



THE DEATH TRIANGLE

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- ? [CHAPTER I. DEATH AWAITS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER II. GEMS AND GUNS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER III. THE SHADOW LEAVES](#)
- ? [CHAPTER IV. A QUESTION OF ETHICS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER V. THE MAN WITH THE BEARD](#)
- ? [CHAPTER VI. THE CONSULTATION](#)
- ? [CHAPTER VII. THE SHADOW HEARS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER VIII. DESIGNED DEATH](#)
- ? [CHAPTER IX. THE SHADOW'S CLEW](#)
- ? [CHAPTER X. MURDERERS GLOAT](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XI. THE SILENT GUEST](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XII. THE SEARCH BEGINS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XIII. THE SHADOW'S SEARCH](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XIV. THROUGH THE MANSION](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XV. THE TRIANGLE](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XVI. THE CONFERENCE](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XVII. PLOTTERS DECIDE](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XVIII. VORBER SEES THE SHADOW](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XIX. THE NEW VIGIL](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XX. MARCHELLE CHECKS](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XXI. MURDERERS MOVE](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XXII. THE FATAL SHOT](#)
- ? [CHAPTER XXIII. TRUTH REVEALED](#)

CHAPTER I. DEATH AWAITS

"THERE'S the spot. Ease in."

The rakish sedan came to a sharp stop. The driver had responded instantly to the voice of the man beside him. The car turned and rolled into a parking space between two old buildings.

The driver, with a deft turn of the wheel, backed the sedan against a wall. He turned off the motor and extinguished the lights. Silent, sullen men listened in the darkness.

While they waited, their watching eyes were turned toward the street. Taxicabs and other vehicles rolled by, following the narrow thoroughfare that formed a straight line through New York's upper East Side.

This was an old district of Manhattan. It was filled with buildings which had once been pretentious homes, but which had now been altered into apartment houses of a cheaper sort. It was the type of district where one might expect to find an idle automobile, lying in wait for some unknown purpose. This

fact accounted for the precaution of the men in the sedan. Their leader, the man beside the driver, was anxious to make sure that the car was not under surveillance.

Satisfied, at last, that he and his men were unobserved, the leader began to speak in a low growl. His instructions were terse and specific.

"The fire escape is just in back of this building," he explained. "The kitchen is one window to the right. You'll get my signal if I need you -"

"Sh-h!" came a warning whisper from the rear seat. "Wait a minute, Mitts."

THE man in back was peering from the side of the sedan. Two who sat beside him craned their necks in the same direction. Tough fists tightened on the handles of revolvers. Strained silence added to suspense. At last, the warner spoke again.

"Guess I was goofy, Mitts," he remarked. "Thought I saw somebody, but I was wrong."

"Whereabouts?" quizzed "Mitts."

"Out by the front corner of the building," responded the man in back. "I didn't see nobody - but I sorta saw somethin' blot out that light across the street. It wasn't nothin' important, though. I've been lookin' close since then."

"There's nobody out there," growled another fellow in the rear.

"Keep your eyes open, anyway," ordered Mitts. "Remember what I told you. One window to the right of the fire escape -"

"Which floor, Mitts?"

"The third."

With his final statement, the man beside the driver alighted from the sedan and moved off through the darkness. Those in the car remained silent. Toughened, experienced mobsters, the four were waiting until their chief had left the vicinity. Later, they would watch for the signal from behind the house.

The departing leader did not appear in view until he had reached the street. There, he went up the front steps of the building, and entered an open door. He stood in the dim light of an apartment-house lobby which had once been the vestibule of a home.

Picking from the name cards beside a row of push buttons, the gang leader pressed. The name on the card was Ralph Lorskin. This was the name to which the visitor referred when he heard a voice through the old-fashioned telephone receiver which hung from the wall.

"Mr. Lorskin?" he questioned.

"Yes," came the cautious reply. "Who is calling?"

"Hello, Sparkles," growled the visitor, with a low laugh. "This is Mitts Cordy."

"Come up," was the prompt order that came through the wall phone.

Mitts Cordy turned toward the outer door. He was a big man, with an iron jaw, and hard, close-lidded eyes. He glanced keenly toward the street to make sure that no outsider was watching him. Then, as the buzz came from the door, he swung quickly and entered the decadent inner hall.

Two flights up a pair of gloomy stairs brought Mitts Cordy to the rear apartment on the third floor. The gang leader rapped. The door opened. Mitts entered to face a tall, stoop-shouldered individual who gave a gold-toothed smile of greeting.

"Hello, Sparkles," said the gang leader, as Lorskin shut the door. "Everything all set?"

"You're asking me?" returned Sparkles. "How about the mob?"

"Outside and waiting."

"Good."

THE two men sat down. Mitts Cordy pulled out a pack of cigarettes and offered one to "Sparkles" Lorskin. The stoop-shouldered man declined. He picked up a pipe from the table beside him.

"This is better," he said. "I'm playing the part of a recluse - an unapproachable chap who doesn't like to go out. Lives alone, puffs his pipe, and admires his collection of rare gems."

With this statement, Sparkles produced a box from beneath the table. He opened it to display a glittering array of jewels. Mitts Cordy showed both eagerness and surprise.

"Say, Sparkles!" he exclaimed. "I thought you had fenced all that stuff. What's the idea -"

"Bait," interposed Sparkles. "The longer I keep these gems, the easier they are to sell - without experiencing difficulties. In the meantime, they have enabled me to gain the envy of certain collectors who occasionally visit this apartment. I expect one tonight. That is why I wanted you on the job."

"To knock off a jewelry collector?" snorted Mitts. "Say, Sparkles, that don't seem like very much of a lay, unless -"

"Unless what?" Sparkles smiled as he spoke.

"Unless he's bringing a lot of jewelry with him," added Mitts. "Is that the gag?"

"Partly," returned the pretended collector. "More important, however, is the money which this man may be carrying. I estimate that it will be in the neighborhood of twenty thousand dollars."

"Twenty grand!" Mitts whistled. "I'd bump off a regiment for that dough!"

"This is no regiment," returned Sparkles. "As a matter of fact, the job is an extremely easy one. I expect the man to appear by nine o'clock, if not before then. You will be surprised when I tell you who he is."

REACHING to the table, Sparkles picked up an old newspaper and displayed the portrait of an elderly man with a large white beard.

Mitts looked puzzled.

"The old doctor with the Santa Claus whiskers?" he questioned. "You showed me his picture last night, Sparkles - I thought it was a joke when you told me I might meet him some day."

"Doctor Johan Arberg," declared Sparkles quietly. "The Danish specialist from Copenhagen. A blood specialist - here in America attending the medical conference in Chicago."

"A doctor," repeated Mitts, "in Chicago. If this guy is in Chicago -"

"He is not in Chicago, tonight," interrupted Sparkles. "He is in New York. He is coming here. He sails within a few days - that is, he is scheduled to sail - for Denmark. He has made an appointment to visit me this evening.

"Doctor Arberg has one other interest besides medicine. He collects precious stones. He frequently visits obscure collectors like myself" - Sparkles grinned - "and tempts them with a display of wealth. If they happen to be in financial straits - as I am supposed to be - they often fall for the lure of cash."

"I get you," laughed Mitts. "You've got the jewels, and you want the cash, too. Old Kris Kringle will leave his dough here."

"Exactly. Furthermore, he will take a short one-trip ride at your request. That will be the end of Johan Arberg."

"O.K., Sparkles," grinned Mitts. "You're paying for the job; but I don't see where you need a crew to handle one old guy."

"I don't," returned Sparkles. "That part of it is easy. I'm thinking about what might happen afterward. When Doctor Arberg fails to show up in Copenhagen, there's going to be a search for him. Somewhere between Chicago and Copenhagen. A long trail, nevertheless, it would look bad if the police found that I skipped out on the same night that Arberg disappeared.

"I'm going to play it safe - make it look like a straight gang job. Even the old doctor won't know the difference. You and your crowd can carry that old boy out of here right under my nose. If something goes wrong, drop him. He'll testify that I tried to save him.

"If all goes well, I'll stick right here until the end of the month, when my lease expires. Then I'll go on my way. No one will ever know that Doctor Arberg paid a private visit to an obscure gem collector named Lorskin."

"Smart stuff," affirmed Mitts. "You always played a cute game, Sparkles. Leave the job to me - I'll bring up the gang while you're talking to old whiskers. You want us in the kitchen?"

"Yes. Bust in when the time looks ripe."

Sparkles Lorskin tossed the newspaper aside. He began to remove the jewels from their box. Mitts Cordy watched this procedure. Both men were looking toward the table. They did not see a peculiar motion upon the floor.

A long streak of blackness, a flat splotch that bore a startling resemblance to a silhouette, was drawing itself along the floor, receding toward the door. The gliding shape upon the carpet was not a token of an approaching person; it was the sign of a departing visitor!

As it dwindled and finally vanished, it indicated that someone had entered while these men conferred; that the same unseen visitant was moving away, unheard in his departure!

Had Mitts Cordy been followed to this place? Had invisible eyes been watching his arrival? Had listening ears overheard the plans for crime?

Only coming events could answer that question. Yet, had either Sparkles Lorskin or Mitts Cordy seen that moving silhouette upon the carpet, they would have suspected the presence of a sinister visitor whose proximity boded them ill.

For the phenomenon of a gliding shape of blackness, the passage of a soundless silhouette - these were

manifestations which cautious crooks feared more than open, visible signs of a human enemy.

Stealthy, gliding darkness; such was the sign of The Shadow, the strange, mysterious being whose hidden hand dealt death to men of evil. His very identity a veiled secret, The Shadow was a menace that all gangdom dreaded.

The arrangement of the jewels was ended. Sparkling shafts of light came from glittering gems upon the table. Wealth and rarity awaited the arrival of Doctor Johan Arberg. Here was a shining snare that gave no inkling of the danger which lay behind it.

Sparkles Lorskin arose. The crook paced the floor at the very spot where the gliding shape of the blackness had been. He saw no sign of The Shadow; nor did Mitts Cordy. Both men of crime were ready for the evil work which they had planned.

Grim death was awaiting the arrival of Doctor Johan Arberg.

CHAPTER II. GEMS AND GUNS

SPARKLES LORSKIN and Mitts Cordy were two men who worked efficiently. The snare which they had prepared for Doctor Johan Arberg was not the first effort of their evil cooperation.

Sparkles had the instinct of a ferret when it came to locating valuable collections of jewelry. Mitts, a bold ruffian who led a hardened crew, was always ready to follow the lead which Sparkles gave.

The gems which at present lay upon the table in Sparkles Lorskin's apartment were the spoils of raids in which Mitts Cordy had played the leading role. Sparkles, who always had money, paid cold cash for the work which Mitts performed.

This was an effective arrangement. Mitts Cordy preferred jobs that were laid out for him. He liked to avoid the trouble that attended the disposal of stolen goods to a fence. Sparkles, who preferred planning to action, and who was willing to bide his time in selling stolen valuables, was also satisfied. He was in a position to reap the greater profit.

Sparkles considered Mitts as much a henchman as an associate. Mitts admired Sparkles. Tonight, more than ever before, Mitts envied his companion's quiet nerve.

The gang leader knew that the gems which lay on the table as a lure for Doctor Arberg represented thousands of dollars in stolen goods. The police, had they suspected where such valuables lay, would be here in an instant.

Yet Sparkles did not fear them. Posing as an obscure collector of gems, he had deliberately opened communication with a prospective victim. Mitts Cordy and his gang, instead of setting forth on a foray, had come to Sparkles Lorskin's own abode, there to aid the shrewd jewelry crook in the accumulation of further pelf.

Mitts Cordy watched Sparkles Lorskin pace the floor. The gang leader then turned to study the layout of the apartment. The door that led to the kitchen was almost directly opposite the entrance to the apartment. The table was slightly off line between the two portals.

Sparkles noted his companion's calculation. With a shrewd smile, he explained the proper arrangement as he indicated two chairs near the table.

"I'll be facing the kitchen," he declared. "I'll have Doctor Arberg in this chair at the side. You'll get my sign when it's time to break in. Work quick -"

Sparkles paused as a buzz came from the wall. He walked over to answer the telephone.

Mitts heard his brief conversation. Sparkles turned quickly as he concluded.

"It's the old boy, himself," he said, in a low tone. "Duck out, Mitts, and wigwag the crowd below. He'll be up here in a couple of minutes."

As soon as Mitts Cordy had passed beyond the door to the kitchen, Sparkles Lorskin opened the main door of the apartment. He heard lethargic footsteps on the stairs. He bowed as a stoop-shouldered man came into view, carrying a portfolio. The visitor approached, and his white beard wagged.

"Mr. Lorskin, yess?" came the high-pitched question.

"Yes," replied Sparkles, with a smile. "I am glad to meet you, Doctor Arberg."

The physician received the crook's handclasp within the door of the apartment. As Sparkles closed the barrier, the visitor's eyes saw the glittering gems upon the table. A cry of interest came from Doctor Arberg's lips. The old man placed his portfolio on the floor.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "These are wonderful, yess! It is good that I should have come here."

The elderly man sat down in the very chair that Sparkles had assigned for him. Still wearing his satisfied smile, the crook took his own seat and watched the visitor examine the gems that lay before him.

Sparkles was particularly interested in Doctor Arberg's face. The Dane possessed a countenance that was both kindly and dignified. He wore a heavy white mustache and well-trimmed white beard, yet the strength of his features was apparent beneath.

Physically, however, Doctor Arberg presented no problem. His slow stride up the stairway had been proof of his advanced years. Lorskin, who had never met the blood specialist before, placed Arberg's age at about seventy-five. The physician was active for a man of that age, but it was plain, by his actions, that he was well past his physical prime.

"By the way, Doctor Arberg," purred Sparkles Lorskin, "I trust that you have not told anyone of your intended visit here -"

The speaker paused as Arberg slowly shook his head in negative reply. The old physician seemed too interested in the gems to give a verbal statement.

"You understand," resumed Sparkles, "that I am willing to make a great sacrifice in disposing of these jewels. That is why I did not want it noised about that they were for sale. I did not want to be annoyed by troublesome bargain hunters."

"Certainly not," agreed the old physician.

"Of course," continued Sparkles, "I am interested in only cash transactions."

Doctor Arberg looked up from the table. A smile appeared amid the white beard. Reaching in his pocket, the physician drew forth a thick bundle of bank notes. Sparkles stared as he saw bills of five-hundred and thousand-dollar denominations.

"This will cover more than I intend to purchase," remarked Arberg. "I have plenty of money with me - and I always buy with cash. Always, yess."

The words came in well-pronounced English, which was just a trifle thick in tone. Before Sparkles could

reply, Arberg thrust the roll back in his pocket and indicated the jewels with a sweep of his hand.

"There iss only one trouble, yess," he asserted. "These gems have value, but there is something about them that I do not like. You understand, yess?"

Sparkles shook his head.

"They are not like a collection," argued Arberg. "Not one bit, no. They are like many gems which might have been taken from here and there. Like stolen gems, you understand -"

Sparkles stared coldly at the physician. He felt ill at ease as he met Arberg's steady eyes. Sparkles did not like the old man's expression.

"These jewels," declared the crook, "are not stolen. I have collected them regardless of their history. Their value depends upon their own merits. I am sorry, Doctor Arberg, if they do not interest you."

THE crook shifted in his chair. He was just about to glance toward the kitchen door when Arberg caught his eye with an odd gesture. Extending his left hand, the physician displayed a gleaming ring upon his third finger. Sparkles looked in wonder at a beautiful opal which glimmered with ever-changing hues.

"This stone," remarked Arberg, "iss my favorite. See it - a rare girasol. Once it belonged to the Russian czar who -"

Sparkles Lorskin was staring at the gem. Its glow, changing from maroon to mauve, was fascinating. Sparkles did not notice Arberg's right hand, which rested beneath the old man's coat. The crook, thinking this the perfect opportunity, signaled with his fingers.

Without moving his head, he peered upward to see Mitts Cordy stealing through the door, revolver in hand. His gaze went back to the girasol.

It was then that Doctor Arberg acted in a most surprising manner. The old physician's keen eyes had seen Lorskin's signal. They saw the crook's gaze turn downward. Arberg's right hand came from beneath his coat, carrying an automatic. At the same time, his left hand shot for Lorskin's arm.

From a forward position, the white-bearded man snapped backward and upward. With incredible strength, he yanked Sparkles Lorskin's long, light frame from the chair. As the crook shot sprawling across the table, Arberg's right arm extended as a rigid bar upon which Sparkles fell.

With a mighty twist of his body, the amazing old man swept his arm on a long arc, and sent the crook hurtling across the room directly toward the spot where Mitts Cordy stood.

The whole maneuver was an amazing one. A jujutsu thrust, which depended upon strength as well as skill, it brought the fierce old man face to face with Mitts Cordy and the quartet of invaders.

The bitter tones of a mocking laugh burst from Arberg's beard. That blast of merriment betokened the true identity of the visitor. This was not Johan Arberg, a frail old man. This being who had sprung into action was The Shadow - the enemy whom all the hordes of gangdom feared!

AT times, the very appearance of The Shadow was sufficient to cow the most hardened mobster. But when action occurred, the instinct of self-preservation was sufficient to bring a counterthrust. In this crisis, Mitts Cordy acted with all the venom that was in his nature.

The gang leader had already covered the white-bearded visitor. As Lorskin's body came through the air; as The Shadow whirled and emitted his identifying laugh, Mitts Cordy fired. Quick with the trigger, he

accomplished the rare feat of beating The Shadow to the first shot.

With his quickness of action, however, Mitts was forced to change his aim. The gang leader, in side-stepping Sparkles Lorskin's body, had turned the muzzle of his revolver from the white-bearded man. It was during the quick return swing that Mitts loosed his shot.

The Shadow, in his unfamiliar white-bearded garb, was still in motion. Mitts Cordy's bullet whistled past The Shadow's shoulder. The gang leader pressed his finger to the trigger for the second shot. It never came.

The Shadow's automatic delivered its explosion. Momentarily delayed for perfect aim, the shot reached its mark. A hideous look appeared upon Mitts Cordy's face. The gang leader crumpled. The revolver dropped from his right hand. Claspings both hands to his breast, Mitts sprawled forward upon Sparkles Lorskin, then rolled sidewise and lay flat upon his back.

The eyes of The Shadow did not follow the gang leader's demise. Even while Mitts Cordy's gun was dropping to the floor, the master fighter opened a swift attack upon the mobsters who stood beyond the door.

Mitts Cordy's fall had cleared the way for action. Ready revolvers were coming up. Trigger fingers were in action. But The Shadow, who had cleared the path for this new fray, was a fighter who dealt in split seconds. Into the massed quartet before him, he opened a leaden hail from his powerful automatic.

The roars of the .45 resounded with thunderous repetition. Three shots went forth from that mighty weapon ere a single revolver responded.

The first answering report came from a staggering mobster. The man's bullet went wide. The second bullet was dispatched by the rearmost gangster, who fired hastily as he turned to dive for shelter. The gunman failed to reach his mark. He screamed, an instant later, as The Shadow delivered a shot that winged his shoulder.

Of the four mobsters, one had fled, wounded, for the window which was out of The Shadow's range. Another, also wounded, managed to scramble to his feet and hurry for the same point of safety. The Shadow's laugh followed the fleeing crooks.

The other two mobsmen lay upon the floor. One did not stir; the second, however, showed a sudden sign of life. He writhed, propped himself upon elbow, and leveled a revolver toward The Shadow. The mobster's lips, twisted in dying pain, phrased venomous oaths.

Calmly, The Shadow covered the man with his automatic; but did not fire. A shot proved unnecessary. The gangster's curses died; his leaning form collapsed before he could attempt a shot. He had succumbed to a mortal wound.

Shots came from the direction of the kitchen. One mobster was firing from the window. Answering reports from below; a shriek betokened the fall of a dying mobster from the window. The Shadow's sinister laugh was repeated.

The Shadow knew the source of those outside shots. His agent, Cliff Marsland, who had been previously watching the activities of Mitts Cordy's gang, had come below to cut off retreat. That was the reason why The Shadow had allowed the two crippled mobsters to flee.

UPON the floor, Sparkles Lorskin lay unconscious. The crook had not recovered from the terrific jolt which he had received. The Shadow, still in his bewhiskered impersonation of Doctor Johan Arberg,

laughed again as he saw that Sparkles had witnessed no part of the gun fray.

Suddenly, The Shadow swung upward. Dashing from the kitchen came the last of the mobsters. Choosing the door instead of the window, where darkness lurked below, the wounded ruffian sought to wrest victory from The Shadow.

With a cry of rage, the mobster hurtled forward, aiming his revolver directly into the white-bearded face that he knew masked the visage of The Shadow. Up came the automatic. Its final roar resounded. The gangster plunged forward, his trigger finger jerking spasmodically. Two hopeless bullets pierced the floor.

The last of the mob lay dead.

In the room which now became strangely silent, The Shadow gave a whispered laugh. It was a grim paean of triumph, the final note to the swift and scattered struggle.

Almost as in answer to The Shadow's taunt came the distant sound of a police whistle. The roar of guns had been heard upon the street. The police were on the way.

Turning swiftly, The Shadow picked up the portfolio which he had brought with him. He laid it upon the table, and there began the change that ended his amazing impersonation of Doctor Johan Arberg.

The Shadow's visit had begun with gems. It had ended with guns. The gems were gained; the guns were silenced. The might of The Shadow had prevailed.

CHAPTER III. THE SHADOW LEAVES

A POLICE whistle sounded in the darkness of the narrow thoroughfare beside the apartment house where a battle had been waged. Heavy footsteps thudded on the pavement. Uniformed men crowded into the parking space where an empty sedan was backed against the wall.

There had been an interval between the final shots and the arrival of the officers. During that interim, Cliff Marsland, agent of The Shadow, had made a hurried departure. But The Shadow still remained, up in the apartment where the police were due to converge.

The open portfolio lay upon the galaxy of gems. Long, firm hands drew forth a mass of black cloth. The material developed into a shroud as it dropped over the white wig and false beard which The Shadow wore. The shroud became a cloak. The Shadow's left hand, with its sparkling girasol glimmering brightly, brought a slouch hat from the portfolio.

The hands slid the hat upward. As it reached The Shadow's head, the hat replaced the wig and beard. The white-haired mask dropped from The Shadow's face, which was now invisible beneath the projecting brim of the broad slouch hat. The hands bundled beard and wig into the portfolio; the pliable bag folded and went beneath The Shadow's cloak.

Whistles from the fire escape. Shouts from below stairs. The Shadow laughed as his burning eyes once again noted that Sparkles Lorskin, the only person present, lay oblivious to all that was transpiring.

The table again glittered with its array of jewels; a train of shining stones lay upon the floor between the table and Sparkles Lorskin's resting place. The crook's hurtling body had swept these gems in his wake.

Swiftness, alone, could enable The Shadow to make his departure before the police arrived. Both ways were blocked. Yet The Shadow, as he delivered his uncanny laugh, showed no haste. His hands were drawing on black gloves. A spectral creature clad in somber garments, The Shadow scorned the need of

flight.

There was a telephone in the corner. The Shadow lifted it. He dialed a number. A response came. In smooth, easy tones, The Shadow asked to be connected with Doctor Johan Arberg.

Sparkles Lorskin stirred. Groggy, the crook could hear the tones of The Shadow's voice. They seemed strangely familiar to Sparkles Lorskin. There was a very definite reason. The Shadow was talking in a perfect imitation of Sparkles Lorskin's own voice!

"Hello!" The Shadow's accents were dim in Lorskin's ears. "Doctor Johan Arberg?... This is Lorskin calling... I am glad that I had time to call you before you left the hotel... No, a visit here will be useless... The gems? I have disposed of them... Yes, the entire collection is gone... I was persuaded to part with every gem that I possessed... Good-by, sir."

SPARKLES LORSKIN was rising to hands and knees. Like a man in a trance, he had heard his own voice speak and cancel the appointment with Doctor Johan Arberg. All was a dream to Sparkles. He vaguely remembered Arberg arriving here; then a whirl through air that had ended in temporary oblivion.

A whistle sounded from the kitchen window. The shrill noise startled Sparkles and brought him to his senses. He saw the body of Mitts Cordy, a revolver lying beside the dead gang leader's form. Wildly, Sparkles clutched the weapon.

Instinctively, the crook turned toward the telephone, to the spot where he had heard his own voice carrying on a conversation. There was no one at that spot. Then came pounding at the outer door. Rising to his feet, Sparkles stared in that direction.

It was then that Sparkles saw The Shadow. Tall, silent, and menacing, the black-garbed phantom stood like a lonely sentinel, a creature of unreality amid a scene that told of imminent invasion. As a cry - expressing both fear and amazement - came from Lorskin's lips, The Shadow's left hand turned the knob of the door.

The barrier swung inward. A burly officer plunged headlong. At the same instant, another bluecoat appeared at the door from the kitchen. The Shadow's hand was still in motion. As Sparkles Lorskin cowered toward the wall, The Shadow pressed the switch and plunged the room in darkness.

Sparkles fired his revolver. He did not aim at either policeman. He shot for the spot where he believed The Shadow stood, sensing that there was his immediate enemy. A whispered laugh, its very location vague, was the mockery that came in answer.

New revolvers spat their flame. Both policemen had aimed toward Sparkles. Swinging wildly, the crook began to return the shots.

Amid the staccato of revolver fire came the heavy roar of an automatic. The policemen's shots continued. There was silence from the spot where Sparkles had stood.

Instinctively, the policeman from the kitchen advanced toward Lorskin's position. His gruff voice ordered his companion to turn on the light. Simultaneously, a silent being edged toward the door from which the officer had come.

On came the light. It revealed two uniformed men, one by the outer door, his hand upon the switch; the other, staring toward the table. Sparkles Lorskin, his breath coming in convulsive gasps, was doubled up on the floor, his revolver three feet away.

Vainly, Sparkles reached for the gun. His effort was useless. He sprawled, choking, as the policemen

leaped forward to beat him to the weapon. Cries of amazement came from the officers as their eyes saw the jewels that were strewn upon table and floor.

Another policeman appeared at the outer door. He, like the pair already in the room, was astonished at the sight of the precious stones. Not one of the trio who represented the law gave a glance toward the kitchen door. Hence they failed to see the tall being in somber black, who, motionless, surveyed the scene with penetrating eyes.

AN instant later, The Shadow was gone into the darkness of the kitchen. Picking his way past the bodies of the fallen gangsters, the master fighter headed toward the window that gave access to the fire escape.

Stealthy in stride, The Shadow reached his goal. He was already on the fire escape when a powerful flashlight cast an upward beam to reveal the window through which The Shadow had passed.

"Hey, up there!"

