

Calendon Kidnapping Case

Continued from page 10

my revolver? Good! Telephone immediately to Calendon to take the next train for Antwerp, and meet me at the station. I don't want to miss it." He threw himself into a heavy overcoat, slipped the revolver into a pocket, jammed on his hat, and was off before Valeska could question.

She waited in the studio, however, so absorbed had she become in the mystery, so much she feared that, when Astro did return, it would be with some dreadful news.

and, taking the lamp, stumbled down narrow steps.

In another moment there came a stifled clamor from below. Calendon dashed in terror.

SUDDENLY, up stairs, where Astro momentarily remained, there was the sound of footsteps. Then a gruff voice broke out.

"I've got you fellows now! I've had you for five days, and now, by hickey, make you pay for it! You'll never see another body, curse you!"

There was a shuffling of feet, and a voice rang steadily: "Throw up your hands and drop that gun! You're a pretty chap to call names! I think you'll show up when you're investigated! Constable Jimmie come up here!" He kicked loudly on the floor.

"By Jove! It's the corner!" said the constable, appearing in the doorway.

"Is there a body here?" the cornered man asked.

"Yes—why?" Now Calendon appeared most puzzled and alarmed of all.

"It's all right, Mr. Calendon, we're on the trail now!" said Astro.

Calendon groaned.

"But your boy is safe and unharmed, have suspected this a long time; but I dare tell you hope. Now, coroner, tell me the story."

"Why," he began, turning shamefacedly to the constable, "it's this way, Jim. I was comin' along the road last Friday with an outfit an' three of them poorhouse bodies, y'know, an' blamed if the hind didn't break short off about a mile up o' here. I had to walk clean back to Miller's house for a scantlin' to prop up my axle with, an' I was gone about three-quarters of an hour. When I come back I see the coffins was gone,—the little one,—an' it was. An' I see the axle had been sawed half through with a hack saw. Somebody had laid for me just to steal that—"

"And will you please explain," said the constable, "why you were burying these bodies for which you are paid by the township at night?"

The coroner's face fell. "Oh, I was too busy day times," he said lamely.

"I think it had best be looked into," said the constable. I can see where our friend the coroner makes a very pretty little income from his medical students, and does the town out of a few burials occasionally. But we must go, Mr. Calendon. I had hoped that the boy was here. We must hurry to the other house. It's a mile away. We'll take your ring, while you attend to the remains in the cellar."

THE three men hurried outdoors, and the constable drove at breakneck pace to the Easting's house. Arrived there, they knocked loudly, and, there being no immediate answer, the constable entered.

Calendon followed close behind. "Harold! Harold!" he called loudly.

There was no reply, but a door slammed up stairs, and a pattering of feet was heard. Calendon fairly floundered up and threw open the door. There was still no one in sight, but a tumbled bed showed where some one had lain. A boy's clothes were scattered about the room, a few playthings were on the floor.

Astro, who had followed on the heels, made directly for a closed door, wrenched it open. There sat a little boy, his red flannel nightgown, caressing a large glass jar of jam. His round chubby cheeks were stained with strawberry.

Then, before his father could reach for him in exultation, the child exclaimed, "I don't care. I liked it, and I took it. I don't care. I don't care! I don't care!"

And after the frightful strain that had been on the three men who gazed down at the boy, they all broke into a hearty laugh.

It was Harold Calendon, and he was perfectly happy.

IT was late in the evening when a telegraph boy arrived with a message for her. Eagerly she tore it open. It read:

"Problem 204: White knight to king's fourth; black rook to queen's bishop's third; white king's rook's pawn to seventh; check black queen's bishop to king's knight; third mate. Please file. A."

Valeska was never more exasperated in her life. Only the solution to a knotty chess problem!

WHEN Calendon alighted on the platform at Antwerp, at eight o'clock that evening, he was met in the shadow of the station by Astro and a burly local constable.

"Plenty of time and a clear field, I think," said Astro, his eyes dancing with the anticipation of peril imminent; "and unless I'm very much mistaken in my understanding, Mr. Calendon, I'll have some pleasant news for you before long."

"I hope to Heaven you—!" said the old man. "I can't stand this much longer. I've sent Mrs. Calendon to the hospital. Her nerves have quite given way under the strain. I only hope that if we get the boy we'll find the dastard that stole him as well!" His look was grim.

