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The **MAN WHO MADE
GOLD**



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**THREE ISSUES
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THE MAN WHO MADE GOLD

AN ADVENTURE OF THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

THIS IS ERNEST DUDLEY, YOUR ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE, TELLING YOU ABOUT ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING BITS OF SKULDUGGERY THAT EVER FELL INTO MY LAP.

I HAD KNOWN OLD CHARLES TRAVERS FOR YEARS, AND ONE AFTERNOON I WAS VISITING HIM AT HIS BIG, OLD HOUSE, WHERE HE LIVED WITH HIS DAUGHTER EILEEN AND HIS BROTHER TOM.

CHARLES WAS A SCIENTIST AND HE WAS EXPERIMENTING IN HIS PRIVATE LABORATORY....



I MUST CONFESS I SMILED. CHARLES AND HIS BROTHER TOM, I FELT, WERE HAVING A PRACTICAL JOKE AT MY EXPENSE.

MY DEAR CHARLES, YOU SHOULD BE ON THE STAGE LIKE YOUR DAUGHTER. YOU ARE SO CONVINCING I ALMOST BELIEVE YOU. BUT NOW I MUST FLY—BE A GOOD CHAP AND SEND ME A HUNDREDWEIGHT OR SO OF YOUR GOLD—WHEN YOU MAKE IT. I COULD DO WITH IT!

BUT I AM NOT JOKING, ERNEST, IT'S REALLY TRUE.

TELL IT TO THE MARINES, I SAID GRINNING. EILEEN WAS DRIVING UP TO TOWN FOR HER DRESS REHEARSAL AND I GLADLY ACCEPTED HER OFFER OF A LIFT.

PERHAPS IT IS TRUE, ERNEST. DAD AND UNCLE TOM HAVE BEEN VERY BUSY LATELY.

I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT, EILEEN. EVER SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN, WIZARDS AND ALCHEMISTS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO MAKE GOLD. BUT NOTHING HAS EVER COME OF IT.

WITH THAT I PROMPTLY DISMISSED CHARLES TRAVERS AND HIS GOLD COMPLETELY FROM MY MIND. BUT IT WAS SOON TO BE RECALLED. THAT VERY EVENING SAW THE OPENING ACT OF WHAT WAS TO PROVE ONE OF THE MOST INTRIGUING CASES OF MY CAREER.... OF COURSE I WAS NOT THERE AT THE TIME, BUT I WILL TELL YOU ABOUT THINGS IN THE ORDER THEY HAPPENED. IT WILL BE EASIER THAT WAY. THAT EVENING TWO MASKED MEN ENTERED THE TRAVERS LAB, AND ATTACKED THE BROTHERS AS THEY WERE WORKING.



TOM TRAVERS LEAPT FORWARD TO TACKLE THE INTRUDERS BUT HE WAS STRUCK DOWN BY A SAVAGE BLOW.



YOU FOOL! YOU HAVE KILLED HIM! QUICK! GET THAT DRUG SHOT INTO THIS ONE'S ARM. WE DON'T WANT HIM KICKING AND SHOUTING WHILE WE MAKE OUR GETAWAY. HURRY MAN!

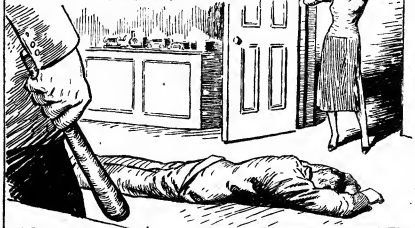


SHOCKED BY THE MURDER OF HIS BROTHER, CHARLES TRAVERS OFFERED NO RESISTANCE AS THE POWERFUL HYPNOTIC DRUG WAS SHOT INTO HIS ARM FROM A HYPDERMIC NEEDLE. IT WAS AT THIS POINT IN THE DRAMA THAT FATE TOOK A HAND, AND SOMETHING HAPPENED WHICH THE CROOKS HAD NOT RECKONED ON IN THEIR PLANS. EILEEN RETURNED TO THE HOUSE UNEXPECTEDLY TO COLLECT HER SCRIPT, WHICH SHE HAD FORGOTTEN. WITH MURDER ON THEIR HANDS THE SOUND OF A CAR DRAWING UP WAS ENOUGH TO FRIGHTEN THE CROOKS INTO A PANIC.



CURSE IT! THERE'S A CAR DRAWING UP OUTSIDE! A BLACK CAR! THE POLICE! COME ON LET'S GET OUT OF HERE... QUICK! PUT THAT CLUB IN THE OLD FOOL'S HAND AND LET'S BEAT IT!

EILEEN WENT INTO THE LAB, SMILING TO HERSELF, TO TELL HER FATHER AND UNCLE OF HER FORGETFULNESS. THE SIGHT THAT MET HER EYES WAS A TERRIBLE ONE. HER UNCLE LAY DEAD ON THE FLOOR, AND STANDING OVER HIM, MUTTERING TO HIMSELF, A BLOOD STAINED CLUB IN HIS HAND, WAS HER FATHER.



THE MOMENTS THAT FOLLOWED WERE MOMENTS OF HORROR FOR POOR EILEEN. HER FATHER, SUFFERING FROM THE POWERFUL DRUG, COULD DO NO MORE THAN MUTTER AND STARE VACANTLY INTO SPACE.

EILEEN MANAGED TO GET A GRIP ON HERSELF AND SHE MADE HER WAY TO THE PHONE TO RING ME. LUCKILY I WAS IN, AND HER SOBBED-OUT STORY WAS ENOUGH TO BRING ME RACING ACROSS LONDON.



THEN THE TERRIFIED GIRL TOOK ME TO THE SCENE OF THE TRAGEDY. SWIFTLY I TOOK IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE THE TERRIBLE FACT, THAT CHARLES TRAVERS HAD MURDERED HIS OWN BROTHER.

I COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS REALLY TRUE, BUT I KNEW THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO BE DONE NOW.

EILEEN... WE MUST PHONE FOR THE POLICE, AND THE SOONER THE BETTER.



EILEEN SAID SHE WOULD PHONE, AND I THOUGHT THAT DOING SOMETHING - ANYTHING - MIGHT HELP HER. WHEN SHE WAS GONE I GRABBED HER FATHER BY THE SHOULDERS AND SHOOK HIM ROUGHLY.



WHAT HAPPENED? TELL ME - YOU HAVE GOT TO TELL ME!

