



THE DEVIL'S FEUD

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CHAPTER I. THE MAN WHO CAME BACK

LIGHTS were glowing from the mansion on the hill - the first lights that had gleamed from its windows for the past five years. Across the lawn that spread among the trees, those lights formed fantastic streaks that seemed like living things.

Those streaks could have been the shadows of the trees that were weaving constantly in the heavy wind. One patch of darkness, however, was imbued with purpose. Steadily, with gliding progress, it moved toward the house, until, close to the glow of a corner window, it became a solid shape.

That shape was human, though many observers might have mistaken it for a ghost. It formed a figure cloaked in black - a being whose eyes, hidden beneath the brim of a slouch hat, caught the glow of the window lights and reflected them with the burn of living coals.

Curiously, only those who did not fear this black-clad being would have mistaken him for a ghost. Those who really feared him would have recognized him, had they seen him.

He was The Shadow, master foe of crime; a human fighter dreaded by all men of evil! To such, The Shadow was far more formidable than any spectral creature of the night.

Close to a corner window, The Shadow paused. His cloaked shoulder formed an outline against the light, and a hawkish profile formed beneath the slouch hat, as The Shadow's burning eyes peered through the window. There, as he viewed the great hall of the mansion, The Shadow saw a solitary person.

The lone man was Tukes, the old servant who had been with the Granmore family since they first moved to this mansion, forty years ago. It was fitting that Tukes, the faithful old retainer, should have reopened the mansion to receive Foster Granmore upon his return from a five-year sojourn in the State penitentiary.

Since Tukes was alone, it was evident that Foster had not yet arrived. Withdrawing from the window, The Shadow moved past a corner of the house, and paused. Below the hill lay a glittering vista, a carpet of light that represented the town of Venetia, plainly visible despite the wind-swept drizzle.

Great puffs of flame rose suddenly from amid the valley. Reflecting ruddily from the scudding clouds, the glare outlined the sprawling buildings of a factory. That plant was the glass works owned by Weldorf, Granmore Co., the industry upon which the town of Venetia depended.

As flames faded, The Shadow's keen eyes gazed across the valley to a mansion that surmounted the opposite hill. It was lighted, like the Granmore house, but even at this distance the other mansion looked more brilliant. Well it might, for it was the home of the Weldorf family, whose name lacked the smirch that had fallen upon the Granmores.

Singular, the status of these two families who had once rated equally in Venetia!

Five years ago, old Daniel Weldorf, patriarch of his clan, had been murdered in that distant mansion. His slayer was a masked robber, who had rifled the Weldorf safe and taken bonds belonging to the company, valued at a quarter million dollars. The bonds were registered; hence the murderer had never been able to turn them into cash. For five years, both the killer and his loot had remained undiscovered.

Suspicion in the murder of Daniel Weldorf had rested briefly upon Foster Granmore. Though most of the company records had disappeared with the bonds, duplicates had been found, much to the disappointment of Foster. For those duplicate records had shown a shortage in Foster's accounts, to the total of forty thousand dollars.

Foster had established an alibi in the matter of Daniel's death, but vindictive members of the Weldorf family had forced the other issue, with the result that Foster Granmore had gone to jail for embezzlement.

These were the vital facts that brought The Shadow to the Granmore mansion; these, plus the added point that tonight, Foster would return to the old homestead.

Like the missing bonds, the embezzled cash had never been found. In the case of the cash, Foster Granmore could certainly provide the answer. Whether it formed a link to murder, was a question to be answered by The Shadow!

SKIRTING the Granmore grounds was a deep ravine, and from it, The Shadow could hear the tumult of a raging creek. This was the rainy season, when swollen streams became roaring torrents that swept out bridges and carried away shacks built along their shores.

The flood menace was heavy throughout this area, and The Shadow could picture the appearance of the

plunging creek from the sounds that issued from the pitch-black ravine.

Then came an added roar, deceptive at first, but plainer as it increased. It was the motor of a large car, climbing the hill road that skirted the ravine. Even before the headlights swung into the Granmore driveway, The Shadow was gliding into the darkness that fronted the mansion. There, under cover of low shrubbery, he continued toward the front door.

Sweeping the bushes, the headlights failed to reveal the black cloaked shape behind them. The big car stopped in front of the mansion. Hearing its arrival, Tukes opened the front door, and the light showed the halted limousine. From the big car stepped a dapper chauffeur, who opened the door to let two passengers alight. The Shadow saw them plainly as they stepped toward the house.

One was Foster Granmore. He showed the traces of his years in prison. His face, once full and florid, had become thin and was smeared with a sickly pallor. His shoulders were bowed; he had the look of a wearied man. Indeed, Foster Granmore seemed almost as old as Tukes, the stooped and wizened servant who greeted him at the front door.

The other arrival was Giles Mandon, general manager of the glass factory. Mandon was a picture of middle-aged health. He was handsome, with his sleek light hair and clear blue eyes; friendly eyes displayed sympathy as he ushered Foster into the old homestead. Mandon's shoulders were erect, giving him a military bearing.

After turning Foster over to Tukes, Mandon swung about and spoke to his chauffeur:

"Wait here, Corbey. I shall be with you shortly."

The front door closed behind Mandon, and darkness reigned anew. It was darkness that suited The Shadow, for he moved directly to the front door. The lights of Mandon's car were focused along the drive, hence they did not reveal The Shadow as he reached the front door. Nor did Corbey, back at the wheel, catch a glimpse of the gliding shape in black.

It was because of Corbey that The Shadow worked the house door inward very slowly, until he found just enough space to enter. In entering, he blocked off the light completely, and he closed the door as he turned. The barrier came shut so softly that Corbey hadn't an inkling of what happened.

Within the great hall, The Shadow saw an open path ahead. Tukes had gone back to the kitchen, and from another doorway The Shadow heard voices, giving the location of Foster Granmore and Giles Mandon. They had left the door ajar, in case they wanted to summon Tukes, so The Shadow took advantage of the matter.

Reaching the partly opened door, he looked into a comfortable corner den, where Foster and Mandon were chatting together.

"THOUGHTFUL of Tukes," remarked Foster. "He even lighted the fire for me, and here are my pipe and slippers. My favorite tobacco, too!" Leaning back in a deep chair, Foster reached for the tobacco jar. "It's good to be home again. I hope that people will leave me alone!"

"I'm afraid they won't, Foster," declared Mandon, with a solemn headshake. "At least, I know one person who is likely to visit you quite shortly."

Foster's eyes narrowed into sharp beads. His next question came in a snarled tone:

"Do you mean Titus Weldorf?"

Mandon nodded.

"Titus is a fool!" snapped Foster. "So big a fool, that he still thinks I killed his cousin Daniel! Well you can't expect too many brains in one family. Old Daniel had them; Titus lacks them. I'll handle Titus Weldorf!"

Again, Mandon shook his head.

"That's just the trouble, Foster," he said. "You're not the man to handle him."

Foster's teeth bit the pipe stem with a savage click that rather proved Mandon's point. At least, Mandon took it that way. He arose and laid a friendly hand upon Foster's shoulder.

"If Titus arrives," suggested Mandon, "tell Tukes to get in touch with me."

"Very well," agreed Foster. "I'll send Tukes over to your house. He can make it in less than ten minutes, by the path across the ravine."

There was another headshake from Mandon.

"The bridge went out today," he told Foster "so you can't send Tukes. Have him phone me, and I'll come around by car. Besides" - Mandon's tone carried a warning note - "Tukes should stay here, to witness what passes between you and Titus. Titus is vindictive, Foster, and you are both hotheaded."

Foster gave a shrug and reached for his slippers. At last, yielding to Mandon's persuasion, he promised to follow instructions.

As Mandon came from the den, The Shadow drew back into darkness, under an old-fashioned stairway, and let the rugged man pass. Watching Mandon, The Shadow saw him go out through the front door, which Tukes had come from the kitchen to open.

Remaining where he was, The Shadow heard Mandon's car pull away, and watched Tukes go back to the kitchen. The Shadow preferred his present lurking spot, for he knew that eyes were watching the hallway.

Those eyes belonged to Foster and they were very sharp. They might even have spied The Shadow, had Foster suspected that anyone was standing in the shelter of the stairway.

With Mandon and Tukes gone; Foster was quite sure that he was alone. He started to close the door of the den, then decided against it, on the supposition that he could certainly hear Tukes if the old servant came across the hallway.

As Foster retired into his den, The Shadow came from darkness and again peered through the partly opened door.