"I am afraid you won't get that opportunity, however," said the mystic, drawing out his watch and pausing to inspect it under a gas lamp. "Mr. Stacey was born under an evil planet and in an evil House of the Heavens. At the present moment he is under arrest in the Beau Rivage Apartments. One of his accomplices has just left here for New York, where she will be met by the police. Another will soon be taken. I have been waiting for one more of the gang who is engaged in a shady business hereabouts. We need only him to solve the last shreds of mystery in this affair. I've already seen him in my crystals, dressed in black. It remains to find him on the material plane."

They walked rapidly through the outskirts of the village, past quite a stretch of open country.

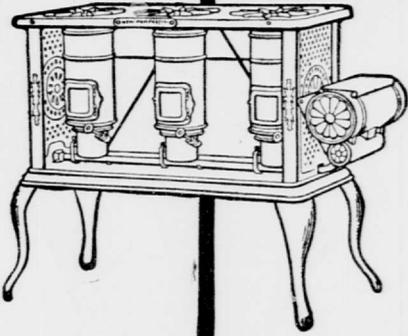
Calendon, nervously excited, spoke only once, to say, "There must be some change of affairs, Astro; for so far as I can find the gang didn't speculate to-day in the stocks I tipped off in 'The Era.' I had a circle of my friends attempting to influence the market; but it got away from them altogether. We simply couldn't sell enough to make any effect. The Fountain Company common stock jumped seven points, when I sold out, and I'm about fifty thousand ahead of the game. If my son is restored to me, I'll have good cause to be happy to-night." He relapsed into silence.

THEY were now approaching a lonely house, back from the road, and in utter darkness. Astro strode up to the front door and knocked. There was no response. The constable unlocked the door with a skeleton key, and all three men entered. A kerosene lamp was found in the kitchen and lighted. Hardly had it been brought into the front room, when Calendon stooped and picked up a child's shirt.

"It is my son's, I'm sure!" he exclaimed in excitement. "Harold! Harold!" he cried aloud, and began a hasty search through the rooms. He was followed by Astro and the constable; but, after a thorough inspection, no living thing was found except a canary, which, awakened by the disturbance, warbled shrilly in the sitting room.

The constable threw open the cellar door,

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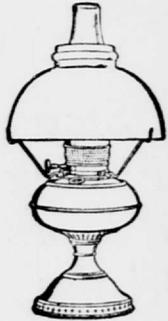


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Marvels of the Human Body

Continued from page 6

strength. It has been estimated that if the hairs of a blond could be plaited into a rope, they would support a weight of eighty tons.

The hair on the head grows at the rate of about one-fiftieth of an inch each day, or about seven inches a year. An eyelash grows much faster, say about one-twentieth of an inch each day, until it reaches a length of four-tenths of an inch, when it falls out. The life of an eyelash is about one hundred and twenty days.

It just takes about the same length of time, from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and forty days, for the fingernails to be entirely renewed. The toenails grow more slowly, requiring from six months to a year for their renewal.

A Baby's Growth

THE average length of a baby fifteen days old is nineteen and one-half inches. During the next fifteen days the baby grows an inch and a half. By the end of its first year of life it has grown to be twenty-eight and one-quarter inches long. If the child went on growing at this rate, by the end of its third year of life it would have attained the height of the average adult man, five feet nine inches. By the end of his fifth year he would be ten feet seven inches tall, and by the time he reached his tenth birthday he would be a

veritable Colossus, with a height of sixty-two feet three inches. After the first year, however, the rate of growth gradually decreases. During the second year the average growth of the body is three and one-half inches; during the third year it is only three inches; during the fourth year it is two and a half inches; for the next ten years it is about one and a half inches a year.

As might be expected, there is a similar variation in the rate of weight increase. During the first twenty-two weeks of life, the infant doubles its weight. If a child of average weight continued to grow at this rate, long before its fourth birthday he would weigh two tons.

The human eye can discern an object as minute as one-six-hundred-and-twenty-fifth of an inch in diameter. An object of this size makes on the retina, or sensitive plate of the eye, an image one twelve-thousandth of a hundredth of an inch in diameter. With the help of the microscope the eye can discern an object one-four-hundred-thousandth of an inch in size.

Nerve messages travel at the rate of one hundred and ten feet a second.

The body contains over two thousand miles of tubing.

The body secretes each day about two gallons, or thirty pounds, of digestive fluids.