BUT IT WAS HOPELESS. ALL CHARLES DID WAS TO STARE INTO SPACE, WITHOUT SAYING A WORD. IT WAS THEN THAT THE THOUGHT FIRST STRUCK ME THAT CHARLES WAS DRUGGED.

IN A LITTLE WHILE A POLICEMAN ARRIVED AND I LET HIM IN.



WHAT IS THE TROUBLE, SIR?

I THINK YOU'D BETTER STEP INSIDE, OFFICER.

THE OFFICER WAS YOUNG, BUT VERY COMPETENT. HE TOOK IN ALL DETAILS OF THE GRIM SCENE, AND TOOK OVER COMMAND OF THE SITUATION UNTIL FURTHER HELP SHOULD ARRIVE.



NOTHING MUST BE TOUCHED, AND I MUST ASK YOU ALL TO STOP JUST WHERE YOU ARE UNTIL THE C.I.D. ARRIVES.

MORE OFFICERS ARRIVED, AND TRIED TO QUESTION POOR CHARLES -- BUT ALL TO NO EFFECT...

TOM... DEAD? I...
...I DON'T UNDERSTAND
...I DON'T REMEMBER...



AND SO OLD CHARLES TRAVERS WAS COMMITTED FOR TRIAL, ON A CHARGE OF MURDERING HIS BROTHER.

AS FAR AS THE POLICE WERE CONCERNED, IT WAS AN OPEN-AND-SHUT CASE.

THE ONLY FINGER-PRINTS ON THE MURDER-WEAPON BELONGED TO CHARLES, BUT EILEEN'S FAITH IN HER FATHER WAS STEADFAST, AND I HAD A HUNCH THAT THERE WAS MORE IN THIS CASE THAN MET THE EYE... FOR ONE THING... CHARLES HAD BEEN DRUGGED... AN OVERDOSE OF A POWERFUL HYPNOTIC, THE DOCTORS SAID... AND ALL MEMORY OF THE EVENTS OF THAT DREADFUL DAY HAD BEEN WIPEO OUT.

WHO DRUGGED HIM... AND WHY?
THAT WAS WHAT I WANTED TO KNOW.

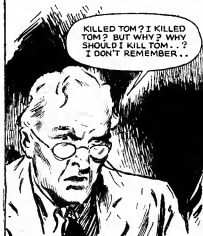


BUT THE COUNSEL FOR THE PROSECUTION HAD AN ANSWER-- AN ANSWER I DIDN'T LIKE.

MY LORD, GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY - THIS IS A SAD AND DISTRESSING CASE. THE EVIDENCE I HAVE PRESENTED TO YOU PROVES BEYOND DOUBT THAT CHARLES TRAVERS MURDERED HIS BROTHER, THOMAS. BUT... THERE REMAINS THE QUESTION OF THE DRUG. GENTLEMEN... I SUGGEST TO YOU THAT IT WAS SELF ADMINISTERED, TO WIPE AWAY A DREADFUL MEMORY. DO NOT FORGET... THE HYPODERMIC NEEDLE WAS FOUND ON THE FLOOR...



LOST IN A PRIVATE WORLD OF HIS OWN, CHARLES TRAVERS SEEMED ALMOST UNAWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING.



KILLED TOM? I KILLED TOM? BUT WHY? WHY SHOULD I KILL TOM...? I DON'T REMEMBER..

I SHALL NEVER FORGET THOSE TEN MINUTES- THEY SEEMED ENDLESS- WHILE THE JURY RETIRED TO CONSIDER THEIR VERDICT. THE RESULT, OF COURSE, WAS A FORGONE CONCLUSION



... GUILTY BUT INSANE.

TEARS SPRANG TO EILEEN TRAVERS' EYES, AND I GRIPPED HER BY THE ARM



OH, IT'S TOO CRUEL! HE DIDN'T DO IT! I KNOW HE DIDN'T DO IT!

STEADY, OLD GIRL...

IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE A THICKSET MAN STEPPED UP TO US. FOR SOME REASON THAT I COULDN'T EXPLAIN, I TOOK AN INSTINCTIVE DISLIKE TO HIM . . .



HOW AWFUL THIS MUST BE FOR YOU, EILEEN. IF THERE'S ANYTHING THAT AN OLD FRIEND CAN DO . . .

IT - IT'S VERY KIND OF YOU, MR. BROND . .



THIS IS JULIUS BROND. ERNEST . . AN OLD . . . FRIEND . . . OF FATHER'S. MR. ERNEST DUDLEY . .

DUDLEY! . . THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE!

HE STARTED, AND CLOSE-UP, I DISLIKED MR. BROND EVEN MORE. HE SEEMED TO EMANATE EVIL . . .



HIS BEADY EYES SCANNED ME INTENTLY. THEN HE TURNED TO EILEEN TRAVERS AGAIN.

IT WOULD BE FAR TOO PAINFUL FOR YOU TO RETURN HOME JUST YET. YOU MUST LET ME FIX YOU UP WITH FRIENDS. LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME, EILEEN! LET ME HAVE THE KEY TO YOUR HOUSE AND I'LL SEE TO THINGS THERE . . .

I - I DON'T KNOW . .

ON SUDDEN IMPULSE, I CUT IN. AND I SHALL NEVER FORGET THE EXPRESSION OF BAFFLED RAGE AND SUDDEN DISMAY WHICH FLICKERED ACROSS HIS FACE...



I TURNED ONCE AS WE DESCENDED THE MARBLE STAIRCASE. JULIUS BROND WAS GLARING AT ME WITH UNDISGUISED HATE. WHY SHOULD BROND BE SO PUT OUT?



WHY? I WONDERED, AS WE CROSSED TO MY CAR.

..I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND, ERNEST... WHY DID YOU TELL MR. BROND THAT I...?

BECAUSE I MEANT IT! YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE MY FLAT FOR THE PRESENT. I'LL PUT UP AT THE DALCHESTER HOTEL... AND I'M NOT TAKING NO FOR AN ANSWER! HOP IN!



I PONDERED AS WE SWUNG THROUGH THE CITY TRAFFIC...

I WAS CONVINCED THAT CHARLES TRAVERS HAD NOT MURDERED HIS BROTHER... BUT IN THAT CASE, WHO HAD DONE IT - AND WHY?

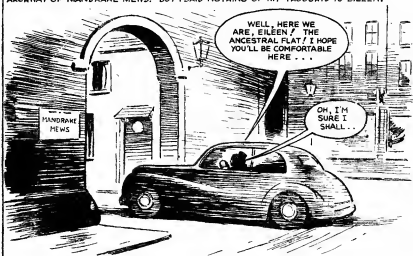
AND WHERE DID JULIUS BROND FIT IN? I HAD THE FEELING THAT HIS OFFER TO LOOK AFTER THE TRAVERS' HOME HAD NOT BEEN MADE OUT OF KINDNESS OF HEART-- EVEN PRESUMING THAT HE HAD ONE!

