed with the exactitude of The Shadow's disguise. When he had finished his talk, Langhorne rested back in his chair to watch the incredible person who stood before him.

"The Death Giver," declared The Shadow, in a now perfect replica of Langhorne's accustomed tones, "is a monster who plans and executes murder. Henry Bellew was struck dead because he defied The Death Giver. Terrible danger lurks in your home even now. The Death Giver does not wait!

"I am the one who can meet it. I do not fear The Death Giver. My only apprehensions are regarding your safety. No one can possibly know that you are here. Therefore, I rely upon you to inform no one. Wait patiently. I shall return. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," responded Langhorne.

The Shadow donned Langhorne's coat, picked up Langhorne's hat. The perfect image of the millionaire, as he had left his home, the disguised master went to the door. There, he faced the millionaire and delivered a last warning.

"Remember," came the carefully affected tones, "I intend to end the menace that now threatens you. Stay here in hiding. I shall return, to give you further word."

The door closed. Irwin Langhorne dropped back into his chair. The millionaire rubbed his eyes in amazed perplexity. It seemed to him that a miracle had happened here to-night. The threat of The Death Giver had been strange, indeed; compared to the amazing actions of The Shadow, it was nothing!

The master mind of darkness had set forth to challenge the master mind of death!

CHAPTER XII. THE STROKE OF DEATH

A TAXICAB rolled up to the home of Irwin Langhorne. Eyes were watching it from an upstairs window. They were the eyes of Jarvis, the secretary. The gazing man recognized the stocky figure of his millionaire employer. Slinking away, the peering man retired.

A heavy step sounded on the stairs. A few minutes later, a light shone in Irwin Langhorne's specially constructed office. Jarvis, prowling outside the door, listened intently for any sound from within.

A bell rang. Straightening up, Jarvis waited for half a minute, then opened the door and walked into the office. He saw Irwin Langhorne seated at the glass-surfaced desk. He noticed the millionaire's hat and overcoat lying on a chair. That was not unusual.

"Jarvis"—Langhorne's tone denoted worry—"I want to talk with you about a very important matter. I have been receiving letters from an unknown source. I should like you to read them, Jarvis."

"Very well, sir," responded the secretary.

Irwin Langhorne reached into the desk drawer and brought out three envelopes. He slipped the contents upon the desk, and motioned Jarvis to draw up a chair beside the desk. Langhorne's eyes showed an unfamiliar sparkle as they watched the secretary study the material.

The glistening light from the heavy chandelier above the millionaire's head revealed the expression upon the secretary's face. Perhaps Irwin Langhorne, himself, might not have noted anything unusual about Jarvis; but the eyes of The Shadow could detect facts that were not apparent to others.

Jarvis was considering the notes with feigned surprise. It was several minutes before he raised his head to face his employer. By that time, a dullness had come into the eyes of Irwin Langhorne.

"This is quite alarming, sir," asserted Jarvis.

"So I can testify," came Langhorne's dry reply. "The question is: How should I act?"

"It is a dangerous threat," continued Jarvis. "It involves your life. You have made a mistake to mention it to me. Indeed, Mr. Langhorne, you have already violated the terms of the message."

"Indeed I have," declared Langhorne seriously. "Yes, Jarvis, I should not have done so. What would you advise me to do now?"

"Obtain the million dollars, sir. Look at the facts. This man called The Death Giver has you in his power!"

"He has," returned Langhorne. "Nevertheless, I might have some way of escaping him."

"There could be none," protested Jarvis. "Take my advice, sir. Destroy those letters. Value your life above money. You can raise a million dollars, sir. You would not want to suffer the death that came to Henry Bellew. You may rely fully upon me, Mr. Langhorne. I will preserve silence."

"That is very considerate of you, Jarvis," came the millionaire's cold tones. "Nevertheless, I do not intend to follow your advice. To destroy those letters would be to destroy all evidence. No. I shall keep them."

With one hand, the man at the desk reached forth to grasp the letters and the clippings. With the other, he picked up the telephone. He eyed the instrument with care.

"Bellew's telephone was wired," came his sarcastic comment. "This one is not. Strange, isn't it, Jarvis, that Bellew died the moment that he went against The Death Giver's instructions? Yet I have defied them in speaking to you; and I still live. I wonder, Jarvis, what would happen if I called police headquarters?"

WITH this statement, the pretended Irwin Langhorne raised the receiver and clicked the hook. When the operator responded, he calmly called for police headquarters. His eyes, gazing steadily toward the telephone, did not appear to notice Jarvis. The secretary was rising as in alarm. Backing slowly toward the wall, several feet from the desk, he kept his eyes upon the form of the millionaire.

Langhorne's voice was speaking over the wire. With a quick turn, Jarvis placed his hand against the light switch in the corner. He clicked it quickly up and down—up and down—the motion twice repeated. Jarvis was swift; but he had not seen the sidelong gaze from the man at the desk.

Even as Jarvis began his movement toward the switch, Langhorne's form had risen from the chair. Straightening and lengthening, it cast a grotesque shadow as it sprang across the floor in the blinking light.

Hands clutched the secretary's shoulders just as Jarvis made the final click. The tall personage Irwin Langhorne no longer—flung the secretary away from the wall.

Jarvis, light of frame, plunged headlong toward the very chair where he had seen Irwin Langhorne sitting. The sudden shift came in a twinkling. Jarvis was hurtling toward the desk with meteor speed. With that final click of the light switch, an answering crackle had come from the ceiling above.

The room was plunged in darkness as the glittering chandelier broke from its fastenings and dropped straight downward, a mass of heavy bronze and crystal. The target of the huge object was Irwin Langhorne's chair. The occupant was no longer there. But as the massive chandelier crashed against chair and desk, a dying cry rent the gloom with horrible shrillness.

The shriek was from the lips of Jarvis. Cast aside by The Shadow's powerful arms, the secretary had sprawled head-foremost across the chair and the desk. His body was crushed beneath the Jagannath that he had loosed for the destruction of Irwin Langhorne!

Beneath the chandelier, Langhorne had been in the power of Jarvis, secret aid of The Death Giver. But The Shadow, in Langhorne's place, had sprung away from the fatal snare; and by the swiftness of his action had hurtled Jarvis to a deserved doom!

A light glimmered in the room. The Shadow's flashlight sparkled as its rays struck the widespread remnants of broken glass. The glare showed the upturned face of Jarvis, cut and bloodstained amid the mass of wreckage.

"Speak!" came The Shadow's sinister command. "Speak! Tell me of Thade, The Death Giver!"

The secretary's lips trembled. Jarvis, dying, could not form the words that came to his paralyzed brain. The miserable man gasped, and his head fell listless.

There were cries from other parts of the house. Scurrying servants were coming up the stairs to learn the cause of the tremendous crash. The Shadow's light went out. His hands swept Langhorne's coat and hat from the chair. With swift stride, the master of darkness hurried from the room.

WHEN the servants arrived, they found the crushed form of Jarvis beneath the shattered chandelier. They saw the telephone off the hook. They believed that the secretary must have been making a call.

The police would be arriving soon, although these servants did not know it. The call had gone through to headquarters. Detectives were already responding. When they arrived, they, like the servants, would consider the death either accidental or unsolvable.

For the evidence was gone. The hand of The Shadow had carried away the data and the messages which Thade had sent to Irwin Langhorne.

To-night, The Shadow had thwarted the scheme of the master killer; he had nullified the death that Thade had planned for Langhorne, should the millionaire disobey instructions.

A murderous wretch had been sent to a deserved death; yet, despite his victory, The Shadow had once more been foiled in his ceaseless effort to trace The Death Giver. The dying lips of Jarvis had failed to tell what they knew about the master killer.

Once again, an underling of Thade had perished while in The Shadow's grasp. The stroke of death had fallen; not upon emptiness, but upon the living form of a man whose testimony The Shadow had desired.

Chance had aided Thade to-night. Jarvis, unable to stop his plunge, had died. Yet even chance seemed

subservient to Thade. The chandelier in Irwin Langhorne's room had been placed there with design to kill. The special operation of the switch had done its work.

Not Irwin Langhorne nor The Shadow—neither of these had fallen before Thade's might. Nevertheless, the death-dealing mass had found a victim. Jarvis, in his failure, was of no further use to Thade. He had died, and could speak no damage.

The stroke of death had fallen. It had done its work as certainly as if it had been controlled by the hidden hand of The Death Giver himself!

CHAPTER XIII. CHANCE INTERVENES

WHEN The Shadow, playing the part of Irwin Langhorne, had conferred with Jarvis, he had struck close to the millionaire's actual type of action. For Langhorne was one who placed considerable reliance in those who had his confidence.

From the moment that his mysterious double left the Bastion Hotel, Irwin Langhorne began to ponder upon the situation which surrounded him; and in pondering, he decided that he must seek dependable advice.

Going over a mental list of persons whom he knew, Langhorne struck upon one name that impressed him. That was Paul Roderick. The two were friends; and during the past few months they had often discussed business matters when they had met at the Merrimac Club.

It did not occur to Langhorne that Roderick might be the man behind the menace which now threatened him. Not for one instant would the millionaire importer have associated Roderick with The Death Giver. One reason was the millionaire's constant reliance upon his friends; the other was the cleverness which Roderick had displayed in his meetings with Langhorne.

In compiling his list of prospective victims for the toils of Thade, The Death Giver, Paul Roderick had used considerable discretion. He knew that there were many millionaires whose wealth consisted chiefly of frozen assets. Therefore, in picking such names as Henry Bellew and Irwin Langhorne—the two who topped the list—Roderick had first assured himself that each would be capable of raising a million dollars in a hurry.

Roderick had named Bellew chiefly through hearsay and reports; he had chosen Langhorne because he had heard the man talk freely about his affairs. Importing, in which Langhorne dealt, was at its zenith; and Roderick had shrewdly made friends with the man whose life Thade was to threaten.

Actually, Langhorne had many friends who were closer than Roderick; but as he sat alone in the room at the Bastion Hotel, the millionaire recalled Roderick as a young man of unusually sound judgment. It was this recollection that made Langhorne forget his promise to The Shadow.

He felt a sense of unreality. He wanted some one with whom he could talk. Why should he mistrust every one on the say-so of an individual whose identity he did not know? Certainly it would be all right to call upon Roderick.

With this thought, Irwin Langhorne went to the telephone, and when the sleepy clerk responded, the millionaire gave the number of the Merrimac Club. The clerk dialed it to the central operator.

Langhorne learned that Roderick was at the club. A few minutes later, he was engaged in earnest conversation with his friend.

Langhorne's first words were the exacting of a promise that Roderick would not tell any one he had heard from the speaker. Roderick acquiesced. Langhorne then added that he was in hiding at the Bastion Hotel, and gave the room number. Roderick promised to come there right away.

LESS than a quarter hour later, there was a soft rap at Langhorne's door. The millionaire opened the portal and smiled in wan relief as he saw the face of Paul Roderick. He invited the clubman into the room.

"What's the trouble?" was Roderick's first question.

Briefly, and with another caution for secrecy, Irwin Langhorne related the events that had occurred. He described the letters that he had received from The Death Giver; he told of his strange meeting with the amazing being garbed in black, who had revealed himself as the image of Irwin Langhorne.

"This may sound fantastic, Roderick," asserted Langhorne, "but I assure you that it is all true—unless I have lost my mind -"

"It sounds incredible," returned Roderick. "The part about the letters is understandable; but this phantom that you say brought you here—are you sure you were not under some sort of delusion?"

