



THE CASE OF CONGRESSMAN COYD

Maxwell Grant

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CHAPTER I. AT THE CAPITOL.

A COLD drizzle had settled upon Washington. The massive bulk of the Capitol building showed hazy in the dulled afternoon light. The high dome of the great building was barely discernible against the foggy sky. Atop the dome, the resplendent statue of Armed Victory formed a shrouded figure amid the swirl of mist.

A taxicab was rolling in from the Union Depot. Arriving at the Capitol grounds, the cab pulled up at the east entrance. A wiry passenger alighted, bundling the folds of his raincoat about his chin. Paying the driver, this arrival turned toward the many steps that led into the Capitol.

Huddled visitors were coming down those steps, anxious to regain their cars and escape the increasing rain. Swinging in out of the rain, head down and in a hurry, the wiry man bumped squarely into a chap of larger build. The jostled man grunted angrily; then stopped short and clamped a heavy but friendly hand upon the wiry fellow's shoulder.

“Burke!” exclaimed the man who had been jolted. “Clyde Burke! When did you breeze into town?”

“Hello, Garvey,” grinned the wiry man, as he pulled down the collar of his raincoat and thrust out a

greeting hand. "Glad I bumped into you. I just landed in town and intended to look you up later."

"Opening the news bureau again?"

"I expect to. I'd like to get the old office in the Wallingford Building if it's still empty."

Garvey nodded, then, in an impetuous fashion he drew Clyde Burke toward the inner wall of the portico. It was plain that Garvey had something to talk about; and Clyde showed every indication of being interested.

This fact was not surprising. Both men were journalists; Clyde, a New York reporter—Garvey a freelance news hawk who preferred Washington. A few years ago, Clyde Burke had opened a bureau of his own, called the National City News Association; Garvey had coined welcome cash supplying him with stories.

The very success of the bureau had made it short-lived. Clyde Burke, as a news gatherer, had figured in the exposé of a criminal ring in Washington. The New York Classic, his old sheet, had offered him a fat salary increase because of his exploit. Clyde had returned to Manhattan; and many of his Washington friends had regretted his departure. Chief among them, Garvey.

"You've picked a ripe time to come down here, Burke," informed Garvey, as the two went into conference. "This burg is hot with news. Congress is just winding up its session, but that's only the beginning of it. Special reports, investigations, committee meetings—they're all in the making. Boy! I'm glad you blew in!"

"Any special low-down, Garvey?"

"Sure. Remember that recent story—the cancellation of lumber contracts?"

"Of course. The government found them phony and ended them. Going to use their own lumber, instead, from the national forest surplus."

"That's it. Well, Burke, there were millions of dollars involved in that clean-up; but it's just the first. Smart gyps are finding it tough to shove any new rackets past these legislators. The committees are on the job."

GARVEY paused to consult a watch that he drew from his vest pocket. He uttered a grunt of satisfaction; then clamped Clyde's elbow.

"Come along," suggested Garvey. "There's still time for a look-in. See things for yourself, Burke."

"Going up to the Senate chamber?" queried Clyde, as his companion led him through a door beneath the portico.

"No," responded Garvey, turning toward a corridor that led beneath the rotunda. "We're heading for the south wing. Nothing doing in the Senate today. We'll take a look at the monkey house."

Clyde smiled slightly at Garvey's slang term for the House of Representatives. Then he voiced a question.

"Galleries are apt to be jammed, aren't they?" asked Clyde.

"They would be," chuckled Garvey, "if it wasn't for the rain. That kept most of the gawks away. We'll find plenty of space; and you'll get a chance to see the Honorable Layton Coyd in action."

"That's something," nodded Clyde, as they stopped at a south wing elevator. "Congressman Coyd is supposed to be a real orator, isn't he?"

“A windjammer, if you ask me,” confided Garvey. “But what’s more, despite all his bluster and eccentricity, he’s capable. Individualistic—takes orders from nobody—but he lines up followers on all the best measures.”

Garvey’s talk came during the elevator ride. Reaching an upper corridor, the two journalists entered a swinging door and arrived in the gallery of the representatives. Garvey nudged Clyde as they took their seats.

Clyde nodded; below, a man was speaking. The ringing tones of a strong, oratorical voice indicated that Congressman Layton Coyd held the floor.

Peering down, Clyde made a mental study of Coyd. The famed congressman was a man of sixty, who stood with erect shoulders and high-tilted head. Coyd’s grayish face was smooth as parchment; but his profile showed a ruggedness.

A huge shock of jet-black hair topped his straight forehead. His nose was wide and somewhat flattened. His chin was rounded; and Clyde could discern a curved scar, conspicuous because of the tight flesh.

As Coyd turned, the bushiness of his eyebrows was more apparent; also a peculiar squint that seemed to be Coyd’s permanent expression. Gesturing as he spoke, raising both hands with fists half clenched, Coyd showed a tendency to tilt his head toward one shoulder, an oddity that contrasted with his erect bearing.

CLYDE had never seen the House of Representatives so quiet. But as he caught the import of the congressman’s words, Clyde realized the reason for the spell that the man had cast.

“Tyranny shall end!” Coyd paused, with one fist uplifted, as he delivered his tirade. Then, his voice dropping to a deep pitch: “Yes, tyranny. Deep, insidious tyranny, worse than that of ancient autocrats who openly enslaved their people.

“The tyranny that we have to-day is masked. It is cloaked by pretended beneficence!” Coyd’s tone had boomed; suddenly it quieted and the orator spoke with sarcasm as he spread forth his hands. “A beneficent tyranny, gentlemen, prepared to delude the simple minded.

“To us, as to little children, come these gift-bearing tyrants.” Coyd paused, his set lips twisted into an ironic smile. “Bell-ringing Kris Kringles, one on every corner, each clamoring for our confidence. Ah, yes, we believe in Santa Claus. We believe in fifty of him.”

A buzz of laughter sounded in the gallery. It subsided suddenly as Coyd, half hunched and bending forward, straightened and thrust forth a commanding fist.

“These tyrants have ruled!” boomed the orator. “Ruled because we failed to look for jokers in their contracts! But we are gullible no longer! The schemes of speculators; the falsified books of money grabbers; the exorbitant profits of swindlers who pretend that they are working for the common weal—these will be ended! Ended for us and for posterity!”

Coyd was dynamic, all his energy thrown into one titanic gesture. Watching, Clyde saw a tremendous relaxation seize the man. Coyd’s whole body shrank; he subsided into his seat and huddled there, running long fingers through his tousled hair.

APPLAUSE roared from the house. The gallery echoed it while representatives scrambled forward to clap Coyd on the back and shake his hand. The black-haired man was lost amid a flood of congressmen.

“How did you like that diatribe, Burke?” queried Garvey. “Coyd means that stuff—and he sells it. What’s

more, he's right. If you doubt me, take a look at that guy over on the other side of the gallery.”

Clyde looked to see a long-faced man who was seated just in back of the rail. There was something of the rascal in the fellow's gaunt features. His lanky figure reminded Clyde of a spidery creature. The man was glaring as he chewed his distorted lips.

“Who is he?” queried Clyde.

“Tyson Weed,” returned Garvey. “The most persistent lobbyist in Washington. A bird that still hopes to sell the government a carload of gold bricks.”

Weed was rising as Garvey spoke. Clyde saw the lobbyist move dejectedly from the gallery. He was about to speak to Garvey when the free lance grabbed his arm and pointed out another man who was preparing to leave.

This individual had an imposing air; his face, though somewhat flabby, showed distinction. His bearing was one of self-importance; there was something dramatic in his manner as he picked up a gray hat, a cane with a huge gold head, and a sporty overcoat that resembled a cape.

Below his full chin, the man was wearing a piccadilly collar, adorned with a flowing artist's necktie. The oddity of his attire was ludicrous; it indicated the conceited type of person who sought to attract attention.

“Montgomery Hadwil,” informed Garvey. “Think he's the greatest character actor in the profession. A swell-head, if ever there was one. Come along—we'll head him off.”

“What for?” queried Clyde, as he followed Garvey from the gallery. “Why does a ham actor rate important?”

“Because,” chuckled Garvey, as they made for a stairway, “Montgomery Hadwil is the fiancé of Miss Beatrice Rydel, who, in turn, is the daughter of Dunwood Rydel, who is a steel, coal, lumber magnate—and a dozen other things.”

“So Montgomery Hadwil is going to marry into the Rydel millions?”

“Into the Rydel family—not into the dough. Old Dunwood Rydel has promised to disinherit his only daughter the moment she becomes Mrs. Montgomery Hadwil.”

Garvey was hurrying toward a stairway to reach the rotunda.

“What's Hadwil around here for?” Clyde queried. “Will that get him in right with the old man?”

“The answer is simple,” returned Garvey. “Coyd is in the limelight, and whenever there's a glare, Montgomery Hadwil wants to bask in it, too. The fellow's a ham, I tell you. Wait until you hear me rib him!”

THEY came to the rotunda and spotted Hadwil crossing to leave by the east exit. They overtook the actor on the drizzly steps. Hadwil looked annoyed as he recognized Garvey. He did not slow his long, stalking pace.

“Statement for the press, Mr. Hadwil,” suggested Garvey. “What about your coming plans for matrimony? Can you give me an idea when the day will be?”

Hadwil stopped at the bottom of the steps. He tilted back his head in conceited fashion, tapped the

sidewalk with his cane.

"I leave for Europe, shortly," he announced. "There I shall devote myself to further study of the drama. Despite the envy with which my fellow Thespians regard me, I still feel that I have not yet attained perfection.

"After my return, I shall consider the plan for my marriage to Miss Rydel; all arrangements, however, will remain with her. As for my voyage—I shall be absent from America for at least six months."

A huge limousine rolled up while Hadwil was speaking. A square-faced chauffeur opened the door; the actor entered and the car rolled away, leaving Clyde and Garvey standing in the drizzle.

"That limousine," informed Garvey, "is one of half a dozen cars owned by Dunwood Rydel. I suppose his daughter Beatrice inveigled papa to let her sweetie ride about in it while he is in Washington. Well, Burke, let's hop a cab and go down to locate that office of yours."

The reporters hailed a taxi; the driver took a course for Pennsylvania Avenue. Speeding along, he passed the limousine in which Hadwil was riding. Neither Clyde nor Garvey gave that car notice. The actor, however, was keen-eyed enough to spot the reporters in their cab.

Reaching for the speaking tube, Montgomery Hadwil spoke to the chauffeur. There was an odd tone in the actor's voice, a strange, venomous snarl that seemed at variance with his pose.

"Don't forget, Mullard," Hadwil informed the chauffeur. "Tell the chief about my meeting those news hounds. So he will know that I've spilled the story."

A nod from the chauffeur. Montgomery Hadwil's lips showed a twisted leer as the pompous actor settled back on the cushions. Up ahead, Mullard's face showed a hard, knowing grin. Both occupants of the limousine had registered deep malice.

Evil was afoot in Washington. There had been purpose in Hadwil's visits to the Capitol. Yet neither Clyde Burke nor his old pal Garvey, both on the trail of news, had suspected any motive beneath the surface of Montgomery Hadwil's self-conceit.

CHAPTER II. THIEVES THRUST.

NEARLY two weeks had elapsed since Clyde Burke's arrival in Washington. Congress had ended its session, yet tension existed at the Capitol. As Garvey had predicted, there would be news. Clyde sensed it in the air. For Clyde Burke was in Washington with a mission. His reopened National City News Association was a blind. Actually, his purpose was to report doings at the Capitol to a hidden chief located in New York. For Clyde Burke was an agent of The Shadow.

It was common knowledge that certain interests had lost millions of ill-gotten dollars because of the alertness of a competent Congress. Personal investigations and cooperative committee work had disclosed many ills. Other evils were soon to be corrected. If crooks could block or counteract such measures, they would surely do so. That was a fact which The Shadow recognized.

Clyde Burke, summarizing his own findings, was forced to admit that he had accomplished but little.

In two weeks Clyde had learned but little more than he had gained on his first day. Congress had closed; Coyd was busy with committee reports, to be arranged for the next session. It was obvious, to Clyde's observation, that Coyd represented the right.

There was another man in Washington who rated even more importantly than Layton Coyd. That was

Senator Ross Releston, chairman of various committees in the upper legislative body. Releston was a great factor in the Senate; and Coyd was aping Releston's example. That policy had won him favor; for Releston was so greatly esteemed that any one who adhered closely to the senator's beliefs was due to gain ready followers. But Coyd had been wise enough to act in an independent fashion. Hence he was regarded as a power in his own right, a sort of Releston in a lesser field.

Looking for opposition to these men, Clyde could see it coming from two quarters. First, the lobbyists, who were in Washington to get all they could. Chief in this ilk was Tyson Weed, whom Clyde had seen off and on since that first day at the Capitol. Second, those men who had interests to protect. Towering from this group was Dunwood Rydel, magnate of many interests. Clyde had seen Rydel twice; the man was big and portly, gruff-voiced and glowering. There had been no interview. Rydel had refused to make any statement to the press. He and his daughter lived in a large house with a group of servants and kept to themselves.

At that point, Clyde's speculation ceased. Had it gone further, he might have made a surprising discovery. But Clyde had eliminated as a nonentity one man whom he had actually seen and should have watched: Montgomery Hadwil, the character actor whom Rydel—so people said—did not want as a son-in-law.

On Clyde's very desk were clippings that pertained to Hadwil. The reporter was actually fingering them as he stared absentmindedly from the window. The clippings showed Hadwil's saggy features and stated that the middle-aged actor had gone abroad to gain new appreciation of the drama. They added that Hadwil's marriage to Beatrice Rydel had been postponed until after his return.

So Clyde let the clippings drop to the desk as he continued to wrinkle his brow and ponder. It was not until the door opened that Clyde's reverie ended. Swinging about, Clyde saw Garvey grinning from the opened barrier that bore the title National City News Association.

"Hello, Burke," greeted Garvey. "How's the old N.C.N.A. coming along? Any chance to sell you anything?"

"What have you got?"

"Nothing—except guesses. The market's good for them, I know, but these are bum ones."

"I can't use them then."

Garvey came in and stretched himself in a chair. He helped himself to one of the Clyde's cigarettes and began a résumé.

"Regarding Mr. Coyd," he remarked. "I should say the Honorable Mr. Coyd. Well, he's overworked. Jittery, contradictory, blunt with his best of friends—the reporters. I saw him two days ago and I saw him yesterday. The first time he was haggard and worn out. The second time he was purple and angry. Never twice alike."

"What did he have to say?"

"Nothing much. He gave some halfway interviews last week; but none this week. His daughter is coming on to Washington to visit him. His two secretaries are up to their necks in work. That's all."

"Have you seen Senator Releston?"

"No. He gives no interviews, except by occasional appointment. Don't ask me if I've seen Dunwood Rydel. I haven't—that is, not to talk to. Nobody sees him. He's a sulker."

“What about Weed?”

“Say—there's something, Burke. That guy's been bobbing in and out of town like a jack-in-the-box. Seeing the people he's lobbying for, I guess. You can't figure Weed—”

Garvey paused as the telephone rang. Clyde answered the call; a voice asked for Garvey. Clyde handed over the instrument; Garvey talked abruptly, then hung up.

“Come on!” he exclaimed. “That was Tuft, of the Interstate Press, giving me a hot tip. Senator Releston has reported a burglary up at his place. He's ready with an interview for all reporters. Let's go!”

THEY hurried from the office. In a taxicab, en route to the senator's home, Garvey gave more details, also supplying facts that he had meant previously to mention.

“Foster Crozan just arrived in town,” stated Garvey. “He's a man with a lot of money, mostly inherited, who's gone in for politics. He's taken the best way to do it; going in for investigations that will help the congressional committees.”

“Didn't Crozan help to uncover those lumber contracts?” inquired Clyde. “It seems to me he was mentioned prominently.”

“He did,” acknowledged Garvey, “and he's handed more good dope to the right people since. He's due to run for the Senate from his home State; and he's done plenty to talk about in his campaign. He's a friend of Releston's. Crozan has visited Releston before; and he's on again to learn things that will make him useful when he gets elected.”

The cab had pulled up in front of the Hotel Barlingham, an old but conservative edifice which Senator Releston had chosen for his Washington residence. Garvey kept quiet as he and Clyde sauntered through the lobby, then entered the elevator.

They alighted at the sixth floor and went to a corner suite. There they entered a lounge room; a secretary ushered them through a hallway and into an office. They found half a dozen newspaper men facing Senator Releston, who sat behind a large desk.

THE senator was a man of somewhat rugged features but his face was mild in expression. Gray hair added to the dignity of his appearance; and Releston's eyes were kindly, almost curious, as they surveyed the new arrival. Recognizing that Burke and Clyde were new representatives of the press, Releston proceeded with the statement that he had been about to read.

“Early this afternoon,” stated Releston, quietly, “one of my secretaries, Donald Lanson, went into my room to discover two men rifling the drawers in my filing cabinet. The thieves locked Lanson in a closet, and it was twenty minutes later that he managed to get free.

“None of these documents, however, were originals. They were merely duplicates. So, gentlemen, the theft, while indicating real villainy, was of no serious consequence.”

With that, the senator arose. It was plain that he intended to make no further pronouncement. The reporters helped themselves to copies of the statement from a ready stack on the desk. Then they filed from the office, Clyde and Garvey among them.

“What do you make of it?” queried Clyde, as they rode away in a taxi. “Sounds like a straight statement, doesn't it?”

“Releston always talks straight,” returned Garvey, absently. “I'm wondering though—just wondering

about when it happened. It may have been earlier than Releston said.”

A pause; then Garvey added:

“Foster Crozan came in this morning. The senator probably met him. If crooks were watching, that's the time they would have picked to step into the place.”

“What about Crozan?” asked Clyde. “Where was he when we were there?”

“Somewhere in the apartment, probably. Releston didn't want him to be bothered with an interview.”

“You don't think this burglary was more serious than Releston indicated?”

“No. Chances are that the papers were duplicates, just as the senator said. The intent was bad; but the results nil.”

GARVEY dropped off before they reached the Wallingford Building; but Clyde kept on to his office. At his desk, The Shadow's agent found a pad of telegraph blanks and began to prepare a wire. That dispatch was to carry a secret to The Shadow, in New York.

In response to this wire, The Shadow would come to Washington. His presence here was needed; a rift had come into the serenity of the scene. Completing the message, with its hidden plea for his chief to visit the Capitol. Clyde reached for the telephone. As he did, the bell began to ring.

Impatient at the delaying call, Clyde snatched up the receiver, intending to be as abrupt as possible. He snapped his opening words into the mouthpiece:

“Clyde Burke speaking.”

A change came over Clyde's countenance as a voice responded. Strange, whispered tones, commanding words that held Clyde speechless. His telegram had been anticipated; the speaker on the line was The Shadow.

But Clyde's chief was not calling from New York; by The Shadow's own statement, Clyde understood that these instructions were being given from a local telephone in Washington.

Clyde hung up, baffled. The Shadow knew about the theft at Releston's. How had he learned of it? How had he arrived in Washington so soon?

Then truth dawned; and with it, Clyde gained full realization of how consequential the crime at Releston's might prove to be.

The summons that had brought The Shadow had been dispatched to him direct. Its sender, though not an agent of The Shadow, had reason to know the value of The Shadow's prowess. The man who had sent the important request was Senator Ross Releston himself!

CHAPTER III. THE SHADOW PREPARES.

HALF an hour after Clyde had received his call from The Shadow, a taxi driver pulled up in front of the Hotel Barlingham. The driver glanced askance into the rear of his vehicle, wondering whether or not he still had his passenger.

The driver grunted his relief as the rear door opened and a tall figure came into the light of the hotel front. The first inkling of his presence in the cab had been when the driver had heard a voice order him to go to the Hotel Barlingham.

The tall stranger did not appear formidable when he entered the hotel lobby. He was dressed in a dark suit. His face was of chiseled mold. Masklike features, dominated by a hawkish nose; thin, inflexible lips; eyes that were steady—these were elements of physiognomy that made the arrival's visage bear a masklike, unemotional expression.

On the sixth floor, the stranger entered the lounge of Senator Releston's apartment. Lanson was in charge there; the secretary was wan-faced and suspicious-eyed. The visitor gave him a card; Lanson nodded and smiled.

“Go right in, Mr. Cranston,” said the secretary. “Senator Releston told me not to keep you waiting.”

PASSING through to the office, the tall visitor found Senator Releston at his desk; opposite the gray-haired solon was a tall, middle-aged man who had the physique of an athlete. Sharp-eyed and alert, this individual turned a frank, square-jawed face toward the new arrival.

“Ah Cranston!” Senator Releston spoke in hearty welcome as he came to his feet and extended his hand. “It is good to see you. Meet Foster Crozan, who arrived to-day. Crozan, this is Lamont Cranston.”

Crozan delivered a strong handshake that brought the semblance of a wince from Cranston. On his feet, Crozan was tall and well-built; a powerful man who seemed much younger than his gray-streaked hair would indicate. Crozan watched Cranston seat himself leisurely in a convenient chair; then sat down himself.

“I did not mean to summon you to Washington, Cranston,” apologized Releston. “My wire merely requested you to communicate with me by long distance. I was surprised when you wired back that you were coming here.”

“Purely a coincidence, senator,” remarked Cranston, his voice a level tone that held a slight drawl. “I had intended to leave for Florida to-morrow. My luggage was all ready for shipment; so I came ahead to-day.”

“You will leave to-morrow then?”

“Yes. A few weeks in Miami; then on to Havana. After that, Brazil and the Amazon country. A six-months sojourn on this expedition.”

Releston nodded.

“Cranston is a globe-trotter,” he explained to Crozan. “He has been everywhere. I was fortunate to locate him at his club in New York.”

Crozan looked puzzled as he watched the visitor. He saw Cranston extracting a cigarette from a gold-and-platinum case. He watched the visitor lazily insert the cigarette into a holder; then produce a lighter in lackadaisical fashion. Crozan could not withhold comment.

“You go in for big-game hunting, Mr. Cranston?” he asked.

“Certainly,” drawled the visitor, pausing to puff at his cigarette. “A pursuit of yours, also, Mr. Crozan?”

“No. I was simply wondering—”

“At my lack of energy? I thought that puzzled you, Mr. Crozan. Well, I am often quite as deliberate in aiming at an elephant as I am at lighting a cigarette. Leisurely action, Mr. Crozan, is quite different from hesitancy. I make it a policy to never become excited—”

“Exactly what I told you, Crozan,” put in the senator, with a nod. “That is why I felt that Cranston's opinion would be a useful one to us in this critical situation that we are facing.”

CROZAN nodded his agreement. He was beginning to be impressed by Cranston's lack of energy. A pleased smile showed upon his open features.

“Cranston,” declared Releston, “today, thieves rifled my filing cabinet. They stole important papers that pertained to committee investigations. Those papers were only duplicates; nevertheless, their loss may be serious.”

“Because of the information which they contain?”

“Exactly. Some of them were old data, such as the lumber statistics which Crozan gathered some months ago. But others concerned unfinished subjects: mining, manufactures, utilities which we are investigating. Except, fortunately, some recent material which Crozan was to send me; but brought with him instead. That data had not as yet been filed.”

“And just how serious is their loss?”

“Very serious. Because they will tell the new owners exactly how far we have progressed with our investigations.”

Releston paused emphatically. He leaned upon the desk and added this explanation:

“You see, Cranston, the great value of these committee investigations lies in keeping certain interests in a state of quandary. If they knew that they were going to be regulated; if they knew that they were to be given a clean bill of health—in either case they would act accordingly and—”

“And defeat the investigations,” put in Crozan. “They could sell or buy, according to the future that they knew was coming; and in that manner show huge profits that they could not otherwise gain.”

“So serious is it, Cranston,” affirmed Releston, “that if Congress were still in session, I would move the dismissal of the committees as a better course than keeping them. Nevertheless, we still have one strong hope.”

CRANSTON'S face looked inquiring. Releston raised a solemn finger and drove home his point.

“Washington is filled with rumors,” declared the senator. “So many, in fact, that no credence will be given to any statement unless it comes from an authoritative source. Unless I, for instance, made some statement that would bolster the facts that these thieves have learned, the investing public would not rally to support the rogues”

“Then your course, senator,” came the quiet response, “is to avoid all statements that might serve as indicators.”

“A policy which I intend to maintain,” assured Releston. “Unfortunately, I am not the only authority concerned. Every iota of information that I possess is owned in duplicate by Congressman Layton Coyd.”

“Our new Daniel Webster,” added Crozan. “A golden-throated orator who likes to be heard. A windbag on most occasions; but one whose warbles would gain listeners now that certain information is at large.”

“It is no jesting matter, Crozan,” rebuked Releston. Then, in a solemn tone: “You see, Cranston, Coyd is an individualist. He takes orders from no one. He has the right to speak if he chooses; just as I have the

right to preserve silence.

“Moreover, he is eccentric. His efforts during the past session threw him into a high pitch of nervousness. He is really ill, under a physician's care. Yet he persists in further effort. If I could only see him, I might handle him tactfully; but he will not keep his appointment.

“That is why I wished to speak to you. I need some man to serve as intermediary. A special secretary, appointed by myself to deal directly with Coyd. To wait on him, to suit his convenience. A man who can bring back information. One who can be trusted. You can supply that man.”

“I presume that you mean Vincent.”

“I do. Harry Vincent, whom you once recommended to me in the past and who served me with intelligence and loyalty. I knew of no way to reach Vincent except through you. My hope, Cranston, is that he may be available.”

“He is. I shall wire him in Michigan to-night, senator. You may expect him within forty-eight hours.”

Leisurely, Lamont Cranston arose. Senator Releston was smiling with relief. He raised his hand, however, to restrain his guest. Taking pad and pencil, the senator scrawled a note and folded it. He passed the message to his visitor.

“Send that telegram, Cranston,” he suggested. “In my name, so that Vincent can come here direct. Unless you prefer to wire him yourself. It is optional. Well, Crozan”—Releston was turning as he spoke—“this may enable us to bolster our own forces. Our one worry from now on will be to single out our foe.”

“We have done that already,” asserted Crozan. “Dunwood Rydel is the rogue with whom we have to deal. He wants to recoup his losses from those lumber contracts. What is more, he may have interests in half a dozen of the enterprises which were named in your stolen papers.”

“I am not so sure that Rydel is the culprit, Crozan,” stated Releston. “He is on the defensive, not likely to deliver such an open thrust as thievery. I am inclined to suspect Tyson Weed.”

“Weed is a mere lobbyist. Capable of sneaky measures and tactics. Not nearly so dangerous as Rydel, senator.”