AND IF MY HUNCH WAS RIGHT, WHAT WAS HIS GAME?

I TOOK EILEEN TO LUNCH AND THEN WE WENT ON TO THE SOLICITORS, WHERE THE DRY AS DUST BUSINESS OF GETTING HER AN ALLOWANCE FROM HER FATHER'S ESTATE, WAS ARRANGED.

I WAS STILL TURNING THE CASE OVER IN MY MIND AS WE DROVE TO MY FLAT.

A NEW THOUGHT STRUCK ME, AND MY FACE WAS GRIM AS I DROVE THROUGH THE ARCHWAY OF MANDRAKE MEWS. BUT I SAID NOTHING OF MY THOUGHTS TO EILEEN.



WELL, HERE WE ARE, EILEEN! THE ANCESTRAL FLAT! I HOPE YOU'LL BE COMFORTABLE HERE...

OH, I'M SURE I SHALL...

EILEEN FELL IN LOVE WITH MY FLAT. I WAS GLAD. I KNEW THE CHANGE OF SURROUNDINGS WOULD TAKE HER MIND OFF THE TRAGEDY.

IT'S LOVELY!
IT'S SO KIND OF
YOU, ERNEST...

FIDDLESTICKS!
JUST MAKE YOURSELF
AT HOME, MY DEAR!



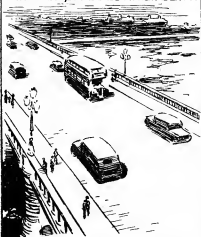
ONCE SHE WAS COMFORTABLE I PACKED A SMALL CASE AND LEFT.

AND NOW,
I'D BETTER TROT
ALONG TO THE
DALCHESTER AND
GET MYSELF
FIXED UP...
SEE YOU LATER!

GOODBYE...



BUT INSTEAD OF MAKING FOR THE WEST END, I HEADED SOUTHWARDS ACROSS THE RIVER TOWARDS THE TRAVERS' CROYDON HOME . . .
 ...AST DROVE, I PONDERED MY NEW IDEA . . .



JUST SUPPOSE CHARLES REALLY HAS DISCOVERED HOW TO MAKE GOLD ... THAT WOULD PROVIDE A MOTIVE FOR THE WHOLE THING . . .



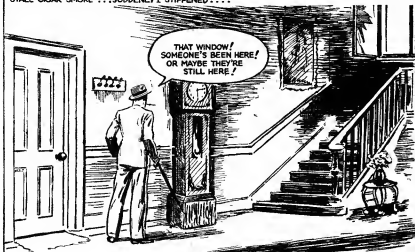
THE MATTER OF THE GOLD MACHINE HAD BEEN MENTIONED AT THE TRIAL, BUT AN EMINENT SCIENTIST HAD POOH-POOHD THE WHOLE IDEA, BUT EMINENT SCIENTISTS CAN BE WRONG, YOU KNOW.

I DREW TO A HALT OUTSIDE THE EMPTY, SILENT HOUSE, AND MADE MY WAY UP THE STEPS . .

EVEN IF THIS GOLD-MAKING MACHINE REALLY CAN DO THE JOB, WHAT GOOD WOULD IT BE TO ANYONE UNLESS THEY KNEW THE SECRET OF HOW TO MAKE IT WORK? AH, HA! THAT THOUGHT GIVES ME AN IDEA... MAYBE THE MURDER WAS A KIDNAPPING THAT WENT WRONG. ANYWAY, LET'S TAKE A LOOK-SEE ---



AS I LET MYSELF IN WITH EILEEN'S KEY, I WRINKLED MY NOSTRILS. THERE WAS A SMELL OF STALE CIGAR SMOKE ... SUDDENLY I STIFFENED



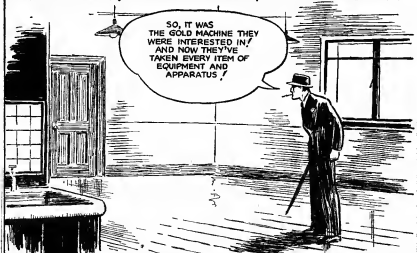
GRASPING MY FAVOURITE SWORD-STICK UMBRELLA, I SWIFTLY SEARCHED THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE HOUSE . .



THEN I THREW OPEN THE DOOR OF THE OLD MAN'S LABORATORY . . .



THE LABORATORY WAS COMPLETELY EMPTY! NOT A BENCH -- NOT A SINGLE PIECE OF APPARATUS REMAINED! I STARED IN ASTONISHMENT, BUT MY BRAIN WAS RACING ...

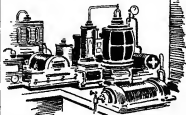


THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE MAN IN IT, THAT WAS OBVIOUS BY THE WAY THE LABORATORY HAD BEEN CLEARED. SUDDENLY I DREW IN MY BREATH SHARPLY...

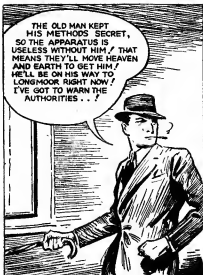


NOW THINGS BEGAN TO CLICK INTO PLACE! THINGS THAT HAD PUZZLED ME FROM THE START!

THE ORIGINAL PLOT HAD BEEN TO KIDNAP CHARLES TRAVERS, TOGETHER WITH HIS SECRET APPARATUS! THAT MUCH SEEMED CLEAR NOW!



OLD TOM HAD BEEN SAVAGELY STRUCK DOWN WHEN HE INTERVENED. THEN EILEEN'S UNEXPECTED RETURN HAD THROWN THE MURDERERS INTO A PANIC, AND THEY HAD FLED, FORCED TO ABANDON THEIR EVIL SCHEME.



- I KNEW INSPECTOR GRAYSON OF OLD ! HE WAS A MAN WHO COULD TAKE SPLIT-SECOND DECISIONS , AND THAT WAS WHAT WAS NEEDED IN THIS CASE !
 IF CHARLES TRAVERS FELL INTO THE HANDS OF HIS BROTHER'S MURDERERS , THEY WOULDN'T HESITATE TO ELIMINATE HIM , ONCE HE HAD SERVED HIS PURPOSE !
 PROMPTLY INSPECTOR GRAYSON AGREED TO HAVE A SPECIAL GUARD PLACED UPON OLD CHARLES , AS SOON AS HE ARRIVED AT LONGMOOR .
 I LEFT THE CALL-BOX TINGLING WITH SATISFACTION . . . THINGS WERE MOVING AT LAST !



