



THE WEALTH SEEKER

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. AT RED MIKE'S

EVENING had come to the bad lands of Manhattan. The fading of dingy dusk had brought an insidious gloom to the district which marked the strongholds of the underworld. Skulking figures of shifty mobsters, quick steps of persons bound on innocent business, the stalwart forms of patrolling policemen—these were the manifestations that marked the beginning of a new period of danger.

Gangdom had come to life after dark. Ways of crime, neglected while daylight held sway, were once more in the making. Every empty house, every deserted alleyway, might be the lurking spot where evil men awaited the word to wage war against the organized forces of the law.

This district was the breeding place of crime. Mobster hide-outs and meeting places were all too frequent. Yet the police, although they knew the evils that existed, were handicapped by the very law which they served.

Unless violence broke out within the precinct, or orders were received to arrest men wanted for crime, the patrolling officers could make no legal inroads. They were forced to ignore the dives where crime

was instigated; to wait until rats of the bad lands came forth and committed evil in respectable districts. Then would come the task of stopping the rats as they scurried back to cover. But once the furor had ended, the old routine would rule the bailiwick of crime.

This night was typical of underworld activity. There was no doubt that crime was being fostered almost within hearing distance of the patrolling policemen. The men in uniform could not learn such details. Marked as men of the law, they were handicapped.

Spies, alone, could gain the secrets of the underworld. Yet even detectives who appeared within this area were easily spotted by shrewd-eyed watchers. Stool pigeons served as secret workers for the law; they, too, were insufficient, for they were outcasts who feared mob rule.

Indeed, the denizens of gangland were contemptuous of the law. So far as the police were concerned, they feared no interference with their plans. There had been a time when plotting gangsters moved abroad with very little effort to cover up their actions. Yet on this night—as on many more before it—the stealthiness of those who skulked was evidence of some hidden foment beneath a surface that seemed more than usually calm.

ON one narrow street where passers-by hastened on their way and every doorway seemed to shelter prying eyes, a man was strolling alone. There was both caution and challenge in his attitude. His step, though regular, was not quick. His course, though favoring the shelter of darkness near the buildings, was not furtive.

A patrolling policeman eyed this passer as the man came within the dim glare of a street lamp. The officer saw a firm, square face that denoted self-assurance. The features were not of the usual gangster type; they lacked the uncouth coarseness so prevalent in the underworld. Nevertheless, the man's confidence marked him as one who was familiar with this district.

The policeman sauntered on. When he paused to look over his shoulder, he noted that the man had disappeared. He supposed that the walker had increased his pace to reach the next corner.

He was wrong. The man with the firm face had made a quick turn into a side alley and was now moving easily toward a sunken doorway some distance from the street that he had left.

Arrived at his destination, this individual descended the short steps to the door and rapped for entrance. As soon as the portal opened, he shouldered his way into a stone-walled room. He nodded curtly to a brawny, red-haired fellow who stood behind a rough wood counter at one end of the room. He took his seat at a table; the proprietor brought him a bottle and a glass.

There were more than a dozen men seated about this stone-walled room. They were a hard lot, these rowdies of the underworld. Their conversation seemed to lull as they paused to throw sidelong glances at the man who had entered. Then the subdued buzz was resumed. Evidently the face of the arrival had gained recognition.

Such was the case. This hang-out was known as "Red Mike's," in honor of its ruddy-faced proprietor. Only the most capable of gunmen were allowed within the place. Admission here was a mark of gangland's approval.

The man who had entered was known to most of the patrons at Red Mike's. Conceded to be one of the most dangerous characters in the bad lands, he was welcome. Thick, bloated lips announced his identity in an undertone.

The arrival was Cliff Marsland, one of the coolest handlers of a gat that the underworld had known.

CLIFF MARSLAND, steady-faced and firm-eyed, knew that his appearance here had caused a buzz of comment. Yet there was nothing in his action that indicated any notice of those about him. Cliff was a man who kept his impressions to himself; he was one whose superiority showed itself among these vicious fighters of the underworld.

Cliff, by his demeanor, seemed to consider the present atmosphere as a normal one. In his thoughts, however, this steady-eyed man could see that all was not well at Red Mike's. Here, of all places in the Tenderloin, subdued talk was unnecessary. Yet it persisted, and Cliff knew the reason why it did so.

A threat was hanging over gangdom. Fierce ruffians had felt the menace of a hand that they feared. A powerful enemy, dreaded by those who scoffed at the law, had shown his might with devastating results. Supercrooks had met defeat when they had encountered a superfighter known as The Shadow.

The underworld had hurled anathema at this common foe. Vicious men of crime had sought to end the strange career of a menacing being garbed in black, whose spectral form appeared wherever crime was loosed. But in every combat, The Shadow had prevailed. Uncanny in his findings, unyielding in his tactics, The Shadow had struck down all who had opposed him.

Some time had passed since the thunder of well-directed automatics had marked The Shadow's last victory over hordes of evil. Yet The Shadow, silent, was as great a threat as ever. Hence, when mobsters plotted, they chose ways of secrecy. For it had been bruited about within the underworld that The Shadow might be anywhere—or everywhere.

Deeply educated in the ways of gangland, Cliff Marsland had the explanation why the tense atmosphere existed at Red Mike's. It had been the same in every other hang-out which Cliff had visited to-night. Every newcomer, such as Cliff himself, was spotted by those who patronized the dives. Each arrival was discussed in murmurs. Mobsmen were ready to challenge all who failed to meet their twisted standards of approval.

It was known that The Shadow, a master of disguise, had visited the bad lands in the past. He had joined mobsters, posing as one of their ilk, and had dealt devastating blows to their ranks.

It was also believed that The Shadow utilized agents. That these men must be of unusual ability was a positive conclusion. Hence suspicion rested on all denizens of the underworld, save those whose reputation put them in the elite of gangdom.

Cliff Marsland knew all this. The smile that flickered upon his poker face was an indication that he knew the repute in which he was held. No one would challenge Cliff Marsland. In fact, he would be one of the first upon whom other men of gangland would call should they desire aid in tracking down a suspected underling of The Shadow.

It had been reported that Cliff was gunning for The Shadow. That accounted for the fact that he remained aloof from gang associations. A freelance who roamed at will throughout the crime district, a fighter de luxe who bore a reputation as a killer, Cliff Marsland had a unique prestige.

FIFTEEN minutes after Cliff Marsland's arrival at Red Mike's, his entry had been forgotten. Mobsters at a nearby table had raised their voices to a pitch where Cliff could hear their buzzing conversation.

They were talking of affairs in gangland; their chatter, however, was of little consequence until two new arrivals appeared within the doorway of the hang-out.

Cliff Marsland, like the other patrons, eyed the newcomers. One was a pasty-faced, shrewd-eyed little fellow whose body carried a peculiar hunch. Cliff knew him as "Birdy" Zelker, an intermediary between

gangsters.

The other, a brawny, flat-faced ruffian was one whom Cliff did not recall. He noticed the broadness of this gangster's nose; the puffed cauliflower ear which the fellow wore.

Birdy Zelker and his unknown companion spoke to Red Mike. The proprietor of the hang-out nodded and motioned toward a doorway at the side of the stone-walled room. The two went through the opening. As soon as they had departed, Cliff caught the buzz of the mobsters seated closest to him.

"You know who that guy was, don't you?" quizzed one.

"Sure," came the reply. "Birdy Zelker. He's O.K."

"No. I don't mean Birdy. I mean the mush-faced guy with him."

"Who was he?"

"Pug Hoffler."

"Pug Hoffler!" The second mobster uttered the name in a surprised whisper. "Say—I thought he was in stir!"

"He was," declared the first gangster. "He done his stretch up in the big house. He's back now—an' you can count on it he's got somethin' up his sleeve."

"Yeah? What's his racket?"

"He ain't got none. But he knows his onions. He used to work for Tex Lowner and Rabbit Gorton."

"All at onct?"

"Have you gone goofy?" The informant's voice was contemptuous as he surveyed his pal. "Say—did you ever hear of any gorilla workin' for Tex an' Rabbit at the same time? Those bimboes are cutthroats."

"I know that. But you said -"

"I said that Pug Hoffler worked for Tex an' Rabbit. He worked for Tex one time; after that he stuck along with Rabbit. Then the bulls got him. Some say Tex fixed it because Pug had jumped to Rabbit's outfit. Others say Rabbit was afraid that Pug was spyin' for Tex an' that Rabbit saw Pug got his. Anyway, Pug Hoffler took his trip up the river."

"Is he in Dutch with Tex an' Rabbit both?"

"Maybe." The responding gangster snorted. "Anyway, neither of them guys is popular with Pug Hoffler. You can bet he's workin' on his own from now on."

"Yeah." The second mobster nodded wisely. "If he's usin' Birdy Zelker, it's sure enough that he's figurin' on buildin' a crew of his own."

The discussion changed.

Cliff Marsland had heard every word. To him, the conversation was illuminating. Cliff knew both "Tex" Lowner and "Rabbit" Gorton by repute. They were hard-fisted gang leaders who were sworn enemies to each other. Both were close-mouthed and kept their affairs to themselves.

"Pug" Hoffer was a newcomer in the field, now that he had returned from Sing Sing. Cliff knew that the talking gangsters must have hit upon the truth; that this ex-convict was planning mob activity of his own.

Was Pug planning to play a game of crime that would rival the closely guarded methods of Tex Lowner and Rabbit Gorton? Would a third enmity begin before Pug Hoffer had completed his schemes of action?

THESE were possibilities that concerned Cliff Marsland deeply, although he betrayed no interest in the subject. This conference between Pug Hoffer and Birdy Zelker—for Cliff was sure that such a talk was taking place in a side room—might mean much in the coming activities that were brewed in the confines of the underworld.

Cliff Marsland shoved his bottle and glass aside. He arose from the table and slouched toward the door. He paused to light a cigarette. As he did so, he cast his eye along the room.

Mobsters, concerned in their own affairs, were paying no attention to Cliff's departure. Red Mike, his back toward the counter, was arranging bottles of bootleg booze upon a shelf.

As he flicked his match across the floor, Cliff Marsland was standing beside the doorway through which Pug Hoffer and Birdy Zelker had gone. With a side step, he moved in that direction. Unnoticed by others in the room, Cliff slipped from sight.

Had any observed him, they would have decided only that Cliff Marsland had business with Pug Hoffer and Birdy Zelker. That would have excited no suspicion. If Pug Hoffer were contemplating crime, he would make an excellent first step by enlisting the services of so redoubtable a gun carrier as Cliff Marsland.

The firm smile on Cliff Marsland's face showed that this possibility had been well considered. It also indicated, however, that Cliff Marsland had a purpose all his own when he had moved upon the trail of Pug Hoffer and Birdy Zelker.

Had that purpose been known to the gangsters in Red Mike's, Cliff Marsland's life would not have been worth a counterfeit nickel. Cliff had not stepped in this direction to join the conference between Pug and Birdy. Cliff had come to spy upon the pair.

For Cliff Marsland, the man whom gangland accepted as one above suspicion was a person whom hosts of mobsters had been seeking. He was the trusted subordinate of the being whom all mobdom feared.

Cliff Marsland was The Shadow's agent in the underworld!

CHAPTER II. PLANS OF CRIME

PUG HOFFLER and Birdy Zelker were in conference. Seated in a small, dilapidated room off a stone-walled corridor of Red Mike's dive, these men of crime were discussing the very subjects which Cliff Marsland had heard two gangsters mention.

Pug, an ugly smile upon his battered features, was resting back in a creaky chair at one side of a broken table. Birdy, his ratlike eyes aglow, was leaning forward with his elbows on the table, eagerly awaiting the words which Pug might have to offer.

"I'm counting on you, Birdy." Pug's voice, though lacking the slurred jargon of the underworld, was harsh. "I've got the boys I need for the first job. After that, it will be your job to line up a big crew."

"O.K., Pug," returned Birdy, with a peculiar whine. "They's only one thing dat gives me de jitters about

dis racket of -"

"Yeah?" interrupted Pug sourly. "What's that?"

"De way you stand in wrong wid Tex Lowner an' Rabbit Gorton," confessed Birdy. "Say—if dose guys have it in for you, Pug, it ain't goin' to be healthy to be workin' wid, you -"

"Scared, eh?"

"Not me, Pug." Birdy's tone was hasty. "I'm only t'inkin' about de guys I'm goin' to see."

"Tell them they'll be safe," snorted Pug. "When I'm ready for them, I'll be set. Listen, Birdy. Tex and Rabbit are out so far as I'm concerned. Out—you understand? And they'll stay out. I'm working on my own—and I'm going after a job that nobody else is figuring on doing."

"When I get de mob?"

"No. Before that. With the crew I have already. I don't need a big mob for this pick-up. Listen, Birdy; when you have the crew ready, I'll pay them in advance. Pay them plenty, if they'll stick with me."

"You've got de dough?"

"I'll have it." Pug eyed Birdy's beady eyes; then, with a laugh, he pulled a crumpled newspaper from his pocket and smacked it on the table. "Look at that, Birdy."

The hunched-up mobster obeyed. Pug Hoffer watched him. Both were concerned with the matter before them. Neither saw the face that was staring from the creaky, partly opened door.

They did not know that Cliff Marsland had been listening and now was watching.

BIRDY'S lips were moving as the gangster laboriously read the paragraph in the newspaper. When Birdy spoke aloud, his voice indicated that he did not grasp what Pug Hoffer had in mind.

"What's de idea, Pug?" quizzed Birdy. "Who's dis guy Dorand dat nobody knows nothin' about? I seen somethin' about him before. De news hounds has been playin' him up, ain't dey? What's dis word here dat dey call him?"

"A philanthropist," explained Pug, as Birdy pointed to a word in the paragraph before him.

"What's dat mean?" queried Birdy.

"A philanthropist," added Pug, "is a man who gives money to people who need it. Some of them hand out the cash to hospitals and schools— or other big places that need dough."

"Widout people knowin' who dey are?"

"Not always. But this fellow Dorand is doing it that way. What's more, he has been working it different from most of them. Look at that newspaper story, Birdy. You'll see what Dorand's doing."

Birdy scowled as he continued to read the paragraph. His eyes suddenly took on a surprised expression.

"Say!" he exclaimed. "Dis guy must be bugs. Here dey let out five hundred workers from dat factory in New Jersey an' dis guy gives each of 'em a pay envelope wid a century in it. Say, Pug—how much dough is dat?"

"Five hundred people," calculated Pug, "with one hundred bucks each. That's fifty thousand dollars, Birdy."

"Fifty grand!" Birdy's tone was filled with amazement. "Say, Pug, dat guy Dorand must have plenty of kale."

"Don't bother to read any more of it," suggested Pug, picking up the newspaper. "I can tell you the rest faster than you can read it. This isn't the first time Dorand has been loose with his dough. He gave half a grand each to those thirty sailors who came in from that tank steamer—the Bahia—after it sunk off New Jersey."

"That was fifteen grand in one plug. What's more, he's been pulling this pay envelope stunt right along. The newspaper here says that he's passed out half a million all told, and it don't look like he's going to quit."

"How come nobody knows de guy, Pug? When he passed out de real dough -"

"He don't pass it out himself. He sends the money by messenger to some responsible person with a note asking that guy to do it for him and to tell people that Dorand put up the cash."

"Take that Jersey factory. These five hundred people were ready for their last pay day when some fellow delivered a package to the cashier. He opened it and found the pay envelopes. He gave them out."

"Why didn't he grab the dough?" Pug grinned as he saw Birdy's incredulous look.

"You would wonder about that," observed the flat-faced ex-convict. "The cashier was honest—that's all. There was a note signed by this fellow Dorand asking him to dish out the fifty grand. So he did it."

Birdy shook his head.

"Maybe it's me dat's cuckoo," he declared. "Maybe it's me. But I still t'ink dis guy Dorand is bugs, too."

"Maybe he is." Pug's eyes glittered as his face assumed a serious expression. "That's neither here nor there. The big point is that Dorand's going to supply me with the cash to start a big racket. Get that, Birdy?"

"You mean dat dis guy is goin' to give you dough?"

"He's not going to give it to me, Birdy. I'm going to take it. Plenty of it."

"How?"

"I'll tell you how. Dorand has been helping poor people right along. Always with cash. No checks to hospitals none of that stuff, like a lot of these big mugs do. Always straight cash, where it counts. He's liberal and he's careless."

"You mean you're goin' to be around de next time he forks over de pay envelopes?"

"NO. That wouldn't work. I'm going to get him before he gives out the cash. Here's the stunt, Birdy. Dealing in real dough, the way Dorand does, he's certainly got to keep a lot of money on hand. All right; I'll take my picked crew and bust into his place. We'll walk off with the cash."

"But how're you goin' to do it, Pug, if nobody knows who dis guy Dorand is?"

"Because"—Pug's face was hardening—"I happen to know who Dorand is."

Birdy gasped. His jaw fell as his eyes stared.

"I knew about this fellow," continued Pug, "before I went to the big house. I knew he had money then; I didn't know, though, how he was going to spend it. While I was doing the stretch, I read the newspapers. They let me have them right along. The minute I saw the Dorand stuff, I figured who it might be.

"I'm working on more than a hunch. I know the place where he lives. His name isn't Dorand—that's what fools people. I know who he really is, and I have a pretty good idea of how his home is laid out.

"The best part of it is this. This fellow—let's call him 'Dorand' - is keeping mum on the gifts he makes. Maybe some day he'll let people know who he is—after he's given away a million bucks or more. But right now he seems to like keeping himself buried from the public.

"That's why he's not worrying about some one like me barging in to rob the place. It's an easy enough job, if you know the way to it, like I think I do. But no one is tackling it because no one knows it's worth while. That is, no one but me. Savvy?"

"I get you, Pug," grinned Birdy. "You're goin' to pull a surprise on old million bags, eh?"

"Right," returned Pug. "What's more, I'm working it right away. There's no telling how soon Dorand is going to quit this anonymous stuff. Maybe next week— next month—next year—he'll come out and let the public know who he is.

"That's the way a lot of those philanthropists work. They don't get much excitement started if they come right out in the open with their gifts. But the public falls for this no-name bunk. Then when the time's ripe, the big guy— like Dorand—picks up a lot of credit when his name becomes known."

"He's out the dough," observed Birdy.

"Sure," agreed Pug. "But Dorand has plenty of it. He won't go broke with his hand-outs. Don't worry about that."

Pug paused to lean back in his chair. Birdy reflected; then spoke eagerly.

"Say, Pug." The little gangster's face expressed his keen interest. "When you pull dis job, you're takin' me along, ain't you?"

"I've got my crew all fixed," returned Pug. "Your job is to line up some gorillas. Once I've staked myself with Dorand's dough, I'm going to ride high."

"I know dat. But I want to see de way you work. Dat's goin' to help me when I pick de guys you want."

Pug reflected. He began to nod slowly.

"There's something in that, Birdy," admitted the ex-convict. "Sure - I'll take you along when I raid Dorand's place. You meet up with the gang; I've got the spot all set."

"How soon?"

"To-night."

Birdy whistled.

"Say, Pug!" he exclaimed admiringly. "You're a quick worker, ain't you? Say—where is dis place you're goin' to?"

"I'll tell you, Birdy," replied Pug, in a confidential tone. "It's just the kind of a spot that'll be easy. It's -"

The gang leader broke off. He stared suddenly at the door. His eyes narrowed as he laid one hand on the edge of the table.

"What's de matter?" queried Birdy.

"That door," answered Pug, rising from his chair. "I didn't figure it was open. Maybe some guy was listening. Wait here, Birdy, while I look outside."

SPRINGING to his feet, Pug went to the door. He stared suspiciously into the corridor. He motioned Birdy to remain where he was. Leaving the room, Pug closed the door behind him.

There was no sign of any person in the corridor. Pug strolled to the main room of Red Mike's and walked to the counter. He chatted affably with the big proprietor while he glanced about the room.

Cliff Marsland was seated at one of the tables. The Shadow's agent had foreseen Pug's move, back at the little room. Dodging just before Pug had had a chance to spot him, Cliff had doubled on his tracks. He had reached a table before Pug had decided to investigate the corridor.

Cliff did not excite Pug's suspicion. Satisfied that all was well, the gang leader strolled back to the room where he had left Birdy. It was then that Cliff, in turn, arose and walked to the counter.

"Say, Mike," Cliff growled to the proprietor, "where's Duster Yomer? Hasn't he been around lately?"

"Not here," returned Red Mike. "He hangs out over at the Black Ship. Ain't you been in there, Cliff?"

"Didn't think of it," mused Cliff. "Say—maybe I could call over there and get him."

"Does he answer telephone calls?"

"Sure. When he gets the password. I'll use your phone, Mike."

The proprietor nudged his thumb toward a doorway on the opposite side of the room. Cliff walked in that direction. He entered a short corridor and found an ancient coin box in a room which resembled the one where Pug Hoffer and Birdy Zelker were quartered.

Closing the door behind him, Cliff called a number. With the click of the receiver at the other end, a quiet voice made itself known with these words: "Burbank speaking."

"Marsland," returned Cliff. "Reporting from Red Mike's. Birdy Zelker here with Pug Hoffer. Planning raid to rob philanthropist called Dorand. To-night."

"Further details?"

"None. I'll try to get them. Pug knows the place; Birdy doesn't. I'll have to trail one or the other."

"Report received. Await instructions. Repeat call after fifteen minutes."

Cliff Marsland hung up the receiver and strolled from the room. Burbank, to whom Cliff had been speaking, was The Shadow's contact man. Messages and reports phoned by The Shadow's active agents were relayed by Burbank to The Shadow himself.

CLIFF wondered, as he reached a table, what The Shadow's order would be. Perhaps he would leave this job to Cliff. Possibly he would come here in disguise. More likely, if The Shadow happened to be

within Burbank's reach, he would come and linger outside of Red Mike's to pick up the trail himself.

As a tracker of suspicious characters, The Shadow was without an equal. Time and again, this master worker who moved with the stealth of night had stalked his quarry through the confines of the underworld.

It was Cliff's job to stand by, to learn all that he could to aid The Shadow. It would be unwise to return to the little room where Pug and Birdy were, now that Pug's suspicions had been aroused. Yet Cliff had an itch to do so, for he was positive that Pug was telling Birdy all that he knew about a wealthy philanthropist known as Dorand.

While Cliff was considering the possibility of some action, he saw Pug and Birdy come out from the corridor. There was a wise look on Birdy's face that signified much. Cliff was positive that the hunched gangster had learned facts from Pug.

Cliff expected the two to leave Red Mike's. Instead, Pug went out alone. Cliff waited. He was sure that by trailing Birdy he could accomplish as much as by following Pug. A few minutes passed; then Birdy arose and walked into the opposite corridor, toward the telephone room!

This was Cliff's cue. Birdy had passed Red Mike unnoticed. Rising, Cliff approached the counter as the proprietor chanced to look in his direction. In a growling tone, Cliff announced that his call to the Black Ship had not gone through; that he intended to try calling it again.

As he followed Birdy's path, Cliff had a hunch that the little gangster was following some order that Pug Hoffer had given him. There was time to catch the beginning of a telephone call which Birdy must be making. Cliff was eager to get in on any information which might be obtainable.

Outside the door of the little room, Cliff paused. He slowly turned the knob of the door. He pushed the barrier ajar. He heard the tones of Birdy's voice. A look of frank astonishment crept over Cliff's firm face as he listened to the words that Birdy Zelker was uttering.

In the space of a few brief seconds, Cliff Marsland gained an inkling of astounding facts that he had not suspected!

CHAPTER III. BIRDY TALKS

"HELLO..." Birdy Zelker's whisper was an anxious one. "Dot you, Joe?... Dis is Birdy... Yeah... I been talkin' to him... Here at Red Mike's... Say, Joe, I've got de dope on de guy..."

These were the words that caused Cliff Marsland's astonishment. From the tone of Birdy's voice, from the explanation which the little gangster was giving, Cliff not only knew the identity of the man to whom Birdy was speaking, he also realized that Birdy was engaged in a game of double cross.

Joe! That was a name which Cliff Marsland knew. It was the first name of Joe Cardona, ace sleuth of the Manhattan force. Birdy's anxiety to accompany Pug Hoffer on to-night's job was at once explained. Birdy Zelker was a stool pigeon!

Having gained details regarding Pug Hoffer's plans, Birdy was squealing to the police. He was tipping Cardona off to the Dorand business. He had pulled a fast one on Pug Hoffer.

"Listen, Joe." Birdy's words were plaintive. "Dey'd get me here if dey knew I was callin' you. Dere's plenty of time. I'm waitin' here a half hour, see? Den I'll slide out. You pick me up outside of dis place—Red Mike's. Trail me an' I'll tip you off when I'm sittin' safe. Den we can talk.

"Yeah... Yeah... If anybody sees you trailin' me, it'll give me an alibi. See?... Sure, I can laugh it off dat way... I don't want no one to see me, but if dey do..."

Birdy paused. The little gangster licked his lips as he listened. He was evidently receiving instructions; and as chance would have it, they must have come with an abrupt ending that Birdy understood. Before Cliff realized what Birdy was about to do, the stool suddenly hung up the receiver and wheeled quickly toward the door of the little room.

Cliff, peering through the door, had no chance to dodge. He caught the frightened look on Birdy's face that came when the stool realized he had been spotted.

As Birdy dropped back instinctively, Cliff acted in opposite fashion. Like a flash, The Shadow's agent bobbed through the door and, with a sweeping motion, brought a ready automatic from his hip.

Before Birdy could recover from his fright, Cliff was standing with the door nearly closed behind him and was covering the stool pigeon with his .45. Birdy backed against the wall and cowered, hands above head.

IN the brief interval in which he had acted, Cliff Marsland had changed his plan. He held Birdy Zelker at his mercy. As a recognized representative of gangdom, Cliff had every right—by the code of the underworld—to put the stool pigeon on the spot.

He also had the privilege of calling in witnesses to share in his knowledge of Birdy's perfidy. That would bring the same result; except that less explanation would be necessary on Cliff's part. The look on Birdy's face showed that the stool expected Cliff to follow the second course.

Instead, Cliff waited. His face took on a sullen look that indicated a relish of the situation. Birdy cringed hopelessly. His lips moved, but no words came from them. The hunched gangster knew that pleading would be useless.

"Talking to Joe Cardona, eh?" questioned Cliff. "Looks like you were trying to double-cross a pal. You came in here like you were a friend of Pug Hoffer. Nice kind of a rat you turned out to be!"

Birdy licked his lips but dared not speak.

"What's this dope you were going to hand Cardona?" continued Cliff, indicating clearly that he had overheard Birdy's end of the telephoned conversation. "Something about what Pug's doing?"

Birdy found his voice.

"Honest," he whimpered, "I wasn't tellin' nothin'. I was pullin' a stall— that's all -"

"Yeah?" Marsland showed sudden shrewdness as he put the question. "Well, if you can stall Joe Cardona, you're the first stool that ever was able to do it."

"I ain't no stool, Cliff," whined Birdy. "Honest, I ain't. Say— let me go ahead wid dis. I'm tryin' to fool Cardona. Honest, I am!"

"To fool Cardona?" snorted Cliff. "You mean you're trying to fool me. How're you going to prove that sort of stuff?"

Birdy, cringing, tried to catch some idea to follow up his statement. Seeing the stool pigeon's effort, Cliff cagily supplied the bait.

