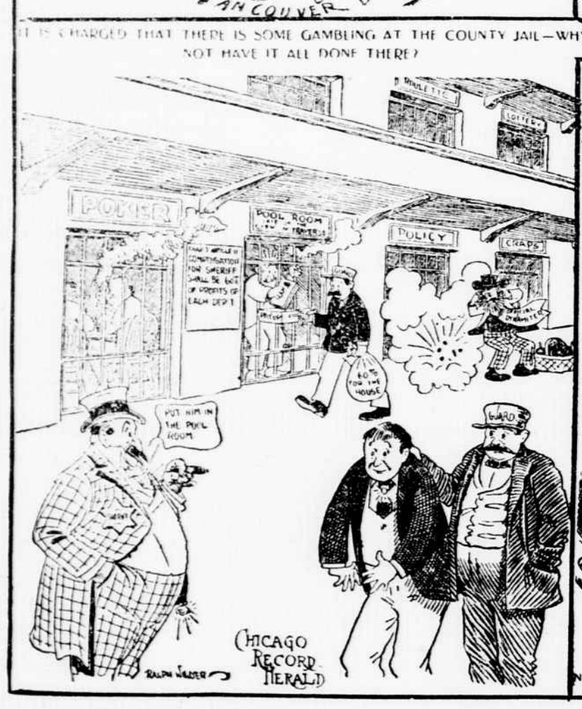
As the CARTOONISTS SEE THE NEWS



THE MIDNIGHT GUEST.

A DETECTIVE STORY BY FRED M. WHITE,

Author of "The Crimson Blind," "The Corner House," Etc.

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CHAPTER III.
The Mark of the Beast.

A sudden quick cry broke from Ravenspur's lips. He fairly staggered back; his white face was given over to a look of peculiar horror. Then as he became aware of the curious glances of his companion he made a great effort to regain his self-control.

"I—I don't understand," he stammered. "A stiletto made of glass! A long, slender blade like an exaggerated needle, I presume. Yet, now I come to think of it, I recollect that, when I was painting a 'Borgia' subject once, my costume dealer spoke of one of those Corsican daggers. I did not take much interest in the conversation at the time. And you have an idea that this is the way in which my poor friend met his death?"

Ravenspur was speaking quietly and easily now. He had altogether regained control of himself save for an occasional twitching of his lips. He paced up and down the room thoughtfully for some time, utterly unconscious of Dullas' sharp scrutiny.

"I suppose there's nothing more you have to tell me?" he said at length. "This is evidently going to be one of those crimes which thrill a whole community for a week and then are never heard of again. Still, if there is anything I can do for you, pray do not hesitate to ask for my assistance. I suppose we can do no more till after the inquest is over?"

Without waiting for any reply from his companion Ravenspur quitted the room and went back to his brougham. He threw himself into a corner, and pulled his hat over his eyes. For a long time he sat there immersed in deep and painful thought, and utterly unconscious of his surroundings. Even when the brougham pulled up in Park lane he made no attempt to dismount till the footman opened the door and addressed him by name.

"I—I beg your pardon, Walters," he said; "this terrible business prevents my thinking about anything else. I am going into my own room now, and I am not to be disturbed by anybody. If I am dining out tonight, tell Mr. Ford to write and cancel the engagement. Oh, here is Ford himself."

The neat, clean-shaven secretary came forward.

"Your lordship seems to have forgotten," he said. "You are giving a dinner here tonight yourself. You gave orders especially to arrange it, because you were anxious for some of the royal academicians to meet the young Polish artist——"

"I had clean forgotten it," Ravenspur said, with something like a groan. "Entertaining people tonight will be like dancing in fetters. Still, I must make the best of it, for I should not like that talented young foreigner to be disappointed. In the meantime, I am not at home to anybody."

With this admonition Ravenspur passed up to his own private rooms, and carefully locked the door behind him. He took a cigar from his case, and lighted it, only to fling it away a moment later in disgust. He stood just for a moment with his hand on a decanter of brandy, and then with a smile for his own weakness poured out a glassful, which he drank without delay.

"I am a fool and a coward," he muttered. "What can there be to be afraid of after all these years. Why do I hesitate in this way when boldness and decision would avert the danger?"

Ravenspur sat there, looking moodily into space. He heard the house resounding to the sound of the luncheon gong, but he made no movement. The mere suggestion of food was repulsive to him, clean as his habits were and robust as his appetite usually was. The lane and the park were gay with traffic now; the roar of locomotion reached the ears of Ravenspur as he sat there. Presently the noise of the newsboys came again, and the name of Delahay seemed to fill the air to the exclusion of everything else. Ravenspur rang his bell and asked for a paper.

The flimsy, ill-printed sheet fairly reeked with the latest and most ghastly of London tragedies. Nothing else seemed to matter for the moment. Seven or eight columns were given over to an account of the affair. Before he sat himself down to read steadily through, Ravenspur glanced at the last paragraph, to find that the preliminary inquiry had been adjourned for a week. Most of the florid sensational paragraphs contained nothing new. The only point that interested the reader was the medical evidence.