NOW BACK TO THE FLAT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THAT UNPLEASANT FRIEND OF THE FAMILY, JULIUS BROND ! EILEEN MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE ME A LINE ON OUR FRIEND . . . SHE SHOULD KNOW HIS ADDRESS, AT LEAST.



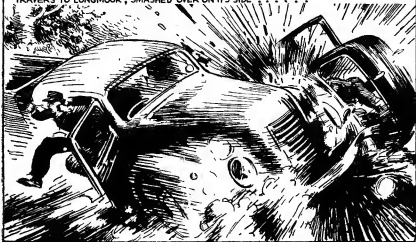
I STARTED BACK FOR MANDRAKE MEWS . . . AND MEANWHILE ON A LONELY COUNTRY ROAD NEAR LONGMOOR . . .



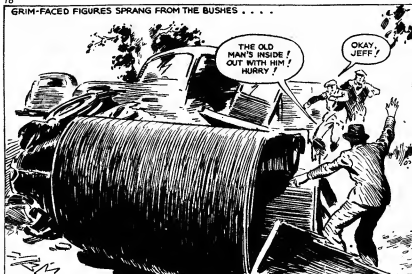
AS THE POLICE-VAN NEARED THE TREES, A HEAVY LORRY ROLLED FORWARD TO BLOCK THE ROAD!



TOO LATE THE POLICE DRIVER STAMPED ON THE BRAKE. THE POLICE CAR SKIDDED, ITS TYRES SCREAMING ON THE ROAD SURFACE THERE WAS THE RASPING OF METAL GRINDING INTO METAL AND THEN THE POLICE VAN, TAKING CHARLES TRAVERS TO LONGMOOR, SMASHED OVER ON ITS SIDE



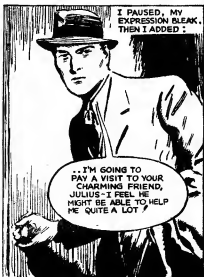
GRIM-FACED FIGURES SPRANG FROM THE BUSHES



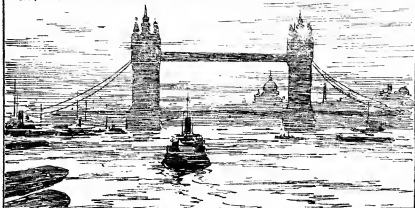
DAZED AND SHAKEN, CHARLES TRAVERS WAS DRAGGED ACROSS TO THE WAITING CAR.







NOW FATE TOOK A HAND AGAIN. OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO CARRY BROND'S PLAN A STAGE FURTHER, IT WAS IRONIC THAT HE SHOULD CHOOSE CAPTAIN DACK, AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE. PERHAPS AT THIS STAGE I SHOULD TELL YOU SOMETHING OF DACK. HE WAS AN ODD SORT OF CHARACTER - TOUGH, DEVIL-MAY-CARE, AND PRONE TO SAIL A LITTLE NEAR THE WIND WHEN ENGAGED ON SOME OF HIS RATHER OUBIOUS MISSIONS. BUT DOWN AT THE BOTTOM, DACK HAD HIS OWN ROUGH, TOUGH SENSE OF FAIR PLAY, AS MANY A CROOK HAD LEARNED TO HIS COST. WELL, ON THAT VERY EVENING CAPTAIN DACK ARRIVED IN THE POOL OF LONDON



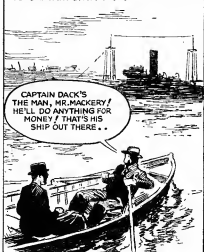
A POLICE PATROL LAUNCH CHUGGED PAST. HER CREW WERE SUSPICIOUS. THEY ALWAYS WERE WHEN DACK SHOWED UP . . .



BUT CAPTAIN JAMES DACK - OWNER AND SKIPPER OF THE SHIP - A MAN WHO WAS WILLING TO TRY ANYTHING FROM AN HONEST CARGO TO PIRACY - HAD NO PLANS AT THAT MOMENT . . .



BUT ALREADY A COMMISSION WAS COMING TO CAPTAIN DACK . . .



AND AS CAPTAIN DACK SWUNG DOWN FROM THE BRIDGE . . .

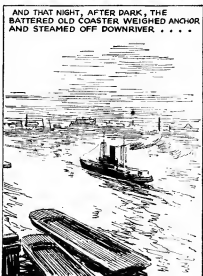
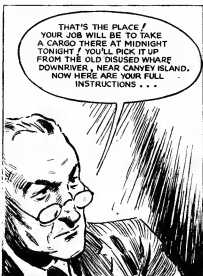


DACK'S EYES FLICKED COLDLY OVER SMILEY. HE NEVER HAD LIKED THIS SMOOTH, FLASHY, DOCKSIDE CROOK, WHOM HE SUSPECTED WAS A COLD-BLOODED KILLER . . .



SMILEY'S FACE PALED, HIS EYES GLITTERED DANGEROUSLY AND HIS LIPS TWISTED INTO A WOLFISH SNARL. BUT DACK'S MOCKING, DERISIVE SMILE WARNED HIM TO KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT.





..WHILE AT THAT VERY
MOMENT, MY CAR WAS PULLING
TO A HALT OUTSIDE THE LARGE,
OLD SURREY HOME OF JULIUS
BROND. THE PLACE WAS IN
COMPLETE DARKNESS...

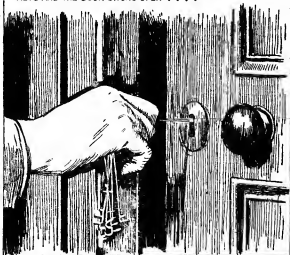
WAS JULIUS BROND
WITHIN?

WAS I WALKING INTO A
TRAP?

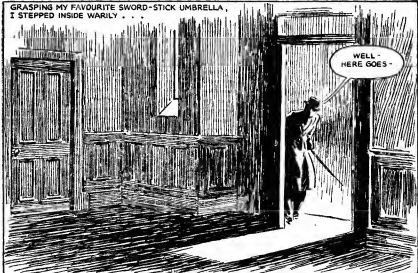
I GLIDED ALONG IN THE
SHADOWS TOWARDS THE
STEPS.....