Showing unusual agility for a man wearied by prison life, Foster Granmore was moving about the room, drawing the window shades right down to the sills. That task finished, he hurried to the fireplace. There, he threw a quick glance toward the door. Seeing only blackness beyond it, he supposed that the hall was quite empty.

His breath coming in eager gasps, Foster reached beneath the mantel and began to turn an ornamental iron ring that was set in the stone.

The heat from the fire bothered him. He withdrew his hands twice, rubbing his fingers. Then, tugging a

handkerchief from his pocket, Foster wrapped it about his hand and resumed his operation.

Finishing the turning of the ring, Foster gave it a pull. Instead of coming free, the ring swung at an angle, bringing a small, square section of the fireplace with it, on a hinge.

Into the compartment thus revealed, Foster shoved an eager hand. His face, reddened by the fire's glow, held a leer of satanic triumph. As plainly as though he had spoken it, Foster's face was informing that he expected to reclaim the spoils of crime.

One point, alone, was in doubt. Foster's face did not tell whether he merely wanted the forty thousand dollars that he had embezzled, or whether he also counted on finding the quarter million in bonds that had disappeared with the masked murderer who killed Daniel Weldorf.

Whatever he wanted, Foster Granmore did not discover it. His hand, merely nervous at first, became frantic. Stooping, he peered into the cavity beneath the mantel; even struck a match to view its interior.

Then with a snarl so vicious that any murderer would have envied it, Foster swung about with both fists clenched. His face had lost its demoniac leer; he was wearing the visage of a madman.

Small wonder that Foster Granmore was the picture of a man crazed with despair. In paying the penalty for crime, he had undergone the ordeal in the confidence that he would retain the profits of his evil.

Instead of wealth, Foster Granmore had gained a lesson that The Shadow could have told him was his due.

The lesson that crime did not pay!

CHAPTER II. DEATH FROM THE DARK

WATCHING the face of Foster Granmore, The Shadow saw it run the gamut of emotions. Rage replaced despair, only to weaken into misery. Then the desire for revenge turned the man's face savage, until he realized that he did not know the person upon whom his vengeance should be wreaked.

Suddenly, a cunning glint came to Foster's beady eyes, and held itself like a vulture's glare. Closing the aperture beneath the mantel, he screwed the iron ring tight again.

Foster Granmore intended to play smart. Some time, during the past five years, someone had robbed him of his ill-gotten gain. When the robbery had happened, who had perpetrated it, were things that Foster would make it his future business to learn. His face was actually gloating, as though he relished this challenge to his ownership of stolen funds.

The Shadow could hear the sharp intake of Foster's breath - an indication of the embezzler's eagerness to wage a new campaign.

Around the old house, the wind wailed, as though it shared Foster's disappointment and wanted to join his cause. Its shriek was a ghoulish whine, and a gust, traveling down the chimney, stirred the firelight into wavering tongues that licked upward, anew, in vengeful style.

Then, as though the wind had already played its part, there came a sharp clack-clack outside a window of the room.

Turned from the fireplace, Foster cocked his head and listened shrewdly. At first, he mistook the clatter for a loosened shutter; then he identified it as an actual rap upon the pane beyond the lowered shade. Striding across the den, he raised the shade and hoisted the sash. In with a surge of wind came a sweep

of rain that forced Foster to fling his arms in front of his face.

As for The Shadow, he did quick work to prevent the door from slamming in his face. Thrusting his foot into the door space, The Shadow stopped the barrier as the wind caught it and drove it his way.

When The Shadow looked again, a figure was clambering over the low sill. Foster evidently knew the visitor, for he had admitted the man, and was closing the window and drawing the shade again.

The man who entered was muffled in a raincoat and wore a flabby gray hat. He threw back the coat collar and removed the rain-soaked hat as he approached the fire.

There, the visitor turned, and The Shadow saw a face quite like Foster's though it was younger and more robust. With a broad grin, the arrival spoke.

"Well, Uncle Foster," he queried, "aren't you glad to receive a visit from your favorite nephew?"

"Considering that you are my only nephew," returned Foster testily, "I suppose that you are entitled to the distinction, Ted. Nevertheless, I am not accustomed to receiving visitors through the window. The front door is the proper entrance."

Ted Granmore's lips showed a none-too-pleasant curl. Then, smoothly, he remarked:

"Our business is confidential, Foster. I didn't care to have even Tukes know about it. It concerns the sum of forty thousand dollars."

Foster's eyes went hard, with a cold glint.

"Come, come, Foster," chided Ted. "We Granmores must work together. You have suffered, of course, from your stay in prison; but I have borne some of the brunt. After all, the blemish on the Granmore name _"

"Cut it short, Ted!" snapped Foster. "How much money do you want?"

Ted shrugged.

"About five thousand dollars," he decided. "It would settle some pressing debts. I've already sold most of my stock in the glass factory, and I ought to hang on to some of it just for family pride."

Foster sneered at Ted's mention of "pride". Then, his expression hardening again, Foster shook his head.

"Sorry, Ted," he stated. "I had debts, too. Old ones. I embezzled the forty thousand to cover them. It's all gone, years ago, before I went to prison."

There was disbelief in Ted's eyes. In his turn Foster studied his nephew closely. The Shadow could understand Foster's gaze; the older man was trying to guess whether his nephew had taken the money from its cache beneath the mantel. At last, to break the tension, Foster spoke sarcastically.

"I suppose you're wondering about the bonds that were stolen from old Daniel Weldof," remarked Foster. "It would be like you, Ted, to think that I took them, too."

Ted gave a headshake.

"I'm not sure that old Daniel ever had those bonds," he declared. "It would be like a Weldorf, to frame something that would bring discredit to the Granmores. Tell me, Foster: could Daniel Weldorf have known that you were embezzling company funds?"

"He might have, Ted."

"Very well, my dear uncle. That would have given Daniel his opportunity to obtain funds in a much bigger way. He could have disposed of the bonds then faked a robbery -"

"And let himself be murdered for his pains?" broke in Foster. "That wouldn't be like Daniel Weldorf; nor, for that matter, like any Weldorf, not even Titus -"

THERE was another interruption - the ringing of the front doorbell. Coming with Foster's mention of Titus, the bell was very apropos. Taking Ted's arm, Foster Granmore pressed his nephew toward the window, at the same time hissing in Ted's ear:

"It's Titus Weldorf. Mandon told me to expect him. Get outside, and stay there until Titus has gone!"

The Shadow kept the door from slamming while Ted was going out the window. By then, Tukes was admitting Titus Weldorf. Retiring to the space beneath the stairway, The Shadow had a good look at Titus when the visitor went past.

Titus Weldorf had a long, aristocratic face, with a high-bridged nose that was probably a mark of his clan. Considering Titus as a specimen, the Weldorfs were more imposing than the Granmores. But behind the haughty air of Titus lay a certain shrewdness, quite as strong as any displayed by Foster Granmore or his nephew, Ted.

Upon receiving Titus Weldorf, Foster Granmore dismissed Tukes but left the door half open. Foster had not forgotten Mandon's admonition to have Tukes handy, in case of an altercation between himself and Titus. The admonition was a solid one, for the two men lost no time in baring their antagonism.

"I know why you've come here, Titus," opened Foster. "You want to talk about a matter of forty thousand dollars. Sorry to disappoint you. I'm not in a mood to discuss finances."

"Then perhaps you will talk about murder!" retorted Titus, in a tone that had the sharp cut of a knife. "I refer to the death of my cousin Daniel. You can't have forgotten it, Foster. You remember other things that happened five years ago."

"I had an alibi at the time of Daniel's murder -"

"So you did, Foster. You were with Giles Mandon shortly before it happened. His testimony cleared you, but there is a chance that Mandon was mistaken as to the exact time when you left him."

Foster's fists tightened, then relaxed. He picked up a pipe that he had filled, lighted it, and began to puff serenely. Then, coolly, he inquired:

"Aren't you intimating that Mandon lied in my behalf, Titus?"

"Not in the least," knifed Titus. "If he had, he wouldn't have produced those duplicate accounts that branded you as an embezzler. Mandon is honest, and an honest man can be fooled, to some extent, by a crook."

Again, Foster's fists went tight. He bellowed savagely as he bounded across the room, and The Shadow whipped away from the open door, back into the space beneath the stairs. It wasn't necessary for The Shadow to mix in the dispute, for old Tukes was coming across the hallway, attracted by the sound of angry voices.