"I'll give you a break, Birdy," he offered. "Come clean; tell me what you know about Pug Hoffer. Then I'll let you meet Cardona. I'll pick a place for you to take him to. I'll be there—with others—and we'll hear what you tell him.

"If you stall him—O.K. But if you squeal—it'll be curtains. You know me well enough. I'll give you the bump while Cardona's looking on, if I feel like it."

The threat seemed certain to Birdy Zelker. The stool pigeon had no suspicion that Cliff's reputation as a killer was largely synthetic, built up by hearsay so that The Shadow's agent might rove the underworld in high repute. To Birdy, Cliff was a redoubtable menace. The chance of a life-saving break was something that the stool could not ignore.

"I'll give you de whole lay, Cliff," blurted Birdy. "You can check it on me. Honest. Pug is goin' after a big-money guy named Dorand. Goin' to grab off a pile of dough to-night -"

"Dorand?" queried Cliff sarcastically. "That's a phony name, Birdy."

"Yeah," admitted the gangster. "I know it. But Pug knows who de guy really it. He knows where he is -"

"Who is Dorand?" asked Cliff Marsland coldly.

Birdy hesitated. Cliff's glower worried him. The stool knew that he could stall no longer.

"He's a guy named Satruff," whined the cornered rat. "Got a funny first moniker. Folsom. Dat's what Pug told me. He says de guy's full name is Folsom D. Satruff."

"And Satruff lives -"

"Out on Long Island. At a place called Garport. I never heard of de joint before. But Pug's startin' out dere to-night -"

"At what time?"

"Eleven o'clock."

"From where?"

"I don't know, Cliff." This time Birdy's whine was begging. "Honest, I don't know. You can croak me, if I do. Pug told me to slide out ahead an' wait dere until he an' de mob showed up."

CLIFF saw that the stool had told the truth. The problem, now, was what to do with Birdy. Cliff considered. Nearly fifteen minutes had elapsed. A call to Burbank would be in order. There would still be fifteen minutes before Birdy's set time of meeting with Joe Cardona.

Birdy could not remain here while Cliff called. Nor could The Shadow's agent trust Birdy out in the large room. Cliff was sure that the stool would slide out; and that if Cardona happened to come along, Birdy would squeal to the detective.

The best plan was to lead Birdy out immediately; to get away before Cardona had a chance to show up. Then Cliff could stow Birdy in a safe place, under threat, and make his call to Burbank.

It required less than a minute for Cliff to come to his decision; but the seconds, as they passed, were anxious ones to Birdy. Before Cliff had an opportunity to give his orders, the stool suddenly resumed his plaintive whine.

"Don't tell nobody," he whimpered. "Don't let 'em know I'm Joe Cardona's stool. De'd put me on de spot sure, Cliff. Dey wouldn't believe nothin' I told 'em. You ain't goin' to put 'em wise, are you, Cliff?"

The stool's voice had risen piteously. Birdy was staring, terror-stricken, into the muzzle of Cliff's automatic. Once again, he repeated his shaky plea.

"Don't tell nobody I'm Cardona's stool! Don't tell 'em I was phonin' him from here. Don't tell 'em I was double-crossin' Pug Hoffer -"

Birdy's voice broke off. The stool pigeon's eyes were glassy. Those transfixed optics were staring straight past Cliff Marsland as Birdy suddenly altered the direction of his gaze.

The whimper died into a gasp. Cliff Marsland, wheeling, saw the reason for it.

The door, previously ajar, had been pushed open. Standing there, his brawny arms akimbo, was Red Mike. Behind the proprietor of the hang-out were two tough-faced mobsters.

The three had heard Birdy's plea. Like Cliff Marsland, they were wise. Red Mike and his pals had listened to Birdy Zelker's own confession of perfidy.

Whatever chance of mercy Birdy might have gained from Cliff, was ended now that this trio had arrived. Death was the only sentence the cringing stool could expect.

Birdy Zelker had talked—too much!

CHAPTER IV. FACTIONS FIGHT

CLIFF MARSLAND, startled though he was by the sudden arrival of Red Mike, was quick to realize the position in which he stood. He knew, immediately, that the proprietor and the two gunmen with him had heard only the last words spoken by Birdy Zelker.

To these men of the underworld, the situation was plain. Cliff Marsland, gangster of repute, had caught a stool pigeon in the act of squealing. He had done the right thing by cornering the rat.

Contempt showed on Red Mike's ruddy features. The big-fisted proprietor stepped into the room and Birdy Zelker cringed against the wall. After a surly, threatening glance at the stool, Red Mike turned to Cliff.

"These fellows just came in from the Black Ship," he explained to Cliff. "Said that Duster Yomer ain't down there to-night. He's over at the Pink Rat. I came back to tell you so you could call there."

"Thanks, Mike," returned Marsland calmly.

"And this guy?" Red Mike nudged a thumb toward Birdy.

"He was phoning when I walked in," answered Cliff. "I didn't put in my call to the Black Ship after I heard what he was saying."

"Calling Joe Cardona?"

Cliff nodded.

The gangsters around Red Mike growled. They looked approvingly at Cliff. One of them walked up to Red Mike.

"Leave the rat to us," suggested the gangster. "We'll take him for a ride. You don't want no one shooting up this joint, Mike. Leave him to us."

"Wait a minute." Cliff was cold as he interposed. "Where do I come in on this party? Who do you gazebos think you are? I heard this squealer double-crossing Pug Hoffler. I'm the guy who's going to fix Birdy Zelker. Outside, bums."

"Cliff's right, boys," growled Red Mike.

The gangster whom Cliff had challenged proved surly. He was falling back on the code of the underworld. His companion showed the same expression. Like hounds, they wanted their chance to join in the kill that had been uncovered.

Cliff knew this and his challenge had been gruff on that account. He had no desire to see Birdy Zelker die. Much though he despised stool pigeons, he knew that those of Birdy Zelker's ilk were tools of the law. The Shadow seldom protected stools, for they were offshoots of crime; but Cliff, through practical consideration of this case, knew that it might be advantageous to let Birdy Zelker live. Hence he had tried to bluff the mobsters who wanted Birdy's death.

RED MIKE, by arguing in Cliff's behalf, had strengthened the case. He had served almost as a judge, so far as the customs of gangdom were concerned.

With no more hesitation, Cliff shoved his automatic into Birdy's ribs and ordered the stool to move along.

Birdy obeyed. Cliff, seeing him in motion, dropped his gun hand and followed the cringing stool to the outer room. Red Mike and the pair of surly mobsters brought up the rear. It was when they reached the outer room that Cliff saw trouble brewing.

The patrons of Red Mike's hang-out knew that something had occurred. Had Birdy come out of the corridor head up, Cliff could have marched him to the street, leaving explanations to Red Mike. But Birdy's hang-dog look marked him as a squealer. Snarling mobsters gathered for an explanation.

Cliff looked to Red Mike. The proprietor responded. He pounded on the counter for silence and gained attention. He nudged his thumb toward Birdy Zelker.

"Birdy's a stool," he announced. "Cliff Marsland caught him calling Joe Cardona over my phone. Three of us heard Birdy asking Cliff to let him go."

"Put the stool on the spot!" came a response.

Again, Red Mike pounded for silence.

"That's Cliff's job," he decided.

"Yeah?" It was the mobster whom Cliff had challenged who again thrust his way into the discussion. "What about the rest of us? We know Birdy's a stool. We want to see him get the works."

"If you're waiting around to see me hand out hot lead," broke in Cliff, as he faced the challenging mobster, "you've got a long while coming. Unless"—silence reigned while Cliff added these firm words—"you're looking for some of it yourself."

The mobster quailed. A buzz came from the assembled crowd. It was partly one of admiration; partly of disapproval. Cliff's nerve caught the crowd, but his impartial threat was not relished by some who were

present.

Cliff realized from the murmur that the mobster who had challenged him must have a host of friends in the crowd. This conclusion was justified by the surly gangster's next action.

Striding forward, the man who had argued with Cliff, clapped his hand on Birdy Zelker's shoulder and dragged the stool pigeon across the floor. With a fierce tone, he addressed the mob, calling upon them to apply the law of the underworld.

"Give him the works!" snarled the mobster. "Don't let one guy tell you what to do!"

"Think it over!" challenged Cliff, covering the gangster as he spoke.

The mobster dropped his hand from Birdy's shoulder. He backed away under cover of Cliff's gun.

Like a flash, Cliff realized that a fight was coming. Turning, he saw the gangster's pal whip forth a revolver. As the weapon swung in Cliff's direction, The Shadow's agent responded to the movement.

Beating the drawing mobster to the shot, Cliff fired. His bullet winged the second gangster's shoulder. The man dropped. Cliff whirled as the first man yanked a gun. He fired again and his new aim proved its worth. The challenger who had tried to seize Birdy Zelker, fell sprawling to the floor.

Cliff had acted spontaneously. He dived for cover of the counter as revolvers began to flash. His assumption that the surly mobsters had plenty of pals proved true. Bullets winged their way past Cliff's head as The Shadow's agent dived for safety.

IN his quick action, Cliff had brought the storm of enemies upon him. Though his hand had been forced, he had placed himself in a terrible predicament. He had dropped two mobsters in a sudden fray; it was a threat to the entire evil crew. Quick with the triggers, sympathizing with Cliff's crippled foemen, the whole crowd of scumland rats took Cliff as their one target.

Red Mike was on Cliff's side, but the big proprietor was no craftsman with a gun. He dived for the cover of the corridor to avoid the fray. Cliff, behind the counter, was alone against a horde.

Birdy Zelker saw a chance. In taking it, the stool pigeon sealed his own doom. At the same time, however, he brought respite to Cliff Marsland, the man who had so far saved him. As guns played toward Cliff's spot of temporary safety, Birdy made a dash for the outside door.

Snarls arose. Revolvers flashed as Birdy ran. Quick shots sent the stool pigeon crumpling to the stone floor.

Cliff, timing his own actions to this unexpected break, popped up from behind Red Mike's counter and pumped lead at his adversaries. He saw two gangsters stagger. He dropped as he once more became the target.

A stinging pain caught Cliff in the left shoulder as he sank behind the counter. His drop to safety had been timed too late. A gangster's bullet had found its mark. Cries of exultation arose as enemies bounded forward, ready to end the life of the man who had challenged them alone.

Dropping back to the stone wall, Cliff raised his right arm to fire his last remaining shots. He had loosed the murderous horde. It was coming upon him now. The Shadow's agent saw certain doom; he could only hope to fire point-blank into the first snarling faces that came over the counter.

As he poised for the final effort, Cliff heard a change in the gunmen's cry. Pounding feet seemed to halt

for one brief interval. Sullen voices broke with a terrorized warning. Instinctively, Cliff turned his head in the only direction from which help might come— toward the outer door of Red Mike's dive.

Cliff's own lips uttered a triumphant gasp as he saw the figure that had appeared there. The door of the hangout had opened. Standing in plain view was a form that needed no introduction. It was the outlined shape of a being clad in black.

A cloak of sable hue clung to the shoulders beneath it. Above the turned-up collar of the cloak was a broad-brimmed slouch hat that hid the features beneath it. From gloved hands that projected from the cloak loomed the muzzles of two mighty automatics.

Like a specter from another world, this dreaded being had arrived to bring a climax to the sudden gun fray at Red Mike's. He was one who pronounced his own identity, with a weird, chilling laugh that broke from hidden lips in that momentary lull that had followed the swift roar of battle.

He was the one whom all gangdom feared. He was the master who made his arrival and departures like the phantom of the night. He was the personage whom Cliff Marsland had notified concerning the conversation that had passed between Pug Hoffler and Birdy Zelker.

Sensing the impending trouble that had been due to break, this mighty warrior had come in person to aid his agent's cause. Armed with his mighty guns, The Shadow had arrived to save Cliff Marsland from the doom that no other could have stayed!

CHAPTER V. THE SHADOW'S CLEW

BURNING eyes gleamed from beneath The Shadow's broad-brimmed hat. As those eyes turned, the looming automatics followed their gaze. One against a dozen, The Shadow lost no time in loosing his surprise attack.

The black-garbed fighter had arrived at a moment when none had expected him. Even at this moment, no gangster brain caught any connection between The Shadow and Cliff Marsland.

As he uttered his weird, defiant laugh, The Shadow seemed guided by but one thought—the call which he so often followed—the lure to end the barks of gangster guns.

The laugh was a well-timed deed. It came as The Shadow's automatics picked the lines that his eyes were following. It ended the attack that would have meant Cliff Marsland's doom. It brought a series of split-second surprises to the death-seeking mobsters who were clustered in Red Mike's dive.

Before guns could be turned upon him, The Shadow fired. The thunderous roars of his flame-belching automatics came like the rumble of an artillery barrage as they echoed through the close-walled quarters.

The nearest gangsters sprawled. Two fell at a clip. Others, raising their glimmering revolvers, felt the sudden heat of The Shadow's lead. Of the dozen mobsters who faced The Shadow, four went down before they could fire in return. Two, aiming hastily, held their ground. The remainder, farther away, ducked for the cover of the corridors.

A bullet sizzled the side brim of the slouch hat as one mobster delivered his shot from the center of the room. The Shadow's tall form seemed to telescope toward the floor just as the second mobster pulled the trigger of his revolver. The second bullet whistled inches above the dropping hat.

The automatics roared amid the echoes. One mobster clapped hand to breast and plunged gasping to the floor. The second sagged; snarling, he managed to raise his revolver and press the trigger. His faltering aim was wide. A second bullet from one automatic crumpled the mobster.

Cliff Marsland, still clutching the automatic which he held, had clapped his gun hand to the counter. With a valiant effort, he raised himself and flopped forward. His elbow on the counter, he aimed for the corridor straight across the room, where flashing revolvers were aiming toward The Shadow.

With steadied marksmanship, Cliff loosed his last bullets. One revolver dropped to the floor as a gangster screamed. The other disappeared as its owner dived for deeper cover farther down the corridor. Cliff's teeth gritted beneath his grim smile.

The Shadow had seen his agent's action. Taking advantage of Cliff's well-given effort, The Shadow, with a sweeping movement to the right, picked the other corridor simultaneously. His automatics blazed; the rats who had scurried to that hole were caught as they tried to aim.

Bullets, ricocheting from the stone walls of the corridor, dropped even those who had thrown themselves to a spot which they thought was beyond The Shadow's range. The only mobsters who remained unscathed were a trio who had dodged down the corridor at which Cliff had blasted.

From their point of safety, they could not see The Shadow; but they were able to view the dropping forms of those who had taken the opposite corridor. That was enough. These three who had eluded The Shadow's wrath, were unready to emerge in the face of deadly fire.

THE efficiency of The Shadow's surprise attack had lain in the master fighter's quickness in handling his living targets. The mobsters, while they had aimed to kill their dreaded enemy, had given The Shadow time to deliver quick shots.

Some of The Shadow's toll had been fatal. For the most part, the men whom he had dropped, as well as those for whom Cliff had accounted, were still writhing on the floor.

As the quick staccato ended, the wounded ruffians saw Cliff Marsland stagger toward the door that led to the street. The Shadow, apparently, did not see Cliff's escape. That was part of The Shadow's game. He had played the part of one who had come to end a fray, not of a rescuer. He wanted his agent's status in the underworld to remain unchanged, so far as these survivors were concerned.

As Cliff escaped from Red Mike's, The Shadow's work was ended. His automatics were still covering men upon the floor. Their ceaseless swing brooked no answer. It was not until The Shadow swept suddenly toward the door that snarling, wounded men grasped guns anew to hurl a last futile reply to the fighter who had mastered them.

The challenge was too late. The Shadow, stopping, delivered his final bursts of thunder. Hands dropped as impartial bullets ricocheted along the floor. Each fuming mobster thought himself to be the target. All sprawled away and dropping gun hands fired wide as a sinister cry of taunting mirth sounded from The Shadow's unseen lips.

Then, with a twisting motion, The Shadow blotted himself from view. Only the outer door of Red Mike's dive remained as a target where the enemy of gangdom had effected his quick disappearance.

OUTSIDE Red Mike's, Cliff Marsland was gripping the corner wall beside an alleyway. He heard the shrill call of a police whistle. Weakened, Cliff was scarcely able to move as he heard the pound of distant feet coming down the street.

A sweeping figure emerged from the darkness of the steps that led down to Red Mike's entrance. Before Cliff realized the presence of that form, a firm arm caught him in its powerful grasp. Staggering, Cliff found himself being swept into the side alleyway, carried away from the direction where the police whistle had sounded.

When the officers reached Red Mike's the outside steps were deserted. One man bounded down into the entrance. As he opened the door, rising mobsters saw a new enemy whom they recognized. It was that of a swarthy man in plain clothes, who waved a big police revolver in the faces of those whom he had encountered.

Detective Joe Cardona had reached Red Mike's. Behind him, half a dozen uniformed police were brandishing their weapons. Trapped, the wounded gangsters dropped their guns and sank back to the floor. Crippled by The Shadow's bullets, they were too weak to offer new resistance.

Red Mike came scrambling from the corridor where he had taken to cover. He tried to explain what had occurred—a gun fight following the discovery of Birdy Zelker's true purpose in the underworld. As policemen invaded the dive, Cardona observed the crumpled form of the stool pigeon. Two officers picked up Birdy's inert form. The man was still alive, but unconscious. Cardona followed as Birdy was carried from Red Mike's.

OF all the original combatants, one alone had managed to depart from Red Mike's, before the arrival of the police. That one was Cliff Marsland. He owed his complete escape to The Shadow's aid.

Blocks from the vicinity of the beleaguered dive, Cliff found himself resting against the cushions of a coupe, beside a black-garbed driver whose form was obscure in the darkness.

Hazily, Cliff realized that he was with The Shadow. True to his service, the agent uttered disjointed sentences—his recollections of the statements which Birdy Zelker had made when cornered.

"Pug Hoffer." Cliff uttered the name with much difficulty. "To-night. Eleven o'clock. Pug—and his mob—going to home of -"

A pause; Cliff caught himself with an effort.

"Home of Folsom Satruff. Folsom—D.—Satruff. Place at Garport, Long Island. Pug—Pug is going there to—to rob. Satruff—Satruff" - the final statement came in a gasp—"Satruff is Dorand."

With a deep sigh of relief, Cliff Marsland sank into the cushions. A whispered laugh sounded softly within the darkened coupe. It was The Shadow's response to his agent's statement—a token of commendation which Cliff Marsland, lapsing into unconsciousness, heard but faintly.

The coupe gathered speed. The Shadow was carrying his wounded agent to a place of safety. He knew that Cliff had weakened from the strain; that his gritty henchman would be due for swift recovery once he had been taken to a place where his wound could be attended.

Ample time lay ahead. The evening was young. The Shadow could complete the present task; with Cliff in capable hands of a physician, The Shadow would be free to follow his own quest. There would be one objective for to-night.

An hour after Cliff Marsland had quietly subsided, the trim coupe was crossing an East River bridge. This time the driver was alone.

The Shadow had departed on his quest at the home of the philanthropist who called himself Dorand.

CHAPTER VI. AT SATRUFF'S

TWO men were seated in a magnificent second-story living room. Paneled walls of solid oak, massive furniture of the same rich wood, oriental rugs of thickly woven texture betokened worldly wealth.

The men, ensconced in front of a glowing fire, seemed fitted to their surroundings. One, who bore the air of ownership, was a dignified, gray-haired gentleman past middle age. His face, though stern, showed a quiet sympathy.

This was Folsom D. Satruff, a millionaire whose name was widely known in New York. He was seated here in his fine residence; a house which, outside as within, constituted the show place of Garport, Long Island.

Satruff's companion was a younger man; one who also bore an air of affluence. His glistening black hair was smoothly combed. His pointed black mustache added distinction to his sallow features. There was a keenness in his attitude that gave him a professional appearance. One would quickly have recognized him as a physician.

That was his calling. Satruff's companion was one of Manhattan's outstanding nerve specialists: Doctor Wesley Harlow.

The peculiar contrast between the men—one that only a close observer could have noted—was that Satruff possessed a calmness, while Harlow showed traits of nervousness. This could have been considered unusual. It proved, at any rate, that Harlow was not here as a consultant specialist.

Satruff was talking quietly. His random remarks dwelt upon world affairs, of business conditions at large. There was tolerance and sympathy in his attitude. Harlow listened; the physician's lips twitched at times, but made no interrupting utterance.

"Life," observed Folsom Satruff, "is not entirely a game of personal gain. I admit that the desire of possession is the primary expression found in every human being. Wealth is a lure that few can resist once they see the possibility of obtaining it.

"But once that longing has been satisfied, the man who has gained his end begins to look for higher things. He seeks to distribute his portion of possession among those who really need it. That, Harlow, is a greater task than gaining wealth."

"Any one can give money away," interjected Harlow.

"Yes," agreed Satruff, "but one cannot always give wisely. Mere giving brings no satisfaction. It is a sour undertaking, Harlow. Realize this: the man who has gained has done so through wisdom. When he is ready to apportion his wealth, he also chooses to follow a wise course."

"It's easy enough to help out people who need cash."

"Is it?" Satruff smiled. "You are wrong there, Harlow. The man who has money is envied by those who lack it. Instinctively, inspired by their desire for gain, they come to look upon him as an easy mark. He aids them; they return for more. Generosity is always preyed upon by greed.

"No, Harlow, I can tell you this from my experience. When one who has wealth aids those who require it, the desire for such action must be sponsored by the giver; not by the recipient. A philanthropist is surrounded by most trying circumstances.

"If he is indiscriminate in his gifts, he soon learns that he is passing his wealth to the undeserving, and in so doing, he is actually robbing those who are really worthy of his aid. Each ingrate who receives a thousand dollars as a present is actually a thief. The money which he takes—through pretense of poverty—should rightfully go to some high-minded person who is really badly off, yet who refuses to cry for aid."

THE millionaire arose as he completed this statement. He strolled across the room and picked up a box

of expensive cigars. He offered one to Doctor Harlow. The physician took the perfecto and lighted it.

The match showed a tense look on Harlow's face. It was obvious that the young specialist was more nervous than before. Satruff, taking a cigar of his own, did not appear to notice Harlow's expression.

"You, Harlow," resumed the millionaire, "are one of the few who are acquainted with the method that I have chosen for my philanthropies. I have remained anonymous—that is, I have used a name which none can recognize—for the very reason that I have just stated. I do not want to be preyed upon by those who are shrewd seekers for wealth."

"These gifts of yours," interjected Harlow, "are not the best way to solve the problem, Satruff."

"Why not?"

"Because they are indiscriminate. A hundred people lose their jobs. Under the pseudonym of Dorand you give them each five hundred dollars."

"Well?"

"Out of one hundred people," insisted Harlow, "there are sure to be many ingrates. Thus you aid the very persons whom you say are undeserving."

"Your theory is good, Harlow," laughed Satruff. "Practically, however, the case is different. When I, as the unknown man Dorand, make gifts, I certainly choose people who can use aid at the time. Any man, no matter what his inner nature may be, is to be pitied when he meets with a calamity. Survivors from wrecked ships, victims of fire tragedies, persons deprived of the opportunity to work; all are unfortunate at the time. Do you follow me?"

"Yes."

"Very well. When such individuals receive my gifts, their immediate response is one of thanks. Later, they may begin to reason shrewdly, to consider ways whereby they might curry favor with their benefactor. But I, through my own method of giving, have blocked such trains of reasoning.

"Dorand! Thousands hold his name in honor. Of those thousands, not one knows who Dorand is. Grasping natures are curbed. There is no use for a schemer to puzzle how he might gain new gifts from his unknown benefactor."

Tall and imposing, Folsom Satruff stood with eyes aglow. He had the attitude of an enthusiast. He had expressed his feelings in the field of philanthropy and his very air showed whole-hearted satisfaction. Doctor Harlow eyed him narrowly, then spoke.

"Your gifts are unsought," said the physician cautiously. "Yet are you sure that they bring the highest satisfaction? What of people close about you? Are there none whom you would aid if you knew that they really needed your assistance?"

"Have you never experienced the pleasure of lending to a man upon no other security than his own worth? Do you realize the feeling of friendship that comes when such a man returns the sum that he has borrowed?"

"I have," admitted Satruff; then, with a shake of his head, he added: "But I have also felt the chagrin which comes with misplaced friendship. That sorrow more than offsets the joy that comes with confidence returned."

"No, Harlow, the odds are all against the idea which you offer. A man of wealth must be free to choose his friends. He must pick those in whose minds the desire for easy money or quick loans is totally absent. You cannot form true friendship upon the sandy soil of personal wish for gain."

"Then if a friend should seek to benefit through your philanthropies -"

"I should, regard him as a friend no longer. The moment that a man asks me for a loan, I feel our friendship is at an end."

"A rather narrow view, Satruff."

"It has modifications." The millionaire paused to consider. "There are exceptions to every rule, Harlow. It might be that I could see differently if conditions were extremely urgent. There have been cases where friends have proposed business deals to me. In such instances, I have placed friendship aside and have treated those individuals purely as commercial acquaintances."

"Suppose"—Doctor Harlow paused to puff speculatively on his cigar - "that a friend should propose a philanthropy, or something very much akin to it -"

"I do not believe that I would be interested," interrupted Satruff. "I choose my own ways of giving. I owe it to myself. I have thousands of dollars here in this house, Harlow. You are one of the few who know that fact—just as you are one of the few who know that I am Dorand -"

FOLSOM SATRUFF paused to turn toward the door of the living room. A stoop-shouldered man with a pale, dried-up face had entered, and was waiting to gain the millionaire's attention.

"What is it, Okum?" asked Satruff.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," whined the man, who was evidently a servant. "Riggs admitted him at the front door. I have his card."

"Let me see it."

Okum approached and tendered a card to his employer. Folsom Satruff raised his eyebrows as he read the name. He nodded as he turned to Okum.

"Bring him up here," ordered Satruff. "At once, Okum."

Doctor Wesley Harlow watched the stoop-shouldered servant depart. He turned to Satruff, who was still looking at the card.

"As I was saying," began Harlow, "there must be cases in which you would consider -"

"Look at this card," interposed Satruff, as he extended his hand toward the physician. "I suppose you will recognize the name of this unexpected visitor."

Harlow took the card. An expression of surprise appeared upon his sallow features.

"Lamont Cranston!" he exclaimed. "He's the millionaire who travels everywhere. A remarkable chap, they say. A friend of yours?"

"An acquaintance," returned Satruff. "In fact, I have visited his New Jersey home on two occasions. He has never been here before. I suppose that -"

Satruff broke off as footsteps sounded from the stairway. Okum appeared with a tall man by his side.

Lamont Cranston, the millionaire, strolled into Satruff's living room. His host advanced to meet him.

"Welcome, Cranston!" exclaimed Satruff. "This is indeed an unexpected surprise."

A SLIGHT smile appeared upon thin lips. Lamont Cranston's face was an impressive one. His features were almost masklike. His aquiline nose gave him a hawkish expression; his keen eyes were steady orbs that seemed to glow as they met the light.

"It is a surprise to myself," announced Cranston in a quiet tone. "I chanced to be near Garport. I recalled that you lived in the vicinity. I dropped by in hope that you would be at home."

Folsom Satruff nodded as he introduced the visitor to Doctor Wesley Harlow. The young physician eyed Lamont Cranston closely. As a nerve specialist, he could see that this calm-faced individual was a being who possessed an iron will.