"I am positive that I told the cab driver to take me to the Albion," persisted Langhorne. "I have never heard of this place—The Bastion—before. Some one else gave the order. Some one who later proved to be the image of myself!"

"And you say his purpose was to return to your home?"

"Yes. To thwart the mission of The Death Giver."

"Who is there now?"

"Several servants. Jarvis, my secretary, is in charge."

"Ah! You have confidence in Jarvis?"

"Yes."

"Well, suppose," suggested Roderick suavely, "that you call your home and talk to Jarvis. Be cautious about it; let him know that an impostor is at your house. This looks to me like a fiendish scheme directed against you."

"You are right, Roderick!" exclaimed Langhorne. "You are right! I shall do so at once!"

THE millionaire went to the telephone and called his home. He appeared puzzled when he heard the voice over the wire. He asked for Jarvis; when he heard the reply, his questions came in short, quick utterances.

Paul Roderick, puzzled, was watching Langhorne narrowly. The millionaire hung up the receiver and turned to his friend.

"Jarvis is dead!" he exclaimed. "Dead! The police are there! Death has struck!"

"What did they tell you?" queried Roderick.

"The chandelier in my office," blurted Langhorne. "It fell and crushed Jarvis—at my desk -"

"When?"

"Fifteen minutes ago. This is terrible, Roderick! Terrible! What does it mean?"

"It means," replied Roderick quietly, "that the man who went to your home is a murderer. His return is imminent. You must escape him, Langhorne. Come. My car is outside."

Irwin Langhorne arose. He saw Paul Roderick moving toward the door. He was about to follow when a new thought occurred to him. It came as a strange inspiration to his bewildered brain.

"One minute!" exclaimed Langhorne. "You are wrong, Roderick! What was Jarvis doing at my desk? That chandelier hangs directly above. Why was Jarvis prowling there?"

"The other man must have forced him," retorted Roderick. "The impostor—the man you must escape."

"The chandelier fell," declared Langhorne. "It fell on the very spot where I am usually placed. That was not meant for Jarvis! That death was designed for me!"

"It was the impostor, I tell you!" asserted Roderick, in an effort to bend Langhorne's will. "He is the one who killed Jarvis! He will kill you -"

"Kill me?" questioned Langhorne hoarsely. "He could have killed me here! He left me alone. I am not a prisoner. He is the man who saved me, Roderick!"

"Come!" ordered Roderick.

Langhorne refused to budge. He was staring at his companion. Looking straight into Roderick's eyes, the millionaire detected an evil gleam.

"Danger at my home," announced Langhorne, in a slow tone. "Danger from a secret enemy. Death if I should speak. Who would deal that death? Some one whom I trusted. Jarvis—he was to be my murderer. He was the man appointed by The Death Giver.

"My one friend was the man who brought me here. He told me to inform no one. Why? Because he knew that I was surrounded by enemies. He eliminated one when he met Jarvis. The traitor fell into the trap prepared for me. But what have I done?"

"I have summoned you, Roderick. You have advised me to ignore the advice of my one friend. You are trying to make me leave this place. I will not go! I will remain here! Jarvis is dead, and the other enemies will die! I shall tell all I know -"

The gleam in Roderick's eyes was wicked. Langhorne saw it in a new light. With a hoarse cry, the millionaire expressed the final thought that had flashed into his mind.

"You are a traitor also!" screamed Langhorne. "I see it now! Those I trusted most—the first to whom I would turn. You are with The Death Giver!"

RODERICK'S hand was in his coat pocket. Irwin Langhorne understood the action. With a wild shout, he leaped upon the clubman in an effort to beat down Roderick's arm. The hand of the younger man flashed into view, a revolver in its grasp.

Fiercely, Langhorne struggled against his adversary. For a few moments, the impetus of his attack served him well. Then Roderick broke away and leveled the revolver.

He fired once as Langhorne plunged upon him. The bullet found its mark. Langhorne, wounded, still

fought with fury.

Roderick wrested himself clear and staggered toward the door. He turned and fired another shot into Langhorne's sinking form. He would have delivered a third, but in the brief pause that followed the report, he detected footsteps in the hall.

Langhorne had crumpled on the floor. Believing him dead, Paul Roderick headed toward the stairs as two men came along the hall.

On the steps, Roderick pitched headlong into a man who was coming up. It was Harry Vincent. He had been sitting in the lobby, stationed there to watch should Irwin Langhorne attempt an unexpected departure. Paul Roderick fell upon The Shadow's agent. Harry Vincent went down as he warded off the swing of Roderick's descending revolver.

Other men were coming down the stairs. With long strides, Roderick crossed the lobby and gained the street. No one blocked his path. He gained his coupe before the pursuers had reached the door. He drove down the street away from the hotel.

The lobby was empty. Even the lethargic clerk had dashed to the street. No one saw the man with the derby hat who entered a few minutes later, at the side entrance.

The false Irwin Langhorne was returning. The sight of the empty lobby awoke a sudden brightness in his keen eyes.

Hurrying up the stairway, he overtook Harry Vincent weakly climbing to the top. Grasping Harry's arm, the returning man drew him into Langhorne's room. There, on the floor, lay the millionaire. He saw the face that bent above him. He recognized his own features.

"Rod"—the dying man's breath came in a long, hesitating gasp— "Rod— Roderick -"

The lips were slowing. They moved no more. Irwin Langhorne was at the point of death. There was a chance to revive him; but that was too late. Intruders would be here at any moment; only the chase to the street had drawn them away.

Langhorne's coat and hat tumbled to the chair. The man who had worn them stepped to the closet; when he emerged, a few seconds later, he was a man no longer. He was a phantom in black, a strange, weird being. He was The Shadow.

"Come."

With whispered word, The Shadow thrust Harry Vincent from the room and swung him to the stairs. Understanding, Harry dropped to the position where he had fallen when Roderick had struck. He was to play his part—that of a chance loungeur in the lobby, who had been struck down by the murderer. Others had seen him fall.

But Harry had sufficient time to whisper an important message. He had heard two telephone calls go out during the period that he had watched in the lobby.

"The numbers—at the desk—the clerk marked them -"

The Shadow had not waited for further information. Well did The Shadow know that Irwin Langhorne must have summoned some one to his hiding place. With a swift swish down the steps, The Shadow gained the lobby. His tall form vaulted the desk and disappeared beneath the counterlike barrier.

MEN were coming into the lobby. Those who had rushed in vain pursuit of Paul Roderick; the clerk and two policemen. All of them hurried up the stairs.

The moment that they were gone, the form of The Shadow reappeared, a spectral shape in the gloom behind the desk. A gloved hand plucked a sheet of paper from a memoranda pad. The Shadow passed the end of the desk, crossed the lobby with swift stride, and disappeared through the side door.

Several minutes afterward, three men came down the steps. One was the clerk; the second was a policeman. The third was Harry Vincent, still groggy. He was telling his story to the officer. The clerk supported it. He had seen Harry dash up the stairs after the shots were fired.

"O.K.," said the officer, as he aided Harry to a chair. "We'll need you if we arrest a suspect. Maybe you could recognize the man if you saw him again."

The clerk had gone behind the desk. He was scratching the back of his head.

"Guess I forgot to write those numbers down," he declared. "I usually mark them. Sometimes I forget. There were two calls came from that room to-night."

Harry Vincent suppressed a smile. He knew what had happened to those numbers. They were in the hands of The Shadow. Better that he should have them than the police!

SOME time afterward, a light clicked in The Shadow's sanctum. A white hand laid a sheet of paper upon the table. It was the hotel clerk's memorandum; the notation that bore the telephone numbers of the Merrimac Club and Irwin Langhorne's home.

The hand inscribed a name upon another sheet of paper. A single name, it stood out in vivid letters. The name was Roderick. It was all The Shadow needed. A man named Roderick, a member of the Merrimac Club. He was the murderer whom The Shadow sought to-night.

The light clicked out. A low laugh resounded in the Stygian gloom. Chance had intervened again to aid the cause of Thade, The Death Giver. Irwin Langhorne had died, through his own foolish disobedience of The Shadow.

That death was to be regretted. It would mean the beginning of a new campaign of slaughter. Another victim would be named, with useless deaths preceding the attack upon him.

But The Shadow's mesh had tightened. He had learned the identity of a man close to The Death Giver. Before new crime could be fostered, The Shadow might find the chance to strike!

Master of darkness versus master of death. The Shadow against Thade!

The climax of the terrible drama was drawing near!

CHAPTER XIV. FIENDS CONFER

PAUL RODERICK was standing by the lifted grillework that marked the hiding place of Thade's secret elevator shaft. The clubman had pressed the bell a few minutes before; now the wheezing of air marked the arrival of the descending car.

Roderick entered the elevator, closed the grille, then the doors and pressed the hidden switch. The car moved upward through the darkness, while Roderick mumbled vague imprecations. The moment that he reached his destination, Roderick hastily opened the door and stepped into The Death Giver's anteroom.

The black door with its skull and crossbones raised no terrors in Roderick's mind. The portal lifted, and Roderick went through. The panel across the room had been raised; Thade, The Death Giver, was quietly seated in his chair.

There was no formality in Roderick's approach. He was coming here to report a defeat—a strange chain of circumstances that had thwarted The Death Giver's plans. Thade's greenish, glaring face showed a scowl as the man's eyes noted Roderick's concern.

"What is the matter?" Thade's demanding voice sounded before Roderick could speak.

The clubman stopped short and began his story.

"Everything is the matter!" he declared. "Our plans against Langhorne have been ruined! Langhorne is dead; Jarvis is dead!"

"You erred in following my plans?" questioned Thade, in a harsh, irritating tone.

"Not one bit!" asserted Roderick. "On the contrary, all went according to instructions. Treffin did his part perfectly. Langhorne was unquestionably cowed; ready to consider terms. Jarvis was in readiness. But some one intervened."

"The police?"

"No. The Shadow!"

Roderick's tone was positive. Thade's response was a cackling chuckle that came in harsh defiance.

"The Shadow!" Thade's tone was filled with irony. "The Shadow! What can he do to harm me? I am greater than The Shadow! I am Thade, The Death Giver!"

"You say that Langhorne and Jarvis are dead. Very well. Thade has dealt death. That is success. I have struck. I, Thade, The Death Giver."

Roderick shook his head. Something in his manner compelled Thade to listen. The clubman began his story.

HE told how he had received the unexpected call from Irwin Langhorne; how he had found the millionaire in hiding. He told of the call to Langhorne's home; the report that Jarvis had been killed by the falling chandelier.

Then came Roderick's description of his battle with Langhorne; how he had been forced to slay the millionaire at the Bastion Hotel. Amid these details, Roderick inserted the few facts that he had gained concerning a mysterious personage in black who had gone as Irwin Langhorne to the millionaire's home.

"That person was The Shadow," declared Roderick. "I left Langhorne dying at the hotel; and I know positively that The Shadow was due to return. That is why I left my car in a garage and came directly here."

"Because you fear The Shadow?" queried Thade, in a cold tone.

"Because I know his ability," answered Roderick. "Given a single clew, The Shadow will follow it. He traced Vernon Quinley; he uncovered Barcomb. He linked Bellew's death with the killings on the trains at Felswood. Those trails ended.