Tukes arrived to find Titus backing through the doorway, away from Foster's shaking fist. Seeing the

servant, Foster calmed down immediately and waved a hand toward the front door. Then, stiffly, he ordered:

"Show Mr. Weldorf out, Tukes."

Courteously, Tukes conducted Titus to the front door. There, Titus turned and delivered a parting thrust.

"Remember, Foster!" stormed Titus. "A man who will steal will commit murder! It applies in your case, and I shall prove it! You will pay for the death of my cousin Daniel!"

Before Foster could give reply, Titus stepped through the doorway and was swallowed by the drizzling darkness. The wind howled, as though endorsing the words of Titus, and Foster gave a savage gesture, indicating for Tukes to close the door, which the servant did. Anxiously, Tukes queried:

"Shall I phone Mr. Mandon?"

"Not yet, Tukes," Foster shook his head. "Wait in the kitchen. I shall call when I need you."

WAITING until Tukes had turned away, Foster went back into his corner room. From Foster's manner, The Shadow could divine the man's exact purpose. Foster had followed Mandon's admonition to have Tukes present as a witness when Titus Weldorf arrived.

But Tukes had only witnessed a portion of the altercation. Foster Granmore had an even better witness close at hand: his nephew Ted, outside the window.

Foster hadn't quite closed the window, nor had he fully drawn the shade. He intended to admit Ted again and renew their own conference.

There was a shrewd gleam upon Foster's face; he could foresee at least a temporary alliance with his nephew. Granmore's both, their antagonism toward the Weldorfs would unite them in a common cause. As for the suspicion that showed on Foster's face, it had a new significance.

Still thinking of the missing forty thousand dollars, Foster had begun to believe that Ted Granmore wasn't the only man who might have garnered those stolen funds. Titus Weldorf, with his show of indignation, might well be covering a theft on his own part.

At least, Foster had played smart throughout, for he hadn't given either visitor an inkling that the funds were missing from the hiding place. As for his coming campaign, Foster intended to play a Granmore against a Weldorf and sit back to see what happened.

Hearing Foster raise the window, The Shadow stepped forward from the stairway and thrust the necessary foot into the doorway, to prevent the wind from slamming the door. Through the crack he saw Foster leaning forward at the window, his arm raised against the swirling rain. Foster's other hand was moving forward to beckon Ted indoors.

It was the same setting as before. A few moments more, and Ted Granmore would be coming through the window to rejoin his uncle. The Shadow was regarding the situation casually, despite the wail of the wind.

The strident gale was striking a new note; it carried a banshee's wail, as though some spirit of the outer reaches sought to voice a warning fraught with death. Yet, even The Shadow did not regard that chance whine as an omen.

Then came the stroke itself.

From the doorway, The Shadow could see blackness as a background beyond Foster Granmore. A background into which the pasty-faced man was leaning his hand extended as in welcome. In return came something wholly unexpected.

There was a stab from darkness - a tongue of flame that knifed upward, straight for Foster's heart. The report that accompanied the burst was scarcely audible, for the roar of the wind had a drowning effect. But there was no mistaking the fiery stab. It issued from the muzzle of a gun.

With that wind-drowned shot, Foster Granmore reeled back from the window, swayed, and toppled forward, dead. The man who had paid the penalty for one crime had become the victim of another. From the misery of a prison cell, Foster Granmore had returned to the security of his old home, to meet with death from the dark.

Death from the dark, in the very presence of The Shadow!

CHAPTER III. THE DOUBLED TRAIL

EVEN before Foster Granmore completed his sudden death stagger, The Shadow was drawing a gun from beneath his cloak to start in the direction of the murderer, outside the window.

Briefly, The Shadow paused in the doorway, still part of the blackness that pervaded it. He was waiting on the chance that the killer might appear at the window to view his handiwork.

When no face appeared, The Shadow was sure that the murderer had taken the opposite course, that of flight. The delay was not too long to prevent The Shadow from overtaking him. Any man who had delivered death so deliberately would not be seized by panic. The Shadow was merely giving the killer sufficient leeway to lull him into a sense of false security.

Flinging the door wide, The Shadow sped across the room, cleared the dead form on the floor and vaulted through the window, into outdoor darkness. So swift was his action, that the incoming wind did not slam the door until The Shadow had reached the ground outside. There, amid darkness, The Shadow heard the door as it clapped shut.

This window was near a rear corner of the house, which was the logical direction in which the killer would have gone. Turning that direction, The Shadow wheeled out from the house wall to gain a better angle for a swift pursuit. Such little details as clipping corners came in very handy, in cases like the present.

This was one instance when such tactics proved handier than usual. So handy, indeed, that they saved The Shadow's life.

Scarcely had The Shadow veered out into the dark, before a gun spoke from the house corner. Its stabs were straight at the spot where the cloaked investigator had landed. Even from his present position, The Shadow could hear the whine of bullets amid the higher shriek of the wind. Moreover, there was double cunning on the part of the opposing marksman.

So true was the fire that if The Shadow had taken a direct course to the corner, he would have come straight into the path of bullets, to suffer the same death that Foster Granmore had received at the window!

Quick though The Shadow had been, when vaulting to the outside darkness, the murderer must have glimpsed his arrival there. It would have been impossible for anyone to identify The Shadow in such a passing glance; but that, in itself, was a disadvantage. Whoever had killed Foster Granmore knew that

Tukes was about, and could therefore have mistaken The Shadow for the faithful servant.

True, Tukes was old, but he was loyal. Giles Mandon had admonished him to take good care of Foster. As for the two men who had paid clandestine visits to this mansion, both knew that Tukes was about. Ted Granmore had mentioned Tukes by name; Titus Weldorf had seen the servant when Tukes admitted him to the house. Both would have been on the lookout for Tukes, and The Shadow's rapid vault could have passed for a tripping plunge of the sort that Tukes might have made.

On that basis, The Shadow halted where he was. Crouching in the darkness, several yards from the house wall, he waited for the killer to steal back and look for Tukes. During those fateful moments, The Shadow was considering the parts that two men might have played.

Ted Granmore had been outside his uncle's window when Foster had the argument with Titus Weldorf. It would have been easy, very easy, for Ted simply to wait and deliver the death shot when Foster came to the window.

True, Ted had shown no inclinations toward murdering Foster earlier. But he could have decided upon such a course after witnessing Titus's visit. Assuming that Ted had taken Foster's hidden funds, he would have a motive for eliminating his uncle. At very best, there was no love lost between the pair.

And what could be more to a Granmore's liking than to commit a murder that circumstance would pin upon a Weldorf?

The Shadow answered that mental question by supplying another. The second question was this:

What could be more to the liking of a Weldorf than killing a Granmore for sheer satisfaction?

This new question put a different aspect on the case. Very plausibly, Ted could have left the premises when Titus arrived. Noticing the partly opened window, through which the wind had persistently whistled, Titus Weldorf might very well have decided to thrust home the vengeance that he had promised.

Calculating the time element, The Shadow decided definitely that Titus could have rounded the house and stationed himself outside the den window, hoping for a shot at Foster. If such were true, Foster had personally helped the cause of his own death, by making himself the perfect target for a lurker.

In his present mood, Titus Weldorf could hardly have resisted the temptation to jab a bullet home, had Foster Granmore come his way so conveniently. For Titus had displayed sincerity, when he accused Foster Granmore of having murdered Daniel Weldorf. To Titus, Foster's steps toward the window could well have seemed an action controlled by a guiding hand of Fate.

The question of the killer would soon be decided.

WAITING, The Shadow was watchful in the darkness, even though the grimy gray of the house wall showed nothing against its surface. This night was as pitch-black as any that The Shadow had ever experienced, and it gave other prowlers the same coverage that he had.

But below the window lay a square of light, coming from the room itself. Foot by foot, The Shadow could picture the murderer moving toward that glowing square. Given the slightest token of the man's arrival, The Shadow would be ready for a devastating pounce.

Then, when The Shadow was sure that opportunity was close at hand, a sound came from within the room where Foster Granmore lay sprawled in death. It came at a most untimely moment, during a lull in the howl of the wind. It was a high-pitched cry of horror, that could only have been voiced by a faithful

servant like Tukes, upon finding the body of his dead master.

The cry changed the entire situation. It told a murderer two things: that Tukes was still alive and that the servant was not the person who had flung himself so recklessly from the window. That cry was the equivalent of a signal to the killer, telling him to resume his delayed flight!