“He is a schemer, Crozan. We must not underrate him. He has money; he maintains sumptuous quarters at the Hotel Halcyon.”

“Quite true, senator. But do not underrate Rydel. He has millions; and much of his wealth is at stake.”

Releston nodded as he considered this suggestion. The senator's face was troubled; Crozan looked serious. Cranston, however, seemed to have lost interest. He shook hands in blasé fashion and strolled out through the lounge, where he obtained his suitcase from Lanson and made a departure.

“What did you think of Cranston, Crozan?” inquired Releston, after the visitor had gone.

“A weary fellow.” responded Crozan. “Frankly, senator, I feel that you hold an exaggerated impression of his capacities. All I can hope is that Vincent will represent the picture you have painted of him.”

“Cranston does seem to have slipped,” acknowledged Releston, in a troubled tone. “But I feel confident that Vincent will be as alert as usual. After all, he is the man for whom we must depend on contact with Coyd.”

WHILE Releston and his guest were discoursing thus, the subject of their conversation was riding in a taxicab, through secluded cross streets. His suitcase was open in his lap. An electric light was throwing its glare upon a metal mirror.

The cover of the case was toward the driver; he could not see the face of Lamont Cranston as it bent down into the suitcase. Long fingers were at work upon that face; they were molding it, changing its contours, applying dabs of puttylike make-up.

The transformation ended. A hawkish visage remained; but it was not the physiognomy of Lamont Cranston. A soft laugh whispered from above the mirror; the light went out as the lid of the suitcase dropped shut.

Five minutes later, the cab stopped in front of the pretentious Hotel Halcyon. The transformed passenger alighted, paid the driver and handed his bag to the doorman. Entering the hotel, he registered; but not under the name of Lamont Cranston. Instead, he signed as Henry Arnaud.

Casually, the new guest inquired for Tyson Weed, only to learn that Weed was away. Being a resident of the hotel, however, Weed would be back within a few days. His suite number, for Mr. Arnaud's information, was 1012. The suite to which the clerk assigned Henry Arnaud chanced to be 808.

After establishing himself in his new quarters, Henry Arnaud turned out the lights in the little parlor of his two-room suite. He opened his suitcase; this time no light blinked. That bulb belonged only in the special make-up tray. Arnaud had opened the tray along with the lid.

Cloth swished in the darkness. The folds of a cloak settled over shoulders. A slouch hat pressed upon a head; hands drew on black gloves. A soft laugh sounded as a figure approached the window. Another transformation had taken place. Henry Arnaud had become The Shadow.

A spectral figure, this cloaked shape swung across the sill. A gloved hand adjusted a square box that The Shadow had taken from the suitcase, clamping the container safely beneath the cloak. Strong fingers—their grip would have amazed Foster Crozan—were firm as they clutched a projecting cornice.

Beetlelike, yet indiscernible against the brick side wall of the high hotel, The Shadow poised above space. With a calm precision—a worthy tribute to the deliberate calculation of which he had boasted when guised as Cranston—The Shadow swung his body to the right and coolly caught a neighboring cornice with one freed hand.

Another swing enabled The Shadow to thrust his hand farther upward and grip the iron posts of a projecting balcony, one of a dozen ornamental contrivances that graced the broad wall of the Hotel Halcyon.

ONE minute later, The Shadow swung across the rail. His gloved hands pressed the pane of a blackened window, to discover that the sash was locked. A prying strip of steel clicked its message; The Shadow loosened the catch without leaving any telltale marks. He dropped into the room within. A tiny flashlight flickered.

The Shadow had entered Suite 1012. He spent a dozen minutes in the rooms reserved for Tyson Weed; then emerged and locked the window behind him. High above the tiny lights of the street, The Shadow swung back along the cornices. He clung with one hand while he hooked a length of threadlike wire above the final cornice. Finally he swung back into the window of 808.

Gloved fingers clicked a table lamp. Then, into the light, came the folded piece of paper that Senator Releston had given to Lamont Cranston. Unfolded, the paper read: WHILE VINCENT WILL PROVE

USEFUL, OTHER AID IS MORE URGENT. IF POSSIBLE, ARRANGE FOR THE SHADOW TO COME TO WASHINGTON AND REMAIN THROUGHOUT THE COMING CRISIS.

To his friend Lamont Cranston, Senator Releston had given this plea. For Senator Releston knew that somehow Lamont Cranston could contact that mysterious fighter who had aided the government in the past. He was sure that Cranston could bring The Shadow to Washington.

Even Releston had not identified the pretended personality of Lamont Cranston with the mysterious figure of The Shadow. Like others, the senator would believe that Cranston had left Washington for Florida.

Beneath the light, The Shadow's hand began inscribing messages. One was a summons to Harry Vincent; the others were coded orders to additional agents. The Shadow was bringing a small but competent corps of workers to Washington, there to aid him in the protective measures that Senator Releston required.

To-day, two suspects had been mentioned; Tyson Weed and Dunwood Rydel. For the present, The Shadow was prepared to concentrate on one, Tyson Weed. Should the lobbyist prove inconsequential, an investigation of the magnate would be in order. Tyson Weed was due to be covered by The Shadow.

CHAPTER IV. HARRY REPORTS.

THREE days after The Shadow's conference with Senator Releston and Foster Crozan, a sedan pulled up in front of an old brownstone house in the northwest section of Washington. The car belonged to Senator Releston; the young man who alighted from it was a brisk, clean-cut chap who had but recently come to town.

This was Harry Vincent, gaining his first view of the old mansion which Congressman Layton Coyd had chosen as a residence. Entrance was gained to the house by a pair of crumbling brownstone steps. Harry ascended them and rang the bell.

A weary, doubled-up servant admitted the visitor. The fellow blinked weakly at Harry, not recognizing him. Then came a man's voice, brisk from the hall:

"If it's Mr. Vincent, Mose, step by and let him enter."

Mose saw Harry nod; wearily, the ancient servitor allowed him to enter. In a spacious, gloomy hallway, Harry found himself face to face with a well-groomed young man, who extended his hand and delivered a pleasant smile. This chap's expression was friendly.

"My name's Jurrick," he stated. "Don Jurrick. One of Mr. Coyd's secretaries. The congressman received Senator Releston's telephone call. He says that he can see you."

Jurrick led the way toward a flight of stairs. They went upstairs and turned toward the front of the house. They came into a huge room, across it a doorway that opened into a bedroom. This was Coyd's present quarters; the place was a medley of living room, reception hall and office.

SEATED by a desk was Layton Coyd, garbed in dressing gown, his legs wrapped in a blanket. Harry noted the weariness of the man's grayish face. He also observed what Clyde had noticed; the parchmentlike texture of Coyd's skin, with the crescent scar that marred chin and cheek.

But Harry was not impressed with the ruggedness of the congressman's profile. For Coyd's features were relaxed; they seemed weather-beaten rather than well-molded.

Beside Coyd was a tall, sallow-faced man with black hair and a pointed mustache. This individual had an

air of self-assurance; his attire was immaculate, his poise seemed somewhat foreign. Jurrick introduced Harry to Coyd. The congressman shook hands without rising; then introduced Harry to the sallow-faced man, whom he named Doctor Borneau.

“Has Mr. Coyd been sick?” inquired Harry in an undertone.

“The congressman has suffered from heat strokes and nervousness,” replied Jurrick. “Doctor Borneau happened to be in Washington and arranged to act as consultant. He's been on the case several months. He happens to remain in Washington as he is preparing a series of speeches on Oriental diseases.”

Before Harry could add a comment to the conversation, another young man joined the group. He had shocky, red hair and a freckled face; he shook hands with Harry awkwardly.

“Hugh Tabbert, my fellow secretary,” stated Jurrick. “Tabbert comes from the congressman's home State, while I'm an extra hand here in Washington. Tabbert knows all the home-town politicians by their front names. That's where he had the edge on me.”

Jurrick's tone was jocular and friendly; but Tabbert seemed to resent it. Harry took that as an admission of inferiority on Tabbert's part; for Jurrick had obviously meant the remark as nothing more than a mild jest.

“Tabbert!” Coyd snapped the order from his chair. “Come here. Doctor Borneau wants to question you about my medicine.”

TABBERT approached the pair; Borneau, holding the congressman's pulse, questioned him mildly, in a foreign accent.

“You have been exact with the doses?” inquired the physician.

“Just as close to the dot as I can make them, sir.” returned Tabbert.

“That is good.” Borneau nodded. “Yes. Very good. We shall keep them on. Maybe perhaps one little change—”

He paused and drew a pad from his pocket. He made notations and handed them to Tabbert; then glanced at his watch and nodded.

“I'm tired, doctor,” complained Coyd, his tone showing irritability. “What good is medicine—treatment—if everything continues to annoy me? My mind seems bewildered—whirling—”

“Too much of the overwork,” interposed Doctor Borneau, with a smile. “Ma foi, m'sieu! Of what good can be the medicine if you do not give the cooperation?”

“I suppose you're right, doctor,” grumbled Coyd. “By the way, Tabbert”—Coyd addressed the dull-faced secretary, who was stirring a glass of liquid—“what have you heard from Lucian? When does he intend to have that bust finished?”

“In a few days, sir,” responded Tabbert. “He will bring it here, sir, for your approval.”

“Be sure he does so.” Coyd glowered angrily. “Bah! Such delay! I was afraid he had broken another cast and would want me to go through another of those plagued sittings. Such things annoy me!” Coyd's voice had become harsh, his fists were upraised and twitching. “Confound it! Everything annoys me! This place is becoming a madhouse—”

Coyd was coming to his feet, gesturing wildly as he flung aside the blanket that encircled his legs. Doctor Borneau sprang forward and gripped the congressman's arm. At a gesture from the physician, Tabbert set down the glass and lent his aid. Under their combined pressure, Coyd subsided. He huddled in his chair, muttering as he thrust his fingers through his shocky, black hair.

Harry Vincent had watched the quick changes that had come over the congressman; then looked toward Jurrick. Something in his glance made the friendly secretary realize that an explanation was necessary; for Jurrick gave one in an undertone.

"Mr. Coyd seldom has such outbursts," was Jurrick's whisper. "Certain matters arouse his anger; the matter of the bust is one of them. The native sons want a bronze bust of Mr. Coyd for the state capital. They have been pestering him for its delivery."

"And the bust is nearly ready?"

"Yes. A sculptor named Lucian is molding it from a plaster cast. That is what is causing the delay. A few months ago, Lucian took a mask impression direct from Mr. Coyd's face. It was accidentally broken, and he had to take a new one. That irritated Mr. Coyd, and justifiably—for those sittings were a nuisance. But the bust is almost done at last—"

Jurrick broke off and turned toward the door. He bowed and advanced to meet an attractive girl who was entering from the hall. Harry heard the secretary address her as Miss Coyd; he knew that this must be the congressman's daughter.

COYD opened his eyes wearily, then smiled pleasantly as his daughter approached. An attractive brunette, trimly attired, the girl had arrived as a welcome visitor. She leaned forward and kissed her father's forehead; then sat down in a chair which Tabbert clumsily placed beside the congressman's big chair.

"Hello, Evelyn," said Coyd, slowly. "You seem very cheerful to-day, dear. Are you all ready for your vacation in Virginia?"

"The lodge is opened, daddy," returned the girl, brightly. "The servants are just waiting for us to come there."

"For us?"

"Certainly. You are going with me, daddy."

Coyd shook his head. The girl turned appealingly to Doctor Borneau. The physician spoke to Coyd.

"A trip to Virginia would do you good, sir," declared the doctor. "It is part of my prescription. At the same time, Miss Coyd, I believe that it would be for the best if your father should rest before the journey."

"That's right," rumbled Coyd, becoming more active. "Run on down to Virginia, Evelyn. Stay there at the lodge. I shall join you later."

"Very well." The girl paused after giving agreement. Then: "Would you mind, daddy, if I took a friend to Virginia with me?"

"A friend? Who?"

"Beatrice Rydel."

COYD came upward in his chair. He glared angrily at his daughter and began to pound his fist upon a table that was beside him.

“Dunwood Rydel's own daughter!” stormed Coyd. “Why should you be friendly with her, of all persons? Her father and I are enemies, Evelyn—”

“But Beatrice and I are friends.”

“Perhaps. Nevertheless, that is no reason to invite her to visit you.”

“Please, daddy, don't stir yourself into another temper. Beatrice won't annoy you if she visits with me.”

“Maybe not.” Coyd settled back in his chair. “After all, the girl is nothing but an empty-headed chatterbox; and I've put up with many of that sort in the State legislature. Very well, Evelyn; take her to Virginia with you.”

That matter settled, Coyd glanced across the room and spied Harry Vincent. He had practically forgotten the stranger's presence. Coyd decided that it was time to discuss business.

“I welcome your visit, Mr. Vincent.” he declared. “Senator Releston tells me that you are to serve as his own representative. An excellent plan, for it will enable me to keep better contact with the senator. I agree on the point that he and I should cooperate.

“There is nothing, however, for us to discuss to-day. My mind is burdened with troublesome details; after they are cleared, I shall send for you, Mr. Vincent. Good day, sir, and my regards to Senator Releston.”

It was an abrupt dismissal, yet not intended as a rude one. Harry understood that Coyd's thoughts were hectic at present.

GOING down the brownstone step, Harry engaged in a flurry of thoughts. He had learned trivialities in this first visit to Coyd's; yet in that mass of chaff there might be some point of value.

Coyd's indisposition, Doctor Borneau's presence, the congressman's irritability over the matter of the delayed bust—these were facts worth noting. Most important, however, was the information that Beatrice Rydel was to be Evelyn Coyd's guest at the country residence which Congressman Coyd had take in Virginia.

This would be of interest to The Shadow, thought Harry, as he entered his sedan and drove away. Convinced in that impression, he was too occupied to notice present points that he should have observed.

One was a face that appeared at an upstairs window—Coyd's bedroom—and watched The Shadow's agent drive away. That countenance was Hugh Tabbert's; and the face was much more alert than Harry would have believed possible.

The other factor that escaped Harry's observation was a parked coupé across the street. From behind the steering wheel of that vehicle, a thick-faced man with a heavy, black mustache had been watching the front of Congressman Coyd's home.

With glaring eyes, this mustached observer watched Harry drive away; then grunted with satisfaction as he settled back in his seat and resumed his observation of Coyd's residence. With stubby fingers, the spy noted down the license number of Harry's car.

Events were brewing about the mansion wherein Layton Coyd resided. Cross purposes were at work;

and the very atmosphere presaged the coming of the crisis that Senator Releston had anticipated. Senator Releston had been wise in his request for The Shadow's aid.

CHAPTER V. TWO CAMPS.

DUSK had followed afternoon. Lights were agleam in a stately mansion that stood back from the traffic of a Washington avenue. This was the Washington colonial residence of Dunwood Rydel, the millionaire magnate who felt that his interests commanded his stay in Washington.

Behind the huge colonial mansion, the garage formed a wide, squat building. It had once been a stable; now it housed the half dozen cars that formed Rydel's fleet of automotive vehicles. Back of the garage was a high, thick hedge; it was from this barrier that a sidling figure entered the grounds, unseen against the blackness of the hedge itself.

Heedless of the patrolling servants who kept watch for prowlers, this prowler glided along the side wall of the garage and reached a small door at the front corner. A gloved hand turned the knob; a shrouded figure entered a darkened passage. The visitant found another door and opened it inch by inch.

The sound of voices came from the big storage room of the garage, where four cars were parked in a row.

The Shadow had seen the lights through the rear windows. He had stopped at the garage to listen in on any conversation that might prove of interest. The voices that he heard were those of two chauffeurs in Rydel's employ. One was standing ready to enter a large imported coupé.

"I guess the master's ready and waiting, Chet." declared the chauffeur by the car. "I'd better not keep him waiting. He's got an appointment this evening."

"Where's he going, Bill?" queried the idle chauffeur. "Down to the Lotus Club?"

"Yeah, for dinner. That's why he's starting early. He always goes there when Miss Beatrice is away. Say—is Mullard driving clear down to that place in Virginia?"

"No, He just took Miss Beatrice into town to meet her girl friend. Won't be back for a while, though; he's probably getting those new tires for the limousine."

Bill clambered aboard the coupé and backed it from the open door of the garage. Evidently Rydel had been waiting Bill's appearance.

The Shadow swung suddenly about as Chet came toward the little door where he was stationed. The chauffeur was whistling; the trill announced his approach. The Shadow moved out through the little front door and blended with blackness against the wall. The move was a wise one, for Chet stepped into view a moment later. The chauffeur paused to light a cigarette.

Forced to delay his departure, The Shadow waited. He had no further purpose here; as soon as Chet was gone, he intended to glide along. But before the chauffeur could step away, a flashlight glimmered. One of Rydel's inspecting servants arrived to talk to the chauffeur.

"Hello, Whitey," greeted Chet. "Giving the grounds a look-over like the boss wants?"

"Yeah," growled Whitey. "Fine job for a butler, ain't it? Like Toby, being a valet, and doing his bit on the other side of the house. Scouring the shrubbery."

"Hubert and Tobias," chuckled Chet. "Great monikers for a couple of guys like you fellows. Well, I'll still

call you Whitey and Toby—”

“Here's Toby now,” interrupted Whitey, swinging toward the gravel drive. “Hey, Toby—”

WHITEY'S greeting ended as a harsh exclamation came from Toby. The approaching watchman had pressed the button of his flashlight. Purely by accident, the glare had focused on the wall of the garage; there it had revealed the blackened outline of The Shadow. Toby had seen the living shape.

Hard upon Toby's discovery came action. Before the servant had opportunity to catalog the physical appearance of this black intruder, The Shadow's swift form surged forward. Toby swung hard with a lead-weighted club that he was carrying. A gloved hand plucked his descending wrist.

With a sharp cry, Toby spun upward; his body was heaved into a somersault. His fingers lost their clutch upon the club; his flashlight went spinning through the air. Toby flattened on the gravel and rolled over into a helpless sprawl.

Two reserves were springing into action; Whitey, with a club and flashlight; Chet, yanking a revolver that he carried while about the garage. As Whitey's torch cleaved the darkness, a black form hurtled in to meet him. Gloved hands found their grip as The Shadow joined in swift grapple.

Flashlight and club went flying. With a grunt, Whitey sagged beneath choking fingers that clamped his throat. Then The Shadow flung the husky guardian to the gravel; coming up to hands and knees, Whitey paused, half dazed beside the groggy form of Toby.

Chet had snatched the flashlight from the drive. Away from the garage, he circled the gleam, frantically trying to spot the intruding fighter. A sudden exclamation of success came from the chauffeur as a figure sprang suddenly into the light. Chet swung the revolver, seeking quick aim.

A gloved fist swished through the glare. Buffered knuckles clipped Chet's chin. The chauffeur reeled backward; then thudded to earth. Torch and revolver slipped from the chauffeur's loosened grasp while The Shadow swished past the garage and gained the hedge beyond. Silent, mirthless, he was gone when the half-groggy servants came clambering dizzily to their feet.

AT the Lotus Club, Dunwood Rydel was seated at a corner table in the grill-room, confining his diet to a bowl of milk and toast while he growled to a companion opposite. Big, portly and glowering, Rydel seemed in ill sorts. His friend, a quiet, mild-mannered man, was shaking his head in disapproval.

A stranger entered the grillroom and seated himself at a table opposite. His features were the hawklike guise of Henry Arnaud. Departing from Rydel's terrain, The Shadow had headed for this club that he had heard the chauffeurs mention. His manner of entry had been simple. He had used a letter of introduction signed by Lamont Cranston, whose name was known in all exclusive clubs.

“You're a lawyer, Wimbledon,” The Shadow heard Rydel say. “You ought to agree with me. I tell you, there's not been fair discrimination.”

“You are wrong, Rydel,” returned the mild-mannered man. “True, you have suffered through certain investigations. The findings, however, justified.”

“But why are they pressing on me all the time? Striking at interests which concern me? Why don't they let up? Why don't they pick on other big-money men?”

“They will,” assured Wimbledon. “Give them time, Rydel. Many investigations are under way.”

“Humph.”

With this utterance, Rydel pushed aside his bowl of milk and toast and delivered a sour expression that befitted his dyspeptic nature.

“Why stay in Washington?” queried Wimbledon. “You have business in New York. Why not spend your time there, Rydel?”

“I’ll have to go to New York,” grumbled the magnate. “But I’ll be back here, Wimbledon. I’ll tell you why. Foster Crozan is here—has been, off and on, for weeks. He’s staying at that hotel where Senator Releston lives.”

“You don’t like Crozan, do you?”

“Why should I? In order to boom his campaign for next fall, he’s stirred things up in that State where he lives. He wants to be a senator; that’s why he pushed himself into the investigation of the lumber contracts.”

“That shows no personal animosity on his part. You merely chanced to be a contract holder.”

“I don’t trust Crozan. He’s out to win more than that Senate election. He blackened me once; he will try it again. He’s jealous of my wealth.”

“Preposterous, Rydel. Crozan is a millionaire in his own right. True, he has ambitions; but they are honorable ones. Take my advice as a friend, Rydel; do not let your animosity carry you too far against a man of integrity such as Crozan. Your own malice will boomerang and injure you instead of him.”

THE two men arose and left the grill-room, en route to some business conference. The Shadow followed. Through this brief observation he had gained a definite idea of Dunwood Rydel. He had heard enough to know of the man’s prejudices; but he had recognized also that he had seen but the surface of Dunwood Rydel. Later, when the occasion might demand it, The Shadow could learn more.

Another point gained by The Shadow: he knew that Rydel’s servants had not informed him of the affray out at the house. Evidently they had decided that their report of a mysterious prowler could wait until their master returned.

In the easy fashion of Henry Arnaud, The Shadow left the Lotus Club. He entered a taxi and told the driver to take him by the shortest route to the Hotel Halcyon. As the cab rolled along, The Shadow glanced at his watch. His whispered laugh betokened satisfaction.

It was nearly eight o’clock, an important hour in The Shadow’s plans for to-night. For The Shadow—as Arnaud—had learned to-day that Tyson Weed was due back in Washington, scheduled to arrive at eight this evening.

A soft laugh came from The Shadow’s disguised lips. While waiting for Weed’s return, he had looked in on one camp; that of Dunwood Rydel. At present, he was on his way to investigate the other headquarters.

Within the next few hours, The Shadow intended to learn some inside facts concerning Tyson Weed’s business in Washington.

CHAPTER VI. THE DOUBLE DEAL.

WHEN The Shadow alighted at the Hotel Halcyon, he still affected the easy guise of Henry Arnaud. It was a part less leisurely than the languid role of Lamont Cranston; nevertheless, his actions as Arnaud gave no appearance of great haste.

Perhaps that was why The Shadow, glancing casually across the street, managed to spy a hunch-shouldered figure sidling from view beyond the railed front of an old, darkened house. The man whom The Shadow noted had not expected observation from so casual an arrival as this one who had stepped from the cab.

A thin smile showed on The Shadow's lips, as he entered the hotel. The man whom he had spied was one whom only the keenest eyes could detect. That huddled figure was "Hawkeye," one of The Shadow's own agents, a trailer whom The Shadow used on numerous occasions.

Inside the hotel lobby, The Shadow observed a husky, well-built man seated in a corner chair. This chap looked heavier, more rough-and-ready than Harry Vincent; at the same time, his features were clean-cut, and he was quite at home in the gilt surroundings of the Hotel Halcyon. This was Cliff Marsland, another of The Shadow's agents.

Across the lobby, lounging by a cigar counter, was a thick-faced man with heavy, dark mustache. Swarthy of countenance, wise of manner, this individual was wearing a Derby hat tilted down over his sharp, almost glaring eyes.

Though not conspicuous, the mustached man came immediately within The Shadow's keen range of observation. While pausing at the news stand to make a purchase, The Shadow, mild in his guise of Arnaud, found opportunity to study the fellow at close range, without the man knowing it.

Walking toward the elevator, The Shadow noted Cliff Marsland watching the man in the Derby. It was not surprising that Cliff should be making such observation on his own initiative. The fellow with the mustache had the air of a private detective. Cliff, knowing the ways of such worthies, had not been lax in noting it.

REACHING 808, The Shadow entered a darkened room. He spoke in a whisper; a quiet voice answered from the corner. A man was stationed there in the darkness, earphones clamped to his head.

His stooped shoulders were barely visible in the light from the window. This was Burbank, The Shadow's contact man; he had been summoned on from New York to take up his post here during The Shadow's temporary absence.

A buzz sounded from beside the table where Burbank was seated. The contact man removed the earphones and picked up the telephone while The Shadow waited. Burbank held a brief, even-toned conversation; then hung up and reported to The Shadow in the darkness.

"Weed has arrived," stated Burbank. "Marsland recognized him from Burke's description. Weed has gone up in the elevator. Marsland also reports a man loafing by the cigar stand who looks like a dick. The fellow took an interest in Weed's arrival."

His report given, Burbank again donned the earphones. The Shadow turned on a light above another table. He opened an envelope that was lying there; from it he produced a coded report. This was from Harry Vincent; it told the details of Harry's recent trip to Coyd's.

Harry's report, however, made no mention of the mustached man in the coupé; for Harry had not spied that watcher outside of Coyd's. Such mention would have been illuminating had it been included in Harry's report. For the man with the Derby hat whom The Shadow and Cliff had noticed in the lobby was the very fellow who had been acting as spy outside of Coyd's.

The telephone buzzed; again Burbank answered it. This time he held the earphones above his shoulder as he hung up the telephone receiver with his other hand. Methodically, he reported:

“Marsland again. Man by the cigar stand went up alone in an elevator. Indicator showed tenth-floor stop. Looks like a visitor for Weed.”

The Shadow donned the earphones. Half a minute followed. Then he heard a sound of muffled knocking. Dragging footsteps; a door opened, then closed. After that came voices.

Cliff was right; Weed was receiving a visitor. Those earphones which The Shadow wore were picking up all sounds from Suite 1012, thanks to a tiny microphone that The Shadow had planted on his visit a few nights ago.

A WHINY voice reached The Shadow. It was Weed, greeting the visitor. The tone fitted the description that Clyde Burke had given of the long-faced, sneaky-looking lobbyist. Weed's whine, though peevish, also carried a tinge of authority.

“Well, Walbert?” came the lobbyist's query. “What about it? Where's your report?”

“Right here,” was a gruff response, that fitted the man with the Derby. “Take a squint at it. There's lots for you to lamp. I was parked across the street from Coyd's most of the afternoon.”

Weed spent time in perusal; finally, he spoke, as peevishly as before.