The call came from a policeman, who was standing beside the dead body of the gangster who had toppled from the window. A figure appeared within the shaft of light. The man below recognized one of the policemen who had gone up to Lorskin's apartment.

"We've got one of them," informed the officer in the window. "Phoning for the ambulance. Had to plug him in the darkness. There are others up here - but they all got the works before we showed up."

The policeman with the flashlight was staring upward as he listened. Brick wall and open window were within his path of vision. To the man above, only the glare of the flashlight was evident. Neither saw nor heard the stealthily moving form that reached the bottom of the fire escape.

With darkness as a hiding veil, The Shadow passed behind the officer in the parking space. His black form was invisible. It could not even be seen as it reached the sidewalk. The only phenomenon that indicated The Shadow's presence was the momentary blotting of a light across the street. Neither officer observed it.

Upstairs, the officer returned from the kitchen and stood looking at Sparkles Lorskin. One policeman was at the telephone, calling headquarters. He had already sent an emergency call for an ambulance. The other officer was gathering the gems from the floor, piling them into the box upon the table.

Of all the evil men who had sought to bring death to Doctor Johan Arberg, Sparkles Lorskin alone remained alive. Yet his condition, judged by his position upon the floor, indicated that little chance was his.

Mobsters had recognized that the fighter disguised as Doctor Arberg was The Shadow. Those gangmen were dead, with their leader, Mitts Cordy, silent as they. Only Sparkles had seen The Shadow in his weird guise of black. Sparkles had not identified him with Doctor Arberg. To Sparkles, the visitation of The Shadow had been an unreal incident.

The policemen, piecing their theory to what they saw, believed that raiders had come to steal this hoard of jewels. They knew that the gems must be stolen; otherwise, Sparkles Lorskin would not have battled against those who represented the law.

Not one of the officers suspected the hidden presence of The Shadow in this room where death had struck those who had planned to deliver it.

BLOCKS away, The Shadow was speeding southward. Seated behind the wheel of a trim coupe, the master was departing from the scene of crime. The car turned into the entrance of a garage. As an

attendant came up to take the coupe in charge, a gentleman in evening clothes, with portfolio under his arm, stepped forth.

"I shall leave my coupe here tonight," he remarked in a quiet tone. "Has my limousine arrived?"

"Right over there Mr. Cranston," replied the attendant.

The gentleman turned in the direction indicated. A chauffeur was opening the door of the limousine. The gentleman entered the car.

"Over to New Jersey, Stanley," was his order to the chauffeur.

The limousine rolled from the garage. It headed toward the Holland Tunnel. Stanley drove at an easy speed, while the passenger, reclining on the cushions, leisurely smoked a cigarette.

Tonight, The Shadow had impersonated Doctor Johan Arberg, to make an early visit to Sparkles Lorskin's apartment. There, over the telephone, he had impersonated Sparkles Lorskin to tell Doctor Arberg that a visit would be unnecessary!

In the meantime, this amazing battler had wiped out a desperate mob. He had returned to the black-clad guise of The Shadow. He had left Sparkles Lorskin, desperately wounded, in the hands of the police, surrounded by a crime-reaped harvest of stolen gems.

Now, in the guise of Lamont Cranston, multimillionaire and gentleman of leisure, The Shadow was returning to a mansion in New Jersey, there to await a new occasion that would call for conflict with surging hordes of crime.

The Shadow had saved the life of Doctor Johan Arberg, Danish blood specialist, whose return to Copenhagen could not now be blocked by Sparkles and his minions of the underworld.

Such was the way of The Shadow. By marvelous achievements, this stranger of the night could accomplish the seemingly miraculous. With skill and precision, The Shadow had saved the life of Doctor Johan Arberg without the savant gaining a single inkling of the menace which he had avoided!

Through his watchfulness of affairs in the underworld; through the reports of Cliff Marsland, his agent in the bad lands, The Shadow had gained a complete triumph. From his knowledge of the entire situation, The Shadow saw no further need of extending protection to Doctor Johan Arberg.

Yet while The Shadow, as Lamont Cranston, was riding comfortably back to New Jersey, a new menace was threatening Doctor Arberg. Beyond the reach of The Shadow's vigilance, an enemy more subtle and capable than Sparkles Lorskin and Mitts Cordy combined was planning drastic action.

Every step of evil that The Shadow had foiled was to be duplicated, with an objective that reached to heinous crime beyond - hidden crime that had not yet come within The Shadow's ken.

The fruits of victory that The Shadow had gained tonight were destined to be spoiled. The Shadow, triumphant, was due to face new foemen who were worthy of his steel!

CHAPTER IV. A QUESTION OF ETHICS

DOCTOR JOHAN ARBERG was standing by the window of his room in the Hotel Emperor. Twenty-two stories above the sidewalks of New York, the Danish physician was studying the glimmering lights of Manhattan.

On this, his first stay in New York City, the prominent blood specialist was experiencing the fascination of the huge metropolis. Imagination, however, rather than actual visualization, was responsible for Doctor Arberg's steady observation. Mentally, the specialist was likening the glittering lights of the city to sparkling gems.

One reason for Doctor Arberg's visit to New York had been the lure of purchasing a collection of valuable jewels which he had learned were up for sale. He had planned to visit the owner tonight; he had just received a telephone call, saying that the jewels had been delivered to another party.

Doctor Arberg was a trifle piqued.

He could not understand why he had not been given the opportunity to see the gems. That, he decided, was due to the mania for quick business transactions which seemed to govern all Americans. In Denmark, Doctor Arberg reflected, anyone offering gems for sale would have given every possible purchaser a chance to examine them.

Doctor Arberg, as he turned away from the window, appeared exactly as The Shadow had impersonated him. The shape of his beard, the size of his mustache, the curl of his hair - all had been duplicated to perfection. Even the stoop of the elderly man's shoulders had been copied to exactitude.

The real Doctor Arberg, however, showed no sign of latent power. He was a man well preserved for his age, that was all. He glanced about the room with a rather querulous air, and his eye noted a little clock which rested upon a writing table.

The clock was one of Doctor Arberg's most cherished possessions. He always carried it with him when he traveled. In keeping with the physician's hobby, the collection of jewels, the case of the clock was embellished with small but valuable diamonds that corresponded with each number on the dial.

The clock registered exactly nine. Doctor Arberg reached out to pick up the timepiece. He stopped as the telephone began to ring.

LIFTING the receiver, the physician pronounced his identity and began to nod his head as he heard the voice from the other end of the wire.

"Ah, yess!" he exclaimed. "Doctor Barton Keyes. I am pleased to hear from you, doctor. How iss the patient?"

A brief response came over the wire. Arberg continued his nodding, as though face to face with the speaker.

"I am glad to hear what you say," declared the Danish physician. "It iss good that the injections haff produced the results I promised... What iss that? You are at Mr. Cyril Wycliff's home at present?... Very good, doctor. I can come there tonight... Yess... Yess. The reason I made the appointment for tomorrow night wass because I had a very important visit to make tonight. That appointment iss no longer. I haff heard from the man I wass to see, and he hass said not to see him. You understand?"

Still wagging his head, Doctor Arberg took paper and pencil, and copied down instructions which came over the wire. He concluded the call, hung up the receiver, and turned away from the telephone. As he looked up toward the center of the room, Arberg stopped suddenly and stared half startled.

Directly in front of him stood a dark-haired man of medium height. The intruder was about forty-five years of age. His bearing marked him as a man of professional accomplishment; his attire, quiet in color, was similar to that which Arberg wore.

The visitor bowed as he caught Arberg's eye, and the old physician felt more at ease as he noted the man's friendly demeanor. Nevertheless, the Dane detected a shifty look in the sallow face which he was observing, and could not repress a lurking suspicion that this visit might bode ill.

"Who are you?" demanded Arberg. "How did you enter here?"

"I knocked at the door," said the visitor, in a suave tone. "I found it unlocked, and I entered. You were telephoning."

"The door was locked!" challenged Arberg.

"I found it otherwise," returned the visitor.

"What is your purpose here?" questioned Arberg, in his thick voice, forgetting the matter of the door.

"To discuss an ethical problem with you," replied the sallow-faced man. "I, too, am a physician. My name is Martin Hamprell."

"Sit down," invited Arberg, waving his visitor to a chair.

Hamprell responded. Doctor Arberg remained standing, his hands clasped behind his back. The elderly man was evidently waiting for the visitor to present his problem.

MARTIN HAMPRELL began.

"First, Doctor Arberg," he said, "you must believe me when I say that I was not eavesdropping. I chanced to hear a portion of your conversation across the telephone. However, I was already familiar with the matter."

"You mean the case of Cyril Wycliff?"

"Exactly. Cyril Wycliff, as I understand it, is being treated for thrombosis under your direction. Doctor Barton Keyes is the New York physician attending him."

"Yess. That is right."

"As I understand your treatment," continued Hamprell, "your method is to destroy a thrombus or embolism by the means of carefully prepared injections -"

"Let me explain," interjected Doctor Arberg, drawing himself up as though addressing a class. "I have proved my theories, Doctor Hamprell. It is a very useful method which I use."

"When a blood clot forms in a vein of the body, it is called a thrombus, and is very dangerous. If it becomes detached, it will pass to a spot where it will bring quick death. You, of course, as a medical man, know this."

"The patient who has thrombosis, I keep in bed for a long time, no matter how healthy he is. Then, by the injections, I cause the blood clot to dissolve. The blood, itself made stronger by the injections, will carry away the clot. With this done, the disease of thrombosis comes to an end. The clot, made so tiny before it is taken away, can do no harm."

"I understand," nodded Hamprell. "Doctor Keyes is using your injections. His patient, Cyril Wycliff, is improving. Moreover, Keyes has already cured other cases of thrombosis through the use of your injections."

"Yess," agreed Arberg. "From Copenhagen, I haff sent Doctor Keyes the word of how he must giff the injections. He hass asked me to stop here in New York. He wants me to see how well the patient, Cyril Wycliff, hass been doing under the treatment. I am going to the house tonight."

Hamprell nodded wisely. A scornful smile appeared upon his lips. Arberg stared wonderingly. With the Dane's curiosity aroused, Hamprell offered his explanation.

"Doctor Arberg," he declared suavely, "this man Keyes is using you to benefit his own practice. He has been taking the credit for his cures upon himself. He claims that he is the originator of your treatment.

"Here is his game. You have come from Denmark to America. You are stopping here in New York. Doctor Keyes is inviting you to see what he has accomplished. The word will go around that you came to learn from him. You, the master, will be marked as the pupil."

Martin Hamprell paused to study the effect of his words upon the Danish specialist. Hamprell's tone had carried conviction. His face, however, marked him as a schemer. Perhaps it was that fact that made Doctor Arberg blaze with anger.

"This iss a lie!" cried the specialist. "It cannot be so! It iss a lie, I tell you!"

"It is a question of ethics," interposed Hamprell suavely. "I can assure you, Doctor Arberg, that you will be nothing more than a dupe if you visit Cyril Wycliff's home. Doctor Keyes has been counting on your visit to further his game. If you refuse to go to Wycliff's, you will defeat his motive."

FOR a moment, Arberg began to appear convinced. His white head nodded. He strode across the room and reached the telephone.

"I shall call Doctor Keyes," he announced. "I shall ask him of this. I shall tell him what I haff been told -"

"Wait!" interposed Hamprell, rising. "Do not act foolishly, Doctor Arberg. If you call Keyes, he will deny all that I have said. He will be on guard. You can do better by following the plan that I have to offer."

"What iss that?"

"Do not go to see Doctor Keyes. Forget all about this appointment at Wycliff's home. Wait until tomorrow. That will be the test. If Keyes calls up and asks why you did not come, it will prove that he is playing fair.

"But if Keyes is crooked, then he will suspect that you have learned his game. He will be afraid to call you again. You will have your answer."

The old physician stared thoughtfully. Then, with a gesture of resignation, he laid down the telephone. He walked toward the window and looked out at the lights of the city. His face, turned away from Martin Hamprell, became suddenly tense, but the white beard hid the expression.

Doctor Arberg was in doubt. He had held long correspondence with Doctor Barton Keyes. He believed the man to be a sincere practitioner of the Arberg system that counteracted thrombosis. Considering the problem, Arberg came to a very keen decision.

This unknown visitor, Martin Hamprell, who claimed to be a physician, had accused Doctor Barton Keyes of unethical practices. If Hamprell spoke the truth, Keyes must be investigated. On the contrary, if Keyes should be the honest man that Arberg supposed, what of Hamprell? Such circumstances, obviously, would mark Hamprell as the man who played a hidden game.

Doctor Arberg looked from the corner of his eye. He caught the reflection of Martin Hamprell's face in the mirror. He detected a gloating expression. Hamprell, believing himself unwatched, had allowed an insidious smile to spread upon his lips. Seeing this, Doctor Arberg knew the truth.

Martin Hamprell, he decided, was some impostor. It was essential to deal with him as such. Doctor Arberg turned from the window and went back to the writing desk.

"I thank you for coming here, sir," he declared. "I shall follow your advice. I haff another appointment which I can make this evening. I shall call those people on the telephone, yess. The number iss here, in this drawer."

Martin Hamprell watched the old physician fumble in the table drawer. The shrewd visitor still wore his gloating smile. It changed, of a sudden, when Doctor Arberg wheeled away from the table.

In his hand the white-bearded Dane held a small revolver. With it, he covered the intruder. Eyes blazing, Johan Arberg cried out his accusations of the other.

"You are the one who plays a game!" he challenged. "It iss you - not Doctor Keyes - who iss the bad one! Stand where you are! It iss the police who shall hear of this!"

Martin Hamprell began to back away. The distance between himself and Arberg was too great to warrant a wild forward rush. Covered by a loaded gun, the intruder was taken unaware. He held his position as he saw Doctor Arberg reach for the telephone.

Then, with the knowledge that arrest awaited him, Hamprell did the unexpected. Still moving backward, he turned his body a trifle to the right. With a quick movement of his right hand, he reached in his coat pocket and snatched forth a short, stub-barreled revolver.

DOCTOR ARBERG saw the weapon flash. The Dane proved his mettle. Forgetting the telephone, he quickly pressed the trigger of his small gun, just as Hamprell made a forward leap. Hasty, with faltering aim, the old man missed his mark.

The revolver report brought an immediate response. Hamprell, now that a shot had been fired, threw caution to the winds. He fired in return. Doctor Arberg staggered, a bullet in his left shoulder. Bravely, the old Dane delivered another shot. His tottering destroyed his aim. Hamprell, leaping to close range, fired once again. Doctor Johan Arberg fell back upon the table, a bullet through his heart.

Martin Hamprell, the smoking revolver in his hand, saw the gun drop from the Dane's fingers. He watched Arberg's body, with arms outstretched upon the table, as it slid slowly forward, the bearded face staring straight upward.

Then came the collapse. Arberg's form went down in crazy fashion. His long arms, sliding along the table, carried objects with them. An inkwell bounced upon the floor. The jeweled clock thudded close beside it. Arberg's body, its shirt front covered with a widening splotch of crimson blood, sprawled piteously upon the carpet.

Slowly, mechanically, Martin Hamprell replaced the revolver in his pocket. His eyes were staring. His lips wore their petrified smile of evil.

The intruder had gained his say. Doctor Johan Arberg would not visit Doctor Barton Keyes and Cyril Wycliff tonight. Hamprell's will had prevailed. All that differed was the cause which would keep Johan Arberg from his call.

Murder, not ethics, was the reason why Doctor Arberg would fail in his appointment. The man whose life

The Shadow had tonight saved, had died at the hand of a fiend more potent than the evil men whom The Shadow had defeated!

CHAPTER V. THE MAN WITH THE BEARD

MARTIN HAMPRELL stood at the door of Doctor Arberg's room. The murderer peered out into the silent corridor of the twenty-second floor. He softly closed the door, and a pleased gleam showed upon his face.

The sound of the shots had not been heard. Murder unobserved could remain unknown. With catlike tread, Hamprell stalked back to the spot where Johan Arberg's body lay. The murderer surveyed the man whom he had slain.

Upon the table, Hamprell noted a sheet of paper. It bore the address of Cyril Wycliff. Carefully, Hamprell picked up the slip and pocketed it. Then, with utmost care, the murderer reached in his victim's pocket and drew forth articles of value - a wallet and a roll of bills.

Hamprell noted the clock and its array of diamonds. He saw a ring on Arberg's third finger. He slipped the adornment from the dead hand. The ring contained a large and valuable ruby.

Ignoring the clock, Hamprell began a swift and systematic search which uncovered various items of valuable jewelry. Evidently Doctor Arberg carried only a few choice items when he traveled. From Hamprell's actions, it appeared that robbery was the motive which had brought him here.

In all his swift work, however, Hamprell showed a desire to leave as soon as possible. This belied the robbery motive. With the shots unheard, there was no pressing cause for haste. Hamprell did not spend more than five minutes in his search.

Coming back to the clock, Hamprell picked up the timepiece. He held it to his ear and smiled. The clock had stopped. Hamprell glanced at the dial. It showed exactly twelve minutes after nine.

Drawing a silk handkerchief from his pocket, the murderer wiped the clock to remove all marks of finger prints. He turned the stem and smiled thoughtfully; then, with satisfaction, he dropped the clock exactly where he had found it.

Glancing at his own watch, Hamprell noted that it was twenty minutes after nine. Approximately eight minutes had elapsed since he had killed Doctor Arberg. With a last swift glance through the room, Hamprell hastened to the door.

After a cautious glance into the hall, Hamprell went out and softly closed the door behind him. He wiped off the knob with his handkerchief. He drew a key from his pocket; then decided not to lock the door. He went to a doorway farther along the corridor, and opened it with an oddly shaped key which he took from his pocket.

This was evidently a master key which Hamprell had obtained. It explained how he had entered Doctor Arberg's room while the old Dane had been telephoning.

THE room in which Hamprell now stood was unoccupied. The murderer reached beneath the mattress of the bed and brought out a small package.

Standing in front of a bureau, Hamprell opened the package and drew forth a flat box. With it came a mass of white hair. With painstaking care, the murderer donned the wig, then arranged a set of whiskers upon his face. He performed these actions with the skill of a make-up artist, using spirit gum to keep the

beard and mustache in place.

When he had finished this work, Hamprell went to the closet and produced a hat and overcoat. He donned these garments, packed up his make-up box, and put it in a pocket of the coat. He crumpled the wrapping paper and pocketed it also.

Stepping from the room, Hamprell assumed a stoop-shouldered pose. He went back along the corridor, opened the door of Arberg's room, and went over to where the dead physician lay.

It was not to gloat over his handiwork that Hamprell had returned to the scene of crime. The murderer's purpose was a more practical one. He was here to study Doctor Arberg's facial appearance. After a brief survey, Hamprell turned to a mirror, adjusted his own false beard and mustache, and uttered a satisfied chuckle. His make-up filled the bill.

In Arberg's closet, Hamprell saw the Dane's hat and coat. They closely resembled the garments which Hamprell wore. Satisfied, the murderer again left the room and went along the corridor until he reached the elevators.

In the lobby of the Hotel Imperator, Martin Hamprell approached the desk and spoke to a clerk. He used the thick tones of Doctor Johan Arberg.

"I am going out," he declared. "I shall be back within the hour. You understand, yess?"

"Yes, Doctor Arberg," replied the clerk.

With shoulders stooped, Martin Hamprell moved across the lobby. He went out through the revolving door, and called a taxicab. He did not give his destination until the vehicle had started. Then he drew the paper from his pocket, and named the location of Cyril Wycliff's home, on a street in the northern portion of Manhattan.

Traffic was swift along the avenue which the taxicab followed. Within twenty minutes after his departure from the Hotel Imperator, Martin Hamprell alighted from the cab in front of an old, secluded house, that one would scarcely have believed was in New York City.

Hamprell dismissed the cab and went up the front steps. In response to his ring, the door was opened by a tall, scrawny servant whose face bore a harsh, suspicious look.

"Iss Doctor Barton Keyes here?" questioned Hamprell. "I am here to see him, yess."

THE servant stepped aside; as Hamprell entered, a stout, serious-faced man came from a side room and advanced with extended hand.

"Doctor Arberg!" exclaimed the stout man. "It is a privilege to have you here. I am Doctor Keyes."

"It iss grand to meet you, my friend," returned Hamprell warmly. "It iss not for long that I can stay. The hour iss late for me. I am an old man, yess."

"Advanced in learning, as well as in years," complimented Keyes. "Come this way, Doctor Arberg. We shall see the patient shortly. Vorber" - this to the servant - "take Doctor Arberg's hat and coat."

Martin Hamprell hid a smile beneath his copious beard and mustache as Vorber took his hat and coat. His impersonation had stood the test. He had come as Doctor Johan Arberg. If good luck continued, he would never be in the least suspected of having been anyone else.

For the second time tonight, Doctor Johan Arberg had been represented by another person in disguise. The Shadow had impersonated the Danish specialist to save the old man's life, to accomplish a deed that would bring an end to crime.

This time, Martin Hamprell was impersonating, Doctor Johan Arberg. The murderer had taken the place of the man whom he had murdered. Moreover, Martin Hamprell's taking of disguise had been in keeping with his character.

He had assumed the part of Doctor Johan Arberg to perform another deed of evil.

CHAPTER VI. THE CONSULTATION

MARTIN HAMPRELL was playing the part of Johan Arberg to perfection when Barton Keyes conducted him into a large room, on the ground floor of Cyril Wycliff's home. The room was evidently a library. It was furnished with chairs and tables of many shapes and sizes. Long rows of books rested upon high shelves.

There were three men seated in the room when the physicians entered. They rose with one accord as Doctor Barton Keyes introduced the man whom he believed was Doctor Arberg.

"This is Mr. Howard Wycliff," said Keyes, indicating a tall, light-haired man of twenty-five. "He is the son of Cyril Wycliff, our patient."

"I am glad to meet you, yess," declared Arberg, as he clasped hands with Cyril Wycliff.

"Mr. Garrett Slader," continued Keyes, introducing a tall, pinch-faced man whose hands shook from palsy. "Mr. Slader is Mr. Wycliff's attorney."

The last to be introduced was a square-shouldered, dark-haired man of thirty-five, whose keen face was set with a pair of steady, dark-brown eyes. This man studied Hamprell carefully as he shook hands with the physician.

"Mr. Paul Marchelle," introduced Doctor Keyes. "He is an associate of Mr. Slader."

"Lawyers, yess?" inquired Martin Hamprell, in his thick, well-feigned tone. "Iss it that our patient hass been feeling not so well?"

"No," said Doctor Keyes soberly. "Cyril Wycliff appears to be responding well to your prescribed treatment, Doctor Arberg. He refuses, however, to consider the seriousness of his condition. I have told him that thrombosis is dangerous; that there is always the possibility of a loosened blood clot producing fatal results."

"Every evening, Mr. Slader and Mr. Marchelle pay a visit to learn if Cyril Wycliff has any important business to transact with them. He persists that there is no cause for alarm. Therefore, he refuses to discuss matters pertaining to his estate."

"It iss a good sign," decided Hamprell, wagging his false beard in Johan Arberg's fashion. "If he iss ready to be better, it will help the treatment, yess. Iss it that we can see the patient now?"

"This way," said Keyes, turning toward the door.

Hamprell followed the physician through the hallway toward a long pair of stairs. Vorber, the tall, shrewd-faced servant, was standing with watchful eyes. Hamprell realized that this man, of all present, was the one most likely to see through a disguise.

Yet Hamprell was confident. He had done a fine job in his quick make-up. The only person who might have previously met Doctor Johan Arberg was Doctor Barton Keyes, and the physician seemed least observant of all.

THE stairs were gloomy. The second floor proved to be a large hallway with rooms at wide intervals. Vorber, passing the two leading men, moved with long stride to the door of Cyril Wycliff's bedroom and opened it. He stood aside while the physician entered with the others behind them.

Cyril Wycliff was an elderly, fat-faced man who appeared the picture of robust health. His visage, however, had a sourness that faded slightly when Doctor Keyes introduced his companion.

"Glad to meet you, Doctor Arberg," stated the elder Wycliff, extending his hand. "It's time we met - considering the time I've been under your care. When am I going to be up and about?"

"That iss for Doctor Keyes to decide," declared Hamprell. "We must haff time, yess, to make sure that you are all well, my friend."

Doctor Keyes approached with a chart. He showed it to Martin Hamprell. The false Doctor Arberg nodded wisely. He studied the report of the treatment.

"It iss good, yess," he decided. "Very good, yess. It iss time that the injections should soon be made different. A little more of the power, Doctor Keyes."

"Ah!" responded the attending physician. "You think we have advanced sufficiently?"

"Yess. You haff the fluids there. It iss for me to see, yess."

Hamprell went to a medicine table in the corner of the room. He looked at various bottles and picked up a measuring tube. He studied the small formula record which lay in view. Doctor Keyes watched him with keen interest. The others were beyond the bed, talking with Cyril Wycliff.

"What iss the pulse?" questioned Hamprell, turning suddenly to Doctor Keyes. "The temperature?"

"I shall take the reading immediately," returned Keyes.

The attending physician went to Cyril Wycliff's bedside, leaving Hamprell alone in front of the medicine table. Carefully, Hamprell measured off solutions in a graduated glass. He picked up one bottle and held it in his hand, while he turned his head to note the men by the bedside.

No one was glancing in Hamprell's direction. Turning his attention to the glass and bottle in his hand, Hamprell poured forth a supply of oily fluid. He replaced the bottle on the table, and immediately concluded his solution formation by using a small quantity of liquid from another bottle.

Hamprell was holding the glass to the light as Keyes came over to report Wycliff's pulse and temperature. Both were normal, the physician stated.

Hamprell nodded wisely.

"That iss good," he declared. "I haff giffen but a little more change to the injection. You see?" He pointed to the glass; then to the last bottle which he had used.

"I understand," said Keyes, nodding. "The new formula was to go into effect next week. In the meantime, you have arranged a special formula midway between the old and the new."

"Yess," asserted Hamprell. "It iss sufficient for this to be used until there iss no more."

Doctor Keyes took the measuring glass. He nodded as he studied the quantity of the solution.

"Plenty for twelve injections," he remarked. "Two each day for the next six days. I shall begin with the first injection tomorrow. That will be at noon."

"It iss better to begin tonight," returned Hamprell. "With the temperature and the pulse so good, it can begin with the next."

"At midnight," muttered Doctor Keyes, making a notation on the chart.

WHILE the attending physician continued to arrange his new records, Martin Hamprell walked over toward the bedside. Confident in the effectiveness of his disguise, he chatted with Cyril Wycliff until Doctor Barton Keyes came back from the corner of the room.

"It iss time that I must go," declared Hamprell, glancing at his watch. "It iss nearly ten o'clock. That iss a late time."