The Shadow took it as a signal for action. Swooping through the darkness, he drove blindly through the drizzle, for a spot midway between the window and the corner. As his shoulder hit the house wall, he turned squarely into the arms of a scudding man who was coming the other way.

It was The Shadow who was prepared for that sudden meeting. He clamped the unknown man in a quick hold that forced the fellow's gun hand upward. They swung full about, and The Shadow, keeping his full sense of direction, drove his opponent against the house wall.

But before The Shadow could follow that advantage by delivering a full-fledged jolt, both he and his adversary were sprawling upon the slippery turf under the impetus of another attacker, who had hurled himself from the corner of the house!

From then on, The Shadow was one of three, each man fighting for himself, in a free-for-all battle where the wind whistled like a referee whose signals were ignored.

Guns were slugging hard against warding arms. No one was wasting shots until he could find an opportunity to place them home, and such chances were lost too rapidly to prove of use.

So poor was the footing that a hard stroke with a gun tumbled the man who gave it, whenever he missed his mark. Hands were clutching at feet, that kicked them away. Guns clanked as they smacked the stone wall.

Even The Shadow's swings were ineffective in this mad battle, until he forced a double tangle with both of his opponents; then wresting one hand free, he made a hard cross-slash in the dark.

One man took the stroke and reeled. He must have warded it, partly, for his flinging hand caught The Shadow, hoping to carry him along. The Shadow followed with him, for the man's stagger was toward the lighted space beneath the window.

There, twisting free, The Shadow let his opponent skid against the wall. He was sure that the fellow must be either Ted Granmore or Titus Weldorf, and he wanted to see which, before dealing with the other fighter in the dark.

The staggered man caught himself against the wall, and his face came into the light. In that glimpse, The Shadow saw the pointed, half-pale features of Ted Granmore. The fact pleased The Shadow, for he considered Ted a cooler hand than Titus Weldorf. It would be easier to deal with Titus in the dark.

In fact, the shots that were ripping from the direction of the corner had all the frenzy that The Shadow attributed to Titus. They were wide, hopelessly so, as they probed the blackness for The Shadow. They gave the impression that the marksman was half dazed, and there was another reason for such a conclusion.

Titus Weldorf would logically have blazed bullets at Ted Granmore, rather than seek an impossible target in the night. Offsetting that was the possibility that Titus might not have slain Foster Granmore, and therefore was fighting only to save himself from an unknown attacker.

THIS was no time to debate such points. Driving low, The Shadow cut in toward the house wall, reversing his former tactics as he sought to reach the corner. It wasn't Titus who spoiled his plan; the

intervention came from Ted.

No longer groggy, Ted was away from the light below the window, along the wall toward the front of the house. He was starting to shoot on a line toward the corner, aiming for the spurts he saw there, and The Shadow, unknown to Ted, was wheeling right into that path of fire!

One bullet, clipping stone from the house wall, ricocheted so close to The Shadow's face that he could feel its breeze. Before the next shot came from Ted's gun, The Shadow flung himself flat beside the wall. He heard Ted's bullets whistle overhead; then came a sudden ending of the fire.

Having blasted those few shots, Ted Granmore had turned and was dashing for the front of the house, anxious to get away before someone clipped him in the darkness.

The Shadow made for the rear corner. Around it, he gave a few quick blinks with a little flashlight, the sort that would serve as bait for Titus Weldorf. However, there were no shots from the other fugitive, and The Shadow's only course was to seek traces of the man who had fled past the corner.

He found them when he swept the flashlight along the ground. There were square-toed footprints in the mud, and the distance between them showed that the fugitive had departed on the run.

Tracing that route was a slow task. The footprints veered across the grass, and had to be picked out among the shrubbery beds behind the house. The Shadow came to a walk of flagstones, noticed dabs of mud upon the stones. Farther along, he found where the running footprints left it.

Then came a path through some trees, with traces of flight along the way, but The Shadow lost the trail at a point where the path forked. No longer did he have a chance of overtaking the fugitive. Even a runner of Titus's type could by this time have gotten a full five-minute lead.

All that The Shadow hoped to learn was where the trail led. When he found out, he regretted that he hadn't picked the route more rapidly.

The footprints stopped abruptly beside the deep ravine that flanked the Granmore estate. The ravine wasn't more than thirty feet across, but its sides were very sheer. There, The Shadow saw a thing that Giles Mandon had mentioned to Foster Granmore; something that Titus Weldorf couldn't have known about.

On each side of the ravine were the narrow abutments of a footbridge, but nothing lay between them. Mandon had mentioned that the flooded creek had carried away that bridge this afternoon. Turning his flashlight downward, The Shadow saw the wooden planking of the bridge dangling in the thundering creek, a dozen yards below.

A low laugh came from The Shadow's hidden lips. He probed the bank of the ravine with his flashlight, searching for more footprints. He found them, going away from the ravine, but they weren't following the path back to the house.

They showed long strides, those square-toed imprints, along another path through the trees. From its direction, The Shadow calculated that this trail would take him directly to a spot somewhere along the driveway in front of the Granmore mansion.

Using the flashlight only for direction, The Shadow started on the run. But before he could reach the drive, he heard the sound of a departing car, followed immediately by the starting of another motor from some other spot along the drive. One car stood for Ted Granmore, the other for Titus Weldorf.

Whatever the part that each had played in crime, both were escaping, leaving The Shadow only a broken

trail. The throbs of those motors, flung back by the furious wind, were a mockery directed to The Shadow. His laugh however, carried an acceptance of any challenge that a murderer might offer.

To the facts that he had already gained, The Shadow would add more, until he could place full blame upon the man who had slain Foster Granmore!

CHAPTER IV. WANTED FOR MURDER

INSTEAD of continuing a useless chase to the distant driveway, The Shadow turned and retraced his own course. Using the small but powerful flashlight, he probed for his own footprints, and effaced them.

The task was simple, considering the muddy condition of the ground. Mere shuffling could permanently eradicate any of the unwanted tracks. But at no place did The Shadow disturb those square-toed marks that the man ahead of him had made.

Pausing by the ravine, The Shadow heard occasional crackles below, as the roaring creek tore away more fragments of the demolished footbridge. Detouring along the gorge, The Shadow made quite sure that there was no route across it.

Working back to the Granmore mansion, he finished disposing of the occasional tracks that represented his own dash in pursuit of a man who might have been a murderer.

In his reflections, The Shadow still clung to that term "might", for his observations of Titus Weldorf and Ted Granmore had convinced him that one was equally as good a candidate as the other for the stigma that belonged to a murderer. Motives, in this case, could go far deeper than the surface showed, and The Shadow was reserving his decision for the future.

Coming around the house, The Shadow found the spot where he had tussled with two foemen. Here, the grass was thick and, accordingly, footprints were absent. Ted Granmore, at least, had shown excellent judgment in running to the front of the house. Along that route, The Shadow failed to find a single incriminating trace, a fact that placed a new complexion on the case.

Though Titus Weldorf might have had a stronger motive for murder than Ted Granmore, the latter, from start to finish, had possessed a better opportunity, and had certainly managed to cover his presence, as far as he was able. Except for the dead man, Foster Granmore, only The Shadow had seen Ted peer in through the window. Recollection of that fact caused The Shadow to pause and do the same.

Inside the room, Foster's body was still coiled upon the floor. There was no sign of Tukes; in fact, the door of the room was closed. From the gusts of wind that whistled past him, The Shadow assumed that Tukes must have hurried out to the telephone and that the wind had slapped the door shut.

Having no present need to enter the room, The Shadow skirted to the front of the house.

There, he noted that the thick grass fringed right to the gravel. Neither Ted nor Titus had parked their cars along the drive, for it was in very poor condition, after years of disuse.

Mandon's chauffeur, Corbey, had used the drive because the limousine was bringing Foster home, but remembering that the big car had taken several bounces, The Shadow considered it logical that other cars would have avoided the drive.

Doubtless Ted and Titus had parked at different spots along the lone road that ran up to the hill top, and Ted, at least, must have taken advantage of a turnout, where he could have left his car unnoticed.

But these were matters for future consideration. For the present, The Shadow was interested in Tukes.

REACHING the front door, The Shadow opened it gradually and saw Tukes standing in the hallway.

Nervously, the servant was trying to get a number on the telephone, though he had certainly had time enough to make a dozen calls while The Shadow was away from the house. As The Shadow listened the call came through.