“This doesn't help me, Walbert,” declared the lobbyist. “None of these details give me anything. Doctor Borneau has been to Coyd's before.”

“But not this other fellow,” observed Walbert. “I checked the number of his license. He was driving Senator Releston's bus.”

“Get his name. It might be useful. But if he's from Releston, he'd be hard to deal with. That's obvious, Walbert. No, you haven't brought me much.”

“What about Coyd's daughter being there? That's something, ain't it?”

“Listen, Walbert.” Weed's tone was querulous. “I didn't hire you just to watch Coyd's house. This is no ordinary gumshoe job. Any cheap dick could do what you've done. I want something that will give me an opening.

“You know what I'm up against. I've got to reach either Senator Releston or Congressman Coyd. Both of them have given me the grand bounce. All I can hope for is to get something on one of them. Releston's a tougher proposition than Coyd; that's why I'm concentrating on the congressman.”

“Maybe there's nothing you can get on Coyd. He's supposed to be mighty honest.”

“Perhaps he is; but the odds are he isn't.”

“What about that sculptor guy that I saw going in there once?”

“He doesn't know anything. Just a goof that's making a bust of the old guy. What you've got to spot, Walbert, is some bird from Coyd's own State. Some yahoo that's come to Washington looking for a favor. That kind always likes to tell things that they remembered when some senator or congressman was just a small-time legislator in his home State.”

“All right, Mr. Weed; I'll keep my eyes peeled. Nobody spotted me outside of Coyd's to-day. I'll go back there to-morrow. Maybe I can pick up some dope on Coyd, from guys around town.”

“Get what you can, Walbert. Let me know if you spot anything. That's all for to-night.”

Conversation ended. The Shadow spoke to Burbank; not in the tone of Henry Arnaud, but in a low-voiced, commanding whisper.

“Call the desk,” was The Shadow's order. “Ask the clerk to look for a message.”

Burbank did as ordered; he received word that there was no message in box 808. As soon as Burbank hung up, the telephone rang. It was Cliff. He had seen the clerk look in the pigeonhole marked 808. He knew that Burbank wanted him; the signal had been prearranged.

“Hawkeye to trail Walbert, the man who visited Weed.” ordered The Shadow, quietly.

Burbank repeated the order to Cliff. Through the earphones, The Shadow could hear the sounds of Walbert's departure. There was ample time for Cliff to stroll out and tip off Hawkeye, giving the little agent the name that The Shadow had learned. Hawkeye was going on the trail of a man whose identity was now known.

TWENTY minutes passed. The Shadow had given the earphones back to Burbank; suddenly, the contact man took them off and raised them toward his chief. Listening, The Shadow heard new voices. One was Weed's again; the other was abrupt and harsh.

“Let's read it, Quidler,” came Weed's comment. “I hope you've got something this trip.”

“I have,” was the reply, in the clipped tone. “You said you wanted a real operative—not a dumb dick. Well, I'm the bozo you was after.”

“Say—this is something, Quidler! Coyd's daughter has gone on a trip to Virginia and Beatrice Rydel is along with her. How did you grab off that dope?”

“I'll tell you how. I stuck around the back of Coyd's house. There I met Mose, an old half-blind servant of Coyd's. I pumped him a good deal. He told me that Coyd has been rather sick lately, that Evelyn Coyd and Beatrice Rydel were going to Virginia on a vacation. Then there was this fellow Vincent who came from Releston—”

“All right, Quidler,” Weed cut in. “That's enough. Sit down and help yourself to a drink while I review the details.”

The Shadow spoke to Burbank. The contact man picked up the telephone and put in another call to the desk. He wanted to be sure about the expected message. The clerk finally reported that he had made another look. It was not there.

TWO minutes later, Cliff called the room. Prompted by The Shadow, Burbank asked about any suspicious-looking persons who had recently entered the lobby. Cliff stated that a tall, slouchy-looking fellow had gone up in an elevator. Cliff described him as a long-nosed, peak-faced individual who had looked like a salesman.

“Watch for him,” stated Burbank, methodically. “If he comes down shortly, you'll know that he is the man now visiting Weed. His name is Quidler. He's another dick like Talbert. Trail him.”

Sounds of departure came through the earphones. The Shadow removed the instruments; he picked up a briefcase which he found in the darkness. Leaving Burbank, he strolled out into the hall. Still as Arnaud, he walked in the direction of the elevators.

When The Shadow reached the lobby, Cliff Marsland was gone. The Shadow knew the answer. Quidler had descended in a previous car; Cliff had spotted him and was on the fellow's trail. With a slight smile

on his fixed lips, The Shadow walked out to the street. He reached a darkened spot; there a transformation took place. Henry Arnaud became The Shadow.

A whispered laugh sounded amid darkness; prophetic as well as understanding. The Shadow had learned the game that Tyson Weed was playing. It was a double deal, involving two private detectives. Weed had signed up two dicks, independently; both had been assigned to get something on Congressman Layton Coyd.

The Shadow had matched the lobbyist's double deal. On Walbert's trail he had dispatched Hawkeye; he had sent Cliff after Quidler. Burbank was still covering Weed, thanks to the dictograph hook-up between 1012 and 808.

That accomplished, The Shadow was free to roam alone; to pass unseen through the secluded byways of Washington, seeking objectives of his own. Phases of the game were opening; The Shadow was seeking further indications of the moves that lay ahead.

CHAPTER VII. COYD'S SECRET.

FOUR days had passed. They were uneventful ones, stalemated at every point. Senator Ross Releston and Foster Crozan had expressed no opinions to Harry Vincent.

Tyson Weed had received no reports from his detectives. Hawkeye and Cliff had trailed the dicks, but to no avail. All had proven empty. Dunwood Rydel, however, was at home; a newspaper mentioned that he was confined to bed by a slight illness. All seemed quiet on the surface.

Meanwhile, Congressman Coyd was ill at ease; but he managed to keep his burden to himself. He was about to dismiss Tabbert when Jurrick entered to announce that his daughter had arrived unexpectedly from Virginia.

This gave Coyd his opportunity to dismiss both secretaries. A few minutes later he was alone with his daughter and his physician. Evelyn began to talk; her father listened with an indulgent smile.

"You are coming to Virginia," affirmed Evelyn, emphatically. "This very afternoon, daddy. No excuses this time."

"Is Beatrice Rydel still there?" inquired Coyd. "That might be the only excuse that I needed."

"She is still at the lodge, daddy, but that makes no difference."

"Very well, my dear, I shall come down to see you to-morrow."

"To-day, daddy."

"No. To-morrow."

Evelyn persisted no longer. She knew when her father's mind was made up. Evelyn closed the door when she left the living room. As she walked through the upstairs hall, she saw some one stepping into a doorway. The girl stopped with a sharp exclamation. Sheepishly, Hugh Tabbert stepped into view.

"Sorry to have startled you, Miss Evelyn," apologized the red-haired secretary. "I—I was just passing along here when—"

"A poor excuse," interposed the girl. "You were listening to our conversation, Tabbert. I would report you, if it were not for my father's nervous condition."

“Honestly, Miss Evelyn, my duty is to—”

“Your duty does not include listening outside of doorways. See that it does not happen again, Tabbert.”

On the stairs, Evelyn met Jurrick. The sleek-haired secretary had heard words uttered above; he gazed inquiringly as Evelyn approached. The girl spoke to him quietly.

“Tabbert is behaving oddly,” she explained. “It would be best for you to watch him, Don. I rebuked him; but I did not want to report the matters to father.”

“Certainly not, Miss Evelyn,” responded Jurrick, solemnly. “You may rest assured that I shall maintain your confidence.”

“Thank you, Don,” smiled the girl; then, with a twinkle in her eyes: “Very few people call me Miss Evelyn. Most every one addresses me either as Miss Coyd or just as—”

“Evelyn?” inquired Jurrick.

The girl nodded.

“Remember it,” she remarked, as she turned to walk toward the front door.

Jurrick smiled. He watched the girl's departure, feeling pleased because Evelyn chose to meet him on less formal terms. Upstairs, however, Tabbert was staring downward; his fists clenched, his teeth gritted.

Tabbert had known Evelyn for years; for he came from her father's home town. An adoring swain, secretly in love with the congressman's daughter, he resented the favor that she had shown to the smooth-mannered Jurrick.

WHILE this bit of drama was in progress, Congressman Coyd had chosen to discuss more serious matters with Doctor Borneau. Seated in the living room, Coyd was explaining his present trouble.

“I feel better, doctor,” he stated. “Much better; and yet, in a sense, I am worse. Physically, I am comfortable; but my brain is in a whirl. It has been, for the past two days.”

Reaching to the table, Coyd produced some newspaper clippings and handed them to the physician. They were interviews, given the day before. Borneau read them solemnly.

“These show lucidity, Mr. Coyd,” decided Borneau. “Your statements are proof of your good reasoning. Simple facts regarding the amount of time it will take to complete investigations.”

“The statements were all right, doctor, when I read them.”

“When you read them?”

“Just this, doctor. I don't remember having given those orders. I rested from dinner on till supper. But when I read those clippings this morning I was amazed. I questioned my secretaries, tactfully, of course. They told me that at four-thirty I had gone down to interview the reporters. I can't understand it. I can't even remember going downstairs.”

Doctor Borneau shook his head and smiled seriously. He waved a warning finger. “The overwork again, Mr. Coyd.”

“Is my condition serious, doctor?”

“No. It's merely a state of temporary aphasia. To explain it would involve a lot of medical terms, but it is not dangerous.”

“But will it become worse, doctor?”

“Not if you are careful. Do not worry. Above all do not discuss it with persons.”

“But if I should have another interview, if I say things without realizing it—”

“Ah! You are worrying already!” Doctor Borneau smiled triumphantly. “You see what I mean? What I have told you, you must do. Do not worry. That is my advice, Mr. Coyd. To-morrow you will start on your vacation. It will do you good.”

There was a rap at the door; Coyd called to enter. Jurrick entered, bringing a square box that formed a heavy weight. Coyd smiled.

“Open it, Jurrick,” he ordered. “It must be the bronze bust for the State capital.”

“One moment,” remarked Doctor Borneau. “The medicine must first be taken. Go, young man, and prepare it.”

Jurrick went to the medicine chest and began to remove the bottles. He paused; then turned doubtfully, just as Tabbert arrived from the hall.

“Which ones do I use, sir?” inquired Jurrick. “Just what is the mixture? How much of each?”

“Tabbert will prepare the medicine,” responded Coyd. “You open the box in the meantime, Jurrick.”

TABBERT took over Jurrick's task. He had completed the mixing of the medicine just as Jurrick finished opening the box. The bronze bust came into view while Coyd was gulping down the contents of his glass.

“It flatters me,” grumbled Coyd. “It is too healthy-looking. It has my scar”—he rubbed his chin—“but the face is fuller than mine.”

“It was taken from your own casts, sir,” reminded Jurrick. “You have not changed so greatly in these few weeks.”

“You look unusually well, sir,” added Tabbert, comparing Coyd's face with that of the bust. “You do change, though, Mr. Coyd. Sometimes you look quite differently—even on the same day, sir—”

“That is enough,” interrupted Doctor Borneau. “Do not worry my patient. Indisposition makes the face become hard; sometimes, it will give a relax, very strongly, afterward.”

“Put the bust on the mantelpiece,” ordered Coyd, rising and stretching his arms. “Keep it up here, where reporters never come.” he yawned; then laughed: “I don't want those pests bringing troublesome photographers here with them.”

Coyd started toward the bedroom. Tabbert put a question as the congressman reached the door.

“You intend to take a nap, sir? What if the reporters should come this afternoon?”

“Come up,” replied Coyd, “and if I am awake, tell me that they are here. If I am asleep, do not disturb me.”

With that, Coyd entered the bedroom and closed the door behind him. Doctor Borneau accompanied

the secretaries downstairs; then left the house. As the physician stepped into a taxicab, a man across the street eyed him from a parked coupé.

It was Walbert; the watching dick made a note of the time, then leaned back behind the wheel to wait. Nothing to be gained, he thought, by watching Coyd's house when no visitors were there. In fact, Walbert was convinced that nothing was due to happen within that house to-day.

In that guess, the dick was wrong. Already, important events had brewed. Deep-laid plans of schemers had gained proven strength. The crisis that Senator Releston feared had arrived. A thrust that involved millions of ill-gained dollars was ready for delivery, with all its staggering consequences.

CHAPTER VIII. THE INTERVIEW.

GATHERING clouds had brought an overcast sky during the period of Doctor Borneau's visit at the home of Congressman Layton Coyd. As hours lapsed, heavy gloom enveloped the old mansion, as if the very elements were themselves presaging ill.

Swirling wind, pattering rain; these obscured the outside scene. To Walbert, watching Coyd's house from his rain-swept coupé, the house lights were splotches amid the dull mass of darkness formed by the brownstone house front.

Noting that the lower story was alone aglow, the mustached dick began to speculate on the possibility of further visitors.

If others came, Walbert realized that it would be difficult to recognize them, without parking closer to the house. He preferred to remain where he was, at an angle, across from Coyd's residence. Muttering angrily, Walbert shifted in his seat. As he did, he fancied that he heard a scraping sound from the back of the car.

Shifting, jolting up and down, the dick tried to gain a repetition of the sound. There was none; instead, the driving of the rain became more apparent. The windshield and the windows were clouding; Walbert was feeling warm. So he pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and began to polish the mist from the glass, at the same time tossing his Derby hat to the seat beside him.

INSIDE Coyd's mansion, the atmosphere was morose. The lower hall was poorly lighted; the stairs were obscure; while the passage that led beyond the stairway was almost totally dark. A loud-ticking grandfather's clock was pointing to twenty-five minutes after four when Tabbert, a book beneath his arm, emerged sleepily from the front library on the ground floor. The red-haired secretary strolled toward the stairs.

"Tabbert! Where are you going?"

The hail came from the passage beyond the stairway. Tabbert paused as Jurrick came into view. Pausing, Tabbert scowled; then decided to reply.

"Upstairs," he reported, curtly. "To see if Mr. Coyd is awake. It's nearly time for the reporters."

"I know that," smiled Jurrick. "So does Mr. Coyd. That is why he came downstairs while you were day-dreaming in the library. He is in his study; he wants to see you there."

Sourly, Tabbert followed Jurrick through the dim passage. Jurrick knocked at the study door; a response coming, he and Tabbert entered. They found Coyd seated behind a large desk; he was wearing an old smoking jacket and was puffing at a rank-odored stogie, his favorite type of cigar.

Coyd, quite alert, noted Tabbert's expression and rapped severely upon the desk.

“Come, come!” he exclaimed. “This is no time for petty jealousies. This afternoon is important; I have an interview to grant when the reporters arrive. Jurrick, type these notes”—Coyd picked up a sheet of pencil-scrawled paper—“and you, Tabbert, be ready to receive the reporters. Leave the door open so I can call you.”

Jurrick took the penciled notes to a typewriter in the corner. Tabbert went out into the hall and loafed there, listening to the click of the machine. Soon the doorbell rang. Mose appeared to open it; he admitted a bevy of rain-coated reporters. Tabbert conducted the news hawks into the study.

As the reporters began to take their chairs, others arrived. Soon there were ten in all, among them, two who had been present yesterday for the first time. These were Clyde Burke and Garvey.

Another ring at the doorbell; Tabbert followed Mose to answer it. Harry Vincent stepped into the hall, shaking the rain from his hat and poncho. He hung the garments on a hat rack, along with the dripping coats of the reporters; then followed Tabbert into the study. Meanwhile, Jurrick had finished typing the notes. The handwritten ones he tore up and put them into the basket.

“Gentlemen”—Coyd looked over the top of his spectacles to note the last arrival, then reverted to his notes—“I have a statement that is both definite and important. It concerns munitions and their regulation.”

An audible buzz came from the reporters. It stifled as Coyd shot an annoyed glance toward the group.

“Munitions have been regulated,” announced Coyd, “and the rulings will stand. The committee of investigation came unanimously to that decision. Present embargoes that concern warring countries will be maintained; the same will apply to new conflicts and to nations wherein revolution threatens.”

HARRY VINCENT shifted uneasily. So far, the congressman's statement was merely one of generalities; but Harry feared that more drastic expressions were coming. Harry's dread was justified.

“In making appropriations for munitions and armament,” continued Coyd, pounding his fist upon the desk, “we have decided to take the profit out of war. No American manufacturer”—Coyd was on his feet, his voice rising to the forced oratory that Clyde Burke had heard him use before—“no countryman of ours shall ever again gain fortune through sales of war supplies to our government.

“Congress will set the price; Congress will also force a refund should any profits result. The supplying of materials for war will be made a patriotic duty; not a business enterprise. That, gentlemen, is final.”

Coyd paused. But the congressman's statement was not finished. A bombshell was coming.

“A patriotic duty,” repeated Coyd, his voice lowered, his clenched fist half loosened and wagging slowly. “Patriotism, gentlemen, concerns one's duty to his own country; not to others. Should American manufacturers choose to supply war materials to foreign governments that are under no embargo, they will be free to do so.

“Such sales will not be subject to congressional price regulation. We do not consider them—for the present—to be within our sphere of attention. Later, a new committee will be formed to deal directly with that subject. The appointment of that committee, however, will not be discussed until the next session of Congress.”

Voice modulated, the speaker seemed spent in effort. Watching Coyd, Clyde Burke saw him slump into his chair, exactly as he had sagged after his speech in the Hall of Representatives. There was something dramatic in the action; it was difficult to guess whether the weariness was genuine or feigned.

Then Coyd removed his spectacles and faced his audience, with head tilted to the right.

“That is all, gentlemen,” he announced, quietly. “You may go and print this interview.”

Reporters came to their feet. Some were buzzing; the wiser ones were nudging them for silence. They moved from the study in a pack, Tabbert following, to usher them out.

BACK in the study, Harry Vincent was staring at Coyd's slumped figure.

“I am sorry, Mr. Coyd,” stated Harry, “that you did not tell me of your intention to give this interview. You had opportunity to do so when I called up at noon. Because of your calmness, I assured Senator Releston that you would make no special statements to the gentlemen of the press—”

“I changed my mind,” snapped Coyd, angrily. “Confound Releston—and you, too, Vincent!” With these words, Coyd's fist smashed against the desk. “Who am I that I should toady to Releston? The Senate committees are his business; those of the House are mine!”

“But their interests are identical—”

“They are not! They run parallel; but each is independent. I have never told Releston what he should or should not say.”

“You might at least have called him. But since you did not, I shall.”

Harry was on his feet, reaching for the telephone that stood on Coyd's desk. An arm shot forward; quick fingers clamped Harry's wrist; The Shadow's agent found himself staring into glaring eyes that were fierce beneath Coyd's heavy brows.

“You will make no call from here,” Coyd's lips hissed furiously. “If you wish to talk to Senator Releston, go and see him. Remember your place, Vincent!”

Jurrick stepped over and gripped Harry's arm in friendly fashion. At that moment, Tabbert arrived at the door; his eyes narrowed, glowering, as he saw Coyd rise to his feet and shake a heavy fist in Harry's face.

“Get out!” stormed Coyd. “Out, I tell you! Go back to Releston! Tell him what you wish!”

“I'll tell him plenty,” assured Harry, grimly, as he let Jurrick draw him toward the door.

“You'll tell him lies!” Coyd's voice was a wild scream, his gestures frantic. “Lies! I shall need a witness to them. Go with this fellow, Tabbert. Hear what he says to Releston. Bring back what the senator tells you!”

Tabbert nodded; roughly, he gripped Harry's other arm and dragged The Shadow's agent from the room while Jurrick was aiding with mild pressure on the other side.

“Keep steady, old man,” suggested Jurrick, as they marched through the hall. “You couldn't help breaking loose the way you did. I understand.”

“What's that, Jurrick?” demanded Tabbert, savagely, his face enraged. “You are turning against Mr. Coyd? Against our employer? Against the one whom we should admire and respect?”

“Lay off, Tabbert,” pleaded Jurrick. “I'm just seeing Harry Vincent's viewpoint—”

“You lack loyalty. You—you traitor! A scummy traitor, Jurrick, that's what you are! When Miss Evelyn

hears that you—”

“Do not bring Miss Coyd's name into this, Tabbert. Remember, you are going along with Vincent. It would be best for you to realize that he has a duty to Senator Releston, as important to him as yours to Mr. Coyd.”

TABBERT subsided. They had reached the front door; the enraged secretary followed Harry to don hat and poncho. Sullenly, Tabbert picked up garments of his own. A voice spoke from the hallway; Tabbert and Harry turned with Jurrick to see Congressman Coyd standing wearily at the stairway.

“I am going to my bedroom,” announced the congressman, wearily. “I am going to rest. My effort is spent; I did not expect so much confusion.

“Jurrick, see Tabbert and Vincent off. Then station yourself in the library. If there are any callers, have Mose bring them to you. I want you to talk to them, Jurrick. I shall rest until dinner time.”

Jurrick nodded. Harry and Tabbert preceded him through the front steps. Jurrick pulled the door shut, but kept his hand on the knob while he watched Harry and Tabbert walk to the sedan. They appeared to be arguing; but their animosity had lessened.

Jurrick saw the sedan roll away; then he turned to enter the house. Hence he did not observe the coupé that started from the other side of the street, after Harry's car had passed it. Walbert had seen some one come out with Harry; the dick was tailing the sedan.

Jurrick, halfway in the house as Walbert started, regained the hall and closed the big front door. Congressman Coyd was no longer by the stairway. Jurrick went into the front library; there he found Mose, carefully rearranging books upon their shelves.

“Mr. Coyd went upstairs, Mose?” inquired Jurrick, seating himself in a comfortable chair.

“I guess so, Mr. Jurrick,” responded the servant. “I hain't seen him, though, since them reporter men were here. This is where I've been all along. Here in the library, fixing all these here books.”

“All right, Mose,” laughed Jurrick. “I'll help you by reading one of the books while I'm here. You won't have to put it away then.”

“Thanks, Mr. Jurrick.”

THE big hall clock was chiming five. The only light within Coyd's residence was that of the widely spaced electric incandescents; for the outside gloom had greatly increased.

Of all spots where premature darkness had thickened most effectively, those passages between Coyd's house and the neighboring buildings seemed most favored. They were almost completely blackened.

A movement occurred near the rear of one passage. A dark-garbed, rain-swept figure merged with the darkness that was beneath the shelter of an overhanging roof. Keen eyes peered from the gloom. The Shadow had arrived at the home of Layton Coyd.

The Shadow had reached the old house less than ten minutes after Harry Vincent's departure. The reason for his quick arrival was a telephone call that he had received from Clyde Burke, while Harry was still engaged in stormy session within Coyd's study.

Immediately after the brief interview, Clyde had found some pretext to call The Shadow from a drug store near Coyd's. Clyde had accomplished this in an offhand fashion that had passed with Garvey.

Keeping close to the house, The Shadow followed the passage to the front, till he arrived at the door.

The Shadow tried the door and found it locked. He produced a probing tool; his tiny flashlight glimmered from beneath the folds of his cloak. The door yielded when The Shadow jabbed a thin, flat piece of steel between frame and door.

ENTERING the house, The Shadow found himself in a gloomy entry. He went up a few steps and came into the rear halls. On his left was the door of Coyd's study. The Shadow opened it and entered. He closed the door and turned on the light. He found a folded sheet of paper on the desk. Opening it, he read the notes that Jurrick had typewritten.

Remembering a point of Clyde's report, The Shadow looked in the wastebasket and found the original penciled paper. The Shadow fitted eight fragments together. He found that Jurrick had copied the notations exactly. The papers fluttered one by one into the wastebasket, until seven had dropped. The Shadow still held the eighth. He folded it and placed it beneath his cloak.

Moving from the study, The Shadow reached the front hall. Stealthily, he peered into the library; there he saw Jurrick reading by a lamp. Mose had finished arranging books; the servant was slowly gathering up old newspapers and dumping them into wastebaskets.

Softly, The Shadow glided away from the door. He gained the stairs and ascended; his footfalls silent, no swish from his rain-soaked cloak. The door of the upstairs living room was open. The Shadow entered that apartment. Large windows at the front gave the living room a bit of outside light. Objects were discernible.

The Shadow saw the bronze bust on the mantel. He approached to study it. He could tell that it was a perfect replica of a face mask, for no effort had been made to smooth the roughness of the profile. Even the scar upon the chin was prominent in this metallic likeness of Congressman Layton Coyd.

With a soft, whispered laugh, The Shadow moved away. He reached the closed door of the bedroom and opened it softly. He entered and approached a large four-poster bed. There he saw Coyd, stretched out in slumber.

The congressman was garbed in a dressing gown. His face was toward the window; the haggard features showed a pallor in the fading light. Coyd looked like a man whose health was irregular. The lines of his face seemed deeper than those of the bust. His closed eyes looked more sunken.

Gliding from the bedroom, The Shadow softly closed the door behind him. His form was barely visible in the gloom; his sharp eyes, however, could still espy all objects. A wastebasket stood by a table.

Reaching into it, The Shadow found torn letters and crumpled papers. The latter impressed him most. Removing them, The Shadow carried his trophies to the window.

Examining each, he rejected them until he came to one that bore a penned scrawl. It was a brief note, the handwriting characterized by oddly shaped letters. Coyd had written it to his daughter Evelyn; the congressman must have heard from her before mailing it, hence he had thrown it away.

The Shadow kept this letter, but dropped the others back into the wastebasket. He laughed softly as he moved toward the thick darkness of the windowless hall. Silently, he descended the stairs; there he turned toward the rear passage. He stopped suddenly and pressed against the wall by the stairway.

THE door of Coyd's study was opening; a glimmer of light came from that room, which The Shadow had left dark. Then Mose appeared; wobbling as he walked, the old servant was carrying out the

wastebasket. Mose passed The Shadow; the menial's dim eyes never noticed that blackened shape against the wall.

The Shadow watched Mose add the wastebaskets to others that were standing near the doorway to the living room. Then Mose started upstairs. Listening to his creaky footsteps, The Shadow knew that the servant was going up to get other wastebaskets to empty with those that were on the ground floor.

With a swift move, The Shadow gained the passage to the outside door. He left the house, carefully latching the door behind him. Passing through the deepening darkness, he reached the rear street, followed it for a block and came upon the entrance of a deserted store. Moving into the doorway, The Shadow removed his cloak, hat and gloves. He bestowed them in a briefcase that he opened into enlarged form.

Donning a soft gray hat, he strolled from the store front. His gait was that of Henry Arnaud. One block on, The Shadow reached an avenue. Standing in the drizzle, he formed a plain figure as he hailed a passing cab. Entering the vehicle, he ordered the driver to take him to the Hotel Halcyon.