Accompanied by Keyes, Hamprell left the sick room and descended the stairs. He stood in the living room while Vorber brought his hat and coat. Hamprell eyed the taciturn servant for a moment, then turned to the others.

"The patient iss doing well," he declared. "I must giff my commendation to my friend, Doctor Keyes."

"We owe you a great deal of thanks, Doctor Arberg," said Howard Wycliff.

"With this improvement, Mr. Slader" - Howard turned toward the old, gawky lawyer - "the necessity of having my father arrange his complete affairs is not so pressing."

"It would still be advisable," insisted Slader, "but with his recovery approaching, we must use tact."

"There iss always danger," reminded Hamprell, with his final display of Arberg's dialect. "The thrombosis iss a very bad condition. With the patient quiet, like tonight; with the pulse and temperature at the normal, it iss best that he should not be disturbed."

The fake specialist shook hands about the group. With shoulders bowed, he went to the door with Doctor Keyes. The two stood there talking until the honk of a horn sounded outside. Howard Wycliff had summoned a cab.

Vorber, the tall, sour-faced servant, was the last one to watch the stoop-shouldered visitor depart. He stood at the door until he saw the white bearded man enter the cab. Then Vorber closed the portal.

From the cab, Martin Hamprell detected Vorber at the door. The fake Doctor Arberg chuckled as his taxi started away.

TWENTY minutes later, Hamprell alighted at a spot not far from the Hotel Imperator. Entering a cigar store, the false specialist made a telephone call to the hotel. In a voice somewhat like his own, he asked if Doctor Arberg had returned. He received a negative reply. Chuckling, he left the cigar store.

Five minutes later, Hamprell's stooping figure appeared in the hotel lobby. Still playing the part of Doctor Arberg, the crook stopped at the desk and received a slip which stated that some unknown person had called him by telephone, only five minutes previously.

Strolling to the elevator, Hamprell ascended to the twenty-second floor. As Arberg, he shuffled toward the door of the old physician's room. He did not enter. Instead, he kept on to the empty room which he

had previously used as his own.

There, before a mirror, Hamprell quickly removed all traces of his make-up. With the remains of false beard and hair tucked beneath his coat, the murderer cautiously went back into the corridor. He found a stairway and descended four flights.

There, as himself, he quietly entered an elevator and rode down to the lobby. As a quiet, inconspicuous guest, he departed from the Hotel Emperor.

Murder had been Martin Hamprell's work tonight. He had followed murder with a pretense. In the role of Doctor Johan Arberg, his own victim, he had held a consultation with Doctor Barton Keyes.

Boldly, Hamprell had returned to the Hotel Emperor, entering there at ten minutes after ten, for his final establishment of Doctor Arberg's character. Departing, he was swallowed up in the multitude that thronged the busy streets of New York.

An archmurderer had performed an evil deed. He had followed it with new activities. The purpose of his crime completely veiled, the time of the evil deed covered, Martin Hamprell feared no consequences.

As he headed south on Broadway, his evil brain was gloating on the past. His thoughts were also of the near future. For Martin Hamprell, through one murder, had paved the way to another death which was soon to arrive.

CHAPTER VII. THE SHADOW HEARS

MIDNIGHT had arrived. Amid the turmoil of Manhattan, quiet existed in a little room. A pitiful figure lay upon a cot. His eyes staring upward, Sparkles Lorskin was breathing out his life.

Other crooks had died as Sparkles was dying. Evil, wasted lives had reached an end when they had been used for crime in opposition to The Shadow. This was but the aftermath of a battle in which justice had gained a grim triumph.

Yet Lorskin's useless life was still to play a part in affairs of crime. Unwittingly, the dying crook was to reveal an evil deed which another had accomplished in his stead. Ignorant of all save his own hopeless condition, Sparkles Lorskin was about to state a fact that would lead to immediate consequences.

Two men were standing by Lorskin's bedside. One was Joe Cardona, ace detective of the New York force. The other was Clyde Burke, police reporter of the New York Classic. Cardona was here in the interests of the law: to learn what little he might glean concerning the affray at Lorskin's apartment. Burke, presumably, was on the job to get a story for his newspaper readers.

Yet Burke, as he stood watching Cardona and the dying crook, held another purpose in his mind. A keen-faced journalist, a man who could keep confidences, Clyde Burke had a greater duty than the one which he owed his newspaper.

Clyde Burke was a secret agent of The Shadow. Tonight, he was performing a function which was part of his routine. It was his work to keep tabs on those who had failed before The Shadow's power, that he might report back to his unseen chief any added details which pertained to crime.

Joe Cardona, his swarthy countenance steady, was speaking in a slow, monotonous tone that drummed into Sparkles Lorskin's dying brain. With cool, effective effort, the star detective was seeking an answer to certain speculative questions.

"We've got the stuff you stole, Lorskin," Cardona was declaring. "Mitts Cordy is dead. So is his mob.

Tell us what you know about them."

Sparkles Lorskin stared. He did not speak.

"You're dying, Lorskin," reminded Cardona. "Dying - do you hear me? Come clean - before you die. Square yourself. Tell us what you know about Mitts Cordy and the rest."

"Mitts Cordy!" The name came in a gasp from Lorskin. "Mitts Cordy. Where is he?"

Delirium showed as the dying crook turned his eyes toward the detective.

"Mitts got his," informed Cardona. "He's dead, Lorskin. Dead, like you will be -"

"Mitts was my pal!" coughed Lorskin. "My pal - he's dead. Some - somebody got him. Somebody got me."

"You were working together, eh?"

"The old doctor!" gulped the crook. "What - what happened to him? Where - where is he?"

"What doctor?" quizzed Cardona.

"Arberg," said Sparkles Lorskin, in a weary tone. "Johan Arberg - at my apartment - to buy - to buy the stuff that -"

"Doctor Johan Arberg," declared Cardona slowly. "Tell me how he figured in this, Lorskin."

"Money!" blurted Sparkles, lifting his hands to claw in the air. "Money! He brought it with him! He came from the hotel - from the Emperor! He had the money with him. He wanted to buy gems - I wanted his money!"

The crook was staring wildly at the ceiling. His hands dropped heavily upon his chest. Blood trickled from his lips as he coughed huskily. A doctor entered and stood beside the bed. Lorskin's head rolled wearily to one side. The physician turned to Joe Cardona.

"Dead," was the single word the doctor uttered.

JOE CARDONA pondered as he strolled out into the corridor, with Clyde Burke at his elbow. The detective stared at the reporter, his eyes mirroring the deep concentration in his mind.

"I've got the idea now, Burke," remarked Cardona. "It looked phony to me - a fight between Sparkles Lorskin and Mitts Cordy. With the two working together, though, it gets different. Who is this Doctor Johan Arberg? Did you ever hear anything of him or his work?"

"A blood specialist," said the reporter, recalling a news item that he had read. "A big fellow from Copenhagen. Came to New York from Chicago. It seems to me I read something about him being a gem collector."

"Ah!" A glimmer of understanding appeared upon Cardona's face. "That tells us the story. Those jewels in Lorskin's place were all stolen goods. They're being traced now. Lorskin had a wise stunt - getting a foreign gem collector to buy them.

"From what Lorskin said, the old doctor must have been in the apartment. I see the game. Mitts Cordy there to grab him. It's like the guy had a big roll with him - the way Lorskin mentioned money just now. Doctor Arberg must have managed to get away. That doesn't explain it, though."

"Explain what?" questioned Clyde Burke, in a tone of pretended curiosity.

"Explain how all that shooting started," answered Cardona. "It doesn't tell what happened to Doctor Johan Arberg, either."

"There's a story in back of this!" exclaimed Clyde enthusiastically.

"You just finding that out?" laughed Cardona. "Well, you're Johnny on the spot, Burke. Come along. We'll get the story all right."

"Where?"

"Over at the Hotel Emperor. Come along - it's only a few minutes from here."

SHORTLY afterward, Detective Joe Cardona entered the lobby of the Emperor. Clyde Burke accompanied the sleuth. Cardona strode to the desk and asked for Doctor Johan Arberg. He showed his badge as he spoke. The clerk stared.

"Doctor Arberg is in his room," he stated. "He has been there since" - the clerk turned to check a record - "since ten minutes after ten."

"That's about two hours ago," remarked Cardona. "Well, we're going up to see him."

"Here is the house detective," informed the clerk, as a stocky man came up to join the group. "Our new man."

"Detective Cardona, from headquarters," said Joe, introducing himself. "There was some shooting in an apartment over on the East Side. A dying man said that it was a game to grab some dough from Doctor Johan Arberg."

"I want to find out what the doctor knows. Apparently, he was to be a victim. The crook was delirious when he croaked. I couldn't tell whether or not Arberg had been over to his place when -"

"What time was the shooting?" questioned the clerk.

"Shortly before nine," replied Cardona.

"Doctor Arberg was here then," stated the clerk, looking at his record. "He received a telephone call just before nine; one a few minutes afterward. He went out at nine twenty, and returned at ten ten."

"Hm-m-m," grunted Cardona. "Well, that means he wasn't over at the apartment. I'd been thinking that, anyway. He couldn't have gotten away from that place very well. I want to talk to him, though. Here's the way we'll work it."

"We'll go upstairs, the three of us" - Cardona indicated himself, Clyde Burke, and the house detective - "before you call the room from the desk. When Arberg answers, tell him a visitor has gone up. We'll rap on the door right after that."

"All right," agreed the clerk.

The trio ascended. They reached the twenty-second floor. They waited outside of Doctor Arberg's room. The telephone began to ring. No one answered it. The ringing continued.

"Sounds like he isn't in," declared Cardona, in a low tone. "That noise ought to have wakened him up by now."

"The lights are on," declared the hotel detective, peering at the bottom of the door from the opposite side of the corridor.

"Let's have the pass key," ordered Cardona.

To his surprise, the detective found the door unlocked. He opened the barrier and stood upon the threshold of the room. There, Cardona stared at the crumpled form of Doctor Johan Arberg.

"Dead!" exclaimed Cardona, advancing into the room. "Stand back, men. Don't disturb a thing! This is murder!"

THE ace sleuth did not even approach the telephone. He stationed Clyde Burke beside the door. He ordered the hotel detective to unlock another room and call the desk. When this had been done, Cardona hastened to the telephone in the other room, and called headquarters. He returned to find Clyde and the house man standing exactly where he had left them.

"The police surgeon is on the way," announced Cardona. "Inspector Timothy Klein is coming up. You're sure that dead man is Doctor Arberg?"

"Positively," responded the house detective.

Clyde Burke strolled toward the corridor. Cardona stopped him.

"Where are you going, Burke?" he questioned.

"Out," responded Clyde weakly. "This sort of hit me, Joe, seeing a dead man all of a sudden. I've looked at plenty of them in the morgue - but unexpectedly, like this -"

"You're not calling the newspaper?" questioned Cardona.

"Not a bit of it, Joe," assured Clyde. "There's no story yet. They'd only tell me to get more details."

"O.K.," agreed Cardona. "After the inspector gets here, with the surgeon, you can shoot the works."

"I'll be back in ten minutes," assured Clyde. "I just want to steady up a bit - that's all."

Clyde walked toward the elevator. The hotel detective snorted.

"Kind of weak around the gills," he remarked. "Funny, for a police reporter to get that way."

"Not at all," returned Cardona. "It's liable to hit anybody at times."

CLYDE BURKE, when he reached the lobby, showed complete recovery from the faintness which had struck him. He hurried to an outside telephone and dialed a number. A quiet response came over the wire.

"Burbank speaking," said the voice.

"Report from Burke," declared Clyde. "Doctor Johan Arberg murdered in his room at the Hotel Emperor."

"Await reply," returned Burbank.

Clyde gave the number of the pay telephone and waited in the booth. Burbank, the man whom he had just called, was the contact agent of The Shadow. A call to Burbank meant that word would be relayed

to The Shadow himself.

Clyde Burke, like other active agents of The Shadow, knew virtually nothing concerning the whereabouts of the mysterious chief. Through Burbank, however, they could always reach The Shadow in an emergency.

The telephone rang. Clyde lifted the receiver. He again heard Burbank's quiet tones. The message was terse.

"Report forwarded," assured the contact man. "Cover the murder as a regular story for the Classic."

Clyde Burke reflected as he strode back toward the Hotel Emperor. Burbank's message meant exactly one thing: that The Shadow, himself, intended to investigate the murder of Doctor Johan Arberg.

Clyde Burke complimented himself upon the speed with which he had sent word to The Shadow. He was sure that the master of darkness, when he arrived, would be able to trace the murderer of the Danish specialist.

Sparkles Lorskin had been a link to Doctor Johan Arberg. The dead Dane would, in turn, point the way to some other person, once The Shadow arrived upon the scene. Perhaps, by that time, Clyde might be able to learn something from Joe Cardona's study of the case.

Clyde Burke would have been amazed had he known the insidious truth that lay behind the death of Doctor Johan Arberg. His thoughts were speculations on the possible identity of an unknown murderer - not on other deeds of crime.

A problem for The Shadow - the tracking of a fiend. Such were Clyde's Burke's thoughts. Yet even while the reporter speculated; even while The Shadow was heading for the scene of crime, new and more insidious murder was reaching its completion elsewhere!

CHAPTER VIII. DESIGNED DEATH

MARTIN HAMPRELL had visited two definite places on his missions of crime. One - Doctor Arberg's room in the Hotel Emperor - was now occupied by the police. The other, Cyril Wycliff's bedroom, still preserved its quiet atmosphere.

The full-faced patient was resting quietly in bed. Doctor Barton Keyes, who had just administered the midnight hypodermic, was saying a good night.

The physician turned out the light and left the door slightly ajar. He went downstairs. He passed Vorber, the solemn servant, in the lower hall. He reached the library, where young Howard Wycliff was still in conference with Garrett Slader and Paul Marchelle.

"I still insist," Slader was saying in his querulous tones, "that Cyril Wycliff should make a definite statement of his estate. It is ridiculous for him to keep his affairs so closely to himself. What is your opinion, Paul?"

"Perhaps," returned Marchelle thoughtfully, "he is only pretending that he has assets other than those of which we know. He has never discussed these supposed belongings in any specific fashion."

"That is possible," admitted Slader, "but I have known Cyril for many years. He has frequently brought out securities and titles from under cover. I suspect that he has some such assets at present."

"Gentlemen," interposed Doctor Keyes. "I have heard snatches of this discussion, which seems to be

sponsored by Mr. Slader. You, Mr. Slader, are Cyril Wycliff's attorney. I must remind you that I am his physician. These persistent visits to Cyril Wycliff's bedside are not at all good for my patient. Will you kindly clarify the situation and its reasons? I believe it should be my privilege to know the facts in detail."

"I can explain it, Doctor Keyes," declared Howard Wycliff. "It dates back to the beginning of my father's illness. When you pronounced his ailment as thrombosis and stated frankly that it carried the danger of sudden death, my father sent for Mr. Slader. He told him then that he wanted him to be close at hand; that he had certain important papers which must be given to me in case of his death.

"After my father recovered from his first alarm, he refused to discuss the matter further. Mr. Slader and Mr. Marchelle have paid regular visits; each time, my father puts off the subject. He has declared only that he possesses assets which he does not care to reveal until death actually threatens. He will say no more. He will not even specify what those assets are."

Doctor Keyes nodded. He looked toward Garrett Slader, and the old lawyer motioned for Howard Wycliff to continue.

"My father's known assets," resumed Howard, "are in safe-deposit vaults. His will is made. It is in Mr. Slader's safe. Except for a few minor legacies to cousins of mine, the entire estate will come to me. Mr. Slader, therefore, persists that I should know exactly what other assets exist, and where they may be found."

"Certainly," agreed Doctor Keyes. "But your father's condition must also be considered. I can see how constant annoyance will not only turn his mind to concealment, but will also have a marked effect in delaying his recovery of health."

"His condition may mean death!" warned Garrett Slader. "I am protecting his interests and those of his son!"

"Mr. Slader's viewpoint is justifiable," assured Paul Marchelle. "At the same time, Doctor Keyes, I feel that your opinion is highly important. I have recommended that we be less persistent in our efforts -"

"Preposterous!" exclaimed Slader. "Paul, you do not know our client as well as I do. Cyril Wycliff relies upon my advice. He will eventually come to his senses."

Doctor Keyes was thoughtful. Silently, he nudged his thumb toward the doorway. Howard Wycliff understood the motion and shook his head.

"I don't think Miles Vorber can help us," he declared, in a low tone. "He has been my father's servant for many years. He has always gone about his duties in a steady fashion, but my father has never confided in him."

"He is a suspicious type of individual," commented Slader. "I think that your father has been unwise to keep him here."

"Just part of father's policy, I suppose," returned Howard. "He always kept his affairs to himself. Vorber knows that; I imagine that he thinks it his duty to watch everyone."

The conversation ended as Vorber's footsteps were heard in the hallway. The old servant entered and faced Howard Wycliff.

"Are there any more orders tonight, sir?" he inquired.

"None," said Howard.

Vorber turned. His face was sour as he turned his eyes toward each of the other men present. The servant's attitude, as Slader had stated, was one that betokened constant suspicion.

There was a lull as Vorber left the library. The servant's footsteps sounded on the bottom steps of the stairs. Howard Wycliff began to speak. The words ended before they reached his lips. All present sprang to their feet.

A long, wailing scream had come from upstairs; from the direction of Cyril Wycliff's bedroom. Howard Wycliff dashed toward the door. Paul Marchelle was close behind him. Doctor Keyes and Garrett Slader followed.

Vorber, showing surprising agility for one of his age, outpaced the younger men in the race up the stairs. Cyril Wycliff's shrieks were horrifying. Vorber shoved open the bedroom door and flashed on the light. He sprang toward the bed as Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle arrived.

CYRIL WYCLIFF was sitting upright. His face was purplish. He was clawing his temples with his hands. The patient seemed bursting with a terrific attack of some unexpected fever. Another shriek came from his lips. He sank back, writhing, as Doctor Keyes and Garrett Slader reached the room.

The physician sprang to the patient's side. Cyril Wycliff did not notice him. His eyes were upon Howard and the lawyers. They did not even appear to notice Miles Vorber, who had moved to the other side of the bed to make way for Doctor Keyes.

"I am dying!" blurted Cyril Wycliff. He clutched at his heart. "Quick! Before I die! Quick, Howard!"

As his son leaned forward, Cyril Wycliff gasped again, in words that all could hear.

"The deed! The deed!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Find it! Bring it here! It is - it is -"

A pause, while Cyril Wycliff seemed to lose strength. Howard Wycliff was eager to hear his father's words. Miles Vorber was staring straight at the stricken man's lips. Garrett Slader and Paul Marchelle were listening, while Doctor Barton Keyes made efforts to counteract the fit which had swept over his patient.

"The deed" - Cyril Wycliff's words came slowly - "in the library - in the - in the -"

The words ended with a scream. Cyril Wycliff raised himself and flung his arms wide. Then, with a tremendous surge of effort, he sought to complete his statement, but failed. He collapsed, gurgling, upon the pillows.

The crimson tinge faded from the stricken man's face. Cyril Wycliff's parched lips spread; thereafter, they moved no more. Doctor Keyes arose to face the men who gazed at him with deep concern.

"He is dead," pronounced the physician.

No response came from the stunned group. Despite the warning that sudden death might be the lot of Cyril Wycliff, none had expected so rapid a demise. Only tonight, Wycliff had appeared well on the road to complete recovery.

Howard Wycliff bowed his head. His father's death was a shock to the young man. Miles Vorber, the old servant, never moved from the opposite side of the bed. His narrowed eyes surveyed the other men, as though seeking to detect their reactions. It was evident that Vorber's alertness was due to the dying words that Cyril Wycliff had uttered.

Old Garrett Slader shrugged his shoulders. To the attorney, this occurrence stood as proof that his ideas had been correct; that Cyril Wycliff should long ago have given the information which he had refused to divulge until his death.

Paul Marchelle, however, did not share his associate's feelings. He stepped forward and placed his hand upon Howard Wycliff's shoulder. With friendly comfort, he remained there; then, sensing that the shock had passed, he led Howard from the room.

IT was a strained group that assembled in the library a short while later. Howard Wycliff, partially recovered from the blow which had come with his father's passing, faced the two attorneys and tried to recall the final words that he had heard.

"A deed," remarked the young man. "My father spoke of it as he was dying. A deed, here in this library. Somewhere in this room."

"We shall have to institute a search," decided old Garrett Slader. "In the meantime, I would suggest that this room be kept locked."

"A wise idea," agreed Paul Marchelle.

"Your father bought much property," asserted Slader, as he turned to Howard Wycliff. "He had a remarkable ability for purchasing real estate. You can be sure that the deed is valuable. It must be found."

Miles Vorber came solemnly into the room. Howard Wycliff beckoned to the old servant and questioned if he knew of any possible hiding place in the library. Vorber solemnly shook his head.

"I know of no hiding place, sir," was all he said.

Doctor Keyes entered while the servant was speaking. The portly physician seemed dejected. He shook his head sadly, as though he could not understand the sudden end that had come to Cyril Wycliff.

"One can never be sure," he declared. "Thrombosis, despite the counteracting efforts which we employ, is always apt to gain its end. Coming so soon upon Doctor Arberg's visit, this death is all the more unfortunate."

"The new injections," suggested Paul Marchelle. "They could not possibly have caused the change?"

"No," decided Doctor Keyes. "They were wisely calculated by Doctor Arberg's own direction. They were designed to strengthen the patient, not to render him more susceptible to the attack which occurred."

The doctor's verdict was accepted. Keyes stepped into the hallway and picked up a telephone. He held the instrument for a short while; then replaced it and came back into the library.

"I was going to call Doctor Arberg," he stated. "The hour, however, is too late. There is nothing now that he can do. I shall make out the death certificate, stating that Cyril Wycliff succumbed as the result of thrombosis."

KEYES spoke a double truth when he stated that Doctor Johan Arberg could do nothing to aid dead Cyril Wycliff. Like the patient who now was past human assistance, Doctor Arberg, too, was dead.

Arberg's demise would be known as murder; Wycliff's as death from natural cause. Yet there was a close parallel between both cases. Cyril Wycliff, like Johan Arberg, had died by the insidious hand of

Martin Hamprell!

Cyril Wycliff's death had been designed, not only to eliminate him, but to prevent him from giving the information which he had tried to utter.

Martin Hamprell had succeeded in his first deed of crime upon this night - the prevention of Doctor Arberg's visit to Wycliff's home.

He had also managed - in the guise of Arberg - to plan sure and unsuspected death for Cyril Wycliff. In his final purpose, however, he had gained but half success. Cyril Wycliff, in dying, had managed to give an inkling concerning the identity and location of an important paper which he wanted his son to have.

A property deed lay somewhere in the library. It must be found. Howard Wycliff, aided by friends, would endeavor to locate it. In so doing, he and his companions would be subject to the same menace which had brought the death of Johan Arberg and Cyril Wycliff.

Unknown enemies threatened the future of Howard Wycliff and those who might seek to aid him. Even the existence of such enemies was outside of Howard Wycliff's present range of knowledge. Danger lay ahead. Insidious schemes were in the making.

The police, if they could learn, might be of aid. But the police were not likely to uncover the deep plot that lay beneath the deaths designed and executed by Martin Hamprell.

Only one could bring future aid. That one was The Shadow. Already this mysterious personage of the night was coming to investigate the death of Doctor Johan Arberg. Would his study of the savant's murder enable him to uncover the plot beyond?

The answer to that important question rested with The Shadow alone.

CHAPTER IX. THE SHADOW'S CLEW

DETECTIVE JOE CARDONA was completing his report of Doctor Johan Arberg's murder. The detective was still in Arberg's room at the Hotel Imperator. With him were Clyde Burke, Inspector Timothy Klein, and a police surgeon.

"Robbery," asserted Cardona. "There is the motive, inspector. As for the details of the case -"

Cardona paused, a sheet of penciled notations in his hand. The telephone was ringing. The detective answered it.

"Who?" he questioned. "Came to see Doctor Arberg?... Send him up... Yes, here to the room."

The detective turned to the other men. A puzzled look showed on his face.

"Did you ever hear of Lamont Cranston?" he questioned.

"Is he the millionaire globe-trotter?" asked the reporter.

"Yeah," returned Cardona. "Well, he's coming up here. He stopped in to call on Doctor Arberg. Cranston is a friend of Police Commissioner Weston, by the way."

A few minutes later, a tall man entered the room. He stopped just within the doorway. A solemn look appeared upon his firm face as he observed the body of Doctor Johan Arberg by the table in the corner. Cardona fancied that he could see a flicker of emotion in Cranston's brilliant eyes.

The millionaire turned to the detective.

"When did this happen?" he questioned.

"About ten thirty tonight," answered Cardona. "How did you happen to come here, Mr. Cranston?"

"Doctor Arberg was an old acquaintance of mine," explained the millionaire, in a quiet tone. "I used to visit him in Copenhagen. He had an interest outside of medicine - the collecting of precious stones. That is a hobby of my own. Hence Doctor Arberg and I had much in common.

"Tonight, I chanced to learn that Doctor Arberg was in New York. I read a newspaper item that stated he was stopping at the Hotel Emperor. Although it was rather late, I decided to drop by, hoping that he might still be awake. At the desk, I learned that Doctor Arberg had been murdered."

There was conviction in every word that Lamont Cranston uttered. Joe Cardona looked squarely at the millionaire. He met Cranston's eyes - piercing optics that shone from either side of a hawklike nose. Joe Cardona felt a definite respect for Lamont Cranston.

"Murder," declared the detective, "is obvious in this case. The motive was robbery. Since you were a friend of Doctor Arberg, Mr. Cranston, you are welcome to remain while I review my report."

"Thank you," said Cranston.

As the tall millionaire seated himself, Cardona referred to his notes, then began his statements for the benefit of Inspector Klein.

"There were two telephone calls for Arberg," said the detective. "One was shortly before nine o'clock; the other shortly afterward. Prior to that time - between eight and nine - two hotel attendants were here rearranging the furniture to suit Doctor Arberg's ideas. The old doctor wasn't out of the place at the time of the killings up at Lorskin's."

"Yet Lorskin," interrupted Klein, "said that Arberg had a lot of money."

"Certainly," resumed Cardona. "Sparkles Lorskin was after it. But it's a sure bet that Arberg didn't go there. He was here. We don't know what caused the mess at Lorskin's - unless there was some double-crossing in the game. We may be able to trace something from that end, but right now, we've got facts here.

"It was nine twenty when Doctor Arberg went out. He was alone. He came back at ten ten - still alone. There was a report of a telephone call when he arrived. That indicates that someone was waiting to see him when he came in - or trying to find if he was still out.