"Hello! Hello!..." Tukes showed a quaver in his voice. "I must talk to Mr. Mandon... Yes, I know he has guests and is very busy. But tell him that Tukes is calling; that I've been trying to get him, but the line was busy... Yes, very urgent..."

All the while that Tukes talked, The Shadow was leaning well within the door, straining to catch the wavery words above the obligato of the tempestuous wind. The outside noise was a dull, varying roar, its changes difficult to distinguish while The Shadow's hearing was concentrated elsewhere.

This time, when the thrumm of motors came, the sounds failed to reach The Shadow.

Instead, lights reached him.

They came with a sweeping glare, from the curve of the driveway, the lights of three approaching cars. Striking the front of the mansion, the flooding glow outlined the doorway and the figure of The Shadow within it.

Instead, lights reached him. Noting that he was caught flat-footed, he recognized, also, that a dash through the house, while offering escape, would probably be seen by Tukes.

The old servant had witnessed enough for one evening. The Shadow didn't want his testimony to be clouded by the factor of a black-cloaked intruder running at large through the mansion. It was better to risk an outside encounter, on the chance that these newcomers might fail to observe The Shadow at close enough range to describe him properly.

On that basis, The Shadow wheeled from the doorway, took a flinging leap across some shrubs and struck the gravel of the drive. His leap carried him from the angled slant of the first car's headlight, but as luck had it, the car swerved and picked up another view of The Shadow landing form. Catching his footing, The Shadow was off with a long bound, just as the car's front wheels struck a hole in the road.

This time, the break was in The Shadow's favor.

Not only did the lights lose him when the car jounced; guns that blasted from the vehicle were wide in their fire, which was particularly fortunate, considering that the marksmen were blazing with shotguns, weapons that could easily have clipped The Shadow with their spraying fire.

Unquestionably, the men in the arriving cars represented the local authorities. Tukes must have phoned them, after his first call to Mandon produced a busy line. They were stopping their cars, spreading them, so that headlights gave a full view of the lawn. Men were piling out, and revolvers were barking along with the boom of shotguns.

They were shooting at nothing.

The Shadow had taken another long stride, and was making more of them. Not that the country sheriff and his deputies didn't expect him to keep on the run, and were making due allowance; their trouble was that The Shadow had tricked them.

With the first sound of the guns, he had pivoted on one heel and was reversing his direction. With utmost speed, the cloaked fighter was springing back to the shelter of the house.

No chance to reach the front door. Tukes was there, attracted by the gunfire, and some of the deputies were joining him. There were a dozen in the pack, and when they didn't see The Shadow, they guessed the course that he had taken. They aimed for the low-clumped shrubbery and raked it with their fire.

Again they failed to wing The Shadow.

He'd wheeled among the bushes toward the corner of the house. He was around it when the guns talked. These men from Venetia were accurate enough in their fire, but they were too deliberate in aim. They couldn't keep up with the speedy locomotion of The Shadow.

THOUGH he was out of the bushes, The Shadow wasn't out of trouble. He could tell from the shouts following the gunfire that the deputies were deploying in all directions. The Shadow had two choices: one, to cut around the house; the other, to reverse his course. Between those lay another prospect that could not be termed a choice at all: the brink of the ravine.

The Shadow took both choices. Cutting around the house, he came right into the glow of flashlights, which showed some of the deputies in their reflection. The Shadow saw a man he wanted; one who carried a shotgun.

He sprang for the fellow, sure that he could jump the clumsy gun before the deputy had a chance to aim it. There was a chance, too, that the man had already used both barrels - in which case, The Shadow's course would prove doubly safe.

Both counts came through.

At sight of the lunging shape in black, the deputy dropped back and tried to swing the butt end of the gun, proving that it was empty. The Shadow caught the weapon, twisted it so suddenly that its owner hadn't time to let go. As the man spilled to the turf, The Shadow wrenched the shotgun away and flung it at the other deputies.

Revolvers fired wide as marksmen ducked. Flashlights, coming back to focus, gave one a fleeting sight of The Shadow, heading back the way that he had come, toward the front of the mansion. His cloak streaming in the wind, The Shadow looked more like a marauding ghost than a human fighter. Like a ghost, he vanished at the corner of the house.

Amazing, that disappearance. The Shadow accomplished it a mere second before flashlights blazed from the opposite direction. Men were coming from the front, attracted by the gunfire at the back. They, too, caught an evanescent view of The Shadow and thought that he had retraced his course. There could only be one result from such a situation, and it came.

Two squads of deputies met at the corner, in a first-class tangle. By the time they had finished clawing for a wraithlike figure in a black cloak, they found that they had been tearing at each other. There wasn't any trace of The Shadow. He'd gone so completely, that the deputies wondered if there ever had been a Shadow.

There had been a Shadow, and there still was. At the corner, he'd turned and bounded off at an angle, covering half a dozen yards during that important second when no lights were upon him.

The Shadow was at the brink of the ravine by this time, and he waited there, knowing it was the one place where no one would search for him. Soon, the deputies would give up the search and go into the house. When they did, The Shadow would be free to depart.

While he waited, The Shadow looked toward the valley below. The drizzle was over and the lights of

Venetia were much clearer than before. But The Shadow was more interested in the lights atop a distant hill, above the puffs of flame that represented factory chimneys.

Those lights belonged to the Weldorf mansion; as The Shadow watched, he saw the lights of a car crawling up the road to that house on the other hill. That car belonged to Titus Weldorf; he was returning home after his visit to Foster Granmore.

As for Ted Granmore, who had secretly dropped by to see his uncle Foster, there was no way of spotting his car from this elevation, because Ted was living down in the town and had by this time shuffled himself into its traffic.

A soft laugh stirred among the alders that fringed the deep ravine. The whispered laugh of The Shadow told that he had not forgotten the men who had visited the Granmore mansion.

The murder of Foster Granmore and the theft of the dead man's illicit funds were problems that The Shadow still considered far more pressing than any of his own!

CHAPTER V. ONE MAN'S VERSION

LIKE the Weldorfs and the Granmores, Giles Mandon owned a house upon a hill. Mandon's residence, however, in no way rivaled the two traditional mansions that had so long dominated the town of Venetia.

Mandon's house was located close to the Granmore mansion. In fact, its hill could be termed a knob, or portion, of the larger Granmore hill. The reason why it was regarded as a separate slope was because of the ravine that gutted between the higher elevation and the lesser rise where Mandon lived.

Getting up to Mandon's wasn't difficult, because the slope was fairly gentle. However, it was a long trip around by road from the Granmore mansion, a matter of twenty minutes or more, considering the wayward-twists of the ravine, that took the road from Granmore hill clear beyond the outskirts of Venetia.

In The Shadow's case, the trip required half an hour. He'd left his car a full mile down the road, parked in a clump of woods opposite the ravine. In addition, The Shadow had to dispose of his rain-soaked cloak, and change to a dry pair of shoes that showed no traces of the muddy ground that lined the ravine.

All this done, The Shadow drove to Mandon's house, to join the party as an uninvited guest.

Cars galore were parked in front of Mandon's sizable but simple house. Most of the party guests had arrived ahead of The Shadow. Alighting from his car, The Shadow strolled up to the lighted front porch, a different personality entirely than the ghostly creature who had played hide-and-seek with the sheriff's men.

In his present guise, The Shadow was a tall man who wore evening clothes as though he had been molded to fit them. His manner was leisurely, his face very calm. So calm were those features, that they were almost masklike, and people usually remembered them because of their hawkish profile.

The Shadow's present face happened to belong to a gentleman named Lamont Cranston, whose name commanded respect and attention because Cranston was reputed to be a multi-millionaire.

Announcing his name to the servant who answered the door, Cranston was ushered into a little reception room, from which he saw and heard the guests who had come to Mandon's party. He observed Giles Mandon among them, and watched the gleam that came to the man's clear eyes when the servant announced the name of the uninvited guest.

Hurrying into the reception room, his handsome face aglow with a smile, Mandon extended a hearty handshake to Lamont Cranston, otherwise The Shadow.

"A pleasure, Mr. Cranston!" exclaimed Mandon. "If I'd known that you were coming to Venetia so soon -"

"I appear to have come too soon," interposed Cranston, in a calm tone. "I wouldn't care to interfere with your party."

Mandon shook his head.

"You won't interfere, at all!" He paused, his face becoming grim. "Your interruption is slight, compared to one that just occurred." Mandon looked about, noted that no guests were near. Then, confidentially, he questioned: "You've heard of Foster Granmore?"