"But now he has performed new wonders. He learned that we were after Langhorne—how, I cannot

understand. He would have saved Langhorne, but for the man's own folly.

"Jarvis is dead; Langhorne is dead; but I still live. I am the one whom The Shadow will trail. That is why I have given him no opportunity. He can never know that I am here. He will watch the Merrimac Club; he will try to locate me at my apartment. But I do not intend to return to either of those places."

Thade's face was glistening with an evil light. The Death Giver understood the truth of Roderick's words. The power of The Shadow did not nonplus the evil genius. Instead, it keyed Thade to a new challenge. The Death Giver had met an adversary worthy of his steel.

While Paul Roderick awaited Thade's reply, The Death Giver's greenish face became a fearful sight. Lips, eyes, and forehead—all writhed in furious malice. The Shadow had tampered with Thade's schemes of death. That would bring reprisal!

"The Shadow!" Thade was scornful. "He thinks that he can thwart me. He will be a menace—yes. But only so long as my schemes are small. The time has come to strike terror that will sweep the country!"

"I shall deliver a stroke that will frighten them all! The time has come for my master coup. After that, Roderick, you can roam at large. The terror spread by Thade will be everywhere. You can pluck one million; then another. Wealth will come like fruit from a flourishing tree. New York will be the scene of this tremendous crime. The crime will appall. It will baffle. It will be gigantic!"

Roderick was dumfounded. He waited for Thade to go on. The Death Giver was no madman. When he planned, his measures invariably were sound.

PAUL RODERICK stared at the fiend in the chair. He let his eyes roam to the stolid Nubians who obeyed Thade's wishes. He listened for the words that were to come.

"Assassination!" hissed Thade. "That is my plan now, Roderick! The opportunity is here. Two days from now."

"You mean on Broadway -"

Roderick blurted the words when The Death Giver paused. The response was a glittering of Thade's fanglike teeth. Roderick had guessed the mighty coup which Thade was now considering.

"Yes," declared The Death Giver. "This time there will be no warning. Thade shall strike! Death—unknown and unforeseen—shall descend upon those who do not expect it. Death that will strike terror everywhere. Mysterious death, its origin unknown.

"To-night, Roderick, you have killed for me. Hence I depute you to deliver the mighty death which I, Thade, alone can hurl. You, Roderick, and one other will be needed. But after the stroke is made, the other will not be required. His death will be advisable."

Roderick smiled grimly. He realized that his unique status as Thade's roving agent was a sure protection. Other minions of The Death Giver could be disposed of, rewarded only by quick death. But Paul Roderick would live, to share the monster's gains.

"There is only one man," stated Roderick, "who is now available to act— unless I find a new subordinate. That man is Harlan Treffin."

"He will do," asserted Thade.

"I shall go to see him," declared Roderick. "To-night -"

"Wait," ordered Thade. "It is best that you should stay here for this night. To-morrow you can communicate with the man who is to assist you. We must spend this night in discussing and arranging the great plan."

"Treffin calls my apartment at eight in the evening," nodded Roderick. "He waits an hour if he receives no reply. It is after nine o'clock now. The time for me to communicate with him will be to-morrow evening."

"But not from your apartment," advised Thade. "You will not go there again, Roderick. Let Treffin call and receive no reply. You, in turn, can call him before nine."

The Death Giver's words were wise. Roderick appreciated that fact. By staying here, Roderick was safe from all tracing by The Shadow. No other man knew the location of Thade's lofty abode.

"Come," ordered Thade.

With that word, The Death Giver stepped from his chair and walked toward the anteroom, his green robe drawing along the thickly carpeted floor. Paul Roderick followed to the elevator. He entered with The Death Giver.

Thade clapped his hands. Roderick saw one of the Nubians step to the chair and reach for a lever beside it. Thade closed the door of the elevator; the car moved upward a moment later, impelled by the Nubian's touch upon the distant switch.

THE elevator stopped on the floor above. Thade opened the doors and led Roderick into a narrow corridor, of which the elevator was an extension.

Roderick had been here before. The doors on the left, he knew, opened into Thade's laboratories. Those on the right gave entrance to the living quarters.

Thade opened one of the doors on the right; and Roderick followed his insidious chief into a small but exquisitely furnished living room. This chamber was papered with green. Its carpet was green, and the furniture was upholstered in the same color.

The ornaments—fantastic shapes of animals—were all of green jade.

Thade motioned to a chair. Roderick seated himself and gazed toward The Death Giver. He sensed that he was to hear something unusual in this conference.

"The time is here," declared Thade solemnly. "This is the time for mighty action. Until now, Roderick, I have told you but little of my plans. To-night, I shall reveal all.

"To me, life is useless and futile. I, Thade, spent years in poverty and misfortune. I became an old man young. I was not Thade then. I was called Lucius Olney—and people laughed at my stooped shoulders and wizened face.

"Let us consider Lucius Olney"—Thade was speaking in a strange, reflective voice—"for he was a poor, deluded fool. He studied poisons; he studied lethal gases. More than that, he designed amazing ways of delivering those deadly forces.

"Experiments with living animals. Then Lucius Olney turned to the preparation of self-destroying containers that would leave no evidence of their contents. He went to the government. He was ridiculed. His life work was ended. Lucius Olney prepared to die.

"Death? It was a simple matter for Lucius Olney. He had come to consider life as worthless. In his crude

laboratory, he had but to open a jet, or to inject a needle—that would be the end. It was then that Lucius Olney gave himself to death."

Thade paused, and a fiendish smile appeared upon his cracked lips that still glowed green in the dull light of this room.

"Death!" cackled the robed man. "Lucius Olney was as good as dead. He ceased to be. It was inspiration that stayed his hand—inspiration gained by the sight of those inventions all about him. This world had no place for Lucius Olney. But it did have place for a mighty being who could deliver death!

"Lucius Olney went from that laboratory. From then on, he was a new being. He had found a name. Thade. A name formed by the letters of 'death'! He was Thade, The Death Giver! Thade, whom you see before you now!

"With wealth gained from subtle schemes of death, I, Thade, took up this high abode. I continued the inventions of my former self—the deadly devices of Lucius Olney. Poison, concentrated in projectiles that shatter and leave no trace. That worked at Felswood. Lethal gas, compressed in tubes that curl and evaporate after they have been set. That worked in Manhattan.

"Other devices—they were but ingenious inventions that served as accessories. They have been a portion of Thade's schemes. Great wealth has been my goal, Roderick, as you know. I have planned to obtain it. After acquiring my millions, then, I could launch new and strange destruction upon an unsuspecting world.

"My campaign against Bellew was but an experiment at terrorism. I knew that it was in the balance; that it might bring a million dollars, or that it might require death as an example. With Langhorne, I planned more effectively. My purpose was interrupted by this person you call The Shadow.

"So now I shall burst forth with mighty death. I shall be content to linger no longer. Death that will make its mark! Death that will not soon be forgotten!

"You have seen my power, Roderick. That traitor below"—Thade leered as he referred to the man entombed beneath the floor of his den - "spent months in dying as I gauged the gas which entered his glass-covered coffin. I let him die last night. I needed him no longer. It will be easy to replace him if necessary.

"But you have seen nothing, Roderick. In your wildest imagination you could not vision my greatest scheme for the sure delivery of quick destruction. Yet it is simple to the utmost. So simple that its operation requires but the minimum of apparatus. I have retained this method, Roderick, for a startling scheme of death.

"I, Thade, shall make history by my scheme. Yet my brain and hand will remain hidden. You, Roderick, will aid me, with Harlan Treffin as your dupe. Come along with me. I shall show you all."

Thade led the way to his laboratory. There, in a green-walled room, among green-painted tables and benches, stacked with green bottles and flasks, the two men stood alone. With an evil leer upon his wizened face, Thade, the green-robed monster, cackled forth his newest scheme of death.

Paul Roderick listened in amazement. As the chortled words sounded in his ears, the murderer of Irwin Langhorne became convinced that no one—not even The Shadow—could cope with Thade, The Death Giver!

CHAPTER XV. THE NEXT NIGHT

A KEY clicked in the door of Paul Roderick's apartment. A tall figure blotted out the light from the hall. The door closed softly and the tiny rays of a small flashlight circled about the room. An unseen hand pressed the switch of a table lamp. A mild glow pervaded the corner of Paul Roderick's living room.

The fringe of light revealed the obscure shape of a tall being clad in black. The folds of a long cloak enveloped the stranger's shoulders. The brim of a black slouch hat obscured the features that lay below.

The Shadow had arrived.

Paul Roderick had been right in his fear that The Shadow would trace him. The dying gasp of Irwin Langhorne, the penciled slip upon the clerk's desk at the Bastion Hotel—these had been sufficient clues for The Shadow to track the murderer through investigation at the Merrimac Club.

Roderick's apartment had been the next step. Here, with scrutinizing eye, The Shadow saw that the bird had flown. A low laugh echoed softly through the room.

Paul Roderick's flight had been precipitous. It was obvious that he had not come back to his apartment. Roderick was the link to the strange monster who called himself Thade, The Death Giver. Roderick, here, could answer questions under pressure. Roderick, gone, was useless. But somewhere there might lie a clue that would enable The Shadow to continue his quest of the missing clubman.

The clock on Roderick's mantelpiece showed twenty minutes of eight when The Shadow began a silent but methodical search through the premises. Drawers slid open from tables almost of their own accord. Letters, stacks of papers, all were scrutinized by a practiced eye. At last the search ended.

The clock on the mantel struck eight sharp tinkles. Those sounds seemed to culminate The Shadow's effort. Not one trace of Thade, The Death Giver, had been discovered by the black-cloaked seeker.

There was a telephone table in the corner; there, The Shadow made his way. From a stack of telephone books, he raised the one marked Long Island. Held in a gloved hand, its thick back downward, the book wavered under delicate balance until its pages fluttered in two directions.

The book had opened at opposite pages which listed names beginning with the letter Q. The Shadow's laugh rippled softly. On one of those pages appeared the name of Vernon Quinley.

Paul Roderick was the man who had called Quinley, that night of the explosion in the bearded man's garage. Harry Vincent had mentioned a phone call in his report. The source of the call was evident now. Roderick had used this book on several occasions to look up Quinley's number, wisely refraining from making a notation of the Felswood number.

That was why the book, balanced by a careful, guiding hand, had opened to the spot where Roderick had so frequently referred.

What worked with one book might work with another. The Shadow's hand raised the book marked Manhattan, and held it in the same delicate balance. The pages fluttered doubtfully. The keen eyes watched them; and the hand did its part in the careful operation. The book finally wavered and opened at one particular place. The names on the facing pages were those which began with the letters TR.

UPON the margin of the right-hand page was a slight sign of a rumple in the paper. It denoted the spot where a thumb had pressed. The eyes of The Shadow ran down the column of names. They spied a significant fact.

A dozen names, together in the column, bore a distinct trace of a consultation. They were not marked by the imprint of a finger, but the printed ink was smudgy. Paul Roderick, in looking for a certain name, had

inadvertently run his finger over this column, leaving the tell-tale mark.

Carefully, The Shadow noted the lowermost of these names. The third from the bottom of the smudged group was that of Harlan Treffin. The stopping finger would have blurred the names below. This one name— Harlan Treffin—was the most likely choice. Still, the others could not be entirely eliminated.