"Whether the murderer was waiting for Arberg is a question. It's more likely that he sneaked in through the door, which we found unlocked. The point is that Arberg made for the table in the corner. There's finger prints on the telephone. It would be great if they were the murderer's, but I think they'll prove to be Arberg's."

On his feet, Cardona moved toward the corner. He began a portrayal of the crime. He stood above Arberg's body, facing those who watched. Then he strode out to the center of the room and whirled toward the corner.

"Arberg fired at the murderer. The man fired back." Cardona moved toward the corner, to make another complete turn. "The bullets from Arberg's gun are in the wall. The murderer's shots killed the old man. He must have fallen upon the table and slumped down. Shiny streaks in the dust show that."

"The ink bottle and the clock fell on the floor. The murderer grabbed all he could get. The old doctor's bank roll, his jewelry, even his finger ring. He made his get-away. All we know is that he's a crook who came in here to steal. Maybe he got the idea from Sparkles Lorskin and made a stab at this job after Sparkles was shot.

"What we do know is that the murder took place at some time after ten, the time when Arberg came in; and if one clew is right, I can set the exact time. Ten twenty-five."

WITH this statement, Cardona picked the clock from the floor and pointed to the dial. The diamonds that encircled the case glittered in the light. Cardona did not pause to admire them. He was marking the time with his finger. The clock read twenty-five minutes after ten.

"The fall stopped the works," explained Cardona. "Unless the murderer was thinking of more than I give him credit for, that clock tells us just when the murder took place."

"What do you mean?" questioned Klein. "You've got the evidence there, Joe. Ten twenty-five - that's the time it happened."

"Maybe," said the detective cagily. "There's another angle to it, though. Suppose this murder was committed at a few minutes before midnight. The murderer could have picked up the clock and turned the hands back to ten twenty-five."

"Why?"

"To fool us into thinking he got out of here before he did. That's why. I'm making allowance for that, inspector. At the same time, there's a good chance that the murderer left the clock alone. The doctor here" - Cardona indicated the police surgeon - "says that Arberg must have been lying dead close to two hours. But we're not going to take the clock time as final evidence - not by a long shot.

"Suppose we nab some crook - want to know where he was at ten twenty-five on the night when Arberg was killed. Maybe he'd produce a perfect alibi. Nobody gets away with that kind of stuff when I'm around. On the report, it will be death some time between ten twenty-five and twelve fifteen."

"Good," commented Inspector Klein. "Very clever, Cardona, figuring that the clock could have been turned back."

"I don't miss many tricks," said the detective modestly. "What's more" - Cardona's face clouded - "this is going to be a tough case any way you look at it. We've got to start with Sparkles Lorskin and Mitts Cordy. If some other tough guys started the brawl at Lorskin's, and got away, it's possible that they took up the job that Sparkles and Mitts were going to do.

"With the clean-up that was pulled in the apartment, it would have been safe for some smart gunman to come up here on his own. There was only one guy left alive in the apartment - that was Sparkles Lorskin. He got his when the police arrived."

"What about the jewels at Lorskin's?" questioned the inspector. "He still had them when the officers reached the apartment."

"Yes," admitted Cardona, "but he could have driven them off. They had to scam fast enough after the shooting started. Besides that, there's no telling how much other stuff Lorskin might have had in his apartment. We picked up plenty of his swag - but there might have been more of it."

The detective paced back across the room and spoke again in a definite tone. He was narrowing the matter down to the situation as it existed here, in Doctor Arberg's room.

"We'll work from this spot, inspector," declared the sleuth. "We'll find out who it was that left this room some time after ten twenty-five. That's the job we've got. Where Arberg was before that is important only if it brings in crooks. If he went out for any ordinary purpose between nine twenty and ten ten, it doesn't mean a thing."

Inspector Klein nodded his agreement. The inspector had great reliance in Cardona's deductive ability. Clyde Burke, taking notes, was pleased with the story that he was getting.

WHILE Cardona and Klein were discussing details of the report, Lamont Cranston arose quietly and strolled across the room toward the body of Johan Arberg. The millionaire stood silent, as he looked at the upturned dial of the stopped clock.

Cranston's eyes seemed to reflect the sparkle of the diamonds that fringed the case of the timepiece. A thin, faint smile appeared upon the millionaire's lips. No one saw that smile. It disappeared as Cranston turned toward the door of the room.

"Doctor Arberg was a most estimable man," said Cranston to Cardona. "His death is greatly to be regretted. I trust that you will have success in discovering the murderer."

After a short talk with the detective, Cranston left the hotel. Joe Cardona, despite the important matters which perplexed him here, still found himself recalling Cranston's calm composure, the immobile expression upon the millionaire's masklike face. Clyde Burke, too, was impressed by Cranston's arrival and departure.

Yet neither the detective nor the reporter noted an odd phenomenon which was visible when Cranston walked along the corridor. Behind the departing millionaire trailed a long, weird streak of blackness, that glided over the floor. It was the strange splotch with its topping silhouette - the shade of darkness that identified The Shadow.

THE aftermath of Cranston's visit to the Hotel Imperator occurred some time later. A click sounded in a pitch-black room. A flickering blue light cast its spectral rays upon the polished surface of a table. White hands crept from darkness, to move within the range of light. Upon one hand sparkled the flashing, ever-changing gem which was the symbol of The Shadow.

Pen and paper were on the table. The Shadow's hands began to use them. Long fingers sketched the outline of the clock which had been lying on the floor in Doctor Arberg's room. The final touch was the placing of pointing hands, which indicated twenty-five minutes after ten.

Eyes from the dark studied that time. On another sheet of paper, The Shadow inscribed terse words which were open statements of his hidden thoughts. The Shadow was analyzing Detective Joe Cardona's theory.

Motive - robbery; time indicated - 10:25;

evidence - clock; possibility - hands set back -

These were the phrases which The Shadow inscribed in his analysis. Then, in tabulated form, The Shadow marked a schedule that gave the approximate times of the events which had concerned Doctor Arberg's affairs during the evening.

8:50 - Telephone call.

9:00 - Telephone call.

9:20 - Departure.

10:05 - Unanswered call.

10:10 - Return.

10:25 - Time on clock.

12:20 - Discovery of murder.

The Shadow checked the top of the column. The 8:50 call, he knew, was his own. Then minutes later, at nine o'clock, Doctor Arberg had answered another telephone call; probably one which summoned him from the hotel. The Shadow's finger marked the interval between nine o'clock and twenty minutes after that hour.

Why the telephone call at five minutes after ten, only a few minutes before Doctor Arberg's return? Why had that call not been repeated? The person on the wire had probably been informed that Doctor Arberg would soon be back.

The Shadow laughed. He sensed that the 10:05 call could have been made to learn whether or not anything had been discovered amiss.

Motive robbery; time 10:25; possibly later; evidence, the clock -

After writing these words again, The Shadow deliberately drew a line through the phrases until he reached the final three words. "Evidence, the clock" - that was the only statement which The Shadow accepted. Beneath it, The Shadow wrote:

Motive not robbery.

The whispered laugh that crept through the blackened room explained more effectively than words the reason why The Shadow had formed this conclusion. If, as Joe Cardona supposed, the motive had been robbery, why had the murderer failed to take the jeweled clock along with the other articles that he had stolen?

There was only one answer. He had left the clock on the floor for the express purpose of deceiving investigators. The murderer had considered that factor of more importance than the purloining of objects of value. He had taken cash and belongings to establish robbery as the motive; he had left the clock to establish a wrong time for the deed. In so doing, he had deceived the police, but not The Shadow!

As though measuring time in terms of space, The Shadow rested his thumb and forefinger upon the schedule so that it included the tabulations from 10:10 to 12:20. According to Joe Cardona, the murder must have been committed within that span of time.

The Shadow's fingers moved. Cardona's theory was finally rejected. One fact remained obvious. The murderer's advantage would not be materially aided by leaving the clock to indicate any time between twenty-five after ten and the hour of midnight. Any robber would have considered the clock itself of greater value.

The Shadow's fingers moved higher up the schedule. They indicated the time between nine o'clock and ten minutes after ten. They narrowed to show those twenty minutes between nine and the time when Doctor Arberg had been seen leaving the hotel lobby. The Shadow laughed softly.

Here was the answer. If murder had been done within that space of time, the slayer would have every

reason to leave the clock upon the floor, after setting its hands ahead - not back!

THE SHADOW knew the truth. Doctor Arberg had been killed shortly after nine o'clock. The man who had been seen leaving the hotel lobby; the man who had returned at ten minutes after ten; was not Doctor Johan Arberg. He was none other than the murderer himself, disguised as the Danish specialist!

Perhaps The Shadow's own activities - the ease with which he, himself, had earlier played the part of Doctor Arberg - accounted for his prompt conclusions. The result, however, was definite. The Shadow knew that he was dealing with a master murderer - not an ordinary criminal. He knew also that the man had held some hidden purposes in his crime.

It was the murderer who had called up at five minutes after ten, to make sure that his deed had not been discovered. He had then returned to make his final appearance as Doctor Arberg. A span of fifty minutes had been all that he required.

Why?

That was the question which The Shadow faced. But in this situation, The Shadow was equipped to follow a true clue while Joe Cardona still continued along a blind trail. The Shadow knew that the morrow would, perhaps, bring word of Doctor Arberg's supposed whereabouts between twenty minutes past nine and ten after ten.

Cardona would think nothing of that matter. The Shadow, however, would follow the new clue. For in finding the place where Doctor Arberg had been seen during those important fifty minutes, The Shadow would be tracing the actions of the murderer himself!

The light clicked. The room was plunged in darkness. Amid the Stygian atmosphere of this unknown black-walled room, The Shadow's laugh resounded with sinister tone. Eerie echoes responded with a sobbing shudder. When the last ghoulish reverberations had died away, the room was empty.

The Shadow had departed from his sanctum, that hidden abode where he made research into the ways of crime. His plans for his next step were in the making. The clue of the clock had served The Shadow well!

CHAPTER X. MURDERERS GLOAT

A NEW evening had descended upon Manhattan. In the living room of a sumptuous hotel suite, two men were reading the latest editions of the afternoon newspapers. One man chuckled as he looked up from his reading. The action revealed the evil, smiling features of Martin Hamprell.

The man who had slain Doctor Johan Arberg seemed pleased with the newspaper reports. He looked at his companion, a big, bluff-faced, domineering fellow. Martin Hamprell spoke.

"All's well," he remarked. "Plenty of talk about Doctor Johan Arberg."

"And none about Martin Hamprell," chuckled the bluff-faced man.

"Nor Ward Fetzler," added Hamprell, staring straight at his companion.

A worried look appeared upon the big man's haughty face. Meeting Hamprell's steady gaze, the man offered a definite objection.

"Leave my name out of it, Hamprell," he ordered.

"Your name is out of it, Fetzler," declared Hamprell. "So is mine. We're in the same boat, you and I - and it's a good ship."

"You did the murder."

"You offered me the job."

Fetzler scowled. Hamprell smiled. He tossed his newspaper aside, rose from his chair, advanced, and clapped the big man on the shoulder.

"Why worry?" he questioned. "So long as I stay here, as your companion, we're both safe. We might as well be pals. You've hired me; I've done the job. I'm satisfied. You may need me later."

"It looks that way," agreed Fetzler, in a sour tone. "Things are still tied up a bit."

"Look here, Fetzler," argued Hamprell. "I've done the job you wanted. I've been paid. I want you to be satisfied. You don't appear to be. Why don't you let me in on the whole idea? Maybe two heads will work better."

Fetzler made no comment. He was staring gloomily. Hamprell lighted a cigarette and began to speak in a reminiscent tone. His words began to take effect upon Fetzler.

"I've been crooked for a long time," he asserted, "and you knew it. Martin Hamprell - fake promoter; fake physician; fake lawyer; fake what-not. There's my story. Quite a contrast between myself and you. Ward Fetzler has a reputation for honest dealing. Big landowner and developer. Head of corporations. There's your story."

Fetzler looked up as Hamprell paused. The murderer gave a shrewd look, then continued with his discourse.

"You knew my unique abilities," resumed Hamprell. "You learned that I was in Buffalo. You called me by long-distance telephone and invited me here. You told me frankly that you wanted a certain man to die - namely, Cyril Wycliff. The chief obstacle to Wycliff's death was the fact that he was recovering from thrombosis, under treatment prescribed by Doctor Johan Arberg of Copenhagen."

"Correct," agreed Fetzler. "But why continue -"

"Let me proceed," interposed Hamprell. "I suggested the plan to eliminate Cyril Wycliff. I decided to impersonate Doctor Johan Arberg. I watched the old doctor from the time he arrived in New York. I prepared my make-up. Then I tried to persuade Doctor Arberg not to visit Wycliff's home. I failed in persuasion, so I committed murder.

"PLAYING the part of Johan Arberg, I visited Cyril Wycliff. I mixed the ingredients for a hypodermic solution. I had some drugs of my own with me. They proved unnecessary. Small quantities of nitroglycerin had been used in Wycliff's injections. I mixed a solution overcharged with nitroglycerin. The result was Wycliff's sudden death after the first injection."

"My tracks are completely covered. The newspaper accounts prove that fact. The motive for Arberg's death is accepted as robbery. I left a clock on the floor of Arberg's room, after setting its hands more than one hour ahead. The murder is believed - positively - to have occurred after Doctor Arberg's supposed return to the hotel."

"To add to my good fortune, the police today received a call from Doctor Barton Keyes, the physician attending Cyril Wycliff. Keyes stated that Arberg visited Wycliff's home between nine and ten. Hence

they are sure that Arberg was alive during that period.

"They have seen no connection whatever between the deaths off Cyril Wycliff and Johan Arberg. Doctor Keyes has declared Wycliff's death the result of thrombosis - a sudden passing that was to be expected.

"Now for my conclusion. Doctor Arberg's death has been laid to mobsters - jewel thieves - and not to any person of my caliber. Therefore, his death is advantageous. Cyril Wycliff is dead, as you desired. Yet you still appear in a quandary and assert that further murder may be necessary."

"It may," interposed Fetzler gravely. "I am counting on you, Hamprell."

"Count on me," agreed Hamprell, "only on one condition. Namely, I must know the reasons in back of it all."

Ward Fetzler considered. Hamprell's decision seemed fair enough. Fetzler grasped the murderer's viewpoint. He drummed nervously upon the arms of his chair. He motioned to Hamprell to sit down. The murderer knew that an explanation would be forthcoming.

"HAMPRELL," began Fetzler, "Cyril Wycliff was a friend of mine. Several years ago, he invested more than one hundred thousand dollars in a large purchase of Utah land that I owned - acreage which offered future profit through the development of shale oil production."

"Rather speculative," remarked Hamprell.

"Yes," agreed Fetzler, "but a sound investment at the price which Wycliff paid. I retained a smaller tract of land adjacent to the acreage which Wycliff purchased. I was not anxious for people to know that I had sold the land. Wycliff was not anxious to have it known that he had bought the property. So he gave me additional money, and I continued to pay the taxes.

"Recently, I discovered pitchblende deposits on the Utah property. I am positive that large quantities of uranium can be produced there. The land, at my estimate, is worth millions. I realized my mistake in having sold the property to Cyril Wycliff. I met him, just prior to his illness, and offered to repurchase it on a profitable basis. He refused to sell."

"You did not tell him," remarked Hamprell, "that the land contained pitchblende."

"Certainly not," resumed Fetzler. "On my next trip to Utah, I went to see if Cyril Wycliff had registered the new deed to the property, I found out that he had not. The land, to all appearances, is mine - provided only that Wycliff's deed is never registered!"

"Ah!" Hamprell nodded shrewdly. "Cyril Wycliff will not register the deed now. Someone else, however -"

"The deed is hidden," interrupted Fetzler. "Cyril Wycliff had a habit of keeping his important papers in places which he alone could reach. When I learned of his illness, I hoped that he would die. As he began to recover, I decided that I must take extreme measures."

"Which succeeded," said Hamprell, "thanks to me."

"Which succeeded only in part," returned Fetzler.

Martin Hamprell arched his eyebrows in quizzical fashion. He did not understand this statement. Ward Fetzler offered the explanation.

"When Cyril Wycliff was dying," he stated, "he managed to blurt out something about a deed - hidden, he said, somewhere in his library. The deed which I hoped would be forgotten - its existence unknown to Howard Wycliff, the son - will now be the objective of a search."

"How did you learn what Cyril Wycliff said?" questioned Hamprell suddenly.

"My plans have been carefully arranged throughout," asserted Fetzler. "I have long since had contact with - well, with a certain man who knows what takes place in the Wycliff home. This man was present when Cyril Wycliff died. He heard what was said."

"Someone at Wycliff's home?" quizzed Hamprell. "Was he there when I called - as Doctor John Arberg?"

"Yes," replied Fetzler calmly.

Martin Hamprell chuckled. He took the affair as a huge joke. He pictured the various incidents at Cyril Wycliff's home. He remembered eyes that had watched him during his visit there.

"I think I know your man," he declared. "Did he know that I was not Doctor Arberg?"

"He was posted," answered Fetzler, "to stand by you in case of emergency. He knew that your visit was a crucial test. He does not, however, know your actual identity."

"What are you going to do now?" demanded Hamprell.

"I am receiving reports from my man," responded Fetzler. "He will play a part in the search. He will try to uncover the deed before the others find it. Moreover, he will notify me in case some other person discovers the deed. That will mean -"

"A job for me," interposed Hamprell.

"Exactly," agreed Fetzler. "I wish to avoid further murder merely as a matter of policy. If, however, an emergency arises, I shall put you on the job immediately."

"I see," laughed Hamprell. "I wondered why you wanted me to remain here, instead of taking for cover. It wouldn't take long to get from this hotel to Wycliff's. Maybe I'll have to bump off the son like I did the father."

"I hope not," said Fetzler, in a calloused tone. "Another murder might make trouble. However, if my man fails to discover the deed before someone else, it will be too bad for the person who does find it."

MARTIN HAMPRELL picked up the newspaper that lay upon the floor. He crinkled the sheet and tapped it significantly. His evil leer registered the confidence that he felt from reading the newspaper.

"The cops are shooting wide," he asserted. "This fellow they call Cardona - the ace detective - is a sap. He will never trace me as the murderer of Johan Arberg. He will never even visit Cyril Wycliff's home. He is wide of his mark; the further he goes, the worse off he will be."

"What is another murder?" Hamprell snapped his fingers. "Nothing - provided it is intelligently accomplished. Your man is competent at Wycliff's?"

"Very competent," assured Ward Fetzler.

"Then we are ready for the emergency," decided Hamprell. "We are murderers - you as well as I - and we can be murderers again. We can bide our time until murder is necessary; then strike. The deed of

which you speak is ours."

"I must see it destroyed," declared Fetzler. "After that, all will be well. Once that attested document is in fragments, I shall be free to harvest millions. You and my other aid will receive liberal compensation."

"I'm satisfied," returned Hamprell shrewdly. "We'll wait and take it as it comes. No one will be the wiser."

Martin Hamprell's wicked grin was well received by Ward Fetzler. A gloating smile appeared upon the big landowner's puffy lips. What Hamprell said, Fetzler believed to be true. Murder, past and future, would remain undiscovered. No one who sided with the law would be cunning enough to grasp the truth.

Yet while murderers gloated, there was one who was already seeking the answer to two deaths. The Shadow, whose keen deductions had seen through a murderer's ruse, was taking up the cause of justice!

CHAPTER XI. THE SILENT GUEST

THE reports in the evening newspapers had been pleasing to Ward Fetzler, man of wealth and crime. Fetzler's reactions had been shared by his murder dispenser, Martin Hamprell. Minions of the law had been directed from the real trail of crime.

Yet the very reports which the evil pair had considered so favorable now lay before the eyes of another personage. The Shadow, within the portals of his secret sanctum, was reviewing them beneath the blue-rayed lamp above his table.

Clippings were spread before The Shadow's eyes. A complete summary of Cardona's findings was in view. Marked with a blue ring was a paragraph which mentioned that Doctor Johan Arberg had returned from a visit to the home of Cyril Wycliff shortly before the murder in the Hotel Imperator.

Coincident with this report was a small, detached clipping that lay beside the longer news items. This was a brief obituary notice which referred to the death of Cyril Wycliff, stating that his demise had been the result of thrombosis, from which he had been ailing.

The Shadow's long fingers marked these parallel items. To The Shadow, the accounts were definitely related. He divined that a bold and successful murderer had gone from the Hotel Imperator to the home of Cyril Wycliff. It was more than coincidence that Cyril Wycliff, like Johan Arberg, should have died so suddenly.

A light glimmered from the wall beyond the sphere of bluish light. The Shadow's girasol sparkled as his hand reached forward and plucked a set of ear phones into view. These instruments disappeared into the darkness on the nearer side of the table. The Shadow's voice spoke softly amid the gloom. Another voice responded.

"Burbank speaking," came the quiet tones. "Stationed in old unoccupied house across the street from the home of Howard Wycliff. New telephonic connections completed with private line. All agents informed of new number."

"Report received."

THE SHADOW'S response carried the faint trace of a sibilant laugh. Burbank was a unique and satisfactory agent. His part was a passive one in the service of The Shadow, yet Burbank could be relied upon to perform his active duties with exact precision and meticulous care.

The Shadow had given Burbank definite instructions regarding the house across the street from Wycliff's.

Burbank, an expert electric technician, had entered there to establish two connecting lines of telephonic communication. He was serving a double purpose. One was the receiving of the usual messages from agents, with the relay to The Shadow; the other was that of watching the Wycliff mansion, to which Burbank - always exact - had referred as Howard Wycliff's home.

"Report from Burke," came Burbank's voice. "At detective headquarters. Cardona is questioning stool pigeons regarding Mitts Cordy and other gang leaders."

A pause. This information was exactly what The Shadow had expected. Then came Burbank's own statement.

"Personal report," said the contact agent. "Three men have entered Howard Wycliff's home. Evidently expected visitors. Two arrived in a sedan; one in a coupe."

"Report received."

With his final whisper still passing amid the blackened walls of the sanctum, The Shadow pushed the ear phones across the table. The blue light clicked off. A cloak swished in darkness. A final echo of sibilant mockery marked the departure of the phantom who had occupied this weird abode.

A COUPE appeared upon one of Manhattan's avenues. Speeding uptown, threading its way rapidly through traffic, it was guided by a black-gloved hand that lay invisible upon the wheel. As it neared the vicinity of Howard Wycliff's residence, the coupe swung into a blackened side street, and came to a stop.

No audible evidence occurred when the driver of the coupe alighted on the sidewalk. From then on, The Shadow's course was one of swiftness and stealth. Street lamps showed a gliding silhouette upon the sidewalk. A mass of darkness seemed to detach itself from solid night as it passed across the street.

A ghostly shape was swallowed in the gloom that surrounded the old mansion where Cyril Wycliff had died. Against the blackened wall on one side of the building, a silent, mysterious figure stood within the shroud of darkness.

Strong fingers gripped the roughened stone surface. With surprising agility, a tall form moved upward toward a closed window on the second floor.

Clinging like a bat, The Shadow reached his objective. Noiselessly, his hands applied a steel jimmy to the window sash. The barrier yielded. The Shadow entered.

A tiny disk of light appeared. No larger than a silver dollar, it flickered about the room. It revealed a bed. It showed a medicine table. A soft laugh came in whispered tones. The Shadow was in the room where Cyril Wycliff had died.

The rays of The Shadow's small but powerful torch showed a corked bottle which rested upon the table. A gloved hand stretched forth and raised the glass container. The same hand replaced the bottle, then reappeared with a vial which The Shadow produced from beneath his cloak.

With one hand, The Shadow uncorked the bottle. With bottle and vial both in the same hand, he performed a deft motion of pouring a small quantity of liquid from one to the other. The bottle went back to the table, the vial to The Shadow's cloak.

The Shadow had obtained a sample of the solution prepared by the false Doctor Arberg. This was a specimen of Cyril Wycliff's final injection. The label on the bottle denoted that fact.

The Shadow's light glimmered as it sought for clues. Suddenly it went out.

Footsteps were coming up the stairs. Swiftly, The Shadow gained a spot within the doorway. A few moments later, a man entered and approached the bed, where he turned on the lamp. It was Miles Vorber, Cyril Wycliff's old servant.

Probably from force of habit, Vorber glanced suspiciously about the room. He did not, however, turn in the direction of the doorway. He went to the window through which The Shadow had entered. He found it locked. The Shadow had fastened it after entering.

Vorber approached the medicine table. He picked up the bottle which The Shadow had examined and carefully poured its contents into an old-fashioned wash stand in the corner of the room. He did the same with other bottles of solutions. He carefully rearranged the bottles of ingredients that stood at the back of the table.

While Vorber was thus engaged, The Shadow, a creature of blackness, still stood in the corner near the door. As Vorber performed the final operations, however, The Shadow advanced noiselessly toward the door; then glided out into the hall.

As though he sensed some hidden presence close at hand, Vorber swung suddenly toward the door. He saw nothing but the blackness of the hallway. Nevertheless, Vorber, his gaze undeviating, watched for a full minute, with the impression that he had detected someone in the room.

THE SHADOW had reached the stairway. Even the swish of his robe was inaudible as he descended. The sound of voices reached his keen ears. The door of the library was ajar. The Shadow reached that point and listened.

Through the crack he could discern four men engaged in conference.

These were Howard Wycliff; his lawyers, Garrett Slader and Paul Marchelle; also Doctor Barton Keyes. Inch by inch, The Shadow widened the opening, so imperceptibly that not one of the four observed the motion of the barrier. Standing at the portal, The Shadow could hear what was said, and view the faces of the men as well.

Suddenly, The Shadow's tall form drew away from the door. It moved swiftly backward to a hanging curtain that marked an archway in the hall. Within a second, The Shadow's form was enveloped within the heavy, hiding velvet.

The cause of The Shadow's action became apparent a few moments later. Only the keenest ear could have detected the sound which The Shadow had heard. Miles Vorber was sneaking down the stairs. He arrived too late to see The Shadow.

The hidden watcher observed the servant stride cautiously toward the library. He saw Vorber listen at the portal. Then, suddenly ending his snooping methods, Vorber pushed open the door and entered. Evidently he had overheard only a snatch of unimportant conversation.

The tones of Vorber's raspy, monotonous voice came to The Shadow's ears. The servant was speaking to a portly gentleman who was sitting opposite the door.

"I have arranged your bottles, Doctor Keyes," announced Vorber. "Are there any further instructions you wish to give me, sir?"

"You emptied the old solutions?" questioned Keyes.

"Yes, sir," responded Vorber. "I emptied all the solutions, as you ordered."

"Not the new one?" echoed Keyes. "Well, that's all right. I have its formula as well as the others. It is important that I keep all the information that I received from poor Doctor Arberg. That is all, Vorber."