Cranston nodded.

"Only half an hour ago," informed Mandon, in a low tone, "I learned that poor Foster had just been murdered!"

Cranston's face retained its calm expression as he inquired, in matter-of-fact style:

"He was murdered in prison?"

"No, no," returned Mandon. "I suppose you haven't heard. Foster was released today, and came back to Venetia. I met him at the station and took him to his house. I couldn't possibly invite him here; anyway, I knew he would prefer to be alone. I felt that of all places, he would be safest in his own home. But, apparently -"

Mandon shrugged, and his lips went tight. He didn't care to pursue the subject further, since it would involve the name of Titus Weldorf. Turning to conduct Cranston into the other room, Mandon confided:

"I shall have to go over to the Granmore house, to talk to the sheriff. He said there was no rush, that there was nothing that I could do. However, I think it would be best if I should see the scene first hand. Rather than spoil the evening's party, I do not intend to mention the tragedy to my guests until they are leaving. I trust that you will keep the matter to yourself, Mr. Cranston."

RECEIVING a nod from Cranston, Mandon proceeded to introduce the new guest to the earlier arrivals, explaining that Mr. Cranston was from New York. This created much interest, especially when Cranston mentioned that he had driven in by car.

Floods had rendered many roads impassible in the vicinity of Venetia, and everyone wanted to hear of Cranston's experiences with detours, and hazards such as fallen trees and washed-out bridges.

The description that Cranston gave actually dated back to early afternoon, because he had foreseen delay in reaching Venetia, and had therefore started early from New York around noon. However, he conveyed the expression that he had left New York around noon, with no expectation of trouble on the way. As a result, he couldn't have reached Venetia until well after dark.

All this was for the benefit of Giles Mandon, who was an interested listener. Since Mandon, was going to the Granmore mansion to see the sheriff, it was a good idea to talk of detours on the way to Venetia. Cranston wanted to make it evident that he couldn't have had time for an extra detour near the town itself; namely, the trip up the hill to the Granmore house, and down again.

In brief, The Shadow, as Cranston, was disassociating himself from the black-cloaked prowler that Mandon would certainly hear about when he talked with the country sheriff. This wasn't difficult, considering that Mandon had expected Cranston to arrive in Venetia.

For a month or more, Cranston had been writing Mandon, asking if any stock in the glass company was for sale. Always a wise investor, Cranston wanted to buy some share's in Weldorf, Granmore, Co.

Mandon had replied that no stock was available at present, but that shares might be offered later. So Cranston had announced his intention of coming to Venetia for a personal interview with Mandon.

Perhaps the shares that Mandon had mentioned were those belonging to Foster Granmore, whose return from prison was the real cause of The Shadow's visit to Venetia. At least, Mandon's mind must have returned to Foster's case, for Cranston saw his host glance at his watch, then quietly excuse himself.

Corbey was waiting in the reception room, and sight of the chauffeur told Cranston that Mandon was going to drive around by the long road.

Then, just as Cranston was resigning himself for a wait until Mandon returned, there was an interruption. At the outer door of the reception room, Ted Granmore pressed into sight and pleaded with Mandon to wait.

Glancing through the reception room, Cranston saw Mandon gesture as though to conduct Ted in to meet the guests; but Ted shook his head ardently. Dismissing Corbey, Mandon led Ted deeper into the house, avoiding the room where the party guests were.

By then, Cranston had finished talking about his trip. In his quiet fashion, he let others monopolize the conversation. Stepping away, Cranston stopped by a curtained doorway; then, the moment that he was no longer noticed, he performed a glide worthy of The Shadow.

Through the curtains, he found himself in a hallway, with a doorway at the other end. Assuming it to be the room where Mandon had taken Ted, Cranston approached in The Shadow's noiseless style.

A twist of the door handle, an easing of the door itself, and The Shadow was looking into a study where Giles Mandon was seated at a desk, listening to Ted Granmore. Mandon was deeply concentrated, and Ted was busy talking; hence neither realized that The Shadow, in the person of Cranston, was viewing their conference.

"SO you learned about Foster from Tukes and the sheriff," Ted was saying. "They don't know who killed Foster. Well, I do, Mandon, because I was there!"

Mandon's clear eyes shone quizzically.

"Titus Weldorf is the murderer!" emphasized Ted. "He sneaked around by Foster's window and shot him right through the heart!"

Mandon shook his head.

"I think you're wrong, Ted," he said. "Tukes says that he showed Titus out, and that he went to his car."

"Maybe Tukes thinks he did," snapped Ted, "but it was too dark for him to be sure. Anyway, I ran into Titus when I went back to the window. I'd used the window to get in to see Foster. I didn't want Tukes to know I was calling on my dear uncle."

This time, Mandon's eyes narrowed. For the moment, he seemed to be picturing Ted as the actual

murderer. Then, his show of suspicion fading, he remarked:

"The sheriff spoke of a mysterious prowler around the place. You might have run into him and mistaken him for Titus."

"I ran into both of them!" asserted Ted. "That's how I know Titus was in it. This business of an unknown prowler only accounts for one person roaming the premises. There were two, I tell you, because I tackled both of them!"

"Odd you couldn't hold onto Titus," observed Mandon. "I wouldn't credit him with being much of a fighter."

"He wasn't. He got away while I was milling with the other fellow."

"And the other man?"

"He chased after Titus," replied Ted. "I fired a few shots after him, but I couldn't wing him."

Again Mandon's eyes went narrow, and Ted understood. He gave a short laugh.

"Yes, I had a gun," said Ted. Pulling his hand from his pocket, he displayed the revolver in question. "Don't worry, Mandon." Ted shoved the weapon across the desk. "It isn't the gun that killed Foster."

Withdrawing his hand as from a hot stove, Mandon finally acquired nerve and reached for the revolver. As he did, he remarked:

"I'll turn this in to the sheriff Ted -"

"No, you won't!" Interrupting, Ted sped his hand for the revolver. "Why should I muddle the issue? If Titus knows I was at Foster's, he'll try to toss blame my way. I don't want him to learn that I was around there."

As Mandon debated the question, Ted added further argument.

"You know I didn't kill Foster," declared Ted. "I wouldn't have come here, if I had. I'm letting you in on facts, Mandon, because you're the one man I can trust. You're impartial, and you wouldn't favor a Weldorf over a Granmore. Keep that gun for me, and say nothing about it, for the present."

"Why do you want me to keep it, Ted?"

"To prevent murder!" Ted's tone was hard; his eyes showed a glower. "If I still have it when I meet Titus, I'll shoot him point-blank, like he did with Foster!"

IMPRESSED by Ted's savagery, Mandon decided to keep the revolver. He rose from his desk, turned to the wall, and opened a fair-sized safe, his shoulders hiding the dials as he worked the combination. Tossing the revolver into the safe, he slammed the door and twirled the knobs.

"Corbey is driving me over to Foster's," said Mandon. "Do you want to wait here until I return, Ted?"

Ted shook his head.

"I have my car out front," he said. "I'll drive back to my apartment." Rising, he was half turned to the door, when he paused and asked: "Why are you driving to Foster's? You could walk there in five minutes by the path over the ravine."

"No longer," replied Mandon. "The flood carried away the footbridge, this afternoon. The road is the only way to get to Foster's."

The Shadow saw a shrewd expression flicker on Ted's face and knew that the young man was thinking of Titus Weldorf, wondering if the latter had encountered trouble after leaving the Granmore mansion.

However, Ted offered no comment, and The Shadow had no time to study him further. Ted was turning toward the door, along with Mandon, when The Shadow inched it shut.

A few swift strides, and The Shadow was through the curtained doorway, idling there in Cranston's casual fashion, when the two men came from the study and took the short route to the front door, to reach their respective cars, outside. Neither saw Cranston, nor could they have heard the soft laugh that came from his lips, for it was no louder than a whisper.

The Shadow had heard one man's version of murder. As to the truth of the story that Ted Granmore told, The Shadow was reserving final decision until he heard a further account of the same crime, from the lips of Titus Weldorf!

CHAPTER VI. GUILT UNPROVEN

UNDER the glow of the late morning sun, cars were stopping in front of the Granmore mansion. Daylight and the passing of the storm had brought a huge change to the scene upon the hill. No longer was the old stone house a forbidding place, bulking weirdly amid the wailing wind. It had the outward semblance of a quiet, friendly homestead.