This was compact and to the point. Death had been undoubtedly due to a stab over the heart which had been inflicted by some long, pointed instrument, not much thicker, apparently, than a needle. So far as the police doctor could say, the weapon used had been an Italian stiletto. There was practically no blood. Indeed, the whole thing had been accomplished in a cool and deliberate manner by a man who was not only master of his art, but who must have possessed a considerable knowledge of anatomy. Evidently he had chosen a spot to inflict the wound with careful deliberation, for the deviation of half an inch either way might have produced comparatively harmless results. It was the opinion of the doctor that, had the fatal thrust been made through the bare skin, all trace of it might have been overlooked. It was only the adherence of the dead man's singlet to the tiny puncture that had caused sufficient inflammation to attach suspicion to the point of impact. All this pointed to the fact that the crime had been clearly premeditated and carried out coldly and deliberately.

For the moment, however, the great puzzle was to discovered how the murderer had been aware that he would be in a position to find his victim at Fitzjohn Square. It was proved conclusively enough that Louis Delahay had come back to England on the spur of the moment, and that equally on the spur of the moment he had made up his mind to visit his house, and, therefore, nobody could possibly have known besides his wife when he had left the Grand Hotel. On this point public curiosity would have to wait, seeing that Mrs. Delahay was in no condition to explain. In fact, she was in the hands of a medical man who had prescribed absolute quiet for the present.

Ravenspur tossed the paper impatiently aside, and rang for his tea. The slow day dragged along until it was time for him to dress and prepare for the reception of his guests. He came down presently to the drawing room, where one or two of the men had already assembled. His old pleasant smile was on his face now. He was once more the polished, courtly man of the world. He steeled himself for what he knew was coming. Practically the whole of his guests were artists of distinction. And the death of Louis Delahay would be the one topic of conversation. The blinds were down now, for the young spring night had drawn in rapidly and it was perfectly dark outside. The clock struck the hour of eight, and the butler glanced in inquiringly. Ravenspur shook his head.

"Not quite yet, Simmonds," he said; "we are waiting for Sir James Seton. As he is usually the soul of punctuality he is not likely to detain us."

"You can take his place if necessary," one of the guests laughed. "When I see Seton and our host together I always feel quite bewildered. Two such public men had no business to be so absurdly alike."

"There is no real resemblance," Ravenspur laughed, "though people are constantly making absurd mistakes. It is excusable to mistake one for the other in the dark, but not in the daylight. Besides, Seton is a much taller man than I am, and much slimmer. We should hear nothing about his likeness but for certain gentlemen of the press who make their living out of little paragraphs."

"Well, they have got plenty to occupy their attention now," another guest remarked. "This business of poor Delahay's is likely to give them occupation for some time. Tell us all about it, Ravenspur. I hear that you were down at Fitzjohn Square this morning. Is there anything fresh?"

Ravenspur groaned in his spirit. All the same, his manner was polished and easy as he turned to the speaker. But before he had time to give any details there was a sound of excited voices in the hall outside, the banging of a door or two, and then a tall, elderly man staggered into the room and fell into a seat. There was an ugly scar on the side of his face, a few drops of blood stained his immaculate shirt front.

"Good heavens!" Ravenspur cried. "My dear Seton, what is the matter? Simmonds, bring the brandy here at once."

"No, no," the newcomer gasped. "I shall be all right in a minute or two. A most extraordinary thing happened to me just now. I was coming toward the lane by the back of Lord Fairhaven's house on my way here when a man came out from under the shadow of the trees, and commenced a violent attack upon me. Fortunately, I was able to ward him off with my stick, but not before he had marked me in the way you see. Somebody happened to be coming along and my assailant vanished. Still, it was a nasty adventure, and all the more extraordinary because the fellow evidently mistook me for our friend Ravenspur. He actually called me by that name."

All eyes were turned in the host's direction, for a strange, choking cry burst from his lips.

(To be continued tomorrow.)

BUSY DAYS AT BOYDS.

A Marriage and a Fire Help Things Along.

Special Correspondence of The Star.

BOYDS, Md., September 14, 1907.

James Boxall of Boyds and Miss May Dillehay of Slidell were married yesterday at Clarksburg, in the parsonage of the M. E. Church south, by Rev. F. F. Neel. Mr. Boxalls was divorced from his first wife about a year ago.

A fire yesterday on the farm of Mr. B. Dixon, at Urbana, near Hyattstown, destroyed a barn, corn shed and 1,500 bushels of wheat. Damage, $3,500.

The high school at Gaithersburg reopened September 2 with 130 pupils, the largest attendance in the history of the new school.

John W. Williams will leave Monday for a health-seeking trip to Billings and Helena, Mont., and Seattle, Wash.

Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Windsor and Mrs. Windsor, former residents of this vicinity, are visiting their old homestead at Clarksburg. They now reside in Baltimore.

The work on the new bank building at Poolesville is progressing and the bank will be ready for business by November 1. The vaults, which were hauled over the road from the site of the old Montgomery county National Bank at Rockville, are being placed in position.

OCEAN GROVE.

Special Correspondence of The Star.