The servant retired. He left the door ajar, however. His footsteps were heavy as they sounded on the stairs. The Shadow did not move from his position by the curtain.

To The Shadow, that emptied solution was important. The markings on the label had shown that it was prescribed by Doctor Arberg on the previous evening. The solution now was gone. The Shadow, however, had a sample of it.

Doctor Keyes still possessed the formula. But did the formula - which The Shadow had also noted - correspond to the actual solution? Had Doctor Keyes deliberately ordered the mixture to be poured away - or had Vorber pretended to misunderstand him?

These were questions which The Shadow sought to answer. Unimportant, apparently, to the other three men present, these statements which had passed between Doctor Keyes and Miles Vorber were ones that The Shadow had indelibly registered within the recesses of his mind.

Why did The Shadow remain within the folds of the velvet curtain? He could still see the men within the room; his keen ears could pick up their conversation. Yet at closer range, the strain would have been less. The answer to this problem arrived in the form of Miles Vorber.

The servant, after his heavy pounding upward, came silently down the stairs. Like a cat, he crossed the hall and crouched just outside the library door. The Shadow had anticipated this action. He had sensed that Miles Vorber would have a deep interest in the affairs that the four men intended to discuss - matters which concerned Vorber's old master, Cyril Wycliff.

Thus Vorber listened, a prowling eavesdropper. Yet all that he saw and heard from his crouched position, his spying tactics as well, were noted by one who watched from darkness. A silent guest was in Howard Wycliff's home tonight.

That hidden, undetected personage had come to unravel threads of mystery. The silent guest was The Shadow!

CHAPTER XII. THE SEARCH BEGINS

THE men within the library were talking about Cyril Wycliff. The body had gone to the funeral parlors that afternoon. Howard Wycliff, with a meditative sigh, turned to Doctor Barton Keyes.

"Your prediction proved correct, Doctor Keyes," said Howard. "You told us that death, if it came, would be sudden."

"Yes, Howard," returned the physician. "Thrombosis often works directly opposite to the apparent health of the patient. Those who seem to be progressing most favorably are frequently the ones least capable of withstanding the attacks."

"Doctor Keyes warned us," rasped Garrett Slader. "That is why I was so insistent all along -"

"About learning my father's affairs," interposed Howard. "Well, Mr. Slader, I appreciate your efforts, because they were unquestionably made in my behalf. However" - Howard smiled wanly at Garrett Slader - "all seems to be settled."

"So far as the will is concerned," declared Slader. "There will be no trouble with that document. Your father left practically everything to you, Howard. But as for this matter of the deed -"

"I am thinking about the will," broke in Howard. "I am surprised that nothing was left to Miles Vorber. I thought surely that my father would have remembered him. However, I have offered Vorber steady employment."

"Has he shown any resentment?" questioned Paul Marchelle.

"No," answered Howard. "It is rather difficult, though, to guess what Vorber may be thinking. He is always the same in expression."

"Suspicious by nature," suggested Doctor Keyes.

"By training," objected Garrett Slader.

There was momentary silence. None of the men realized that Vorber, the object of their present discussion, was listening just outside the half-open door. Vorber, beyond the barrier, had no inkling that he, in turn, was under observation of The Shadow.

"The matter of the will is settled." The decisive words came from Garrett Slader. "We come again to the matter of the deed. If such a document exists - I am assuming, Howard, that your father spoke while still in possession of his faculties - it would be well to decide what you intend to do about uncovering it."

"In the library," mused Howard. "That means in this very room." The young man paused to look about, at furniture and rows of books. "I suppose it would be best to begin a search for the missing deed. You have no idea, Mr. Slader, to what sort of property it refers?"

"I have no knowledge of any deed," returned Slader brusquely. "You heard all that I heard, Howard. It is probable - as I have asserted all along - that your father possessed hidden assets. I would not count too strongly, however, on discovering any documents of any great value."

"Your father," remarked Doctor Keyes, turning to Howard Wycliff, "was under terrific pressure at the time he died. He may have been talking purely in delirium. His words may have been meaningless."

HOWARD WYCLIFF turned toward Paul Marchelle. Howard's expression was a bit dubious. With Garrett Slader indisposed to making an immediate search, with Doctor Barton Keyes questioning the accuracy of Cyril Wycliff's last words, Howard expected Paul Marchelle to make a statement that supported the others. The young lawyer, however, took a different attitude.

"A search would be advisable," he proposed. "Nothing can be lost. Much can be gained. I would recommend it. Naturally, I must keep in accord with Mr. Slader's opinions -"

"I have offered no objection to a search," interrupted Slader testily. "I merely refuse to attach too much significance to such operations. I am your attorney, Howard. Whatever I can do to assist you will be done gladly."

"Let us begin the search," decided Howard.

"It is rather late," remarked Slader.

"That doesn't matter," returned Howard. "I'm going through the furniture first of all. That can be done tonight."

With this decision, Howard arose from his chair and looked about the room. The library, large in size, was heavily and variously furnished. One could not appreciate the quantity of furniture until all the objects were counted.

With a shrug of his shoulders, Howard Wycliff went to the first object that looked most likely - a heavy secretary that stood in the corner.

"There's not much chance of the deed being in plain view," he said. "These drawers were never locked. My father was a man of caution. He would certainly have used some hiding place that could not easily be discovered."

Garrett Slader showed sudden interest the moment that Howard Wycliff began the search. The old lawyer arose and approached the young man, to help him look over the items that were in the secretary.

Doctor Keyes, who had shown signs of being ready to leave, also warmed up to the idea of the hunt. He rummaged about the room, going from one article to another.

Paul Marchelle alone remained seated. His eyes roved curiously about the room, as though looking for probable hiding places. He was about to speak when the door opened and Miles Vorber entered.

The servant came into the library in natural fashion. He stared with his customary gaze, as he noted the men at work. He approached Howard Wycliff and spoke.

"Is there any way in which I can aid you, sir?" he questioned.

"Yes, Vorber," remarked Howard. "Help us search this room. We are looking for a missing deed - the one my father mentioned just before he died."

VORBER joined in the search. His method, however, was different from the others. He did not hunt of his own accord. He paid strict attention to everything that his companions were doing.

When old Garrett Slader rummaged through papers in a secretary drawer, Vorber was peering over his shoulder. When Doctor Keyes scuffed up the ends of rugs, Vorber was studying the action. Whenever Howard Wycliff turned to look at another piece of furniture, Miles Vorber quickly turned with him.

Only one person noted the shrewd, furtive look that showed upon the old servant's face. That observer was Paul Marchelle. The young lawyer saw that Vorber was apprehensive. The servant apparently had a definite desire to uncover the missing document himself, and with all these persons present was worrying about their activities.

Moreover, Marchelle had noted a peculiar fact regarding Vorber's entry into the library. The servant had arrived at the psychological moment; he had immediately suggested that he aid in the search; he had seemed to know what was going on. It was obvious - to Marchelle, at least - that Vorber had been listening outside the door.

Peering eyes were at the portal. They were the eyes of The Shadow. Unseen, they watched the searchers. They saw Vorber's actions. They observed that Marchelle had gained an inkling of the servant's unusual interest in the present search.

Howard Wycliff, stepping away from a large table, noted that Paul Marchelle was not searching. He laughed in jocular vein as he called attention to the fact.

"Thought you were enthusiastic," he said. "Why don't you join in the game, Paul?"

"I have an idea," returned Marchelle, thoughtfully. "It seems to me that this search is being conducted in a rather hit-or-miss fashion. Why not go at it more intelligently?"

GARRETT SLADER and Doctor Keyes turned to hear what Marchelle intended to suggest. Vorber, who also ceased activity, listened while he looked here and there, seeking spots that had been neglected.

"What is your idea, Paul?" questioned Garrett Slader.

"A deed," replied Marchelle, "is a fair-sized document. Moreover, most persons - and Cyril Wycliff was such a person - seldom fold such heavy papers. Therefore, to be systematic, we should reject places which seem unlikely."

"You mean the furniture?" questioned Howard Wycliff.

"No," responded Marchelle. "I would consider the furniture first. But why not segregate those items of furniture which obviously could not contain the deed?"

"An excellent idea!" exclaimed Howard.

"It means more work," observed Doctor Keyes.

"At the start, yes," declared Marchelle. "But it will lead to better results in the long run. Suppose we rearrange the room - set aside all articles which are useless?"

"Good," agreed Howard Wycliff, in a decisive tone.

"That will end the search for tonight," remarked Doctor Keyes.

"Certainly," said Howard. "We can get the furniture established, then begin the actual search tomorrow."

"You have the key to this room?" asked Marchelle.

"Yes," returned Howard. "The only one. We can lock up after we have finished fixing the furniture. Those iron shutters will make the room completely barred."

"I believe I must be going," decided Doctor Keyes. "I think I would find the search interesting, gentlemen, but if it is merely a matter of moving furniture, my stoutness renders me incompetent."

"I must waive claims also," declared Garrett Slader. "I make my plea on account of my age. It is late. I think that I shall leave."

"If you are leaving, Mr. Slader," objected Paul Marchelle, "that means that I must have to go also -"

"Not a bit of it!" broke in Howard Wycliff. "You can stay here, Paul. There is plenty of room in the house. Why not remain overnight?"

Marchelle was about to voice an objection when he caught a glimpse of Miles Vorber's face. The old servant seemed eager to have him go with the others. Marchelle pretended not to notice Vorber's glance. He turned to Garrett Slader.

"I believe I shall accept Howard's invitation, sir," he said. "It will speed up the work here."

"All right," agreed Slader. "I shall see you at the office in the morning."

DOCTOR KEYES and Garrett Slader went from the library. Vorber followed to get their hats and

coats. None of the departing trio noted the gliding blackness that slid along the floor of the hallway, merging with the velvet curtains beyond.

When Vorber returned, a few minutes afterward, Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle were already shifting the furniture. Without a word, Vorber joined them in the work. Operations progressed.

It required three quarters of an hour to rearrange the library. When the work was finished, one end of the room was packed with possible objects that might contain the supposedly hidden deed. The secretary, a heavy table that contained several drawers, a long couch - these were the items that had been retained.

The other end of the room held light, frail chairs; two thin-topped, long-legged tables; a flimsy bookrack; and other articles that were naturally rejected. Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle stood puffing, with coats off. Miles Vorber, shrewd-faced as ever, stood near the door, surveying the faces of his new master and the young lawyer, Marchelle.

"What next?" questioned Howard, turning to Marchelle.

"Lock up," returned the lawyer, "and call it a night."

Miles Vorber sidled away from the door. The two young men went out. Vorber, his scrawny shoulders stooped, made a shrewd survey of the room, as though doubting that all had been properly done. At Howard Wycliff's call, the servant turned quickly and went into the hall.

Howard Wycliff closed the massive door of the living room and locked it with a large key, which he pocketed. He and Paul Marchelle, coats over arms, went up the stairs together. Vorber stood in the hall, watching until they reached the top of the steps. The servant turned to stare sullenly at the locked door of the library. A knowing smile appeared upon his usually straight lips.

With his catlike tread, Vorber crossed the hall to the front door. He locked it, then followed the path that the two young men had taken. A switch clicked at the head of the stairs. The lower hall was plunged in darkness.

Blackness reigned near the locked door of the library. The stillness indicated that the search for the missing deed would be a matter of the morrow. Yet there was an ominous token of approaching action.

The Shadow, invisible as a phantom of the night, was still within that darkened hallway!

CHAPTER XIII. THE SHADOW'S SEARCH

LONG minutes had passed since Miles Vorber had followed Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle up the stairs. Complete silence reigned throughout the darkness of the Wycliff mansion. A light suddenly glimmered in the lower hall.

The rays of a tiny flashlight centered themselves upon the library door. Something swished softly in the darkness as The Shadow approached the barrier. The invisible investigator - his presence revealed only by his light - listened intently before he began operations on the lock.

The lock was a formidable one. The Shadow, however, attacked it with skill that was equaled only by the amazing silence with which he worked. While a hidden hand held the little flashlight, gloved fingers crept into view. They carried a projecting pick of blackened metal.

With this instrument, The Shadow probed the lock. His sensitive hand seemed to feel the hidden tumblers. A tiny click came forth, its sound muffled. Another click.

The Shadow wedged the pick in a new position. The light focused downward. The visible hand moved to the knob. The door of the library opened.

The Shadow paused before entering. His flashlight was out. His keen ears were listening. Any sound within that mansion would have been audible to The Shadow. Satisfied that no one was about, the black-garbed being entered. The pick came from the lock. The door closed.

The Shadow was in the shuttered library. Nevertheless, he did not turn on the light. He preferred the rays of his electric torch. This search was to be a concentrated one.

The beam of the flashlight enlarged. The Shadow approached a heavy table.

The drawers of this piece of furniture had been searched. Yet The Shadow was not satisfied. Noiselessly, he opened each drawer. The light showed the interiors. The Shadow's hand made quick and effective tests.

This was not the blundering type of search that had been made by Howard Wycliff and his companions. The Shadow, using the skillful methods of one who knew every trick of concealment, looked for double bottoms and false backs.

Despite the thoroughness of The Shadow's search, his work was accomplished with surprising rapidity. The Shadow possessed the uncanny faculty of rejecting useless spots. He picked only those which might be of importance to him.

Within fifteen minutes after he had begun the search, The Shadow was finished with the chosen objects of furniture. His flashlight described a sweeping arc about the room, toward the bookcases with their rows of volumes. These were likely objects; they would follow the furniture after the searchers began their work upon the morrow.

THE SHADOW, however, left the bookcases for the moment. His flashlight gleamed upon the end of the room where the discarded furniture stood. Beyond those pieces was a shuttered window. The Shadow went in that direction.

The iron shutters were formidable. Drawn together, they were held in place by the simple expedient of a hinged bar that swung from one shutter into a receiving arm upon the other. The shutters overlapped; it would have required remarkable ability to open them from the outside.

The Shadow turned back toward the room. He let the rays of the torch fall upon the miscellaneous collection of discarded articles which had been placed near the window. The light fell upon chairs, book rack, and tables. It turned downward, and its rays passed directly between the legs of the two light tables.

Stepping forward, The Shadow carefully moved the tables apart, using one hand on each. His flashlight seemed to dwindle as it dropped to the floor. It went out. A soft laugh whispered uncannily through the room.

In darkness, The Shadow was investigating. His actions were invisible; yet they must have been important, for the soft laugh was repeated. Here, in this end of the blackened room, The Shadow was engaged in some discovery. Light taps sounded from the floor, with the weirdness of raps heard at a spirit seance.

Did those knocks have significance? Their sound might well have indicated communication with the dead. Indeed, the parallel was a significant one. The light, weird noises could have signified that The Shadow

was en rapport with dead Cyril Wycliff; for this master investigator was learning facts which only the murdered master of the mansion had known!

The rappings ceased. The whispered laugh was scarcely audible in the gloom. The light came on, rising upward. Suddenly it disappeared. A cloak swished in the darkness. The Shadow had gained a warning.

It came more clearly than when the phantom listener had first heard it - a slight click beyond the door of the room. The turning of the knob; the squeaking of the hinges - these were sounds which The Shadow had avoided in making his entry, but which the new arrival could not eliminate.

The door was open. A slight wisp of air entered the room. Then came the muffled sound of the closing door. Two living persons were now within the library. One was The Shadow; the other, an undeclared visitor.

FOR a full minute, the arrival waited tensely in the darkness. The Shadow had left no token of his presence, yet the ominous atmosphere of this large apartment was evidently having its effect upon the prowler who had entered. The breathing of the visitor could be heard; there was no sound, however, that proved The Shadow was here.

A man moved across the floor. He stumbled against the desk and stopped his progress. His breathing indicated that he was returning to the wall beside the door. He waited there, his breathing stifled, apparently intent to learn if the sound of his motion could have been heard outside the library.

The light switch clicked. Ceiling lamps brought illumination which showed the turned figure of a man clad in a dressing gown, still listening at the door. To all appearances, he was the only occupant of the room, this person whose back alone was in view.

The Shadow had completely disappeared. Yet he had not entirely destroyed evidence of his whereabouts. In the light, there was a sign which betokened The Shadow's presence - a long streak of blackness that lay across the floor. Though motionless, that strip of darkness was traceable to its source. Between the end of a bookcase and the wall at the windowed end of the room, a phantom figure was standing in a spot well chosen to escape observation.

The Shadow, his form no more than the solid blackness which could have been cast by the end of the bookcase, was watching the man beside the door. Blazing eyes were upon the new intruder. Those eyes, alone, gave visible token of the actual figure of The Shadow. Those eyes, however, were ready to be shrouded in the darkness cast by the wide brim of the slouch hat that projected above them.

The Shadow watched. He saw the man at the door step backward, then turn. That action was the final revelation of the identity which The Shadow had already guessed. The secret visitor, a duplicate key gleaming in his scrawny fist, was Miles Vorber, the old servant!

CHAPTER XIV. THROUGH THE MANSION

A SHREWD, satisfied gleam was plain on Miles Vorber's face. The servant seemed sure that he was free from discovery. As The Shadow had anticipated, Vorber was here to make a new search of the furniture.

Unlike The Shadow, however, Vorber was content to take much for granted. His observations of the other searchers had convinced him that it was unnecessary to look in certain places. He spent most of his time tapping the sides of the desk, the secretary, and other large pieces of furniture.

Occasionally, Vorber ceased his work to listen at the door. He always began where he had left off.

Finally, he seemed dejected. He stood in the center of the room, looking all about him. His face was sour, his attitude was that of a man who was feeling the approach of nervousness.

Each time that Vorber's gaze turned toward the spot where The Shadow stood, the watching eyes of the silent master seemed to fade from view. Not once did Vorber catch a glimpse of the sinister shape which occupied the library.

Stooping, Vorber walked with feline tread toward the end of the room where The Shadow was standing. He crossed the long, silhouetted patch of darkness that lay upon the floor. He did not notice it. Vorber's eyes were upon the discarded items of furniture.

The servant reached the very place where The Shadow had performed his mysterious rappings in the darkness. He looked at tables, chairs, and bookrack. He shook his head.

Then, as an afterthought, Vorber extended both hands - one toward each table. With his thin knuckles he tapped the tops of the tables. They echoed solidly. Vorber turned away.

The test had been positive. Vorber had heard what Paul Marchelle had said regarding the size of a deed. Even if the document had been folded, it could not have been placed between the portions of a double table top without some token of the container being evident when Vorber rapped.

The servant was looking at the bookcases. He seemed to be weighing the risks attendant to the removal of the long rows of volumes. Again, he shook his head, without, however, looking beyond the end of the bookcase. A scowl appeared upon Vorber's face.

Until the present moment, Vorber had been too intent in his search to worry further about matters outside of the library. With a lull in action, the servant apparently began to think of such subjects. The Shadow knew that Vorber had cause for apprehension.

In this room, entry effected with a duplicate key, Vorber was taking chances in his quest for the missing deed. Quick footsteps took him toward the door. The light went out as Vorber's hand pressed the switch. A puff of air denoted that the door was opened. Vorber waited at the entrance to the room.

It was obvious that the servant intended to return if he heard nothing from upstairs. The Shadow, however, had no reason to remain. His tall form came forth from its hiding place. In the darkness, The Shadow was invisible. His footsteps, also, were soundless.

AN unseen hand raised the bar that held the shutters. Gloved fingers drew the double barrier inward. A draft went through the room as the sash beyond the inner shutters moved upward. An instant later, Vorber closed the door.

The Shadow was halfway through the window. By the time Vorber had placed his hand upon the light switch, The Shadow was outside; the shutters were closing. Vorber turned on the light. He stepped farther into the room.

Steadily, the shutters closed, without the slightest noise.

Then came the remarkable sequel. In closing the shutters, The Shadow delayed the final action. The iron bar, responding to a trifling jar, slipped downward from a poised position. As though controlled by a ghostly hand, it moved into its proper place, eased there soundlessly!

Vorber happened to glance toward the window. He had heard nothing. Only caution accounted for his sudden gaze.

The servant's eyes did not observe the final imperceptible movement as the shutters locked; nor did his ears detect the lowering of the sash beyond the double barrier.

Vorber's return was for a single purpose. He wanted to examine the bookcases. He did so, quickly, and with exactitude, removing batches of books and replacing them precisely as he had found them.

Confident that neither Howard Wycliff nor Paul Marchelle were worried about this locked room, Vorber proceeded with fruitless results.

OUTSIDE the mansion, The Shadow was moving through the darkness. For the second time this evening, he approached the wall and began a noiseless, invisible upward climb. The Shadow entered the room where Cyril Wycliff had died. He continued through to the gloomily lighted hall. He listened and heard snores from a room close by.

Two closed doors: these indicated the rooms occupied by Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle. The Shadow spied an obscure stairway leading to the third floor. He followed it upward. He came to a closed door. It was unlocked. The Shadow entered. His flashlight glimmered. The Shadow was in Miles Vorber's room.

The room was large, but plainly furnished. Part of its space consisted of two long alcoves, which terminated in windows set in the side of the sloping roof. They were almost like passages.

A bed, two chairs, a bureau, and an old desk: these were the principal items of furniture in Vorber's room. The Shadow went to the desk and found it locked. He opened it within a few seconds. With his flashlight glimmered, he studied pigeonholes; then picked a long, flat drawer which bore a lock. This opened under the persuasion of the blackened pick.

There were papers within; items of trivial importance. Under them, however, The Shadow discovered rows of bank books, neatly concealed beneath a sheet of brown paper which filled the entire bottom of the drawer. All these books bore the name of Miles Vorber. The Shadow examined them.

The books showed deposits - in banks and savings funds - to the total of twelve thousand dollars. With the exception of straggling amounts which covered a period of years, a full ten thousand had been deposited within the past few months.

The Shadow laughed softly as he replaced the books. His mirth indicated a supposition that was more than mere conjecture. He understood the source of Vorber's suddenly accumulated wealth. The Shadow's light went out. His gliding form stole from the room, along the hallway to the stairs, then down to the second floor.

But for The Shadow's keen hearing, approaching figures would have met in the gloom of the second-story hallway. Miles Vorber was coming softly up the stairs, quietly enough to avoid detection by those who were sleeping on the second floor, but not with a stride too stealthy for The Shadow to hear.

For two full seconds, the figure of The Shadow was revealed. It was a moving form in black, cloaked and topped with a slouch hat. The cloak swished; a flash of its crimson lining came in view. Before Miles Vorber had arrived, however, The Shadow had swept into the darkness of Cyril Wycliff's old room.

Miles Vorber passed through the hall and went up the stairs to the third floor. He did not even suspect the presence of a living being watching his progress from the door of the room where his master had died. When Vorber's final softened treads had died, The Shadow turned and crossed to the window. He left silently, wedging the lock shut by the means of a thin instrument pried between the portions of the sash.

From the time that his form descended the wall, none could have traced the passage of The Shadow. The next manifestation of his awesome presence came in the silent house across the street from the old mansion.

BURBANK, his back toward the door of a dimly lighted room, was seated before a small table, with a pair of ear phones on his head.

Of all The Shadow's agents, Burbank was the most enduring. His duties were passive as a rule, but there seemed to be no limit to the length of time that he could remain awake and ready.

Tonight, there would be no more reports from The Shadow's agents. Clyde Burke had given his final call from detective headquarters. None of the other agents were at present engaged in duty. Burbank was awaiting only the final word from The Shadow.

The door of the room opened softly. Into this carefully arranged spot of habitation in a supposedly deserted house stepped The Shadow. His tall form remained just within the door. The Shadow spoke in a hushed whisper.

"Off duty," was his brief command.

Burbank did not turn. He simply removed the ear phones from his head. Burbank had received other visits from The Shadow. He accepted them as regular events. Burbank pressed the switch of a lamp beside him. The light went out. In darkness, Burbank arose from his chair. An army cot creaked as The Shadow's agent sat down upon it.

There was no sound of the door closing; no sound, indeed, to indicate that any person had moved in that direction. Yet Burbank knew, from experience, that his master, The Shadow, had departed, after giving him the sign that his vigil was ended.

Such word usually came from The Shadow's sanctum. Tonight, being in the vicinity of Burbank's present station, The Shadow had preferred to give his faithful agent fifteen or twenty minutes of extra respite by visiting him in person.

Such was the way of The Shadow. Though none of his trusted operatives had ever seen his undisguised face; though his ways and actions were secret and mysterious to them; they received constant signs of The Shadow's appreciation of their reliable cooperation.

THE Wycliff mansion was silent. So was the house across the street. No one in the vicinity heard the departure of a trim coupe that slipped easily from its parking spot upon a street not far away.

There had been no evidence at Howard Wycliff's home that could have given anyone an inkling of The Shadow's visit. The ways of the mysterious investigator had been dark and baffling. Nevertheless, The Shadow had accomplished much. A sibilant laugh from the downtown-bound coupe betokened that fact.

Tonight, The Shadow had learned facts that he required. He had seen the search for the missing deed begin. He had made his own search; he had seen Miles Vorber's clever efforts afterward. The Shadow, in his departure, had gained definite results.

He had left Howard Wycliff's house with the positive knowledge that the missing deed was safely hidden; that until he, The Shadow, should so will, its place of concealment would pass undetected!

The crafty method which dead Cyril Wycliff had used to preserve his most important document had been discovered by the subtle understanding of The Shadow!

Should The Shadow so decide, the search for the missing deed would end. At any time, Howard Wycliff could be privileged to receive the valuable paper which his father had sought to give to him. For the present, however, that time would be delayed.

The Shadow knew, by keen deduction, that the missing deed was the lure which had caused the crime of murder.

While villains lurked, the time of restitution could wait.

Such was the decision of The Shadow.

CHAPTER XV. THE TRIANGLE

THE SHADOW was standing in a black-slabbed room. Unlike his sanctum, which had curtained walls of light-absorbing qualities, this compact apartment glistened from the illuminating rays above. The Shadow was in his laboratory.

Still clad in his black cloak and hat, those garments which he always wore except when specially disguised, The Shadow was testing the contents of the vial which he had brought from the medicine table in Cyril Wycliff's room.

The test was proving a fact which The Shadow had quickly suspected from his observations of the bottles on the medicine table. The solution showed an oversupply of nitroglycerin. The explosive substance, used in tiny quantities to stimulate heart action, had been the direct cause of Cyril Wycliff's death.

Doctor Barton Keyes, apparently, had overlooked this fact. There was an excuse for the physician's lack of discernment. The symptoms of Cyril Wycliff's death; the bursting effect which the nitroglycerin had shown when it had racked his heart - these were counteracted by the doctor's faith in Johan Arberg; and also by the expectancy of natural death that is present in all cases of thrombosis.

To The Shadow, who knew the truth, it was apparent that the impostor who had played the part of Johan Arberg was not only a clever impersonator; he was also a man who possessed some knowledge of medicine. These were clues which could later prove of prime importance.