A soft laugh came from the lips of Henry Arnaud as the cab wheeled through the rain. That repressed mirth was both reminiscent and prophetic. It also carried keen understanding. A crisis had come, despite The Shadow. But the aftermath had been of The Shadow's own making.

CHAPTER IX. THE ANTIDOTE.

TEN o'clock the next morning found Senator Ross Releston at his desk. Spread before the senator were copies of many metropolitan dailies; the headlines on their front pages made a mass of screaming print. The munitions story had broken with a bang. Releston's countenance was troubled.

Across from the senator was Foster Crozan; his face, too, showed glumness. Like Releston, Crozan knew how terrific the consequences of Coyd's interview could be; but he was not discussing the matter with the senator. Both were waiting for a visitor.

Lanson entered. Releston looked up eagerly and put a question to the secretary.

"Mr. Rydel is here?"

"No, sir. Vincent has not yet returned with him. It is Mr. Cranston who is here, sir."

"Mr. Cranston? I thought he had gone to Brazil?"

"Apparently not, sir. He said—"

"Show him in, Lanson. Show him in. Cranston can speak for himself."

Half a minute later, Releston was on his feet welcoming his millionaire friend. The Shadow, again in the guise of Lamont Cranston, had entered in his usual languid fashion. Releston's greeting ended, The Shadow shook hands with Crozan.

"My Amazon expedition is off," remarked The Shadow, quietly. "It fell through while I was in Havana. So I am heading north instead. I decided to stop off and see you, senator."

"I am glad you did, Cranston," acknowledged Releston. "Of course, you have seen the newspapers. Our worst expectations have been realized."

Before The Shadow could make comment, two men appeared at the door of the room. One was Harry Vincent; the other Dunwood Rydel. Harry stepped aside to let the magnate enter. Rydel advanced to

meet the challenging glare of Releston, who waved him to a chair. The senator made no further introduction. Instead, he opened hostilities immediately.

“Rydel, I demand an explanation,” stormed Releston. “I am confident that the story in to-day's newspapers is your work. I want to know why you forced it into print!”

“My work?” queried Rydel, savagely. His eyes were beady as he turned his glare from Releston to Crozan. “Where did you get that impression, senator? From Crozan?”

“Yes.” Crozan spoke boldly for himself. “It is obvious that you were behind it, Rydel. I know your methods. Dollar-grabbing is your specialty.”

Rydel was about to fume a reply when Releston silenced him. The stern-faced senator continued his accusation.

“It was believed,” stated Releston, “that restrictive measures might be placed upon the sales and price of all munitions, including those to be shipped to foreign countries. To enforce that last measure, however, we needed to await the next session of Congress.”

“It was our plan to form a special committee at that time; to have it cooperate immediately with the present committee, which is not—unfortunately—permitted to interfere with exports that are free from embargo.

“We had hoped to keep that fact to ourselves. We knew that hidden interests were buying up the stock of idle munitions plants; but that they were afraid to operate while the committee report was pending, because they thought their profits might be seized.

“Coyd's statement has ended their doubt. Already the shares of those munitions companies are shooting skyward. Speculators, tipped to what was coming, are primed to make millions. During the next few months, factories will work at full capacity, pouring American-made munitions into foreign lands.

“A golden harvest, through steel and powder that will later bring blood and strife. That is the terrible part of it, Rydel. Lust for wealth has inspired those behind the game; and I accuse you as the leading instigator!”

Another might have wilted under Releston's salvo; but not Rydel. The portly magnate showed challenge in his heavy-jowled face. He came to his feet and glowered across the desk.

“Rubbish!” he snarled. “Plain guff; poor talk from a man of your intelligence; senator. I have no interests in munitions, sir. The stocks that I hold in such companies are few; and most of them are in large concerns that have already promised full cooperation with the government!”

“What about proxies?” demanded Crozan.

“Proxies?” queried Rydel, with a laugh. “Find any if you can. Prove that I have been buying munitions stocks, in my name or in any other.”

“We know you could have covered it, Rydel.”

THE magnate delivered a contemptuous growl. An ugly smile showed on his pudgy face as he resumed his chair. Thumbs tucked in vest sleeves, Rydel leaned back as if to welcome further query.

“Perhaps,” decided Releston, “the profit to your basic interests will sufficiently reward your scheming, Rydel. We realized that you would be in a position to defy us. I merely wanted you to know the

greatness of the misery that your selfishness may produce.

“Europe is in foment. Increased armaments and munitions purchases may cause destruction there. We, who think of the welfare of the world as well as that of America, felt sure that we could do our part to prevent foreign strife. Our hopes have been shattered.”

“Not by me,” announced Rydel. “Look here, senator—now that you're talking quietly, why don't you listen to common sense? Somebody's in back of the munitions game; but I'm not. I'm not an ugly octopus, trying to swallow everything.

“I wouldn't be fool enough to mix into the munitions racket, even if I were mean enough to want to. You've singled me out, senator, simply because you've been prejudiced against me.”

Rydel paused; then glared viciously at Crozan. He continued:

“How could I have been in back of it?” demanded the magnate. “Coyd did the talking, didn't he? He has it in for me just like you have. How could I have reached him? Answer that!”

“I can tell you.” Foster Crozan spoke steadily, as he arose from his chair and towered above the seated magnate. “Congressman Coyd has a daughter, who is a great influence in his life. She has visited her father at recent intervals, coming to Washington from Virginia. You, too, have a daughter, Rydel. She is Evelyn Coyd's closest friend. Do you deny that at present your daughter Beatrice is staying in Virginia with Evelyn Coyd?”

Instead of replying, Rydel bounded to his feet. He clenched his fists. Crozan dropped back, expecting a threatening gesture; but Rydel merely pounded his fists against the side of his own head and began to stalk the room, laughing like a madman. Near the door, he stopped and faced the others.

“My daughter!” he giggled. “My daughter! Mixing into politics—my daughter, with no thought in her empty head except a crazy infatuation for a conceited, penniless actor. Jove! Have the two of you gone as insane as Coyd? One would think it, to hear you advance such an absurd theory as—”

He stopped, tilted back his head and delivered another laugh.

“Perhaps,” asserted Releston, dryly, “you can suggest a better method of our learning who influenced Congressman Coyd to his ill-timed statement.”

“I can,” assured Rydel, sobering. “Go to Coyd and ask him about it. But don't annoy me with any more of this kindergarten stuff. I am leaving for New York; I shall return in a few days, senator. Perhaps then you will have realized the absurdity of your theory.”

RYDEL turned on his heel and stalked from the room, leaving Releston and Crozan speechless. The Shadow, quiet through the tempest, was performing the Cranston gesture of inserting a cigarette in a holder.

“Perhaps you were wrong, Crozan,” remarked Releston. “The link does seem flimsy. Rydel's daughter could not be intelligent; if she were she would never have become infatuated over that ridiculous actor, Montgomery Hadwil.”

“That does not follow, senator,” disagreed Crozan. “Love and intelligence are different mental processes. Beatrice Rydel may be quite bright. Moreover, I can see a reason why she would lend aid to her father's cause.”

“To gain his consent to her marriage to Hadwil?”

“Exactly. Senator, I think Rydel bluffed us. He is on his way to New York, he says, and he is probably going there to meet others of his kind. They will gloat over their victory.”

“Shall I have secret service operatives cover him?”

“What good would it do? He has committed no crime. You cannot arrest him. He has no conscience. More than that, Rydel has left us helpless.”

“Not quite,” observed The Shadow, in the calm tone of Cranston. “On the contrary, he has given a very excellent suggestion; one that may lead to real results. One, in fact, that may provide the antidote for this poison that has been released.”

“What was that?” queried Releston, eagerly, while Crozan stared, puzzled.

“Rydel told you to see Coyd,” returned The Shadow. “It was true advice, whether he intended it as such or not.”

“You are right,” agreed Releston. “Come, let us start for Coyd's.” Then, to Harry, at the door: “Have the car ready at once, Vincent.”

FIVE minutes later, Harry was piloting the sedan toward Coyd's. Senator Releston was riding in the back, between The Shadow and Foster Crozan. As the car spun along an avenue, the senator remembered something which The Shadow had said.

“By the way, Cranston,” he remarked. “You said something about an antidote. Is there a cure for this crisis, Cranston?”

“Perhaps,” replied The Shadow. “We shall see.”

That cryptic statement ended The Shadow's discussion. The sedan had reached Coyd's. Three passengers alighted; they ascended the brownstone steps. Releston first; then Crozan; after that, The Shadow.

Firm, disguised lips held the semblance of a smile that the others did not see. The Shadow, his keen brain at work, had found an answer to a problem.

CHAPTER X. COYD AGREES.

THEY found Congressman Coyd in his upstairs living room. His table resembled Releston's desk, inasmuch as it was piled high with newspapers. With Coyd were Jurrick and Tabbert; also a man of professional appearance, whom The Shadow knew must be Doctor Borneau.

Coyd was glum, almost apologetic as he greeted the visitors. He stared seriously at Releston when the senator sat opposite him. Yet in Coyd's eyes was the semblance of a glare; the natural mistrustfulness that went with the man's self-styled independence.

“Let us come to facts, Mr. Coyd,” asserted Releston. “We do not require privacy. All present know the reason for my visit. I have come to ask you about the interview that you gave yesterday. Just what was its purpose?”

“I cannot answer you, senator,” groaned Coyd, wearily. “Please do not plague me with useless questions. My mind is burdened. I am leaving for a rest.”

“To Virginia?” inquired Crozan.

“Yes,” replied Coyd. “Doctor Borneau has advised it. I wish, gentlemen, that I had gone there sooner.”

“Then,” stated Releston, “I take it take you have regretted yesterday's interview.”

Coyd's eyes blazed. The congressman towered as he rose from his chair and raised his fist dramatically. His face took on a fullness; it showed its true likeness to the bronze bust on the mantelpiece.

“I regret nothing!” cried Coyd, reverting to his oratorical complex. “I stand upon my own record! I take no orders from others! Not from you, Senator Releston, nor from any man at all—”

“Even though you have done great harm,” interposed Releston, with a sad shake of his head. “Have you considered that, Mr. Coyd?”

The congressman subsided. The sorrow that was evident on Releston's face was something that Coyd had not expected. Despite his love of independence, Coyd was sympathetic. He subsided into his chair.

“Frankly, senator,” he declared. “I may have made a mistake. You must realize, though, that my urge is one of progress. I represent the people; it is their right to know of certain facts.”

“And your constituents include those rogues who are already reaping their evil harvest?”

“You mean that rogues were awaiting my statement regarding munitions control?”

“Exactly. They have probably bought up shares of stock for trivial sums. The market in such securities has started to rise. To-morrow—or in a few days—it will be soaring. Scamps knew the truth; they were prepared.”

COYD slumped and bowed his head in his hands. His voice came in a mutter; when he looked up his whole countenance showed haggard.

“Whatever I can do, senator—whatever I can do—”

“Your mistake cannot be rectified. You can, however, tell me one fact that may aid us in finding the culprits. What caused you to issue your statement to the press?”

Coyd shook his head seriously.

“I do not know, senator,” he declared. “Oddly, I cannot answer the question.”

“Did any one approach you?”

“Certainly not! You know that I would never listen to outside suggestions!”..

“Something must have persuaded you. Can't you remember?”

In response to Releston's question, Coyd shifted uneasily. He glanced appealingly toward Doctor Borneau. The physician nodded and stepped forward.

“You have named the ailment, senator,” declared Borneau, quietly. “Mr. Coyd cannot remember.”

“Cannot remember?”

“His mind has been overtaxed. He is subject to a mild form of aphasia. Not a serious condition; but one which causes a hiatus in his memory.”

“You say it is not serious!” exclaimed Releston. “Not serious, when it leads to such results as this?”

Emphatically, Releston picked up one of the morning newspapers and pointed to the headlines. Doctor Borneau smiled.

“I speak as a physician,” he reminded. “Not as a politician. I say that Mr. Coyd's condition is not serious, senator, because his brain is lucid. Read his statement; you will agree with me that it shows the efforts of a healthy mind.”

Releston looked puzzled. It was Coyd who tried to help the senator out of his dilemma.

“Yesterday,” Coyd explained, “I took a rest. I awoke from my nap shortly after four. I came downstairs; I met the reporters and gave the interview. I had words with Vincent, which I am forced to regret. Then I went back to nap and did not awaken until seven.”

Coyd paused; half pitifully. He looked toward Doctor Borneau, who delivered a prompting nod. Coyd pushed his fingers through his shock of black hair; then turned appealingly to Releston.

“Frankly, senator,” he admitted, “I cannot remember waking between those two naps.”

“Perhaps, Mr. Coyd,” Releston stated dryly, “your mental condition is so precarious that your best policy would be to resign the chairmanship of your committees.”

“Never!” retorted Coyd. “Hear what Doctor Borneau has said! My faculties are not below normal! I am alert, despite my nervousness. I can assure you of this; my statement yesterday was a clear one. I must have had reason to give it!

“Since I no longer recall the episode, I naturally have forgotten my reason also. That is a logical consequence. I can assure you, however, that I must have acted on my own. I take orders from no one!”

“What do you think of it, Crozan?” inquired Releston. “Should I insist upon this matter?”

“It will do you no good, senator,” stormed Coyd, suddenly. “No one can force me to abandon my normal rights. I shall retain my position of authority!”

“Suppose Mr. Coyd should resign,” suggested Crozan, speaking straight to Releston. “Who would head the committees? Is there any one competent to replace him?”

“No!” exclaimed Coyd, bursting into the discussion. “Matters would be worse, Releston. Three or four men would be required to fill my place. There would be conflict; moreover, Congress has ended its session. Who would appoint those committee heads?”

CROZAN appeared troubled; he was impressed by Coyd's statement. So, for that matter, was Releston. Worried, the senator looked to The Shadow, who was leaning by the mantel, puffing a cigarette that extended from its long holder.

“What do you think, Cranston?” questioned the senator. “You have shown good analysis of this situation. Is there not some answer to our problem?”

“Mr. Coyd can supply the answer.” replied The Shadow, casually. He looked straight toward the congressman as he spoke. “Moreover, I think he may be willing to do so.”

“How?” queried Coyd. He was impressed by the magnetism of those focused eyes. “I am willing, sir, to listen to any reasonable request from Senator Releston. But when he tries to label me as a madman—”

“Senator Releston admits that he is wrong,” interposed The Shadow, quietly. “He accepts the statement

made by both you and your physician. Your mental faculties are active. It is wise that you should continue in your high service to the government.”

Coyd was on his feet, his chest swelling as he listened to these flattering statements. The Shadow smiled solemnly.

“At the same time,” he added, “Senator Releston cannot ignore your own admission of poor memory. An admission, Mr. Coyd, that has also been backed by your physician. So, in full fairness to Senator Releston, you should take precautionary measures to offset any future lapse of memory.”

“How can I do that?”

“By agreeing to let Senator Releston read any public statement before you make it; and to discuss its wisdom with him. That, Mr. Coyd, would be a courtesy.”

Releston spoke up promptly.

“A courtesy which I shall gladly return,” he assured. “I shall inform you of any public utterance which I intend to make, Mr. Coyd.”

Coyd nodded slowly. His expression showed that he had been conciliated.

“I agree,” he declared, emphatically. “But suppose I should forget? My memory is really bad—”

“You can instruct your secretaries,” interposed The Shadow. “Have them remind you that Senator Releston is to be informed beforehand of your statements.”

“Vincent can help with that,” added Releston, quickly. “If he could be here more regularly—more often—”

“Very well,” interrupted Coyd, abruptly. Then, to his secretaries: “You hear that, Jurrick? Tabbert? Jove! Why didn’t the two of you jolt me yesterday?”

“I was afraid to, sir,” confessed Jurrick. “When I was copying your penciled notes. I wondered about them—”

“And I was puzzled when I heard you read them, sir.” broke in Tabbert. “But I knew that Jurrick must have copied them exactly. I saw you hand them to him, sir; I knew how quick you always are to catch any error in a copy.”

“I understand,” nodded Coyd. “I know that I must have written that statement and delivered it verbatim. But I cannot explain my folly. Jove, Releston! Is there no way to stop it?”

RELESTON shook his head; Crozan copied the senator's example. The Shadow, however, spoke in slow, deliberate fashion. His even-toned words were definite.

“My understanding of the present situation,” he remarked, “is that the congressional committees are authorized to regulate the sales and purchase of all munitions that our government may require. Am I correct, senator?”

“Absolutely,” returned Releston. “But we cannot control exports, Cranston. We can only lay down the law in reference to government purchases.”

“I understand. I have heard also that Congress made a large appropriation for American armament, to be supplied as occasion may demand, bringing this country up to its treaty limitations. Am I correct again?”

“You are, Cranston. One function of the present committees is to determine when that appropriation shall be made; and how the moneys shall be spent.”

“Very well.” The Shadow's smile was fixed. “Suppose that you, senator, and Mr. Coyd, issue a joint statement. Tell the public that the committees may recommend that the entire appropriation be spent at once; that all munitions available should be purchased immediately, with the price fixed barely above cost. And then—”

The Shadow paused, his smile unchanging. Senator Releston had grasped the idea. The solon's stern face was lighted with enthusiasm.

“Marvelous, Cranston!” cried Releston. “You have the answer! These factories will be working overtime, rushing their foreign orders, knowing that our present committees cannot stop them.

“But we control supplies needed for the American government. We can make the factories store away their output; we can deny them the privilege of export on the grounds that we control all munitions that the American government may want. We can make them wait for our refusal before they ship their munitions. Until we say that we will not buy, they cannot unload elsewhere!”

“And when you decide that you will not buy,” remarked The Shadow, “Congress will again have been in session. The new committees will have been formed, empowered to control—to ban—all exports of munitions.”

“Munitions on hand, with no sale,” ejaculated Releston, his face beaming. “The only possible purchaser would be our own government. It would buy at cost—”

“But it never will,” assured The Shadow. “Once your statement has been made, senator, with Mr. Coyd's approval, the whole game will be spiked. Those rising stocks will slump back; the factories will never open.”

RELESTON nodded. He turned to Harry Vincent and pointed to a typewriter in the corner of the room.

“Take this statement, Vincent,” said the senator, briskly, “direct on the machine. A joint statement by the congressional committees on munitions, of the Senate and the House—”

The Shadow had stepped forward; Releston saw a slight restraining gesture of his hand. The senator understood; he turned to Layton Coyd.

“It is your privilege, sir,” bowed Releston. “You have heard the plan, Mr. Coyd. I shall concede to you the honor of delivering the words for this epoch-making statement.”

It was the perfect stroke. Coyd, when the cause had seemed hopeless, had expressed his willingness to follow Releston's lead. He could not withdraw from it; in fact, a statement from Releston alone would be sufficient to spike the scheme by which swindlers hoped to use munitions makers as a step to wealth.

Even though he might have shown reluctance, Coyd was committed, now that The Shadow had shown the way. But if Coyd were forced to play second fiddle at this time, future relations might be strained between him and Releston. Knowing that, The Shadow had gestured to the senator; Releston, wise in all circumstances, was stepping aside for Coyd.

In grandiloquent fashion, Coyd stepped forward. Bombastically, he delivered his statement, one hand tucked beneath his coat in Napoleonic fashion.

The statement finished, Coyd relaxed. He seemed to shrink as he always did, when an effort had been

ended. As Coyd groped his way back to his chair, Harry pulled out sheets of paper and their carbons. He brought the triplicate copies to Releston, who pointed toward Coyd. Harry brought the papers to the congressman. Coyd signed each one with a flourish.

At the bottom of each sheet, Releston wrote the words: "Approved in full"; then added his own signature. Coyd saw the action and smiled. He knew that the glory was all his. Speaking quietly, his tone filled with friendliness, he said:

"I leave the rest to you, senator. I am too tired to interview the press. I am starting for Virginia within an hour. Doctor Borneau assures me that after a brief rest, I shall be myself again."

"Call the newspapers, Vincent," ordered Releston. "Tell them to have representatives at my apartment within fifteen minutes. This news will reach New York by wire in time for the noon editions. It will stop that forced rise of munitions shares, before the closing rush at the market."

THE visitors left Coyd's. Harry took the wheel of the sedan. Senator Releston occupied the center of the rear seat, clutching two of the precious papers that bore Coyd's signature and his approval. The senator was bubbling with enthusiasm. Foster Crozan, on his right, was nodding, his lips wreathed with a steady, set smile.

The Shadow, his disguised lips straightened, was looking from the window on the left as the sedan pulled away from the brownstone house. Enthusiastically, Releston turned and thumped his hand upon The Shadow's back.

"Grand work, Cranston!" approved the senator. "You gain the credit. You were right, the poison was given—a big dose to the public, the interview that Coyd gave yesterday. But you found the antidote, old fellow. You found it and the cure will be complete."

A slight smile formed on the lips of Lamont Cranston. Releston thought that The Shadow's expression was a response to his own enthusiasm. The senator was wrong; The Shadow had smiled because of something that he had seen, not heard.

The Shadow had noticed a coupé parked across the street as the sedan rolled by. He had spotted the man hunched behind the wheel; he had recognized the mustached face of Walbert. But The Shadow had seen even more. He had noticed a slight lift of the rumble seat; he had caught a momentary glimpse of a wizened face ducking out of view, within the back of the coupé.

Hawkeye, the artful trailer, had been clinging close to the mustached dick. The little spotter had chosen the cute system of riding everywhere within the confines of the rumble seat at the back of Walbert's coupé.

CHAPTER XI. WEED GAINS FACTS.

"WALBERT has arrived."

Burbank's hand came up over his shoulder as his voice spoke these words. The Shadow received the earphones in the darkness. Quiet reigned in 808 as the chief and his agent waited in the blackness. Evening had replaced daylight.

Voices came through the earphones. Tyson Weed was querulously interrogating Walbert.

"So you saw Releston come and go." remarked the lobbyist. "And you saw Coyd leave alone, in a hired hack. You trailed him twenty miles down in Virginia; then you guessed he was going to see his daughter, so you came back. So what?"

“So what?” queried Walbert, gruffly.

“That’s what I said,” retorted Weed. “What does any of this mean? Borneau, Vincent, Crozan—all the rest of them—what have you got that’s new? Then this about Coyd?”

“I’ve given you all the facts about Coyd—”

“But not the kind I need. Go back on the job and keep your eyes open. Maybe you’ll land a break if you persist long enough.”

“Want me to go down to Virginia and watch his nibs?”

“No. He’s taking a vacation; incidentally, the newspapers mentioned that also. There’s no good of keeping tabs on Coyd while he’s taking the rest cure. Wait until he comes back to Washington.”

Sounds of Walbert’s departure came. The earphones went back to Burbank. The Shadow moved toward the window; his keen eyes stared out above the lighted city.

WAITING at the window of 808, The Shadow was confident that Quidler should soon arrive in 1012. Both dicks had had appointments with Weed on that preceding night. It was likely that both would be here again. Walbert had come and gone; Quidler, by rights was due. As The Shadow mused, Burbank spoke:

“Quidler has arrived.”

The Shadow took the earphones. He heard Quidler’s clipped tones, which Burbank had promptly recognized. Like Walbert, Quidler had brought a written report. The Shadow listened.

“Say!” The exclamation was Weed’s. “You’re sure about this, Quidler?”

“Sure about everything I’ve written.” informed Quidler, snappily. “It’s more than a guess when I say a guy has been trailing me. I’ve wised to it a couple of times. What’s more, I’ve seen that coupé parked in front of Coyd’s too often—”

“Forget it,” interrupted Weed, impatiently. “That’s not the part of the report I’m talking about. I’m interested in this business about Coyd himself. You’re sure you saw him outside the house?”

“Sure. Two days ago I spotted him coming in just after I got there. Along around four o’clock. He got out of that limousine and went in through the side door of the house.”

“Leaving the limousine waiting for him?”

“Out back. Just like my report says. He’d been somewhere, Coyd had. Well, he came out again half an hour later, and the chauffeur drove him away.”

“You should have had a cab ready to trail him.”

“I know that, Mr. Weed. But I muffed it that time. It took me too long to get a cab; and I chased all over town trying to locate the limousine. And it was while I was chasing around that Coyd must have hopped back home.”

A pause. Weed was evidently consulting the report. The Shadow listened keenly at the earphones. This expedition of Coyd’s was something that had happened while Cliff had not been watching Quidler.

“Coming to yesterday,” Quidler remarked suddenly. “It was pouring rain. I didn’t think Coyd would slide

out again. I kept going back and forth; and he must have left his house while I wasn't there. Because along after four, when I got there again, the limousine was waiting on the back street.

“Not conspicuous you know. It had pulled away from Coyd's house. But I knew it by the license plate; and I'd looked the number up, like my report says.”

“Tell me this,” demanded Weed, “you're positive that the limousine belongs to Dunwood Rydel?”

“You bet it does,” returned Quidler, “and that chauffeur is one of the monkeys who works for Rydel. Listen: it was about quarter of five when Coyd comes barging out of the side door, like he was in a hurry. Leastwise I think it was Coyd; it was too dark for me to make sure. Anyway, he took the limousine.

“I had a taxi waiting around the corner. I grabbed it and trailed the big bus to that old apartment I tell about, there in the report. The limousine waited there about ten minutes. I couldn't see nobody get out; but maybe Coyd did. It's likely he got back into it again, if he was out, because he probably had to get back to his house.”

“But you lost the trail?”

“Yeah. The taxi driver skidded going around a corner and wound up on the curb with a flat. I paid him and beat it, because I didn't want to be around if some cops showed up and started an argument.”

“You went to Rydel's later?”

“Sure. To see if the big limousine showed up there. It did. What's more, I found out that sometimes the chauffeur parks it at the old F Street garage; and the chauffeur's name is Mullard—”

“Wait a minute.”

WEED evidently took time out to make a final perusal of Quidler's report. When he spoke again, the lobbyist was sharp in tone.

“Look at this newspaper,” he ordered. “This account says that Coyd has gone away for a trip.”

“Sure he has,” chuckled Quidler “That fits my report, don't it? Look what I've got to say about this afternoon. I went around to that apartment and did some gumshoe work. Kept looking through transoms until I spotted the place I wanted. There was Coyd, big as life, smoking a stogie and reading a newspaper. Had the light on—the shades drawn—”

“Hold on, Quidler. The newspapers have more to say about his trip. They state that he went to Virginia.”

“They're wrong. He's here in Washington. I saw him this afternoon.”

“But I'm sure that he was driving down through Virginia at noon. Twenty miles south of Washington.”