A FEW SECONDS WORK WITH MY UNFAILING BUNCH OF SKELETON
KEYS AND THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN.....



GRASPING MY FAVOURITE SWORD-STICK UMBRELLA,
I STEPPED INSIDE WARILY.....



I STOOD TENSED AND WATCHFUL . NOT A SOUND DISTURBED THE SILENCE . MY TORCH BEAM CUT THROUGH THE DARKNESS . THEN I STARTED .



EMPTY,
BY JUPITER !
THEY'VE GONE !
LOCK, STOCK AND
BARREL !

THE GREAT OLD HOUSE HAD BEEN CLEANED OUT FROM TOP TO BOTTOM . . .

THAT MEANS I'VE RUN
UP AGAINST A DEAD END ! NO
LEADS - NO CLUES - BUT SOMEHOW
I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHERE OUR
AMIABLE FRIEND HAS VANISHED TO --
-- AND SOON !



IT CERTAINLY SEEMED AS IF BROND HAD
RETIRED TO SOME PLACE WHERE HE
COULD WORK ON CHARLES, WITHOUT FEAR OF
INTERRUPTION . GRIM-FACED, I RETURNED TO
THE CAR . . .



I'LL GET BACK TO
THE DALCHESTER . I
MUST RING THE YARD .
MAYBE THEY CAN
HELP TRACE FRIEND
BROND FOR ME . . .

MEANWHILE AT MIDNIGHT, CAPTAIN DACK'S SHIP WAS NOSING IN TOWARDS A ROTTING OLD WHARF IN THE LOWER THAMES . . .



AS THE SHIP TIED UP ALONGSIDE, SOME FIGURES MOVED FROM THE SHADOWS . . . HURRYING UP THE GANG-PLANK, MACKERY, THE LAWYER, INTRODUCED HIS CLIENT. IT WAS JULIUS BROND.



BROND GRUNTED AND SNAPPED OUT AN ORDER.



FOR A MOMENT BOTH MEN STARED DEEPLY INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES. NEITHER LIKED WHAT HE SAW . . .

THEN BROND'S MEN MOVED UP THE GANG-PLANK, A WHEEL-CHAIR IN THEIR MIDST . . .



DACK GLIMPSED A PALE, VAGUELY FAMILIAR FACE ...

WHO'S THE
INVALID, MISTER ?
HE SEEMS IN A
BAD WAY ..

I DON'T
LIKE QUESTIONS !
DO WHAT YOU'RE PAID
TO DO, CAPTAIN,
AND MIND YOUR OWN
BUSINESS, SEE ?

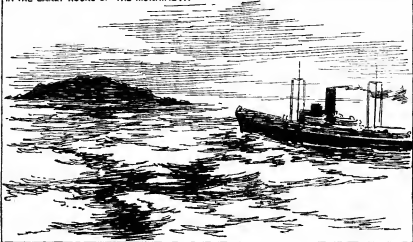


DACK GRINNED... BUT THERE WAS NO LAUGHTER IN HIS EYES. HE WALKED SLOWLY AWAY.

I WOULDN'T
TRUST THAT GUY AS
FAR AS I COULD THROW
HIM ! I'M GOING TO NOSE
ABOUT A BIT. THERE MIGHT
BE OTHER PICKINGS IN
THIS FOR ME !



DACK KNEW THAT BROND WAS A CROOK. HE HAD SEEN TOO MANY OF HIS KIND... EVIL, DANGEROUS AND GREEDY. AND HE WAS STILL WONDERING WHAT BROND'S RACKET WAS AND HOW HE COULD ENRICH HIMSELF. WHEN THE MARY ANN NEARED THE LONELY ISLAND IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING...



SOON THE CARGO WAS BEING MANHANDLED UP TO THE OLD HOUSE WHICH BROND HAD RENTED WEEKS BEFORE . . .

COME ON ! HEAVE ,
YOU LILY-LIVERED
BUNCH OF LUBBERS !
HEAVE !



AND WITHIN THE OLD EMPTY HOUSE , JULIUS BROND SNAPPED OUT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS .

TAKE THE CRATES
STRAIGHT THROUGH
AND PUT THEM IN
THE END ROOM . . .



AS BROND FOLLOWED THE MEN INTO THE INNER ROOM, DACK CAME UP FROM THE BEACH.



AND IN A ROOM AT THE FAR END OF THE HALL DACK FOUND THE INVALID, AND AS SOON AS DACK SAW HIS FACE, A GASP ESCAPED HIS LIPS.

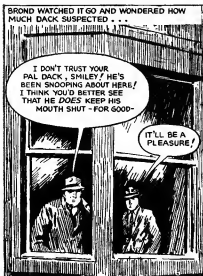
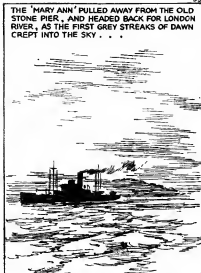


THEN FROM THE PALE LIPS OF CHARLES TRAVERS DRIFTED A FEW WHISPERED WORDS...



DACK WAS PUZZLED. WHY SHOULD ANYONE KIDNAP A MURDERER? HE DIDN'T KNOW RIGHT THEN, BUT HE MEANT TO FIND OUT! THOUGHTFULLY HE RETURNED TO THE MAIN ROOM...





CAPTAIN DACK MUSED AS HIS SHIP PLOUGHED THROUGH THE CHOPPY, EARLY MORNING SEAS . . .



IN MID-MORNINGS, THE
'MARY ANN' ANCHORED BELOW
TOWER BRIDGE, AND CAPTAIN
DACK ROWED ASHORE.

BUT FROM THE DOCKSIDE,
THE SHIFTY EYES OF SMILEY
WERE WATCHING!

IN THE SPEEDY MOTOR-
LAUNCH, THE LITTLE CROOK
HAD REACHED THE PORT OF
LONDON AHEAD OF THE
SLOWER-MOVING COASTER,
TO LIE IN WAIT . . .



AFTER MANY ENQUIRIES, AND UNAWARE THAT HE WAS BEING
SHADOWED, DACK FOUND HIS WAY TO THE TRAVERS' OLD
ADDRESS



A NEIGHBOUR CAME TO DACK'S HELP . . .

I'M AFRAID MISS TRAVERS HAS LEFT, BUT HERE'S HER PRESENT ADDRESS, CAPTAIN. SHE LEFT IT WITH ME IN CASE THERE WAS ANYTHING TO SEND ON . . .

THANKS MA'AM, I'M MIGHTY OBLIGED!