Yet, to those who saw it and knew its recent history, the old mansion seemed to harbor doom. Here, Foster Granmore had returned to receive a welcome in the form of death, and these very visitors had come to seek some clue to the unknown murderer responsible for the crime.

The sheriff, the coroner, and other assorted officials were in the party. Along with them had come Ted Granmore, nearest of kin to his deceased uncle Foster. Another member of the party was Titus Weldorf, who, whether he liked it or not, had been a business associate of Foster Granmore.

Giles Mandon was also present, not only as the active head of Weldorf, Granmore, Co. but because he was the one man who could cool any friction between Ted and Titus.

Along with Mandon had come a stranger, a gentleman named Lamont Cranston, who had very conveniently managed to be in Mandon's office at the time the sheriff called.

Old Tukes was still in the house. In solemn fashion, the servant repeated his story. He told of Titus coming to the house, and mentioned that the visitor had exchanged harsh words with Foster. Walking to the front door, Tukes gestured outside to indicate Titus's departure to his car.

Then, walking toward the kitchen, Tukes paused and gave a graphic illustration of a man hearing a gunshot. He dashed creakily to Foster's den, stopped on the threshold, and pointed to the spot where he had seen the body.

The sheriff, a beetle-browed man named Clemming, next turned his attention to Titus Weldorf. He asked if Titus had gone directly to his car, and Titus answered him with a blunt yes. More than that, Titus led the way out the front door, to show exactly where he had left his car, below the foot of the driveway.

"I took much longer last night," explained Titus during the move. "Very much longer. I remember stumbling about here" - he pointed to a hole in the drive - "and after that, I was more careful. Besides, I

had trouble finding my car when I reached the road. Very foolishly, I had turned the lights off."

The sheriff asked why Titus hadn't foreseen such trouble, and Titus explained that the lights in the house had deceived him into thinking that there would be no difficulty. It was mention of that point that helped Titus pick the spot where he had left his car.

It was a short distance up the road, and from it, when Titus pointed, the others saw that the house was in sight, a few hundred yards away. A slight intervening rise of ground gave the illusion that the house was much closer.

It was the coroner who put the next question. He wanted to know if Titus had heard any shots. Titus not only shook his head; he remarked that the wind had been against him on the return trip, making it impossible for him to hear anything that happened around the far corner of the house.

All the while, The Shadow was watching Ted Granmore, whose lips wore a scoffing curl. Not knowing that Cranston's eyes were upon him, Ted let his expression widen into an actual sneer. Oddly, it wasn't meant for Titus Weldorf. Ted was thinking in terms of the sheriff and the coroner.

Time was when the names of Weldorf and Granmore were both above suspicion in Venetia. Five years ago, Foster Granmore had ruined the reputation of his family by his embezzlement of company funds. But the tradition still existed, in the case of the Weldorfs. To even suggest that Titus Weldorf might be lying would be in the nature of a crime, itself.

As the group moved away, Ted reached out and gripped Mandon's arm as the latter passed him. Thinking that Cranston was out of earshot, Ted undertoned:

"Do you see? We'd have to prove Titus guilty, before these hick officials would make a move. They're Weldorf men, both! All Granmores are jailbirds, in their estimate!"

TED said no more, even though he was sure that Cranston couldn't hear him, a point on which Ted was mistaken.

However, Mandon was nodding soberly as he and Ted overtook Cranston, and The Shadow knew that Mandon was actually considering a point that Ted had left unsaid. Ted had inferred it, however, with his bitter reference to "jailbirds".

It was a simple fact that if Ted Granmore admitted his secret visit to the family mansion, the local officials would promptly quiz him as a suspect, showing him none of the courtesy they had extended to Titus Weldorf. From the way Giles Mandon tightened his lips, it was plain that he intended to do the fair thing and avoid all mention of Ted's presence here.

The investigators reached the spot outside Foster's window and soon discovered the footprints around the corner. It was purely for sake of comparison that men began to look at the shoes of their neighbors, and as they did, Ted's face showed its first triumphant gleam.

The only man in the party who was wearing blunt-toed boots chanced to be Titus Weldorf, and his size looked very much the same as the marks on the ground. For a moment, Titus's face clouded; then, in his most dignified style, he met the situation.

Bluntly, Titus remarked that the footprints were much like his own. Carefully, he extended one foot above the print, and showed pleased surprise when he discovered that it was his exact size. Looking at other feet about him, Titus observed that his were larger than the rest.

"We are in luck, sheriff!" exclaimed Titus. "You must look for a man who wears shoes of my size and

style. Unfortunately, I never buy my boots in Venetia. Nevertheless, we have gained an important clue. That is" - Titus gave a shrug, depreciating his own words - "if these footprints are important."

A whole gamut of emotions swept over the face of Ted Granmore. They ran from elation, through dismay, and finally ended in stupefaction. Before Ted's very eyes, the men who represented law in Venetia, had let their suspicions fade into complete agreement with Titus Weldorf, and at the finish they were actually belittling the clues that were staring at them from the ground!

Indeed, they were about to turn away, when Giles Mandon suggested, very impartially, that it would be a good idea to follow the footprints. Haughtily, Titus Weldorf conceded that the suggestion was a good one, so the march began.

During its progress, Cranston wished that he had been able to pick up the trail as easily the night before. If he had, he might have overhauled the murderer and given him a taste of The Shadow's justice.

Not that justice wasn't lacking in Venetia. In his own appraisal of the sheriff and the coroner, The Shadow regarded them as quite competent, the sort of men who could be relied upon in a pinch. The name of Weldorf simply blinded them, and Titus was quite aware of its dazzle. So aware, that it could prove his own pitfall, should the time come. Having met with situations of this sort before, The Shadow was unperturbed.

As for pitfalls, those footprints that so resembled Titus's came close to one, when they reached the ravine. There, the trailers saw the foundations of the footbridge, tilted in the weakened soil. Below, the creek still raged, and all vestiges of the bridge planking had been carried away by the torrent.

Noting how the prints had turned, the investigators followed their new route and came back to the road, not far from the place where Titus had parked his car. Before anyone else could remark upon the coincidence, Titus took the privilege.

"If I had only been a few minutes longer!" he exclaimed, "I might have heard the murderer when he reached the road! He must have been in a panic when he found the footbridge gone. I wonder" - Titus, accidentally perhaps, let his eyes fix upon Ted - "I wonder who could have visited poor Foster with intent to kill him!"

Ted's hand stabbed to the coat pocket beside it. If he'd had his gun, he might have gone through with the threat that he had mentioned to Mandon, the night before.

Remembering Ted's murderous inclinations toward Titus, Mandon stepped in between. In his impartial way, he suggested that speculation as to the killer's identity be left to the authorities.

Then, turning to sheriff and coroner, Mandon told about the footbridge going out, the day before. He said that Corbey had reported it in the afternoon, and that he had personally gone down to see the wreckage, from his side of the ravine.

At his invitation, the officials decided to go over to Mandon's. When Titus stated that he had business elsewhere, Mandon tactfully invited Ted along, in a manner that allowed no refusal.

ACCOMPANYING the group, Cranston took the long ride around by car, and joined the parade from Mandon's house up to the higher rim of the deep ravine.

There were footprints on this side, made the day before: Mandon's and Corbey's. They led to the ravine, and back again, graphic evidence of the inspection trips that the chauffeur and master had made to view the ruins of the footbridge.

Still impartial, Mandon proved that one set of footprints was his own, and made Corbey demonstrate the same with the second set. During the process, Cranston's eyes were watching Ted, and they observed a satisfied smile.

Ted Granmore was thinking that some day the dull-witted minds of certain officials might grasp the point that if two men's shoes matched their footprints, the rule might apply in a third case.

Those footprints of Titus Weldorf, on the other side of the ravine, were still the evidence that Ted Granmore hoped would save him the trouble of avenging his uncle's death by ridding the world of Titus Weldorf. As yet, however, the case was not as open and shut as Ted would have it.

On the way back from the ravine, all talk concerned a mysterious marauder who had been seen outside the Granmore mansion by the sheriff and his men. Sheriff Clemming kept harping on the subject of a person unknown, who would have to be found before this case was settled.

By such a person, the sheriff meant The Shadow, and Ted Granmore, listening, recognized that the guilt of Titus Weldorf would remain unproven until the interloper was discovered and his part in the case revealed. It never occurred to Ted that right beside him walked the marauder of the night before, in the person of Lamont Cranston.

A singular instance, this: The Shadow forced to hold back blame from Titus Weldorf in order not to cast suspicion upon himself. Perhaps there was some other reason why he preferred to let the present investigation linger.