“Maybe he was. He could have doubled back. I've seen too many pictures of that guy's mug to be mistaken.”

“That doesn't follow, Quidler. Look at these photos.” Newspapers rustled; Weed was exhibiting the morning dailies, with their story of yesterday's interview. “See? They're all different.”

“They're all funny-looking. Like Coyd, himself. Maybe the galoot does look one way when he's swelled up and another when he's tired or sick. But that mush of his is a give-away. Nobody else has a mug just like it. That scar of his, those eyebrows, that shaggy hair. Don't tell me, Mr. Weed. I know.”

“Humph.”

Another pause after Weed's utterance. Then came an ejaculation from Quidler:

“My report! You're burning it!”

“I am,” rejoined Weed, with an ugly chortle. “It's dynamite, Quidler. I want to get rid of it.”

“You mean—you don't think—”

“I'm thinking plenty. I don't want to carry this paper; I don't want any one else to see it.”

“I get you.” Quidler chuckled.

“Never mind, Quidler. You've done well. We can pass up a discussion of the details.”

“You mean you've got enough on Coyd to make him talk turkey. Well, I hope you remembered the address of that apartment. That's where you'll find the old bozo.”

“I've remembered it. That is where I'm going, Quidler.”

“To talk with Coyd?”

“Maybe. Maybe not. I've put two and two together, Quidler. Maybe it will make four; maybe two and two will be twenty-two. Anyway, you've done your part. Slide along; and stay away from that apartment.”

“You're going there right away?”

“Not for a while. I'm waiting in case of a long-distance call from New York. But there's no rush. The bird will still be in the nest when I look for him.”

SOUNDS indicated Quidler's departure. A chuckled laugh followed; it was Weed's expression of a deep understanding. The lobbyist was comparing Walbert's report with Quidler's, much to his satisfaction. The Shadow knew that Weed had gained even more results than before.

Earphones went back to Burbank. The Shadow strolled from the room. As Henry Arnaud, carrying a briefcase, he reached the lobby and took a seat there. From this post, he could witness Weed's departure and take up the crafty lobbyist's trail.

As for Walbert and Quidler, their work was done for to-night. Hawkeye and Cliff could still watch them, however, in hope of chance developments. The future boded well for The Shadow. Only some wild freak of chance could hinder his present quest.

So reasoned The Shadow; and he reasoned wisely. For even while he waited in the lobby of the Hotel Halcyon, bad luck was on its way. Before this night had ended, The Shadow would have his share of trouble.

CHAPTER XII. TWO DICKS TALK.

THE SHADOW had deliberately delayed his departure from 808 to give Quidler time to leave the Hotel Halcyon. The Shadow was positive that Cliff Marsland was waiting outside to take up the dick's trail; and The Shadow had been right.

Quidler had taken a cab outside the hotel. Another taxi had followed him. The trail had led to a

frequented street just north of Pennsylvania Avenue. There, Quidler had alighted to enter an old but popular hotel, the Nayland House.

Cliff had followed the dick into the thronged lobby. He had watched Quidler enter the taproom. The place had but one entrance; Quidler would have to come out through the lobby. So Cliff sat down and waited.

The Nayland taproom was crowded and noisy. Cliff had decided that Quidler could not have chosen it for an important meeting; and he was right. In fact, Quidler had simply decided to celebrate. Weed had slipped him a fat roll of cash; the dick had cause to be jubilant.

It was entirely by chance that Quidler happened to bump into an old acquaintance. Shouldering his way to the jammed bar, the beak-faced dick jostled a long-necked rowdy who was standing there. The fellow swung about with an angry snarl. Quidler recognized a sallow, rattish face.

“Hello, Jake,” chuckled the dick, with a friendly grin. “Bumped into you, didn't I, huh? How're you, old fellow. Last guy I expected to see here was Jake Thurler.”

“Hello, Quidler,” rejoined Jake, a leer forming on his leathery lips. “What're you doin' in town? Still in the gumshoe racket?”

“Sure. It's gravy. Washington's a good spot. What're you doing, though? Running booze down through the dry South?”

Jake shook his head.

“Out of that racket,” he informed. “Too hot for me. Too hot for any guy that's got brains. I'm working for Stew Luffy, the big shot that's runnin' a classy gamblin' joint across the Potomac. Steerin' suckers down there is my job. Plenty of saps loose; an' I'm the guy to spot 'em.”

“You're workin' to-night?”

“Sure. This is a good place to draw from.” Jake was speaking in a low, confidential tone. “Sometimes I fix the squawkers, too. Stew don't like howls about his joint. But say”—the ratty fellow raised his tone—“here's a guy you'd like to know, Quidler. He's in the gumshoe racket, too.”

JAKE leaned back so Quidler could look past him to see a glum-faced fellow who was wiping foam from a big black mustache. The man was wearing a Derby hat tilted over his forehead; but Quidler could see an angry look in his eyes when Jake nudged him roughly.

“Snap out of it, Walbert!” snorted Jake. “Wantcha to meet an old pal of mine. He's a Sherlock, too. Shake hands with Quidler over here.”

Walbert extended a flabby paw and received Quidler's hand grip. Then, the mustached man swung away and began to drink again, while Jake Thurler turned to chat with Quidler.

“Who is the guy, Jake?” queried Quidler, in an undertone. “Looks like a dumb cluck to me. Who's he working for?”

“Keep it under your hat.” confided Jake. “I'm the only bird he's mentioned it to. Ever hear of a bozo named Weed? Tyson Weed?”

“Walbert's working for Weed?”

“Sure. And it ought to be a good racket. Weed's got dough, they say.”

“Edge out, Jake. I want to talk to Walbert.”

Jake consented reluctantly. He whispered a warning as he moved away. Quidler gave him a wise look; then slid in beside Walbert. The mustached dick studied him rather sourly.

“Ease down to the end of the bar.” remarked Quidler. “I got something to tell you, Walbert. A lot to tell you.”

Walbert hesitated; then followed instructions. Something in Quidler's manner impressed him. As they reached the deserted spot, Quidler came right to the point.

“Listen, bozo.” He informed, “A guy that tries to trail me is wasting his time. I'm no palooka. Get me?”

“Who are you talking about, fellow?” demanded Walbert, with a growl. “You mean me?”

“I mean that when I'm working on a case, the bird that hires me don't need to check up on what I'm doing.”

“Yeah? Well, who's been hiring you lately?”

“A fellow named Tyson Weed.”

WALBERT'S jaw dropped. For a moment, the mustached dick stared so sharply that his very manner was a giveaway. Quidler chuckled hoarsely.

“Tyson Weed,” he repeated. “He's the guy that hired me. To keep a lookout on a congressman named Coyd. You know all about it, Walbert. You're the guy I've seen out front of Coyd's, parked in a coupé.”

Quidler's eyes were flashing eagerly. He was not sure about Walbert having been the man in the coupé. But the blink of the eyes beneath the Derby hat made Quidler know that his guess was a good one.

“All right.” parried Walbert, realizing that he had slipped. “Suppose I was out front of Coyd's? What does that mean? Where were you?”

“Out back of Coyd's. Does that mean anything to you?”

“Not a thing. I was never anywhere but out front. Say, Quidler; it looks like you're the second fiddler. Keeping an eye on me, eh?”

Quidler grinned sourly. Walbert's return thrust had been a good one. He chapped the fellow roundly on the shoulder.

“Not bad, Walbert,” he approved. “Only you did some tagging once in a while. Hopping cabs to follow the ones I was in. Picking up my trail; then dropping it.”

“Hopping cabs?” quizzed Walbert. “Say—what do I want with them when I've got my own buggy? Let's get this straight, Quidler: do you really think I've been trailing you?”

“Somebody has. I told Weed so to-night and he said to forget it.”

“You were up at Weed's to-night?”

“Sure. I just came from there.”

Walbert brought his empty glass down with a thud.

“The louse!” he ejaculated. “So that's why he told me to vamoose. After he'd said get there early. Didn't want me to know he had another guy working on the same case.”

“Weed told me just when to get there,” admitted Quidler. “Say, fellow, maybe we're getting somewhere. I'm putting it straight; I never knew that anybody else was supposed to watch Coyd. Did you?”

“No. That's straight. Quidler.”

“So Weed took us both for saps.”

“Looks like it.”

Quidler chuckled. After all, it was Weed's business to do as he liked. A grin on his peaked face, the dick called for drinks. Walbert indulged in a broad smile. He saw the situation identically with Quidler.

“Looks like our stunt is to pal up,” decided Walbert. “Hand Weed the ha-ha. Working together, we can do a better job. How does it hit you, Quidler?”

“Not a bad idea. Well, you didn't know I was watching you; and I thought you were watching me. We were both wrong.”

“Which makes us both right.”

Quidler, gulping from a glass, stopped short. He turned to Walbert, with a serious stare.

“Somebody was watching me,” he declared. “Maybe not at Coyd's; but at other places. Say—there couldn't be a third guy working for Weed?”

“Not a chance. Finish your drink. The next is on me.”

Quidler complied; then made another comment:

“There is a guy, though. He's working for somebody different than Weed. Guess he didn't spot you, Walbert; but he trailed me.”

“If he trailed you, he's liable to trail me. Especially if we team up on the q.t.”

“You said it. It's something we ought to find out about.”

“I'm going to.”

QUIDLER turned and spied Jake. He beckoned to the fellow and Jake came over. Quidler spoke confidentially.

“There's a guy been trailing me, Jake. How about getting a line on him? Could you help me?”

“Sure. It's a cinch. Want me to bag him?”

“Can you do it?”

“Soft. I got everything outside. A phony cab for the saps; a touring car to cover. All you got to do is start out in a cab of your own. The phony will pick up the bird you want.”

Walbert interposed.

“You don't need a cab, Quidler,” offered the mustached dick. “Ride with me in my coupé. Which way will we head, Jake?”

“Over the Potomac bridge. Duck off the road and douse the glims. My man in the hack will do the rest. You can come on back.”

“What about the mug?” inquired Quidler, “We got nothing against him, you know.”

“We'll make him squawk,” assured Jake. “It don't take much. Leave that to us.”

“Sure,” grumbled Walbert. “Jake knows his stuff. He'll handle the bird.”

“You bet I will.” leered Jake. “Out at Stew Luffy's joint. Wait a couple of minutes, while I fix things. Then go out and get in your buggy.” Jake departed.

FIVE minutes later, Walbert and Quidler set down their empty glasses. Buzzing as they left the taproom, they went through the lobby and out to the street. Cliff Marsland saw them pass. Calmly, The Shadow's agent followed.

Walbert's coupé was parked a hundred feet down the street. The dicks boarded it; Walbert started the motor, and the car drew away. Cliff spied it from the curb; as he looked for a taxi, one shot into view from the other side of the street. Cliff boarded the cab and ordered the driver to follow the coupé.

The two cars crossed the Potomac. Walbert took to a curving boulevard; then found a little-traveled road and chose it. Cliff, crouched forward in the taxi, pointed out the path to the driver. The fellow nodded; but lagged slightly. Up ahead, the coupé swung a curve.

“Here's a good spot.” said Walbert, to Quidler. He pulled the coupé to the side beneath some trees. “We'll douse the glims and watch what happens.”

Out went the lights. The dicks watched from darkness. As they did, the top of the rumble seat opened cautiously. A wizened face poked its nose into view. Hawkeye looked about; then gazed toward the road as he heard a car approaching.

It was Cliff's taxi. Hawkeye watched it pass; he heard the chuckles from the dicks. The cab was slowing, a hundred yards ahead. Then, from around the curve, came a swift touring car. As Hawkeye peered over the rear fender, he saw the larger machine overtake the cab, just as the taxi stopped.

Watching, Hawkeye saw men pile from the touring car and drag a figure from the taxi. Walbert started the coupé; the car swung about and started back toward Washington. Hawkeye, high out of the rumble seat, could see the taxi turning to come back; the touring car was going on ahead.

Boldly, the little spotter swung clear of his hiding place. Clinging to the right fender, he pushed his face up toward the open window. He could hear comments despite the rattle of the car. The dicks were chuckling.

“The guy was trailing you, right enough, Quidler.”

“Yeah. Thanks for helping get rid of him, Walbert. He'll talk plenty when he gets out to Luffy's joint.”

“Jake's taximan must have shoved a gun in his face. Covered him unexpected and made it soft for the other guys.”

The car was near the Potomac bridge. Lights showed a gasoline station. Hawkeye dropped from the

running board as the coupé showed. With loping gait, he hurried toward the service station. There, Hawkeye found a telephone.

THREE minutes later, The Shadow saw the clerk at the Hotel Halcyon look into the box marked 808. Rising from his lobby chair, The Shadow went to a telephone. He called the room. Burbank's quiet voice gave the news.

“Instructions,” declared The Shadow, in Arnaud's easy tone. “Hawkeye to cover Weed.”

“Instructions received.” was Burbank's response.

The Shadow strolled from the lobby. He walked straight to a parking space; there he entered a coupé that was parked there in the name of Henry Arnaud. Behind the wheel, he started the car and slowed at an inconspicuous corner of the lot. Swiftly he donned cloak and hat, from his briefcase.

Hands thrust automatics beneath the black cloak. Gloves slid over long fingers. A foot pressed the accelerator as hands gripped the wheel. The car roared as it sped along a clear street. The speedy coupé reached the Potomac bridge.

The car passed a cab on the bridge. Not the one that had carried Cliff; that had already reached Washington. This was one that Hawkeye had called from the service station. The shrewd spotter was speeding back, to serve as The Shadow's substitute.

For The Shadow had given up his plan to follow Tyson Weed in person. His mission was one of emergency; a rescue that had become most pressing. Hawkeye had learned the vital facts by listening to Walbert and Quidler.

The Shadow knew the location of “Stew” Luffy's notorious gambling dive, an undercover establishment that persisted in defiance of the law. Minister of vengeance, he was speeding thither to aid Cliff Marsland, trapped by men of crime!

CHAPTER XIII. THE SHADOW'S SUBSTITUTE.

FIVE minutes after The Shadow had left the Hotel Halcyon, Tyson Weed appeared in the lobby. Luck had tricked The Shadow to-night. The chance meeting of Walbert and Quidler had forced an issue that the dicks, individually, would not have pressed. Cliff Marsland's capture had been the result of a cooperative plan.

Drawn to an immediate quest, The Shadow had been forced to leave an open time period. Chances were that Weed would not choose those few minutes for his trip to the old apartment house that lay somewhere in Washington; but again, the short odds won. Weed was leaving the hotel while Hawkeye was still on his way in from the Potomac bridge.

Outside the hotel, Weed hailed a cab. About to enter it, the lobbyist paused. A newsboy, coming along the street, was shouting out the headlines as he sold the bulldog editions of a morning journal. Weed paused to buy a newspaper. He fumbled for the change and found it.

A penny slipped from his hand as he paid the newsboy. The coin rolled across the sidewalk and disappeared through a grating. Snatching the newspaper roughly from the boy's hand, Weed turned toward the cab.

“Say, mister—”

The newsboy's plaint was wistful. He had not even touched the coin that the man had dropped. Weed

snarled angrily.

“Fish it out for yourself,” he told the boy, pointing to the grating. “I haven't time to waste.”

“But it's down the grating—”

Weed shoved the boy aside; but before he could enter the cab, the driver slammed the door. Leaning from the front seat, the taximan took the boy's part.

“A hurry, eh?” he barked at Weed. “Not in this cab, you ain't. Pay the kid the cent you owe him, or you don't ride in this hack.”

“Move along. I'll just take another cab.”

“Yeah? Not while I'm around. It'll be tough for the hackie that gives you a lift.”

The cab driver showed a pair of threatening fists. He made a gesture that indicated further pugnacity. For a moment, Weed thought that he intended to step to the street. Huddling back, the lobbyist fished in his pocket; finding no pennies, he tossed the newsboy a nickel and snarled for him to keep the change.

“Thanks, mister!”

WEED paid no attention to the newsboy's remark. Expediency, not generosity had forced Weed to the deed. The cab door was being opened by the grinning driver. Weed stepped aboard and snapped out his destination, telling the cabby to hurry. The taxi shot away.

But at that very moment, another cab had swung around the corner. Sharp eyes from its interior had spotted the lanky figure of Weed, hopping spider-like into the waiting cab.

Hawkeye, just in time, was quick to nudge the driver and tell him to follow Weed's cab. The fuming lobbyist had been in luck; now the situation had changed. Weed's own stinginess over a dropped penny had delayed him long enough for Hawkeye to snag his trail.

Unfortunately, the driver of Weed's cab was a man who held no malice. Even though he expected no tip, he drove with speed and precision. Cutting through the web-like maze of Washington's streets, he picked short-cuts and sudden turns that were confusing to Hawkeye's driver.

It was the little spotter, not the cabby, who managed to keep an eye on the cab ahead. But at last, the game failed. Hawkeye's cab swung a corner, sped a block and crossed Q Street. Hawkeye could see no taxi ahead. He knew that the trail had been lost. Telling the driver to stop, he shoved a bill in the fellow's hand and dropped from the cab.

Hawkeye was going on the theory that perhaps Weed's destination had been near by. If so, the lobbyist had alighted and dismissed his cab. There might still be a chance to trail him. If Weed had gone on, there would be no use trying to pick up his course. Hawkeye was hoping for the only chance.

Weed's cab had stopped. It had turned down Q Street and had halted before an obscure building, while Hawkeye's cab was crossing the thoroughfare. Weed had scowled as he paid the driver.

Finding the tip omitted, the driver had laughed and driven on. Weed had turned into the entrance of an old apartment. Both the cab and he were out of sight when Hawkeye's came back to Q Street. The building that Weed entered was actually an old house converted into an apartment. Once it had been well managed; the name board showed push-buttons and bell. But the bell-button bore a scrawled paper that said “Out of Order” and Weed decided that the door might be unlocked. It was.

Entering, the lobbyist went up one flight. He came to a door marked 2D. He paused there, staring at the lighted transom; then went to the end of the hall where he found an opened window that led to a fire escape. Stepping out, Weed found a darkened window that he was sure opened into the apartment that he wanted.

Again, luck was his. The window was unlocked; evidently the occupant of the apartment feared no intruders. It was dark here on the fire escape, with an empty building in back and a little alleyway between.

Weed opened the window and slid into the room. He was breathing tensely as he felt his way through darkness, toward the crack of a lighted door.

Arriving at the barrier, Weed paused; then, with a jolt, he shoved the door open and plunged into the room. He grabbed the door and closed it behind him. Looking across the room, he saw a man rise excitedly from a chair. Weed grinned as the fellow threw a newspaper aside.

The lobbyist was staring at the glowering face of Congressman Layton Coyd.

ATTIRED in smoking jacket, the surprised occupant of the apartment was too perturbed to make a move. Weed saw his lips twitch; that fact gave the lobbyist confidence. He motioned toward the chair and bowed with sarcasm.

“Sit down, congressman,” he urged, in wheedling fashion. “Excuse my unannounced arrival. Since I am here, we may as well be friendly.”

“Who are you?” The question was hoarse-toned. “Why have you come here?”

“You don't remember me, Mr. Coyd?” Weed smiled meanly as he remembered statements in Quidler's first report. “Well, well, I had forgotten that your mind was troubled. Loss of memory, perhaps.”

All of Coyd's dignity became apparent as the shock-haired man drew himself erect and pressed his hand against his scarred chin. Then came a shake of the shaggy head.

“What?” quizzed Weed. “You don't remember Tyson Weed? Your pet lobbyist? The prize pest, as you used to call me?”

Coyd's figure relaxed. The expression that came over his face was partly one of anger; at the same time, it showed relief. It was like the dawn of recognition, followed by a nod.

“I remember you now, Mr. Weed. Sit down. Tell me the purpose of your visit. I am rather surprised that you learned I was here.”

“No wonder.” Weed grinned as he took a chair. “The newspapers stated that you had gone to Virginia.”

“Yes, they did.” Coyd's words came reluctantly as the unwilling host resumed his chair. “Tell me, you possess this information exclusively as your own.”

“Yes,” replied Weed, blandly, “and that fact, Mr. Coyd, leaves us clear to form a friendly agreement.”

Twitching fingers pushed their way through shaggy, black hair, that glistened in the lamplight. Weed watched the expression on the tight-skinned face.

“An agreement,” came Coyd's ponderous tone. “Just what do you mean by an agreement, Mr. Weed?”

“Just this.” Weed was on his feet; his hissed tone lacked its whine. “I represent various interests, Mr.

Coyd. I have been paid to see that their rights are given fair consideration by Congress; that needed appropriations are made for them.”

“And you are even empowered to use bribery to obtain votes. Am I right, Mr. Weed?”

“I have never attempted bribery.”

“Because you knew that you were dealing with honest men. You want the government to purchase worthless timber lands; to grant money for the reopening of useless canals. You are ready to advocate the draining of marsh lands, to further speculative real estate developments.”

“What of it? Such things have been done before.”

“I have never been party to them.”

WEED watched a change come over Coyd's expression. The shaggy-haired man came to his feet; he was pompous as he thrust one hand beneath his smoking jacket in Napoleonic pose.

“You have proven yourself a nuisance, Weed,” came the accusing tones. “In the past, I have refused to see you. Your visit here is uncalled for. There is the door. Go.”

“Not yet.” Weed grinned wisely as he faced his challenger. “I have a purpose here, Mr. Coyd. Tell me: why did you make that statement regarding munitions? Why were you responsible for an attempt to aid speculators?”

“A whim on my part. A mistake. One that I rectified after I realized it.”

“You take the credit? Come, Coyd—I am too wise to fool. Senator Releston forced the issue.”

“You are wrong, Weed. Read the newspapers—”

“I have read them. Between the lines. I know that your scheme went sour. You fooled Releston; but not me. I know what's coming. Something bigger than munitions.”

There was no reply. Coyd's features were purple; but Weed noted that clenched fists were twitching helplessly. The lobbyist thrust a pointing finger beneath the congressman's flattish nose.

“Here are my terms,” affirmed Weed. “You back the things I want; in turn, I'll keep my mouth shut. I won't visit your house; instead, I'll see you here, by appointment. While you're pulling your own big deals, you can slip mine by in the rush.”

“Impossible,” Coyd's head shook emphatically. “After all, Weed, why should I listen to your preposterous requests? Why do I need your silence?”

“Why? Because it would do you no good if it were known that you, the self-styled paragon of justice, had chosen to live in a hide-out here in Washington.”

“A hide-out? Absurd! My physician has ordered a rest. I chose this apartment for that purpose. It is quiet here.”

WEED licked his lips. His face was gloating, his chuckle deep in his throat. He had found his chance; he used it.

“Suppose, Mr. Coyd”—the lobbyist was sarcastic as he pronounced the name—“suppose that I should inform Senator Releston of your present whereabouts? Suppose I told him that Congressman Layton

Coyd so requires rest that he has chosen to take it in two places simultaneously?

“What if I told him that you were living in this apartment and also dwelling in your comfortable lodge, some seventy miles away, in Virginia? What would Senator Releston think of such miraculous eccentricity?”

“I’m not at the hunting lodge, Weed. I’m right here, in Washington.”

“Certain persons, if promptly quizzed, might swear that you were at the lodge. For instance: Miss Evelyn Coyd; and also Miss Beatrice Rydel. If Senator Releston should call the lodge, by long distance, this very evening—”

“One moment, Weed. You actually intend to see Releston?”

“I do. And if he requires a counter witness, there is a man named Mullard—one of Dunwood Rydel’s chauffeurs, I believe—”

“You know more than I thought you did, Weed. Say nothing further. I am ready to talk terms.”

The blatant tone had ended. Weed smiled as he saw the look of resignation that had come over the tight-skinned face. His point was won; he listened for his victim’s next statement.

“Go back to your hotel,” came the slow pronouncement. “Say nothing of your visit here. I have a conference tonight with a certain man—one whose name you have probably guessed—and I shall tell him that I intend to support your enterprises.

“After all, such a course may be advisable. It will carry attention away from other matters. Since I am deemed eccentric, it is preferable that I should play the role in full. On second thought, Weed, I believe that your visit here has been a fortunate one.

“You will hear from me to-morrow.” Advancing, the speaker clamped a friendly hand on Weed’s shoulder. “I shall call by telephone and arrange a definite appointment. Meanwhile”—he was drawing Weed to the door while speaking—“you can prepare your own plans. Use wisdom. Arrange a systematic campaign whereby your requests will come at intervals. We must cooperate in this game, Weed.”

The lobbyist nodded. His shaggy-haired host opened the door and urged him into the hall. Weed thrust out a hand and received the firm shake that was characteristic of Congressman Coyd. The door closed; the lobbyist strolled toward the stairs.

Inside the room, a vast change had come over the countenance of Congressman Layton Coyd. The apartment dweller was listening to the departure of Weed’s footsteps. Satisfied that the lobbyist was gone, he wheeled about and hurried to the telephone. Hastily, he dialed a number; when a voice responded, he spoke in quick, abrupt terms:

“Weed was here... Tyson Weed, the lobbyist... Yes, he’s wise... Yes, I handled him. He’s gone back to his hotel... Expects to hear from me to-morrow.

“You’ll handle it? Good! That’s best. In person; then no one will know... What’s that? The other hideout? Yes, you’re right... I’ll start there at once... Yes, I can call Mullard myself, at the F Street garage...”

A look of elation showed on the tight features of Congressman Coyd. A quick hand hung up the receiver; a rapid finger dialed a number. In disguised tone, the speaker asked for Mullard; when the chauffeur answered, he gave abrupt orders to come at once.

OUTSIDE the old apartment building, Tyson Weed had paused to light a cigarette. The match showed his grin; then, as he puffed his smoke, the lobbyist strode along Q Street. His lanky figure was moving at its customary gait. Weed came beneath a lamplight; his leering figures showed.

Eyes spotted him from across the street. A watcher saw Weed turn the corner. A hunched form edged toward the old apartment building. It was Hawkeye. The Shadow's agent had seen the tall man come from the house; upon recognizing Weed, Hawkeye knew where the lobbyist had been.

Crossing the street, Hawkeye entered the converted apartment house. He looked about the first floor; then sneaked up to the second. Staring along the passage, he saw the opened window to the fire escape. Hawkeye went in that direction. Peering from the window, he saw the opened window of apartment 2D.

Hawkeye eased out to the fire escape. He slipped into the window of the bedroom. He saw the glimmer that edged the farther door. Imitating Weed, Hawkeye did a sneak in that direction. He reached the door; just as he laid his hand upon the knob, the barrier was yanked open. Hawkeye stopped short; he found himself staring into the livid countenance of Congressman Layton Coyd.