"You can stay a while -"

Cranston nodded as he heard Satruff speak.

"An hour or more," he remarked. As though answering Cranston's statement, a clock on the living-room mantel chimed the half hour. Satruff and his guests looked in that direction. They observed that the time was half past eleven.

Doctor Harlow arose with a slight touch of nervousness. He glanced at his watch to make sure the clock was right. He turned to Cranston and Satruff.

"I must be back in town by midnight," he remarked. "Sorry to be leaving you. I'd like to talk with you again, Satruff. Suppose— to-morrow night we -"

"Give me a call," suggested Satruff. The millionaire walked to the door with the physician. The two stopped at the top of the stairs. Lamont Cranston stood alone. His keen, burning eyes turned from the distant pair to the clock upon the mantel.

The faint echo of a whispered laugh came from Cranston's thin lips. Neither Satruff nor Harlow heard that trace of mirth. It was an eerie tone of softened mockery that came as a reminder of a strident laugh which earlier to-night had been the knell to men of crime.

This personage who bore the guise of Lamont Cranston was none other than The Shadow. The master fighter of the night had arrived at the home of Folsom Satruff—the place where further crime was due to strike!

CHAPTER VII. THE RAIDERS

WELL had The Shadow gauged his arrival at the home of Folsom Satruff. Cliff Marsland, before lapsing into unconsciousness, had informed his black-garbed master that Pug Hoffer was setting forth at eleven o'clock.

It was obvious that the ex-convict's meeting place must be somewhere in Manhattan. At least half an hour would be required for the gang leader and his henchmen to reach Garport. The Shadow, posing as Lamont Cranston, had reached the important spot ahead of the raiding crew.

Folsom Satruff, when he came back into the living room, found Lamont Cranston seated before the fire. As Satruff handed the box of cigars to his guest, Cranston took one with a leisurely air. There was nothing in Cranston's manner to indicate the purpose that had brought him here.

"Sorry Harlow had to leave," observed Satruff. "He's an interesting chap."

"I've heard of him," returned Cranston. "A nerve specialist, I believe."

"An excellent one," affirmed Satruff. "A profession of that sort must take its toll, however. Harlow has seemed to be in a distraught condition the last few times that I have seen him."

"Does he visit you often?"

"Quite frequently. I have noticed that he seems worried. I have constantly tried to ease his mind away from his work and his troubles."

Okum, Satruff's cadaverous servant, had entered the room. The man had evidently come for some minor purpose. He left without speaking. Satruff noted that Cranston's gaze followed.

"An odd old fellow," observed Satruff, in an undertone. "A faithful servant, though. Bartlett Okum is his name. He has been in my employ for several years."

"What are his duties?"

"They are varied. He serves as my secretary, for one thing. Okum is methodical; I can intrust details to him. He is very taciturn and seems satisfied with his work."

There was a pause. Cranston, puffing at his cigar, turned the topic to Satruff's residence.

"A remarkable place you have here," he said. "The interior surprises me as much as the exterior. Coming up your driveway, I was not quite sure which was the front of the house until I saw the porte-cochere."

"That is not the front," smiled Satruff.

"No?" queried Cranston.

STILL smiling, Satruff faced the doorway that led to the stairs. He pointed with his hand to indicate that direction. With sweeping gestures he described the layout of the building.

"The front," explained Satruff, "is toward the Sound. The driveway entrance—which you mistook for the front—is on the left. There is another side entrance on the right of the house."

"With a driveway?"

"Yes, but one which is seldom used. In fact, that side of the house is one which is rarely used as an entrance. It has a doorway which is kept locked. Within is a short entry; then comes the strong-room where my vault is located."

"Rather an open position for the strong-room."

"Hardly. There are two heavy doors; the outer one and the door of the strong-room itself. They can only be opened from within the strong-room, which is reached by a side passage from within the house."

"It would seem hardly necessary to use the door on the right side at all."

"I seldom do. There are times, however, when I receive packages of value. I usually have them delivered outside the strong-room. That is one of Okum's duties—to receive such shipments. My house servant, Riggs, is more of a butler."

Cranston's eyes were still turned toward the door. Okum had gone downstairs. He was returning. At the head, however, the servant paused. Satruff, like Cranston, chanced to see him turn, hesitate and then descend.

"Did I hear a doorbell ring?" questioned Cranston quietly.

"Riggs will answer it if you did," replied Satruff, in an indifferent tone.

"Maybe it was a mere fancy," observed Cranston. "You were talking about Okum—how he answered calls at the door of your strong-room. I saw him stop at the head of the stairs."

Satruff's eyebrows nodded. There was something in Cranston's matter-of-fact suggestion that made the millionaire think. As he stared at his guest, Satruff seemed to weigh Cranston's words.

"That is odd," remarked Satruff. "You are very observant, Cranston. Okum's action would certainly indicate that he had heard a bell."

"Particularly as he was bound for this room."

"Yes. But I cannot imagine who would be coming here to-night. The only door that Okum would answer is the one beyond the strong-room. Riggs takes care of the usual entrance—the one by the porte-cochere."

"Do you receive many visitors late at night?"

"No. It worries me a trifle. Suppose that you remain here, Cranston, while I call Okum. He is very methodical but taciturn. It would be better if he talked more often at times. However, I have taught him to be silent."

"Perhaps"—Cranston's tone was speculative—"it might be wise to call Okum."

"An excellent suggestion," agreed Satruff. "If you will excuse me for a few moments, I shall do so."

The gray-haired man walked from the room. He paused at the head of the stairs. He called below. There was no response. Satruff glanced back into the living room. Seeing Cranston calmly smoking, he decided to go downstairs.

AS soon as Satruff had taken this course, Lamont Cranston sprang to his feet. In action, if not in appearance, he had become The Shadow. With catlike stealth, he reached the head of the stairs and stood there, his tall form clinging within the gloom of the dimly lighted hallway.

Folsom Satruff was in the hall below. The millionaire's figure was plain to the watcher from above. Satruff was looking about as though he expected to see Okum. The Shadow saw Satruff gaze toward the side of the house on which the strong-room was located.

Satruff started in that direction, then paused. With furrowed brow, he opened the drawer of a hall table and brought out a revolver. He seemed more confident when he turned and went in the direction of the strong-room. It was evident that Satruff had become disturbed by Cranston's subtle suggestion that something might be wrong with Okum.

As Satruff passed from view, The Shadow stepped to the stairs. With silent tread, he began a quick descent. He reached the lower hall and followed Satruff's path. He came to a short passage and paused there. Satruff was less than a dozen feet ahead, carefully opening a door which The Shadow knew must be the entrance to the strong-room.

Gloom pervaded the passage. With amazing stealth, The Shadow moved forward. Folsom Satruff, intent upon the door ahead, did not sense that the tall form of Lamont Cranston was almost at his shoulder. The eyes of The Shadow, burning as they stared, were watching the door ahead. As Satruff opened it, a complete tableau lay before The Shadow's eye.

In the center of a square-walled room stood a flat-faced, glowering ruffian. The Shadow knew that this must be Pug Hoffer. With the gang leader were four other rowdies.

Bartlett Okum was backed against the farther wall, his face aghast. One of Pug's gangsters was covering Satruff's servant.

It was Pug who turned swiftly as Satruff opened the door. With a quick move, the gang leader covered the millionaire before Satruff could raise the revolver that he was holding. A warning growl came from Pug's thick lips.

"Stick 'em up!" Pug's challenge meant business.

Satruff made no motion. He seemed petrified. His hand still gripped its gun, but showed no effort. The sight of his vault, as yet unopened, seemed to withstay the millionaire from yielding to Pug's demand.

"Up with 'em!" Pug's growl was a final warning. "We're tapping this box of yours, old million-bucks, and if you don't want to hand us the combination, we'll blow it. Come on! Up with your dukes!"

SATRUFF'S reply was a surprise. With one leap, the millionaire hurled himself straight toward Pug Hoffer, swinging his gun arm upward as he plunged. Instinctively, Pug side-stepped the onrush. Satruff's revolver barked. The bullet missed its mark as Pug Hoffer swerved.

With a fierce laugh upon his evil lips, Pug regained his aim before Satruff could turn in his direction. The gang leader's left side was toward the doorway through which Satruff had come. His right hand held the revolver close to his body as he steadied his finger for the shot. The other mobsters watched their chief.

Then, from the hallway came a booming shot. It was the powerful roar of an automatic, held in the waiting hand of Lamont Cranston. The Shadow, in the guise of a leisurely man of wealth, still possessed his perfect aim. A cry came from the lips of Pug Hoffer as the mob leader collapsed sidewise to the floor, a bullet in his left shoulder.

With the instinctive action that characterized mob fighters, Pug's quartet of gangsters swung toward the spot from which the shot had come. They caught a quick glimpse of Lamont Cranston, framed within the open door. As they saw the challenger, the automatic spoke again. Down went the nearest gangster.

There was no laugh from the doorway. The Shadow was playing Cranston's part to the limit. With his second shot, the tall fighter dropped away, only to thrust his gun hand forth and deliver a third burning bullet at a gangster who had just fired too late.

Folsom Satruff was acting with the same speed as the mobsters. Swerving, the millionaire encountered one directly. He fired while the gangster was aiming. The crook fell; his own shot went wide.

The Shadow had dropped two men; Satruff, one. The fourth, the last to turn, was the fellow who had been guarding Okum with drawn gun.

As this mobster aimed at Satruff, Okum made a leap forward and snatched at the gangster's arm. The servant failed to stop the shot as the mobster shifted.

The gangster fired at Folsom Satruff. Simultaneously with his pressure of the trigger came a blazing roar

from the doorway where The Shadow stood. A winging bullet caught the mobster's gun hand just as its finger completed its task.

The gun, shifting in the wavering hand, failed in its purpose. The mobster's shot went wide. Howling, the man grabbed his right wrist with his left hand.

Then came a burst from Satruff's revolver. The mobster plumped upon the floor as the millionaire's bullet found its target in his body.

Five raiders had come to Satruff's. Two lay motionless upon the floor. Another pair was writhing helplessly. One alone was glowering fiercely, although he made no move to action. This was the leader, Pug Hoffer. His right hand still grasped its gun.

THE tall form of Lamont Cranston appeared within the room. With a welcome cry, Folsom Satruff turned toward his rescuer. The smoking automatic in Cranston's hand was proof that he had fired the much needed shots.

"Great work, Cranston!" exclaimed Satruff. "It's lucky you followed me here. I walked into a trap. These men had come to rob me."

"So I observed," stated Cranston calmly. The eyes of The Shadow were upon Pug Hoffer, who cowered as he saw them.

"I don't know their game," decided Satruff, "but this man"—he indicated Pug—"looks like the leader -"

"He is!" exclaimed Okum. The servant had seized a gangster's revolver from the floor and was waving it wildly. "He's the one who rang. He cornered me here."

"Burglary," announced Satruff coldly. "Attempted, at least. It means the penitentiary for these ruffians."

These were the words that stirred Pug Hoffer to action. Lamont Cranston had stepped slowly back. Freed from the searching gaze, Pug raised his head and shouted defiance.

"The pen for me?" The gang leader's question was a snarl. "Maybe! But before I go there, you'll get yours—from me -"

The gang leader raised his revolver as he spoke. It covered Satruff, waveringly. The millionaire, his own gun ready, was waiting. Okum, wildly excited, held his revolver pointed toward Pug Hoffer.

Under double coverage, Pug sank exhausted. His face was grimy with dirt from the floor; his snarl was evil as he let his gun click against the stone.

"You've got me," snarled Pug. "Got me on the spot. The bulls will have me next. I'll go up the river, but when I go, I'll see to it that there's another bird goes with me. Wait'll I squawk. Wait'll I tell what I know about -"

The gang leader's gun was rising with new effort. Folsom Satruff was waiting steadily for the danger point. So was Lamont Cranston. Only Bartlett Okum, still excited, was on the verge of losing control. The servant's hand was aiming for a shot as Pug Hoffer tried to rise.

"I'll tell—about -"

As Pug gasped the words, a sudden shot burst through the room. It was from a new quarter; the outer door of the strong-room, which had been ajar until this moment. A quick hand had delivered this

unexpected bullet; and with its arrival, Pug Hoffer sprawled, coughing, to the floor.

FOLSOM SATRUFF swung toward the outer door. There, his sallow face twitching, stood Doctor Wesley Harlow. The physician had arrived at the moment when Pug Hoffer, rising defiant, had lifted his revolver for a final threat.

Harlow's shot had reached the gang leader's heart. Pug Hoffer lay dead upon the floor as Harlow stepped forward to view the result of his quick work.

Before any one present could voice an expression regarding Harlow's sudden action, the thud of hurrying footsteps sounded from the passage of the house. The four armed men who had battled with the mobsters, turned with one accord to face the new arrivals.

Detective Joe Cardona, a pair of subordinates at his heels, had arrived through the house. The headquarters man, too late to aid in the fray, was here to witness the climax of the strange battle in which Pug Hoffer had died!

CHAPTER VII. CARDONA'S QUIZ

It was after midnight. The police had removed the crippled mobsters from Folsom Satruff's home. With them, they had taken the dead form of Pug Hoffer.

Detective Joe Cardona had remained. He was in Satruff's upstairs living room; with him were the principals in the fray against the group from mobland. Folsom Satruff was standing near the fireplace. Lamont Cranston and Doctor Wesley Harlow were seated. Bartlett Okum, his cadaverous face still pale, was near his master.

"Pug Hoffer was a bad egg," commented Cardona. "He deserved what he got. There's no doubt about why he and his mob came here. You gentlemen did a good job. But there's some things I've got to put in my report. That's why I'm asking questions."

The assembled men waited for Cardona to continue. The detective turned the trend of his conversation temporarily.

"I had a tip-off on Pug," he remarked. "There was some heavy shooting early to-night down at a place called Red Mike's. A tough mob picked off one of my stool pigeons—a fellow named Birdy Zelker. We took him to a hospital and he came to just before he died. Told me that Pug Hoffer was heading here."

"Why didn't you call me?" queried Folsom Satruff.

"I counted on making it before Pug showed up," returned Cardona. "Birdy said something about eleven o'clock; I didn't think the raiders could get here before midnight. We heard the shots when we came up the driveway. Your man had the front door open. He shouted to us."

"That was Riggs," remarked Satruff. The servant himself appeared at the head of the stairs while the millionaire was speaking. Riggs had been down helping the police. He stood silently within the door of the living room, a quiet addition to the group assembled.

"Let's get this whole thing straight," announced Cardona, as he produced a report book. "First of all, this fellow." He nudged a thumb toward Bartlett Okum. Satruff's secretary responded in a choky voice.

"I heard the bell ring," he stated. "It was the side door, by the strong-room. That's where I went -"

"To the side door?"

"Yes. Through the strong-room. I just thought—thought that some occasional visitor might be coming in that way. When I opened the outer door, the gunmen came through. They forced me back into the strong-room. They had me covered when Mr. Satruff arrived."

Cardona jotted down his notes. "All right, Mr. Satruff."

"I was up here with Mr. Cranston," explained the millionaire. "We saw Okum go downstairs. We supposed that there had been a ring at the side door. I went down to investigate."

"I suspected trouble, so I picked up a revolver. When I arrived, I found conditions just as Okum has stated. I leaped at the ringleader— this man you referred to as Pug—but he would have shot me had it not been for Cranston's timely aid."

SATRUFF made a gesture toward Cranston as he spoke. Joe Cardona followed the motion with his eyes. He looked to Cranston to pick up the continuity.

"I followed Mr. Satruff," declared Cranston calmly. "Fortunately, I provided myself with an automatic. When I saw Satruff miss the gang leader, I fired and wounded the man. I added further shots from the little passageway. Satruff did effective work also. We managed, to drop the entire crew."

Cardona finished his notations. He glanced about, saw Riggs, and put brief questions to the servant.

"You were in the kitchen, Riggs?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when you heard the shots?"

"I ran into the front hall. I opened the door by the regular driveway, hoping that I could call for aid -"

"All right. We were there to hear you. Now for your story, Doctor Harlow."

"It is rather odd," declared the physician, in an uneasy tone. "I had left the house just after Mr. Cranston arrived. I was seated in my coupe, out near the porte-cochere, when I thought I detected some one prowling across the lawn."

"I decided to investigate. I alighted and went in that direction. Seeing no one, I rounded the house very cautiously. It was quite dark on that side; I waited there a while until suddenly I heard the sound of gunshots. I hurried to the side entrance. I dashed in and saw the gangster—Pug—about to fire at Mr. Satruff. I raised my revolver -"

"Wait a moment!" Cardona's interposition was a sharp one. "Mr. Satruff was armed; so was Mr. Cranston. They were in a home, protecting it. But you were out in your car. How does it happen you had a revolver?"

"I always carry one in the car."

"You have a permit?"

Harlow fumbled in his pocket and produced the necessary paper. He handed it to Cardona. The detective examined it and passed it back.

"I drive a great deal at night," explained Harlow, in a nervous tone. "I thought it best to carry a gun for emergencies."

"All right, doctor." Cardona's tone was steady. Then, to the others: "We're getting to the part I want. How did Pug Hoffer happen to be killed? Who fired the shot?"

"I fired it," stated Harlow. "I wanted to save Mr. Satruff's life."

"Harlow's action was well intended," remarked Satruff. "He was naturally excited and quite within his rights. The deed, however, was hasty, as well as unnecessary. I should much have preferred that Pug Hoffer was turned over to you, Detective Cardona."

"You say that Doctor Harlow's shot was unnecessary?" quizzed Cardona.

"Yes," admitted Satruff, in a reluctant tone, apparently regretting his statement. "I could easily have killed the man. I was covering him with my revolver. He began to talk, however, and I wanted to hear him out."

"Ah!" Cardona caught this last statement. "What was Pug saying just before he died?"

"At first," explained Satruff, "he made a motion as if he intended to shoot me. He desisted when he saw my revolver. Then he snarled that if he went to prison, he would see that another went with him. He said that he would tell what he knew about some one."

"Did he give the name?" queried Cardona eagerly.

"No," returned Satruff. "He was lifting his gun as he spoke, but he seemed incapable of using it. We were listening: Cranston, Okum, and I, but before Pug could speak further, Harlow made his sudden entry and shot the man dead."

"I didn't see the gun in Mr. Satruff's hand," broke in Harlow impatiently. "I saw the gangster make his move—I fired instinctively."

"Where were you, Mr. Cranston?" quizzed Cardona.

"Standing by," rejoined the calm-faced millionaire.

"Were you covering Pug Hoffer?" asked the detective.

"Not exactly," stated Cranston. "I could have shot him before he had an opportunity to fire at Satruff."

"Where were you?" This time Cardona was addressing Okum.

"Near the gangster," replied the secretary. "I had a revolver which I had picked up from the floor."

"I saw Okum's gun," broke in Doctor Harlow. "I thought that he was going to shoot the gangster on the floor. Now that I remember it, Okum's action influenced me. Okum was unsteady. I was afraid that he would miss."

Joe Cardona jotted down these final statements. Ignoring all others, he turned to Doctor Harlow.

"You killed Pug Hoffer," the detective told the physician. "It appears to have been a hasty action; nevertheless, you will probably receive credit for it. The man was an ex-convict. He was here to burgle Mr. Satruff's strong-room. He was the fellow I came after, Pug was. I'd like to have brought in Pug alive, but it can't be helped now."

"I'd like to have you come along to headquarters with me. We can ride down in your car. Hang on to that permit that you've got. Suppose you meet me downstairs. I'll be there in a few minutes. I want to talk

with Mr. Satruff— alone."

DOCTOR HARLOW arose. Lamont Cranston copied his example. With Okum and Riggs following, the two guests went down the stairway. Joe Cardona moved toward the door and closed it.

"Just a minute, Mr. Satruff." The detective's voice was low-pitched. "There's something about this mess that I want you to know. It's bad that Pug Hoffer was killed."

"Because of the fact he was about to talk?"

"Yes. He was going to name some one. There must have been some reason why Pug picked this place."

"You mean -"

"That he may have had a tip to come here."

Folsom Satruff nodded thoughtfully. "You suspect an accomplice," he remarked.

"Yes," admitted Cardona. "I do. Pug failed; but that's no reason why some other tough guy won't try the job later on. I want you to keep in touch with me. There's no proof on anybody just yet, but there may be later."

"I understand," nodded Satruff.

"I've got my suspicions," stated Cardona, in an expressive tone, "but I'm not saying any more until I've made an investigation. I'm taking Doctor Harlow down to headquarters, so he can make a technical statement about killing Pug Hoffer.

"After that—well, I'll keep you posted. I'm going to find out how Pug Hoffer got this layout here. There's more to this than shows on the surface."

While Satruff nodded more definitely than before, Cardona opened the door of the living room and motioned to the millionaire to accompany him downstairs. Together they descended to the front hall where the four who had left were waiting.

Cardona joined Doctor Harlow. He and the physician said good night. They departed and Satruff's eyes followed them as they went. The man whose strong-room had been saved, was thinking over what Cardona had said. Satruff was the only one who knew of Joe Cardona's suspicions.

There was another, however, who had divined those suspicions. Lamont Cranston's keen eyes also followed the detective and the physician as they left. Cranston had been watchful upstairs also. He had heard Cardona's sharp quiz of Harlow's statements.

That Pug Hoffer had been about to squeal on some one was evident. A shot had ended Pug's life. That shot had been fired by Doctor Wesley Harlow. Why? Because—so the physician had said—Folsom Satruff's life had appeared to be in danger.

Was there another reason?

Well did Lamont Cranston know that Joe Cardona nourished such a thought. The keen brain of The Shadow was at work. Cardona was a sleuth who followed hunches. He was working on one now; and in the past—so The Shadow knew— Cardona's hunches had frequently been correct.

THE face of Lamont Cranston was inflexible, however, when its owner turned to bid good night to Folsom Satruff. The millionaires shook hands. It was then that Satruff expressed a sudden thought.

"I should like to see you again, Cranston," he stated. "By again, I mean very soon. You aided me well, to-night. I regard you as a friend. There is something important that I wish to tell you. Could you come here—say to-morrow evening -"

"Certainly," returned Cranston, in a quiet tone. "I shall be glad to call here, Satruff."

The host met his guest's gaze. Cranston's piercing eyes were impressive. Satruff wondered if this keen personage had caught the fact that Cardona suspected an accomplice in to-night's affair. He wondered what Lamont Cranston thought regarding Doctor Wesley Harlow.

There was a glance, however, that Satruff did not catch as Cranston turned toward the door. He did not notice his guest's gaze as it turned across the hallway and steadied for a long moment upon the pallid, corpse-like face of Bartlett Okum.

The door closed to mark Cranston's departure. The guest entered his coupe. He drove away into the night. As he handled the wheel of the car, his form seemed completely merged with the interior darkness.

A soft laugh sounded in the gloom. That laugh was one of recollection. The Shadow, as Lamont Cranston, had observed every detail of the battle in Folsom Satruff's strong-room.

He had seen exactly what Doctor Harlow had stated; that Bartlett Okum had been ready to fire at Pug Hoffer the very moment when Harlow had released a bullet to end the gang leader's evil life.

Harlow's odd behavior—his prowling about the grounds—the revolver which he had carried in his car; these had attracted the attention of Joe Cardona.

But Okum's admission of the gangsters—the secretary's helplessness when they had entered—these were points which The Shadow alone had noted.

The Shadow knew the secret which both Wesley Harlow and Bartlett Okum, through their contact with Folsom Satruff, had learned. He knew that Satruff was the unknown philanthropist who used the pseudonym of Dorand.

That was why The Shadow, as Lamont Cranston, had agreed to make another call at the home of Folsom Satruff.

CHAPTER IX. DORAND ASKS ADVICE

ON the following evening, Lamont Cranston's trim coupe was again rolling along the road to Garport. The Shadow, hidden at the wheel, was on his way to visit Folsom Satruff.

The car swerved swiftly from the main highway, without slackening its speed. It whirled along a narrow byway. The road-worthy car responded as its driver swung it into an entrance between two pillars. Gravel crunched as the coupe ascended the slope to Satruff's mansion.

The car came to a stop beside the porte-cochere. Alighting, The Shadow stalked through the darkness. His keen eyes had spied the fork, farther back, where a disused driveway went to the opposite side of the house. Now his burning gaze was centered upon the mansion itself.

Few lights were glimmering, although a parked sedan indicated that a visitor was in the house. As The Shadow came into a dim range of illumination beneath the porte-cochere, his form was no longer hazy. It appeared as the shape of a tall man, who bore the passive features of Lamont Cranston.

Riggs answered the door when the visitor rang. He recognized Cranston and conducted him to the

second-floor living room. Entering, Cranston was greeted by Folsom Satruff. With Satruff was an elderly, shrewd-faced man who rose to be introduced.

"This is Mr. McEwen," stated Satruff. "Tobias McEwen, the attorney. He is my legal representative."

Cranston nodded as he shook hands with the lawyer. Evidently McEwen's name was one which he had recognized.

Satruff waved Cranston to a chair. He then closed the door of the living room and returned toward the fireplace. Satruff glanced at McEwen. The lawyer was studying Cranston.

It was evident that Satruff had invited his attorney here for some specific purpose. Whether or not McEwen was responding as Satruff had expected was something that could be left only to conjecture. Satruff took it for granted that McEwen was satisfied.

WITH his back to the fireplace, Satruff spoke directly to Lamont Cranston. A glimmer of interest appeared in the visitor's eyes as the millionaire host began his discourse.

"Cranston," declared Satruff, in a confiding tone, "I realized last night that I owed you a debt of gratitude. I have appreciated that fact even more since then. I know that in you I have found a true friend.

"When I discussed the matter with McEwen, here at dinner, I explained that a man in my position must be very careful about taking others into his confidence. The more wealth that a man accumulates, the more does he separate himself from the world at large. He limits his potential friendships to those few who can understand the situation of a moneyed man. Do you agree?"

"Quite," acknowledged Cranston quietly. "That is one reason why I prefer to roam the world at large, rather than confining myself to a limited area. My real friendships are found in most obscure localities.

"A British consul in Timbuktu; the chief of staff of a maharajah's guard" —Cranston paused to smile reminiscently—"those are typical friends of mine. I have others who possess great wealth, such as Pascual Cordillez, the Chilean mine owner. I understand these men because I have met them completely freed from thoughts of profit-making friendship."

"Exactly!" exclaimed Satruff. "You see, McEwen, that Cranston's experience has been parallel to mine. That is why, in the light of what occurred last night, I think it best to tell him of the peculiar circumstances which surround me."

McEwen nodded in half-given approval.

"Cranston," said Satruff, in a serious tone, "there was a reason for that gang raid here last night. Those mobsters came with well-planned purpose."

"So Detective Cardona seemed to indicate."

Satruff nodded as he heard Cranston's reply. He knew that Cranston had not been present when Cardona had set forth his theory; but the gleam in Satruff's face indicated that he had felt sure that Cranston had divined the detective's hunch.

"Cardona spoke to me along that line," remarked Satruff. "He suspected that Pug Hoffler had received some information that this place could be robbed. But what Cardona did not guess—and what I did not tell him—was the amount of available wealth that lies within my vault."

Satruff paused to judge the effect of his words. Cranston made no comment; nor did he indicate any

undue surprise.