OCEAN GROVE, N. J., September 14, 1907.

As a result of investigations into the matter by the townspeople it has been found that a number of changes have been made in the original by-laws of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association. These appear in the eighth and tenth annual reports, the only ones which were found to contain by-laws. The discovery did not come as a surprise to the majority of the investigators. It is part of a subject upon which Ocean Grovers have been much wrought up of late, and several meetings of investigation into the doings of the association have been called within the last few weeks. The residents of the resort are so heartily tired of having no voice in the running of their town affairs that a radical change in the management is likely to be a result of the uprising.

Members of the Ocean Grove Festival Orchestra held a farewell reception at the orchestra house Tuesday night before separating to go their various ways for the winter. The orchestra members come from all parts of the country, and during the summer season it is their custom to live under one roof in Ocean Grove, an entire house, under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. George Burnham, being devoted to their comfort. This last reception of the season was an informal affair, at which music was not the sole topic of conversation, although it entered somewhat into the talk of the hour. Games were played, which provoked much merriment, and there was a deal of chatting on the broad verandas overlooking Wesley lake. The orchestra members have played for nine years in the Auditorium, under the direction of Prof. Tall Esen Morgan, musical director, and the organization is much like a big family. A majority of the members will play at Mr. Morgan's New York and Brooklyn engagements during the fall and winter, and many have made application to return to Ocean Grove another summer.

Among the Washingtonians registered at the New Philadelphia are Mr. and Mrs. Chester R. Clarke, Miss Genevieve Hutchins and Roy Garrett.

H. J. Stevenson of Washington is a late guest at the Ocean View.

Charles A. Roberts, S. D. Avery and Miss Selina Tucker of Washington are among the patrons of the Majestic.

Miss Adrienne Leslie and Miss Edith Runyon of Washington have lately arrived in Ocean Grove to spend several weeks at the Alaska.

Among the September guests here are Mr. and Mrs. William A. Smythe of Washington, who are making their headquarters at the Atlantic House.

Prominent among the visitors from the Capital city registered at the United States are Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ancker and the Misses Wilpp'e.

Mrs. Louis Wingate and Miss Dorothy Rice of Baltimore are spending September at the Sheldon.

Not to Wed Mrs. White.

NEW YORK, September 14.—Charles F. McKim, senior member of the firm of McKim, Mead & White, architects, returned yesterday on the White Star liner Celtic from an extended stay abroad. He was much distressed by the story printed in this city a few weeks ago that he was to marry the widow of Stanford White, one of his partners. In referring to the rumor, he said:

"This matter was brought to my notice just before leaving Scotland, where I have been passing the summer. I have been greatly distressed by it and am very glad to have this opportunity to say that there is not the slightest foundation for such a report."

Bay State Vets Here.

Word has been received here that a party of Massachusetts state officials and civil war veterans will reach this city today bound for Winchester, Va., where tomorrow they will dedicate a monument to Massachusetts soldiers who participated in the great Shenandoah valley campaign.

Gov. Curtis Guild will join the party here today and the visitors will see Washington and vicinity in automobiles.

After dedicating the Winchester monument tomorrow the vets and officials will visit Harpers Ferry and Gettysburg Tuesday and leave for home Wednesday.

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Beautifully Constructed Princess Dresser, with full serpentine front. Large, flawless French plate mirror; richly carved standards. In dark or tuna mahogany. Price, $33.25. In quartered oak, price only..... $31.75

This Massive and Handsome Sideboard, with serpentine drawers and large bevel French plate mirror—heavy carvings. Price only... $19.65

This Parlor Table—mahogany, highly polished—you can see from the picture what a dainty design it is and how prettily carved. Price only..... $11.95

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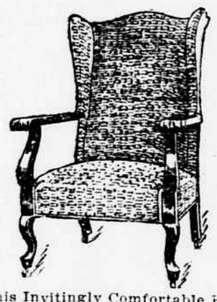
An old proverb runs: "The secret of success is constancy of purpose." The facts are: Success is knowing what to do, and doing it.

Golden Oak Dining Chair, with brace arms, high back and good cane seat. Only..... $1.15



This Invitingly Comfortable Fireside Chair, mahogany-finish frame covered in velour; excellent upholstering..... $21.25

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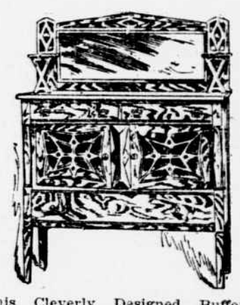
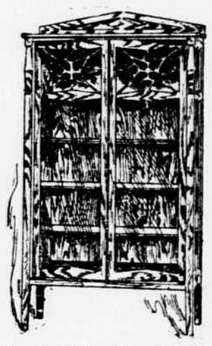


This Cleverly Designed Buffet of weathered oak, with leaded glass panels in the cupboard doors—well built throughout. Price only..... $32.75



Weathered Oak China Cabinet to match the Buffet shown above—mirror back to the upper part. Price only..... $26.85

This Very Handsome Parlor Chair, with mahogany-finish frame and upholstered seat, covered in fancy damask. Only..... $5.85