This time, it was the intruder who was surprised; moreover, Hawkeye was of a different ilk than Weed. Before The Shadow's substitute could make a move, a fierce oath came from Coyd's spread lips. Strong hands shot for Hawkeye's throat.

The grapple that followed was a swift one. Hawkeye was gripped by an antagonist to whom fury had lent unexpected strength; at the same time, The Shadow's agent was as slippery as an eel. He twisted to the living room; there, they banged about, upsetting furniture in the struggle. As they bowled against a table, Hawkeye twisted free.

Dropping back to a corner near the bedroom door, Hawkeye yanked a revolver from his pocket. He covered his foe with the weapon; he heard a snarl, then saw the look of terror that flashed upon his enemy's dried countenance. Hawkeye grinned, more wisely than had Weed. It was the spotter's turn to talk terms with Congressman Layton Coyd.

As Hawkeye puffed for breath, a sound made him turn. He was just in time to see the door from the hall swing open. On the threshold was a man in chauffeur's uniform: Mullard.

The fellow's face was set in an ugly grimace. Mullard had arrived to hear the crash of conflict; he had opened the door with a duplicate key. He had yanked a revolver, to deal with the intruder.

Covered by Mullard's gun, Hawkeye had only one course: self-preservation. He did not lose an instant in taking it. With a quick spring, Hawkeye dived for the bedroom. Mullard fired viciously, but too late. The chauffeur's bullet whistled wide of The Shadow's substitute.

LOPING through the bedroom, Hawkeye gained the window and dived for the fire escape. He was just in time. Mullard had reached the bedroom; two shots stabbed from the chauffeur's gun.

Hawkeye twisted through the rail and clung there to take aim; but Mullard had reached the window. The chauffeur saw the whiteness of Hawkeye's wizened face and jabbed shots at the fugitive.

As the first bullet whistled past the tip of Hawkeye's ear, the spotter dropped from the fire escape. Wise was his move; for Mullard's second shot zizzed past the very spot where the little trailer had been.

Gasping a wild cry as he fell, Hawkeye plopped to the mud of the alleyway and rolled beneath the hinged ladder of the fire escape.

Mullard had heard Hawkeye's gasp. The chauffeur thought that he had crippled his quarry. Windows

were banging upward in the apartments on other floors.

Mullard swung about, snatched a big suitcase from the floor and dashed through the living room. He saw his companion waiting; whiteness registered on Coyd's tight features.

"I bagged him," growled Mullard "Let's get away, in a hurry. Who was he?"

"Some thief," was the reply. "Weed was here; the fellow must have found the window that he opened."

Footsteps clattered as the two men dashed down the front stairs. Outside, they leaped into the limousine which Mullard had parked a few doors below. As yet, excitement had not reached the front of the building. Coyd shot the big car from the curb.

Just as the limousine wheeled away, a wizened face poked from a corner of the old house. Hawkeye's sharp eyes saw the departure; the spotter knew that pursuit was hopeless. No vehicle was handy to take up the chase. Sidling away, Hawkeye scurried along Q Street, anxious to get away from this terrain before police arrived.

The Shadow's substitute had done his best; but the breaks had been against him. Too late to spot Weed's entry, Hawkeye had reached the hide-out only to encounter trouble. Instead of gaining a triumph for The Shadow, the little substitute had been lucky to save his own hide.

To-night, success had been in the balance. Had The Shadow; himself, been present to trail Tyson Weed, the schemes that involved Congressman Coyd would have been nipped in the bud. Had The Shadow witnessed that interview, evil purposes would have been revealed.

Fate had decreed otherwise. The game was still on; and with it, crime was due. The flash of opportunity had passed. New tasks would confront The Shadow.

CHAPTER XIV. MURDER BY NIGHT.

HAWKEYE'S experience had been a rough one; but the little spotter had twisted free from his trap. In that, Hawkeye had been fortunate—much luckier than another of The Shadow's agents. For while Hawkeye, free and unhurt by his drop to the muddy alley, was sidling away from Q Street, Cliff Marsland was experiencing the tight close of a trap from which he could see no escape.

Bound to a chair, his arms crossed behind his back, Cliff was blinking at the single light of an underground room. Windowless, whitewashed walls surrounded him; between Cliff and the only door stood the quartette of ruffians who had brought him here. Chief of the four was Jake Thurler, a venomous, snarling inquisitor.

"Not squawking, eh?" came Jake's quiz. It was a reference to the stolidness that Cliff had maintained. "Well, that ain't going to last forever. Get that hunk of lead pipe, Pete. Shove it in them ropes behind this mug's back."

Pete complied. Jake, glaring, was about to issue another threat when a sharp rap sounded at the door. Jake gestured to another rowdy. The fellow pulled back the bolt and admitted a squatty man in evening clothes.

"Hello, Stew," laughed Jake. "Want to see me put the heat on this bozo?"

"What are you going to do?" queried Stew. "Maul him?"

"Not yet," leered Jake. "Too many taps on the konk makes a mug goofy. Sometimes they ain't able to

squawk even when they want to. I got a better way.”

“What's the lay, Jake? When you brought this bird in the back way, I said use your bean about him. What's he been pulling?”

“Trailin' a pal of mine, Stew. I said I'd find out what his racket was—who he was workin' for.”

“And your pal said to give him the heat?”

“No. But two fellows said to nab him; and they left it up to me. Maybe they'd be soft enough to yap if they saw me workin' on this guy; but they ain't here.”

STEW looked doubtful. Cliff watched the gambler's calloused face; for a moment he was hopeful. Not that he saw any mercy in Stew Luffy's expression; on the contrary, the gambler's hard countenance was more merciless than Jake Thurler's ratty face.

Cliff's hope was that Stew might consider it poor policy to make a torture chamber out of this room beneath his gambling joint. For a moment, Stew seemed inclined in that direction. It was Jake who turned the trend.

“This mug was around the Nayland House,” he informed. “That's the best spot I got, Stew, for snaggin' the saps that I bring out here. Maybe he was watchin' me, too. I gotta find out, don't I?”

Stew nodded.

“Better make him talk,” decided the gambler. “The place is yours, Jake.”

Jake grinned as the gambler turned about and went to the door. Stew had decided to wash his hands of the cutthroat crew. Jake and his ruffians had proven useful at times.

“Coming down later, Stew?”

“Maybe,” returned the gambler, in response to Jake's question. “If the guy's got anything to spill, I'd like to hear it.”

As soon as the door was closed, Jake spoke to Pete. The underling had shoved the lead pipe into the ropes. Another hoodlum took the opposite end of the bar. Together, they twisted. Cliff winced as the tightening ropes jerked back his shoulders. He felt as if he were in a strait-jacket.

“Hold it that way,” rasped Jake. “Let him get used to it. Slap another turn when I give the word.”

Stew Luffy, upon leaving the cellar room, had gone up a flight of stairs to reach another door. There, the gambler rapped. The door opened; Stew faced a big, pock-faced rowdy who served as bouncer in the gambling joint. The pair stood in a little hallway, with a door opposite. Stew gestured down the darkened corridor.

“Anybody on the back door, Frank?”

“Yeah,” returned the bouncer. “Muggsy is out there. He let Jake and them other guys come in.”

“I'll send some of the boys around from the front,” decided Stew. “We need more than one man there. If there's a raid, we'll need time to tip off Jake. He's putting the heat on a guy. Wanted me to come back and watch.”

“Going down again, boss?”

“Me? Not a chance. I'm going in and watch the suckers lose their wads. Say—there'll be a fifty-grand take to-night. No sap has a chance in this joint.”

“Not with that gaffed roulette wheel. Say, boss—you've fixed this racket great.”

“It's just started. If it stays quiet for a couple of weeks, we'll all be sitting pretty. That's why I'm letting Jake put the heat on the guy he grabbed. Maybe the bird knows too much. It's best to find out.”

With that, Stew opened the door opposite the cellar. Frank grinned as he saw the boss depart, en route to the gambling room where gullible players were losing their money on a fixed roulette wheel. Frank's chuckle indicated his admiration for Stew; but the bouncer's gloating was due for a sudden finish.

Something moved amid the blackness of the back door corridor. Like gruesome tentacles of night, two outstretched arms came forward. Then darkness became a living shape.

A cloaked figure followed the arms; a silent, living avalanche swooped hard upon Frank, before the big bouncer realized what was arriving.

It was The Shadow, swift, noiseless and expert in his overwhelming attack. Frank, gasping, stared bulge-eyed into fiery optics as gloved hands pressed his throat.

Frantically, the bouncer struggled, clutching at a twisting form that managed to wrench from his grappling arms. All the while, thumbs pressed hard against the big fellow's windpipe.

Frank slumped. The hands released their grip. The bouncer rallied for a struggle; but arms were clutching him for the final stroke. A lithe, powerful figure snapped backward; the bouncer hurtled head foremost to the floor. His skull cracked the wall. Frank lay half stunned.

Snapping away the fellow's belt, The Shadow bound Frank's hands behind his back. This was his second swift victory. Entering the back door of the gambling joint, he had clipped “Muggsy” on the chin and left that victim senseless, bound and gagged as well.

The Shadow finished his job with Frank by gagging the bouncer with the fellow's own handkerchief. That done, The Shadow unlocked the cellar door.

In the improvised torture chamber, Cliff Marsland had experienced the agony of a second twist. His back was tight against the rear of the chair; the topmost rung was cutting against his spine. The strain upon his shoulders was even worse. His arms felt ready to wrench from their sockets.

Cliff realized what torture the next twist would bring. He foresaw permanent injury should he be wrenched to a worse position and held there. Yet Cliff was grim in his defiance. He was ready to hold out, despite the fact that rescue seemed hopeless. Cliff did not know that Hawkeye had been a witness of his capture.

“Spill it, mug,” oathed Jake Thurler, his ugly face close to Cliff's. “Who told you to tag Quidler? What's the trouble? Not comfortable enough? I'll fix that. Go ahead, you guys. Give it another twist—”

Jake broke off and held up his hand to stop the torturers. Some one was rapping at the door. Jake nodded to the hoodlum stationed there. The fellow pulled back the bolt and swung the barrier inward.

“It's Stew,” chuckled Jake. “Come to lamp the fun. I thought he'd be back—”

Jake blinked suddenly. For a moment, he saw only the blackness of the cellar. Then, to his astonishment, the gloom moved inward. A swish, a sudden change of shape. Blackness had become a living being. A

whispered laugh echoed through the cell-like room. Jake gasped his recognition:

“The Shadow!”

A FIGURE cloaked in black, burning eyes that glared from beneath the brim of a slouch hat. Mammoth automatics, thrust forward by gloved fists. Those were the impressions that held vicious crooks staring.

Jake stood helpless; so did the cutthroat at the door. Pete and his companion loosed their grip upon the lead pipe; their hands came upward.

Cliff Marsland grinned weakly as he tugged forward. The bar revolved among the ropes. The strain ended. Cliff's muscles responded with more than normal strength. He gave a powerful twist, vainly hoping to break a rope; his success was different than he expected.

The side of the chair back broke. As the wood crackled, the rope slid from it. Cliff drew one arm free; then used it to tug the other free. Rising, he twisted and pressed down upon the broken chair as he pulled his ankles clear from the lower ropes. That job was easy, once he had gained a standing position.

There was no need to talk. Jake and his crew had learned who Cliff's chief was. Their realization that they were faced by The Shadow had been a stunning blow. But Cliff's regaining of freedom was to produce a change.

Jake was maddened at the thought of the captive being clear to demand vengeance. Insanely, the rat-faced rogue made a wild leap for The Shadow.

The move would have been suicidal but for the actions of the others. As maddened as Jake, they, too, went berserk. The hoodlum at the door snatched out a gun. So did the torturers behind the chair. Cliff was between them and The Shadow; he was their shield, and knowing it, they leaped for the released prisoner.

The Shadow had caught the moves in a twinkling. Instead of blazing a shot at Jake, he wheeled suddenly from the wild crook's path. He shot one hand upward and pressed the trigger of its automatic. Flame spurted toward the single light in the ceiling; the bullet shattered the huge incandescent.

While glass was clattering amid the sudden darkness, an automatic blazed in the direction of the door. A cry—a groan—The Shadow had clipped the guard who had been posted at the barrier. He had picked the rowdy's exact position in the dark.

Cliff parried the swing of wild arms in the dark. Free from the broken chair, he dived across the room, heading for the door. He knew that The Shadow wanted him clear of the fray. He was responding to that wish. The Shadow heard Cliff stumble over the prone form of the wounded crook.

Revolvers were barking wildly; in response came automatics, their blaze from an unexpected inner corner. Jake and his two pals saw the spurts; wildly, they fired in that direction, forgetting the door in their effort to down The Shadow. Cliff, stumbling through, gained the stairway.

AUTOMATICS spat in earnest. His unarmed agent clear, The Shadow had no longer need to tarry. Ever shifting, he had moved away from telltale spots where his guns had flashed; but crooks, with their spurting revolvers, had forgotten the need for motion in the dark.

Ripping bursts were thunderous in the stone-walled room as The Shadow dispatched scorching slugs toward living targets.

His laugh, triumphant, quivered mockingly through the torture chamber as The Shadow whisked through

the doorway and followed Cliff's path. Groans and oaths, belated shots—those alone pursued the master of darkness. The Shadow had felled every member of Jake's crew, including the rat-faced ruffian himself.

Cliff had reached the upper hallway to find Frank's outsprawled figure. A revolver was bulging from the bouncer's pocket. Cliff snatched the weapon; and none too soon.

Cries came from the end of the hallway. Stew's door crew had come around the building, to find Muggsy bound and helpless. Entering, they had spotted Cliff.

The Shadow's agent opened fire. As he did, the cellar door swung outward. From the crack between the door and the frame, a fresh automatic blasted quick shots down the hall.

Cliff heard a hissed order; he dived for the door that led into the gambling rooms. He was no longer a target when the men at the back door found the range.

The cover-up crew was advancing; the progress stopped as the invaders met The Shadow's withering cannonade. Under that barrage, they faltered. As the foremost ruffians staggered, those behind them turned and scrambled for the safety of outdoors. The Shadow, swishing out from behind the door, delivered final bullets. The corridor cleared, he followed Cliff's path.

Straight into the gambling room. There, Cliff had stopped short. Tuxedoed men and gowned women had heard the gunplay; they were scurrying for side rooms, while frightened croupiers were gathering up money from the roulette table.

Stew Luffy, revolver in hand, was standing in the center of the room. Alone, he was ready to shoot it out with any comer.

HURLING in from a passage, Cliff took the challenge. As Stew blazed hasty shots, Cliff answered with bullets that skimmed the gambler's coat sleeves. Recognizing the prisoner whom he had failed to favor, Stew feared further quarrel.

As croupiers burrowed their way behind slot machines along the wall, Stew dived past the roulette table. Behind its bulk, he popped up with his gun.

Cliff, taking a short-cut, had reached the near side of the table. Dropping as Stew came up, Cliff hoisted the table with a mighty heave and toppled its entire bulk upon his foe. Stew, scrambling back, was too late.

The table flattened him; his revolver clattered across the carpet as his head thudded the floor. Money scattered everywhere; the roulette wheel jolted loose and rolled to a stop, exposing the wiring of the electrical equipment that had been used to gyp the customers.

A shot blazed from the front door., A bullet sizzled past Cliff's ear and shattered the glass front of a slot machine. Cliff swung to respond; he saw two bouncers aiming from the door. Then came roared flashes from the passage by which Cliff had entered. The Shadow had arrived; his timely bullets clipped those aiming gun arms.

The staggered bouncers dived shrieking from the exit. The Shadow swept after them; and Cliff dashed forward behind his cloaked chief. They gained the outside air; there, The Shadow clamped Cliff's arm and dragged the rescued man through the darkness. Across the driveway, they reached The Shadow's coupé, parked among other cars.

The coupé shot along a curving drive. Shouts arose, as Stew's reserves, rounding the building, spied the fast-moving car. Revolvers spoke wildly; then their users dived for cover as The Shadow leaned from the

window and blazed answering bullets from the muzzle of a .45.

As they skirted the side of the old mansion that Stew had converted into a gambling hall, Cliff caught the sound of bedlam. Cheated customers had peered out from the side rooms to see the ruined roulette layout.

The fixed wheel had raised their wrath. The patrons of Stew's joint were scrambling to grab money from the floor, overwhelming the resisting croupiers who tried to stop them.

Horns were honking; a siren was wailing from the distance. Local authorities had been summoned. They would find the crippled rowdies whom The Shadow had left amid the wreckage. Stew Luffy's gambling racket was ended. The Shadow's laugh, weird from the blackness beside Cliff Marsland, was a tone of parting triumph.

HALF an hour later, a cloaked figure emerged from the coupé, in an obscure corner of the parking lot beside the Hotel Halcyon. Cliff Marsland followed The Shadow to the ground; he saw no sign of his chief after he alighted. Grinning, despite his weariness, Cliff strolled away. He was going to join Hawkeye, in their own quarters.

The Shadow, reaching a deserted doorway below the hotel, had undergone a transformation. When he stepped into view, he was again Henry Arnaud, carrying a briefcase. Entering the Hotel Halcyon, The Shadow traveled up to Room 808.

Burbank was ready with reports amid the darkness. The contact man had heard from Hawkeye, in detail. That report given, Burbank had one of his own. It concerned Tyson Weed.

"Nine minutes after Hawkeye reported," informed the contact man, "Weed arrived in 1012. He put in a long-distance call to New York. Informed some one there that he had fixed everything.

"Three minutes afterward, Weed turned on the radio. He kept it loud for about five minutes; then turned it down. It is still tuned in on Station WIT, which has not yet finished its half-hour orchestra program."

The Shadow took the earphones. The only sound that he could hear from 1012 was that of the radio orchestra. It was tuned very faintly; yet the melody contained a variety of instruments, indicating that at full strength, the sound must have been deafening.

With a significant whisper to Burbank, The Shadow again donned his cloak and hat. He raised the window and swung out into the darkness of the night. Swinging precariously along the wall, The Shadow followed that angled route that he had used on his first visit to the Hotel Halcyon.

He reached Weed's balcony; there, he forced open the window and carefully lifted the lowered shade. A moment later, The Shadow eased into the room. A spectral figure, he stood amid the mellow light from a table lamp, gazing toward the floor.

FOUR feet from the softly tuned radio lay Tyson Weed. The lobbyist was staring face upward; his body, fully clad, was sprawled in grotesque pose. Weed's vest was opened; blood stained his shirt front. The lobbyist was dead; shot through the heart.

The Shadow entered the opened door of the bedroom. Through darkness, he made his way to a door that opened into the hall. That barrier was unlocked; it swung lazily inward as The Shadow pulled it. The door had been pried open with a jimmy.

Returning to the living room, The Shadow reconstructed the scene. Calculating the time element, he knew that a call must have been made from that old apartment that Weed had visited. Some one had come

here while the chauffeur was on his way to the hideout that Hawkeye had later visited.

The unknown intruder had arrived before Weed. He had hurriedly cracked the door from hall to bedroom. Burbank had not heard it; a proof that the connecting door between the bedroom and living room had been closed. Nor had Weed noticed it; for the bedroom entrance was farther down the passage than the door which Weed would logically use; namely, the entrance from hall to living room.

Weed had made his telephone call. When he had finished talking to New York, he must have turned to find an intruder who had silently entered the living room from the bedroom. Weed had made no outcry; he must have simply stared at sight of a leveled gun. The intruder, covering Weed, had turned on the radio.

Burbank had heard the ear-splitting cadence of the loud orchestra. Hence he had failed to hear the shot that must have come while the radio was blaring loudly. Weed had fallen; one bullet had killed him. The murderer himself had toned down the radio, then departed.

A cool, calculated crime; yet every detail was plain to The Shadow, thanks to Hawkeye's report and Burbank's vigil at the earphones. Hawkeye had reported two men at the apartment on Q Street; Coyd and a chauffeur. Neither of these could have come to the Hotel Halcyon in time to deliver death.

Some one else had performed lone murder. The killer had disposed of Weed because the lobbyist had learned too much. There had been thievery at Releston's; The Shadow had encountered hand-to-hand fighting at Rydel's; there had been gunplay at Stew Luffy's place this very night.

WEED'S death, however, marked the first stroke of outright murder. The Shadow, himself hidden, had challenged hidden crime; luck, alone, had blocked his narrowing quest. Here, in defiance of The Shadow, lay the corpse of a murdered victim.

Crime's fangs were fully bared. Those behind it had shown their willingness to stop at nothing. New efforts by The Shadow would be urgent. Calm in the face of this confirmed knowledge, the master of blackness moved out to the little balcony. Locking the window as he had done before, he swung back down the trail to 808.

Burbank was seated with dead earphones. Coiled wire fell to the floor; with it the microphone, for The Shadow had brought the instrument from Weed's room. No longer needed, that tiny device would be a bad clue to leave in a place where murder would soon be discovered by the law.

Doffing the useless earphones, Burbank heard a sound amid the darkness. It was a whispered laugh, suppressed but sinister; a restrained mirth that came with grimness. Burbank had heard that tone before; he knew its meaning. The Shadow's laugh boded ill for those fiends who dealt in heinous crime.

CHAPTER XV. BEFORE THE STORM.

THREE days had passed. Bright afternoon pervaded Washington. The sunlight was pleasant in Layton Coyd's upstairs living room. Seated in the comfortable warmth, the congressman showed healthy cheerfulness as he chatted with two visitors: Senator Ross Releston and Foster Crozan.

Doctor Pierre Borneau was smiling as he noted the improved health of his patient. Harry Vincent, here with Releston and Crozan, was also impressed by the change which had come over Coyd. Jurrick and Tabbert, moving in and out of the room, seemed to have forgotten their old grudges.

“Three days of complete relaxation,” commented Coyd, driving his hands against his swelled chest. “A tonic, gentlemen, that I recommend to any one whose nerves have been bad. Of course, I must still give

some credit to Doctor Borneau's medicine. I took my kit of bottles with me; my daughter saw to it that I missed no doses. But it was sunshine, freedom from worry, that brought about my full recovery."

"You have our congratulations, Mr. Coyd," assured Releston. "Let us hope that you will not plunge into overwork. That is one thing to be avoided."

"I can't promise you that," remarked Coyd. "I have work to do and I intend to do it. If I tire, I shall take another rest. But I promise you this, senator. I shall give no interviews to the press."

"You have decided definitely to make no public statements regarding committee procedures?"

"Not exactly, senator. Two days from now, I intend to speak before the National Progress Society, at their semiannual banquet. My speech will be broadcasted over a national network. However, I shall give you a full copy of it beforehand and—"

"Do not be too optimistic, Mr. Coyd," put in Doctor Borneau. "Remember, sir, what I told you. Starting once again at the hard work may mean a strain. It is for me to say if you can go to the banquet."

"Of course, doctor," nodded Coyd. "Of course, if I am not well, I shall not attend the banquet. In that case, I shall broadcast from here. Those at the banquet will hear my speech over the loud-speaker. That can all be arranged, doctor."

"You have a good physician, Mr. Coyd," stated Releston. "Doctor Borneau and I met at dinner last Wednesday night."

"Where, senator?"

"At the French Embassy. We were together all evening, in fact until long after midnight. Incidentally, doctor, I have not forgotten all those facts that you mentioned regarding nervous ailments. I was greatly impressed by the tremendous scope of your knowledge and experience."

"Thank you, senator," observed Borneau, with a bow; then, twisting the points of his mustache, he added: "I must return the compliment, m'sieu'; your knowledge of the government exceeds that knowledge which I have of medicine and—"

"Wednesday night!" interposed Coyd. "That was the night that some one murdered that fellow Weed. I am sorry that he met with such sudden death; but I must also express gratification that there is one less lobbyist in Washington. He pestered you, senator, just as he did me."

"I HAVE not seen Weed for several weeks," recalled Releston. "The last time was before you arrived, Crozan. Let me see—Weed was never about since you have been stopping at the Barlingham."

"No," returned Crozan. "Not unless it was during that short interval that I went home to obtain those documents on the mining investigation. I arrived back here just after the robbery at your apartment."

"Yes. Of course, Weed was not about at that time. If he had been, I would have blamed him definitely for the theft of those duplicate papers. Do you know, Crozan, this murder makes me wonder about that matter."

"You mean that Weed might have been slain because he had the papers."

"Yes. It is quite a possible theory. I have not mentioned it to the police, however, as I did not want to stir up new comment."

“Of course not. You told the press that the papers were of little consequence. Incidentally, the newspapers said that Weed's suite showed no signs of having been rifled.”

“The murderer might have known where he had the papers.”

“Yes. That is true—”

Crozan paused as Jurrick entered. The secretary had been downstairs. He was coming in to announce a visitor. Something in his expression indicated surprising news. Jurrick spoke to Coyd:

“Mr. Rydel is here, sir.”

“What!” exclaimed the congressman. “Dunwood Rydel? What does he want?”

“He did not say, sir.”

“Show him up.”

EXPECTANT silence still held the group when Dunwood Rydel entered. The dyspeptic magnate was as sour-faced as usual. He nodded curtly when he saw Releston; glowered as he looked at Crozan. Then he advanced and spoke directly to Coyd.

“Sorry to annoy you with this visit,” declared Rydel, gruffly. “It is paternal duty, not friendship that brought me here. I came to ask about my daughter.”

“Ah, yes,” nodded Coyd. “Your daughter Beatrice is still in Virginia, with Evelyn. I saw both of them this morning, before I left.”

“I suppose that Beatrice was all broken up when she received that letter yesterday?”

“What letter? She did not speak of it to me.”

“I wrote her from New York, telling her about that fiancé of hers. I saw a report that the bouncer had eloped with some French actress in London. At least that was the rumor.”

“Yes, yes!” exclaimed Coyd, chuckling as he rose to his feet. “I remember it now, Mr. Rydel. It was Evelyn who told me about the matter; not Beatrice. Your daughter, it appears, was indignant, rather than broken-hearted. But I did not know that she had learned the news through a letter from you.”

“Allow me, Mr. Rydel.” Coyd paused, chuckling, and extended his hand, which the magnate received half hesitating. “Allow me, sir, to extend my full congratulations. You have been freed from the menace of a most undesirable son-in-law.”

“Thank you, Mr. Coyd,” acknowledged Rydel, ending the handshake. He was smiling in spite of himself. “Of all the conceited dolts I ever encountered, that actor was the worst. Montgomery Hadwil! Bah! I would sooner have my daughter marry one of my chauffeurs!”

Turning about, Rydel looked at Releston. His smile faded as he addressed the senator.