"Nor," continued Satruff, "did I tell Cardona why I might happen to be holding so much cash in my home, instead of keeping it in safe deposit. I suppose, Cranston, that you will consider it odd that a man of wealth should commit such an indiscretion."

"Hardly," observed Cranston, in his monotone. "Not in your case, at least."

"Why not?" queried Satruff in surprise.

"Because," returned Cranston, "the initial of your middle name is D."

TOBIAS MCEWEN stared as he heard these words. Folsom Satruff was taken aback. He had been preparing Cranston for a surprise; instead, his guest had delivered one.

"You mean," ejaculated Satruff, "that you have guessed that I am -"

"Dorand," interposed Cranston.

Satruff turned to McEwen. The lawyer nodded as he caught his client's look.

"You were right, Satruff," he said. "I had thought it inadvisable to take any party into your confidence. But since Mr. Cranston already suspects the truth, it is better that he should have been told."

"I am Dorand," announced Satruff, turning to corroborate Cranston's suggestion. "In fact, Dorand is my middle name—but I have never used it except as an individual title. McEwen, here, has records of all my philanthropies. When I have finished with my efforts to aid unfortunate persons, I may, perhaps, reveal my identity. Until then, however, I have preferred to keep it secret.

"Last night's episode, however, has convinced me that my work has been watched. It has reached the ears of men of crime. Pug Hoffer came here knowing that my vault contained thousands upon thousands in actual cash.

"His dying words told me that he was but one who shared the secret. That, Cranston, has placed me in a most difficult situation. I must either give up my benefactions or else reveal myself as Dorand. That, in turn, will mean an end to my plan of philanthropy, for I have chosen to keep my true identity unknown.

"Either course is distasteful. I felt that it would be wise for me to study my predicament. I knew that I could rely upon McEwen. I also wanted the advice of some one who would be qualified to give it. Inasmuch as you had saved my life through your prompt action in the strong-room, I decided that you were the proper person with whom I should confer."

LAMONT CRANSTON was thoughtful. He had placed a cigarette between his thin lips. Each well-timed puff came as the expression of a growing chain of thought. Cranston, himself a millionaire, was surveying Satruff's situation.

"I take it," came Cranston's easy tone, "that you have made your work known to persons in whom you have confidence. That is, to persons other than Mr. McEwen."

"To only two," acknowledged Folsom Satruff.

"The others," remarked Cranston, "are -"

Although Cranston's voice paused, there was something in his tone that indicated his ability to supply the names himself. Folsom Satruff caught the suggestion; nevertheless, the man who called himself Dorand

was prompt to give the identities of those whom he had mentioned.

"One," he stated, "is Bartlett Okum. As my secretary and my aid in philanthropic work, it was necessary that I should tell him everything. The other is Doctor Wesley Harlow, a young man in whom I have great confidence."

"You have told no one else that you are Dorand?"

"Absolutely no one."

"Then," decided Cranston, "if the news has leaked out, it must have been through the indiscretion of either Okum or Harlow."

"Or myself," interposed Tobias McEwen.

"Hardly through you, McEwen," laughed Satruff. "You, as a lawyer, make it a business to keep the affairs of your clients to yourself."

"There are crooked lawyers," declared McEwen.

"But you are not one," responded Satruff. "We can count you out, McEwen. At the same time"—Satruff's voice was kindly—"I do not feel that I should mistrust either Okum or Harlow. I have discussed my work as Dorand with both of them. There is every possibility that one of my conversations might have been overheard.

"In fact, I cannot say with positive surety that Pug Hoffler knew I was Dorand. I merely suppose that; and I can also add that somehow, certain of my benefactions may have been traced back to me, although I have used every possible method to prevent such an occurrence.

"What I want to know is how I can keep on with my beneficent work without running the risk of further gang raids. I should like to preserve the secrecy which surrounds Dorand as long as possible."

"Inform the police." The suggestion came from Tobias McEwen. "Tell Detective Cardona that you are Dorand. Let him protect this house from raiders."

"If I were convinced," returned Satruff, "that a real threat hung over me, I should follow your advice, McEwen. But that would be the beginning of the end so far as the philanthropic work of Dorand is concerned. The police serve the law. If emergencies arise, they are forced to show their hand.

"Detective Cardona might find it essential to let the public know that I was Dorand. My desire in the matter would be of no consequence."

"Put some Pinkerton men on the job," suggested McEwen.

"Worse," decided Satruff. "Hired detectives would not be satisfactory in a case such as this. What I need"—Satruff was appealing to Cranston—"is a man in whom I can rely; one who has a fresh viewpoint on this situation.

"Okum is getting old and useless. You saw how easily he was trapped by last night's raiders. He can still take care of the methodical details which pertain to my philanthropies."

"What about Riggs?" queried McEwen.

"A dullard," responded Satruff. "I need a man of capability; one who could appear to be a private secretary relieving Okum of his heavy duties. At the same time, he must be a man who would prove

quick in an emergency. Such a man as you, Cranston."

A soft laugh came from Cranston's lips. It bore no resemblance to the strange laugh of The Shadow.

"I should like to take the job myself," stated Cranston. "However, that is impossible."

"But perhaps you know of some one who -"

"I do." Cranston's tone was thoughtful. "When I have set forth on unusual expeditions, I have sometimes chosen men to accompany me. They frequently communicate with me when they learn that I am setting out again.

"I am planning, at present, to visit Easter Island, that odd volcanic patch of land west of the coast of Chile. I intend to make a study of the huge stone prehistoric monuments known as megaliths.

"I require no companion, as my Chilean friend, Pascual Cordillez, is providing his yacht and expects me to join him, alone, at the port of Antofagasta. That means that I must turn down a very deserving applicant who wished to accompany me on this trip. He is a young man from Michigan who possesses marked capabilities and who is at present in New York."

"Ah!" exclaimed Satruff. "You would recommend him for this work that I require?"

"Absolutely," stated Cranston. "He is most trustworthy and thoroughly reliable."

"Is it necessary," objected McEwen, "to bring in another person on this Dorand business?"

"The man would not have to know that I am Dorand," declared Satruff. "Okum will still attend to my affairs. I want some one whom I can count upon in case of an emergency like last night's. This man that you suggest, Cranston—can he handle a gun?"

"That," smiled Cranston, "is the first requirement of any who accompany me on my travels."

"And his name?"

"Harry Vincent."

"Where can I reach him?"

"At the Metrolite Hotel."

FOLSOM SATRUFF smiled and rubbed his hands together. He paid no attention to Tobias McEwen's disgruntled expression. It was evident that the lawyer felt himself overruled, yet was afraid to make new expression through fear of his wealthy client's displeasure.

"That clears my dilemma," announced Satruff warmly. "Clears it for the time, at least. I shall call Vincent to-morrow, Cranston, and state that you recommended him for the post. I can give him active duties during the day—ones which will suit his nature. I have a speed boat in the Sound. I can place him in charge of it.

"At night, however, the outer door of the strong-room will be under my own supervision, and I shall have Vincent to back me in case of emergency. You have helped me greatly, Cranston, and I appreciate your aid."

That ended the discussion. Tobias McEwen departed, in somewhat surly fashion, a half hour later. After that, Lamont Cranston made his exit. Within the low-built coupe, Folsom Satruff's guest merged strangely

with the darkness.

As the trim car crunched its way along the gravel drive, a whispered laugh emerged from its interior. It was a presaging laugh—a tone of mockery that showed token of the future.

The Shadow knew why Pug Hoffer had raided Folsom Satruff's strong-room. He realized that the vault, with its hoard of wealth, would remain a lure to men of crime.

The identity of Dorand was known in the underworld. That meant that further events were due to happen at the home of Folsom Satruff.

From to-morrow on, The Shadow would be prepared to deal with such occurrences. Through subtle conversation with the man who called himself Dorand, The Shadow, as Lamont Cranston, had made the necessary arrangements.

To-morrow, Harry Vincent, a trusted agent of The Shadow, would begin his stay within the walls of Satruff's huge mansion.

CHAPTER X. FROM THE UNDERWORLD

CLIFF MARSLAND was back on the job. Once more The Shadow's agent was abroad in gangdom. Seated in Red Mike's disreputable joint, Cliff was reviewing the events that had taken place but a few days before.

The raid on Folsom Satruff's home had created a stir in the underworld. Rumor, supplied by Red Mike himself, had passed the word that Birdy Zelker was the stool who had tipped off Joe Cardona to Pug's plan of burglary.

Red Mike, friendly to Cliff Marsland, had also added that Cliff was the one who had uncovered Birdy as a stool. This had increased Cliff's repute. The two mobsters who had opened the quarrel with him, were dead. The survivors of the fray at Red Mike's were wisely quiet.

The fact that The Shadow had come to Red Mike's had been attributed to Birdy Zelker's connection with Joe Cardona. It was generally conceded that The Shadow must spend much time spotting the stool pigeons who worked for the police. It was possible, even, that Birdy might have been working for The Shadow as well as for Joe Cardona.

Returned to Red Mike's, Cliff was more than welcome. Hunched in a corner of the dive, he received occasional glances of approval from gunmen who entered. No questions were put to him. The whispered buzz which took Cliff as its intermittent discussion was reaching grand proportions.

Red Mike had intimated that Cliff Marsland, alone, had managed to get clear by the front door of the hang-out before the police arrived. By doing so, Cliff had accomplished the feat of eluding The Shadow.

It was bruited—more than before—that Cliff was gunning for The Shadow; that he was seeking to meet in single conflict the lone warrior who had so long harried all gangdom.

In his own thoughts, however, Cliff was considering matters of a different sort. This was his first trip back to the bad lands. His shoulder—less badly wounded than he had first supposed—had healed sufficiently to enable him to take up his work in gangland.

Through newspapers and by listening to chattering crooks, Cliff had pieced the Pug Hoffer situation so far as police and criminals considered it. Pug had taken a chance on a profitable raid. He had formed a squad of gunmen. He had been killed; his gang had been captured.

IT was probable that Pug had picked Satruff's on a hunch. Maybe the ex-convict had tried to raid the place prior to his term in Sing Sing. At any rate, he had shown a familiarity with the surroundings; how he had gained it, no one seemed to know.

There was idle talk of the possibilities that existed at Satruff's; this was so speculative that there was no organized idea among bold gangsters concerning a future attempt to break in where Pug had failed.

Joe Cardona had evidently learned of this lack of spirit through reports received from stools. The ace detective, apparently, was making no endeavor to forestall a new attack at Satruff's.

Cliff Marsland could well picture Cardona's reasoning. Things were rather quiet in the bad lands; if any host of mobsters planned trouble anywhere, they would, doubtless, pick spots that had hitherto been ignored.

Cliff, however, was working on a lead—one which he was sure Cardona had not seen. Pug Hoffler had boasted a checkered career prior to his incarceration at Sing Sing. Joe had evidently considered Pug's past purely as an indication of the dead gang leader's criminal inclinations.

Cliff, recalling the conversation between Pug and Birdy, had learned facts which Cardona had missed. The beginning of the conference between the now-dead mobsters had involved two names that Cliff had not forgotten.

Tex Lowner and Rabbit Gorton!

These men had been redoubtable gang leaders. Pug had served each of them in turn. He had been double-crossed by one—or by both. Pug had told Birdy that those two were out so far as he was concerned.

But had they been out?

Cliff knew the way of the underworld. He knew that Pug, back from Sing Sing, must surely have held a grievance against either Tex or Rabbit. Moreover, Pug, planning outlets for his own endeavor, might well have tried to muscle in ahead of one of these two mob leaders.

These thoughts were speculations; yet Cliff, himself, had not begun them. He had made a report to The Shadow. He had received return instructions. It was the order from The Shadow that had caused Cliff's well-set chain of ideas.

The Shadow had instructed his agent to pick up the trail of either Tex Lowner or Rabbit Gorton. Through that tracing, either positively or negatively, the way might be found to learn facts that concerned Pug Hoffler's attack at Satruff's.

CLIFF realized that The Shadow must be watching the home of the philanthropist who called himself Dorand. That end would be covered— perhaps by an agent instead of The Shadow himself. Cliff's work lay within the confines of the underworld.

So far as Tex Lowner and Rabbit Gorton were concerned, Cliff knew the pair by reputation.

Tex, a huge, two-fisted fellow, was reputed to have been a bank robber in the West. He had a habit of coming in and out of New York, and, although the underworld gave him credit for various jobs which had involved large hauls, the police had never gotten the goods on the big gang leader.

Rabbit Gorton was the antithesis of Tex Lowner. Rabbit, though dangerous, was the type of mob leader who knew when to scurry for cover. Time and again, he had gathered his cohorts, made a quick foray

either in or out of Manhattan, and had returned to a hideout before he could be traced.

It was not odd that Tex and Rabbit should be sworn enemies. It was probable that they had crossed each other's trail. Tex, who preferred the open, would logically hold Rabbit in contempt. Rabbit, who used more discretion, would regard Tex as a fool.

Yet both were crafty in their way, and to locate either would prove no sinecure. The hitch about finding Tex was that the big gang leader was probably absent from Manhattan. The trouble in discovering Rabbit was that the wary mob leader would probably be somewhere out of sight.

Cliff smiled grimly as he considered the situation. He was positive on one point only: that if he found either Tex or Rabbit, the place of discovery would not include the other. Those two champions of wrong stayed as far apart as the poles.

Tex was the best bet. If he had come into Manhattan, he could be located. If Tex were not in the bad lands, the job would be to search for Rabbit. Cliff had his instructions; upon him rested the preliminary work of locating one man and reporting to The Shadow.

SAUNTERING from Red Mike's, Cliff wended his way to a more pretentious dive called the Black Ship. As soon as he entered the joint, he was greeted by a gruff-faced fellow who was seated in a corner. It was Duster Yomer, the mobster for whom Cliff had inquired on the eventful night when trouble had burst at Red Mike's.

"Hello, Cliff," growled Duster. "I hear that you're out gunnin' for The Shadow."

"Yeah?" Cliff grinned as he sat down. "What you hear isn't always so, Duster. I'm taking things easy right at present. Things are too quiet."

"You bet," agreed Duster. "Say, Cliff—when Tex Lowner barges into town, you can bet there's nothin' much blowin'. He don't hang around when the bulls are chasin' heavy. There ain't been nothin' doin' much since Pug Hoffler got his -"

"Who says Tex Lowner's in town?" broke in Cliff, in a doubting tone.

"I say he is," retorted Duster. "Didn't I see him? He's hangin' out at the Hotel Spartan."

"Yeah?" Again Cliff's voice was challenging. "Well, he's welcome to stay there. That's a softy joint. It's one place you won't see me."

With this statement, Cliff arose and sauntered from the Black Ship. He headed along an alley, reached another street and threw a wary look over his shoulder.

Cliff's contempt for the Hotel Spartan had been feigned. The Shadow's agent knew well that the most formidable and affluent of gang leaders used that battered old hostelry as their headquarters. This was news for The Shadow—that Tex Lowner had come into town and was at the Spartan.

Stopping at a crumpling cigar store, Cliff entered and made a call to Burbank. He reported to the contact man and received an order to repeat the call in ten minutes. Cliff loitered in the store and made his second call.

This time he received instructions. He was to go to the Hotel Spartan, there to locate the number of Tex Lowner's room and to learn if the gang leader were in. After that, Cliff's stand should be made at the entrance to the rear alleyway behind the old hotel, to await new orders.

Cliff headed for the Hotel Spartan. He passed beneath an elevated structure and entered the grimy lobby of the place where Tex Lowner was staying. He strode up to the desk and nodded to the hard-faced clerk.

"Pinky Osgrove come back to town yet?" inquired Cliff.

The clerk shook his head.

"No?" Cliff's tone was incredulous. "Say—he was figuring on getting in to-day—so he told me."

Turning to go back through the lobby, Cliff paused as an afterthought. He whirled about and put a question that was a natural one, inasmuch as Cliff called occasionally on gang leaders who were staying at this hotel.

"Who has come in?" he quizzed.

"To-day?" The clerk scratched his head. "Bugs Malby is here—that is, he's stopping here, but he's out right now -"

"Where is he? I may want to see him later."

"Up in 514. Then there's Tex Lowner—he's in 328. Want to see him? He's in."

"No." Cliff shrugged his shoulders. "I'll be back to-morrow to see if Pinky's arrived. Maybe I'll catch Malby in then."

OUTSIDE the hotel, Cliff took the side street and reached the entrance of the rear alleyway. The place was grotesquely dark. Cliff remembered it, for this had been the scene of past adventures in which The Shadow had figured heavily.

Stepping into the darkness, Cliff lingered. He had the sensation that eyes were upon him. Hardly had he felt it, before a whispered voice hissed from the gloom.

"Report."

It was The Shadow!

Invisible in the darkness, the black-garbed messenger of doom was awaiting the word that his agent had gained.

"Tex Lowner," whispered Cliff huskily, "is in Room 328. He is there now."

"Report received," came The Shadow's weird reply. "Off duty."

The hissing voice could not be traced. It seemed to have been an utterance of the darkness itself. As Cliff moved away, he realized that The Shadow must, also, have taken some direction. Yet Cliff caught no sound whatever as he left the alleyway.

There was a sound, however. It was not that of footfalls. It was a squidgy noise, soft amid the darkness. It marked the direction which The Shadow had taken. The invisible watcher was moving directly upward, against the side of the brick-walled hotel!

The squidge came from rubber suction cups. Pressed firmly, then twisted for release, these served as the invisible means of support which enabled The Shadow to make his upward progress.

Cliff, as chance would have it, happened to stare up to the third floor of the Hotel Spartan where a light that showed weakly through a lowered shade marked the location of Tex Lowner's room.

The lower right corner of the window seemed to fade from view. That was all; no further motion followed. Yet Cliff, as he lingered, realized that the darkness veiled a batlike form that was hanging from the outside wall!

As Cliff strolled across the street, he paused suddenly at the sound of slinking footsteps. Into a patch of light came a scrawny figure. Cliff caught a glimpse of a pasty face; then he saw the arrival turn into the alleyway behind the Hotel Spartan. A light glimmered as the scrawny man entered a rear door.

That action meant much to Cliff Marsland. Those in the know could enter the rear door of the hotel in order to visit persons who were living there. This man had come for such a purpose. The very incongruity of his arrival was startling—for it gave Cliff the sudden realization that this man must be on his way to visit Tex Lowner.

It was the recognition of the scrawny man's pasty face—the last visage that Cliff had expected to see here to-night—that amazed The Shadow's agent. Wildly, Cliff wanted to report to his invisible chief, stationed on the wall high above. That, however, was hopeless. It was impossible to reach The Shadow now. Yet Cliff knew that in the situation which must be surely coming, The Shadow would be able to cope with whatever might occur.

The pasty-faced, scrawnily built man whose face Cliff had glimpsed, was none other than Rabbit Gorton! The second of the two whom Cliff had been ordered to locate had come to the rear entrance of the Hotel Spartan.

Tex Lowner was in the hotel; Rabbit Gorton had just entered. The two were sworn enemies—the bitterest foemen in all gangdom. Enmity, like friendship, could be a force that would draw two gang leaders together, but where enmity existed, meetings would mean trouble.

Such was the case to-night. Rabbit Gorton had come to see Tex Lowner. An encounter impended; The Shadow would be there to view it! What would result if guns broke loose?

Cliff could not tell. Moreover, he could not enter to see. The Shadow's order had been given; Cliff had been sent off duty. It was loyalty to The Shadow that made Cliff reluctantly move along the street; it was the same loyalty that made him pause when he had reached a point a block away.

Here, lingering, Cliff knew that he could leave the vicinity if his absence would be best suited to The Shadow's needs. From here, also, he could head back to the Hotel Spartan if The Shadow needed him.

But how was Cliff to tell which was the case? That was the hopeless question that perplexed him as he waited, momentarily expecting to hear the roar of muffled guns from the third-floor room which The Shadow himself was watching.

CHAPTER XI. CROOK MEETS CROOK

CLIFF MARSLAND, because he had known of The Shadow's presence, had noticed the momentary motion at the corner of Tex Lowner's window. He had attributed it to The Shadow; and he had been correct.

Yet even Cliff could not have realized the quick ease of the result which The Shadow had accomplished in so short an action. Tex's window had been closed. With prying, noiseless hands, The Shadow had raised the sash three inches. With a continuation of the same motion, he had lifted the shade within.

Motionless again, The Shadow was peering through the narrow crevice which he had formed. The rubber suction cups were gone from his gloved hands. Long fingers of black were gripping the edges of the window sill.

Within the room of the Hotel Spartan, The Shadow observed a man whom he knew to be Tex Lowner. The big gang leader, who had returned to New York, was standing in front of a mirror, adjusting a necktie. It appeared that Tex was going out for the evening.

From the gang leader's hip pocket projected the handle of a large revolver. Tex Lowner was known as a quick man with the gat. He always had his pet smoke wagon in readiness.

A coarse grin showed on the face of the shirt-sleeved mob leader. Tex Lowner's visage, reflected in the mirror, was seen plainly by The Shadow. Tex, however, did not catch a glimpse of the burning eyes that peered from outer darkness.

While The Shadow watched, a soft tap came from the door of the room. Tex turned away from the mirror. His hand sought the handle of his revolver as he strode to the door. Seizing the knob with his left hand, Tex pulled the door inward. He stepped back as he sighted the man who entered.

The Shadow recognized Rabbit Gorton. The scrawny, pale-faced mob leader closed the door behind him. The Shadow's own hand was drawing an automatic from the folds of the black cloak; for The Shadow knew the enmity which existed between these two. Then The Shadow's grip relaxed as Rabbit Gorton spoke.

"Hello, Tex," growled the scrawny gang leader. "Sorry I was late."

"Don't worry about that, Rabbit," returned Lowner, turning back toward the mirror. "Park yourself. Let's hear what's doing."

HAD Cliff Marsland viewed this scene, he would have blinked in wonderment. Not so The Shadow. The scourge of the underworld had observed too many odd situations to be amazed at anything which might occur in gangdom.

Yet the keen stare of The Shadow's eyes showed that he had found intense interest in this unexpected meeting between Tex Lowner and Rabbit Gorton.

The two gang leaders whom all crooks had accepted as participants in a bitter personal feud, were actually friends! Their supposed enmity was a pretense! Rabbit Gorton had not come here to confront Tex Lowner and seek vengeance for some wrong. Instead, he had arrived to confer with the man whom he was supposed to hate!

"Been waiting for you, Tex," observed Rabbit, as he seated himself on the other side of the room. "Been holding back until you showed up."

"You'll have to wait a while longer," rejoined Tex. "It's going to take me a couple of days to scare up the crew."

"I figured that, Tex. You won't need the mob. Leave that part of it to my outfit. You take care of things with Harlow. Tell him you've got to get the dough."

"O.K., Rabbit. I get you. When he gets out to Satruff's place, you'll be on deck there."

"Right."

"Say"—Tex swung suddenly as he spoke—"what about Pug Hoffer? If I'd known that bimbo was going to take a crack at Satruff's vault, I'd have been in town to flag him when he came out of the big house. Why didn't you nab him, Rabbit?"

"Pug knew too much, Tex. He knew more than I thought he did. More than you thought, too."

An angry glare faded from Tex Lowner's eyes. The big gang leader laughed gruffly as he went to a chair and picked up his coat and vest.

"Guess you're right, Rabbit," he remarked. "I was kind of buffaloed when I read about Pug Hoffer getting shot at Satruff's. Do you think he knew Satruff was Dorand?"

"Of course he did," snorted Rabbit. "Why else do you think he'd have been out there?"

"Guess you're right," repeated Tex. "If Pug had gone to Long Island just for fresh air, he'd have picked the beaches, not the Sound."

RABBIT GORTON leaned forward in his chair. His tone was lowered. His words were confidential. Yet they did not escape the listening ears of The Shadow.

"You get the lay, don't you?" quizzed Rabbit. "You know I hadn't figured on busting in to Dorand's strong-room just yet. I was holding that—and we were both figurin' -"

"That it wouldn't be necessary if everything went the way we counted."

"That's right. But Pug Hoffer queered it. He smashed in there and Harlow gave him the bump."

"He did, all right. I remember reading that. Say—if Pug had got away with Dorand's dough, Doc Harlow would have been sitting pretty. Why did he plug Pug?"

"From what I hear," replied Rabbit, cagily, "Pug was going to blab. Harlow popped in and gave him the works. Cardona gave him a clean bill of health." Tex nodded thoughtfully.

"Here's the lay, Tex," stated Rabbit. "Cardona didn't find out that Satruff was Dorand. That's the only break we got. Naturally, Satruff is trying to keep it from the public that he's Dorand. He likes to give away dough under a special name.

"I've got a hunch that Cardona suspects Harlow knew Pug. But what Cardona don't know is that there's as much dough as there is in Satruff's vault. That's why Cardona hasn't gone up there with a flock of dicks.

"He's investigating, though, and he's going to find out that Pug worked for both of us. Cardona will figure that either you or I might have talked to Pug about crashing into Satruff's place. So Cardona will watch both of us.

"That's why we've got to hit there in a hurry. Before Cardona suspects. See? Catching Harlow there at the place may have put an idea in Cardona's noodle. If he finds Harlow there again he -"

"I get you. It will be bad for Harlow. We won't have to worry about him after that. Well, that's the way we figured it all along. Putting the screws on Harlow lets us out."

"Right. But you're the guy that has to talk with Harlow. I'll do the work at Satruff's. After you talk with Harlow, be sure you get an alibi -"

"I'm starting on one"—Tex indicated the clothes that he was wearing— "with these glad rags. They'll do

to visit that swanky apartment where Harlow lives; and they'll look good when I go to the Club Madrid for the rest of the night. Lots of the boys will be glad to see good old Tex back around the bright lights. Some of those blond babies up at the Madrid won't mind either. Leave that to me, Rabbit."

"O.K., Tex. I'll be out at Satruff's when Harlow gets there. I'll wait until he gets inside. Then I'll be all set unless I get a signal to hold off."

Tex nodded; then his voice became speculative.

"I wonder," he said, "just how well Harlow knew Pug—just how Pug worked to double-cross us -"

"It don't matter," interrupted Rabbit. "Cardona's got his eye on Harlow— if he hasn't, he'll put it there after to-night. I'm going to make a real job at the place."

"You've been out there?"

"Last night. Satruff has a new bird working for him—a young fellow named Vincent. Okum is still on the job, of course; so Vincent don't count particularly much. He won't be the one that answers the door when I ring."

"Say"—Tex voiced another suspicion—"it was pretty easy the way Pug cornered Okum. You don't think that Okum is pulling a double-cross of his own -"

"Okum couldn't have known that Pug and his mob were coming in. Okum is dumb, that's all. I think Cardona spotted him as a poor old gazebo who could hardly find his way around."

"Cardona's dumb in his own way," laughed Tex, "but sometimes those dumb dicks learn too much. I figured maybe you'd be ready to pull this big raid as soon as I got back. After we spring it, Cardona will be hot."

"Satruff will have to tell him that he is Dorand."

"You bet he will."

Tex Lowner smiled wisely. There was a cryptic expression on the big gang leader's face that Rabbit Gorton seemed to understand. The pasty-faced rat grinned in reply.