The Shadow left his laboratory. He reappeared a short while later in his sanctum. Here, close against the wall, his tall figure stooped before a row of books. Massive tomes, these volumes; the secret archives of The Shadow. Within them could be found identifying traces of many master crooks.

Often had The Shadow brought fiends to bay by searching through the records which he alone possessed. On this occasion, however, The Shadow met with difficulty. There were descriptions here of crooks who had posed as men of medicine; but all who had shown ability as murderers had been previously brought to accounting by The Shadow himself.

The Shadow moved to the table in the corner. The blue light glimmered and the girasol, shining from The Shadow's finger, sent amazing sparks in upward flashes. The Shadow's hand produced a bottle and a long quill. He dipped the pen into the fluid and inscribed, upon a blank paper, a large triangle, which showed in crimson ink.

The Shadow had chosen this blood-red color in his study of murder which as yet remained unavenged. Above the pinnacle of the triangle, the hand of The Shadow marked a large crimson dot. The symbol represented a human being; a man whom The Shadow intended to discover.

At the head of the triangle: the man behind events of crime. Above the apex, as if to classify the crimson dot, The Shadow inscribed these words:

Owner of previous deed.

To The Shadow's logical, deductive brain, the qualifying detail was a natural assumption. A property deed, unregistered, would have no status. Hence the missing document that lay somewhere within the living room of the Wycliff mansion was valued by the hidden plotter only as an object to be destroyed.

The Shadow laughed. It would be a simple task to learn the identity of the man behind two murders. The first step would be to uncover the missing deed, and thus learn the location of the property involved. Through the document itself, The Shadow could lay his finger on the man directly responsible for crime.

The Shadow scored a line through the red dot. The action indicated that the hidden man could be cornered at any time The Shadow chose. So much for the man behind the game.

The Shadow's hand moved down the left side of the triangle, and marked a new dot at the lower point. Here The Shadow inscribed these words:

The murderer.

Thus had The Shadow indicated two hidden factors in the game. Although he had marked no names, he had pointed out the existing personalities of Ward Fetzler, scheming landowner, and Martin Hamprell, man of murder.

The Shadow placed an arrow upon the side of the triangle that led from the peak to the point at the left. This indicated Fetzler's instigation, the course whereby he commanded the services of Hamprell.

Returning to the apex, The Shadow marked an arrow toward the corner at the lower right. This showed Fetzler's double power. It indicated that the plotter controlled some other hidden worker. The Shadow made a dot at the corner on the right. Beside it he wrote:

The informant.

Here was the indication of the inside man. The controlling villain had an agent who could keep him posted on affairs at Wycliff's. Carefully, The Shadow drew a thin line through this dot that stood for an unnamed individual.

The gesture was apparent. Through swift vigilance and prompt action, The Shadow could eliminate the spying agent and thus obtain the missing deed.

Upward moved The Shadow's hand. It poised upon the dot at the apex. Here was another whom The Shadow could easily reach once the deed had been uncovered. But when The Shadow's hand moved downward to the dot marked "murderer," it paused and remained stationary.

The Shadow had reached an impasse. He saw a difficulty which foiled his immediate plans for complete and decisive action.

By eliminating the inside man, he would gain the deed and learn the identity of the plotter. He could then track the insidious instigator of crime to his doom.

But in the process, while the plotter was seeking to escape The Shadow's wrath, the unknown murderer would have ample time in which to pass beyond The Shadow's reach.

Of the three men involved, The Shadow was most anxious to apprehend the murderer. The man who had posed as Doctor Johan Arberg was unquestionably the most dangerous criminal of all. Once he had gained an inkling that The Shadow was on his trail, he would flee to a place of safety.

The triangle was simple; yet it presented complexities. The Shadow studied the graphic chart. His keen brain was summarizing past events. Two murders: both had been accomplished when needed. Doctor Johan Arberg had been slain that death might be imposed upon Cyril Wycliff.

How had the murderer come to visit the Hotel Imperator and thereafter travel to Cyril Wycliff's home? The question was easily answered. The man behind the game had ordered the murderer to perform that double service for him.

The Shadow's finger, touching the dot at the apex of the triangle, was an indication that The Shadow understood the simple process which had caused Martin Hamprell to execute two murders. Another question was the logical result.

Why had the plotter ordered the murderer to action? Where had he gained the information necessary regarding the proposed visit of Doctor Johan Arberg to Cyril Wycliff's home?

Again, the answers were shown by the motion of The Shadow's finger, which moved to the dot at the lower right. The inside informant, familiar with what was passing at Cyril Wycliff's, had certainly sent word to the plotter.

THE SHADOW laughed. From his tracing of the past, he could foretell the future. An emergency had arisen at Wycliff's. Murder had been needed. Word had passed from informant to plotter; then from plotter to murderer.

The Shadow's problem was apparent. If he could again bring murderer and inside man together, as they had been at the time when the false Doctor Arberg visited Cyril Wycliff's home, they could be handled simultaneously.

With informant and murderer both eliminated, the deed could be uncovered. It would identify the plotter; shorn of both his henchmen, that evil villain would be at The Shadow's mercy!

The Shadow's laugh sounded as a crafty whisper. Its tones revealed The Shadow's hidden thoughts. From now on, The Shadow would play a game of stealth. He would not reveal the whereabouts of the missing deed until the time for action had arrived. Plotter and murderer, both would be waiting for word from the inside man. The Shadow's plan was subtle.

By producing a new emergency; by making it necessary for the inside man to again call on the plotter for a new murder, The Shadow would set the stage for the final drama. He would bring the murderer and inside man together. When they sought a new victim, it would be The Shadow's task to intervene.

The field of action lay at Howard Wycliff's. With Burbank on watch; with The Shadow ready to visit the mansion, it remained simply to provide the trap into which the fiends would fall. That snare, however, required subtle preparation.

The Shadow's hand rested beneath the triangle. The master brain was pondering as it planned the first step. Someone must be urged to action that would force the murderer to pay a visit to the same house where he had formerly committed crime.

The Shadow's hand wrote. This time it inscribed a person's name. The answer glared in shining red letters that announced:

Miles Vorber.

The Shadow had found the key to the situation. The prowling servant, who listened at doors, who conducted his own secret search, who possessed money that must have been gained from sources other than his meager savings, was the one upon whom The Shadow would concentrate all action.

Through Miles Vorber, The Shadow would provide the emergency which would result in the solution of the triangle which lay before him. Three-sided crime would reach its culmination when Vorber sensed the presence of The Shadow!

Murder again would become necessary to aid the schemes of villains, once The Shadow had set the stage for the final scene!

CHAPTER XVI. THE CONFERENCE

"BURBANK speaking."

"Report."

"Marchelle still at Howard Wycliff's. Slader has just arrived."

"Report received."

Such was the conversation that passed over the wire between The Shadow and his agent, Burbank. The Shadow was in his sanctum. Burbank was reporting from the house across the street from Wycliff's.

Twenty-four hours had elapsed since The Shadow's first visit to the Wycliff mansion. In the darkness of another evening, the master of the night was due to make a second trip to the same destination.

Burbank, watching from the front room of the old house, saw a coupe pull up at Wycliff's. Doctor Barton Keyes alighted. Burbank reached to a switchboard and signaled. There was no response. The Shadow had already left his sanctum.

Burbank made a notation of the exact time of the physician's arrival. Before him, Burbank had listed data regarding all the accustomed visitors to Wycliff's. This was information which the agent had received from The Shadow.

Burbank watched keenly from the darkness of the room. Sharp-eyed and observant, he should have been able to spy everything that passed in front of the Wycliff home. Yet Burbank, the vigilant man who so constantly kept his back to the light, did not perceive the motion which occurred within the blackness beside the building across the street. He did not note the mysterious arrival of his master, The Shadow.

THE scene within Howard Wycliff's home had a remarkable similarity to the situation of the preceding evening. Four men were gathered in the old library. Howard Wycliff's companions were Doctor Keyes, Garrett Slader, and Paul Marchelle.

Outside the door stood Miles Vorber, eavesdropping as before. From the stairway came a gliding figure that descended with amazing silence. A tall being clad in black, The Shadow had arrived in time to catch Miles Vorber in his spying act.

The Shadow's ghostly shape melted into the protection of the hanging curtains. Vorber did not sense the approach of the mysterious phantom. Words were coming from the library. The Shadow, like the spying servant, could overhear all that was said.

Both watchers commanded a partial view of the library. The interior of the room presented a changed appearance. The furniture still stood disarranged. Books had been removed from the cases, and were piled upon the floor. Amid this chaos stood Howard Wycliff, in his shirt sleeves. The young man's face was glum.

"We've ransacked the place," he declared. "We've found nothing. I must admit I am discouraged."

Old Garrett Slader eyed the furniture, and shrugged his shoulders. The elderly attorney seemed to regard the search as a futile quest.

"Paul and I started in this morning," remarked Howard. "I left him at work when I went down to the funeral parlor. He has done a complete job of it."

"With Vorber's aid," added Marchelle. "He showed up from time to time to help me."

"While I was out," said Howard, "and after I returned. He was with us when we went over everything a second time."

"Howard," declared Garrett Slader, "I believe that my theory was correct. Your father was probably delirious when he spoke of the hidden deed. Therefore -"

"You believe I should give up the search?" interrupted the young man.

"Not a bit of it, Mr. Wycliff. I intend to leave nothing unturned until I have discovered the deed."

"You have searched everywhere."

"Only through the furniture. We have not yet tried the walls or the floor."

"Do you intend to dismantle the entire room?"

"If necessary."

"You will have to remove the furniture."

"I can place it in storage. I intend to close the house later. The furniture of this room can go to the warehouse in advance."

Garrett Slader smiled.

"I admire your perseverance, Howard," he asserted. "Therefore I advise you to complete your hunt as rapidly as possible. Settle this matter. Get it off your mind."

"Agreed," said Howard. "Are there any other suggestions?"

None were forthcoming. Howard Wycliff turned to Paul Marchelle.

"You said that you could remain here," he remarked. "If that is satisfactory to Mr. Slader, I shall count on your assistance, Paul. We can keep the room locked until tomorrow. The furniture will go out then; the next day, we can have the room torn up. Can I count on you to supervise?"

"Ask Mr. Slader," responded Marchelle.

"I can spare you from the office, Paul," decided the old lawyer. "This is a matter which concerns a client. Nevertheless, I still believe that Howard is pursuing a mere fancy. I would suggest expeditious work."

"We can employ a crew of men," said Marchelle. "Experienced workers will quickly accomplish all that is required. I can readily see, Mr. Slader, why you think the whole search should be dropped. Expense and trouble are involved. Nevertheless, Howard will not be satisfied until it has been completed."

"Let us call Vorber," declared Howard Wycliff. "We can arrange our plans for moving the furniture at once."

Garrett Slader turned toward the door. He was followed by Doctor Keyes. Both had made the same decision; so long as a search was not to continue, there was no need in their remaining. Before the two men had reached the door, Vorber entered.

THERE was something about the servant's manner that reminded Paul Marchelle of Vorber's actions on the preceding night. The man seemed to know what was going on; he had arrived just at the moment when Howard Wycliff had intended to summon him. Paul Marchelle, however, said nothing. He watched Vorber carefully after Keyes and Slader had departed.

"We are moving the furniture, Vorber," stated Howard Wycliff. "The van will come for it tomorrow. You can assist in its removal."

"Very well, sir," responded the old servant.

"After that," declared Howard, "we shall have the floor and walls of the room torn up. It will be a large order" - the young man glanced ruefully about the room - "but it seems to be the only course. Unless -"

"Unless what?" queried Paul Marchelle, as Howard Wycliff paused.

"Unless this furniture might possibly contain the deed," said Howard, with a shake of his head. "I admit that it is very improbable, for we have made a thorough search. Nevertheless -"

"The furniture will be in the warehouse," interposed Marchelle. "It will be available any time we may require it."

"That's true," agreed Howard. "Suppose we list all the items which are to be removed."

"A good thought," said Paul Marchelle.

The young lawyer produced paper and pencil. He sat at the desk and wrote down the names of the various articles as Howard Wycliff called them. Miles Vorber, standing like a lonely sentinel just within the doorway, watched both his master and Marchelle with beady, suspicious eyes.

Howard Wycliff completed his calling of the larger items. He went to the other end of the room, and surveyed the rejected pieces of furniture strewn there.

"What about these?" he questioned.

Paul Marchelle swung from the desk. He looked at the light chairs and tables; then went back to his list.

"Call them off," he suggested. "They'll only be in the way when the men begin to tear up the room. You're sending the furniture away so the room will be clear."

"Right," agreed Howard.

WHEN Marchelle's list was completed, Vorber put forth a question. He wanted to know about the books. Howard Wycliff decided that they could go upstairs.

"Remove them during the morning, Vorber," he ordered. "Get them out of the way before the moving men arrive. The books are too valuable to go into ordinary storage."

Paul Marchelle was tabulating his list. He checked up every item of furniture; then thrust the paper in his pocket. He remarked that the list would be of importance later on.

As Howard Wycliff walked toward the door, a streak of blackness faded through the partly opened barrier. Paul Marchelle followed. Vorber walked stolidly after the two young men. Howard Wycliff closed the door and locked it.

"It's early yet," he remarked. "Suppose we go out and take in a late picture."

"All right," agreed Marchelle. "You are liable to run into a lot of trouble parking the car, though."

"There's a space two blocks from the theater," said Howard. "I'll drop you at the lobby; you can buy the tickets and wait for me there."

The two men left. Miles Vorber went upstairs. Silence pervaded the gloomy old house. Long minutes passed. A whispered laugh crept through the lower hall. The Shadow had awaited the return of Miles Vorber. The servant had not come back. Evidently he was allowing time to make sure that Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle were actually going to the theater. There was a possibility that they might make an unexpected return.

The Shadow glided up the stairs. He stopped as he heard a door shut. Vorber was coming from one of the rooms on the second floor. The servant walked across the hall and entered another room. The Shadow glided into the room which Vorber had left. He flashed his tiny light about it.

The rays showed a large bed, a table with a telephone upon it, and several other pieces of furniture. The Shadow's light went out. Returning to the hall, The Shadow regained the stairs and watched Vorber come from the second room which he had entered.

It was evident that the servant was restless. The Shadow knew the reason. Vorber, despite the thoroughness of his search the night before, was anxious to make another visit to the locked library.

Vorber turned toward the stairway to the third floor. His soft footsteps sounded upward. The Shadow waited; then, with a soft laugh, descended to the ground floor. Keenly, he had sensed that Vorber would not resist the urge to return below.

The Shadow's pick clicked in the lock of the library door. The barrier opened. The Shadow entered. The rays of his flashlight shone toward the end of the room. The door closed softly.

In the stillness of the darkened room, The Shadow awaited the arrival of Miles Vorber. Before this evening ended, the first step in The Shadow's plan would be completed.

The snare was in the making. If it succeeded, there could be but one result.

Before the missing deed finally reached the hands of Howard Wycliff, the murderer of Johan Arberg and Cyril Wycliff would again visit this mansion where he had committed crime!

CHAPTER XVII. PLOTTERS DECIDE

THE SHADOW was right in his assumption that affairs in Howard Wycliff's home would have a strong influence upon the unknown murderer. While The Shadow rested within the portals of the library where Cyril Wycliff's deed was hidden, two men, located elsewhere, were discussing the situation that existed in

that very room.

Ward Fetzler and Martin Hamprell were in conference. The man who had ordered murder was talking with the one who had executed it. Although less than an hour had elapsed since Howard Wycliff had decided to remove the furniture from his library, the fact was already known to this pair of plotting villains.

"What do you think about the removal of the furniture?"

The question came from Ward Fetzler. The landowner's face betrayed a dubious expression. Martin Hamprell laughed as he provided the answer.

"A good idea," he said. "It will give us a break in the long run."

"But suppose the deed is in a table drawer -"

"Not much chance of it," asserted Hamprell, "judging by the telephone call you received a short while ago."

The remark explained why these men knew what had happened at Wycliff's.

Ward Fetzler had received a communication from his inside man.

"Cyril Wycliff," explained Fetzler, "was a cagey old fellow. He would probably have hidden that deed in the most curious spot possible. Even though the furniture has been thoroughly examined, I am not convinced."

"Why worry?" questioned Hamprell. "The furniture will be in storage, won't it?"

"Yes."

"We can get at it then. Any time we want. We'll have the location of the warehouse. We can grease our way in if we want to make a search. I can locate some racketeers who will fix it for us. They have the storage companies pretty well scared."

"What about the search in the library?"

"That's a different matter; but it will be easy also. We can run in a couple of phony workmen with the crew. Your inside man can fix that. I'll get the gunmen."

"It may mean a fight," remarked Fetzler, in a dubious tone.

"Sure," agreed Hamprell. "What of it?"

"I still think," asserted Fetzler, "that the whole matter would be simplified by having you step in alone. That can be accomplished in one way only: by getting Howard Wycliff away from the house before the deed is found."

"You are right," agreed Hamprell. "That's exactly why we want the crew on the job. If we can coax Wycliff somewhere, so that only Marchelle will be in charge, the job will be as good as done, provided that it doesn't take too long for them to wreck the living room."

"Figure it this way, Fetzler. Suppose Marchelle uncovers that deed. What will be his natural course? To turn it over to young Wycliff. The same is true if Vorber finds it. Either one, or both of them, will remain in possession of the document."

"I can step in and recover it. At the point of a gun, with shots, if required. I don't mind another murder. I'm getting used to the game. But if Howard Wycliff is around, he'll put up an additional fight. I don't want an extra man on my hands."

"We'll kill a dozen, if necessary," growled Fetzler grimly. "Before you forget it, Hamprell, call up that gang leader you know and tell him to stand by with his mob."

"Ham Cruther?" questioned Hamprell. "I'll have him on the job. When those workmen start to dig up the room, Ham and his mob will be in the offing. Leave that to me."

"We may need them any time," observed Fetzler. "If you go in alone, Hamprell, you'll do better to have the mob on hand. Then you won't have to worry about a few extra people if you run into them."

"It suits me," declared Hamprell. "What are you going to do, though, about getting Howard Wycliff away? It will be better, if things break, to have him out of town. If he never sees that deed, we won't have to kill him."

WARD FETZLER arose and strode bulkily about the sumptuous room. His big bluff face was glaring with a malicious expression that showed the evil which he usually concealed. He swerved toward Hamprell and gave his decision.

"Here's the situation," he said. "Tomorrow the furniture goes out. The next day, the work begins. If we get a line on where the deed is, in the meantime, the chances are my man will snag it and save us a lot of trouble.

"If someone else grabs it, we'll know. That will mean quick work on your part. It will be an emergency, and you won't know what you're bumping into until you reach Wycliff's house. That's why it will be best to have the gang in back of you.

"In all probability, however, the deed will be uncovered the day after tomorrow, when the room is torn up. With Ham Cruther and his crowd on tap, we'll get the deed, even though there may be a fight. It's going to ease things at that time if Howard Wycliff is away."

"Do you think he will go?" quizzed Hamprell. "He is mighty anxious to locate that deed."

"He suspects nothing," assured Fetzler. "Therefore, I think he would leave town. I have the method."

"What is it?" questioned Hamprell eagerly.

"There is a man named Burchison in Chicago," declared Fetzler. "Hiram Burchison, with whom old Cyril Wycliff had transactions. Burchison, I happen to know, is in California. Suppose a telegram should come to Cyril Wycliff - indicating that Burchison did not know the old man was dead - stating that he wished a personal interview regarding the sale of valuable property. What would Howard Wycliff do?"

"Start for Chicago," responded Hamprell promptly.

"Correct," said Fetzler. "Well, the telegram will arrive tomorrow evening. Howard Wycliff will start out in the morning. By that time, arrangements will have been made for the workmen to tear up the room."

"Which means," smiled Hamprell, "that Howard Wycliff will leave Paul Marchelle in charge of operations, with Vorber keeping an eye on what happens."

"Yes," said Fetzler, "and there will be no need for a gang assault. Ham Cruther and his mob will be available; but you can enter alone and obtain the deed. The less fracas that we raise, the better. In fact,

you may be able to accomplish a very quiet murder."

"The type that I prefer," smiled Hamprell. "I must confess that I was quite nervous when I polished off old Doctor Arberg. The way in which I handled Cyril Wycliff's death was much less trying.

"I like the old house, in a way. There are quiet corners where little can be heard. It is too bad that we cannot chance some killings before the deed is discovered."

"Too risky," snorted Fetzler. "Furthermore, they may prove unnecessary. That's why I feel the way I do about young Howard Wycliff. There's no reason why he should live; on the contrary, there is no reason why he should die."

"You are showing good judgment," grinned Hamprell. "As a planner of murder, Fetzler, you are quite competent. You view the preparations with the same unconcern that I show when it comes to execution."

"I don't deal in murder," protested Fetzler. "At least, not as a rule. But I wasn't going to see old Cyril Wycliff grab off a few millions just because I made a mistake in selling him that Utah property. He knew too much. He had to die. Howard Wycliff knows practically nothing. For that reason he can live."

"Good logic," complimented Hamprell. "Murder when necessary. One relishes it all the more. Dear old Doctor Arberg" - the killer's tone became sarcastic in its reflectiveness - "how I tried to save his life. I talked of ethics. He failed to understand. In fact, he was obstinate enough to fire two shots at me, instead of meeting death quietly."

"You were lucky that the reports were not heard."

"Certainly. I intended to strangle him under his chin whiskers. I had to use the gun in the pinch. But now" - Hamprell's stare became cold and his face leered - "I have changed my policy. If I am called to Howard Wycliff's, I shall not hesitate one instant. Whoever I am forced to kill will die on the spot where I find him. I shall not be hasty, Fetzler; but I shall be decisive. You may count on that!"

"I know it." Fetzler's tone contained assurance. The man of wealth had imbibed the murderer's philosophy. "Perhaps, Hamprell, I shall be there to see you work - if death proves necessary."

"You are cordially invited," chuckled Hamprell. "I usually prefer to perform my murders without a gallery looking on, but I shall make an exception in your case, Fetzler."

With this remark, the murderer arose and went to the telephone. Ward Fetzler knew his purpose. Martin Hamprell was calling his gangster friend, Ham Cruther.

Nothing would be left to chance from now on. Ward Fetzler smiled in satisfaction.

THE plotters had decided their course. Murder was in the offing. Only the secret purloining of the missing deed, its subtle restitution to Howard Wycliff, could spoil their plans. The plotters had entirely neglected that point.

They would have been amazed had they known that even now the missing deed lay within reach of a sinister enemy of crime. The Shadow, located in Howard Wycliff's library, had actually considered such a course.

Yet The Shadow had not acted. Although he had not had access to this conference in Ward Fetzler's apartment, his keen brain sensed exactly what the plotters would plan to do. Murder, he knew, would be their thought, upon the finding of the deed.

Murder!

Martin Hamprell, at the telephone, was discussing it with Ham Cruther, as he gave the gang leader orders to stand by. Ward Fetzler, standing by the window, was considering murder also, as the course which would bring him ill-gained wealth.

Both Hamprell and Fetzler were convinced that through murder they would gain the final objective. Their elation over the success of their two previous killings was as nothing compared to the confidence they felt regarding murders that were to come.

Martin Hamprell was leering as he spoke across the wire. Ward Fetzler wore an evil glare upon his bluff countenance. To both these villains, murder meant success. That was because they did not reckon with The Shadow.

Schemes of death that ordinarily would bring success to those who perpetrated them had a way of dropping into total failure when the unseen hand of The Shadow played its part!

CHAPTER XVIII. VORBER SEES THE SHADOW

THE SHADOW was right. Miles Vorber intended to return to the library. It was more than a half hour, however, before the servant's key clicked in the lock. When he had entered, Vorber left the door open so that he could hear the first sounds that would tell of Howard Wycliff's return.

Vorber's first action was a final inspection of the furniture. The servant seemed to have difficulty in rejecting the bulky objects which had been so thoroughly examined. Convinced, however, that further search of this sort would be fruitless, Vorber began an examination of the walls and floor.

There were hanging pictures on the walls. The searchers had looked behind them. They were to be removed with the books. Vorber went to one picture and lifted it carefully. He looked at the back of the picture; he examined the wall where the picture had been. He replaced the object.

Vorber repeated the operation with the next picture that he reached. Slowly, methodically, he continued the procedure until he came to a large photograph which hung near one end of the room. It was a portrait of Cyril Wycliff.

Holding the picture in the light, Vorber stared at it with narrowed eyes. The servant was looking at his master. The portrait, life-sized, was a perfect reproduction of Cyril Wycliff's visage. Vorber's lips moved. His teeth grated. His breath came in short hisses. This study of his former master's features had roused the servant to a state that resembled suppressed fury.

Carefully, Vorber hung the picture upon the wall. He stared toward it as he backed to the center of the room. Then, with new incentive, he began a more rapid search. His desire for accomplishment had reached a fever pitch.

The Shadow, stationed in the niche beyond the bookcase, saw all this. Every emotion appearing upon Vorber's face had been plain to The Shadow. Vorber was at the walls, tapping here and there. On hands and knees, he crawled along the floor, pounding in a vain effort to discover hollow spots under the flooring.

The servant seemed to lose all sense of time as he continued in his exploration of new territory. He rounded the end of the room, and neared the place where The Shadow was stationed. It was then that The Shadow glided across the floor. Totally unseen by Vorber, the phantom watcher gained the door that led to the hall.

As on the preceding night, the motion of The Shadow seemed to produce a psychic effect upon Miles Vorber. The servant turned abruptly toward the door, and assumed a listening pose. He was a few seconds too late to witness the departure of The Shadow.

However, Vorber was not content. He went to the door of the room, stepped into the hall, and listened. Two minutes elapsed. Vorber saw nothing and heard nothing. He did not detect the unusual blackness that pervaded the curtains hanging in the near-by arch.

WHEN Vorber finally went back into the library, The Shadow moved from his hiding place. He glided swiftly up the stairs, reached the telephone in Howard Wycliff's room and quietly called a number. Burbank responded. The Shadow held a whispered conversation with his agent.

When he returned to the lower floor, The Shadow, spying from the door, saw Vorber tapping the window sill. The searcher had passed The Shadow's chosen hiding place. Gliding along the wall, The Shadow reached the bookcase niche and merged with darkness.

Vorber completed all the searching that was possible. He appeared dejected as he looked about the room. He knew that he would have to wait until the furniture was gone, much though he might prefer to anticipate the others who were anxious to uncover the missing deed.

The servant had two courses: one was to leave; the other to go over the ground again. Vorber preferred the latter course. He stared at Cyril Wycliff's portrait; then resumed his tappings of the wall.