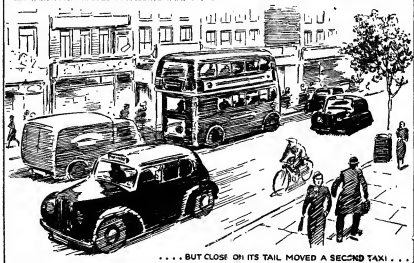


PRESSED BACK IN A NEARBY DOORWAY, SMILEY LISTENED . . .

SO HE'S LOOKING FOR THE TRAVERS DAME! I'LL LET HIM LEAD ME TO HER! THIS IS WHERE I GET TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE!

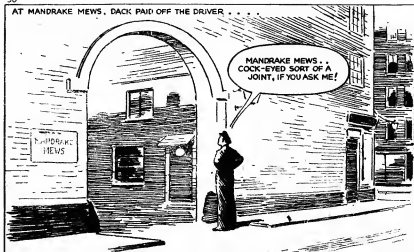


CAPTAIN DACK HAILED A PASSING TAXI . . .



. . . BUT CLOSE ON ITS TAIL MOVED A SECOND TAXI . . .

AT MANDRAKE MEWS, DACK PAID OFF THE DRIVER



EILEEN TRAVERS ANSWERED TO THE PEAL OF THE DOORBELL . . .



AS DACK FOLLOWED EILEEN INTO THE ROOM, SMILEY WAS ENTERING THE FLAT THROUGH AN OPEN WINDOW.....EILEEN FACED DACK, QUESTIONS TUMBLED FROM HER TREMBLING LIPS



THEN A SNEERING VOICE SPOKE FROM THE DOORWAY!



DACK GLARED, HIS GREAT FISTS BUNCHED.



THEN HE SPRANG AT SMILEY!



EILEEN TRAVERS SCREAMED AS THE GUN ROARED AT POINT-BLANK RANGE -- AND DACK DROPPED --



SICK WITH HORROR, EILEEN STARED INTO THE CROOK'S EVIL FEATURES. BUT THERE WAS NOTHING SHE COULD DO IN THE FACE OF THAT MENACING GUN.

... AND THEN SMILEY HAD SEIZED HER ARM AND WAS THRUSTING HER FROM THE FLAT.



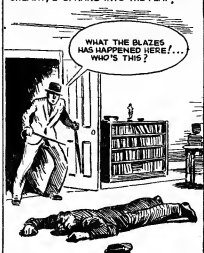
MEANWHILE, I HAD SPENT THE MORNING AT SCOTLAND YARD. INSPECTOR GRAYSON WAS INTERESTED IN MY THEORY - THAT JULIUS BROND HAD KIDNAPPED CHARLES - AND HAD PROMISED TO INVESTIGATE. AS I PULLED INTO MANDRAKE MEWS, I SAW A TAXI MOVING AWAY



LEAPING FROM THE CAR, I SAW THE OPEN DOOR OF MY FLAT



WHIPPING MY RAPIER FROM ITS UMBRELLA-SHEATH, I SPRANG INTO THE FLAT!



AS I KNELT BY THE BODY MY MIND WAS RACING. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF EILEEN, AND I WAS SURE THAT BROND HAD GOT HER AND WOULD THREATEN TO HARM HER IF CHARLES REFUSED TO DO WHAT HE WAS TOLD. THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT MUCH TIME. BUT FIRST THERE WAS THE QUESTION OF THE BODY. GENTLY I ROLLED IT OVER.



DACK'S FACE WAS GREY.

HMM! HE'S HAD
A CLOSE SHAVE! BULLET
MUST HAVE GRAZED
HIS TEMPLE AND KNOCKED
HIM COLD. SOME FORM
OF CONCUSSION. I'VE
GOT TO GET HIM TO
HOSPITAL...



SOMEHOW I MANAGED TO DRAG THE BURLY
CAPTAIN DACK FROM THE FLAT AND HEAVE
HIM INTO THE FRONT SEAT OF MY CAR...

I'LL HAVE TO STAND
BY AT THE HOSPITAL TILL HE
COMES TO, AND I ONLY HOPE
IT'S SOON! I WANT TO KNOW
WHAT HE WAS DOING AT MY
FLAT--AND WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO EILEEN!



I STARTED UP, AND SWUNG OUT INTO THE WEST-END TRAFFIC,
HEADING FOR A NEARBY HOSPITAL...



THEN, STILL UNCONSCIOUS, DACK BEGAN TO GROAN AND MUMBLE AT MY SIDE.

DIRTY RAT BROND --
WOULDN'T LEAVE A YELLOW
DOG IN HIS HANDS -- MUST FIND
TRAVERS' DAUGHTER -- GOT TO
TELL HER -- TELL HER --
THEY'VE GOT TRAVERS!

GREAT
JUPITER!
SO DACK IS
IN TOUCH
WITH BROND!



TINGLING WITH EXCITEMENT I LISTENED INTENTLY AS I DROVE! SOMETIMES DACK MUMBLED A FEW SENTENCES THAT MEANT NOTHING AT ALL.

THEN A REFERENCE TO BROND OR TRAVERS.

BUT STILL NO WORD OF THE INFORMATION I WAS SEEKING -- THE WHEREABOUTS OF BROND'S HIDEOUT, WHERE EILEEN HAD PRESUMABLY BEEN TAKEN.

FRUSTRATED AND DISAPPOINTED I PULLED INTO THE HOSPITAL FORECOURT...



THEN, AS CAPTAIN DACK WAS LIFTED ONTO A STRETCHER, HE SPOKE AGAIN.

SURE I KNOW
IT! -- THAT ROCK --
OFF THE COAST --
DESOLATE DUMP -- I
CAN KEEP MY MOUTH
SHUT, IF THAT'S WHAT
YOU MEAN -- I KNOW
DARK ISLAND LIKE
THE BACK OF
MY HAND --

DARK
ISLAND!



MY EYES NARROWED . . .



I KNOW IT!
LITTLE MORE THAN
AN ISLAND OF ROCK, OFF
THE COAST / SO THAT'S
WHERE FRIEND BROND
IS HIDING OUT / THAT'S
ALL I WANTED TO
KNOW!

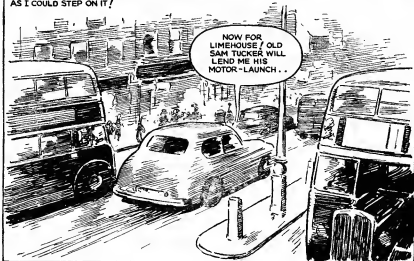
I SPRANG FOR MY CAR!