"Mum's the word, pal," remarked Tex. "We're a couple of eggs who are gunning for each other -"

"And spoiling the other guy's game whenever we can -"

"Right. It's time for you to get going, Rabbit. Duck out the back before I start down the front. I'm visiting to-night. Park Avenue for a first stop. Harlow will have to see another nerve specialist when I get through talking with him."

"Just one thing, Tex." Rabbit paused anxiously as he reached the door. "If Cardona's snooping on Harlow, what'll you do about it?"

"What'll I do about it?" snorted Tex. "Say—I'll give him the bummiest steer he ever got. A good tip, Rabbit—I'll be watching for that dumb dick. I'd like to have him trail me"—Tex was laughing— "so I could get a real alibi."

"That's good, Tex," agreed Rabbit. "Except that when things bust at Satruff's, Cardona is liable to figure that I'm working with Harlow."

"Sure he is. Because you're the guy that barges in on all of my jobs. You're taking it on the lam, anyway. You'll be out of town before Cardona knows anything, and Harlow will be the only person left for Cardona to grab."

"And with you clear," nodded Rabbit, approvingly, "Doc Harlow won't be able to square himself at all. Say, Tex—we're a couple of brainy guys, the way we've been working. It's always looked like each of us was on our own—all the time."

With this final statement, Rabbit Gorton sidled from the room. Tex Lowner continued to make ready for his evening visit. A glimmer of light on the ground floor announced Rabbit's departure by the rear door.

THE SHADOW'S suction cups squiggled. The discarded pair had gone back on the gloved hands. With an easy descending motion, The Shadow reached the darkness of the alleyway below.

When Tex Lowner appeared in front of the Hotel Spartan a short while later, he did not observe the long patch of darkness that seemed a part of one of the elevated pillars. The gang leader hailed a passing cab and gave an address on Park Avenue.

It was then that the shade of darkness became a living thing that moved swiftly from the pillar. The Shadow, a gliding phantom, headed across the street and reached a byway where his coupe was waiting. He entered the car and started on an uptown course.

The Shadow had heard the cryptic conversation between Tex Lowner and Rabbit Gorton. Obscure though many of the remarks had been, The Shadow had understood many facts that were not mentioned.

Strange crime was brewing to-night; Tex and Rabbit, presumed enemies, were to be separate participants in a common cause. The laugh of The Shadow, soft within the coupe, came as an unheard challenge to the machinations of these evil crooks.

The Shadow, too, had planned as he had listened in the darkness. The Shadow was on his way to counter crime.

CHAPTER XII. TRAILS DIVERGE

APPROXIMATELY a half hour after his departure from the Hotel Spartan, Tex Lowner appeared upon Park Avenue. The gang leader had discharged his cab at the corner of a side street. He began to stroll along the brightly lighted boulevard that represented Manhattan's wealthy residential district.

Tex, well dressed in a gray suit and boasting a large, expensive soft hat that was in keeping with his nickname, seemed quite at home upon this thoroughfare. His face, when observed closely, marked him as a ruffian; otherwise, Tex appeared quite in keeping with these surroundings.

The gang leader relished the change from the underworld. Although he had chosen the bad lands for his habitat, he was accustomed to other districts also. He eyed the buildings that he passed. He seemed to find them familiar. He slowed his pace as he came to a doorway that was level with the street.

An unobtrusive sign in the window marked this as the place which Tex had come to visit. The sign bore the name:

WESLEY HARLOW, M. D.

In careless fashion, Tex turned the knob of the door that led from the street. The door opened. Tex stepped into a hallway. There was a door at the left. It also bore Harlow's name. Tex opened it and

entered a well furnished waiting room. He caught the sound of a buzzer from an inner room.

Tex smiled as he sat down in a comfortable chair. He had been in this suite of rooms before. There were three altogether; the waiting room, the office, and a small laboratory beyond. All lay alongside the hall. It was probable that Harlow was in one of the inner rooms. So Tex conjectured, while he waited.

Tex had entered here quite boldly. He had paid no attention to matters outside. Hence he had failed to see a man who was loitering across the street— a stocky individual who had been watching the entrance to Doctor Harlow's office.

THE watcher was Detective Joe Cardona. The sleuth, too far away to see Tex's face closely, had, none the less, decided that this visitor could better be observed at close range. Hence, while Tex Lowner sat in Harlow's waiting room, Joe Cardona walked rapidly along Park Avenue, crossed the street at a corner, and doubled back on the same side as Harlow's office.

Cardona, the observer, was, in turn, observed. The detective, when he moved from his position in the opposite doorway, did not realize that a new pair of eyes had spotted him. A tall figure, blending with the darkened front of buildings as it came along the street, paused suddenly to take notice of Cardona's action.

While the detective was performing the maneuvers at the corner, that gliding shape went swiftly to the door which Tex Lowner had entered. The barrier opened. Into the light of the hallway stepped a silent, spectral form: The Shadow.

The black-garbed visitant did not heed the door which Tex had entered. Instead, he moved swiftly along the hall until he reached the third door on the left. The barrier was locked, as The Shadow learned when he turned the knob.

A small, blackened instrument of steel appeared between gloved fingers. Softly, The Shadow probed the lock. An almost inaudible click announced success. The Shadow opened the door and edged easily into the gloom of Doctor Harlow's laboratory.

Half a minute later, Joe Cardona appeared at the outside entrance of the building. The detective peered through the glass-paneled door into the hallway. He did not enter. Instead, he strolled off and loitered near the entrance of the building.

Tex Lowner, patiently waiting in Harlow's anteroom, looked up as the door of the office opened. He grinned as he saw the sallow, mustached face of Doctor Wesley Harlow. For a moment, the physician stared; his twitching lips showed his nervousness. Then, with a short gesture, he motioned to Tex to come into the office.

Harlow closed and locked the door behind him as soon as Tex had entered. He tried the door to the laboratory; found it also locked. He waved Tex to a seat.

He stared coldly at the gang leader, and Tex grinned as he returned the gaze. Neither man heard the tiny click that came from the laboratory door. Neither saw the imperceptible motion of the barrier.

Both Tex and Harlow thought that they were alone. In that firm assumption, they were wrong. Peering through a tiny crevice, listening with keen, attentive ears, The Shadow was a silent participant in this meeting.

"WELL?" Tex gave the question with a muttered laugh. "How about the dough? Have you got it?"

"No," returned Harlow shortly.

"Things flopped the other night, eh?" sneered Tex.

"I didn't have a chance to work it," admitted Harlow. "Matters didn't turn out the way I expected."

"So I learned," remarked Tex cagily. "Pug Hoffer wasn't such a hot shot, after all, was he?"

Doctor Harlow eyed the gang leader firmly. Tex continued to grin. "Listen, Harlow," he declared. "I'm not finding any fault. You know the proposition I put to you. One hundred grand is what I want—and you've promised to get it—from Satruff."

"If I can get it."

"No 'ifs' about it. He's got that much dough there all the time. I told you that I'd be ready to pile in there and help you, but you said to leave it up to you."

"I said I would try to get it in my own way."

"Right. That's why I'm making no squawk. It was up to you. When I left town, you said you'd try to have the cash by the time I got back. I told you that you'd have to have it—or I'd spill all I knew."

Harlow chewed his lips nervously. He decided to make no comment, even though his expression showed that he was highly perturbed.

"I hadn't figured," continued Tex, in a casual tone, "that you might team up with Pug Hoffer. I was sore when I read about what had happened; then I saw that you had probably doped out that I was right - the best way to grab that Dorand coin was to raid the place. You had to have the cash when I got back. Well—I don't blame you for fixing it with Pug. He was a good guy to go after it, even though he flived."

"I had nothing to do with Pug," declared Harlow, emphatically. "Take that or leave it. Hold whatever opinion you want. After all, it doesn't make any difference."

"None at all," smiled Tex, his lips twisting in a peculiar fashion. "It only shows that you were pretty smart, Harlow. You did a good job, plugging Pug. He's better dead, the double-crosser."

"Listen, Harlow." The gang leader arose as he spoke. "What I want is the dough I sent you after. To-night is your big chance. I'm back in town—I want the kale. You're going out to Satruff's."

"Yes."

"To get the money."

"Yes. In my own way."

"O.K., Harlow. Make it an inside job if you want. But if you flop, there'll be no excuse, because I'm ready to help you out if you give the word."

"You mean -"

"You know all you've got to do. If you can't pick up the cash yourself, pass out the distress signal. That'll mean the strong-arm stuff, and I'm telling you, Harlow, that it won't be another bum job like the one Pug Hoffer tried to pull."

Harlow glanced at his watch. He replaced the timepiece in his pocket.

"I'm going out to see Folsom Satruff," he declared, in a determined voice. "I'll get the money. I'll hold it

until you call for it. Leave that to me, Lowner."

"All right. But remember—I won't take any excuse. I gave you time to work on your own. You gummed the works. I'm seeing to it that you'll have help if you want it."

"I won't need it."

Tex laughed as he unlocked the door. There was a meanness in his mirth that Wesley Harlow did not relish.

"I'll leave it to you, Harlow," he declared. "You've got brains; and I figure you know the game. Work it any way you want. You used Pug and you flopped. Maybe you're figuring on using some one else. That's O.K. with me. I'll stay away from Satruff's. I don't care how you get the dough or who may be in with you on the deal. Just so I get a hundred grand out of your cut—that's all I want.

"You plugged Pug Hoffer. That was good work. He was one bird who could have told what I know—and there may be others. You're a fox, Harlow. Pug knew who Lefty Yates is—he knew of Lefty's hook-up with you. It was a smart trick on your part, getting Pug to play along with you because of Lefty's rep.

"Keep at it. Use anybody you want—anybody who knows the truth about Lefty. These fellows like Pug Hoffer are dumb; you have brains enough to handle them. You tried to kid me a bit when I talked to you about Lefty Yates and how I could get you in wrong by steering the bulls on him.

"But I was too wise. I made you listen to my terms. I knew you wanted to keep Lefty out of stir. I gave you my price—one hundred grand—and you agreed to it. I want results. You're coming through with that dough, or I'm going to spill the works on Lefty—and when that comes out, you'll be completely ruined."

Doctor Harlow clenched his fists. For a moment, violent anger flickered in his nervous eyes. Tex Lowner had aroused all the fury in the physician's nature. For a few short seconds, Harlow had the semblance of a murderer.

Then, quieting, the physician spoke his parting words.

"I killed Pug Hoffer," he said quietly, "to save Folsom Satruff's life. I admit that the strain of my own situation may have urged me. The man, however, was out to kill. I have no regrets because I slew him."

Harlow gestured toward the door across the waiting room. Tex Lowner turned and strode in that direction. He departed. Wesley Harlow closed the door of his office. He began to arrange the place before he left.

TEX LOWNER, when he stepped into the glare of the Park Avenue lights, was grinning broadly. In absent-minded fashion, he stared up and down the street. His grin increased as he spied the stocky figure of a man who was loitering near by.

With all the skill of a character actor, Tex changed his role. His jaw set, he clenched his fists and stared back toward Harlow's office. He laughed aloud; then, with a quick, businesslike swing, he started along the avenue.

Tex did not glance behind him. He took it for granted that the watching man would follow.

Tex was correct in his assumption. As soon as the gang leader had moved a dozen yards, Joe Cardona came to life and followed.

Tex spied a passing cab. He hailed it quickly; leaped into the vehicle and gave the driver the address of the Club Madrid. As he rolled away, Tex peered through the rear window and grinned. Another cab was stopping. Tex recognized Joe Cardona as the man who was clambering into the taxi.

Tex Lowner was leading the ace detective along a blind trail. Joe Cardona would follow to the Club Madrid. He could watch, if he wished, while the big gang leader established a perfect series of alibis for to-night.

Back at Harlow's office, the mustached physician made his appearance on the avenue. He looked about nervously then walked to the nearest corner and climbed into his coupe. He started the car eastward.

Harlow did not see the form that stalked him. He did not observe the phantom figure that stepped into another car parked near his own. He did not—when he glanced back—catch even a momentary view of the trim coupe that was following a block behind.

Trails had diverged. Joe Cardona was following the false one set by Tex Lowner, a trail that was to lead him nowhere. The Shadow, however, was following the trail of Doctor Wesley Harlow, which was leading to the spot where crime had struck before and would strike again to-night.

Once more, The Shadow was bound for the home of Folsom D. Satruff, there to observe the break of new events.

CHAPTER XIII. THE SECOND RAID

HARRY VINCENT, agent of The Shadow, was seated in Satruff's upstairs living room. It had not taken Harry long to acclimate himself to this environment. An immediate friendship had grown between this young man whom Lamont Cranston had recommended and the gray-haired philanthropist who called himself Dorand.

So far, Harry had found matters uneventful. Folsom Satruff had detailed him to secretarial duties. These had consisted purely of correspondence which Satruff had neglected. Not once had Satruff revealed himself in the guise of Dorand.

Yet the millionaire had warned Harry that he had hired him to be on hand in case of trouble. He had told Harry of the attack on the strong-room in which Pug Hoffer had been slain. At Satruff's advice, Harry went armed with a revolver.

There was something in Harry Vincent's manner that seemed to inspire Folsom Satruff's confidence. Harry was a clean-cut young chap, always alert. That impressed Satruff, particularly because the millionaire had previously relied entirely upon his old and lethargic companion, Bartlett Okum.

It was nearly eleven o'clock. Harry had finished going over notes which Satruff had given him. As he looked up, Harry noticed his employer gazing at him across the room from the fireplace.

"Finished, Vincent?" questioned Satruff.

"Yes," returned Harry.

"Excellent," decided Satruff. "It's good to find some one who can get things done in a hurry. Okum is all right, but he's getting old and absentminded. He never remembers anything I tell him. He even loses notations when I write them down for him."

Satruff's brow furrowed as the millionaire paused. It indicated that the man was displeased with something. At last, he spoke his trouble.

"Okum," he said, "is a creature of habit. He can hardly be blamed for that. Yet he is stupid. The night that gangsters entered here, he meekly opened the strong-room door when he heard the bell. He acted exactly the same as if some delivery truck had come to that entrance in the middle of the afternoon.

"I have told Okum to notify me if he hears any one at that door. He is liable to forget my instructions. That is why I have been keeping an eye on him. While you were at your notes, I strolled downstairs and up, just to see what Okum was doing."

Harry nodded. He recalled that Folsom Satruff had made two or three excursions from the room.

"By the way," remarked Satruff, changing the subject, "did you send that letter to Tobias McEwen?"

"I did," answered Harry.

"Good," rejoined Satruff. "I want to see him. He's a sulky sort, McEwen. Generally, he comes out here at intervals; but when he feels out of humor, he waits until I summon him. Right now, he's a bit peeved."

"Why?"

"On your account."

"On my account?"

Satruff smiled and nodded as he heard Harry's puzzled question.

"Yes," chuckled the millionaire, "McEwen was annoyed because I asked Lamont Cranston if he knew of a young man who could enter my employ. McEwen seemed to think that Okum was the only secretary I needed.

"Sometimes I become disgusted with McEwen; but he has handled my affairs for so many years that I would be very foolish to intrust them to another attorney in his stead."

Satruff turned toward the doorway as he heard footsteps on the stairs. It was Riggs. The servant entered to make an announcement.

"Doctor Harlow is here, sir," he stated.

"This late?" Satruff's face clouded impatiently. "I don't want to see him." Then, with a gesture, he added: "I suppose I shall have to talk with him. Come on, Vincent, we'll go downstairs."

THE two walked from the living room. Satruff put a question to Riggs on the way.

"Where is Okum?" he asked.

"Somewhere about the house, sir," responded Riggs.

"Take a look for him, Vincent," ordered Satruff, "but not until after I have talked with Harlow and sent him on his way. I don't feel like a long chat to-night."

They reached the bottom of the stairs to find Wesley Harlow. Riggs departed in the direction of the kitchen. Satruff introduced Harry to Harlow.

"Glad to see you, Harlow," said Satruff warmly. "Sorry, though, that I can't ask you to stay. I have to go over a few business matters with Vincent; after that, I'm turning in for the night."

"I'd like to talk with you"—Harlow's tone was nervous—"even if it's just for a few minutes -"

"Not to-night," interposed Satruff firmly. "Come around, again, Harlow. To-morrow if you wish; but come earlier."

Harlow threw a nervous glance in the direction of the stairway. It was evident that the physician wanted to confer with Satruff in the living room above. Satruff forestalled further suggestion. He clapped Harlow on the shoulder and showed the young doctor to the direction of the door.

"Good night," said Satruff in a firm tone.

Harlow smiled; but Harry could see a fierce display of anger on the thin lips beneath the trim mustache. Satruff opened the door; Harlow walked out. Satruff closed the door in mild fashion, turned about and went up the stairs.

Harry, glancing about for Okum, saw no sign of the old secretary. After a few minutes, he started up the stairs to report to Satruff. It was then that he heard the ring of a bell.

He would not have caught it had he been above; he realized suddenly that it must be the door on the other side of the house—the entrance to the strong-room which Satruff had mentioned.

Looking over the banister, Harry caught a glimpse of Okum. The old secretary had evidently been in the disused library, a small room on the ground floor. Okum's stride was hasty; the cadaverous old fellow was heading in the direction of the strong-room.

"Okum!" Harry called the name in a warning tone. Okum did not appear to hear it.

Hurrying down the steps, Harry reached the hallway just as Okum disappeared in the passage to the strong-room.

With quick decision, Harry knew that it would be better to forestall Okum than to rush upstairs to Satruff. Gaining the passage, Harry pressed through to the door of the strong-room and opened, it.

He was just in time to witness a startling occurrence. Okum's hand was still on the wall switch which controlled the outer door. He had already unlocked the inner door. Before Harry could make a move, the inner door swung open and a pasty-faced, scrawny mobster shoved a gun in Okum's ribs.

As the invader laughed, the secretary raised his hands and backed across the room, under pressure. A pair of armed henchmen followed. Harry, staring, realized that the menace had come again. A new corps from the underworld, picking the spot where Pug Hoffler had failed, were here to burst the vault that housed Folsom Satruff's wealth!

CHAPTER XIV. OUT OF THE NIGHT

HARRY VINCENT was still in the passage when he witnessed Bartlett Okum's plight. The man who had covered the old secretary was Rabbit Gorton. Harry did not know the gang leader, but he recognized at once that he was an invader from the underworld.

Seeing the mobsters at Rabbit's heels, Harry boldly yanked his revolver from his pocket. He caught the wicked leer on Rabbit Gorton's face. In an effort to save the secretary's life, as well as to repel this embryonic invasion, Harry sprang into the strong-room, aiming at Rabbit Gorton as he came.

Simultaneously with a cry from the gangsters at the door, Rabbit wheeled toward Harry. The gang leader's gun swung from Okum's body to meet the new enemy. At the same time, Rabbit ducked behind

Okum to gain cover.

Harry fired. His shot whizzed past Rabbit's shoulder.

The gang leader replied with a wild bullet. Harry, backing toward the passage, fired two quick shots at the first of the mobsmen who were entering. One gangster dropped wounded. The other snarled as he fired at The Shadow's agent. Harry's dive for safety was just in time.

Okum must be saved. The secretary had cowered across the room. Harry, dropping low, loosed shots at random, hoping to repel the attack. His target was the doorway; the gangsters, scrambling into the strong-room, scattered for corners.

Harry heard a triumphant snarl; turning his eyes, he saw Rabbit Gorton taking new aim. Hurriedly, Harry swung his revolver and fired a quick but lucky shot. The bullet struck Rabbit in the left arm; the gang leader wavered.

In his desperate situation, Harry knew that his one hope lay in dropping this crook who led the invading crew. That could be the only stroke which might succeed. Grimly, The Shadow's agent pressed the trigger as he aimed the revolver straight toward Rabbit Gorton. A click responded. Harry's gun was empty.

A fiendish snarl came from Rabbit Gorton. Savagely, the gang leader cried a command to his pals. As the mobsters surged forward, Rabbit, steadying, aimed for Harry Vincent. With nothing but the passage behind him, Harry could not escape the shot.

Trapped, The Shadow's agent made his last valiant effort. He flung his revolver squarely at his enemy. As the gun sailed past his ear, Rabbit, laughing gloatingly, pressed his finger to the trigger of his own revolver.

THE fatal shot was almost on its way; yet it was destined never to leave the muzzle of Rabbit Gorton's gun. A huge, roaring report sounded from the outer door of the strong-room. Rabbit Gorton, a wild scream sounding from his lips, let his revolver fall to the floor. Blood spurted from his right hand as the gang leader doubled in agony.

The sight of their stricken leader caused the mobsters to turn to the outer door. As they did, they heard the strident tone of a weird laugh that burst through the shot-echoing room. There, before them, stood a figure which they knew.

The Shadow, garbed in black cloak and slouch hat, had shot the revolver from Rabbit's hand. The master avenger had arrived in time. Lurking outside until the mob had entered, it was his turn to bring aid to those within.

The smoking automatic in The Shadow's left hand was proof of his skill at single aim. As Rabbit's mobsmen started to bring up their revolvers, both The Shadow's automatics barked. Two gangsters fell; the others sprawled for spots of safety, seeking to avoid this grim battler whom all the underworld feared.

Harry Vincent, now safe in the passage, had heard The Shadow's laugh and its attendant shots. Rabbit Gorton's small mob, even though it was hand-picked, could not stand the fury of The Shadow. The gangsters had turned yellow when they had seen their leader fall.

There were five in all. Two were down. Of the other three, only one made an attempt to defy The Shadow's wrath. The lone mobsmen sprang to the passage where Harry Vincent was located. He

whirled to fire at the black-garbed being who dominated the scene.

With a laugh rippling from his hidden lips, The Shadow pressed the trigger of an automatic. The defiant mobster's whirl ended in a crazy twist. Gasping, the gunman crumpled to the floor. His revolver clattered to the feet of Bartlett Okum.

Nervously, the secretary stooped to pick up the weapon, while Harry Vincent cried to him to aid. Then some one came pounding into the passage in back of Harry. It was Folsom Satruff. The millionaire had arrived, with gun in hand. The sound of shots had brought him hither.

Seeing Okum, hearing encouragement from Harry, Satruff sprang into the strong-room. He and Okum covered the two remaining mobsters. Harry Vincent crowded in to join the pair. Harry's first action was to gaze toward the outer door. No one was there.

His work done, The Shadow had departed. From the night he had come; into the night he had returned. No sign of his presence remained; not even the dying echo of a sinister laugh remained as token of the work that he had done.

HARRY VINCENT picked up a revolver from the floor. He joined Satruff and Okum by the door, to aide them in covering the two cowed mobsters, who had dropped their own weapons and were standing sullenly in the corner.

Suddenly, Harry's gaze turned toward Rabbit Gorton. The gang leader, with effort, had risen to his knees. His face was challenging as he glared toward the three men who had spread out by the entrance to the passage.

"You think I'm through!" Rabbit spat the challenge. "Through— because I've been double-crossed. I know who got me. The Shadow. I came here to be the goat—although I didn't know it. The Shadow—he got in the game. I know who played me for a sucker. I'm going to talk -"

A hiss came from close behind Harry. Turning, The Shadow's agent saw Doctor Wesley Harlow. The physician had come in through the front door. He had stopped at the door of the passage. As Rabbit Gorton tried to raise his weakened left arm, clutching the revolver which he had dropped, but had now recovered, Harlow sprang forward toward the gang leader with a shout of anger.

For a moment Harry had been perplexed by Rabbit's words; he had wondered if the gang leader had been addressing any one in particular. That was before Harry had seen Harlow; now Harry figured at once that Rabbit had snarled at the physician.

Doctor Harlow had no gun. He precipitated himself upon the wounded gang leader. Rabbit's gun jabbed into the physician's ribs; but as the two sprawled on the floor, the gang leader seemed to lose the strength that he required.

Rabbit recoiled as Harlow dealt him a glancing blow to the jaw. Then, lying prone, he managed to turn his revolver toward his attacker, as his snarling lips fumed a repetition of the challenge.

"I'll fix you"—Rabbit's eyes were glaring as his finger tried to press the revolver's trigger—"I'll fix you -"

Harlow's life was momentarily at stake. The physician shot a hand forward to grab Rabbit's gun. As Harry leaped to one side to cover the prostrate gang leader, Okum uttered a nervous cry and fired his revolver.

The old secretary was in a perfect position to aim at Rabbit. His shaking hand steadied as he loosed the shot. With wild elation, the secretary repeated. Okum fired a third time; a fourth. Rabbit Gorton's head

dropped. The revolver fell from listless fingers. Doctor Harlow, rising, was shakily stepping aside. Okum had riddled Rabbit, the gang leader was dead.

"Hold steady." The order came from Folsom Satruff, who was watching the two mobsters in the corner. "Make sure he's dead, Harlow. You should have taken the gun from him. Then Okum could have kept him covered."

Then, with a gesture of his free hand, the cool millionaire beckoned to Harry Vincent.

"Take my place, Vincent," was his order. "You stay here, Harlow—you, too, Okum. I'm going to call the police at once."

Harry Vincent came on guard. With Rabbit Gorton's dead form at his feet; with three moaning gangsters lying in the room; with two men at his mercy, The Shadow's agent was alert and steady. Yet through Harry's brain passed quick, changing thoughts, as the young man tried to place all the events that had taken place in this hectic fray.

Okum covered; then the battle; Satruff's arrival; the challenge of the dead gang leader which had driven Harlow to a fury as the physician had appeared—these were details which Harry intended to remember.

But dominating all, was that sound of a strident, uncanny laugh, which still echoed in Harry's brain. That laugh had marked the complete frustration of crime. Backed with the barks of The Shadow's automatics, it had given gangsters warning that their evil could not prevail.

The Shadow had come and gone; in his wake lay five helpless mobsters with their chieftain dead!

CHAPTER XV. SATRUFF EXPLAINS

POLICE aid was quickly summoned by Folsom Satruff. When the millionaire returned to his strong-room, he announced that he had called detective headquarters. He then instructed Harry Vincent to put in two immediate calls: one to the home of Tobias McEwen, the other to the Cobalt Club, where Lamont Cranston was likely to be found.

Harry reached McEwen by telephone. Cranston, however, was not at the Cobalt Club. Harry left a message for him should he return there or call. Shortly afterward, men from headquarters put in their appearance and took charge of the prisoners.

These were but the first representatives of the law. When Riggs answered the doorbell twenty minutes later, he admitted two men, one of whom he recognized as Detective Joe Cardona. With the sleuth was a keen-faced, domineering companion whose brisk mustache gave him a military appearance.

"Where is Mr. Satruff?" questioned Cardona.

"In the strong-room," began Riggs. The servant paused as Satruff appeared from the passage, accompanied by a headquarters man. It was the latter who recognized Cardona's companion.

"The commissioner!" he exclaimed to Satruff, in a low, awed tone.

Satruff promptly recognized the visitor. Police Commissioner Ralph Weston was an official who believed in action. When crime struck as it had at Satruff's—a repetition of a previous evil foray—it was sufficient to command the commissioner's own investigation.

Cardona introduced Satruff to Weston. The commissioner went to the strong-room. He surveyed the scene where Rabbit Gorton had been slain and his mobsmen repulsed. After a brief inspection, Weston

returned to the front hall.

Riggs was answering the door. Tobias McEwen had arrived. Satruff introduced Weston to the lawyer and suggested an upstairs conference. The entire group, including Harry Vincent, Doctor Harlow, and Bartlett Okum, ascended to Satruff's living room.