The hour was growing late. Vorber seemed to know that Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle might return at any minute. Nevertheless, the servant was loath to end his search. His attitude became spasmodic: first a few taps upon the wall; then moments of listening.

It was during one of these latter intervals that the telephone rang in the lower hall. Quick as a cat, Vorber leaped to the door of the room. He switched off the light. He answered the telephone. His querulous "Hello" was repeated. Vorber received no answer.

Within the darkened room, The Shadow was busy. He knew the source of that telephone ring. Burbank had called this number to signify that Howard Wycliff's car had returned. The garage was farther along the street. It would be a few minutes before the master of the house would enter. Those were the minutes which The Shadow wanted.

The black cloak swished. The slouch hat came from The Shadow's head. It went beneath the cloak. Gloved hands were bared. The Shadow crouched between the two small tables that were with the rejected pieces of furniture.

Something glowed in The Shadow's hand. It was a tube of glass from which a rubber covering had been removed. The hands stroked the tube; The Shadow raised it toward his face.

From the hallway came a click as Miles Vorber replaced the telephone receiver upon the hook.

The servant had returned to the door of the library. He was about to close it, puzzled by the phone call and knowing that Howard Wycliff might soon return. It was then that The Shadow acted. His right hand, shining in the darkness, stretched forth and overturned the small table that was nearest to him.

Miles Vorber sprang into the room. He had heard the table fall. His hand upon the light switch, the servant faltered as he gazed into the darkness. He did not press the switch. The Shadow had half arisen and was staring in Vorber's direction.

The Shadow's hands and face were luminous. They glowed through the darkness and cast a weird,

phosphorescent range of dimmed radiance. The sight was ghostly; to Miles Vorber, the effect was doubled.

There, in the darkness, the old servant saw the shining features of Cyril Wycliff! The Shadow, who had seen Cyril Wycliff's portrait on his previous visit to the room, had adopted a countenance that resembled the dead man's visage!

BURNING from the face above the floor were the eyes of The Shadow. Those brilliant orbs held Vorber's gaze. The servant dared not press the light switch. The Shadow's hands came upward, and the space about them reflected their ghoulish light. The Shadow was raising the table that he had overturned.

Weird, hollow raps came through the darkness. Vorber heard them. They were the same spectral tappings that The Shadow had delivered on the preceding night; this time they were heard by Vorber's ears as well.

The table settled on its legs. It seemed to topple back and forth as the ghostly hands released it. Then the hands were gone - they had passed beneath the black cloak - and only the face still showed; the face that was the countenance of a dead man!

Blackness suddenly obscured the ghostly visage. The Shadow's slouch hat, brought from darkness, was responsible for the strange evanishment. Vorber, trembling with excitement, fumbled with the light switch. A cloak swished; Vorber did not hear it. When the light came on, the servant found himself staring at the end of the room, where nothing but furniture was visible.

Hissing tensely, Vorber crept forward. His hands were outstretched like claws. His eyes were bulging. He feared that phantom face that he had seen; dreaded it as a visitor from the other world.

Upon the floor, Vorber spied a long streak of darkness that came from the niche beyond the bookcase. Before he could advance farther, Vorber stopped and leaped back toward the door of the room.

He had heard someone rattling the front door. He knew that Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle had returned. With frenzied speed, Vorber extinguished the light and closed the door of the library. He gained the hall just as Howard Wycliff entered. The young man spied Vorber with his hand upon the door knob.

"What's this?" questioned Howard sharply. "What are you doing here, Vorber?"

Paul Marchelle was peering from behind Howard's shoulder. Vorber stepped back a pace; then pointed to the library door. He offered a quick explanation.

"I heard you coming in, sir," he declared. "As I reached the foot of the stairs, I thought I caught a sound from the library - like something falling."

"You were going in there?"

"I went to the door, sir. I had forgotten that it was locked."

"I have the key. Are you sure you heard a noise from the library?"

"I thought I did, sir."

Howard Wycliff quickly produced the key. He unlocked the door, which had a spring bolt. He entered and turned on the light. Paul Marchelle crowded in behind him. Vorber followed. The servant's gaze went straight toward the end of the bookcase. Vorber's eyes dropped to the floor. The stretch of blackness

was gone.

In his eagerness to spy the spot that he had last noticed, Vorber was too late to detect a motion by the window. The iron shutters were closing in the same mysterious fashion with which they had acted on the preceding night. The bar dropped into place. No one observed its easing fall.

"There is no one here," declared Howard Wycliff.

"Let's look around a bit," suggested Paul Marchelle, eyeing Vorber as he spoke.

THE three men prowled about. Vorber examined the niche beyond the bookcase. He found no one. The servant shook his head thoughtfully.

"What was the noise you heard?" questioned Howard.

"It was -" Vorber broke off suddenly. "I can't just say, sir," he added. "It came from" - Vorber wheeled - "from this end of the room, sir."

The servant was staring directly toward Cyril Wycliff's portrait as he spoke. The sight of the dead man's picture made him start. Paul Marchelle noted the action and promptly questioned it.

"What's the matter, Vorber?" he asked. "Have you seen a ghost?"

"Yes -" Vorber shook his head to change the statement. "No, sir. I was thinking about my old master, sir. I served him many years."

Marchelle surveyed Vorber narrowly. The servant turned away and ambled to the other end of the room. Marchelle followed, to examine the barred shutters. It was then that Vorber glanced at the table which The Shadow had replaced upon the floor.

The servant's eyes glittered. He looked shrewdly about him. Seeing Marchelle turning from the window, Vorber was careful not to look at the table again. His face, however, wore a look of new knowledge.

"Vorber must have been mistaken," declared Howard Wycliff, as he strolled toward the door. "There could have been no one here -"

He broke off as he heard an odd click from the direction of the window. Paul Marchelle, also on his way toward the door, turned to locate the sound. Both men glanced at Vorber. The servant also seemed perplexed.

"Was that the noise you heard?" questioned Howard.

"No, sir," responded Vorber.

Paul Marchelle was thoughtful. He turned to Howard Wycliff.

"Suppose I sleep in this room," he volunteered. "If there are any spooks in the place, I'll find them - if they turn up."

Marchelle was looking at Vorber as he finished his statement. The old servant returned the gaze, but said nothing. He watched Howard Wycliff.

"It wouldn't be a bad idea," observed Howard. "The couch will make a good bed. You can leave the door open; if anything occurs, call for my assistance."

"You have a gun?"

"Two revolvers. You can have one; I'll keep the other. Come upstairs; we can load them there. Vorber, make up the couch. Mr. Marchelle will sleep here."

Marchelle eyed Vorber until the servant had started upstairs to get the bedding. Then Marchelle followed with Howard Wycliff. The guns were produced and loaded. The two men heard Vorber going down the stairs. They arrived to find him making up the couch.

From then on, Paul Marchelle did not leave the library. The young lawyer wore a serious look. After Howard Wycliff and Miles Vorber had gone, he walked about the room, glancing here and there. Finally, he extinguished the light and retired.

DEEP silence pervaded the old mansion. There was no noise from the ground floor, where Paul Marchelle kept vigil in the library; nor from the second floor, where Howard Wycliff slept. But on the third floor, a man was wide awake, long after the others had retired.

Miles Vorber was seated upon the edge of his bed. A revolver - his own - lay close at hand. The servant's face was harsh and determined. Vorber was thinking of what had occurred in the library.

Whether ghost or human, the being whom he had seen there resembled only some fantastic creature of a nightmare. Reflecting, Vorber fully believed that he had been the victim of a strange delusion. Once the old servant stalked from his room, revolver in hand, to listen at the head of the stair. Intent, he seemed ready to pay another visit to the library. The thought of Paul Marchelle on guard restrained him.

Peering eyes were watching from a long alcove when Miles Vorber returned to his room. The old servant extinguished the light, and went to bed. He did not hear the slight sounds which came from the window as a living form departed.

The Shadow had reentered the old mansion. He had made a final survey of the situation. He knew that his plan had succeeded.

Playing the part of a spectral visitant, he had given Miles Vorber a clew to the whereabouts of the missing deed. By timing his action to the return of Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle, he had prevented Vorber from making use of the discovery.

Tomorrow, Vorber would be forced to act. It would be his only chance. By placing Vorber in a predicament, by clicking the closed shutters, The Shadow had also made Paul Marchelle vigilant.

Whatever steps Vorber might take, Marchelle would be watching. Vorber, in turn, would be observant of Marchelle. The way was paved to the culmination that The Shadow desired. The finding of the missing deed would be challenged when it occurred. The result would be the emergency which would bring the murderer here to aid.

The crisis would not arise until after the furniture had been moved. Then, depending entirely upon Marchelle's aroused vigilance, a final encounter would result. So far as Miles Vorber was concerned, the missing deed was in his grasp, could he but gain the opportunity to take it.

But the servant would require outside aid before he could transfer that document to other hands. That The Shadow knew. The Shadow would be here upon the morrow. Miles Vorber would see The Shadow again before he would have the chance to dispose of the valuable trophy which he was ready now to gain!

CHAPTER XIX. THE NEW VIGIL

IT was nine o'clock in the morning when Howard Wycliff came downstairs to find Paul Marchelle, smoking in the library. The young lawyer was seated in a large chair beside the couch on which he had slept.

"Hello, Paul," greeted Howard. "Any more ghosts?"

"None," replied Marchelle. "If there had been, I would have heard them. I usually sleep with one eye open."

The library was gloomy. Its windows had not been unbarred. The place was stuffy, and the only light was that which came from two lamps and a shaft of sunbeams that entered from a window in the hall.

"Let's go in to breakfast," suggested Howard. "Vorber is probably preparing it, now that he has heard me up and about. Before we go, however, it wouldn't be a bad idea to open those windows."

Paul Marchelle gripped Howard Wycliff's arm and gave a head shake. He pointed toward the door, and urged his companion in that direction. In the hall, he presented a whispered question:

"You have the key?"

Howard Wycliff nodded.

"All right." Marchelle's tone was normal. "Let's go in to breakfast."

With these words, Marchelle deliberately closed the door of the library. The lock clicked. Together, the young men passed by the hanging curtains and reached the dining room beyond. Miles Vorber was standing just within the door.

Howard Wycliff, aroused to a new train of thought by Paul Marchelle's actions, immediately glanced at Vorber. He suspected at once that the servant had been listening, and that Marchelle had been cognizant of the fact.

Breakfast ended, Howard suggested a return to the library. Vorber, who was clearing the table, stopped to remind his master that there was work to be done before the moving men arrived.

"Those books, sir," said the servant. "You ordered me to take them upstairs."

"That's right," recalled Howard. "You can do that this morning, Vorber. We'll call you when we're ready. The library needs an airing."

"I can unbar the shutters, sir -"

"We'll attend to that, Vorber."

WITH Marchelle, Howard went to the library, unlocked the door, and entered. As soon as Marchelle had followed him into the gloomy room, Howard closed the door tightly. He pointed to the windows.

"You think we should keep them shut, Paul?" he questioned. "It would be better to have them open; the place is very stuffy."

"It's all right so long as we are in here," returned Marchelle, in a significant tone.

Howard Wycliff nodded as he unbarred and opened one window. Paul Marchelle did the same with the

other pair of shutters. Meeting in the center of the room, the young men sat down. Howard Wycliff looked at Paul Marchelle.

"I understand what you meant by insisting that the door be locked," declared Howard. "I didn't get the idea at first, Paul; but when I saw Vorber in the dining room, I began to realize. Did anything happen in here last night?"

"Not after we came in."

Howard Wycliff nodded as he considered Marchelle's reply. It broached a thought which Howard had already gained: namely, that Miles Vorber's talk about someone being in the library was no more than a pretense on the servant's part.

"Paul," said Howard, in a low tone, "I'm beginning to wonder about Vorber's attitude. Do you think that he is playing some game? Should we watch him?"

"It is wise," returned Marchelle quietly, "to watch anyone who is watching others."

"You mean that Vorber -"

"Vorber has been constantly snooping into affairs which do not concern him. I noticed that the first night that we met here to discuss the matter of the missing deed."

Howard Wycliff nodded thoughtfully. He recalled the promptness with which Vorber had entered the room on that first evening. He remembered other incidents; and the final one was the discovery of Vorber just outside the closed door of the library. This culmination of a train of thought brought a sharp exclamation from Howard Wycliff's lips.

"Maybe Vorber was in here!" Howard Wycliff stared with a serious expression. "He may have come to search for the lost deed."

"You have the only key."

"There could be a duplicate. I have the one belonging to my father. I naturally assumed that it was the only key. Until my father died, however, there was no particular significance attached to this room. If Vorber has another key -"

"He might be able to beat you to the finding of the deed," completed Marchelle.

"For what purpose?" questioned Howard. "It could be of no use to him."

PAUL MARCHELLE shook his head. He strolled toward the opened window, and stood in the sunlight. His face showed puzzlement. Howard Wycliff approached and voiced a new idea, still guarding his tones, even though the door was closed.

"Could it be revenge?" he queried. "Father treated Vorber rather shabbily - there was no legacy to follow Vorber's years of service. Vorber knew all along that he would probably be left no money by my father's will."

"Yes," returned Marchelle, in a meditative tone, "that might be the reason. If Vorber should find that deed, he could destroy it, and thus deprive you of a legacy which may have value -"

"Or he could hold it," broke in Howard, "and demand cash for its delivery. I hate to suspect Vorber of crookedness, Paul; nevertheless, his suspicious actions have impressed me unfavorably, now that I

review them."

"I have been watching Vorber," admitted Marchelle. "The only reason that I did not tell you so was because I knew you held the old servant in high regard. Vorber is naturally a suspicious type of person. I made allowances for his behavior, and I did not care to injure him in your esteem."

"Very fair," commended Howard Wycliff. "The time for allowances, however, is past. We need vigilance instead."

"Right," agreed Marchelle.

"Do you think," quizzed Howard, "that Vorber could already have found the deed?"

"No," decided Marchelle. "We evidently surprised him while he was here in the library. If he had already found the deed, he would not have been in this room. Perhaps he has located it, but he cannot have taken it. It would have been impossible for him to have had the document in his possession when we entered last night."

"We'll have to watch him," asserted Howard.

"Exactly," agreed Marchelle. "We cannot depend upon the locked door. I would suggest that we take turns here in the library, or, better, occupy the room as a matter of course until the moving men arrive."

"Vorber has to move those books."

"We can help him. When the furniture goes out, I shall check every item on the list."

Howard Wycliff nodded as he stared through the opened window. There was no need for further conference. Miles Vorber could not be listening to this conversation, but it was possible that the servant was wondering why Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle had entered into a guarded discussion behind a closed door.

"I am counting on you, Paul," declared Howard, as he turned to leave the library. "If Vorber has some scheme -"

"Let's give the old fellow the benefit of the doubt," interposed Marchelle, "until we know positively that he has something up his sleeve. Act naturally. Move the books and furniture. The test will come tomorrow, when the room is torn up. We can supervise that work and send Vorber elsewhere. Let's hope that he is on the level. After all, he served your father for many years. His present attitude may simply be a mistaken notion of responsibility."

"That is possible," agreed Howard Wycliff. "Nevertheless, we must be vigilant."

The young man opened the door as he spoke. He stopped, face to face with Miles Vorber. The servant stepped back and bowed.

"What about the books, sir?" questioned Vorber.

"You can move them now." Howard Wycliff watched the servant closely as he spoke. "Mr. Marchelle and I can help you."

As he spoke, Howard Wycliff fancied that he saw a flicker of disappointment upon Miles Vorber's face. The expression changed. Stolidly, Vorber entered the library and picked up a stack of books. Howard Wycliff's glanced significantly at Paul Marchelle.

The new vigil was in operation. From now until the room was devoid of books and furniture, Miles Vorber would be under double surveillance.

CHAPTER XX. MARCHELLE CHECKS

It was nearly noon before all the books were removed from the library. During the entire period of work, Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle took turns carrying books upstairs. Always, however, one of the two watchers remained in the library while Miles Vorber was there.

When lunch was announced, Howard Wycliff calmly barred the windows and locked the door of the library. He and Paul Marchelle, at lunch, were able to keep watch upon Vorber. The old servant, moving about as furtively as usual, gave no signs that he suspected vigilant eyes were upon him.

After lunch, the two young men returned to the library. They sat there, smoking, with the windows again unbarred. Paul Marchelle put in a call to Garrett Slader; Howard Wycliff made one to Doctor Keyes. They learned that the physician intended to visit the old lawyer that evening.

The moving van arrived at four o'clock. Four men entered to take out the furniture. Paul Marchelle showed his list to Howard Wycliff.

"I'm going to check each piece of furniture," he said. "Everything is going out. You can stay in here; I'll watch the loading."

Howard Wycliff nodded his agreement. The removal of the furniture was an essential step to the next search for the missing deed; nevertheless, with Vorber under suspicion, it was advisable to neglect nothing.

It required nearly an hour for the moving men to get the large, bulky furniture into the van. Miles Vorber aided in the work, constantly urging the movers to be careful. When the big couch had gone out, Paul Marchelle came in from the front door. He handed his list to Howard Wycliff, with a significant gesture.

"All the important pieces have gone," he declared. "Not one is missing. That's that. The check-up is finished."

"What about these?" asked Howard, pointing to the discarded pieces of furniture in the other end of the room. "They are going along also."

Miles Vorber was coming in the doorway. Paul Marchelle turned quickly to Howard Wycliff.

"Certainly," said the young lawyer, in a tone calculated to lull Vorber's suspicion. "Check those smaller items. When furniture goes to storage, it is wise to neglect nothing."

"I have come for the pictures, sir," announced Vorber, to Howard Wycliff. "Shall I take them upstairs with the books?"

"Yes," decided Howard. "That is better than having them go to storage."

Paul Marchelle caught Howard's quick glance. He nodded. He went to the wall and took down one of the pictures.

"Let me stack them," he suggested "Vorber can carry them upstairs after all the furniture is gone. In the meantime, he can help take out these small chairs and tables."

Howard Wycliff understood. The pictures had been examined in a previous search; nevertheless,

Vorber's reference to them was direct. Paul Marchelle was playing safe. By taking down the pictures himself, he could make sure that none of them contained the missing deed.

The first picture that Marchelle removed from the wall was the portrait of Cyril Wycliff, the picture at which Vorber had stared the night before. As though by accident, Marchelle let the rear of the frame come open. The portrait dropped upon the floor. In replacing it, Marchelle made positive that there was nothing between the picture and the back of the frame.

"I'm going outside to check up the furniture," remarked Howard Wycliff. "Vorber, you can carry out a few pieces and begin to take the pictures upstairs when the moving men come in from the van."

"Very good, sir."

Vorber picked up a table and a chair. He carried both objects into the hall and set them back from the door. He returned for two more light chairs. Howard Wycliff went out; Paul Marchelle, removing a second picture from the wall, watched Vorber from the corner of his eye.

Two moving men entered. Vorber pointed to the odd items of furniture that were still in the room. The men picked up the pieces. Vorber spoke as they went out.

"I put some chairs in the hall," he said. "You can get those when you come back."

"That will be the last trip," rejoined a moving man.

As soon as the movers had walked out, Vorber turned to Paul Marchelle. The servant pointed to the portrait of Cyril Wycliff.

"Is that ready to go upstairs, sir?" he questioned.

Marchelle nodded.

Vorber picked up the portrait. He went from the room. Marchelle heard his footsteps pause in the hall. Then they continued upward.

Marchelle smiled. This was the opportunity he wanted; it gave him time for an examination of the other pictures similar to the one which he had artfully made with Cyril Wycliff's portrait.

MOST of the pictures were small. Marchelle quickly examined the only two that seemed large enough to contain the missing deed. Gathering half a dozen pictures, Marchelle went from the room. He arrived in the hall just as the moving men were departing with the final pieces of furniture.

Marchelle moved upstairs. He reached the third floor. He called for Vorber. The old servant popped suddenly from his own room.

"Where do these pictures go?" questioned Marchelle. "In there?"

"No, no, sir," returned Vorber hastily. "That is my room. Come this way, Mr. Marchelle."

The servant led the lawyer to a storeroom at the other end of the hall. Cyril Wycliff's portrait was resting on the floor. Marchelle deposited his pictures with it.

"Come downstairs, Vorber," he ordered. "I'll help you bring up the remaining pictures."

Vorber complied. He and Marchelle reached the living room. They took up the last bundle of pictures. When they had placed them in the storeroom, Paul Marchelle looked at the door.

"We'll lock it," he said, "and give the key to Mr. Wycliff. Some of those pictures may be valuable."

"Very well, sir," agreed Vorber.

The servant went to his own room, while Marchelle was locking the door of the storeroom. With a furtive glance toward the lawyer, Vorber locked the door of his room. He saw Marchelle waiting for him. He followed as Marchelle beckoned him to come toward the stairs.

"There may be more work downstairs," remarked Marchelle. "You can find out from Mr. Wycliff."

Howard Wycliff was coming in the front door when Marchelle and Vorber arrived. The servant inquired if there were any further duties. Howard glanced at his watch.

"Dinner," he said, with a smile. "Of course, we can go out -"

"It would be better to eat here," interposed Paul Marchelle.

"I guess so," agreed Howard. "Prepare the meal, Vorber. It is after half past five."

THE library, devoid of furniture, no longer served as a conference room. Howard Wycliff barred the windows and locked the door. He and Paul Marchelle went up to the second floor, to a stuffy little sitting room at the head of the stairs.

"We can watch the library from here," remarked Paul Marchelle. "We must be alert from now on, Howard. The room will be torn up tomorrow; but in the meantime -"

"We must watch Vorber."

"Exactly."

Shortly after six o'clock, Vorber came up the stairs to announce that dinner was served. Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle followed the servant to the ground floor. They entered the dining room and sat at the table.

"Here is your list," remarked Howard, as they began to eat.

Paul Marchelle received the paper. He glanced at the tabulated items, with check marks all down the row. Those at the top were his own, checking the large pieces of furniture. The marks at the bottom were the ones which Howard Wycliff had made, in the mere routine checking of the smaller, rejected items.

Marchelle's eyes stopped. On the list were two identical statements, in column form, near the bottom:

One flat-topped table.

One flat-topped table.

Only the first of these identical items had been checked by Howard Wycliff. Paul Marchelle stared; then crumpled the list and thrust it in his pocket. He looked up to see Vorber entering from the pantry.

"You checked everything, of course," remarked Marchelle, to Howard Wycliff.

"Yes," was the response.

"Good," said Marchelle. "I'll leave the list at the office tomorrow, and have it typed. The stenographer can file it among your papers for future reference."

There was calmness in Paul Marchelle's tone; in his mind, the young lawyer was holding thoughts which he did not express. He realized why Howard Wycliff had believed he had checked everything. He had taken the double listing merely as repetition; by marking one flat-topped table, he had apparently completed the check-up.

But Paul Marchelle, who had prepared the list, remembered two such tables. Had the second gone out after the first, Howard Wycliff would have marked it, realizing then that there were two. The answer was plain. Only one of those rejected tables had passed from the house.

What had happened to the other?

PAUL MARCHELLE recalled that Vorber had carried a table and a chair from the library. Shortly afterward, the servant had taken Cyril Wycliff's portrait upstairs. Marchelle remembered the pause that he had heard Vorber make in the hall. There was the answer.

Vorber had carried the table upstairs also! It must be in his room - the place where Marchelle had surprised him. Vorber had locked the door of his room. That was an unusual action. It added to Marchelle's suspicions.

What use could the table be to Vorber? It could not contain the missing deed. Its flat top was thin and unquestionably solid.

Paul Marchelle visualized the table. A look of understanding suddenly flickered upon his features. His lips became tense.

Marchelle knew where the deed could be. With the clew in his possession, he understood the subtle measure which Cyril Wycliff had taken to hide the document. Vorber had gained what he had sought; the problem now was to wrest it from him.

Yet Marchelle wisely maintained his silence, that the servant might not suspect what he had learned. So long as Vorber remained in the house, the deed would be safe, provided, of course, that no one entered to receive the paper that the servant had gained.

Paul Marchelle said nothing as he continued with his dinner. He did not attempt to communicate with Howard Wycliff. He was avoiding everything that would arouse Vorber's suspicion. The situation had narrowed to a battle of wits between the young lawyer and the old servant.

Vorber eyed Marchelle cautiously, each time he entered the dining room.

Marchelle, in turn, sensed the significance of Vorber's watchfulness. Each knew that the other suspected. Each was planning the next step.

Upon Paul Marchelle rested the outcome of this strange dilemma: whether the deed would reach the hands of Howard Wycliff, its rightful owner, or whether it would pass into the hands of murderers. Marchelle knew well that when he acted, Miles Vorber would offer all the resistance which lay within his power.

Nevertheless, Marchelle was not fazed. Quietly confident, he completed his meal, leaving events to mold themselves afterward. Howard Wycliff, completely ignorant of Marchelle's keen discovery, finished his dinner.

Circumstances were shaping as The Shadow had foreordained. The crisis was approaching. The fate of the missing deed lay in the balance. Before this evening ended, men of murder would arrive to gain the stolen document.

The Shadow's triangle was nearing its completion. As The Shadow had foreseen, Miles Vorber was the key to the approaching climax!

CHAPTER XXI. MURDERERS MOVE

BLACKNESS of night had enshrouded the old mansion when Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle arose from the dinner table to go upstairs. As the two young men passed through the curtained archway, Miles Vorber stood alert and attentive until he heard their footsteps reach the stairs.

Then, with soft tread, Vorber followed. In the gloomy hall, he kept away from the steps and listened intently to the muffled conversation that was audible from the sitting room on the floor above.

There was a spectral atmosphere about the interior of the old house. The servant, his scrawny hands clasped just below his stooped shoulders, was as ghoulish as the ghostly shape which he had seen last night inside the library. Vorber's face showed ferocious determination. As The Shadow had reckoned, Miles Vorber was keen enough to know when his plans were meeting with an unexpected obstacle.

On the second floor, Howard Wycliff was talking soberly with Paul Marchelle. Howard's trend of conversation turned toward the missing deed. Marchelle, with a shake of his head and an upraised finger, warned his companion to maintain silence. Marchelle sensed that Vorber might be listening below.

Indeed, the need for caution seemed all-impelling so far as Paul Marchelle was concerned. The danger of rousing Vorber's suspicions was evident; the young lawyer made no attempt to tell Howard Wycliff what actions he thought Vorber had taken.

In his pocket, Marchelle clutched the crumpled paper of the list. His thoughts were of the missing table, which he believed was up in Vorber's room; yet Marchelle was careful not to bring up the subject for the present.

Howard Wycliff was watching the stairs. Although not entirely convinced that Vorber had become a traitor, the heir to Cyril Wycliff's estate was leaving nothing to chance. He could see the entrance to the locked library. Had Vorber appeared and made a motion to open that door, Howard Wycliff would have sprung forth to apprehend him.