Here, at least, was a probable man with whom Paul Roderick had had recent contact. To-night, The Shadow would be seeking facts that involved the man. The Shadow had reached an important point in his quest. An unexpected event was to speed his immediate action.

The telephone began to ring. The Shadow reached forward and gripped the instrument in his gloved hands. Lifting the receiver, he spoke in a careful tone. It was not the voice of Paul Roderick—which The Shadow had never heard—but over the telephone it carried a distant note that did not disturb the speaker at the other end.

"Hello—Roderick?"

"Yes."

"This is Treffin. Do you want to see me to-night?"

"Yes—alone."

"Certainly. I'm alone now, here at my home. Are you coming up?"

"Yes. Wait until I arrive."

"All right. I called you last night, but no answer. I waited until nine, expecting to hear from you. I'll be here."

The Shadow swept from the room the moment that he had concluded the call. There was no time to be lost. Harlan Treffin's last words had revealed the arrangement between him and Paul Roderick. If Treffin, calling, received no response, he was to wait until he heard from Roderick.

Therefore, Treffin might receive a call from Roderick any minute between now and nine. The Shadow was racing against time. He must reach Treffin's home before Roderick could call from some unknown spot.

A taxi driver on the street was surprised to find that he had a passenger. A voice spoke through the window between the front and the interior of the cab. It ordered the taximan to hurry to an address on an uptown street—the number of Harlan Treffin's home, which The Shadow had noted in the phone book.

The driver, hoping for a substantial tip, responded. He caught a traffic break on an avenue, and whirled along at breakneck speed. The taximeter clicked its changing fares with unusual rapidity. Fifteen minutes later, the cab squeaked to a stop at the required destination.

A five-dollar bill fluttered into the driver's hand. The passenger was gone.

The cabby stared along the street. Then, with a shrug of his shoulders, he pocketed his fee and drove away. For all he knew, a ghost had ridden with him to-night. Why should he worry, so long as ghosts paid with five-dollar bills and required no change?

THE taximan, in his wondering gaze, had passed over the door of Harlan Treffin's home. It was there that The Shadow had gone, his black cloak hiding his outline against the darkness of the door.

A gloved hand was working with a steel instrument. Hardly had the cab moved away before Treffin's front door opened and The Shadow entered the gloomy hall.

There was a light in a rear room. Gliding quickly along the floor, The Shadow neared the open door. His gloved hand came from beneath his cloak. It clutched a huge automatic. Sharp eyes peered through the door.

Harlan Treffin was seated at a table across the room. The man's head was on his hand. He was thinking deeply. The light came from brackets on the wall— not from the lamp on Treffin's table. Beside the lamp was a telephone.

A few moments later, Harlan Treffin glanced suddenly upward to find himself staring into the huge muzzle of the automatic. Beyond the gun he could see burning eyes that peered from beneath the brim of a broad slouch hat. A tall figure, clad in a black robe, had materialized itself in this room.

A startled cry died on Treffin's lips. He sensed the menace of The Shadow. This dread avenger of the night was a sight that would make a bold man quail. Harlan Treffin, unnerved, could not even stammer his fright.

"Harlan Treffin"—The Shadow's words were cold—"I have come to question you to-night. Speak when I command. Tell me what you know of Thade, The Death Giver."

A hunted look came into Treffin's gaze. He tried to turn his eyes away, but the blazing orbs of The Shadow terrified him. Mechanically, almost against his will, Treffin nodded his willingness to obey.

"You have seen Thade?" came The Shadow's query.

"Yes," gasped Treffin. "I have seen him."

"Where?"

"At his abode."

"What is its location?"

"I do not know."

Treffin's plaintive words indicated that the frightened man was telling the truth. The Shadow divined the reason for the man's ignorance and put it to the test.

"Who took you to see Thade?"

"Paul Roderick," blurted Treffin hopelessly. "I was drugged. I did not know—where I was going -"

The telephone began to ring. The Shadow's voice was quick in its low command.

"Answer it," he ordered. "If it is Roderick, simply say that you called him at eight, but received no response."

Treffin reached weakly for the telephone. His hand faltered as the ring continued.

"Obey!"

The Shadow's command had a steadying effect upon Harlan Treffin. The man nerved himself for the task of answering the telephone. Supercharged with fear, he seemed to regain his normal senses at The

Shadow's bidding. He picked up the telephone and spoke.

"Hello... Yes, this is Harlan Treffin... Ah, Roderick. Yes, I called you to-night... You weren't there..."

Treffin listened while Roderick spoke. A worried look came over the man's face. With his left hand, The Shadow plucked the desk telephone from Treffin's grasp. The man slumped back in his chair and listened in startled amazement as he heard The Shadow continue the talk in a voice that was a remarkable imitation of Treffin's own.

"What was that, Roderick?" queried The Shadow.

"I was asking if you had encountered anything unusual," came a steady voice over the wire. "No signs of any er—of any disturbance."

"None at all," responded The Shadow in Treffin's voice.

"I want to see you, then," returned Roderick. "Stay where you are. I will be there in less than an hour. There is new work to do, Treffin, and this time" —Roderick's voice became suave—"you will profit by it. You understand."

"Good," responded The Shadow quietly. "I will wait for you, Roderick."

DURING his conversation as Treffin's proxy, The Shadow had not, for one instant, taken his eyes from the man before him. The muzzle of the automatic was still covering Harlan Treffin.

Now, with the phone call ended, The Shadow became a new menace to the man beyond the table. It was evident that The Shadow intended to continue his quiz.

"What did Thade demand of you?" came the ominous whisper.

"Nothing—nothing -"

Treffin's attempt at falsehood brought a laugh from The Shadow's lips. The tall figure in black became more sinister than before, as words of denunciation told The Shadow's knowledge.

"You are lying, Harlan Treffin!" declared The Shadow. "You were deputed by Thade to place three deadly containers beneath telephone boxes. You caused the death of three innocent men!"

Wildly, Treffin threw his hands before his face as though to cut off thought of his terrible deeds. The Shadow's accusing words had shattered his morale. The Shadow knew!

"You are a murderer," continued The Shadow, "even though you obeyed the dictates of another. Speak! Tell me why you followed Thade's command!"

Harlan Treffin lowered his hands. He stared into the eyes of The Shadow; but his gaze was that of a madman. He could hear the stern words of his accuser, but in his brain, he was visualizing the horrible sight that had lain before his eyes in The Death Giver's lair.

"I can die!" gasped Treffin. "I can die! But not as I saw—not as the man I saw—the man that Thade was killing—by degrees -"

Treffin's hands were on the table. They were clawing, crawling, helpless in their frenzy. A convulsive spasm shook the man's frame. The recollection of the death that Thade could give caused Harlan Treffin to sprawl face foremost on the table. His arms spread apart. He was helpless.

At that moment, there was no thought of resistance in Treffin's delirious mind and The Shadow knew it. The black-clad questioner was waiting for Treffin to recover from his momentary fit of fear. After that, the grilling would succeed. The Shadow had expected this temporary collapse.

But Harlan Treffin, as he lay inert, became conscious of a vague sensation. His hand was touching against cold metal—the base of the lamp upon his table! Coupled with the fear of Thade, the sudden touch brought hope. Much as he feared The Death Giver, Treffin was convinced that there was no escape from Thade's toils.

His trembling fingers were upon the secret switch at the base of the lamp. That, Treffin recalled, was the protection of Thade against such an emergency as this! Roderick would be here soon. Would he find a traitor, or would he find that Treffin had followed Thade's instructions to the letter?

Up came Treffin's face, with a gleam of frenzied delight. His fingers steadied and plucked at the switch upon the lamp. This would be the doom of the strange interrogator who was attempting to foil Thade!

IN an instant, The Shadow saw all. Treffin's quick recovery made it impossible for him to stop the man's design. It was too late to stay those pressing fingers. Backward swept The Shadow, away from the table and toward the floor, to escape this new device of Thade.

At Treffin's touch, the center of the lamp spread open, and a cloud of greenish vapor hissed forth in sudden spray. It swept across the center of the table, covering a radius of half a dozen feet. Swirling, spreading, the gas became as nothingness, dwindling into the atmosphere of the room.

The Shadow had dropped away from the poison spray; but Harlan Treffin was within its range. Devised to kill all within arm's length of the lamp, the swirl of deadly gas performed its mission. As proof of its lethal power, Harlan Treffin lay dying across the table. A last short gasp; Harlan Treffin was dead.

Thade, The Death Giver, had struck. Barcomb—Quinley—Jarvis— now Treffin. These minions of Thade had been sacrificed; and each, by reliance upon The Death Giver, had aided the monster's plans. Again, The Shadow had been balked by death.

This time, The Shadow laughed. His sinister mockery floated through the room and faded as mysteriously as had Thade's greenish gas. Harlan Treffin, a murderer, had died. Before his demise, he had admitted his own ignorance of The Death Giver's whereabouts.

Useless to Thade now, Treffin would be of use to The Shadow! This death was one which Thade might soon regret! For Harlan Treffin had served as The Shadow's link to Paul Roderick. It was Roderick who acted as Thade's lieutenant, and he was on his way to visit Treffin!

By subterfuge and not by threat, The Shadow could now act to thwart the schemes of Thade, The Death Giver. The whispered laugh prophesied swift action. Before its wavering echoes had died away, The Shadow was at work.

Leaning above the upturned face of Thade's latest victim, The Shadow studied every phase of Treffin's countenance. The black gloves peeled away from long white hands. The girasol glimmered as careful fingers pushed back the slouch hat and pressed at the face beneath.

Fifteen minutes later, a man was seated at the table. The sides of the death-dealing lamp were closed. Harlan Treffin's body was gone. The locked door of a large closet gave no token of the fact that the dead man had been hidden there by The Shadow.

For the figure at the table was one that seemed to belong there. In every feature, the living man was

Harlan Treffin! As with Langhorne, so with Treffin. The Shadow had taken the place of the dead as he had taken the place of the living.

Paul Roderick would not be disappointed to-night. He would find Harlan Treffin awaiting him, ready to hear his commands, and heed his bidding.

The Shadow, master of disguise, was prepared!

CHAPTER XVI. ABOVE BROADWAY

AT ten o'clock the next morning, Paul Roderick was eating breakfast in the coffee room of an uptown hotel. The dapper clubman was seated beside a window, and as his eyes noted the somber gloom of the cloudy day, a smile flitted upon his lips.

It was an excellent day in Roderick's opinion. Not that the weather would interfere entirely with the plans formulated by Thade; but there were certain reasons why a dull morning would be better than either a bright one or a rainy one.

Roderick read a newspaper as he ate. The front page was spread with photographs. Murder was not the theme. The big item in to-day's news was the welcoming celebration to four men who had just made history in aviation—a quartet of intrepid fliers headed by Commander Allan Hughes, of the United States navy.

The aviators were arriving in New York after a successful round-the-world flight. The parade in their honor was to be one of the greatest welcomes ever. Not only the fliers would ride in review, three governors of large States would also be there, accompanying the mayor of New York. The secretary of the navy was also scheduled to appear, with four well-known admirals.

Last night, Roderick had stayed at his hotel. To-day, he had an important duty at the hour of noon. Roderick smiled as he appreciated the simplicity of the plans which Thade, The Death Giver, had prepared.

The newspapers had no news of crime to go with their photographs to-day. To-morrow, however, would be different. Sensationalism would rule then!