Hardly had they reached a point where the commissioner was ready to begin his inquiry before Riggs arrived again to state that Mr. Cranston was here. Commissioner Weston arched his eyebrows as Satruff ordered Riggs to bring the guest upstairs.

"Lamont Cranston?" he questioned.

"Yes," informed Joe Cardona. "Mr. Cranston was present when Pug Hoffler's outfit made their raid here."

THE commissioner appeared mildly surprised. As an official, Weston had peculiarities. He seldom bothered about the details of those crimes which he classed as minor ones. He had taken no real notice of the first gang attack at Satruff's. It was the fact that crime had struck a second time that had brought Weston here.

"I sent for Mr. Cranston," explained Folsom Satruff, in an emphatic tone, "because I am convinced that to-night's raid has some bearing on the one that came before. With Cranston here, we have every one who was present on the previous occasion."

"Excellent," agreed Weston. "Excellent. If the two events are linked, we must certainly discover why."

"To-night," remarked, Satruff, in a definite tone, "I shall explain the link." Tobias McEwen gave the millionaire a startled look. Folsom Satruff ignored it. Commissioner Weston stared in surprise at Satruff. Before he could ask a question, however, Satruff moved away toward the door to welcome Lamont Cranston.

As soon as Cranston's arrival was settled, Weston took up the hint that Satruff had given. Addressing himself to the millionaire, he put a pointed question.

"Just what did you mean?" he inquired. "You said that you could link these attacks upon the strong-room."

"I can," returned Satruff coolly. He looked about him as he spoke. "I am ready to tell something which I did not reveal before. It is known to all who were present at either raid, except Vincent and Riggs. I can see no reason why Vincent should not know the truth, as he is a competent man in my employ. Riggs is downstairs; he is merely a minor servant and does not need to know."

"What I am going to tell you"—Satruff's voice was dramatic as the millionaire faced Weston—"is the truth about myself. I am going to tell you why my vault should be an attractive object for hordes from the underworld.

"I am going to tell you a fact which I had hoped was a secret, but which I now know is understood by certain criminals. Commissioner, I am Dorand, the philanthropist."

The name Dorand brought a look of amazement to Weston's face. Cardona shared the commissioner's surprise. The detective was the first to recover. He laughed gruffly and turned to the commissioner.

"That explains it," asserted Cardona. "If Mr. Satruff had told me that at the beginning, it would have been better, commissioner."

"Why didn't you?" Weston asked Satruff.

"I thought of it," explained the millionaire. "I discussed the subject with both Cranston and McEwen. They can corroborate what I have said. I simply wanted to keep the name of Dorand as an incognito for my philanthropies. I took the previous gang raid to be a mere blind attempt. I did not believe that my secret identity had been discovered.

"At Cranston's advice, however, I took Vincent into my employ so that the place would be better guarded. Vincent served well to-night. Had I really anticipated this attack, however, I would have revealed myself as Dorand before now."

"I understand," remarked Weston. "I can hardly criticize you, Mr. Satruff. The mystery has been cleared by your statement. What is your opinion, Cardona?"

"It's a set-up," laughed the detective. "A blind man could see it. Somebody got wise to Mr. Satruff's activities. Knowing the Dorand business, they figured he would have a lot of dough on hand all the time."

"Which I have," admitted Satruff.

"There's somebody in back of it, maybe," speculated Cardona. "On the contrary, it may just be that there are some tough birds working on their own. Anyway, we know why Pug Hoffer came here. This guy that got bumped to-night is Rabbit Gorton—he's a tougher guy than Pug was."

"This is the man who killed Rabbit Gorton?" questioned Weston, indicating Okum.

"Yes," replied Satruff. "He acted hastily, but his intent was to save Doctor Harlow, who was grappling with the gang leader. Both Vincent and I saw what occurred."

"Here is the report, sir," remarked Cardona. "Detective Sergeant Lewis handed it to me downstairs. He is still there if you want him."

WESTON mused aloud as he read over the details which had been placed on paper. These were the results of queries which Lewis had made. As the commissioner made his utterances, Lamont Cranston watched him with a steady gaze.

"Okum opened the strong-room door," commented the commissioner. "Vincent, also hearing the bell, came through the passage. Fired at the gangsters. Repulsed them until Satruff arrived. Gangsters wounded or cornered. Harlow came in, saw Rabbit Gorton about to shoot and wrestled with him to get the gun. Okum fired shots to rescue Harlow."

The flicker of a smile appeared upon Lamont Cranston's lips. There had been no mention of mysterious shots from the outer door of the strong-room; no word of a black-garbed being who had made his amazing appearance in the nick of time.

Harry Vincent could be thanked for that. He, alone, could have seen The Shadow. Okum, facing the door of the passage, had gained no such opportunity. The secretary should have heard the shots from the outer door. In his excitement, however, he probably attributed all to Harry Vincent.

"Where were you, Doctor Harlow?" asked Weston, suddenly turning to the physician.

"In my car," replied the physician. "On the other side of the house. I was just about to drive away when I heard the shots. They were muffled. I came into the house at once."

"You were armed?" It was Cardona who put the question.

"No," replied Harlow. "I haven't carried my gun since I shot Pug Hoffler. I acted hastily then; I wasn't sure of myself."

"Why did you attack Rabbit to-night?"

"He looked dangerous. He was going to shoot. I had no gun; I acted without one."

"The man was dangerous," observed Satruff. "He was cursing furiously when Harlow leaped upon him. He cried out that he had been double-crossed; that he was going to tell what he knew. He was going to fix some one -"

"You mean he talked like Pug did?" broke in Cardona.

"Exactly," returned Satruff. "It was too bad that Harlow did not manage to overcome him. Then we could have heard him talk."

"There's something in back of this, commissioner," began Cardona, turning straight to Weston. "I want you to compare these two raids -"

"One moment, Cardona." Weston's face had become suddenly stern. "There is an important matter which must be discussed. There is no need of going into trifling details."

"The whole trouble is obvious. The underworld knows that Folsom Satruff is Dorand. Criminals have taken his strong-room as their target. Mr. Satruff has every right to preserve his incognito, now that the law understands the case. He is entitled to protection. At the same time, it would be foolish for him to lay himself open to new attacks."

"I agree," remarked Satruff, with a quiet smile. "I have had enough of this trouble. I suppose that it would be best for me to remove all my wealth and put it in safe-deposit vaults. At the same time"—his tone became firm—"I am entitled to protection and it would be a braver part to play if I should go on. I do not care to have my home be the first spot picked by every small-fry gang leader who wants to get some easy money."

"You have gone too far already," interposed Tobias McEwen, in a dry tone. "I told you that, Satruff. If you announce yourself as Dorand and state that you have been forced to put your funds into hiding, you will not only lay yourself open to requests for help from unworthy people; you will also fail in your purpose to prevent gang raids here. Will criminals believe that you have actually removed your funds?"

"I hardly suppose they will," observed Satruff, losing his confident expression. "I suppose that I shall have to abandon everything. To be safe—to be immune from these ruffians who have learned my secret—I shall have to store my money away and abandon this residence."

"Matters have come to an evil pass"—Satruff's tone showed bitterness—"when a man can not even perform philanthropic work without finding himself preyed upon by criminals, who run rampant despite the law."

FOR a moment, Commissioner Weston showed suppressed anger, as he took this to be a reflection upon the efficiency of the police. He restrained himself, however, as he arose to his feet. He could see that there was cause for Satruff's tempered indignation. Weston, himself, supplied the answer.

"This talk is premature," stated the commissioner. "Let me remind you, Mr. Satruff, that you have called in the police only when crime has already struck. Your own withholding of certain facts has handicapped us."

"There is no reason why you should alter your plans. From now on, you can leave this case to us. You will have all the protection that you require."

"With police guards patrolling my grounds?" asked Satruff. "That can hardly be termed in accordance with my plans."

"I shall leave men here to-night," decided Weston. "After that, however, the policy will be different. You have told me that you are Dorand. Cardona has also heard that statement. So far as the police are concerned, it will go no further for the present."

Satruff smiled. There was conviction in the commissioner's tone. Weston, however, followed it with a pointed inquiry.

"Who else," he asked, "besides those here at present know that you are Dorand?"

"I have told no one else."

"Adhere to that policy. Leave the rest to me. I shall work out my plans to-night. You will hear from me to-morrow, Mr. Satruff."

Commissioner Weston prepared to leave. Joe Cardona arose to follow him. Facing Lamont Cranston, Weston addressed the calm-faced millionaire.

"I suppose you have your car here, Cranston?"

"No," was the reply. "I happened to be on Long Island, and I called the Cobalt Club to order my limousine. They told me that Mr. Satruff wished me to come here. I took a cab."

"You can ride with me to Manhattan then?"

"Certainly."

The invitation accepted, Lamont Cranston left with Police Commissioner Weston and Detective Cardona. The trio entered the commissioner's car, which was parked by the porte-cochere.

As they rolled from the drive, Weston spoke to the companion whom he had invited for this ride.

"Can you come to my home, Cranston?" he questioned. "I shall keep you there but a short while. I want to talk to you to hear your opinion about matters at Satruff's."

"Certainly," responded Cranston.

"I can tell you this, commissioner," blurted Joe Cardona. "This second raid means that some one is pulling a slick game. I've got my ideas -"

"You can talk about them later, Cardona," interposed Weston, in a forceful tone. "I want to think this over until I reach my home."

The trio rode Manhattanward in silence. Commissioner Ralph Weston was deep in thought. Detective Joe Cardona was stolidly restraining the restlessness which governed his mind.

Of the three, only Lamont Cranston seemed indifferent. The affairs of Folsom Satruff, otherwise Dorand, apparently did not trouble him at all. His face was unperturbed.

Yet that inscrutable visage masked thoughts more pointed than those which concerned Commissioner

Weston and Detective Cardona. Behind the calm features of Lamont Cranston lay the master brain of The Shadow.

The awesome personage who had turned the tide against crime, had not revealed his hand to-night. The Shadow, who had delved more deeply into this affair than Weston and Cardona together, was riding, in a feigned guise, with the pair who thought they were on the trail of truth!

CHAPTER XVI. WESTON ORDAINS

COMMISSIONER RALPH WESTON used a Manhattan apartment as his town residence. It was here that he took Joe Cardona and Lamont Cranston. The place was quiet, for the servants had retired. Weston led the way into a little office. He seated himself behind a desk.

There was something in Weston's air that indicated the solution of a problem. The ride through the crisp night air of Long Island had evidently stimulated the commissioner's thoughts. He waved his hand toward the telephone as he spoke to Lamont Cranston.

"We shall not be long," stated Weston. "If you wish to call the Cobalt Club and have your car come here, you are welcome to do so, Cranston."

"Never mind," came the reply. "I can take a cab to the club. I am glad, however, that you will not require me for long. I am going away to-morrow and I have matters to which I must attend before I leave."

"Another big game hunt in Africa?"

"No. A quiet sojourn on Easter Island, among the prehistoric monoliths."

Commissioner Weston smiled indulgently. He knew that Cranston had a penchant for visiting strange, out-of-the-way spots. It seemed a touch of irony that the globe-trotter who looked everywhere for adventure should have found it in New York.

Weston wondered if Cranston had welcomed the excitement. Apparently not; Cranston's present mood seemed one of annoyance. Nevertheless, Weston knew that Cranston possessed coolness and that his opinion of conditions at Satruff's was apt to be a good one. It was upon this subject that Weston voiced his present questions.

"Cranston," he asked, "how did you come to learn that Folsom Satruff was Dorand?"

"Satruff told me his identity," returned Cranston.

"How long ago?"

"After the night when the first raid occurred."

"Ah. I see. You aided him on that occasion. Who else knew then that Satruff was Dorand?"

"McEwen knew; so did Doctor Harlow. The old chap, Okum, was also in Satruff's confidence."

"Riggs?"

"No. He knows nothing. You understand, commissioner, that I am simply repeating what Satruff told me. He asked my advice regarding his circumstances."

"I understand. What about this man Vincent? How does it happen that he knew nothing at all about Dorand's identity?"

"I can explain that quite completely." A smile appeared thinly on Cranston's lips. "Satruff, when he decided not to inform the police, did, however, determine to take a new man into his employ. That was against McEwen's advice. Satruff, in order to obtain a man whom he could trust, asked me to recommend one. I chose Vincent."

"I see. Then Vincent did not meet Satruff until after the first raid."

"Exactly. What is more, Satruff soft-pedaled his Dorand activities for the present. Vincent went there purely to be on hand in case of an emergency. I can vouch for him; what is more, I can assure you that he had never even heard of Folsom Satruff until I arranged matters for him to enter Satruff's employ."

"Cranston," declared Commissioner Weston, rising and extending his hand, "your information has cleared matters. I can visualize the situation at Satruff's much better now. There is no need to detain you further, and I wish you an enjoyable excursion among the monoliths at Easter Island."

While Cardona remained seated, Weston accompanied Cranston to the outer door of the apartment. He bade his friend good-by, closed the door and returned to his little office. So far as Commissioner Weston was concerned, Cranston had departed and would not come back.

THE commissioner would have been astounded, however, had he been able to view Cranston's actions in the hallway. As soon as the apartment door had closed, the millionaire globe-trotter produced a blackened pick and applied it to the lock.

A click. The door opened. Lamont Cranston returned to the dim light of Weston's living room. With long, silent strides, he moved across the floor toward the office. There was something sinister in his step. Lamont Cranston was a transformed being.

He had not resumed the cloak and hat of The Shadow. Those garments had been discarded somewhere for the night. In manner and method, however, Cranston was The Shadow. His face seemed lost in gloom, as his back turned toward the light. His shape was followed by a long gliding patch of darkness that trailed across the floor.

Shadowlike, he arrived at the door of Weston's office. His hand turned the knob. The door opened, so imperceptibly that it could not be noticed. A burning eye peered through the crevice. Watching and listening, The Shadow was here to learn what passed between Weston and Cardona.

The commissioner, leaning back in his swivel chair, was eyeing the detective with a smile. The Shadow could hear the words that Weston uttered; they mingled commendation with criticism.

"Cardona," declared Weston, "I have all confidence in your ability as a practical detective. In fact, I consider that the services which you render are unique. At times, however, I am forced to admit that you lack perspicacity."

Cardona was puzzled by the term. Weston continued to enjoy his indulgent smile.

"In other words," he stated, "you lack clear-sightedness. I do not doubt that you have gained a very good idea regarding the possible source of the trouble at Satruff's, particularly as you told me you had obtained some important data bearing on the case.

"But that is just the reason why you should have been more subtle. I do not ask you to play dumb; that would not be a wise part. You should, however, exert some form of strategy. Turn to another issue when there is one which should be reserved for later discussion. Do as I did to-night."

Cardona sat dumfounded. He had not yet caught the full drift of the commissioner's remarks. Weston

made his explanation clear.

"My mind," said the commissioner, "was considering the same question as yours: we had learned why the raiders for the underworld came to Satruff's. We learned that when Satruff told us he was Dorand. What we wanted to know was how they discovered that Satruff was Dorand.

"That was a subject to keep to ourselves because of the people who were there. So I turned the conversation to a different matter; namely, my concern for the safety of Satruff's wealth. The trend turned toward the decision that I wanted: to have Satruff keep his incognito and to hold his money where it is."

"Leaving it open for more trouble," objected Cardona.

"Trouble for which we will be prepared," stated the commissioner. "I saw the very thing that you saw, Cardona. I knew that these men from the underworld must have learned of Satruff's identity through some leak.

"I counted five men present besides Satruff. Any one of them could have passed along the word regarding Dorand. I did not want you to even indicate that fact. I could not talk to Satruff himself; I did the next best thing. I talked to the one man who I knew would not be concerned even indirectly with ways of crime."

"Lamont Cranston."

"Yes. I brought him here to learn what he might know because I was sure that his information would be reliable. I did not mention any suspicions that were in my mind. I merely prompted Cranston to tell me facts. He did.

"We know that there is a link between the two gang raids. We must find a connection between one of the men in Satruff's confidence and the raiders themselves. Cranston, of course, is eliminated. He has definitely given Vincent a clean bill of health. That leaves us exactly four men who could have betrayed the fact that Satruff is Dorand."

"Three," corrected Cardona. "McEwen, Okum, and Harlow."

"I am including Riggs," announced Weston. "Satruff never took the servant into his confidence. Yet Riggs has been a part of the household. He may not be so ignorant as he pretends.

"You see, Cardona, we must never eliminate a possibility. I have included every individual—four in all—who could possibly have betrayed Satruff. We must concentrate upon those four. From four, we may be able to study one."

A TRIUMPHANT gleam appeared upon Cardona's face. Weston saw it. His smile faded. The commissioner loved to show his superiority in reasoning; yet at times, Cardona had a trick of turning the tables. This was coming now.

"You want one?" Cardona laughed gruffly as he spoke. "All right, commissioner. I'll name one man for you."

"One of those four?"

"Yes."

"Which one?"

"Doctor Wesley Hallow."

Commissioner Weston leaned back in his swivel chair. He tapped the desk with his fingers. He put a question as he eyed the ceiling.

"Reasons, Cardona," he ordered.

"Harlow was there at the first raid," asserted the detective. "He had gone outside before the trouble began. He showed up in back of the raiders. Said he saw people prowling about the house."

"Perhaps he did."

"When he came in," continued Cardona, "he plugged Pug Hoffer. Killed the man just as Pug was going to spill something.

"Now comes the second raid. Again, Harlow went out. This time he came through the house. He piled on Rabbit Gorton just as Rabbit was going to talk."

"But he didn't shoot Rabbit."

"No. He couldn't. He was wise enough not to have a gun because that looked bad before. He tried to grab Rabbit's gat, though, and I've got a hunch that he would have plugged Rabbit with the guy's own revolver."

"Then you think that Harlow is the tipster behind these gang raids?"

"Yes."

Weston continued to tap the desk. He still eyed the ceiling and his words became reflective.

"Some one is working from Satruff's," declared the commissioner. "I see your reasoning, Cardona; namely that the inside man might be ready to kill his gangster accomplice before the fellow could talk when cornered.

"But we can apply good reasoning to any of the others concerned. First of all, Okum. He let the gangsters in both times. Harlow saved him the trouble of killing Pug. It was Okum, though, who shot Rabbit.

"I'll go further. We might figure McEwen as the tipster; a man staying completely away, letting events take their own course; or, for that matter, Riggs might be our quarry. His part has been so passive that it could well excite suspicion."

A smile appeared upon Cardona's lips. Weston did not see it. He was still looking toward the ceiling, smiling in his turn.

"All four must be watched," decided the commissioner. "I grant you that Harlow is a prime case; at the same time, I think I have established the fact that Okum is quite as possible an undercover crook as Harlow. Until you have more evidence, Cardona, you should not be so sure of yourself."

"I agree with you," stated Cardona, in an emphatic tone. "You are right, commissioner. Yet I still pick Harlow."

THIS thrust brought Weston's eyes from the ceiling. The commissioner stared at the detective and caught the triumphant gleam in Cardona's face. Weston looked for an explanation and received it.

"I'm working on more than a hunch, commissioner," announced Cardona. "I'm working on evidence. I picked my man—Harlow—and I've been watching him. I've got what I wanted."

"You mean that Harlow is linked with Pug and Rabbit?"

"I figure it that way. I'll tell you why. I watched Harlow's office early to-night and I saw a guy that I knew come there to see him."

"A gangster?"

"Yes. A fellow named Tex Lowner. A mighty tough bimbo, Tex. I followed him."

"Where?"

"To the Club Madrid. A blind trail. Tex was laying off to-night. I thought I would have to wait a while before I could figure more about Harlow; but this trouble out at Satruff's clinched the game."

"But if this fellow Tex Lowner was not concerned in it, you have no tangible evidence on Harlow."

"Haven't I? Listen, commissioner. There were two tough babies who hated each other worse than poison. One was Tex Lowner. The other was Rabbit Gorton. They were the biggest enemies of all the crooks in New York.

"Pug Hoffler fits into their feud. He worked for both of them. When he came out of stir, it was a sure bet he'd go and get in right with one or the other—not with both. But it was a sure bet that the one he didn't see would be watching him like a hawk."

"Good reasoning, Cardona," nodded Weston approvingly.

"All right," resumed the detective. "Pug Hoffler raided Satruff's. I thought he was working on his own—he could have been at the time, for all I knew. Then along comes Rabbit Gorton to tackle the same job. That makes it look like Pug was teamed with Rabbit. They were in the know. Somebody must have tipped them."

"And you think it was Harlow."

"Sure. That's where Tex fits in. He was watching Pug and he knew that the guy was back in with Rabbit. He would be watching Rabbit closer after that. I figure Rabbit sent Pug ahead to do the job while he kept laying low. Then, when Pug flopped, Rabbit took the job himself."

"Then Tex -"

"Tex couldn't talk to Rabbit. But he was watching Rabbit's game and he must have found out somehow that Harlow was in on it. So he went to Harlow— maybe to threaten him—maybe to get him away from Rabbit.

"Let's go back to the first raid. When Pug got trapped, he said he was going to squeal. That's why Harlow plugged him. When Rabbit got trapped to-night, he may have figured that Harlow had been talking to Tex. He was going to squeal, too. So Harlow jumped on him. I'm not saying that Harlow was a double-crosser. I'm just saying that Pug and Rabbit may have thought they were double-crossed."

COMMISSIONER WESTON linked his hands and rested his chin upon them. He was all interest in what Cardona had just told him. Yet he saw vague thoughts in the detective's theory.

"If Harlow is linked with Tex," decided Weston, "it could have been to get rid of Pug and Rabbit—or to

clear the way for Tex to get at Satruff's vault. Yet that seems a purposeless plan. It would be folly to create a stir at Satruff's and then follow with further raids.

"Yet these underworld characters are desperate. It may be that some new scheme is in the offing. We know only that two raids have failed; that some one could have let word out to gangsters; that—from what you have just told me—Harlow is the likely offender.

"So far, results have been disastrous to the invaders. It may be that none will dare a new attempt. We must beware of a more subtle possibility—some one from the inside working out, instead of some one from the outside working in.

"We know that the focal point is Folsom Satruff's strong-room, so long as he keeps his money there and intends to continue his Dorand philanthropies. Therefore, the spot to watch is Satruff's."

"You have men out there now," observed Cardona.

"Yes," said Weston, "and so long as they are there the villains will not show their hands. We have no shred of evidence that can absolutely take in those who are behind the game or prove that Harlow is the traitor that we want.

"To-morrow, Satruff's will be unguarded. The place will be open for the new scheme to be tried. But from to-morrow on, there will be absolute protection so far as we are concerned. One capable man, properly stationed, will be all that we require.

"You will go to Satruff's, Cardona. Stay there, unknown to any, save Satruff and Vincent, whom we know that we can trust. Keep behind the scenes. Explain yourself to Satruff. When crime comes again, should it come, it will be your part to handle it."

The commissioner arose and clapped Cardona on the shoulder. The commendation brought elation to the detective. He arose to leave the office. He shook hands with Weston before departing.

During that brief interval, the door of Weston's office closed completely. A stealthy, elongated figure crossed the floor of Weston's living room. It passed through the outer door and moved rapidly to the stairway that led below.

A soft laugh came from the lips of Lamont Cranston. It was the laugh of The Shadow. The master sleuth had listened to theories and had heard plans. Locked in his thoughts were facts that the speakers had not considered.

Where Commissioner Ralph Weston and Detective Joe Cardona resorted to speculative plans, The Shadow had formed his own campaign, based upon the hidden knowledge that he had gained!

CHAPTER XVII. TEX GIVES ORDERS

TWO nights after Commissioner Weston and Detective Cardona had held their consultation, Tex Lowner again appeared under the lights of Park Avenue. The gang leader swaggered as he approached the entry that led to Doctor Harlow's office.

No one was watching the place to-night. Cardona's blind trail to the Club Madrid had evidently satisfied the police that Tex was not engaged in present crime. The gang leader's lips formed a confident smile as Tex stepped into Harlow's waiting room.

The physician put in a prompt appearance. He appeared ill at ease as he invited Tex into his office. As on the former occasion, Harlow locked the door to the waiting room and also made sure that the way to the

laboratory was tightly closed.

Meanwhile the bright lights of Park Avenue formed curious splotches on the sidewalk, where their spheres of illumination crossed. There were shadowy spots, if one had cared to notice them; and one of these blobs of blackness was in motion. It showed no sign of its owner until Harlow's entry was suddenly darkened by a shape which pressed against it.

The Shadow, sinister visitant of the night, had trailed Tex Lowner here. He was entering to listen in on the conversation between the gang leader and the physician. Swiftly, The Shadow moved along the hall in spectral fashion. His blackened instrument clicked the laboratory lock. The Shadow entered that room.

With silent, yet swift precaution, The Shadow repeated his maneuver with the door between the laboratory and the office. The trifling crack that formed, as The Shadow eased the portal, could not have excited the suspicion of either Tex Lowner or Wesley Harlow.

The two were beginning their conversation when The Shadow heard them. Tex was speaking and his tone was not a friendly one. Harlow, as The Shadow viewed his profile, seemed quite a bit disturbed.

"TRIED some foolish stuff, eh?" Tex questioned. "Flopped again. I suppose you figure that's a good enough excuse for not showing up with the hundred grand."

"Listen, Lowner," pleaded Harlow. "You know I would not have tried a method like that. The fact that the second raid occurred should prove to you that I had nothing to do with the first."

"Quit the stalling," leered Tex in contemptuous fashion. "It don't matter to me even if you did team up with Rabbit Gorton. I hated that guy and I'm glad he got the works. What I want to know is—where's my hundred grand?"

"I couldn't get it," pleaded Harlow. "I told you I'd handle it in my own way. I tried to—but I couldn't get started when I talked with Satruff. I started out, hoping that you would understand the situation when I explained it to you. Then the raid started."

"Mighty funny," scoffed Tex, "the way those birds crash in just as soon as you go out. Gives you a chance to do the hero stuff, eh? A chance to take a shot at one of your pals when he flops on the job."

"I tell you, Lowner, I didn't -"

"Forget it. That's not why I came here—to hear your alibis. I want the dough. Savvy? One hundred grand—and you're going to grab it. To-night— before midnight!

"This is your last chance, Harlow. Forget the flops. If you fliv this time, I'll spring the works. Lefty Yates is where I can get him. He'll go to the bulls—and when they question him, it will be just too bad for you."

"I'll go out to Satruff's," returned Harlow angrily. "I'll get the money. I'm sure I can work it if I get half a chance."

"You'll make the chance, or else -"

"I know. You've threatened me before, Lowner."

"Listen." The gang leader's tone was serious. "I'm leaving this to you, Harlow, and I'll make good my threat if you miss out. Just the same, I want the dough more than I do your scalp. So I'm going to be there to-night. In person.

"I'm wise to one thing. This dick, Cardona, is hanging around Satruff's. Besides that, Vincent is there, and he made plenty of trouble for Rabbit, so I hear.

"So I'm not making any blind raid like Pug and Rabbit did. I'm going to be off a way—down toward the Sound, where they won't be looking for me. I'm coming in after trouble starts—not before, if I can help it."

"There won't be any trouble," protested Harlow.