“Well, sir,” said the magnate, “I have finished my brief business with Mr. Coyd. Since you are present, senator, I take this opportunity to inform you that I have just arrived back in Washington. Should you wish to see me at any time, I shall be at my home.”

“You have been in New York all this while, Mr. Rydel?”

Rydel swung about. The question had come from Foster Crozan. This interference in Rydel's affairs apparently enraged the magnate.

"I said," he repeated, "that I arrived back in Washington this morning. Where I have been during the interim is my business. Not yours, Crozan."

Abruptly, Rydel turned on his heel and strode stormily from the room. Coyd, head tilted to one side, watched the magnate's departure rather curiously; then signaled to Tabbert to descend and usher Rydel from the house. Jurrick went over to the medicine chest and began to take out bottles. Doctor Borneau spoke to the secretary.

"Mr. Coyd has taken his prescription," stated the physician. "Tabbert prepared it. He will need no more medicine until to-morrow."

Coyd had seated himself heavily. He looked weary as he beckoned to Jurrick. Doctor Borneau showed an expression of sudden anxiety.

"Prepare those reports, Jurrick," ordered Coyd. Then, to his visitors: "Gentlemen, I am weary. My mind is befogged again; probably through over-effort. Bah! Rydel coming in here like a wild beast! I tried to humor the man; to show him some consideration. He is impossible!"

DOCTOR BORNEAU motioned to Senator Releston. The gray-haired solon nodded and spoke to Crozan and Harry. The two followed him downstairs; they encountered Tabbert on the way and the secretary conducted them to the front door. They entered Releston's sedan; this time there was no coupé parked opposite.

"What do you think of Rydel?" Releston asked Crozan as Harry drove them back toward the Barlingham. "Do you think he had some purpose in visiting Coyd? Do you believe that he saw my car outside? That he made a pretext for entering?"

"It would not surprise me," answered Crozan. "That was why I challenged him. Did you notice how abruptly he treated me?"

"Of course, Crozan, your question was rather pointed."

"I meant it to be. Here was my reason, senator. Rydel went to New York the morning after Coyd's statement to the press. That was significant. It meant, logically, that Rydel wanted to be on hand for the rise in the stock market."

"Good reasoning, Crozan."

"But the rise was spiked. Accordingly, Rydel had no further purpose in New York. Logically, he would have come back to Washington."

"Quite logically."

"So I intimated as much, senator, to see what his reaction would be. Rydel guessed what I was driving at; he had to parry my thrust. He took the tack of pretending that he had really stayed in New York."

"He did not say so, outright."

"I take it he was afraid to do so. Afraid that one of us might have seen him here in Washington."

"Have you seen him here, Crozan?"

“No. I seldom leave my rooms at the Barlingham; but Rydel does not know that fact. That is why he hedged—as I expected he would.”

REACHING the Barlingham, Harry parked the car and went up to Releston's apartment. The senator instructed him to keep in close touch with Congressman Coyd, in reference to the speech which Coyd intended to deliver. Harry found other duties; it was almost evening before he managed an opportunity to leave the senator's apartment.

Dusk had obscured the Hotel Halcyon. In Suite 808, a figure was seated in front of the writing table. It was The Shadow, in his guise as Arnaud; Burbank was off duty, asleep in the other room. The telephone buzzed; The Shadow answered it. He spoke in a quiet, methodical tone, a perfect imitation of Burbank's voice. Harry Vincent reported.

Five minutes later came a report from Clyde Burke; the reporter was keeping tabs on the police investigation of Weed's murder. Twenty minutes later, Cliff Marsland called in, reporting for himself and Hawkeye. They had picked up no facts concerning Walbert and Quidler, except that the dicks had checked out of their respective hotels.

It was obvious that the sleuths had decided to decamp after hearing of the raid at Stew's gambling joint; and the news of Weed's death had doubtless spurred them to an immediate departure.

The Shadow was no longer concerned with Walbert and Quidler. They were harmless; it had been Jake's idea, not theirs, to torture Cliff. The Shadow had assigned Cliff and Hawkeye to more important duty. Cliff was watching Dunwood Rydel's home; Hawkeye was covering the F Street garage, where Mullard frequently took the big limousine.

Tyson Weed's death was a mystery to the police. The Shadow was content that it should remain so. With Weed eliminated, the plans of crooks would proceed. That suited The Shadow; for he knew that their chief purpose was the gaining of wealth, not the taking of human life.

Men of crime would work as they had before; through Congressman Layton Coyd. The Shadow had gained an insight into their procedure; fitted facts showed him the answer that he had sought. When crooks chose to move, The Shadow would do likewise. Already he had guessed when their new stroke would come.

For in the facts that Harry Vincent had reported in detail were clues that The Shadow needed. He saw the approach of opportunity for men of evil to thrust in quest of wealth. One failure had not balked them; another chance was due.

A chance for greater wealth; a cleanup that would surpass the attempt to build up munitions stocks. That chance which crooks were prepared to seize would be a chance for The Shadow to counteract their superstroke.

CHAPTER XVI. TWO DAYS LATER.

TWO nights had passed. It was noon in Washington, the sidewalks an inferno from the heat of the sun. Mild weather had been followed by an unexpected heat wave—if such an occurrence could ever be called unexpected in Washington.

Coming from the Hotel Barlingham, Harry Vincent entered a drug store and put in a telephone call. The voice that answered him was Burbank's. Harry reported tersely.

“Coyd's this morning,” he stated. “Doctor's order final... Coyd to speak from his home... Radio

electricians have completed installation... Coyd's speech denouncing utility profits approved by Releston... Returning to Coyd's with copy. Will remain there..."

His report ended, Harry entered the parked sedan and drove to Coyd's. Mose admitted him, and Jurrick met him on the stairs. The secretary shook his head solemnly; the indication was that Coyd had felt the heat severely.

When Harry arrived in the second-story living room, he found the congressman slumped in his chair. Looking up, Coyd smiled weakly as he saw the copy of his speech in Harry's hand.

"Releston likes it?" he inquired.

"The senator is highly pleased," responded Harry. "In fact, he feels that you have gone further than essential. Those utilities that you mention—"

"I understand," interrupted Coyd. "My speech almost condemns them. Why not? Their rates have been excessive, Vincent. To state that they will be placed under permanent regulation is a wise step."

"Senator Releston knows that," assured Harry. "But he told me to remind you that the committees intend to fix the rates definitely. Once regulation is made, the government's part will be done."

"Do you know what that means, Vincent?" demanded Coyd, sitting upright, despite the protest of Tabbert, who was present. "Once the rates are settled, they will make economies that will enable them to build new profits.

"They will grasp!" Coyd extended his hands and clutched the air. "They will grasp, like octopuses—or octopi—drat it! Hand me that copy of my speech so I can see which is correct: octopuses or octopi.

"No—never mind! I'll read it correctly when I come to it. Anyway, those utilities will grasp. They always grasp, the lot of them. I shall defy them—"

Coyd slumped back, gasping. His eyes closed wearily. Harry spoke quietly.

"ACCORDING to Senator Releston," declared Harry, "the danger does not lie in the future. Once the utilities are properly regulated, their profits cannot be too great. At least those of certain utilities, the ones which the committees have specifically named.

"The danger, sir, is in the present. Should a false statement be made by either you or Senator Releston, the prices of stocks would leap. Huge profits would be made by present holders; and there is every reason to suppose that a hidden group has invested heavily in those securities."

"I know it," said Coyd, with a weak chuckle. "I know it, Vincent, and that is why I have worded my speech accordingly. I want to make those stocks go down; I want my revenge upon the scalawags who tried to clean up on munitions.

"I was nearly the goat for that game. Even yet, I cannot understand how or why I made such strange statements. My worried brain must have tricked me to do the very thing that I would not normally have done.

"That is why I have gone to the other extreme. I have made my speech so strong, so full of adverse inference, that small stockholders will unload at the present price, which is a fair one, and leave the swindlers holding the bag, unable to sell except at a great loss. Why does Releston object?"

"He does not object," replied Harry, tactfully. "At the same time, he showed reluctance in finally

approving statements which tended to exaggeration. He told me to mention that fact, Mr. Coyd. However, he said that he would have disapproved any statements that might have aided speculation.”

“I have placed none in my speech,” remarked Coyd. “So the matter is settled, Vincent. Sit down, if you intend to remain here. Let me rest a while. I expect to rehearse my speech after Doctor Borneau arrives.”

HALF an hour passed while Harry lolled in a chair. Tabbert and Jurrick stole in and out at intervals. It was Tabbert, finally, who approached and spoke quietly to Coyd, napping in his chair by the window.

“A radio technician is here, Mr. Coyd,” said the red-haired secretary. “He wants to install some apparatus. Some sort of device to increase the intensity of the sound.”

“Tell him to proceed, Tabbert.”

The secretary went out. He came back, lugging one end of a large box, the size of a typewriter desk. Jurrick was at the other end; with them was a stooped man in overalls, whose back was toward Harry. The box was shoved into a corner. The man in overalls squatted in front of it and began to make connections.

Both secretaries had gone out when the man arose to survey his job. Even then, Harry had not seen the fellow's face. He saw the man pull an order book from his hip pocket. Coyd, his eyes open, spoke to Harry.

“You sign it, Vincent,” ordered the congressman, wearily. “Neither of my secretaries are here.”

Harry met the man in overalls; he scrawled his name on a line which a finger indicated. The radio man tore off a sheet of paper from beneath and thrust it into Harry's hand with the quiet statement:

“The receipt slip. Read it carefully.”

The man in overalls had walked through the doorway before the meaning of his words struck Harry. Looking after him, The Shadow's agent saw only his back disappearing at the head of the stairs. That quiet tone, however, had impressed itself. Harry knew the identity of the man whose face he had failed to see. It was Burbank!

Glancing quickly at the receipt slip, Harry saw coded lines inscribed in bluish ink. He read them rapidly; the import of their message impressed itself upon him. Then the writing faded, word by word—a trick of messages that came in The Shadow's disappearing ink.

SOME thirty minutes after Burbank's departure, Doctor Borneau arrived. He examined his patient solemnly; then called for the prescription and gave Coyd a double dose. The weary congressman perked up a bit; he decided to rehearse his speech at once. This was a procedure which Coyd never varied.

Jurrick and Tabbert joined the audience. Harry took his place in the corner, leaning against the big box that Burbank had installed. He watched Coyd prepare; then, when the speaker had taken his stand in the center of the room, Harry quietly shifted the top of the big contrivance.

A click sounded; Harry was the only person who heard it. Coyd was loudly clearing his throat; after that preliminary, he adjusted his tortoise-shell spectacles and proceeded to read aloud from the copy that he gripped in his hands.

Coyd's manner was mild at first. His introductory words were addressed to the members of the National Progress Society. Gradually, Coyd worked into his theme, the future of the nation. He spoke wisely of utilities, their value to the public; his words showed good will and appreciation of those who had served

the people.

Suddenly, his tone became bombastic. His papers in his left hand, Coyd gestured with his right. He denounced graspers, grafters and their ilk. Head tilted sidewise while he read from his typewritten notes, he continued his gestures, wagging his right forefinger as he named certain companies, one by one.

The "rogues roll call," Coyd termed it. He denounced these special companies; he declared that they had deceived the public by deliberately refusing to make possible economies that would produce lower rates. He added that their game was known; that its doom was near.

Congressional measures, Coyd prophesied, would force the creation of a control board that would base rates upon those of sincere utilities that had already found ways of giving maximum service at minimum cost.

Harry had read Coyd's speech; it had struck him as chaffy; but when Coyd delivered it, The Shadow's agent became lost in admiration. With all his bombastic force, Coyd could be both eloquent and effective.

When the congressman slumped to his chair, exhausted, the room still seemed to hold the ring of his powerful speech. It was a quarter of a minute before Harry remembered a duty; with a quick pull of his hand, he shifted the top of the cabinet back to its original place.

COYD'S face was flushed. Somehow, despite his exhaustion, he had retained his high pitch. Doctor Borneau felt the patient's pulse and ordered an immediate rest. Tabbert and Jurrick came up to aid Coyd; the congressman pushed them aside. Rising from his chair, he walked to the door of the bedroom. Standing there, he turned and spoke to Harry.

"You heard it, Vincent," chuckled the congressman. "Go back and tell Releston about it. Invite him here to-night, to hear it for himself."

"Sorry, Mr. Coyd," said Harry. "Senator Releston has a previous engagement. Of course, he will hear your speech over the air, at the dinner which he is attending in Baltimore. But—"

"Too bad," interposed Coyd, gloomily. Then: "Bring his friend, Crozan, if you wish. He can see my delivery and tell the senator about it afterward."

Suddenly wearied, Coyd went into the bedroom. Harry strolled out with Tabbert, while Doctor Borneau was making notes and Jurrick was replacing the medicine bottles in the cabinet. At the bottom of the stairs, Harry paused to light a cigarette; as he tarried, Borneau and Jurrick came down the steps.

Tabbert had gone. Harry started up the steps, remarking, in passing, that he had left his hat in the living room. Reaching there alone, Harry went to the big box; he shifted the lid; it came up several inches. Reaching inside, Harry made adjustments: when he closed the lid and slid it, he heard locks click tight.

Harry had followed instructions received through Burbank. His work was done for the time: what the aftermath would be, Harry could not guess. He knew only that he had done The Shadow's bidding; that some strange climax would later be staged to close a baffling drama.

Something must be threatening, despite the fact that Coyd's speech was written, approved and rehearsed. The outcome was a mystery to Harry. What the finish would be, only The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XVII. FIGURES IN THE DARK.

SEVEN o'clock. A torrential rain had broken the day's heat wave. It was dripping still; the lights of

Washington were hazy through the steamy atmosphere. An hour yet remained before Congressman Coyd's speech would go out over the air, as the finale of the scheduled banquet.

Across from Dunwood Rydel's mansion, two men were seated in a parked coupé. Cliff at the wheel; Hawkeye beside him. Both were watching the rain-soaked driveway with the garage beyond. A light glimmered suddenly to attract their attention. It was under the porte-cochère. The front door opened and Dunwood Rydel stepped into view.

A limousine rolled from the garage. It was the big car that Hawkeye had seen that night on Q Street. The car skirted the mansion; Rydel boarded it and the big machine rolled from the drive. After it had passed, Cliff started in pursuit. The course led to the Lotus Club.

When Rydel alighted, he gave brief instructions to Mullard, who was the chauffeur at the wheel. The man nodded and drove away. Cliff followed him in the coupé; but Hawkeye was no longer aboard. The little spotter had dropped from Cliff's car to put in a call to The Shadow.

Mullard picked a twisting course through slippery streets. Cliff kept the trail; he followed the limousine northward along Seventh Street. Then Mullard changed his tactics; he began to zigzag over the same territory. Apparently he was deliberately trying to shake off any followers. Cliff let him take a turn; then waited.

Soon Mullard's car appeared, crossing the street a block ahead. The glare of a bright electric light was the give-away. Cliff followed and made the corner. As he turned, he saw the limousine parked by the curb, a block and a half ahead. Then the big machine started suddenly; it zipped for the nearest corner and shot out of view as Cliff was coming up.

The chase was ended; but Cliff was sure that he had found a goal. The building before which Mullard had stopped was an old, three-story house; Cliff knew it by the proximity of a street lamp that had partially revealed the standing limousine.

Like the house that Hawkeye had visited on Q Street, this building was a residence converted into an apartment.

It bore the name plate: "Northern Arms."

CLIFF parked his coupé. He went into the lobby, pushed a bell beside a name and listened in hope of luck. The door clicked; Cliff entered. Instead of going upstairs, he sneaked to the rear of the hall and waited.

A door opened above; a voice shouted; then the door slammed. Some annoyed apartment dweller had decided that the ring was a hoax.

While outside, Cliff had noted one point in a preliminary survey. Windows, first and second floors front, had been lighted. The slammed door had apparently come from the second story back; a likely guess, for Cliff had pressed a button marked 2B. The third floor, therefore, seemed like a good bet. Cliff sneaked up the stairs and reached it.

This building, like the one that Hawkeye had visited, was equipped with a rear fire escape. This was required by law in both cases; for none of these old houses were fireproof. Cliff took the rear apartment as the easiest mode of entry. He reached the fire escape and leaned over to a locked window.

Using a thin prying tool, Cliff tried The Shadow's system. His efforts were comparatively clumsy; for he required several minutes before he could catch the lock, and he chipped the woodwork into the bargain.

When he finally opened the window, Cliff slid into a small kitchen; from there, he reached a darkened hall, with a bedroom on the side.

Using a flashlight, Cliff spotted a suitcase. He opened it; the first objects that he saw were papers and letters. Cliff examined them and chuckled; he opened an envelope and produced a handful of newspaper clippings. These were all he needed.

Continuing through to a living room, Cliff calmly turned on the light and picked up a telephone. He dialed the Hotel Halcyon. He asked for 808. Burbank's voice responded. Cliff reported. That done, he stretched out in a comfortable chair and laid his revolver on the table beside him. Cliff was prepared to wait as long as necessary.

MEANWHILE, Dunwood Rydel had met two persons in the Lotus Club. One was Coyd's daughter; the other was another girl, a blonde whose attractiveness was quite as marked as Evelyn's. This was Beatrice Rydel.

The girls had come in from Virginia. Delayed by the storm, Beatrice had called her father; he had told her to meet him at the Lotus Club.

The trio went into the upstairs dining room. As they were ordering dinner, a man strolled in and took a table close by. It was The Shadow, guised as Henry Arnaud. Quietly, he ordered a prompt dinner, stating that his time was short.

"Father," remarked Beatrice, "we are in a great hurry. Evelyn wants me to go with her to hear her father's speech. He is delivering it from his home, you know."

"Humph," growled Rydel. "So that's why he was so testy this morning. I had forgotten about that plagued speech of his."

"Father!" reproved Beatrice. "You are forgetting Evelyn—"

"That's all right, Beatrice," laughed the brunette. "Daddy has said many mean things about your father."

"He has?" queried Rydel.

"Yes," acknowledged Evelyn. "Many times."

"Humph." Rydel's tone was a chuckle. "Maybe the old codger is a good fellow after all. I like people to be frank. Come to think of it, he is frank."

"Why don't you come with us?" queried Evelyn.

Rydel shook his head.

"Not for the speech," he decided. "I have a conference with some friends, here at the club. Mullard is to take the limousine back and come for me in the coupé. I believe, though, that I can get away by nine-thirty. I shall have Mullard keep the limousine in town; then I can come along for Beatrice."

"And meet daddy." added Evelyn.

"Perhaps," said Rydel. "Anyway, you girls can call Mullard and have him take you to Coyd's in the limousine. I sent him to the F Street garage. I told him to wait there in case you needed him."

"We have my coupé, father," reminded Beatrice. "We can drive to Evelyn's in it. Then I can call one of the chauffeurs and have him take it home from there, since you will be coming in the limousine."

An attendant entered and spoke to the headwaiter, who indicated The Shadow. The attendant approached and delivered a message. The Shadow read the statement that Mr. Burbank was calling. He left the table, went to the lobby and answered the telephone. He received news of Cliff.

Telling the attendant to cancel his dinner order, The Shadow left the club. Hailing a taxi, he gave a destination. When the driver reached an empty house, he paused, puzzled; then the fare was thrust into his hand. The door of the cab opened; the passenger was gone.

The driver blinked. He had remembered a man with a briefcase. Yet no such passenger had alighted; in fact the driver had no recollection of anything but a gloved hand, tendering him his fare and tip. Shrugging his shoulders, the cabby drove away along the puddly street. The Shadow, turning the nearest corner, saw him travel by.

NEARLY a block ahead, a limousine was halted by the curb. As The Shadow swished forward through the darkness, he caught a glimpse of a figure by the machine. An instant later, the big car shot away. Continuing, The Shadow reached the back of a huge brownstone house. He had arrived at Congressman Coyd's.

Moving through the passage beside the house, The Shadow reached the front. He seemed unconcerned by that brief sight that he had gained upon arrival. Outside, he discovered a parked sedan; it was Senator Releston's car. Harry Vincent was already at Coyd's.

Long minutes passed; a phantom shape had glided out of sight. Elsewhere, however, a watcher had found something to observe. Hawkeye, stationed outside the F Street garage, saw a limousine swing into the entrance, a dozen minutes after The Shadow had spotted the same car at Coyd's.

Inside the garage, Mullard alighted and hailed an attendant. The fellow came over; the chauffeur put a query:

“Did the boss call?”

The attendant shook his head.

“Listen, Stevie.” Mullard drew the fellow aside. “I got a hunch that old Rydel is checking up on me. I've been riding around in this bus of his and the gas bill's kind of heavy. See?”

Steve grinned and nodded.

“Got a date with a gal,” confided Mullard. “Want to slide out of here along about nine; and I won't be back for an hour. Maybe some snooper is watching. Give me a break, will you?”

“How?”

“You know that old entrance over on the other side?”

“Sure. A couple of old junkers are blocking it.

“Shove them out so I can use the door. Worth a couple of bucks for your trouble?”

“You bet.”

The attendant went away. Mullard remained by the limousine, away from Hawkeye's range of vision. Though he had not spied the spotter, Mullard still figured that a car had trailed him. If so, it might have come back to the front of the F Street garage, after being shaken in the chase. By using the forgotten side

door, Mullard was making a sure thing of a get-away.

EIGHT o'clock was nearing; it was the scheduled time for Coyd's speech. The Shadow, watching from the passage beside the brownstone house, saw a taxicab jolt to a stop in front. A man alighted; he was the radio technician sent to make the hook-up. He had evidently come from the banquet, allowing ample time for the final arrangements.

Hardly had the cab moved away before an imported coupé stopped before the house. Two girls alighted; Evelyn Coyd and Beatrice Rydel had hurried through their dinner in order to be in time for the speech. They, too, were admitted to the house.

Softly, The Shadow laughed as he merged beneath the darkness of the walls. His suppressed mirth faded, lost amid the patter of raindrops on the eaves above. A phantom shape, obscured in blackness, his time for action had come.

Every occurrence of this early evening had fitted The Shadow's analysis. A superscheme was ready for its payoff. Men of evil purpose had grasped their opportunity. They had planned and labored, prepared to offset counterthrusts; but they had not reckoned with the master who was due.

The Shadow.

CHAPTER XVIII. DECISIONS CHANGE.

WHILE The Shadow still lingered outside the darkened brownstone house, a group of persons had assembled in Congressman Coyd's upstairs living room.

Foster Crozan was seated there, in a comfortable easy-chair. He was talking quietly with Evelyn Coyd, who was seated opposite; while Beatrice Rydel was chatting with Hugh Tabbert.

Doctor Pierre Borneau was also present. Smoking a cigarette, the physician was slowly pacing back and forth across the room. In the corner stood Harry Vincent, his elbow resting on the big box that Burbank had delivered. Harry was watching the radio technician complete the hook-up.

The radio man had ignored the big box. Harry had expected that. Burbank had faked its hook-up; the only real connection that the box possessed was a wire to an isolated floor plug. The technician, in fact, had wondered what the cabinet was doing here and had decided that it was some mechanical device which did not concern him.

His work completed, the technician was using the telephone to call the downtown banquet room. Harry Vincent used this opportunity to note the other persons in the room. Tabbert interested him most; Harry noted that the red-haired secretary was scarcely listening to Beatrice Rydel's chatter. Tabbert was looking at Evelyn Coyd, who, in turn, was deliberately ignoring him.

Harry could see the clenching of Tabbert's fists; he knew that the fellow was thinking of Don Jurrick, whom Tabbert considered as a rival. For it was obvious that the home-town boy was in love with the congressman's daughter.

"Where is Mr. Coyd?"

The question was asked by the radio technician, a weary-faced, businesslike individual. Tabbert suddenly realized that he was being addressed. He turned about and spoke.

"Mr. Coyd is downstairs in his study," he stated. "He went down there with you, didn't he, Doctor Borneau?"

“When I awakened him,” replied the physician, “he asked if he might go downstairs. He seemed in good spirits, so I permitted him to do so. Mr. Coyd is quite alert this evening.”

“I heard Jurrick's typewriter going,” stated Tabbert, “so I suppose that Mr. Coyd is dictating some additional notes. Shall I go down and tell him that we are ready?”

“You'd better,” informed the radio man, moving to a square box where a switch was located. “The announcement is due inside of ten minutes.”

TABBERT started for the door. He stopped as he heard footsteps. Two persons were coming up the stairs; Tabbert recognized Coyd's voice and came back into the room. Half a minute later, Coyd entered the room with Jurrick at his elbow. The sleek secretary was speaking in a low, half-pleading tone.

“Enough, Jurrick,” said Coyd, sharply. “You are in my employ to take orders; not to criticize my decisions. Go take a chair and say no more.”

A scowl showed on the congressman's dry features. Then Harry saw a blink of eyelids, a sudden twitch of lips as the shock-haired man spied Beatrice Rydel. For a moment, fingers clutched nervously at open air; then Evelyn Coyd sprang up from her chair.

“Daddy!” she exclaimed. “You don't mind our surprising you? I thought you would like to have Beatrice and myself here to-night.”

The girl had placed her hands on Coyd's shoulders. Mechanically, he kissed her on the forehead; then spoke, nervously, as Evelyn stepped away.

“No, no, daughter,” came Coyd's response. “I do not mind. It was rather startling, though, to know that you had arrived so unexpectedly.”

Though he spoke to Evelyn, his eyes were still toward Beatrice. The blond girl looked half puzzled; Harry saw her start to speak, then hesitate. Evelyn, too, was wondering; and Harry was not surprised. The Shadow's agent had noted many of Coyd's moods; the present one was different than any that he had previously observed.

Fingers moved through the shock of black hair. The action changed the man's mood. Coyd's face became firm; his voice sounded brusque. Doctor Borneau motioned to the girls; they sat down at the physician's order.

“Only a few minutes, Mr. Coyd.”

“Good.” Coyd's tone was firm. With this response to the radio technician, the speaker of the evening swung about and faced the group. “Good. But I still have time to say something that will interest all of you.”

A tense pause; then came the congressman's tone tinged with a sneer:

“I have altered the contents of my speech. I have done so because I am weary of interference in my affairs. In order to declare my independence, I shall deliver statements that will end all meddling on the part of others. From such persons, for instance, as Senator Ross Releston.”

Coyd's tone was sarcastic and biting. Harry saw a gleam in the congressman's eyes as they were focused first upon him; then on Foster Crozan. Harry watched Crozan rise from his chair, only to he waved down.

“To-night, I shall speak of utilities.” Coyd’s voice was intoning the words. “But I shall not condemn them. Nor will I state what Senator Releston has said—that rates will be fixed once and for all.