Paul Roderick had used the greatest precaution since his departure from Thade's abode, yesterday afternoon. Such precaution had been included in the plans. A conference with Harlan Treffin—the giving of simple instructions and definite arrangements—that left Roderick free until the proper time.

The only danger lay in the possibility of Treffin encountering trouble during the preliminary preparation. Roderick could see no chance of any difficulties, however. Treffin, himself, did not know what was to happen! Therein lay the merit of Thade's master stroke. Until Roderick appeared to keep his appointment at a stated place, Treffin would be entirely in the dark.

Finishing his breakfast, Roderick sauntered from the hotel and headed toward Broadway. Already, crowds were gathering in expectation of the coming event. Airplanes were circling over the city. Even the blase New Yorkers were staring upward to view the massive dirigible Akron as its huge motors purred above Manhattan.

RODERICK was still smiling when he entered the subway at Times Square. Much could happen between the time of the parade's departure from the Battery and its arrival on upper Broadway.

To millions of people who made up the mass of New York's population, the parade was to be a gala

event. To one—Paul Roderick - it would be an opportunity to display the craft of Thade, The Death Giver.

When Roderick emerged from the subway on lower Broadway, he found the roped-off sidewalks blocked with surging crowds, in readiness for the first sight of the expected parade. There was nearly an hour to wait. Roderick still wore his sophisticated smile.

He entered an office building and took the elevator to the tenth floor. He followed a corridor to a room that bore the number 1028. He rapped three times. A cautious hand opened the door. Roderick stepped in, closed the door behind him; then turned to see the face of Harlan Treffin.

"All ready?" questioned Roderick.

"Everything is here," came Treffin's reply. "I picked up the package just as you told me. They are in the little side office."

"Good," affirmed Roderick.

He led the way to the office which Treffin had indicated. It adjoined the room which Roderick had just entered.

Several packages lay on the floor, unopened. That was in accordance with Roderick's instructions. He had told Treffin to pick up the packages at parcel checking stands, and to bring them here intact.

Roderick glanced from the window. The curve of Broadway showed the canyon walls of lighted windows in the sides of teeming skyscrapers. The high buildings cut off the light and made the street quite gloomy. This office, without any lights, was inconspicuous. What might happen here, only Roderick and his companion could know.

At Roderick's order, Treffin began to open the packages. The man was very subdued. This pleased Roderick. Treffin had performed one duty assigned him by Thade; to-day's service was even easier, for Treffin had no inkling of its purpose. Under Roderick's supervision, he was a willing worker.

Roderick recalled the night before. He had visited Treffin then, and had given the man his instructions. Treffin was proving useful; later, he would be useless. Roderick had hinted of a reward. There was only one reward from Thade. That was death. Roderick smiled.

The contents of the opened packages proved to be a queer assortment of articles. One item appeared to be a fire extinguisher. Several short sections of pipe were there in addition. A piece of hose, two bottles of a greenish color—these were the final articles in the collection.

Roderick fitted the pieces of pipe together until they made a long section. Another pipe went into the center of the lengthy one, extending perpendicularly. Roderick raised the window a trifle and set the long pipe between the sash and the sill. The pressure of the window against the projecting piece prevented the pipe from falling.

Peering through the pane, Roderick noted that a series of small holes were outward along the edge of the pipe that ran upon the sill. That was in accordance with instructions from Thade.

The clubman opened one of the bottles. Tilting it carefully, he poured a gluey liquid into the projecting section of the pipe. To do this, he raised the window a trifle; when the operation was finished, he pressed the sash tight again.

DURING this procedure, Roderick had kept low by the window. The reason for the gloomy day being

to his liking was now apparent. His actions could not be observed from windows on the other side of Broadway.

This room, in the dull light of the day, was nothing more than a mass of semiblackness. The pipe beneath the window sash was dull in color, and would never be noticed. Ten stories above the street, this window was but one of hundreds in the same building.

With the gluey substance in the piping, Roderick attached the rubber hose to the projecting tube of metal. He carried the end of the hose to the fire extinguisher.

This apparatus now proved to be a camouflaged object; for Roderick unscrewed the end and revealed a small tank within. At the bottom of the tank were tiny, sievelike holes, blocked by metal beneath. Roderick carefully uncorked the second bottle. He motioned Treffin back while he let the liquid trickle into the tank. Seizing the cap, Roderick replaced it on the fake extinguisher.

Roderick then corked the bottle to save the small amount of liquid that remained. With these preparations ended, he turned to speak to Treffin.

"You have been here since nine o'clock?" questioned Roderick.

Treffin nodded.

"That's good," asserted Roderick. "I wanted you to be here early. We're ready for business now, Treffin. I'm going to make observations from the next window—in the other office. When I give you the signal, turn the valve. This looks like a fire extinguisher, but it isn't. Actually, it is a compressed-air tank."

"You put liquid into it," objected Treffin.

"That's all right," explained Roderick. "I'm attending to that right now. The wheel"—Roderick turned it as he spoke—"opens the bottom of the container. The liquid will be absorbed by the compressed air."

A muffled bubbling came from within the compressed-air tank. Roderick paid no attention to the manifestation. He continued to speak to Treffin.

"As soon as we are through," he said, "I want you to detach the air tank and hang it on the wall of this room. It will pass as an empty fire extinguisher. We will have no further use for it. Bring in the pipes and detach them. Stow them in the top shelf of the closet in this room.

"I've had this office available for a long while, Treffin. I didn't know what it was for any more than you did. In fact, you didn't even know about it until to-day. But we'll have some results here mighty quick. Stand by until you get my first order."

Roderick picked up the last bottle that he had used. He shook it gently and smiled as he heard the liquid gurgle within. He gathered up the papers that had been used to wrap the packages, and carried them, with the bottle, into the other office. Treffin sat down in a chair to await his return.

Opening the window, Roderick placed the bottle on a table; then peered down Broadway. He did not mind being seen here. He was but one of many other expectant observers.

The gray sky overhead, the drab walls of high buildings—all seemed drab and colorless, until Roderick detected a distant flurry that looked like a miniature snowstorm. Then came the blare of a brass band. The parade was coming up Broadway!

THE flurry was increasing. The towering walls began to gorge new showers of paper. Blue uniforms of

the band players were in view, a few blocks away. Behind them came a line of automobiles.

Stepping back from the window, Roderick tore the paper wrappings into strips. He dropped these fragments on the table, beside the green bottle. He hurried to the door of the other office. He saw Harlan Treffin still lounging in the chair.

"Ready!" ordered Roderick.

Treffin went to the compressed-air tank. He turned the valve. A dull hissing commenced. Waving Treffin to his chair, Roderick gave a last admonition:

"Stand by. Be sure the attachments do not come loose. Keep back from the window until I give you the word to disconnect."

Roderick saw Treffin nod his understanding. The clubman hurried to the other room to make his observation. When he was gone, Harlan Treffin reached beneath a table and brought forth a package that Roderick had not seen.

The solemn man seemed more interested in that package than in what was going on outside the window. He paid no attention to the compressed-air tank, for its hissing still continued. A mass of blackness showed within the package that Treffin's hands were opening.

In the other office, Paul Roderick was waiting at the window. His face was gleaming with an evil smile. The parade was still a few blocks away. Only the beginning of paper flurries were evident at this part of Broadway.

The plans of Thade, The Death Giver, had been followed. Paul Roderick was here to see their fiendish culmination! Ten stories above Broadway, death was in the making!

Paul Roderick laughed. This was the master scheme of all—and The Shadow could not thwart it!

CHAPTER XVII. BUBBLES OF DEATH

THE booming music of the brass band was blaring upward. The parade was scarcely more than a block away. The roaring welcome down the street was drowning out the march that the band was playing.

The cries of thousands were rolling along the street, half a block in advance of the parade. Paul Roderick was witnessing that great spectacle which only Manhattan can produce—a welcome from the hearts of the mighty towers which line lower Broadway.

As if by signal, hundreds of windows began to disgorge their shower of confetti and torn paper. This had been started farther down Broadway, now it was universal at the point where Roderick's building was located. Long ribbons of ticker tape shot toward the street, forming streaks more than a hundred feet in length.

As the air became filled with a deluge of fluttering paper, Paul Roderick leaned from the window to note the increasing storm. All that the eye could discern now was the man-made flurry that was gaining the proportions of a blizzard.

But Roderick was watching another spot—the window outside of the next office. As if in elation, Roderick hurled forth the strips of paper that had formed the packages. These meant nothing; they were merely his pretended contribution to the celebration.

For Roderick saw that The Death Giver's scheme of doom was working!

Along the pipe beneath the adjoining window, bubbles were forming at every air hole. Rapidly expanding until it reached the size of a large bowling ball, each bubble detached itself and floated outward and downward, squarely toward the street below!

The bubbles which Roderick watched were not the first. Others had preceded them, and were already part way down to Broadway. Their steady, constant descent was just what Roderick had expected. The first of the bubbles would strike just after the blaring band had passed!

Bubbles of death!

Those were the spheres that Paul Roderick watched in gloating admiration. The greatest of the dread inventions that lay within the master brain of Thade, The Death Giver!

Paul Roderick knew the secret of those bubbles. The liquid that he had poured into the tank was Thade's most deadly poison. Combining with the compressed air, it made a heavy vapor that formed itself into a powerful lethal gas.

The escaping vapor was blocked by the gluey substance that Roderick had poured into the pipe. The pressure of the gas forced that liquid outward, it formed strong bubbles, and when the size had increased, these spheres detached themselves like soap bubbles from a pipe.

Only an impact would cause the gluey bubbles to burst. The weight of the gas—the consistency of the gluey substance—these combined to carry the bubbles steadily downward, untroubled by chance breezes and undisturbed by the fluttering flakes of paper.

AMID the artificial snowstorm, no human eye could possibly detect the presence of those bubbles. The first of the deadly missiles were nearly to the street. Following them were dozens more. The forerunners were barely above the heads of the band players; there was a chance that they might strike before the last had passed.

That would not matter. The greater number of the airy plummets would reach the goal which Thade had planned. Directly behind the band were the three cars in which rode the celebrities of the day!

Open cars, without tops. Through the whirling eddies of paper, Roderick could see the mayor and the governors in the first machine. Then came the fliers, standing and waving to the crowds. After that the car with the secretary of the navy and the admiral!

Second by second, the slow procession was nearing the spot where the bubbles would strike. Even in that moment of elation, Paul Roderick was extremely calm. His quick eye noted that no more bubbles were forming along the pipe. The pressure of the gas had ended. The last of the fragile bombs had gone on its way.

Springing toward the door of the inner room, Roderick called the final order to Treffin. His command was to dismantle the apparatus. He heard Treffin's response. He hastened back to the window. A quick glance below. Roderick saw the first of the bubbles strike the street a dozen feet behind the last member of the band.

That was well. The space between the band and the first car had widened to nearly fifty feet. Another bubble struck. A few seconds more, and the falling bubbles would spell death. By dozens they would drift upon their objectives.

In that interim, Roderick had one more mission. That concerned his final discussion with Harlan Treffin after this was over. From his pocket, Roderick was drawing an oddly shaped pistol. It looked more like

a water pistol than a revolver; its muzzle was fitted with a spray.

Opening the top of this strange gun, Roderick uncorked the green bottle on the table and poured the last remnants of the poison fluid into the peculiar weapon. He replaced the bottle on the table, closed the pistol, and put it with the bottle. That gun would prove as deadly as the falling bubbles, when its contents were discharged.