"I'm talking about what may happen before twelve to-night," resumed Tex. "That's going to be the dead line. You'd better do your work before it. When you get the dough, you may have to do a slide out. I'll be outside of the strong-room door. Instead of me coming in, you'll be coming out. I'll have the mob to help you on a get-away."

"You've got the wrong idea, Lowner," asserted the physician. "I can work this quietly—no talk—no fight—no trouble—if I get the opportunity I need. These raids haven't helped me—they've hindered me."

"Midnight," declared Tex, gruffly ignoring Harlow's protest, "is the dead line. Get the dough before then, or I'm not promising what's going to happen."

DOCTOR HARLOW stared steadily at the domineering gang leader. The physician's lips twisted. A cunning glow appeared in his eyes. Tex noted the expression and his hand slid toward his hip pocket.

"Figuring on trying to bump me, maybe?" quizzed the gang leader harshly. "Like you did with Pug and tried to do with Rabbit? Not much" - Tex's laugh was a raucous one—"not much! You're dealing with a tough hombre, Harlow. I'm not a squealer. I'm a guy that lifts the lid."

"I shot Pug," started Harlow slowly, "because he was threatening Folsom Satruff. I didn't try to kill Rabbit. I attempted to disarm him. I'm not a murderer, Lowner, much though I might desire to be."

"You may be smooth with some guys," jeered Tex, "but not with me, Harlow. Remember that. I've pulled some big jobs, and I got after them right. Pug Hoffer was just a two-bit gorilla. Rabbit Gorton was a geek who'd chase for cover every time he thought any one was after him.

"I'm warning you, Harlow, in case you've got any funny business up your sleeve. Those other birds may have thought they had something on you. I've got something. Got it, understand?"

"All right, Lowner," said Harlow wearily. "There's no use harping on it. You're giving me credit for being one of your own kind. I've told you that I have nothing in common with such ruffians as Pug and Rabbit. They were scum—and you're pretty close to their class."

Tex tightened his fingers about the butt of his revolver. Harlow noticed the action and shrugged his shoulders.

"A few minutes ago," he remarked, "you were suggesting that I might be considering violence. You acted as though you expected me to draw a gun and shoot you down. Now you are trying those tactics yourself. Go ahead."

"Not a chance," snarled Tex. "You're worth a hundred thousand berries alive—and not a nickel dead. You're going to get that dough - to-night."

"I'm going to get it," repeated Harlow firmly.

"Before midnight," prompted Tex.

"Before midnight," repeated the physician.

Tex dropped his hand from his gun. With a snarling laugh, he turned and opened the door to the waiting room. He paused long enough to stare harshly at Harlow. Then, with a contemptuous snort, he closed the door and departed.

DOCTOR HARLOW sat down after the gang leader had departed. His sallow features twitched. He rubbed his chin methodically. Then, in brusque fashion, he picked up the desk telephone and put in a call for Garport.

The Shadow was listening intently. The door had opened a trifle farther, now that Harlow was alone. A long, spectral shape of blackness stretched across the floor. Behind it was looming darkness broken only by a pair of glowing eyes.

"Hello..." Harlow was speaking. "That you, Vincent?... Yes, Doctor Harlow speaking... Yes, I should like to talk with Mr. Satruff."

A pause, then Harlow's voice resumed after some one else had come on the wire.

"Hello, Satruff?... Yes, this is Harlow... I am coming out to see you to-night... Good. I thought you would remember that we had a tentative appointment... Listen, Satruff, I should like to talk with you alone, when I see you... Yes, alone... Yes. It is important. I can explain the matter when I see you..."

A smile appeared upon Harlow's lips. Evidently Satruff had agreed to the interview. The physician hung up the receiver. He opened a desk drawer. He drew out a stub-nosed revolver and weighed the weapon in his hand. Then, with a nod, he thrust the gun into his pocket. Closing the door, Doctor Harlow donned hat and coat and strode out through the waiting room.

The figure of The Shadow moved. The door from the laboratory came slowly open. The spectral shape in black edged into the room. The Shadow stood upon the scene, where dramatic tenseness had so recently held sway. Tex Lowner, domineering gang leader, had delivered his ultimatum. He had forced Doctor Wesley Harlow to meet the final issue. The physician had responded. He, in turn, had paved the way to his important visit to Folsom Satruff's home.

Tex Lowner had gone; Doctor Harlow had departed. Only The Shadow remained. He was to be the third in to-night's grim game. A soft, whispered laugh broke from The Shadow's hidden lips. The black-garbed visitor stalked across the office and opened the door to the waiting room.

Into darkness merged The Shadow. A shuddered echo of a whispered laugh lingered, as the only token of this sinister being. The Shadow, like the others, had departed.

He, too, had chosen a mission for to-night!

CHAPTER XVIII. SATRUFF PREPARES

THE door of Folsom Satruff's upstairs living room was closed. Within the room itself, one man was seated facing a crisply burning fire. This man was Detective Joe Cardona.

The living room had been chosen as Cardona's post. Here the detective had installed himself in Satruff's home; here he was in readiness should he be required. Satruff, himself, had taken up new quarters in the library downstairs.

The arrangement had merits. It enabled Satruff to be near the strong-room, with Harry Vincent in attendance. It also made it unnecessary for either Okum or Riggs to visit the upstairs living room, for

Satruff had delegated Harry to that duty. Hence Joe Cardona was comfortably out of sight, yet available.

On the other hand, Cardona was highly annoyed by the enforced circumstances. He wanted to be nearer the scene where action might strike, should fiends of the underworld still have designs upon Folsom Satruff's vaulted wealth.

While Cardona was glowering at the sparks in the fire, the door of the living room opened and closed. The detective looked up to see Harry Vincent. There was something in the young man's expression that informed Cardona he was the bearer of important tidings. Harry did not speak until he had reached a chair beside the one which Cardona occupied.

"Mr. Satruff will be upstairs in a few minutes," declared Harry, in a low tone. "I think something is about to break."

Cardona's expression was quizzical. The detective wanted to hear more.

"Doctor Harlow phoned," explained Harry. "I answered the call. He wanted to talk with Mr. Satruff. Harlow made an appointment for to-night. He is to see Mr. Satruff, here—alone."

"What did Satruff have to say about it?" asked Cardona.

"Nothing, as yet," returned Harry. "He told me to come up here and wait for him. He stated that he intended to dictate some letters. Okum was there—near the telephone—and Riggs was somewhere around."

"I see. Satruff is probably giving them something to do so they won't wonder why he's staying up here a while."

Harry Vincent made no reply to Joe Cardona's comment. Ever since the detective's arrival at Satruff's, The Shadow's agent had played a passive part. Cardona had held a conference with Satruff; after that the pair had taken Harry into their confidence, so that he could serve as a go-between. Harry had done his part so well that neither Okum nor Riggs had actually seen Joe Cardona since his installation here.

YET Harry had discerned that Okum, at least, suspected there was a visitor in the house. Riggs had admitted Cardona on the day when the detective had arrived; Okum had witnessed Cardona's appearance. Both had been led to believe that Cardona had gone after a short talk with Folsom Satruff. But it was highly possible that the deception had not been entirely effective.

In fact, Okum, although he had been instructed to remain downstairs, had on several occasions found reason to go to the second floor. Harry had spotted the secretary in such actions and had casually followed him to make sure that he did not enter the living room, which Satruff had stated was closed for the present.

Okum had made no attempt to go into the closed room; nevertheless, Harry held the opinion that the secretary knew quite well that some one had taken the place as a temporary abode.

While Harry and Cardona sat looking at the fire, the door again opened and Folsom Satruff appeared. The millionaire's face was grim and slightly troubled. Harry and Joe noticed the expression immediately.

Closing the door, Satruff approached the fire and sat down. He remained a moment in thought; then began to talk in a slow and methodical tone.

"Doctor Harlow is coming here to-night," stated Satruff. "He is very anxious to see me—on an important

matter which he did not choose to explain over the telephone.

"As usual, he has chosen a late hour. I told him that I would be glad to see him; and he is due to arrive some time after eleven. It will be necessary for me to confer with him, and I should like to have witnesses. Under the circumstances, they will have to be concealed."

The speaker paused to point to a door at the opposite side of the living room. Both Harry and Cardona nodded. The place would make an excellent listening post.

"I shall talk with Harlow here," announced Satruff. "He does not know that this room has been closed. Furthermore, the library, below, offers no possibility for one to overhear a conversation. At the same time, it is unwise for all three of us to be up here for any length of time. It leaves too much dependent upon Okum, who has already demonstrated his incompetence -"

"That's just it, Mr. Satruff," broke in Cardona. "I've been mulling over this whole arrangement and I don't like it. I've come here to handle this case from the inside, to get a slant on what may be wrong. The police commissioner told me to cooperate with you in whatever way seemed best."

"You are doing it, Cardona."

"Yeah?" The detective's question was a growl. "Maybe—so long as there's no trouble. But suppose something does break. I might just as well be handcuffed. I'm up here, away from the strong-room -"

"I appreciate that, Cardona," Satruff nodded thoughtfully as he made the interruption. "At the same time, you yourself imposed the conditions. You stated that Commissioner Ralph Weston wanted you to be present in case of emergency; yet you added that only Vincent could be taken into confidence. I have done the best that I could under the circumstances. Okum and Riggs have been in my employ a long while. I had to be careful in the way I handled them in order not to excite their suspicions."

"That's all right," agreed Cardona, in a mollified voice. "Just the same, I'm going to be in for it if something goes haywire. The commissioner put me on this job instead of a squad. I've got a tough assignment to start—and to make it tougher is bad business."

"Cardona," declared Satruff, in a reflective tone, "your theory that tip-offs were responsible for the last raids is a good one. As I recall the situations that existed, I remember that there was a certain tenseness preceding each attempt by gangsters. I think there will be certain times—let us call them strategic moments—when we can assume that trouble may be in the offing."

"You mean times when -"

"When some event, though trifling at its beginning, will serve as a danger signal."

CARDONA stared steadily as he heard the words. A firm grin appeared upon his squared features.

"Like to-night," he said. "Doctor Harlow coming here at eleven. He was here both times before; and I've told you, Mr. Satruff, that I think the guy is mixed in this mess."

"Precisely," returned Satruff. "Harlow is a friend of mine; he is also a physician of high repute. I should hesitate to make any disparaging statement concerning him."

"At the same time, Cardona, I know you to be a capable detective. You are able to view the situation with unbiased judgment. You hold to the idea that Harlow was implicated in the previous attacks upon my strong-room. Therefore -"

"He may be set to start another."

"Exactly, if your reasoning is correct. That is why, Cardona, that I intend to follow your advice at present. I have paved the way so that the situation here will be exactly as it was before. Harlow and myself, here in this room, for a beginning."

"And after that?"

"What do you suggest?"

"When Pug blew in," considered Cardona, "it was after Harlow had gone out. The same thing happened when Rabbit took his brodie. It looks to me like everything ought to be O.K. so long as you have Harlow upstairs here. After that, though -"

"I shall go downstairs with Harlow," remarked Satruff. "After that, you and Vincent will be free to follow. You, are both armed. It would be wise, however, to use discretion."

"On account of Okum?"

"Yes; and on account of Riggs. If Vincent precedes you to the lower hall, he can take a look for them. If the way is clear, he can signal to you.

"The strong-room, of course, will be your logical objective. If you can get there unobserved, while I am showing Harlow out, you will be at the strategic point in case of emergency. At the same time, you must use discretion.

"If villains intend to show their hands again to-night, there is no reason to give them a warning that will cause them to stay away. Personally, I still have great confidence in Doctor Harlow. I can hardly imagine him being implicated in crime.

"Nevertheless, I feel that the test should be made—if only to clear Harlow of culpability. That is why I want you and Vincent to behave with caution, so that the test may be a sure one. Although you seem highly suspicious of Harlow, you have not fully given up thoughts of others who might possibly be implicated."

Cardona nodded as Satruff concluded his careful discourse. Through the detective's brain ran recollections of his discussion with Commissioner Weston. With the names of Harlow, Okum, and Riggs, the sleuth thought of another.

"By the way," he remarked. "What's become of that lawyer of yours?"

"Tobias McEwen?" asked Satruff. "I haven't heard from him since the night of the second raid. He is rather annoyed by all the trouble that has come of my philanthropies. He doesn't like the business of Dorand at all."

"Doesn't he telephone you?"

"Very seldom. When I have business for him to transact, I get in touch with him. He has all the data concerning the Dorand gifts in his safe. A large job"—Satruff smiled in kindly fashion—"this matter of giving away half a million dollars. McEwen has made his profits from it, in attorney's fees. He has more to look forward to when I resume my benefactions."

CARDONA was nodding mechanically at this train of conversation. The detective was not concerned with Satruff's big-hearted efforts to benefit those who were in need. He was thinking of the possibilities of

another gangland thrust. He was contemplating the practicability of the proposed plan of action.

"I think you've got the right idea, Mr. Satruff," the detective decided. "You stay downstairs until Doctor Harlow arrives. Bring him up here; Vincent and I will be behind the door. Then we'll follow when you go down with him.

"But remember this: don't make it too long. Play along with anything he has to say. Let him talk. Maybe he'll blab something that can be used against him."

"The case rests in your hands, Cardona," remarked Satruff, in a mild tone. "It reminds me also that I have stayed here longer than I contemplated. I am going down to the library. I want you to remain alert until Harlow arrives."

With this admonition, the gray-haired philanthropist strode to the door of the living room. He left it ajar when he departed. Harry Vincent and Joe Cardona were alone, awaiting the arrival of Doctor Wesley Harlow.

CHAPTER XIX. WORD TO THE SHADOW

THE clock on the living-room mantel was approaching eleven when Harry Vincent rose leisurely from his chair. He and Joe Cardona had been patiently awaiting news of Doctor Harlow's arrival. While Harry had paid occasional visits to the partly opened doorway, Cardona had remained near the far side of the room in order that he might go into hiding should Bartlett Okum chance to come to this reopened room.

Harry knew that his own presence here would excite no suspicion, even if Satruff should be forced to bring Harlow here without an opportunity to give a warning. Hence The Shadow's agent was acting in natural fashion.

There was a radio set in the corner. Harry approached and tuned in on a musical program, keeping the sound toned down to a minimum. As Satruff's clock began to chime eleven, the music ended and the announcement of the next program came softly on the air.

"Station WNX," came the operator's announcement, in a peculiarly toned voice. "After our first number, we shall introduce a guest singer whose ability leaves no room for doubt. We will turn back the pages of time to songs out of the past. The arias of light operas will mingle with forgotten melodies."

"Turn that off," growled Joe Cardona in a low tone. "You want to be listening with both ears in case Satruff is coming up here with Harlow."

Harry complied as the first musical selection began. With his back toward the detective, The Shadow's agent smiled. He had turned on the radio for a purpose which Joe Cardona had not even begun to suspect.

That announcement, with its peculiarly accentuated words, had been something for which Harry had been waiting. In fact, Harry had tuned in on WNX at certain times ever since he had come to Satruff's.

Certain words, each emphasized by the announcer, had spelled a secret message. Harry had caught them easily. They still were clear as he repeated them:

"After guest leaves room, turn out light."

This was a message designed by The Shadow. Through some method unknown to Harry Vincent, The Shadow had gained access to certain radio stations and had managed to arrange announcements to suit his own design.

To Harry, the guest meant Doctor Wesley Harlow. The room was this room, itself—its lights plainly visible to any one who might be watching from outside Satruff's home. Something was due to happen after Harlow left this room, not before. The Shadow would be ready to time his action accordingly.

SUCH was the subtle way of The Shadow. He could reach his active agents at all times, without the most careful observer realizing their connection with him. As Harry, no longer smiling, turned to face Joe Cardona, he could tell that the WNX announcement had made absolutely no impression upon the detective.

"Watch the door," suggested Cardona.

Harry obeyed. He went to the door and listened. He heard voices on the stairs. He caught the words that Folsom Satruff was saying to some one below.

"I'm going up to the living room, Harlow," was the statement that Harry caught. "Come up there as soon as Riggs has taken your hat and coat."

Harry swung back into the living room. He motioned to Joe Cardona. The detective headed for the door beyond. Harry followed. The two moved out of sight and closed the door sufficiently so they could not be seen.

A few moments after Harry and Joe were under cover, Folsom Satruff entered the living room. The philanthropist smiled as he looked about him and realized that his two companions had received their cue. Satruff began to warm his lean hands at the open fire. While the millionaire was standing there, Wesley Harlow arrived.

Satruff invited the physician to sit down and offered him a cigar. Harlow took the perfect; Satruff lighted one of his own and began a casual conversation. This continued for some length of time. Harry Vincent and Joe Cardona felt impatient. Yet both could sense by Harlow's occasional tone that some important matter was on the physician's mind.

THE expected announcement came after a brief pause. Harlow's voice took on a serious note as the young physician leaned forward in his chair and put a leading question to Folsom Satruff.

"What of your philanthropies?" questioned Harlow. "Have your troubles convinced you of the fallacy of the Dorand incognito?"

"Not entirely," returned Satruff. "I must admit, Harlow, that I have met with disappointments."

"As you were sure to do."

"I don't think so."

"The proof"—Harlow was emphatic—"lies in the fact that your measures failed. Perhaps you will recall, Satruff, that I once suggested other methods."

"I do recall your statements," admitted Satruff. "I believe you told me that it would be preferable if I gave money in bulk, to those who asked it under no other claim than that of friendship."

"That was what I said."

"And I stated that such a plan would turn friendship into business."

"Why?"

"Because a friend always comes with a hard-luck story. He talks of some attractive enterprise. He makes promises which he thinks that he can keep, but never does. The glamour of giving is lost."

"Suppose"—Harlow was puffing speculatively on his cigar—"that some friend asked you for money with no other statement than the fact that he would put it to a good use of his own. Suppose he would promise you that some day you would learn that you had performed a useful deed which could not be revealed until afterward."

"That would be interesting, Harlow." Cardona nudged Harry Vincent. It was obvious that Folsom Satruff was responding to the detective's suggestion to lead Wesley Harlow onward.

"Very well," came Harlow's voice, bearing a tone of sudden confidence, "I shall talk to you. Not to my friend Folsom Satruff, but to Dorand, the philanthropist."

"Proceed," suggested Satruff.

"I want one hundred thousand dollars," announced Harlow firmly. "I want it on no other security than my own word that it will be put to good use. I want it in cash—to-night."

FOLSOM SATRUFF did not reply. Joe Cardona, peering past the edge of the door, could see an incredulous look upon the millionaire's face.

"One hundred thousand dollars," repeated Harlow. "For a purpose which in my judgment will be philanthropic."

"A remarkable request, Harlow," laughed Satruff suddenly. "One hundred thousand dollars is a great deal of money."

"I have occasion to believe," declared Harlow, in a smooth tone, "that you have more than that in your vault."

"I have," admitted Satruff. "I have more than double that sum in actual cash, Harlow. More than triple, if I recall correctly. I have securities also. The negotiable contents of my vault are considerably in excess of half a million dollars."

"All intended for philanthropic purposes."

"Chiefly. To be issued, however, by Dorand -"

"Who is temporarily on the shelf as a -"

"Yes. I admit that."

"And who cannot well proceed along his previous lines of endeavor."

Satruff laughed.

"Harlow," he said, "you are a convincing fellow when you open up. Has this idea been on your mind for a long while?"

"Yes," returned the physician, "but you never gave me an opportunity to express it."

"So I realize, now that I consider some of the talks which you began. I thought you wanted to borrow money in some ordinary, pleading fashion. I would not have loaned you a dime on that basis."

"I am asking for one hundred thousand dollars on a different plan."

"You are. It intrigues me. Suppose, Harlow, that I should take you to my strong-room and open the vault, to count you out one hundred thousand dollars. What would you guarantee me in return?"

"The satisfaction that you had done a worthwhile deed. The knowledge that you would feel the same pleasure that you gain from giving fat pay envelopes to discharged employees. You, as Dorand, will learn that you have performed an amazing benefit."

"To you, Harlow?"

"Yes. But no more to me than to yourself. I expect, like you, to gain my satisfaction by giving."

"You are talking like a real philanthropist, Harlow," asserted Satruff warmly. "Come. We are going to the strong-room. There I shall give you the sum that you request."

Footsteps sounded as the two men walked from the living room. Joe Cardona peered from the hiding place. Satruff had closed the door behind him. Cardona beckoned to Harry Vincent.

"Come along," whispered the detective. "This trail is getting hot. That bird Harlow is working some smooth racket. You head for the stairs. Tip me when it's O.K. to follow."

At the door of the living room, Harry Vincent paused. He reached out and pressed the wall switch. The room was plunged into darkness.

"Good idea," whispered Cardona. "That covers me while I keep the door open."

Harry Vincent smiled as he moved into the dim light of the upper hall. The move which he had just made, had, by its very naturalness, completely deceived Detective Joe Cardona.

The sleuth had seen the extinguishing of the light as a move of strategy on Harry's part. Little did he realize that it could have been a signal to watching eyes stationed outside of Folsom Satruff's Long Island mansion!

Harry Vincent was playing his part well. From the air, by radio, he had picked up a subtle message from his chief, The Shadow. Word from The Shadow! In return, Harry had obeyed instructions to perfection.

By his artful pressure of the light switch, The Shadow's agent had given the return message. In answer to The Shadow's call, Harry Vincent had sent word to The Shadow!

CHAPTER XX. IN THE STRONG-ROOM

FOLSOM SATRUFF and Wesley Harlow were in the strong-room. They had come here without incident. Harlow, nervous as usual, had gazed about him going through the lower hall. He had seen a light in Satruff's living room, where the door was ajar. That was all.

As soon as he had turned on the light in the strong-room, Satruff had gone directly to the huge vault. Before he worked the combination, however, he turned to Harlow with a quiet smile.

"The strength of a vault," remarked Satruff, "lies in its combination. Therefore, I must ask you not to watch me too closely while I work the knobs. Stand here"—he moved Harlow back to a spot just beyond the passage through which they had come—"and wait until the vault is open."

As he went back to the vault, Satruff continued to speak in a calm and methodical tone.

"Keep watch, Harlow," he suggested. "Tell me if you hear anything that is disturbing. My entire mind is occupied when I turn this combination. I am the only one who knows it. No one—not even Okum— has ever learned the combination of this vault."

Oppressive silence followed. Seconds went tensely by Harlow, standing with folded arms by the partly opened door, made no attempt to move forward. The physician's face showed keen eagerness. He was waiting for the revelation of wealth.

It was while this situation still existed that Harlow fancied he heard a creeping sound in the passage. The physician did not move; he simply stared toward the door. Then came a clang as Satruff sprang the lock of the vault. The big door opened, long enough to catch Harlow's momentary attention. Then the physician's gaze went back to the entrance of the passage.

Coming through the door was a hand that held a revolver! The weapon was pointing toward Folsom Satruff! For a moment, Harlow stood stock-still, as he stared at the shaky, yellowed claw that held the gun. Then, as the arm moved further inward, the physician acted.

WITH a quick leap, he fell upon the projecting arm and twisted it with a fierce swing that brought its owner hurtling into the room. With the same move, Harlow caught the gun with his other hand and wrested it free from the fingers that had grasped it.

A form went sprawling across the floor. Harlow covered the man with the gun that he had seized. The fellow had dropped face downward. As he scrambled to his feet in crablike fashion, Harlow recognized him. The man who had lost the gun was Bartlett Okum!

The secretary's face showed fright. His arms came up; his hands spread out like talons. He half crouched as he backed toward the vault.

Okum, however, was not the only one who stood in consternation. Folsom Satruff, surprised by the noise of the sudden fracas, had turned around. He, too, stood fearful. His hands went above his head.

"What is this, Harlow?" gasped Satruff, in a terrorized tone. "What is this? Why are you covering us with that gun?"

"I'm covering Okum," announced Harlow, sternly, as the secretary backed directly toward Satruff.

"You have betrayed me, Harlow!" Satruff's voice had risen to a scream. "You have betrayed me! I see your game!"

Harlow hesitated. He was loath to lower the gun on account of Okum, not knowing what the secretary might do. The physician had moved forward instinctively. He wanted to allay Satruff's fears. Before he could reply, however, he heard a sound behind him. An instant later, a rod of metal jabbed into Harlow's ribs.

"Drop that gun!" came the growl of Joe Cardona.

Harlow let the revolver clatter to the floor. He raised his own hands above his head as he turned to face the man who had come to trap him. Beyond Cardona, Harlow saw Harry Vincent.

The physician paled. His arms shook. Words failed to reach his lips. Satruff and Okum had let their hands fall. The millionaire was stepping forward to speak to Joe Cardona.

"You were right, Cardona," he announced in a sorrowful tone. "I brought Harlow here in good faith. I did not imagine that he was covering me with a revolver, until Okum entered. Then Harlow trapped both of

us."

"We've got you, Harlow," growled Cardona. "Got you with the goods. What more, we're going to put you where you belong this time!"

"I have done nothing," protested Harlow, as he found his voice. "I came here—as Satruff says—in good faith. He promised me some money - he brought me here to give it to me -"

"We know all that," interrupted Cardona. "But that gun permit of yours won't help you out on this job. Foxy guy, eh? When the mobs couldn't do it, you thought you'd hoax Satruff yourself. Well, we fooled you. The one-man job is a flop.

"I've got your number. You plugged Pug Hoffler and you tried to put out Rabbit Gorton. You knew that they might blab when the game didn't work. You're the guy who worked from the inside. Brought them from the outside in. Now you're trying to start from the inside out."

Cardona's face was triumphant as the detective threw a quick glance at Folsom Satruff.

"You see I was right, don't you?" laughed Cardona grimly. "I knew this bird for a Raffles the moment I spotted him that first night. This is what the commissioner wanted. We've got the guy in back of the game and we've got the goods on him."

Satruff was slowly nodding. Okum, standing placidly behind his employer, showed nervousness. But the secretary's manner gave no indication of anything, except fear from the recent ordeal.

WESLEY HARLOW realized this. His brain was in confusion. Cardona stood before him as a stern inquisitor. The detective, true to form, saw an opportunity to make a quick quiz here on the ground. Cardona was a great believer in the theory that a criminal will speak when trapped.

"Come on, Harlow," urged the sleuth. "It won't do any good to stall. We know all about you. Spill it and get your conscience clear. It'll save you a lot of trouble later on."

Harlow dropped his arms. He raised his right hand to his forehead and wiped the perspiration from his brow. For a moment, he stood in dull fashion. Then, with an effort, he chewed his lips and gazed at the men about him. His eyes caught Okum's face. A sudden idea swept through his brain. Then, staring straight at Joe Cardona, Wesley Harlow began to speak.

"All right," he said firmly. "I'll tell the truth. I'll tell you everything. It's the only way out. But it's going to surprise you when you hear it."

Cardona raised one hand as Folsom Satruff stepped forward to speak. The detective motioned the millionaire back. His gesture called for silence. All eyes were upon Wesley Harlow, as the physician stared straight ahead and began his story.

Tense listeners stood within the strong-room. All were gazing at one man. None sensed the living presence that had arrived within the passage through which all had come.

The Shadow, shrouded in darkness, was the unseen listener to the confession which now came from the lips of Wesley Harlow.

CHAPTER XXI. HARLOW TELLS

DOCTOR WESLEY HARLOW was a convincing speaker. He had proved that fact to-night, in his conversation in Folsom Satruff's living room. Trapped under incriminating circumstances, his nerve was

slow in returning. As it came back, however, Harlow gave voice to firm and certain discourse.