Paul Marchelle, however, was more concerned with the possibility of Vorber coming up. Once the servant went to the seclusion of his room, action would be necessary. Sooner or later, Vorber would ascend those stairs. Until he did, Marchelle decided it was best to use restraint.

There had been no time for Vorber to examine the table which he had purloined. Marchelle knew that fact, and it was one reason why he played his waiting game. It became evident to him that Vorber, below, was also biding his time.

A RISING wind whistled outside. It shook the rafters of the old Manhattan mansion. It swirled along the stone surface of the building and whisked the wall beneath the window of the room in which Cyril Wycliff had died.

As though conjured from nothingness, a figure appeared beside that wall. A shape of blackness, indiscernible to ordinary vision, this sinister shape might well have been a portion of the night, torn from its natural element by the fury of the wind.

As the wailing gale dispelled, the blackened figure remained. A thing of life, it began to ascend the wall.

The Shadow, knowing that the climax to his operations might soon be due, was paying a secret visit to

the Wycliff mansion. Steadily, he reached his goal; the room through which he had made a chosen path.

Watching from within the portal of Cyril Wycliff's old apartment, The Shadow could see the light of the little sitting room. He could hear the buzzing voices of Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle.

The tenseness within the old house betokened the occurrence of something unexpected. It came. A ringing sound resounded. Someone had arrived at the front door. Howard Wycliff leaped to his feet and sprang into the hall, with Paul Marchelle at his heels. The Shadow watched from darkness.

Downstairs, Vorber came suddenly into Howard Wycliff's view. The promptness with which Vorber appeared made Howard grip Marchelle's arm and whisper a suspicion. Vorber answered the door; they heard him talking with someone outside. The door closed, and Vorber headed toward the stairs. He was carrying a yellow envelope in his hand.

The servant spied his master at the top of the stairway. Without betraying any surprise, Vorber ascended and held out the envelope. He explained what it was.

"A telegram, sir," announced Vorber.

Howard Wycliff took the envelope. He went into the sitting room. Paul Marchelle stood at the door. Miles Vorber, as if seeking a pretext, waited on the landing at the top of the stairs. Howard Wycliff read the telegram.

"Listen to this, Paul!" he exclaimed. "This is a telegram from Hiram Burchison, in Chicago. He wants me to come there to arrange the sale of property which I possess."

Paul Marchelle took the telegram. His eyes widened. He pointed to the name at the top.

"This was sent to your father!" he declared. "Who is Hiram Burchison?"

"A man with whom my father had various transactions," responded Howard. "I don't think that Garrett Slader had any connection with them."

"There is no record of Hiram Burchison at the office," said Marchelle doubtfully.

"I know who he is," assured Howard. "Do you think that Burchison could, by any chance, be referring to the property named in the missing deed?"

"Possibly!" exclaimed Marchelle, forgetful of Vorber's presence. "We must communicate with him immediately. What is his address?"

"The telegram says to meet him at the Dorsay Hotel," remarked Howard, pointing to the words.

"Thursday morning. Tomorrow is Wednesday; that means I would have to take a morning train for the Middle West."

"Can't you reach Burchison any other way," questioned Marchelle.

Howard Wycliff shook his head negatively.

"I heard my father talk of Burchison," he explained. "The man has no regular office. He travels in and out of Chicago."

"You can wire the Dorsay Hotel."

"Yes; but Burchison may not be there. It seems to me, Paul" - Howard's voice showed eagerness - "that

it would be best to keep this appointment and see Burchison in person."

"But tomorrow," objected Marchelle, "we are beginning the search of the library -"

"You can superintend it," declared Howard. "Garrett Slader may be here - possibly Doctor Keyes. Both were around here the other times when we searched -"

"Yes," admitted Marchelle. "We can take care of matters here."

"In Chicago," asserted Howard, "I may obtain information that will at least tell us to what property the deed refers. I can telephone you after I talk with Burchison. In the meantime, should you discover the deed, you can notify me."

"Which would leave you in a position to deal with Burchison," nodded Marchelle, now sensing the train of Howard Wycliff's intention. "If the property is valuable, he might be the right man to purchase it."

"Exactly." Howard Wycliff glanced at his watch. "It is about half past eight. Do you think that Garrett Slader is at home?"

"Yes," returned Paul Marchelle. "It would be wise to see him before you go. You have been neglecting matters, which pertain to the estate."

"Mr. Slader has the papers at his home; we can go over there in your car. How about starting at once?"

Howard Wycliff stared in amazement. He could not understand Marchelle's purpose in suggesting that they leave the mansion. The sight of Vorber, still upon the landing, served to increase Howard's wonderment.

"But - but" - Howard hesitated - "wouldn't it be better to have Slader come here? You can call him, Paul - or I can call him -"

PAUL MARCHELLE frowned. Vorber could not see the action, for Marchelle's face was turned toward the room. Howard Wycliff, however, detected the expression. He realized that Marchelle must have some definite reason for his proposal.

"Mr. Slader is fussy about legal papers," remarked Marchelle quietly. "Besides, the library is emptied of furniture. This little room is too small for a satisfactory conference."

"You are right," agreed Howard promptly. "We can go over to Slader's, Paul. Vorber" - Howard faced the servant - "take charge here while we are gone. We shall not return until after ten o'clock."

"Very well, sir."

Howard Wycliff and Paul Marchelle went downstairs, with Vorber at their heels. The servant helped them don their coats. They went out into the night. When they climbed into Howard Wycliff's car, Marchelle began to speak in a low, tense tone.

"You have the key to the front door, of course," he remarked.

"Certainly," replied Howard.

"Let me have it," said Marchelle. "I'm going back to the house."

Howard Wycliff reached in his pocket. Marchelle uttered another statement.

"Drive along while you're giving me the key," he said. "I don't want Vorber to know I'm coming back. I'll drop off at the corner by the drug store and double on my tracks."

"You think that Vorber -"

"Vorber is up to something. I don't like to say more until I am sure about it. I can't give you my full suspicions now - time is too short. I want to catch him before he has time to act."

"He was stalling while we were there?"

"I think so. He was waiting for us to go out. I thought that when he popped up so quickly to answer the door. I knew that the only way to make him show his hand was to give him the chance."

"You are going back alone -"

"Don't worry about me." Marchelle laughed grimly as the car stopped at the corner. "I've got the gun you gave me. Here in my coat pocket. It would be unwise for you to go back, Howard. Vorber might call Slader's house."

"That's true. But suppose Vorber sees you coming in the door -"

"I can explain it. You are at the corner. I forgot some papers. I can rummage around and pretend to look for them; then come out to join you."

"Good. I'll wait here a few minutes. Suppose, though, that you find Vorber up to something -"

"You'll hear from me by telephone."

PAUL MARCHELLE alighted at the darkened corner. He motioned to Howard Wycliff to drive farther on, so that the lights of the car would not be visible if Vorber was peering from in front of the old house. Howard swung his car around the corner. He caught a last glimpse of Paul Marchelle edging toward the wall beside the drug store.

Howard waited a few minutes, then drove away. As he rode toward Slader's, he wondered over the odd sequence of events. The telegram had changed all plans. It might mean much, this message from Burchison. But the most impressive thought in Howard Wycliff's mind was that of Miles Vorber, the secretive servant, prowling through the old house, with Paul Marchelle entering to watch the old man's actions.

Howard Wycliff was convinced that he, alone, had an inkling of what might be transpiring within that gloomy mansion. Howard Wycliff had never seen The Shadow. Hence he could not suspect that a mysterious, invisible visitor had already entered the house.

But there were others besides The Shadow who also had gained an idea of what was happening in Howard Wycliff's home.

WARD FETZLER, standing in the sumptuous living room of his apartment, was holding the telephone in his hand. With livid, blurring lips, he was telling Martin Hamprell the details of a message that he had just received.

"Vorber has located the deed!" he exclaimed. "He hasn't had a chance to uncover it yet. Young Wycliff is out - he's fallen for the fake telegram. Gone over to his lawyer's house."

"What about Marchelle?" questioned Hamprell quickly.

"He went out with Howard Wycliff," answered Fetzler. "But Vorber suspects him of being wise. You know what that means -"

"Marchelle will double back, of course," interposed Hamprell. "He'll try to get the deed when Vorber uncovers it."

"I hope Vorber stalls to make sure that Marchelle is really gone," remarked Fetzler. "But you can't tell just what Vorber will do. He's been after the deed ever since old Wycliff cashed in; he's worried because Marchelle has been watching him. He'll be dangerous enough if Marchelle tries to take the deed from him, but -"

"Marchelle is clever enough to get it," broke in Hamprell. "Just the same, the odds are fifty-fifty, unless we show up in time to swing the balance."

"Right!" decided Fetzler. "That's why we're starting now. Before we go, buzz Ham Cruther and tell him to get his mob outside."

"We won't need the gang -"

"Not so long as only Vorber and Marchelle are involved; but if young Wycliff comes back, or if an alarm is given -"

Ward Fetzler did not complete the statement. Martin Hamprell was satisfied. He took the telephone from Fetzler's, hand and put in a call for Ham Cruther.

Men of murder had decided. The fate of the missing deed was in the balance. It rested now between Miles Vorber and Paul Marchelle. Whichever one should finally gain it, the result would be the same so far as these fiends were concerned.

Backed by a squad of gangsters, Ward Fetzler and Martin Hamprell were setting forth to gain the spoils of murder, ready to commit new crime to win their game of evil!

CHAPTER XXII. THE FATAL SHOT

WITHIN the old Wycliff mansion, Miles Vorber was standing in his suspicious attitude. The old servant was in the lower hall. His scrawny hand was upon the telephone. His eyes gazed toward the closed front door.

Miles Vorber expected the return of Paul Marchelle. He knew that the young lawyer had suspected the trick which he had worked this afternoon.

Two courses lay open to the old servant. One was to wait and risk an encounter should Marchelle return; the other was to trust to the slim chance that the lawyer had actually gone along with Howard Wycliff.

Vorber had considered both these plans; now he was debating a middle course. He was wondering about the risk involved. Still staring at the door, he made his decision. He lifted the telephone. He called a number. There was no answer.

A wise smile appeared upon Vorber's thin lips. He had called the apartment of Felix Gerwin, an ex-judge, who was a friend of Paul Marchelle. Knowing that Gerwin was not at home, Vorber was free to try his scheme.

He called another number - the home of Garret Slader. Vorber heard the old lawyer's voice over the wire.

"Hello," said the servant. "This is Vorber, sir - speaking from Mr. Wycliff's -"

Before Vorber could complete his sentence, Slader delivered an abrupt interruption. Vorber heard him state that he would call Howard Wycliff to the telephone. A scowl appeared upon Vorber's face. The servant had not intended to ask for Howard Wycliff. Nevertheless, he waited until the voice of his new master came over the wire.

"Hello, Vorber. What is it?"

"I wanted to speak to Mr. Marchelle, sir," said the servant. "There was a call for him; I was asked to deliver the message."

"I can take it," declared Howard Wycliff.

"But if Mr. Marchelle is there" - Vorber's protest was a weak one - "I can give him the message -"

"Mr. Marchelle is here," came Howard Wycliff's terse voice. "He is busy. Give me the message, Vorber."

"Judge Gerwin called," stammered the servant. "He said - he said for Mr. Marchelle to call him at his home. Not now - the judge will not be there until ten o'clock - but after that -"

"Very well, Vorber."

The telephone clicked abruptly. Howard Wycliff had terminated the conversation.

Vorber thought the matter was ended. He would have been disillusioned had he been able to see across the wire!

STANDING in Garrett Slader's living room, telephone in hand, Howard Wycliff was facing Slader and Doctor Keyes. His face wore a troubled look.

"What is the matter," Howard questioned Slader.

"A great deal," explained Howard. "That call was from Vorber. He wanted to know if Marchelle was here."

"You told us that Marchelle remained at your house."

"He is there, but Vorber does not know it. I had not intended to talk about this until I heard from Paul. But with this call from Vorber - well, I am frankly worried."

Howard Wycliff paced across the room. He stopped short and faced the other men. Briefly, he gave the situation.

"Paul Marchelle," he said, "believes that Vorber has located the missing deed. Paul and I both are convinced that Vorber has a key to the library door. Vorber acted suspiciously tonight. As soon as Paul and I went out, Paul doubled back to see what Vorber was doing."

"Then Marchelle should be there at present," said Slader.

"Unless harm has befallen him," returned Howard. "Vorber's call - his pretended anxiety to learn if Paul were here -"

"May be a bluff," completed Doctor Keyes.

"We must go to your house at once!" announced Garrett Slader. "Come, Howard. We will start in your car!" The decision was an unusual one for the old, lethargic lawyer to make. It proved that Garrett Slader still possessed spirit when a friend's welfare was concerned. It was Doctor Barton Keyes who proved reluctant.

"We must be cautious," warned the physician. "Suppose we call the police. I am worried about this man Vorber. This evil business makes me wonder about -"

"About what?" queried Howard Wycliff.

"About your father's death," asserted Keyes. "If Vorber is seeking that missing deed, he may have had some hand in your father's illness. I have been puzzled by Doctor Arberg's death. Gentlemen, I insist that we call detective headquarters."

"Suit yourself," said Garrett Slader. "Howard and I are leaving at once. There's the telephone, Keyes. Call the police if you wish. Your own car is outside. You can follow us."

With this, Garrett Slader strode from the room. Howard Wycliff followed promptly. Barton Keyes remained alone. He picked up the telephone to make a call.

BACK at the Wycliff mansion, Miles Vorber was pacing the hall outside the library door. At last the servant turned toward the stairs. As he did so, two motions became apparent: one above, the other below. Vorber saw neither.

The front door, which without Vorber noting it, was already ajar, now opened slowly. Paul Marchelle entered softly and waited while he watched Vorber ascend the steps.

At the landing above, two burning eyes that had been watching Vorber became no longer noticeable. A blackened shape disappeared into the gloom above.

Miles Vorber continued upward. He reached the third floor, unconscious of a blackened shape that glided ahead of him, unhearing soft footsteps that followed his course. He reached his isolated room. He unlocked the door. He listened intently; then turned on the light.

Leaving the door ajar, that he might hear any outside noise, Vorber went to one of the alcoves. From it, he brought forth the missing table. This piece of furniture had long, thick legs, and a thin, solid top.

Setting the table upside down upon the floor, Vorber placed his foot against the top and wrenched at one of the legs. The sound of cracking wood followed; the leg came away in Vorber's grasp.

The top of the leg was apparently solid, as Vorber examined it in the light. But when the old servant hewed at it with a large-bladed pocket knife, he gained immediate results. Scraping the wood, he discovered that the top of the leg was fitted with a plug. The wooden stopper pried loose under the pressure of the knife.

A gloating smile lighted Vorber's face. Thrusting his fingers into the cavity, Vorber drew forth a long, tight roll of heavy paper.

The missing deed was in his hand! He had uncovered Cyril Wycliff's hiding place - a hollow leg in the most unlikely piece of furniture that had graced the old man's library!

Between his scrawny hands, Vorber unrolled the deed. He began to read it. He saw that it referred to property in Utah.

Suddenly, Vorber's eyes became fixed. His hands were rigid. His head moved slowly upward and turned toward the door. His fingers froze upon the paper which they held.

Standing in the doorway, holding a revolver, was Paul Marchelle! The young lawyer's eyes were cold. Vorber quailed before the indignant gaze.

"You thief!" exclaimed Marchelle scornfully. "I knew you were playing a crooked game! I have caught you with the goods!"

Vorber glowered. His momentary fright was ended. Boldly, he faced the man with the gun. He waited to see what Marchelle intended to do.

"If you make trouble," announced, Marchelle - "I shall shoot. I warn you, Vorber, your game is up. Drop that deed before I fire!"

Marchelle's tone was threatening. Reluctantly, Vorber obeyed. He half slumped as he let the deed fall to the floor. Assuming a cringing pose, he slipped to his knees.

Then came the break.

A DULL sound came from downstairs; the noise might have indicated the opening of the front door.

Marchelle lost his vigilance for the moment. In an instant, Vorber's hand had dropped to the floor. Seizing the hollow leg that he had broken from the table, Vorber, with a scream of rage, leaped upon Paul Marchelle.

The young man did not have time to fire. As he dodged the blow, Vorber caught his right wrist. Marchelle, with his left arm, warded away the table leg. The two men grappled. They staggered across the room in a furious clinch.

Footsteps were pounding on the stairway from the second floor. Howard Wycliff came into view. Vorber could see the approach of his master. Marchelle could not.

For the moment, Marchelle's strength relaxed as the young lawyer sought to free himself from Vorber's grasp. The servant bursting into a paroxysm of fury, swung a back-handed stroke with the table leg, and knocked Marchelle's revolver from his hand.

Marchelle leaped into a new clinch. As he and Vorber turned, Marchelle saw Howard Wycliff. Seeking to avoid the wild blows which Vorber was making with the table leg, Marchelle screamed.

"Get him, Howard! Get him! He stole the deed!"

Howard saw the deed on the floor. He leaped forward and picked up the gun, just as Garrett Slader came into view. As Marchelle and Vorber suddenly tightened in their grasp, Howard aimed the revolver at the old servant.

Seeing the action, Vorber twisted away. He broke free and jumped beyond Marchelle as Howard Wycliff fired wildly.

Vorber swung the table leg. He missed Marchelle. The lawyer grabbed the servant and whirled him directly into the path of Howard Wycliff's aim.

Vorber saw death ahead as Howard Wycliff's finger trembled on the trigger. Paul Marchelle, too, saw death as his eyes turned toward the alcove. There, stepping from darkness, was a being clad in black.

The Shadow!

A terrific shot burst through the room. It did not come from Howard Wycliff's gun. The Shadow was the one who fired. A huge automatic, held in his black-gloved hand, issued a mighty tongue of flame, while the burning eyes above it directed the perfect aim.

The grappling men fell to the floor as one gave way. Howard Wycliff, loosing his volley, was too late. His shots went above the heads of fallen men.

Staring - entirely unconscious of The Shadow's presence - Howard Wycliff saw one of the combatants arise and drop his antagonist's limp body to the floor. A gasp of indignation came from Howard's lips.

The rising man was Miles Vorber. The motionless form upon the floor was Paul Marchelle. In his nervous stupor, Howard Wycliff believed that he had shot his friend instead of the servant whom he had branded as a traitor.

Howard Wycliff was wrong. It was not his hand that had done the act. The Shadow, now merged with the darkness of the alcove, had fired the fatal shot.

It was The Shadow - he who never failed - who had decided the outcome of the struggle. Seeking to save the life of the man who had deserved to live, The Shadow had picked Paul Marchelle as his victim instead of Miles Vorber!

CHAPTER XXIII. TRUTH REVEALED

MILES VORBER, panting, stood with the broken table leg within his grasp. All fight had gone from the old servant. His eyes, however, still held a venom as they gazed toward the prone form of Paul Marchelle.

As Howard Wycliff brandished his revolver, Vorber walked toward the door. He stopped at Howard's command. Garrett Slader had entered. He was bending over Paul Marchelle, while Howard Wycliff covered Vorber. The old lawyer raised his head.

"Marchelle is dead," he said bitterly. "You have killed him, Howard."

"I tried to get Vorber," returned Howard soberly. "The twist they made was fatal. I shall give myself up to the police, Mr. Slader."

"Not yet," returned the old lawyer, as he arose from the floor. "Keep Vorber covered. We shall turn him over to the detectives when they arrive. I was a witness, Howard. Your shooting of Marchelle was accidental."

Slader pointed toward the stairs. With a regretful gaze toward Paul Marchelle's dead form, Howard Wycliff mechanically ordered Vorber to descend. A silent trio - Vorber, Howard, then Slader - they reached the hall on the ground floor.

It was here that Vorber offered his passive protest. Backed against the wall, still clutching the table leg, the servant looked toward Howard Wycliff and tried to explain his actions.

"I did it for you, sir," he said. "Your father feared enemies. He told me to make sure that all went well after his death -"

"Why didn't you tell me?" questioned Howard. "I don't believe you, Vorber. You knew that Marchelle was my friend."

"He was not, sir!" blurted Vorber. "He was trying to find that deed! I knew it all along! He wanted it for himself - or for others -"

"Be quiet, Vorber!" snapped Garrett Slader. "We know your purpose. You were disgruntled because you were not remembered in Cyril Wycliff's will. Howard has explained all that."

"Mr. Wycliff did remember me," said Vorber soberly. "I can prove it, sir. There are bank books in my desk. They show the deposits that I made. Ten thousand dollars, sir - Mr. Wycliff gave me the money long before he died. It was my old master's way. He rewarded me for faithful service while he was still alive - not after he was dead!"

"This will be used against you, Vorber," warned Slader, still unconvinced. "If you have been paid to sell this deed, your pretext that your money came from Cyril Wycliff will not save you. We shall investigate it to the core. We intend to turn you over to the police as soon as they arrive."

"Here they are now!" cried Howard.

THE front door was opening. Miles Vorber, like the others, turned to see the men who entered. These were not detectives.

Howard Wycliff and those with him stared blankly at the faces of Ward Fetzler and Martin Hamprell. Before they could move, Hamprell had uttered a cry of recognition. He knew the trio - he remembered them from the time when he had played the part of Doctor Johan Arberg.

Hamprell's revolver flashed into view. As Fetzler echoed his minion's cry, other faces appeared from the darkness. Ham Cruther, the gang leader, and two gunmen, arrived with revolvers in their hands. It was Ward Fetzler who issued the command.

"Give me that deed!" he ordered.

Stupidly, Garrett Slader yielded the document. Fetzler laughed as he read its contents.

"This is what I want," he asserted. Then, with a sharp, questioning air, he demanded: "Where is Paul Marchelle?"

"Dead," said Howard Wycliff in a dull tone. "I killed him."

"He tried to steal the deed!" blurted Miles Vorber, with a frenzied scowl. "I knew that he was a crook!"

"Certainly," said Fetzler, with his evil smile. "He was my inside informant. He is dead - ah, well, poor Marchelle. He should have waited until we arrived.

"Circumstances demand a few more deaths. It is too bad that you three discovered this missing deed. It leaves us but one alternative: to kill you. Before you die, however, let me introduce myself. I am Ward Fetzler, former owner of the property mentioned in this deed - property worth millions.

"I wanted the deed back. I offered Cyril Wycliff money for it. He refused. I studied his affairs. That is how I formed contact with Paul Marchelle. He was an ambitious young lawyer; his associate, however, was old-fashioned in methods, and had few worthwhile clients. I refer to you, Garret Slader.

"Marchelle yielded to my offer of money. I gave him cash, and promised him more if he would work with me. Cyril Wycliff's death was necessary. I hired a man to murder him. It was necessary, also, for my killer to slay Doctor Johan Arberg, in order that he might impersonate the old specialist. He came here, disguised as Doctor Arberg, to give Cyril Wycliff an injection of a death solution."

Gasps of horror came from Howard Wycliff and Garrett Slader. Vorber's face showed insane rage. This calm mention of his master's murder roused the old servant to a fever pitch.

"Marchelle did good service," continued Fetzler, in a reflective tone. "He kept me well informed of matters here. Only the other night, he telephoned me, while waiting at a theater lobby for Howard Wycliff. He told me how affairs were going.

"Tonight, he telephoned me from the drug store near this house. He informed me then that Vorber had located the missing deed. He said that he was coming back to watch Vorber. I hurried here on that account. Unfortunately, I arrived too late to save Marchelle."

Fetzler's face became fierce. More than mere desire to eliminate these men was inspiring him now. He wanted vengeance for the death of his minion!

"Here is the murderer," sneered Fetzler. "Martin Hamprell is his name. You will never hear it again; for he will kill you now, and thus complete the run of death."

As Fetzler turned to give a command to Hamprell, Miles Vorber acted. Shouting his rage, the servant leaped forward and swung the table leg like a huge club. Martin Hamprell turned to shoot Vorber.

AS the murderer sought to press the trigger of his revolver, a terrific report resounded from the stairway.

Martin Hamprell crumpled to the floor. Ward Fetzler, staring upward, saw The Shadow. So did the others at the door, when they heard Fetzler's cry.

The sight of that black-garbed form - the tall being who held a smoking automatic in his gloved hand - was one that chilled the evil hearts of the supporting gangsters.

A weird laugh came from the stairway. As its hollow mirth burst fiercely through the old house, The Shadow raised a second gun. Shots broke from his automatics. Answering bursts of flame came from the doorway.

Instinctively, Howard Wycliff and Garrett Slader dropped to the floor. Whizzing bullets sped above their heads. The hasty gangster shots were wild. Ham Cruther and his startled men were no match for The Shadow's skill. Cruther fell. One of his henchmen dropped. Others, by the door, dashed out into the night.

Ward Fetzler had drawn a revolver. He was taking aim. The Shadow ignored him - for The Shadow saw what Fetzler did not notice: Miles Vorber's body backed against the wall.

The servant saw the gangsters flee. With a furious snarl, he swung the table leg. It crashed upon Ward Fetzler's skull. The master of the game toppled head forward, staggered, and sprawled upon the steps. Vorber did not stop. He swung the table leg again, and shattered it to fragments on Fetzler's head.

The Shadow had left that action to Miles Vorber. It was the servant's chance to prove his faithfulness to Howard Wycliff. Vorber had slain the evil fiend who had brought death to his old master, Cyril Wycliff.

Garrett Slader and Howard Wycliff turned toward the stairs to observe the amazing rescuer who had saved their lives. All that they saw was a ghostly shape - a shroud of blackness that disappeared into the darkness of the upper hall.

Shot were heard outside. The rescued men turned, expecting a new danger. In came Doctor Barton Keyes; with him, a stocky, swarthy man, Detective Joe Cardona. A squad of detectives followed. They had arrived in time to meet the fleeing gangsters, and down them in a brief revolver fray.

GARRETT SLADER picked up the recovered deed and handed it to Howard Wycliff. The young man turned and extended his hand to Miles Vorber. The servant's thin lips smiled as his hand received his master's clasp of thanks.

The reign of crime was ended. Through Miles Vorber, The Shadow had solved the triangle. The evil three - Ward Fetzler, the plotter; Martin Hamprell, the murderer; Paul Marchelle, the traitor - all were dead.

The master who had accomplished the great result was gone. In the confusion that reigned below, The Shadow had departed from the upstairs window. From the night he had come; into the night he had returned.

The heavy wind was wailing about the old walls of the mansion. From the blackness of the night, it picked up an eerie, ghostly laugh that burst into a chilling cry of sinister mirth. The echoes ended. The knell that marked the deaths of the evil plotters faded into nothingness.

Like the laugh, The Shadow was gone. His triumphant mirth was fitting token of his strange, invincible might. A being of darkness, The Shadow had merged with night!

THE END