

affairs which have no connections with each other, Miss Kendall," he remarked. "The original Valdorome pearls, the replica here and the suicide of Mademoiselle De Voe."

"It was no suicide," cut in Lawson, laying down on the table the fragments of the glass tube which Clare had brought to him. "Miss De Voe was murdered—unintentionally, I believe, but actually murdered—in an attempt to get the pearls which she was wearing at the time."

"While restoring them," added Clare.

Violet looked even more wide-eyed at the information.

"Since Mr. Wheaton denies having seen or heard from Miss De Voe for days before the tragedy," went on Clare, "I must ask her friend what she knows. Miss Le Compte, do you know whether Miss De Voe had any visitors on the day or night before the tragedy?"

Wheaton fixed his eye on her. She did not meet it. "None that I can swear to," she answered, evidently much to Wheaton's relief. Margot smiled again.

"You know of nothing that could have impelled any one to use such an instrument as Dr. Lawson has shown us here on the table?" pursued Clare mercilessly. "No man would have had the heart to badger the trembling stage beauty further in seeking evidence. It was just here that Clare showed her superiority over a man detective."

Violet shook her head.

"THERE are in Paris," resumed Clare, facing the whole room, criminals among the higher ranks of the Apaches known as *entourneurs*, sleep makers. To become an *entourneur* one must possess, I am told, a high education and knowledge of society as well as courage, while the principal qualification in a woman is beauty. With a tube of kélène or ethyl chloride, such as was used in this instance, they will rob in broad daylight in cabs, in private dining

rooms and compartments of railway carriages, almost anywhere. The only thing is to get a victim in such a position that they can get at him and then get away without attracting attention. Now, a hotel is not the most easily entered place in the world."

Clare paused. Callahan nodded. She had come at last evidently to a question as yet unanswered in his own mind.

"Mr. Wheaton," she hurried on, "I know your story. You have been blackmailed. You have bought back the real Valdorome necklace which cost you so much to have restored. It is not a replica. Even at that price you can not purchase silence. Mr. Callahan, call 4,000 Main, police headquarters, and ask them to send a couple of Central Office men here directly. Dr. Lawson, you are interested in the scientific and criminal aspects of this affair. Suppose you read that."

Clare had tossed the cablegram on the table. Lawson picked it up and read: "Paris police report Violet Le Compte very friendly last summer Apache Andrade, believed now New York assumed name."

Violet Le Compte had as suddenly regained her composure as she had lost it. She was indeed a consummate actress, whether as a trembling, tearful, guileless ingenue or a towering, scornful woman of the world, blinding justice by her sheer regal brunette beauty.

"It is of no use to assume that haughty air of injured innocence, Miss Le Compte," concluded Clare. "You were the only person known by the hotel employees to have had access to Miss De Voe's room that night. You can not escape Dr. Lawson's science and the intuition that prompted me to cable to Paris."

A growl of rage burst from Margot. Clare turned to him.

"Margot you may have become in New York," she flashed. "In Paris, Andrade. Be quiet. We are two to one against you and your accomplice. Besides, here are the police."

## Hoof and Claw

(Continued from Page 3)

fused scuffling mixed with groans, and then into a wild crashing of flight and pursuit. The fight was over; but McLaggan perceived with a thrill that the fight was coming his way.

Half a minute later, the fugitive broke out into the trail and came dashing down it, wild-eyed, nostrils blowing bloody foam and flanks streaming crimson. McLaggan stepped politely aside to let him pass, and he passed unheeding. He had no eyes even for the arch-foe, man, in this moment of his defeat and humiliation.

But not so the victor! The most splendid specimen of a bull-elk that McLaggan's eyes had ever rested upon, he stopped short in his pursuit at sight of the gray, erect figure standing there motionless beside the trail. McLaggan expected him to turn and flee back to his cows, and hasten to shepherd them away from danger. But the great beast, now in the hour of his triumph and his most arrogant ferocity, had far other intention. He stood staring at McLaggan for several seconds; but McLaggan saw that there was nothing like fear in that insolent and flaming regard. The bull stamped sharply on the sod with one knife-edged fore-hoof; and McLaggan, knowing what that meant, glanced around discreetly for the easiest tree to climb. He was now furious at the lack of his rifle, and vowed never again to go without it.