"I'll tell my story," he asserted. "I'll tell what I know about Pug Hoffer and Rabbit Gorton. I'll tell about others, too. I came here to-night for money. I came to get one hundred thousand dollars. But I didn't come to steal it. I came to ask for it; and I did."

The physician paused and his tone became steadier. It was taking an effort for him to continue, but Harlow was equal to the difficulty.

"There were facts which I did not want known," he declared. "It is impossible now for me to prevent them from coming to light. So I'm going to talk before others have the chance. I'm going to get clear of all this miserable business."

"That's it," encouraged Joe Cardona. Harlow ignored the detective's words. He stared straight at Joe.

"There's a gangster called Lefty Yates," announced Harlow, "of whom you've probably heard. He's wanted, I understand, for a couple of jobs."

"Is Lefty Yates in this?" inquired Cardona in surprise. "Say—if I could get hold of that bird -"

"Lefty Yates is innocent," asserted Harlow. "He is free from implication in this crime and from others with which he was supposed to be connected. He is trying to go straight—but the man he worked for won't give him a chance."

"You mean Tex Lowner," prompted Cardona.

"I mean Tex Lowner," agreed Harlow. "He can hang anything on Lefty Yates. The fellow hasn't got a chance."

"Say"—Cardona's growl was a sharp one—"where do you get all this stuff about Lefty Yates? How did you come to know him?"

"He is my brother," stated Wesley Harlow quietly.

THE statement was stunning to Joe Cardona. The detective, until now a challenger, suddenly realized that he had stepped beyond his depth. There was sincerity in Harlow's tone, and it gave Cardona a glimmer of understanding regarding the physician's connection with the underworld.

"His real name," resumed Harlow, easily, "is Merle Harlow. I am thankful that he managed to maintain his alias. One man, however, learned the truth about my brother. That man was Tex Lowner.

"He came to me—Lowner did—and told me that he had the goods on Merle. He threatened exposure; threatened to turn Merle over to the law, just because the kid had gone straight and was away from New York.

"Lowner's price was one hundred thousand dollars. I told him I could never get it. The amount was preposterous. Then Lowner brought up the fact that I was a friend of Folsom Satruff. He reminded me that Satruff had millions. I was amazed when I heard Lowner talk. I realized that the man had discovered that Satruff was Dorand."

"I repeat: I was amazed. I thought that only two other men knew Satruff's incognito, namely Tobias McEwen and Bartlett Okum. You remember"—Harlow turned to Satruff—"when you confided in me regarding your philanthropies and asked me to give you some minor aid in the distribution of funds. You told me then that only McEwen and Okum knew the truth."

There was a pause; Cardona ended it with a gruff interjection that he addressed to Wesley Harlow.

"I know all about Tex Lowner," asserted the detective. "I saw him up at your place. I thought you were working with him then. That put me wise, after Rabbit Gorton made his raid. You were in with Rabbit and Rabbit was in with Pug. You fixed it for Pug to pull the first raid, working for Rabbit. When Pug missed out, you brought Rabbit in here.

"No wonder Tex Lowner was on your trail"—Cardona paused to emit a heavy laugh—"when he and Rabbit were after each other's scalp. Maybe Tex did try to tap you for a hundred thousand bucks. He ought to have been able to do it, knowing the game you were playing."

Swelling, Cardona looked toward Folsom Satruff. He saw the philanthropist nodding. The detective turned back to Harlow.

"One hundred thousand dollars," ridiculed Cardona, "to get your brother out of a jam. You were right when you said it was a lot of dough. Your stall won't work, Harlow. You're covering up your own trail—or at least you're trying to.

"You saw a way to tap this vault." Cardona waved his free hand toward the open container. "You bargained in the underworld and you got Rabbit Gorton interested. Tex Lowner wised up and came to you for a cut. He was in the racket—that was all."

HARLOW stood dumb. His persuasive plea had failed. Harry Vincent, eyeing him, felt sympathy for the physician; yet Harry could not help but believe that Joe Cardona had hit the truth squarely. Folsom Satruff evidently held the same opinion, for the gray-haired philanthropist followed with his own remarks.

"You betrayed me, Harlow," announced Satruff sadly. "Your own story proves it. An honest man, laboring under a situation such as you have outlined, would have come out with the truth. You did not need to use subterfuge to deal with me. Cardona has given you the lie."

"I couldn't tell you the truth, Satruff," blazed Harlow. "Every time I approached you, I realized that there was only one way to get money from you—namely, through your desire to aid in philanthropic work."

"You called it philanthropy to seek blackmail money for a gangster?"

"Yes. The money was to be used to save my brother."

"Enough of that, Harlow," ordered Cardona. "We know why you pulled this hundred-thousand-dollar hokum. It was to get Mr. Satruff to open his vault. Come clean, Harlow. Don't try to keep anything back."

"I have come clean."

"Yes?" Cardona snorted in contempt. "You're the guy who killed Pug Hoffer. Why? Because you thought he was going to blab. You're the guy who tried to kill Rabbit Gorton. Why? Because you thought he was going to blab, too."

A triumphant look appeared upon Harlow's sallow face. Cardona stared as he saw the expression. He realized that Harlow had gained a wedge that he sought. The physician's eyes traveled to the spot where Bartlett Okum was standing. They came back to Joe Cardona.

"I killed Pug Hoffer," stated Harlow, in the easy manner of a card player delivering a trump. "Yes. I killed him because he was dangerous. What's more, Cardona, I was glad I killed him, because I did think he was going to talk."

"That's an admission," proclaimed the detective. "Remember that, you witnesses -"

"Wait a moment," interrupted Harlow. "I grabbed Rabbit Gorton, because I thought he was dangerous. I would have liked to kill him because I thought he was going to talk. There's another admission for you. They prove nothing against me."

"They prove you were on the inside," remarked Cardona. "Working to give a tip-off."

"Those facts," corrected Harlow, with all his suavity returning, "prove nothing whatever against me. They prove that there was a man working on the inside. They prove that there was reason for that man to kill both Pug and Rabbit."

"Let me remind you, however, that when I shot Pug Hoffler, Bartlett Okum was ready to fire also. Let me add that it was Okum who killed Rabbit Gorton. I don't know whether Tex Lowner got the Dorand information from Okum or whether Rabbit Gorton was the one who landed it. At any rate, both of those gangsters were after Satruff's money. Both of them knew the truth."

"Here's the proof of who is guilty." With a dramatic gesture, Harlow pointed to the revolver that he had dropped upon the floor. "That gun belongs to Okum. I seized it when he entered the room to cover Satruff with it. Here"—taking advantage of Cardona's momentary lack of attention, Harlow slipped his hand in his coat pocket—"is my own revolver. I never had it in my hand to-night."

JOE CARDONA stared. Harlow had passed a perfect opportunity. Instead of whipping out his gun and starting to shoot, he was holding the revolver by the barrel, tendering the loaded weapon so that Cardona could take it. Mechanically, the detective received the snub-nosed gun.

"There is my proof of good faith," declared Harlow. "I rest my case with you. The real culprit stands there, by the open vault. Look at him, Cardona. Look at Okum. He alone can tell you the game that he played. It reached its finish to-night. I was to be the innocent victim—I and my brother Merle."

Joe Cardona saw that Bartlett Okum was trembling. The old secretary's face was pale. Through the detective's brain whirred statements that Commissioner Weston had made; statements that fitted in exactly with what Harlow had just said. Okum, like Harlow, could have been the traitor.

Cardona looked to Folsom Satruff. The millionaire's forehead was furrowed with deep thought. Cardona saw Satruff's eyes travel from Harlow to Okum. They rested firmly upon the secretary. Cardona left the question to Satruff's judgment.

"What do you think, Mr. Satruff?" inquired the detective. "Do you think this may be true"—Cardona paused as he saw a doubtful expression appear upon the philanthropist's face—"or do you think it is another of Harlow's stunts?"

"I think," declared Satruff, in a cold, firm tone, "that we should let Okum speak for himself. If he has been wrongfully accused, it will simply close the case which Harlow has made against himself. Harlow has shown himself to be a schemer. His own admissions place the entire burden of the guilt upon his own head."

Satruff paused as he faced Okum. The millionaire was stern. His eyes seemed dominating as they met Okum's. The old secretary seemed oblivious to all but his employer.

"Okum," stated Satruff, "have you ever carried a gun on these premises?"

"No, sir," replied the secretary weakly.

"Then that is not your gun?" quizzed Satruff.

"It is not, sir," responded Okum in a firmer tone.

"Was Harlow holding that gun," continued Satruff, "when you came in here? Tell me, Okum, if he was."

"He was, sir."

Satruff turned to Cardona. The millionaire's face wore conviction. Cardona gained the same feeling; so did Harry Vincent.

"This," announced Satruff in a righteous tone, "stands as proof of Harlow's scheming guilt. It shows him as a crook who has tried to cloud the reputation of an innocent man. I leave the rest to you, Cardona. If you have further questions to ask Okum, put them forward now."

"I have none," stated Cardona. "Come, Harlow. You are under arrest."

THE physician shrank instinctively toward the outer door of the strong-room. Cardona, pocketing his revolver, yanked out a pair of handcuffs. Satruff, also leaping forward, gripped Harlow's shoulders while the detective clamped the irons on the doctor's wrists.

The three were near the end of the room. Harry Vincent was beside the door to the passage. Bartlett Okum was still close to the vault. A sudden, gasping scream came from the secretary's lips. Cardona and Satruff turned; like Harry Vincent, they viewed the wild expression of terror that had appeared upon Okum's cadaverous features.

Not one man held a gun, now that Harlow was handcuffed. Thus, as all turned toward the passage door—the direction in which Okum's eyes were staring—they felt a sickening feeling of helplessness when they viewed the being who stood there. Even Harry Vincent could not repress a shudder.

Just within the door stood a spectral shape in black. The Shadow, his sable-hued cloak spread from his shoulders, seemed like a creature from another world. The broad brim of the black hat obscured the features of the unknown phantom. Gloved hands held two mammoth automatics, at sight of which, the watchers instinctively cowered.

Most terrible of all, however, were the eyes of The Shadow. Blazing, scintillating orbs, they fastened themselves upon Bartlett Okum's pallid face with a power that made the old secretary quiver.

Then came the sound of a whispered laugh, a frightful tone of mockery that shuddered to a weird crescendo, only to die with throbbing, ghoulish echoes as the aftermath.

The Shadow, supreme, had arrived to take the part of Doctor Wesley Harlow. He, the master invisible, was to resume the quiz of Bartlett Okum.

CHAPTER XXII. THE HIDDEN FRIEND

"SPEAK."

The eerie hiss of The Shadow's sinister word seemed to pervade the entire strong-room. Bartlett Okum, he to whom the utterance was addressed, quaked in new fright. His lips moved; but his words were inarticulate.

"Speak the truth." The Shadow's tone was firm. "Speak—or learn the power of The Shadow!"

Okum hesitated. His head shook. He managed to wrest his gaze from The Shadow's eyes. He stared

across the room toward Folsom Satruff, as though appealing to his master for aid. He saw the gray-haired millionaire staring spellbound at The Shadow. The sound of a rippling, sinister taunt brought Okum's eyes back to those of his inquisitor.

"I—I am—afraid!" gasped Okum. "Afraid -"

"Have no fear," came The Shadow's sardonic tones. "Your innocence will be established if you speak."

Okum gulped, and nodded. He seemed to find more than menace in The Shadow's tone. He wanted the assurance of The Shadow's gaze to stand this ordeal that was thrust upon him.

"I'll talk!" he blurted. "I'll—I'll tell all I have done! I—I was ready to kill Pug Hoffer, when he began to give the game away. I did—I did kill Rabbit Gorton—because he said that he had been double-crossed.

"I—I made a mistake when Pug came here. I thought he was one of the regular ones who came. That raid was not intended. The second one was. I was— was supposed to act the way I did. I knew that Rabbit was coming here.

"He wasn't the only one. Tex Lowner came here, too. They both used to come and I would let them in. They brought many things—money— wealth—to go into the vault. I—I—it was my job to list all the money that Mr. Satruff gave away, I—I didn't know for a long time that—that much more was coming from the crooks."

"I was a dupe." Okum's voice was plaintive. "I had to believe that all was right. Mr. Satruff told me it was—and I tried to believe him. That's why I wanted to help out when Pug threatened—when Rabbit threatened. I—I really believed in Mr. Satruff—until to-night."

Okum began to waver. The throb of a whispered touch of mirth came from The Shadow. Okum nodded, and resumed.

"He—Mr. Satruff—he told me to be in the library." Okum was gasping the words. "He—he gave me the gun and told me to come slowly through the door— after he and Doctor Harlow were here. He told me to let the doctor grab the gun—that he—that Mr. Satruff, would protect me. That's why I—why I did it. I had to answer the questions that Mr. Satruff put to me. When everything happened the way it did, I really knew that all was wrong. But I couldn't talk. I was afraid something would be blamed on me, too."

Okum began to sag. Trembling, he sank to his knees upon the floor. His story was told. The strain had been too much. Gasping, the old secretary clutched his head between his hands. The Shadow's laugh rippled eerily through the room.

THE sound caught all attention. The looming automatics were aimed toward the end of the strong-room, by the outer door where Doctor Harlow stood handcuffed between Joe Cardona and Folsom Satruff.

The physician was like a man in a trance, dumfounded by the amazing turn that had taken place. Joe Cardona was as stolid as a statue; amazement was frozen upon the detective's features.

Only Folsom Satruff, despite his trembling, showed challenge. The gray-haired philanthropist had undergone a change. His visage showed no more of its benignity. It had become the face of a fiend.

"Folsom Satruff!" The Shadow's words were gibing. "You called yourself Dorand. You played the part of a philanthropist to conceal your evil ways. A crook by nature, you used the aid of crooks. They brought you wealth—at intervals—until your toll was mounting into millions.

"You became Dorand, that you might have an alibi. With Tobias McEwen, an honest man, to vouch for

you; with Bartlett Okum under your control, you had crime to the perfect scale. All that you needed was a helpless man upon whom you could shoulder crime should the occasion require it.

"You held Doctor Wesley Harlow. Held him through your knowledge that his brother was a reformed crook. You did not need him until Pug Hoffler made his unexpected raid. Then, when the police had entered indirectly into your affairs, you saw that it would be best to draw all attention from your own activities."

A pause. Then came The Shadow's laugh. It was directed this time toward Joe Cardona. The detective wondered at the strange note of mirth.

"Rabbit Gorton. Tex Lowner." The Shadow sneered the names. "Enemies? Never! They were pals—comrades in a common service; the tools of Folsom Satruff, the man who called himself Dorand.

"Tex was the one who threatened Harlow. Tex played a clever game. Pug Hoffler was the only man who knew that Tex and Rabbit worked together. Pug learned about Dorand, for he had come here with Rabbit and with Tex. He made a raid for his own gain.

"Luck was with Folsom Satruff. Doctor Harlow slew Pug Hoffler, for the reasons that he stated. He feared the man was going to talk about him; he also feared that Pug would try to injure Satruff, whom Harlow believed to be a man of honor.

"That was the beginning. Satruff saw an opportunity to create a scandalous sensation that would drown the announcement that he was Dorand—one that would make his millions seem honestly gained. He arranged the raid by Rabbit Gorton; through Tex Lowner he brought Wesley Harlow here to be a scapegoat once again.

"To-night, he arranged the finale—the proof that Harlow was a tipster, working with the underworld. Satruff used Okum as a tool. His evil work would have gained him success, but for my presence here."

ANOTHER pause; then, in scathing tones, The Shadow broke forth with his final denunciation of Folsom Satruff. The statements came as uncanny ones as the fiend listened.

"I, The Shadow, knew your game," announced the whispered voice. "You were ready to slay Pug Hoffler. You were prepared to kill Rabbit Gorton, when the emergency arrived and he cried out that he had been double-crossed.

"You let others do your evil work; but your intent was visible. You wanted another man here, apparently as a protection; really to aid your alibi. You were subtle when you put thoughts into the mind of Commissioner Weston. You gave your cooperation to Detective Cardona, but in a way that would prove of assistance to your plans.

"You forestalled Harlow in his attempts to ask for money until Tex Lowner, through your evil order, had given Harlow his final opportunity. Then the stage was set for the culmination of your vile schemes.

"With an innocent man denounced as a criminal; with yourself heralded as Dorand, the great philanthropist, you saw a future of wealth and affluence—an opportunity to spend your evil gains.

"That opened vault—its interior—will prove your crime. Therein lie the spoils of many raids conducted by your henchmen. Missing millions are ready to be restored to those who rightfully own them!"

The Shadow's statement was followed by a laugh of triumph. Chilling to Joe Cardona and Wesley Harlow, it had an opposite effect upon Folsom Satruff. The gray-haired villain, crouching with clenched fists, saw a relaxation of The Shadow's gloved hands. The automatics seemed to droop.

With a fiendish cry, Folsom Satruff sprang behind Cardona and Harlow. His hand made a quick grab at the switch upon the wall. As Cardona dragged Harlow toward a corner, the door sprang open; Folsom Satruff's scream for aid was a shrill shriek that could be heard to any who might be stationed outside.

Upon that shriek came the whispered tones of The Shadow's laugh. It was a presaging burst of mirth, that sneering note of mockery. The Shadow had allowed Folsom Satruff his opportunity.

Once before, the villain had brought mobsmen here, only to be repulsed by The Shadow's might. Again, he was bringing futile hordes from gangland.

Where Rabbit Gorton had failed with a picked crew, Tex Lowner was to make the attempts with a larger, stronger mob. Tex, like Rabbit, was destined to meet The Shadow's wrath!

CHAPTER XXIII. THE FINAL STROKE

THE SHADOW'S automatics rose. They were not directed toward Folsom Satruff. The master criminal had leaped to the corner opposite the door, with Joe Cardona after him. The Shadow's huge weapons were trained upon the door itself.

The action was well timed. The door, partly opened by Satruff, shot inward as shoulders struck it. Tex Lowner, backed by a dozen mobsmen, burst into the strong-room.

Satruff's act had been a call for aid. Yet no shots had been fired; there was nothing to indicate that all had gone against the villain's plans. Tex Lowner, however, was a fighter who always came prepared. As he sprang into the room, he held a big revolver in readiness for whomever might await it.

Tex spied The Shadow on the instant. An automatic was the challenge to the gang leader's revolver. The sight of the dread form in black stopped Tex short. Then, with a fierce oath, the husky mob leader pressed finger to the trigger of his polished, glistening gun.

He did not see that a black-gloved finger was already in motion. A terrific report barked from the muzzle of The Shadow's .45 while Tex's finger was trembling. The gang leader crumpled in his tracks.

The mobsters, just behind, came tripping over their leader's toppled form. The head pair raised their revolvers. The Shadow's automatics boomed. One man sprawled. The other, crouching suddenly, loosed a wild shot in his eagerness to beat The Shadow's aim.

It was the bark of the second automatic that settled that score. Then, with sudden fury, both weapons launched a deadly fire that came with the rattle of an artillery onslaught. The Shadow, sweeping forward, hurled destruction into the ranks of the invading mobsters.

It was the perfect ambush, for its openness served The Shadow's purpose. Clustered gangsters, those behind thrusting those before, were trapped as they snarled and fired hopeless shots. The only bullets that left revolvers were those delivered by falling hands of men who felt The Shadow's metal before they fired.

Gangsters in back broke away as the sprawling forms of those ahead revealed The Shadow plucking fresh automatics from beneath his cloak. Hurling figures scattered across Folsom Satruff's moon-bathed lawn as the remnants of Tex Lowner's vanquished mob sought to evade the fire of the superfighter.

HARRY VINCENT had not been idle. With drawn automatic, he had rendered an accompaniment to the staccato melody of The Shadow's smoking weapons. His bullets, too, were headed toward that door where death was coming to men who deserved the end that they received.

The Shadow's fire ceased. Harry Vincent's automatic, far behind the rapid fire of his chief, delivered two blasts that sounded puny after The Shadow's fierce barrage. Harry suddenly realized that he stood alone; that The Shadow had swept back to that darkened doorway by the passage.

Doctor Wesley Harlow had dropped into the corner. The handcuffed physician had been safe. No mobster had gained a chance to aim at his seated form. Harry saw a glint of satisfaction in Harlow's eyes as the physician saw the huddled form of Tex Lowner.

The torturer was dead. No more did Harlow need to fear his threat. Tex Lowner was the only man who had known the whereabouts of Harlow's brother Merle—otherwise Lefty Yates. The fraternal cause for which Wesley Harlow had striven would never be subject to betrayal.

Then Harry saw Joe Cardona, standing above the prostrate form of Folsom Satruff. The detective had beckoned to Bartlett Okum. The old secretary was by his side. Cardona thrust a gun into Okum's hand and leaped to the doorway to fire at the fleeing mobsters.

Harry joined Joe Cardona. He had seen the detective place Satruff in Okum's charge. Then came a shriek that made Harry turn. Folsom Satruff, with a sudden twist, had risen from the floor. He was yanking the revolver from Bartlett Okum's tensing hand!

A sweep of Satruff's arm—the weapon caught Okum a glancing blow on the head. The secretary sprawled. Satruff, with a fiendish cry, was ready to aim to kill. Harry, responding to the emergency, aimed his automatic to fire at the fiend. The gun was empty. Harry, as on another night, had loosed his entire charge in the fray.

Joe Cardona whirled. Satruff was ready. His first shot, Harry knew would be directed toward the detective, for Cardona held a gun. The next would be a bullet for Harry; then Wesley Harlow, handcuffed, would be the final victim.

In one stroke, with three shots of timely aim, Folsom Satruff could clear his way to freedom! Harry, with only moments at his disposal, sprang forward to prevent Satruff's deeds of death. The Shadow's agent caught the villain's arm.

The revolver roared as the flame shot past Harry's ear. The shot went above Cardona's head, for Harry had spoiled the aim. Then the barrel of the gun thudded sideways against Harry's head; The Shadow's agent dropped, groggy from the blow. He saw Satruff's gloating face.

Cardona had dropped to cover. Satruff, with a croaking cry of triumph, whirled toward the room. Harry saw the gloating expression vanish. Weakly, The Shadow's agent followed the quick aim of the revolver as the villain turned its muzzle straight across the strong-room.

The Shadow!

HARRY saw the phantom master in the doorway; he heard the peal of taunting laughter that came from obscured lips; he heard the mighty thunder of the black-garbed fighter's gun. A gasp came from Folsom Satruff. The villain's revolver dropped from his clawing fingers. Harry Vincent thrust up an arm to ward off the toppling weight as Satruff's body came sprawling straight down upon him.

Eerie echoes died. The Shadow's laugh had marked his swift departure. The master of the night had completed his mission. He was gone through the passage by which he had entered to begin the desperate fray.

Harry Vincent, rolling to his feet, was startled by the sound of distant shots. They came from the direction

of the Sound—from far across the spreading lawn in front of the great mansion. Seizing Satruff's gun, Harry leaped to the side of Joe Cardona. The detective was standing just within the outer door, his eyes on Folsom Satruff's dead form.

In alarm, Harry and the detective looked out toward the lawn. They heard the shrill blast of a whistle. Then came quick shots. Scattering forms were doubling back toward the house. Tiny spurts of flame marked the positions of the men who were pursuing them.

Flashlights gleamed. A man came running up toward the house. He cried out to Cardona, framed in the light of the doorway. Cardona recognized the voice and answered. The man shouted to those men who were following behind him.

"It's Markham!" exclaimed Cardona. "Detective Sergeant Markham! He's got a squad with him -"

Four detectives came surging into the strong-room. They saw that Cardona was in charge. Markham began to puff his congratulations. He stopped as two more detectives arrived. Cardona's jaw dropped as he saw the man behind them.

Commissioner Ralph Weston! Cardona was too astounded to utter a word. It was fortunate for him that he did not speak. The commissioner was advancing with extended hand toward the detective.

"Great work, Cardona!" The commissioner's tone was filled with admiration. "I knew you would be on the job. That's why I followed your instructions to the letter."

Before Cardona could make a remark, Weston added:

"You worked it just right. When you called and told me to have a squad posted along the Sound at eleven o'clock, I wanted to know more. I was annoyed, Cardona, when you ended the conversation so abruptly. I realized though, that calling from here, you might have to be short in your statements.

"We saw the raiders enter from the distance. Just caught a glimpse by the light of the door. We were ready when you scattered them. Who's this one—the leader?"

Weston was pointing to the body of Tex Lowner. Joe Cardona nodded.

"Yeah," said the detective. "He was the leader of the mobsters -"

"Ah!" Weston had spied Harlow in the corner. "So you caught the real crook?"

"Yes." Cardona's reply was grim. Striding over, the detective unlocked Harlow's wrists. He turned and pointed to a body crumpled face downward. The gray hair meant nothing to Weston until a detective rolled the corpse upon its back.

"Folsom Satruff!" gasped Weston. "You let him -"

"He got what he deserved," broke in Cardona. "He was the real crook, commissioner. We have the goods on him. Harlow and Okum are innocent. Here is the evidence!"

The detective stepped across the strong-room and swung the door of the vault fully open. He pulled out boxes and other detectives moved to aid him.

BUNDLES of bank notes, crisp and new as they had been when rifled from vaults by Satruff's henchmen; packages of valuable securities; stacks of gold coins; drawers filled with pilfered jewels—these were obvious evidence of Satruff's crime.

No man, other than a criminal who feared discovery, would have kept such hoardings in his own house. Millions of stolen wealth—these were the spoils of Folsom Satruff—millions beside which the vaunted gifts of Dorand, the false philanthropist, were but puny offerings.

Leaving this discovery to the eager police commissioner, Joe Cardona rubbed his hand to his forehead. The rushing sequence of events had dazed the star detective. He wanted air—fresh air—and he went to get it, through the door that led to Satruff's front lawn.

He found Harry Vincent standing there with Doctor Wesley Harlow. As Cardona joined the pair, Harry spoke congratulatory words in which Harlow joined. These came as a relief to Joe Cardona. He realized that the two must have come to some agreement. They would stand by Cardona and let him hold the credit which he had received.

Cardona did not worry about Bartlett Okum. He knew that the old servant would say nothing. The detective smiled grimly as he realized that he was to receive full approval without question; that his report would be accepted without mention of The Shadow.

For Police Commissioner Ralph Weston would have doubted all veracity had Joe Cardona been forced to include The Shadow's name. The commissioner, away from the active crimes in which The Shadow brought such able aid to the law, had never gained the proof of The Shadow's prowess as had Detective Joe Cardona.

The Shadow!

He was a battler who fought on the side of right; a black-garbed phantom whose power lay in the fact that he was a great unknown. He was willing that others might take the credit for his victories that his hidden hand might still be free to deal new blows to crime.

As Joe Cardona lingered in the clear air, his keen ears caught a strange and distant cry that seemed wafted from the rippling waters of the Sound. A vague note that seemed like a mighty whisper, it lingered weirdly as an echo about the gables of the great mansion.

Joe Cardona knew that tone of mirth. He had heard it before, to-night. His one hope was that he might hear it again, on some other occasion when he might be beset by villainous men of evil.

A chilling sound, yet one which brought assurance to all who had fought for justice. The wavering echoes died. Their passing was the end of The Shadow's final laugh of triumph!

THE END