HEY!
JUST A
MOMENT
SIR!

SORRY!
CAN'T STOP! A
MATTER OF LIFE
AND DEATH! LOOK
AFTER MY FRIEND
FOR ME / HIS NAME'S
CAPTAIN DACK!
SO LONG!

I SPED EASTWARDS THROUGH THE CITY, AS FAST
AS I COULD STEP ON IT!



NOW FOR
LIMEHOUSE / OLD
SAM TUCKER WILL
LEND ME HIS
MOTOR-LAUNCH..

AT LIMEHOUSE REACH I CONTACTED THE OLD SEAMAN WHOM I HAD HELPED OUT OF A TOUGH SPOT SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE, AND WHO HAD NOT FORGOTTEN ME . . .



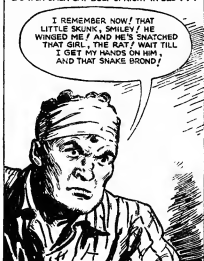
SOON I WAS HEADING DOWNRIVER. ON THE WAY I CALLED ON THE CREW OF THE 'MARY ANN' TO TELL THEM WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEIR CAPTAIN AND WHERE I WAS GOING. THEY AGREED TO FOLLOW AT HIGH TIDE, AND I CONTINUED ON MY WAY. I KNEW FULL WELL THAT, BY TAKING BROND ON SINGLE-HANDED, I WAS STICKING MY NECK OUT FOR TROUBLE, BUT TIME WAS PRECIOUS AND IT WAS A CHANCE I HAD TO TAKE.



MEANWHILE, BACK IN HOSPITAL, CAPTAIN DACK HAD RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS . . .



CAPTAIN DACK SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN BED . . .



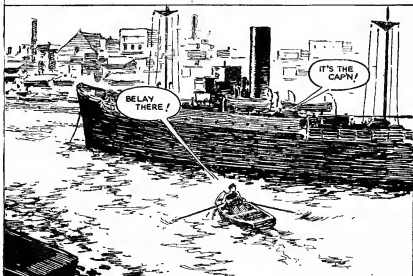
GRABBING HIS CLOTHES, CAPTAIN DACK BEGAN TO DRESS, IN HASTE . . .



CAPTAIN DACK STORMED FROM THE HOSPITAL, LEAVING THE DOCTORS AND NURSES GASPING!

NO ORDINARY MAN COULD HAVE SHRUGGED OFF THE EFFECTS OF THAT BULLET WOUND IN SUCH A SHORT TIME. BUT CAPTAIN DACK WAS NO ORDINARY MAN! ROUGH-HOUSING IT ABOUT THE WORLD, HE HAD DEVELOPED THE CONSTITUTION OF AN OX...

NOW HE MADE STRAIGHT FOR THE POOL OF LONDON, WHERE HIS SHIP LAY AT ANCHOR. . . .

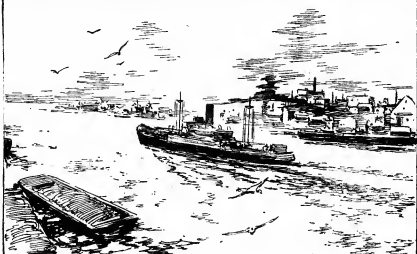


A ROPE LADDER WAS LOWERED AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER, CAPTAIN DACK LEAPT DOWN ON TO THE DECK.



WHEN DACK LEARNED OF THE MESSAGE I HAD LEFT WITH THE 'MARY ANN', HE WAS MORE ANXIOUS THAN EVER TO GET THE SHIP UNDER WAY. THIS WAS ONE FIGHT DACK DID NOT WANT TO MISS!

THE 'MARY ANN' WAS A HIVE OF ACTIVITY FOR THE NEXT HOUR! THEN WITH THE TIDE, HER ANCHOR-CHAIN RATTLED UP AND SHE STEAMED OFF DOWNRIVER . . .



MEANWHILE, ON DARK ISLAND . . .



AS TRAVERS WAS DRAGGED IN, BROND SWUNG ON HIM... HIS EYES WERE COLD, PITILESS...



THE OLD MAN'S EYES BLAZED.



CHARLES CAUGHT HIS BREATH. HE STARED IN HORROR.



THEN THE MAIN DOOR OPENED AND SMILEY ENTERED, PUSHING EILEEN BEFORE HIM...



A SOB BURST FROM EILEEN'S LIPS AND THEN SHE FLUNG HERSELF INTO HER FATHER'S ARMS.



CHARLES TRAVERS MOANED AS HIS DAUGHTER WAS PULLED FROM HIM . . .



EILEEN WAS ROPED TO A CHAIR, THEN THE GANG WATCHED IN TENSE SILENCE AS THE OLD MAN CROUCHED AT THE BENCH.



SCRAPS OF OLD BASE-METAL WERE LOADED INTO THE TRANSMUTATION - CHAMBER AT THE END OF THE MINATURE CYCLOTRON . . .



THEN CHARLES TRAVERS THREW OVER THE SWITCH,
AND THE MACHINE WHINED INTO LIFE !



WITH BEADS OF SWEAT
ON HIS BROW, CHARLES
TRAVERS CROUCHED OVER
THE CYCLOTRON !

WITHIN THE CHAMBER,
THE METALS GLOWED AND
LIQUEFIED UNDER THE
BOMBARDMENT OF THE
ATOM - STREAM !

MINUTES TICKED BY !
THEN THE TREMBLING
OLD MAN SWITCHED OFF
THE DYNAMO, AND THE
SHRILL WHINE DIED AWAY.

JUST THEN I ARRIVED ON DARK ISLAND IT LOOKED GRIM AND FORBIDDING . . . THERE WAS NO SOUND SAVE FOR THE SEA WHISPERING AMONG THE ROCKS . . . I MOVED FORWARD STEALTHILY . . .

NOT A SOUL
ABOUT ! MAYBE
THEY'RE NOT ON
DARK ISLAND,
AFTER ALL !



I MADE MY WAY WARILY UP TO THE OLD HOUSE . . .

JUST AS WELL
TO PLAY SAFE
ALL THE SAME !
IF BROND AND HIS
MOB ARE HERE , I'VE
GOT TO SURPRISE
THEM !



THE DOOR WAS AJAR. I CROUCHED LISTENING, IN THE GLOOMY DARKNESS OF THE HALL. THEN I FROZE. NOW I COULD HEAR THE FAINT MURMUR OF VOICES. I CREPT FORWARD...