But Roderick's thoughts were back to the scene below. He eyed the spectacle and waited for results.

The first car was already in the bubble zone. The mayor and the governors, with their shiny silk hats, were waving to the crowds, moderately accepting a portion of the acclaim. As Roderick stared, a bubble landed squarely in their midst and burst, unnoticed.

To Roderick's amazement the men kept on bowing. The deadly missile had done no harm. A second bubble landed; like the first, its result was nothing.

An oath came from Roderick's lips. By all rights, four men should be collapsing in that car—four dignitaries struck down by an unseen hand. The first of the bubbles must somehow have become impotent. The others would do their work.

They were landing now. Squarely in the second car, among the standing aviators. One bubble burst above Commander Hughes's head. The aviator brushed away the moisture from his forehead. Two more struck in quick succession; then a fourth. The next bubble plopped in the street behind the car.

The parade was keeping on! Not one of the four men had wavered. What could be the matter? Never before had Thade's lethal inventions failed to function!

The final car was in the center of dropping bubbles. One struck beside the chauffeur. A second burst near the secretary of the navy. Three more landed on the car and broke as harmlessly as spheres of soapy water from a child's clay bubble pipe.

A fiendish cry of rage burst from Roderick's lips. The last of the three cars were by. The rest of the bubbles were floating down upon a company of khaki-clad soldiers. What did it matter if any were potent now?

By all the laws of certainty, a dozen men of prominence should be dying now. Those cars of bowing celebrities should have been transformed to vans of victims. What was the answer?

Paul Roderick had followed instructions to the letter. All had gone in accordance with prearranged plans. Yet some unknown power had intervened to thwart the designs of Thade, the supermind of destruction.

Bursting bubbles! Bubbles designed to kill; yet which had broken harmlessly. The scheme of Thade, The Death Giver, was like those bubbles. It, too, had vanished, forgotten amid the gala welcome of Manhattan!

CHAPTER XVIII. THE SHADOW SPEAKS

STANDING beside the open window, Paul Roderick was a fiend gone wild. The trusted minion of Thade, he had long since imbibed The Death Giver's love for ruthless slaughter. The disappointment of a dozen men undoomed awoke a terrible frenzy in the murderer's brain.

The blare of another band, coming up Broadway behind the soldiers, filled Roderick with unrestrained anger. It was several minutes before he could regain his control. Then came sobering thoughts. What could he report to Thade?

Some one must be blamed. It could not be Thade. Well did Roderick know that The Death Giver was unerring in his calculations. Slowly, Roderick realized that he himself could not have been responsible for the failure. He had followed Thade's instructions with exactitude.

Dimly, a strange realization came over Paul Roderick. It must have been the human element that had destroyed the plan of death. Eliminating himself and Thade, there was only one other participant in the scheme. That one was Harlan Treffin.

What could Treffin have done to spoil these plans? The man had played a purely minor part as Roderick's assistant. He was in the other room, dismantling the apparatus, not even realizing what Thade and Roderick had sought to accomplish.

Yet Treffin must be the culprit! The process of elimination pointed directly to him. Treffin would pay the price. He, at least, would die.

With a shout of ire, Roderick seized the vapor pistol from the table and turned toward the door of the other office.

He stopped short as he saw a figure standing in the door. It was not the form of Harlan Treffin. It was a strange shape whose identity Roderick knew upon the instant. A being clad entirely in black, his shoulders bearing up a flowing cloak, his brilliant eyes peering like live coals from beneath the brim of a black slouch hat. Harlan Treffin was gone; in his place stood The Shadow!

The black avenger bore no weapon. His hands, ungloved, were crossed before his body, the only spots of white amid that symphony in black. Upon a finger of the left hand shone a strange gem, that sparkled with the same weird light that gleamed from the eyes of The Shadow!

PAUL RODERICK stood stock-still. For the first time in his life, the man experienced a terrible fear. To Roderick, Thade, The Death Giver, had been an insidious being, but not a menace. He had never felt the terrible dread which others had sensed when they had come to Thade's abode. But now Roderick knew a terror that was as great as any which had gripped an unwilling minion of Thade. He felt the power of The Shadow, and he quailed before those burning eyes!

A sinister laugh reached Roderick's ears. The laugh of The Shadow! As terrifying as the black-clad being himself! The creepy tones of that mockery were a cry of exultation. They crystallized The Shadow's triumph over Thade, The Death Giver. That was the laugh of the stern master who had thwarted the hand of doom!

To Paul Roderick, The Shadow's sardonic mirth was a call to vengeance. In one brief instant, the murderer became imbued with a mad purpose. He would kill The Shadow. He would turn that gibing laugh into a gasp of death.

Suiting the thought with action, Roderick sprang forward and leveled his vapor gun squarely toward the eyes of The Shadow.

Roderick's finger pressed the trigger. There was a sudden hiss as the spray shot from the muzzle. That discharge was designed to bring instant death, but it did not disturb The Shadow. A new taunt of laughter came from the hidden lips. The right hand, suddenly pressed beneath the black cloak, emerged to point an automatic between Paul Roderick's eyes.

With a gasp, the thwarted murderer staggered back. His hands went above his head. His body slumped against the wall. The discharged vapor pistol dropped to the floor.

Paul Roderick was in the power of The Shadow.

"Paul Roderick," The Shadow's sinister whisper echoed through the room, "you have fallen into my snare! The scheme of Thade, The Death Giver, has failed. You are helpless!"

"Treffin," gasped Roderick involuntarily. "Where is Treffin?"

"Harlan Treffin is dead," declared The Shadow. "It was I—not Treffin—who conferred with you last night. You called upon The Shadow to aid you in your scheme of ruthless death!"

The Shadow's laugh brought new terror to Roderick.

"Those packages," came The Shadow's sardonic tone, "were opened long before you arrived at this place today. The poison liquid alone was removed. Its purpose was too evident. A harmless fluid replaced it. The bubbles burst—but death did not follow."

The explanation had been given. Roderick's lips snarled helplessly. The poison fluid had not been necessary to the formation of the bubbles—only to their effectiveness. Instead of deadly gas, a useless vapor had filled the fragile globules. That had been The Shadow's doing!

Even Roderick's spray pistol had been useless. It had been loaded with the remnants of the harmless compound.

The Shadow was approaching Roderick. The gleaming eyes were orbs of doom, more virulent than any killing force that Thade had ever loosed.

The Shadow had trapped The Death Giver's lieutenant. He had captured the one man who was not a dupe; the only minion of Thade who did not possess a device that would bring self-destruction.

Barcomb, Quinley, Jarvis, and Treffin had died before The Shadow could fully unseal their lips. But now the black avenger held full sway over one whose lips could speak and tell all!

THE muzzle of the automatic seemed tunnellike before Roderick's failing gaze. In the gloom of this room, The Shadow loomed as a sinister menace. Harsh, sneering words resounded in Roderick's ears.

"Thade deals cruel death," was The Shadow's statement. "He calls himself The Death Giver. Perhaps the ways of Thade are the ways of The Shadow also!"

Roderick quailed. Until now, he had ridiculed those weaklings who had fainted at the sight of the dying man beneath the floor of Thade's abode. But the words of The Shadow indicated that The Death Giver was not the only one who could deliver terror.

Roderick was in a hopeless dilemma. He feared the wrath of Thade, should he manage to escape. He was facing the menace of The Shadow at this moment.

Like others, he showed his cowardice. The blazing eyes, the threatening voice—these were the factors that compelled him to speak. Like others, he found himself betraying Thade. Well did Roderick know that Thade was only human; that The Death Giver could not save him now.

As his confession poured from his gasping lips, Roderick suddenly experienced mingled sensations. He realized that he was placing himself entirely at the mercy of The Shadow; that he was confessing his crimes to a being who waged relentless war upon all hordes of evil.

The first wave of cowardice was waning; but Roderick had already told too much. He was answering

The Shadow's questions; he was telling the truth about Thade. What would be his reward?

It suddenly occurred to Roderick that he was faced by one who gave no reward to men of crime!

While his lips still spoke, pouring their confession in involuntary tones, a surge of hatred swept through Roderick's brain. His existence seemed mechanical. His mouth spoke, his mind schemed; his body slumped; and his hands slipped to his sides.

His eyes were staring directly into The Shadow's. That gaze was fixed. Roderick saw nothing but the eyes before him—eyes that glistened from the darkness beneath the brim of the slouch hat. The rising surge of evil became impelling.

With a wild scream, Paul Roderick leaped forward. His left hand warded away the automatic. His right grappled for The Shadow's hidden throat.

The sudden impetus of the attack gave it momentary success; Roderick felt a strange elation as he fought. Within these phantom robes was a human frame. He would battle The Shadow to the death!

Powerful as a frenzied bull, Roderick seized The Shadow and fell grappling to the floor. His left hand clutched the metal of the automatic. It struggled to free the weapon from The Shadow's grasp.

Rolling on the floor, Roderick was entangled in The Shadow's cloak. He gripped the gun which was pressing close against him. He could feel its shape, and he jammed his finger to the trigger.

A muffled report sounded beneath the folds of The Shadow's cloak. A dying gasp was uttered as a foiled fighter sank to the floor. The fierce struggle was ended by a shot from the automatic.

Silence pervaded the room wherein Paul Roderick had made his bold attempt to foil The Shadow.

CHAPTER XIX. THE LAST CHANCE

WHILE governors, admirals, and aviators were being entertained by New York's mayor and other city officials, one municipal office holder was still at his desk. Police Commissioner Ralph Weston had sturdily managed to excuse himself from participation in the celebration.

To Weston, this gloomy day brought one real ray of comfort. The newspapers were filled with headlines heralding the welcome parade. They had no heavy space for murders and criticism of New York's police.

In his present mood, the commissioner had need of a foil. Hence, when Joe Cardona was announced, he ordered that the detective be shown in immediately.

When Cardona entered the office, he needed no statement to learn that he was to be on the carpet. Weston's imperious wave toward a chair was sufficient. Cardona sat down and waited for the storm to break.

"Cardona"—Weston's tone was very brusque—"I said some encouraging things to you the other day. Since then, I have decided that I was wrong. I should have dealt in criticism alone."

"You did criticize me," returned Cardona. "You told me that I was likely to be the goat."

"So I did," nodded Weston. "Well, Cardona, I'm glad you remembered that part of it. It will prepare you for what is to come."

"What's that, commissioner?"

"Your resignation from the force."

Cardona sat stolidly, staring hard at the police commissioner. These words had had a stunning effect upon the star detective. He was trying not to show it.

"When do you want it, commissioner?" queried Joe.

There was no break in Cardona's voice; but Weston sensed the strain behind it, and looked out of the window. He spoke in a stern, but kindly tone.

"To-morrow, Cardona," he replied. "To-morrow—unless you obtain some vital facts between now and then. There is no personal animosity in my demand, Cardona. On the contrary, I have the highest regard for your honesty and practical ability.

"But you are beyond your depth at present. You have stated—so openly that the newspapers have taken up the cry—that New York is being terrorized by a master killer. You have been unable to find a single trace of him.

"You admitted that the deaths of Irwin Langhorne and his secretary might be the work of this supercrook. Today, the newspapers have temporarily dropped their running sensation. But to-morrow"—Weston paused to shake his head—"there may be new deaths. If not to-morrow, perhaps the day after.