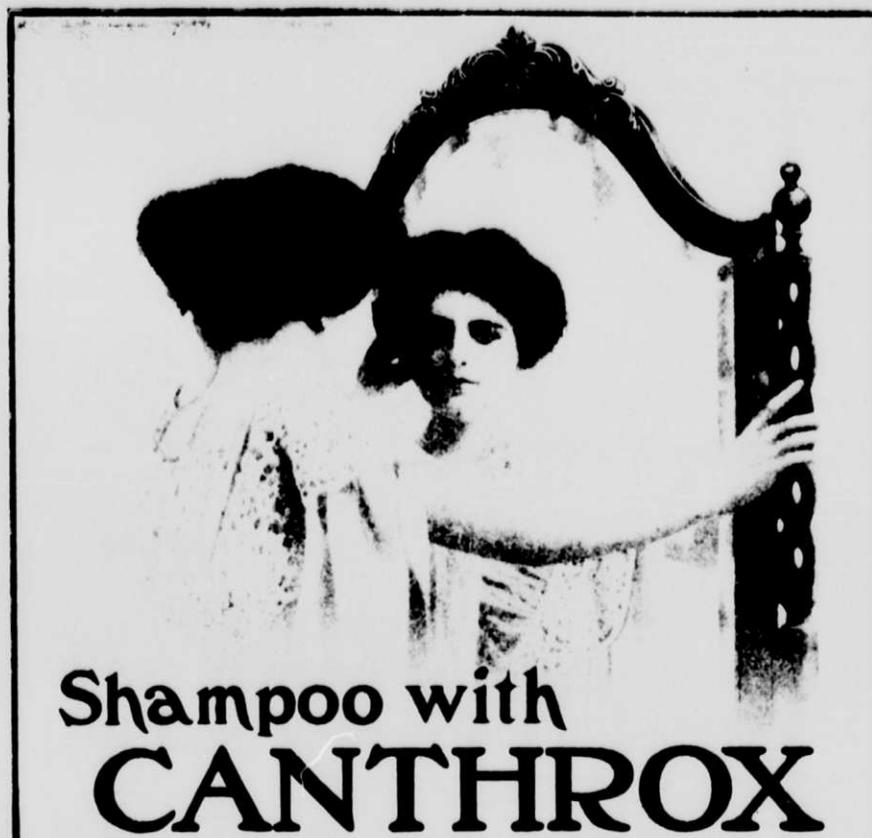
Fortunately for McLaggan, the great bull was no mere blind and brutal ruffian of a fighter. Like all his aristocratic breed, he had a certain punctilio to observe in such affairs. He had first to stamp his challenge several times, snort vehemently, and advance his antlers in fair warning. Then he came on, at first daintily and mincingly. And only after that for-

mal preliminary did he break into his furious rush.

But already McLaggan had swung himself into the tree, just out of reach—leaving his pack at the foot.

For a little McLaggan was engrossed in wondering if he really *was* quite out of reach, so vigorous were the rearings and thrustings of his enemy, so agile the high strokes of those fine, destructive hoofs. Then out of the tail of his eye he caught sight of several elk cows—the herd stealing warily down the trail to see how it was faring with their victorious lord. They halted, noses in air and ears pricked forward anxiously, wondering at their lord's strange antics under the tree. Then, all together, they wheeled about sharply, as if worked on a single spring, and fled off in enormous bounds over and through the thickets. McLaggan stared after them in surprise, wondering at their abrupt flight. A moment later it was explained to him, as he saw the tawny head and shoulders of an immense panther emerge, for just the fraction of a second, into the trail.

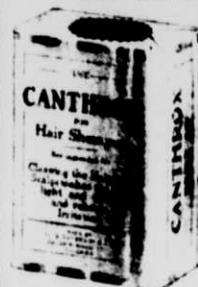
McLaggan was gratified at this confirmation of his woodcraft, but he was now a little anxious as to what was going to happen next. He realized that in traveling without his rifle he had fairly coaxed the unexpected to happen; and it seemed to him that this particular panther was not going to play by the accepted rules of the game, or he would never have been so audacious as to reveal himself, even for that instant, in the open trail. He looked down upon his magnificent adversary raging below him, and felt a generous impulse to give him warning of the peril lurking in the undergrowth. As between the elk and the panther, his sympathies were



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