PEERING INTO THE ROOM I COULD SEE THAT EVERY EYE WAS RIVETED ON CHARLES TRAVERS. NO ONE MOVED. THEN CHARLES THRUST DOWN A LEVER AND A GLOWING, GOLDEN LIQUID SPURTED INTO A CRUCIBLE... IT WAS LIQUID GOLD!



BROND PUSHED OLD CHARLES ASIDE, EYES GLITTERING WITH GREED!



I STARED, MY EYES GLEAMING. HERE WAS PROOF THAT MY HUNCH HAD BEEN RIGHT. CHARLES HAD DISCOVERED HOW TO MAKE GOLD. BROND TRIED TO KIDNAP HIM AND KILLED TOM TRAVERS. WHAT HE HAD NOT RECKONED ON WAS EILEEN RETURNING EARLY, AND THE DRUGGED SCIENTIST BEING ACCUSED OF HIS OWN BROTHER'S MURDER!



SO HE HAD MADE A SECOND ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP CHARLES, WHICH HAD SUCCEEDED, AND HAD FORCED HIM TO MAKE GOLD.

BUT I DID NOT MEAN HIM TO GET AWAY WITH IT!

I STEPPED INTO THE ROOM, AUTOMATIC IN HAND..





THEN EILEEN SCREAMED AS I STEPPED
FORWARD !



A RIFLE-BUTT SMASHED DOWN ONTO MY
WRIST AS I SPUN ROUND, AND MY GUN
WENT FLYING !



3 WAS PUSHED FORWARD INTO THE ROOM, THE RIFLE AT MY BACK !

WELL DONE, SMILEY ! BRING HIM HERE !

LUCKY THING I HAPPENED TO BE BEHIND THE DOOR, BOSS ! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH HIM ?



BROND SMILED THINLY.

I THINK IT'S TIME WE DISPOSED OF ALL THREE, SMILEY ! I DON'T NEED THE OLD MAN ANY MORE AS I CAN NOW WORK THE EQUIPMENT MYSELF. I'VE SEEN HIM WORKING THIS MACHINE BEFORE AND THIS TIME I HAVE FILLED IN THE GAPS IN MY KNOWLEDGE !



THEN BROND WALKED TO THE CENTRE OF THE STONE FLOOR.

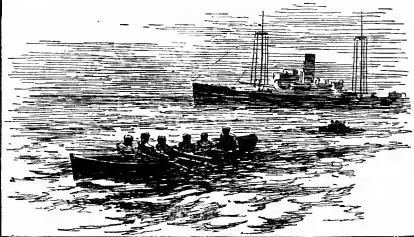
WE'LL DUMP THEM WHERE THEIR BODIES WILL NEVER BE FOUND ! THERE'S AN OLD WELL UNDER THIS CENTRE FLAGSTONE ! FETCH A CROWBAR, KARL ! PRIZE IT UP !



A CHILL RAN DOWN MY SPINE AS THE HEAVY STONE WAS LEVERED UP !



UNKNOWN TO US ALL AT THAT MOMENT, THE 'MARY ANN' HAD HEAVED TO OFFSHORE IN THE GROWING DUSK !
CAPTAIN DACK HAD RETURNED, TO DARK ISLAND -- WITH A VENGEANCE !



LEADING HIS CREW, DACK CHARGED TOWARDS THE HOUSE!



MEANWHILE, JULIUS BROND PEERED DOWN INTO THE SLIMY DEPTHS OF THE OLD WELL!



STRUGGLING LIKE A MADMAN I WAS DRAGGED TOWARDS THE WELL ! I TRIED EVERY TRICK AND DODGE I KNEW, BUT I COULDN'T BREAK FREE. THEY CLUNG ON LIKE LIMPETS, AND A WAVE OF HORROR SWEEPED OVER ME AS WE FOUGHT ON THE VERY EDGE OF THE WELL.



THEN THE DOOR CRASHED OPEN, AND CAPTAIN DACK BURST IN AT THE HEAD OF HIS CREW !



SMILEY'S FACE WENT AS WHITE AS CHALK !



SNARLING, BROND GRABBED FOR HIS GUN, BUT BURLY CAPTAIN DACK WAS QUICKER ! HE LEAPT FORWARD, HIS RIGHT FIST EXPLODED ON BROND'S JAW AND THE CROOK DROPPED TOWARDS THE FLOOR .



THEN THE CREW OF THE 'MARY ANN' TORE INTO THE GUNMEN ! FISTS AGAINST BLAZING GUNS !



AT LAST IT WAS ALL OVER. THE BATTERED CROOKS LAY SPRAWLED ABOUT THE FLOOR. I CUT EILEEN FREE AND THEN SHOOK DACK'S HAND.

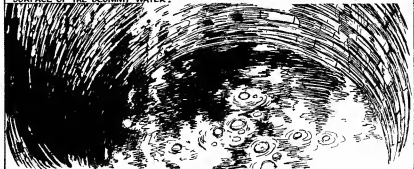


THEN DACK RAPPED OUT AN ORDER.

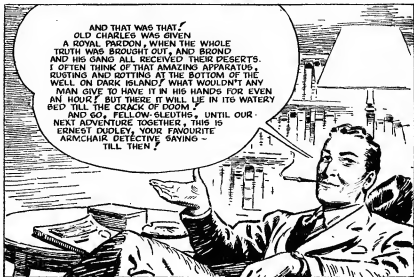




WE SAW A GREAT SPLASH DOWN IN THE DEPTHS. SOON ALL THAT REMAINED OF THE ASTOUNDING INVENTION WERE THE BUBBLES THAT ROSE AND BROKE ON THE SURFACE OF THE GUMMY WATER.



AND THAT WAS THAT.
OLD CHARLES WAS GIVEN
A ROYAL PARDON, WHEN THE WHOLE
TRUTH WAS BROUGHT OUT, AND BROND
AND HIS GANG ALL RECEIVED THEIR DESERTS.
I OFTEN THINK OF THAT AMAZING APPARATUS,
RUSTING AND ROTTING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE
WELL ON DARK ISLAND! WHAT WOULDN'T ANY
MAN GIVE TO HAVE IT IN HIS HANDS FOR EVEN
AN HOUR! BUT THERE IT WILL LIE IN ITS WATERY
BED TILL THE CRACK OF DOOM!
AND SO, FELLOW-SLEUTHS, UNTIL OUR
NEXT ADVENTURE TOGETHER, THIS IS
ERNEST DUDLEY, YOUR FAVOURITE
ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE SAYING -
TILL THEN!



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