"For the good of the force, Cardona, these cases must be handled by some other man. To relieve you would bring criticism to all of us. But if you resign -"

"I'll be the goat," completed Cardona.

The commissioner nodded.

"All right," declared Cardona, rising wearily. "I'll be the goat, commissioner. I deserve all that's coming to me. I only hope that the next man gets by. I'll have the resignation here at nine in the morning."

"Noon will do," responded Weston.

"Noon then," said Cardona. "I guess you're right, commissioner. There's a big brain behind these killings, and there's no telling what will happen next. I've been on pins and needles all day—just a hunch!"

"Of what?"

"A hunch that this big killer might be out to get somebody in the welcome parade."

COMMISSIONER WESTON turned pale. The thought was a terrifying one, yet it was not past belief. A death dealer who could strike as boldly as this one had, would stop at nothing.

Cardona did not wait for the commissioner's reaction. He turned to leave the office. Weston stopped him and held out his hand. Cardona grasped it sturdily; then left.

The detective was in a daze when he reached his own office. He noted Inspector Klein in a room across the hall. Mechanically, he went there and nodded a stolid greeting. Klein detected the misery in Cardona's face.

"I'm through," declared the detective, answering Klein's silent question. "To-morrow. The commissioner

wants me to resign."

"Tough luck, Joe," said the inspector. "I was afraid it was coming. It's not your fault -"

"Forget it," interrupted Cardona, with a gruff attempt at a laugh.

Crossing the hall, the detective entered his own office and sat down behind the desk. He reached for a sheet of paper, intending to phrase his resignation at once. He stopped as he saw an envelope upon the desk.

Opening the packet, Cardona discovered three envelopes within. They were addressed to Irwin Langhorne. Three postcards, addressed to Henry Bellew, were with the envelopes. Vaguely, Cardona seemed to recall those postcards. He had passed over them in Bellew's desk!

Fumbling with the envelopes, Cardona withdrew the clippings and the notes that Langhorne had received. In the last letter was the explanation of the code. It was not necessary, however. Langhorne's pencil had halved the words. The messages were revealed, and when Cardona looked at the postcards, he discovered their meaning also!

The one item that brought a gasp from Cardona was the signature of the final note to Irwin Langhorne. Cardona, in his surprise, uttered the name aloud:

"The Death Giver!"

Here, at last, was tangible evidence! Here was a trace of a master mind behind two series of crimes. The Felswood killings; the murders in Manhattan; the deaths of two millionaires—all were positively linked.

In his elation, Cardona seized the documents, ready to carry them to Inspector Klein. The detective stopped suddenly. He realized that this evidence would stave off his resignation; but would it be wise to reveal it now?

He only knew that his hunch of a supercriminal must be correct. But where could the man be found? The Death Giver! Of what value was the name alone? Reflecting, Cardona began to puzzle over the source of this mysterious evidence.

SOME one had unquestionably been investigating the unsolved crimes. Some one had been over the ground and had gained these clues.

The identity of the mysterious investigator answered a question that had long been in Cardona's mind: namely, the whereabouts of that strange personage known as The Shadow.

The Shadow!

He had aided Cardona in the past—this crime fighter whom Commissioner Weston preferred to regard as a myth. Was he helping Cardona now? No one but The Shadow would have arranged the secret delivery of this packet to Cardona's desk. A sudden enlightenment dawned upon the detective.

The crimes of The Death Giver had taxed even The Shadow's power! Otherwise, the rule of terror would have ended following the murder of Henry Bellew. The Shadow, seeking The Death Giver, had been unable to assist Cardona until the stage was set for action.

Well did Cardona know that The Shadow did not need the aid of the police. Great crimes had been prevented by The Shadow; heavy scores had been settled by the mysterious avenger. But The Shadow had always shown a proclivity for letting the police take credit for the solving of the crimes which

concerned them.

To meet The Death Giver—to destroy the fiend—that was a mission which Cardona believed The Shadow had undertaken. In the culmination of that mission, The Shadow was, in all probability, willing that Joe Cardona should gain a triumph.

The Shadow favored all those who were opposed to crime. Cardona, at headquarters, had been useful to The Shadow. Cardona, no longer a detective, would no longer be a figure in the ceaseless warfare against those who sought to thwart the law.

Cardona settled back into his chair. He knew that this evidence was The Shadow's doing. He realized that The Shadow would expect him to know.

His resignation had been asked. It would not be wanted if Cardona gained results between now and to-morrow noon. Why go to Commissioner Weston or Detective Klein? In a sense, they were no longer Cardona's superiors.

In the approaching hours, so the detective decided, he would be working for a new and unknown chief—The Shadow! The facts concerning a criminal called The Death Giver were a definite hint that he should wait for more. Here was the place to wait; here, where The Shadow could reach him.

An hour went by, and still Cardona lingered. The telephone bell rang. Cardona plucked the instrument from the desk. He was confident that he would hear the tones of a strange, mysterious voice, giving him instructions which he would be wise to follow.

The last chance! Cardona was staking all upon The Shadow!

CHAPTER XX. THADE ORDAINS

GREEN gloom pervaded the lair of Thade, The Death Giver. Seated upon his dais, the master killer was staring toward the door that led to the anteroom. He had just received the signal from Paul Roderick at the bottom of the elevator shaft.

Thade waited, as though counting seconds. His Nubian servants were like statues on—either side. With a fierce display of his fanglike teeth, Thade pressed a switch beside his chair. The portal raised, and Paul Roderick strode into the room, the open door of the elevator showing behind him.

The green glow made all faces appear strange. Paul Roderick's countenance was not visible in its usual details. That was not unexpected by Thade. The Death Giver preferred this weird light because it enabled his ghoulish face to glow more effectively. To Thade, life was a tragic drama in which he loved the role of villain.

Roderick paused before the master's chair. Something in his manner told Thade that plans had gone amiss. The Death Giver scowled.

"The scheme has failed," asserted Roderick.

"Failed?" questioned Thade sharply. "Failed? Thade, The Death Giver, never fails!"

"It was the work of a traitor," insisted Roderick. "Harlan Treffin -"

Thade leered fiendishly. He gazed at Roderick sharply, and asked a fierce, challenging question.

"You delivered death to Treffin?"

"No."

Thade's claws gripped the arms of the chair. The Death Giver half arose as though to hurl himself upon his lieutenant. Amid that display of surging wrath, Roderick's suave voice put forth an explanation.

"The punishment of the traitor," he declared, "should lie in the hands of Thade, The Death Giver. If I bring Treffin from below -"

A gloating light shone in Thade's eyes. This statement from Paul Roderick had been a timely one. It turned Thade's mind from thoughts of futile effort to those of evil vengeance.

"You have captured the traitor!" exclaimed The Death Giver. "Ah! That is to my liking. Tell me no more. After we have dealt with him we can make new plans. My glass-covered coffin is empty. Harlan Treffin shall be its new incumbent!"

The Death Giver saw Paul Roderick motion toward the door. Thade nodded and pressed the switch that raised the black portal. Roderick went into the anteroom. Thade dropped the door behind him.

LONG minutes went by. Roderick did not return. Thade, sitting silently upon the dais, realized that his lieutenant had not stated how long it would require to bring the traitor. At last, a small light glowed beside the chair. It was the signal that Roderick was at the elevator shaft. Thade pressed the switch that sent the lift on its downward journey.

After waiting the proper time, Thade emitted a gleeful chuckle. Roderick and Treffin must be at the top by now. They would be waiting in the anteroom. Thade pressed the switch and the black portal ascended.

A squad of men burst into the room. Foremost among them was Detective Joe Cardona.

Flourishing revolvers, the detectives covered Thade and his Nubians so quickly that resistance was impossible. With hands half-raised, The Death Giver glowered at his enemies.

Standing in the center of the room, backed by half a dozen detectives, Cardona saw that he was master of the situation. He suspected a dangerous trap; and his caution told him that further advance would be a mistake. It was better to hold the prisoners at bay until this strange man in the chair had spoken. Well did Cardona know that precipitous action might bring disaster.

"Who are you?" came Thade's hissing question. "By what right are you here?"

"We are here in the name of the law," was Cardona's answer. "We are here to arrest the man who calls himself The Death Giver."

"I am Thade, The Death Giver."

There was a pause; then Cardona, quietly relaxing, spoke gruff words. He watched Thade, to note the effect.

"We've got the goods on you," declared the detective. "We've got the cards you sent to Bellew; we've got the letters you sent to Langhorne. You've been double-crossed. We came here on a tip-off. Rang the bell of that trick elevator, and came up when you invited us."

"I am your prisoner, then," said Thade, in a lowered tone.

"You guessed it," retorted Cardona. "Slide out of that chair, and no monkey business. Come on—make

it snappy! Walk up here."

Cardona jingled a pair of handcuffs in his left hand. He saw Thade as an easy one to handle. The green walls and the tufted carpet—such bits of atmosphere meant nothing after the few minutes it took to get used to them.

Cardona laughed gruffly as he saw the terrible man who called himself The Death Giver trying to ease his stooped form from the chair that stood on the platform.

It was that pitiful action that caused Cardona to lose his natural caution. He offered no protest as he saw Thade drop his hands weakly to his side. He noticed the right hand of the villain press against the arm of the chair.

Then, before Joe or his men could fire a single shot, the unexpected happened.

As Thade pressed the proper switch, the whole ceiling of the room came sweeping downward at the sides. The green hangings were a huge canopy that opened like a parachute. The center, firmly affixed to the actual ceiling, held aloft. The first warning Cardona and his men received was the moment when the tentlike folds had dropped about them!

An instant later, the portal dropped in front of Thade's great chair. The Nubians sprang back behind the curtain and joined their master on the dais. Muffled shots sounded beneath the canopy which had entrapped Cardona and his men in its insidious folds. Thade's rejoinder was an evil laugh.

Fight as they could, those men could not force their way from beneath that heavy device. Within the ceiling cloth was a meshwork of steel wire that would resist the fiercest efforts to break loose. The bottom of the canopy was drawn tight by the cables that had pulled it down with the outer layer of the wall hangings. This was the certain trap that Thade had set within his lair!

TWENTY minutes—possibly fifteen—that would be the time required for those prisoners to burst loose. Within that space they would be incapable of action. Thade's hand was on a lever at the left side of the chair. His teeth were gleaming, and the broad smiles of the Nubians reflected the master's joy.

Behind the bullet-proof portal, Thade was ready to release a charge of poison gas, through the ceiling hole where the canopy was anchored at the top. Fifteen minutes! In three minutes, those captured detectives would be dead!

Gloating, Thade uttered a mighty shout, loud enough for the imprisoned men to hear, should they choose to listen. His words of a cry of triumph.

"Death!" shrilled the wizened monster. "Death! I am Thade, The Death Giver! You shall die! Thade has ordained!"

The hand was on the switch; but something stayed its progress. With an angry snarl, Thade stared downward to see another hand upon his own. The glittering light of a sparkling gem shone before The Death Giver's startled eyes.

It was The Shadow's girasol. Its reflecting rays betokened the mystery of the man who wore it.

Thade stared upward, to see a form in black beside him. The moment that Thade had dropped the portal, The Shadow had entered this sinister room. Through the curtain, beside the portal, he had stepped to grip and stay the hand of death.

The automatic in The Shadow's hand was pointing squarely at The Death Giver's ghoulish face. The

Nubians stood helpless. They, as well as Thade, realized that this one black-clad being was more dangerous than the squad of detectives who had entered here before him.