“Instead, I shall declare that these specific utilities will not be regulated at all.” A gesturing hand flourished a sheaf of papers that Jurrick had typed. “I shall assert that their affairs do not come under congressional jurisdiction; that the committees will have no report concerning them.”

CROZAN was on his feet. Violently, his fist was shaking in Coyd’s face. Harry had never seen the senatorial candidate so indignant.

“Outrageous!” stormed Crozan. “Do you mean, Mr. Coyd, that you intend to state a deliberate untruth? To create a totally erroneous belief on the part of the public—”

“My original remarks were not entirely correct.”

“They recognized definite possibilities. There was a chance that the committees would go further than already decided. This new statement, however, is a bald lie. If Senator Releston were here—”

“He is not here, however,” came the sneering interruption. “As for you, Crozan, you are nothing but a private citizen. Your interference in my affairs is unwarranted.”

“I am acting for the public good. Do you realize, Coyd, what you will do? No denial—by Releston or any one—will be capable of stopping disaster. The truth can never overtake a lie. The munitions scandal will be nothing compared with this. To-morrow, stocks will soar sky high. Speculators will unload—”

“Let them. Their business is their own.”

“But afterward, Coyd! The dupes who will buy those securities at your instigation! Think of them! When Congress resumes session, when the committee reports are given, the fixing of utility rates will cause a drop to normal or below. Honest persons will be bereft of long-saved earnings—”

“That is their look-out, Crozan. My interests are my own. Independence is a virtue that I value, Crozan.”

“Independence!” Crozan’s tone was irony. “You are showing no independence, Coyd! At last you are flaunting your true colors—the skull and crossbones of piracy. I believed in you, Coyd. I thought—like Releston—that your statement regarding munitions had been an unaccountable error.

“Both Releston and I were deceived on that occasion. Deceived by your glibness and your whining. It is plain, now, that you were working for the very graspers whom you pretended to denounce. A hidden syndicate, operated by one man whose lust for wealth knows no bounds.

“You were forced to back down that time, Coyd. However, you have found another opportunity to serve your evil master. This time the speculation lies in those rotten utilities that you said you would denounce. You will get your pay from that big money grabber who is behind the whole scheme.

“I shall name him, Coyd. I was right from the start. I should have known it to-day. That crook came here in person, to see if you were still in line. Tonight, he has sent his daughter as a reminder of your crooked duty.

“You are working for Dunwood Rydel! He stands to win fifty million dollars through your vile efforts! You will receive your portion. That is, you would receive it, were I not here to stop this outrage. Your speech, Coyd, will not go over the air!”

Both of Crozan’s fists were against Coyd’s jaw. Suddenly, a defending arm shot forward; the drive of

Coyd's fist sent Crozan sprawling back into his chair. Spluttering, Crozan came to his feet again.

“Stop him, Tabbert! And you, Jurrick!”

BOTH secretaries hesitated as they heard Coyd's command. Then Tabbert saw Evelyn; Coyd's daughter was stopping Beatrice Rydel, who was coming toward Crozan, shouting her indignation at his statements concerning her father.

Tabbert waited no longer; with a contemptuous glance at Jurrick, the red-haired secretary pounced upon Crozan and pinned the square-jawed protester in his chair.

Crozan fought back. He had the strength of an athlete and was a match for Tabbert. But Jurrick, forced to follow Tabbert's action, had come into the fray. Together, the secretaries ended Crozan's resistance. Overpowered, Crozan glared at Coyd; then heard the congressman's sarcastic words.

“Sit quiet, Crozan. One move from you will lead to your ejection. One word from you will mean the end of your political career. You have no authority; it is not for you to interfere with my activities.”

Crozan quieted; his face was bitter. Beatrice had subsided under Evelyn's coaxing. Doctor Borneau had stepped forward to protest against his patient's fury. Harry saw Coyd's shaggy head shake. Borneau stepped back.

“Nearly ready, Mr. Coyd.”

It was the radio man at the switch. The fellow had taken no part in the altercation; his worry concerned the broadcasting of Coyd's speech. Nimbly, Coyd's hands unfolded the new notes; Harry saw sneering lips above the congressman's pugnacious jaw. A sudden hush filled the room. Crozan, head bowed, was silent.

Then came words from a loudspeaker. It was an announcer at the banquet hall, stating that the guests would hear from Congressman Layton Coyd, the speaker of the evening. The announcement ended; the radio man swung the switch and nodded. Coyd stepped to a microphone that was standing on the table. The air was ready for his speech.

AT that instant, a whispered sound crept through the room. Low, sinister, almost spectral, it came as a baffling tone of suppressed mirth. A symbol of the unexpected, it died as suddenly as it had begun; but not too soon. Involuntarily, every person in the room had guessed the spot from which the whispered mockery had come. All swung toward the doorway to the hall.

The door had opened. Standing within the portal was a being cloaked in black. Firelike eyes were glowing from below a hat brim; beneath those sparkling optics bulked a brace of automatics, clenched in thin-gloved hands. One .45 was aimed directly for the figure of Congressman Layton Coyd, covering Doctor Borneau also, for the physician was close by the table.

The other weapon was pointed to the chair where Jurrick and Tabbert still guarded Crozan. Neither of the secretaries could make a move. Wagging slowly, the automatic moved from one to the other, while Crozan sat gasping, in between.

Evelyn and Beatrice stared from the wall by the door to the bedroom. The radio technician slumped; his shaking hands came upward. Though no gun aimed in his direction, this bystander was chilled with fright.

A decision had been made; its upshot, a total change in the speech originally prepared by Congressman Layton Coyd. Damaging words were ready for the air; to be uttered by those fuming lips that now twitched upon Coyd's blanched face. Those new words, however, were destined never to be uttered.

The Shadow had countermanded crime. He had reversed the decision. He was here to see that justice would prevail!

CHAPTER XIX. THE SHADOW SPEAKS.

OF all the persons in that hushed room, only one responded with swift action. Not The Shadow; his part required no motion other than the tantalizing manipulation of the automatics. Like steady pendulums, the guns were moving to and fro. One .45 wagged its muzzle between the figures of Coyd and Borneau; the other gun shifted back and forth along the trio at the chair, where Foster Crozan was still flanked by Tabbert and Jurrick.

The man who strode about was Harry Vincent. Stepping to the table, The Shadow's agent clutched the microphone with his left hand while he drew an automatic from his pocket with his right.

Setting the mike on a chair in front of the big corner cabinet, Harry promptly opened the box by pressing a hidden spring. A disk record began a slow revolution; Harry applied a phonographic needle; then stooped and dropped the front of the box. That done, he stood alert, his own gun ready.

From the cabinet came the loud tone of a throat-clearing cough. A pause; then a friendly voice began to speak. Listeners stared as they recognized the words of Congressman Layton Coyd. The speaker was going over the air; but not in person. This was a recorded program, a word-for-word reproduction of the original speech that Coyd had rehearsed that afternoon.

Harry had followed Burbank's instructions to the letter. Harry's own report had given The Shadow ample time to arrange this set-up. In this very room, Harry had managed to record Coyd's words during the afternoon rehearsal. Afterward, he had found opportunity to make the required mechanical changes in the recording device.

Coyd's voice was eloquent as it continued. Harry had caught the congressman's attention that afternoon; Coyd's gestures and his oratory had been delivered directly toward the vital corner. The tones from the record drove home their message. Brief, but pointed and emphatic, Coyd's denunciation of manipulated utilities rang out for all the world to hear.

No listener made a move. The lazy motion of The Shadow's automatics continued unrelenting. At last the speech was done. Still, those in the room sat silent. From hidden lips came a chilling tone, an eerie laugh of whispered triumph. As The Shadow's quivered mirth subsided, Harry Vincent stepped over and pulled the switch. The room was no longer a broadcasting chamber.

THE SHADOW'S gloved hands ceased their motion. Harry had become an added threat with his single gun; those whom The Shadow had covered were too cowed to make a move in face of the three weapons held ready by the cloaked master and his agent. Rigid listeners expected some pronouncement. It came.

“Open the door to the bedroom.”

The Shadow's words were a command. Evelyn Coyd, near the door, could see the gleam of those dominating eyes. Nodding, the girl stepped over and tried the knob. The door was locked.

“Give her the key.”

These stern words were addressed toward the table. A twitching showed on the face of Coyd as the man's hand started for his pocket. Then came a glare of defiance—an expression entirely different from any that Coyd had ever shown.

“No!” cried the man by the table. “No. I do not have the key. You cannot enter there—”

Hands clutched the lapels of the smoking jacket as the shock-headed man raised his head and delivered his dramatic utterance. The Shadow's eyes were upon Doctor Borneau; Harry, springing forward, jabbed his automatic against the physician's ribs and plucked the key from Borneau's pocket.

Coyd's unfamiliar tone had ended abruptly. It was Evelyn who gave the next cry. She was staring at that transformed face. Her eyes were noting the glisten of the shocky hair above. Wildly, the girl blurted the truth.

“You are not my father!” she shrieked. “You are an impostor! I should have known it when I first arrived here! You were different—”

Beatrice Rydel had joined her friend. She, too, was staring at that wild-eyed man whose face resembled Layton Coyd's. Evelyn knew only that the visage, the pose, could not be her father's; but Beatrice had suddenly recognized who the man must be.

“Montgomery!” she exclaimed. “Montgomery Hadwil! You—your face is changed—your hair dyed—”

THE false Coyd swung back against the table; his faked lips gave a venomous snarl. Recognition complete, he resorted to frenzy. His dramatic egotism came to the fore, in spite of a sharp warning from Doctor Borneau.

“What of it?” demanded Hadwil, viciously. “What if I did choose to deceive the world? Bah! How else could I have gained the wealth I wanted? Your father refused—”

“Enough, rogue!” interrupted Crozan, coming to his feet. “You can make your confession later. We know you for an adventurer, seeking a marriage that would bring you wealth. Dunwood Rydel refused it; he told you his daughter would receive no dowry. He knew that money came first with you.”

Hadwil was spluttering; the glare of Crozan's eyes made him end his fuming. Still accusing, Crozan drove home another statement.

“Rydel offered you money,” he scoffed. “He gave you an opportunity. One that allowed you to continue your profession as an actor. It meant an alteration of your features; but what of that? It was no more than a minor operation, designed to bring you wealth. Come, man, confess. I can promise that you will be dealt with leniently.”

“Very well.” Hadwil had calmed. “I did as Rydel told me. I went daily to the Hall of Representatives; I watched Layton Coyd and learned all his mannerisms and gestures. I rehearsed them to perfection.

“I went to a small private hospital outside of Washington. There the operation was performed. After that, I lived in an apartment on Q Street. Rydel placed a car at my disposal. A limousine with a chauffeur named Mullard.

“He brought me here one day to make a trial of my new identity. The next day I came again and issued the statement on munitions. To-night, I made another visit; I came here to deliver a speech as Rydel wanted it.”

“We have your confession,” remarked Crozan. He was in the center of the room, confident that he was backed by The Shadow's guns. “Next, we should hear from you, Doctor Borneau. Hadwil is guilty merely of an imposture. Perhaps, doctor, your deeds were more serious.”

“Slightly,” asserted Borneau, with a grimace. “I, too, was hired by Rydel. Some time ago, a sculptor

named Lucian took a cast—a mask—of Congressman Coyd. Some one—Rydel or his chauffeur—entered Lucian's studio and stole the cast, leaving a batch of broken plaster on the floor.

“A second mask was taken—for that statue on the mantelpiece—but I had the first. I used it as a mold for a facial operation which I performed on Hadwil. You understand, of course, that I was deceived at first. I thought that Rydel was friendly to Coyd; that the purpose was to have Hadwil serve as Coyd's substitute when the latter was indisposed—”

“That is irrelevant, doctor,” interposed Crozan, sternly. “Let us know what you actually did to Congressman Coyd.”

“I gave him two prescriptions,” admitted the physician. “Neither was really harmful; but one stimulated him and afterward, when its effects wore off, he felt melancholy. That accounted for his troubled mental condition. He needed more stimulus, either through medicine or outdoor exercise.”

“And the other prescription?”

“Contained an opiate. So Coyd would sleep on the days that Rydel wished to substitute Hadwil in his stead. I learned the real game, too late—”

“What about your past, Doctor Borneau? How did you come to be in Washington?”

“I was concerned in some trouble at Saigon, Mr. Crozan. Fortunately, charges against me were dropped. Never made, in fact, since I promised to leave Indo-China. Even the French Embassy did not know about the matter. It was a personal concern.”

“What about these men?”

Crozan was indicating Coyd's secretaries. Borneau shook his head.

“Neither was implicated,” the man replied.

TABBERT'S face was pale; for a moment, he was about to blurt out something, then desisted as he saw Evelyn stare accusingly in his direction. Before the girl could speak, Harry caught a signal from The Shadow. He handed the key to Evelyn. The girl hurried and unlocked the door.

Harry gently urged Beatrice Rydel to follow her. The blonde obeyed mechanically; she seemed dulled by the confession that she had heard involving her father.

As Evelyn opened the door, she uttered a cry. Beyond, stretched on the bed, was Congressman Coyd, clad in his dressing gown. Evelyn showed fright at first, thinking that her father was dead.

Then her tone was one of gladness, as she discovered that he was breathing, deep in slumber. Beatrice joined Evelyn in an effort to awake the sleeping congressman.

“That is fortunate,” decided Crozan, staring through the open door. “After all, Rydel could not have afforded to murder Coyd. That would have meant you taking his place permanently, Hadwil. Yet Rydel would have been capable of murder—”

Crozan paused suddenly. Harry, near the door of the bedroom, saw a motion from The Shadow. Calmly, Harry closed the door. As Crozan turned about, The Shadow's agent twisted the key and pocketed it. Evelyn and Beatrice were locked inside the room.

“Murder!” boomed Crozan, turning to The Shadow, who stood as a silent judge. “Dunwood Rydel

committed murder! He had reason to do so; for there was one man in Washington clever enough to have penetrated his scheme. I refer to Tyson Weed. He was murdered by Dunwood Rydel!”

A SARDONIC laugh came from The Shadow's lips. It was a burst of chilling mockery, a gibe that carried stern accusation. No longer repressed, those eerie tones rose to fierce crescendo. Ending abruptly, they left echoes crying from the walls, like chilled responses from a myriad of quivering, unseen tongues. Foster Crozan trembled; his confidence was gone.

“Your game is ended,” pronounced The Shadow. “Your efforts, Crozan, to pin suspicion on Rydel were overdone. If he were the schemer that you wish to make him, he would have avoided the very steps that you have named.

“Rydel's contempt for Hadwil was known. It was returned by Hadwil. Collusion between the two was unlikely. Had Rydel chosen to use Hadwil, he would not have employed his own car for transportation of the impostor.

“Nor would he have permitted his daughter to make friends with Evelyn Coyd. No schemer would have called upon a girl like Beatrice to aid him in his fell plans. Nor would Rydel have come here as he did this morning, making himself conspicuous just prior to the climax.

“Moreover, when you challenged him, Crozan, Rydel—had he been a villain—would have had a perfect alibi for his recent whereabouts. He would not have evaded your question.

“You, Crozan, with all your bravado; you are the man of crime. You placed aids at every spot; you bribed Borneau, Hadwil, even Mullard. To make all safe, you chose an agent in this very house.”

The Shadow paused. His eyes were upon the two secretaries. Tabbert cried out spontaneously:

“Jurrick! He was working with Borneau! I wondered why he used to shift those medicine bottles. Why he always informed me that Mr. Coyd was in the downstairs study; that I was to go there and not come up here. I never saw Mr. Coyd actually go in there. Jurrick must have met Hadwil at the side door—covered his departure when the man left—”

Tabbert stopped, quivering. Jurrick was shrinking away; backed against the wall, he showed his guilt by manner and expression.

Again. The Shadow spoke.

“Tyson Weed visited Montgomery Hadwil,” he pronounced. “The lobbyist guessed the impersonation; his detectives had reported Layton Coyd in two places at the same time. Weed offered terms to Hadwil. You saw their danger, Crozan.

“Only you were available at the time of Weed's murder. Mullard was taking Hadwil to a new hide-out. Borneau was at the embassy with Senator Releston. Jurrick was here with Tabbert. It was your task, Crozan, the elimination of Weed. You could not entrust it to some underling as you had that theft at Releston's.

“You wanted those papers as a prelude to the game; to make it look as though Rydel were guilty. To-night, with your schemes balked, you prompted your tools—Hadwil and Borneau—to make confessions. They did so, knowing that they would be convicted of minor crimes alone. In their confessions—to gain your favor further—they named Rydel as the master crook. Rydel, instead of you—”

Crozan had cowered; yet his face was venomous. The Shadow's automatics were moving from man to

man, covering the master crook and his trio of helpers. A murderer was trapped, his accomplices trembled, helpless. They, too, dreaded The Shadow's wrath, now that justice faced them.

THEN came the unexpected. Harry Vincent was the one to see the danger; for The Shadow, concentrated upon Crozan, had deliberately left Harry on guard. Standing by the door to the bedroom, Harry could see past The Shadow, who had advanced into the living room. He could observe that far doorway to the hall, the only spot that offered possible complications.

Gun in hand, Harry uttered a sudden shout of warning as he saw a figure leap into view. The Shadow heard it, twisting inward, he performed a fading motion just as an evil rescuer came springing past the threshold.

It was Mullard. The chauffeur had slipped Hawkeye. He had come here with Rydel's limousine, to pick up Hadwil. Alarmed by the delay, Mullard had entered Cloyd's home. From the stairs, he had heard The Shadow's tones. Revolver leveled, this underling of crime was driving in to aid his evil master, Foster Crozan.

CHAPTER XX. CRIME'S END.

TWO guns cracked simultaneously. One was Mullard's revolver; the other, Harry Vincent's automatic. Mullard was aiming hastily for The Shadow; Harry was shooting for the spot which he had been covering—the space inside the door.

Mullard's bullet whistled by The Shadow's whirling form. The cloaked avenger knew that the first shot would be wide; he was wheeling about to aim with deliberate purpose. His automatics covered Mullard simultaneously. Ordinarily, The Shadow would have mowed down the intruder before he could take new aim.

But Mullard was already sprawling. Harry's timely shot had clipped the in-rushing chauffeur. Mullard's revolver went bouncing across the floor to bash against Burbank's cabinet. Its owner writhed helpless, moaning in agony. Harry's shot had found his left shoulder.

As The Shadow wheeled to cover Mullard, a fiendish shout resounded. Foster Crozan had lost no precious moments. From his pocket the arch-fiend was snatching a .38; he bounded forward, aiming to shoot The Shadow in the back. Hard after him came another, drawing a revolver also. Montgomery Hadwil was seeking to aid his chief.

The Shadow's spin had not ended. It was a complete twist, off at an angle at the end of the room. Whirling with his first fade, The Shadow had planned to clip Mullard; to keep on in his revolution and deal with the foes whom he knew would make a break.

Shots at Mullard had been unnecessary. The Shadow was almost full about before Crozan could fire. The crook's gun spoke; a whistling bullet clipped the brim of The Shadow's hat. Then, as Crozan fell upon the cloaked fighter, an automatic spoke. Its burst came just as Crozan jabbed his revolver against The Shadow's body.

A finger faltered; The Shadow's automatic gave a second spurt as Crozan wavered. The master crook sprawled heavily upon his adversary, losing his gun as he fell.

Shifting, The Shadow swung Crozan's form as a shield, just as Hadwil, pumping shots from a .32, came plunging upon his dead chief and the living foe.

HALF sprawled by Crozan's death plunge, The Shadow saw Hadwil above him. The face that

resembled Coyd's was flushed with fury as the hand beside it thrust the .32 between The Shadow's eyes.

Hadwil's previous shots had buried themselves in Crozan's sagged body; this bullet—so the transformed actor believed—would finish The Shadow.

The slug never issued from Hadwil's gun. The Shadow's arm had already swung inward, under Crozan's arm. A muffled roar from The Shadow's automatic. Hadwil's lifted face showed agony. He tried to fire; The Shadow smashed the revolver with a stroke of the automatic.

The gun went skidding across the floor as Hadwil slumped backward. He was the man who had doomed Tyson Weed; at heart a murderer like Crozan, Hadwil had gone to a deserved death.

Twisting away from the sprawled bodies, The Shadow was ready with his automatics. His enemies had shielded him in the fray; if remaining foemen were prepared for battle, they, too, could have it. But as The Shadow cleared for further action, he saw that the cause was won.

Harry Vincent had sprung forward to down Crozan and Hadwil. Doctor Borneau had sprung in to stop Harry's surge. The physician was unarmed—Harry had learned that when frisking him for the key to the locked bedroom. Hence Harry had driven blows with his automatic, to clear the physician from the way.

Borneau had resisted the flaying strokes, long enough to hold back Harry. But at last, the physician had succumbed; he had dropped to the floor, holding up his hands in surrender. Turning to aid The Shadow, Harry saw his chief triumphant.

Another struggle was ending. Don Jurrick had started forward, later than the others, reaching to pull a gun from his pocket. Hugh Tabbert had taken care of that adversary.

Fiercely, the red-haired secretary had snatched the revolver from Jurrick. He had followed that by slugging the sleek underling with merciless punches. Jurrick was lying huddled by the big chair, Tabbert, fists clenched, towered above him.

The radio technician had picked up Mullard's gun and was holding it gingerly. That precaution had been unnecessary. No fight remained in Mullard. Harry's shot had clipped him properly. The rogue was still moaning on the floor.

Hearty pounds came from beyond the bedroom door. The Shadow hissed an order. Harry, still covering Borneau, moved back and produced the key with his left hand. The Shadow was backing toward the hall, both automatics ready. With no need to watch Borneau, Harry unlocked the bedroom door.

CONGRESSMAN COYD was on the threshold. Fully awake, he stared with startled eyes at the havoc which filled the living room. Harry spoke; Coyd nodded. Turning, he ordered Evelyn and Beatrice to remain where they were. Stalking out into the living room, Coyd took imperious charge of the scene.

Harry, gun in hand, backed Borneau to the chair beside which Jurrick lay.

Tabbert collected the revolvers that were on the floor; then Coyd ordered Borneau to attend to Mullard's wound. Disarmed, these minions were helpless.

Borneau, as he obeyed, glanced toward the doorway to the hall. That was the spot to which The Shadow had retreated. There was no sign of the cloaked form in the blackness; but the cowed physician suspected that The Shadow was still there.

Some one was hammering at the front door. The pounding ceased; footsteps clattered on the stairs. Mose had admitted a visitor. From the hall came Dunwood Rydel; the magnate had arrived at the finish

of the shooting; and had been hammering for admittance ever since.

Consternation showed on Rydel's face as he gazed about, anxiously seeking his daughter. Harry explained briefly what had happened; adding that Beatrice was safe with Evelyn.

Coyd understood for the first time. He thrust out a firm hand; Rydel received it. Together, these men who had stood apart congratulated each other above the dead body of Foster Cruzan, the arch-plotter who had tried to work evil to them both.

New sounds from below; the doorbell was ringing the arrival of a new visitor. Seeing victory secure, Harry Vincent went out through the hall and down the stairs, to find Mose faltering to answer the call. Harry sent the servant away and opened the door himself. It was Senator Ross Releston.

"I left Baltimore early," explained Releston. "We heard Congressman Coyd's speech through the radio in the automobile. I was in a friend's car, you know. I told them to bring me here at once."

The senator paused; then gripped Harry's arm.

"I heard the weird laugh," he added. "The others merely wondered about it—they thought that somehow a mystery program had worked in with the banquet broadcast. But I understood. I knew that something—"

HARRY nodded. Accompanying the senator to the stairs, he explained the vital points as they went upward. Senator Releston gasped when he heard of Foster Crozan's traitorous dealings.

"Crozan was the murderer," asserted Releston, decisively. "No doubt about it, Vincent. We have witnesses to his statements; to those of his hirelings. The three whom we now hold—Borneau, Jurrick and Mullard—will be forced to declare the full truth."

"They have already done so," returned Harry, as they ascended to the second floor. "Borneau told facts; up to the point where he named Dunwood Rydel as the villain, instead of Foster Crozan."

"He will retract that lie," assured Releston. "Crozan is dead; his threat will no longer influence Borneau. Now that the crisis has passed, Vincent, the game is plain. I should have realized that Crozan's virtues were a pretense. Secretly, his desire was for worldly pelf."

"I felt sure that speculators had been buying those utility securities, Vincent. That was why I dropped my original objection to Coyd's genuine speech. The prices will drop—as they should—and the losers will be those rogues who connived with Foster Crozan."

"What of those associates, senator?"

"They will gain what they have deserved. Financial ruin. We shall press them no further; for they are not of Crozan's criminal type. Murder was his own choice, Vincent. We will learn—I am confident—that Crozan's entire fortune is tied up in those utility stocks. He, himself, must have been the chief speculator. He probably salvaged his original investments in munitions and threw millions into this bigger game."

HARRY VINCENT could detect a note of finality in the gray-haired senator's tone. Justice had triumphed; The Shadow's work was done. There would be finishing details, Harry guessed; and in that assumption he was right. But The Shadow's remaining tasks were trifling.

Word to Cliff Marsland, to call the police; then depart from the apartment where he had been waiting in case Montgomery Hadwil had slipped loose and fled thither. The law would discover that hide-out, where Hadwil's cherished press clippings, his letters, articles of make-up and disguise would be disclosed

as proof of his part in Crozan's game.

A message to Hawkeye, to forget the F Street garage, where he was no longer needed as a watcher. To Clyde Burke, also, telling the reporter to visit Crozan's rooms at the Hotel Barlingham.

Evidence would be uncovered there as well. Records of stock purchases; perhaps a duplicate of a planted cable from Europe, that had told of Hadwil's supposed elopement with a foreign actress.

After that, Burbank. Like The Shadow, the contact man would leave the Hotel Halcyon and make his departure from Washington. Other missions awaited The Shadow and his agents. Soon Harry Vincent would join them.

Glimmers of such thoughts flashed through Harry's mind as he and Releston reached the threshold of the living room, where Layton Coyd and Dunwood Rydel held mutual charge of cowering prisoners. Suddenly the senator stopped; his face was solemn as he harkened to a strange, uncanny sound from below.

It was a weird burst of departing laughter; from the depths of the first floor hall, near the side door that led from this old house. Chilling, solemn mirth; more a knell than a token of elation. Eerily it shivered to a shuddering climax. A host of echoes faded into nothingness.

The author of that mirth was gone. The parting laugh had sounded the final triumph of The Shadow.

THE END