The Shadow's hand thrust Thade's claw from the lever. The monster settled back in his chair, afraid to make a move against this spectral foe.

The hand of doom had faltered. Thade, The Death Giver, had ordained; The Shadow had countermanded his decree of murder!

CHAPTER XXI. THE MASTER OF DEATH

THE futile shots within the canopy had ended. The blanketed detectives were grimly trying to force their way from the green shroud which enveloped them. Behind the portal that guarded Thade's chair-crowned dais, The Shadow was speaking sinister words to the helpless monster whom he had overpowered.

Away from the chair, his single automatic effectively covering Thade and the white-clad Nubians, the black-cloaked master of the night was proclaiming his triumph.

"Your crimes are at an end," were The Shadow's spectral words. "Your master stroke has failed. I have brought its undoing. You who gave death, now face it. You may live only that you may confess your crimes."

"Never!" spat Thade.

"Remember!" The Shadow's tones quivered with a weird laugh. "I have learned the truth. Harlan Treffin died last night—died by the device you gave him. I was there to see him die. When Paul Roderick came, he found Harlan Treffin—so he thought. It was I whom he encountered!"

Thade's eye eyes were glowering in disbelief of The Shadow's statement. The avenger of crime repeated his ghostly laugh.

"To-day," resumed The Shadow, "Paul Roderick found Harlan Treffin awaiting him to aid in the scheme of destruction. The bubbles of death descended; they found their targets. Those bubbles were unnoticed. For the false Harlan Treffin had disposed of your deadly poison.

"When Paul Roderick found that he faced The Shadow, he weakened and confessed his crime. He told the secret of this abode. In a futile fit of desperation, he struggled to defeat The Shadow. In that battle, he was killed when he tried to seize this very automatic."

"Paul Roderick was here to-night," hissed Thade.

"Not Paul Roderick," corrected The Shadow. "You thought that Paul Roderick was here. Behold!"

The left hand raised the slouch hat; the collar of the cloak dropped away, and Thade found himself staring at the features of Paul Roderick!

The truth dawned. It was The Shadow who had come here. He had never left. The mission of bringing Treffin, the traitor, was subterfuge. The Shadow had waited in the anteroom. Thade had unwittingly admitted the police, thinking that Roderick was returning.

"Yes," stated The Shadow, as though answering Thade's thought, "Detective Cardona was acting under my instructions. I called him after Roderick was dead. I told him to be here, below—at an appointed hour.

"Since I brought him to this place, it is now my duty to rescue him. You, Lucius Olney"—Thade glowered as The Shadow pronounced the name—"can remain alive only upon promise to tell everything. I shall spare you because the law held you a few minutes ago; and the law can use you again. But should you attempt to balk my purpose -"

Thade threw back his head and uttered a ferocious laugh. His parched, evil lips of glowing green uttered chanting words in a strange language. With one accord, the two Nubians flung themselves between their master and The Shadow. These huge fighting men were determined to beat down the enemy of Thade!

THIS startling attack, in which The Death Giver deliberately sacrificed the men who were willing to protect him with their lives, left The Shadow no alternative. The onrush of the turbaned Nubians was swift. Their powerful bodies cleared the short space in a twinkling. The Shadow's automatic was quicker. It was unerring.

Two shots rang out; with each report, a white-clad body hurtled to the floor. The Shadow, to escape the falling Nubians, was forced to leap backward from the dais. The first servant dropped close by the chair; the second rolled to The Shadow's feet.

In that capable defense, The Shadow had not lost his original purpose. At any cost, he was prepared to thwart Thade if The Death Giver tried to release the gas into the canopy which held the detectives. Had Thade remained to press the lever, he would have been doomed that very instant; for The Shadow's automatic was leveled for a third quick shaft.

But Thade, recognizing the power of The Shadow, fled in the opposite direction. His robed form sprang with surprising agility, and disappeared through the green curtain beyond the lowered portal in front of the raised platform.

Pursuit was useless. Skirting the lowered canopy that more than half filled the room, Thade had clear passage to the anteroom beyond; and The Shadow, with the canopy between, could gain no opportunity to stay him with a shot. The Shadow, however, had an opportunity which Thade had not suspected. Springing across the bodies of the Nubians, he reached the chair and pressed all but two of the switches that he saw upon the right.

The results were remarkable. The portal rose in front of the platform. The canopy began to lift; and in the floor beneath it, the carpet spread to show the glass-topped coffin, which now held the body of the victim who had been so slowly murdered.

The switches which The Shadow ignored were the two that he knew must control the dropping of the elevator and the lowering of the portal on this side of the anteroom. Leaping to the side of the rising canopy, The Shadow was thus able to glimpse the final flight of Thade. He saw The Death Giver, glancing backward as he ran, making a frantic effort to gain the elevator, with its protecting door.

BUT The Shadow saw what Thade did not see. The lift was rising! The Shadow had pressed the switch which sent it upward. The Shadow's automatic spoke. The aim of that hand never erred. Had The Shadow chosen to kill Thade with the shot, he would have done so. But this bullet was a warning that whizzed beside The Death Giver's evil face.

It was The Shadow's offer to let Thade live, if the murderer chose to go back into the hands of the law.

The Death Giver emitted a gloating cry. He was at the elevator shaft, and he thought that The Shadow's aim had failed. Not knowing that the lift had risen almost to the top of the door, Thade leaped to the spot where the elevator had been.

The Shadow saw a sickly look of horror come over the ghastly, green-hued face as the robed monster missed his footing. Where Thade had expected solid floor he found nothing. His cry became a long, piercing shriek that died away to nothingness as the evil fiend plunged to his doom.

From the top of the secret shaft to the bottom, the full height of the towering building—that was the sequel to Thade's mad flight. The laugh of The Shadow sounded as a fitting knell to the end of the master villain.

The black-clad victor was in the anteroom. His tall figure was merging with the gloomy walls. Out of sight, The Shadow, enfolded behind curtains of green, had left the field to the rescued forces of the law.

With quick precision, The Shadow had counteracted the efforts of Thade and his Nubian servants. He had saved Cardona and the detectives from certain death. The Death Giver's mad career of murder had come to a fitting end.

No more would mysterious death be rampant. No longer would the threat of terrible, unseen crime hang over unsuspecting victims. The Death Giver and his underlings had perished to a man; and the plotting monster had been the last to die.

Justice had triumphed over evil. In the encounter, The Death Giver had fallen before the might of the avenger who had sought and found him in his hidden abode.

That meeting had marked a villain's end. The Shadow, not Thade, was now the master of death!

CHAPTER XXII

THE PUBLIC LEARNS

AT noon, the next day, Detective Joe Cardona entered the office of Commissioner Ralph Weston. The commissioner arose to greet the ace detective. He clasped Cardona's hand in a warm shake. When the detective had seated himself across from the commissioner, he placed an envelope upon the table.

Weston opened the envelope and read the paper that he found within. It was Cardona's resignation. Without a word, the commissioner tore up the document and threw the pieces in the wastebasket. He thumped a stack of newspapers that lay upon the desk.

"These are what I wanted!" exclaimed the commissioner. "Forget the resignation. These will do instead. Now give me the details."

"They're in the newspapers," grinned Cardona.

"I want your story," asserted Weston.

Briefly, the detective recounted what had happened. He admitted that he had received a tip-off. He had learned of The Death Giver's high abode. He and his men had found the secret elevator; they had gone to the top; had surprised Thade; and had then been trapped.

Somehow, good fortune had aided them. The heavy canopy had lifted, and they had discovered the dead bodies of the Nubians. Evidently Thade had decided to kill his servants, and one of them, while dying, had pressed the switch to raise the canopy, in order that the detectives could avenge the death.

Searching through Thade's abode, the detectives had learned the identity of the monster. He was Lucius Olney, an old inventor, disappeared a year before.

In the apartment on the floor above Thade's lair, Cardona had discovered records which Thade had kept. These included diaries which recounted many details of The Death Giver's evil deeds.

At first, the detectives had supposed that Thade had managed to escape. The elevator was on the floor above. Experiment with the switches on Thade's chair enabled them to lower it. When they found that Thade was not hiding on the floor above, they made a search of the elevator shaft.

There, at the bottom, they had found the body of Lucius Olney, the man who called himself Thade, The Death Giver. The green-robed frame was a crushed and twisted thing. In life, The Death Giver had seemed inhuman; in death, he had become a shapeless mass that resembled no existing creature.

To-day, two bodies had been found in other places. Harlan Treffin had been discovered dead, in a closet on the ground floor of his home. Paul Roderick had been found shot to death in a downtown office building.

Thade's records showed that these men were his underlings. Their deaths were largely a matter of conjecture. It was possible that Thade himself had left his strange abode to slay them. One thing was certain: death had ended the monstrous career of the fiendish Death Giver. Mysterious crimes had been solved.

COMMISSIONER WESTON was loud in his praise. He thumped the newspapers time and again as Cardona gave his statements. It was a triumph for the detective; but when Cardona left the commissioner's office, he breathed a long sigh of relief.

For the ace detective had hedged and dodged a dozen questions that Weston had put to him—all in an effort to avoid mentioning one point that would have set the commissioner ablaze with wrath.

Well did Cardona know the source of the mysterious tip-off. It had come from The Shadow. His plans when he had led his squad to Thade's abode had been inspired from a higher source. They were the result of orders from The Shadow. A sinister voice over the telephone had told Detective Cardona what to do.

The ace detective knew how the Nubians had perished and how Thade had gone to his doom. The Shadow was responsive for the end of the monster and his turbaned minions.

As for Treffin and Roderick, Cardona was sure that The Shadow could have explained their deaths; for the finding of those bodies had followed another mysterious telephone call that Cardona had received this very morning.

Moreover, Cardona had a hunch. When the detectives had emerged from the shrouding canopy, one of them had brought the elevator down by pressing a button. Another button had lowered the portal to the anteroom. The same detective had pressed other switches; and had finally raised the outer portal.

Entering the anteroom, Cardona had been surprised to find the door of the elevator shaft closed! While standing there, in wonderment, the ace had felt a swish of air. Opening the door, he had found the elevator back again.

Cardona had figured out the answer. The Shadow must have been in the anteroom. When the portal had dropped, he had gone into the lift in anticipation of more switch-pushing. He had gone to the bottom of the shaft in the car; and his hand had sent the elevator back on its upward journey.

In the triumph that now was his, Cardona felt the pangs of a guilty conscience. He, presumably, had solved the riddle of The Death Giver. He and his men had managed to end the murderous career of the

monster, Thade.

Actually, all had been managed by The Shadow. The invading detectives had not helped him one iota; on the contrary, they had made his task more difficult. Joe Cardona, honest and fair-minded, longed to shout forth his tribute to The Shadow himself.

But who would believe the story? No one. It would open Cardona to ridicule instead of glory. It would be unfair to The Shadow, himself.

For Joe Cardona knew the power of The Shadow. He knew that the mysterious being in black chose to keep his methods hidden and unknown that he might safely wage his unending war on crime.

To The Shadow, triumph lay in achievement. He, by his might, had conquered Thade, The Death Giver. The taste of such victory was the reward The Shadow had sought.

The public had learned of Thade, The Death Giver. They had heard the explanation of his evil deeds. But the true story of The Death Giver's doom was inscribed only in the archives of The Shadow.

THE END