If so, only The Shadow knew why!

CHAPTER VII. THE CLANS GATHER

AT noon the next day, funeral services were held for Foster Granmore, and Giles Mandon attended them. When he returned to his office at the glass factory, he found Lamont Cranston waiting there.

Two people came along with Mandon. One was Ted Granmore; the other, a girl whose resemblance to Ted was so trifling that only eyes as keen as Cranston's could have noted it.

She was Connie Granmore, a cousin of Ted's, and at first sight it was plain that she had inherited the stronger traits of the family.

The early Granmores, cofounders of the glass works, had been noteworthy people. Little had they supposed that there would ever be ill feeling between their family and such esteemed partners as the Weldorfs.

It had taken years of luxury, ease, and extravagance to produce such schemers as dead Foster Granmore and his living nephew Ted, who had argued over the disposal of stolen funds, the only time The Shadow had seen them together. Such tactics, however, were quite foreign to a girl like Connie Granmore.

She was youthful and very lovely, with her deep-gray eyes and light-brown hair, a girl who looked dreamy, until those eyes began to sparkle. It didn't take anger to bring the sparkle, for indignation was about the nearest thing to anger that Connie could display. She'd been showing it since she arrived in Venetia, because she had been talking with her cousin Ted.

With those sparkling eyes, Connie had a firm chin, which didn't mar her beauty in the least. Instead, it showed she could mean what she said, and her determination was of the right sort. In fact, Connie began

to speak her piece soon after she entered the office, and the ugly looks that Ted directed could not stop her.

"Ted has been telling me about Foster's holdings in the glass works," said Connie to Mandon. "Do you have the records here, Giles?"

Mandon nodded, and turned to a filing cabinet, only to have Connie stop him.

"Is it true," inquired Connie, "that Foster borrowed on those shares?"

"He did," replied Mandon. "More than five years ago."

"And that, I suppose, is why Foster found it necessary to borrow company funds to the extent of forty thousand dollars?" Connie turned to Ted. "I think that 'borrow' was the term you used."

"I was thinking of poor Foster," began Ted. "After all, he didn't intend to steal the money. If -"

Connie's eyes, flashing indignation stopped him. She turned again to Mandon, said:

"You are willing to pay a fair price for those shares, the same amount that Foster originally borrowed. It is only fair that you should have them, Giles, even though Ted has suggested that I hold out for a higher price."

Ted began to nudge down in his chair. His eyes shifted away from Mandon and gave a worried glance Cranston's way. Ted didn't have to state that he had played the rat. From the moment that Cranston had entered the picture as a possible buyer of glass company stock, Ted had hoped to start him bidding against Mandon when it came to the disposal of Foster's shares, now controlled by Ted and his cousin Connie.

Inasmuch as Mandon's own offer covered the par value of the shares, and any added value was due to his excellent management of the company, there was every reason for Mandon to direct his own anger upon Ted. But Mandon wasn't angry.

"I shall be quite willing to pay more," he declared. "I think that ten percent would be quite proper, the profit to be divided between you two" - he gestured from Ted to Connie - "as the heirs to Foster's estate. That ten percent will also apply to your own shares, Ted, on which I have already loaned you the full limit."

Ted's borrowing was news to Connie, and it brought a firm smile to her lips. The smile faded, however, when Mandon turned to Cranston and said:

"If you wish to bid higher, Mr. Cranston, you are quite welcome to do so."

WITH a headshake, Cranston declined, and received an admiring glance from Connie. Ted hadn't a word to say, and Cranston understood why, even though Connie didn't.

Short on funds, as evidenced by his last chat with Foster, Ted was doubtless so deeply in debt to Mandon that he had actually forfeited his right to his own shares in the company. Knowing that Mandon could foreclose at will, Ted had tried to pass the selling job along to Connie, and she had upset the deal.

Considering the circumstances, Mandon's offer of a higher price was an absolute gift, so far as Ted was concerned. Connie recognized that much, and spoke her admiration of Mandon's generosity. Then, withering Ted with another accusing gaze, the girl declared:

"I was glad when I left Venetia. Glad to find other places, where people wouldn't speak of me as a Granmore. I've lived down a great deal in the past few years, and I hated to come back here. I was genuinely sorry for Foster, and I hoped that you would be the same, Ted, considering the way he died. But you, at least, are still a Granmore -"

"And there are worse names than Granmore!" shouted Ted, drowning Connie's voice as he gave way to fury. "I'll tell you one. It's Weldorf!"

He was on his feet, his fists clenched, swept by a sudden rage. Mandon sprang up from the desk to quiet him, and Ted suddenly stemmed his anger.

To Connie, it was a most marvelous display of self-control on Ted's part, something that she deemed impossible, once he had passed the border of normal self-restraint. But it was no surprise to Cranston.

The Shadow knew that Ted had too much at stake to toss it overboard. He'd already come close to double-crossing his patient advisor, Giles Mandon.

Knowing Ted's spendthrift habits and his constant need for money, Mandon had let the first matter pass. But to have Ted storming around the office, shouting threats to all Weldorfs for the factory hands to hear, was something that could not be tolerated.

It wouldn't take even a snap of Mandon's fingers to break Ted Granmore. The same authorities who had whitewashed Titus Weldorf would be only too glad to pick Ted Granmore as the scapegoat in Foster's death. A scapegoat he would be, if the facts he had revealed to Mandon were known.

Everyone knew that there had been two visitors at the Granmore mansion the night of Foster's death. One, Titus Weldorf, had come there openly. The other, a party unknown, was wanted by the law. If Ted stated that he had been outside the place, he would make himself the person in question.

To argue that a third individual was in the case, would be very shallow stuff. So shallow, that it would seem more ludicrous than the "borrowing" plea that Foster had given in connection with outright embezzlement.

One man, at least, had believed Ted's story. That man was Giles Mandon. Since Mandon was apt to prove Ted's only friend in court, it wouldn't do to try his patience further. So Ted, in most amazing style, turned his rage into a most abject apology, which he repeated, very humbly, to every person present. Giles Mandon showed appreciation by clapping Ted on the back.

"Well spoken, Ted!" declared Mandon sympathetically. "After all, you've been through quite an ordeal because of Foster's death. And don't forget" - Mandon turned to Connie - "that what applies to one member of a family can apply to another. It hasn't been easy for Ted to bear the stigma that Foster brought to the Granmore name."

It was Connie's turn to become humble. Murmuring her own apologies, she pressed Ted's hand warmly, and he reciprocated with a very cousinly smile. Then, coaxing them both to the door, Mandon offered a parting suggestion.

"Connie will be staying at my house, Ted," said Mandon. "Why don't you drive her up there? She hasn't seen the place since I remodeled it. You might as well stay up there, too, because I'd like you to have dinner with us."

As soon as the two were gone, Mandon shook his head and gave a weary smile toward Cranston.

"I had to get rid of them," spoke Mandon. "Can you guess why, Cranston?"

"In one word," replied Cranston: "Weldorf."

"Two words," corrected Mandon, still smiling. "Weldorf and Weldorf. I'm not expecting just Titus. He is bringing his cousin, Roy."

"The only other Weldorf?"

"Here for Foster Granmore's funeral?"

"In a way, yes," replied Mandon seriously. "You have a way of hitting facts, Cranston. They're worried about those shares of Foster's, too. They prefer to keep the company a closed corporation."

HARDLY had Mandon finished, before the Weldorf's arrived. Again, Cranston was treated to a gratifying surprise. Connie Granmore had been a welcome contrast to her cousin Ted. Similarly, Roy Weldorf was quite an improvement over Titus.

Roy was younger than Titus, and showed none of the older man's shrewd style. His hearty handshake was the opposite of Titus's flabby grip. When Titus, in the manner of a vulture, began to talk about the disposal of Foster's stock, Roy kept strictly out of it.

Studying Roy, Cranston saw frankness and sincerity in his features. Roy had the aristocratic visage of a Weldorf, but none of the haughty air that, in the case of Titus, accompanied it. When Titus expressed smug satisfaction because Mandon was buying Foster's stock, Roy looked relieved.

"Very, very good!" declared Titus. "The less Granmores in this company, the better."

"Perhaps the same applies to the Weldorfs," suggested Roy. "I've often wondered how Mandon puts up with either bunch."

Titus gave his cousin a stare that Roy ignored. Then, haughtily, Titus announced:

"I have already arranged that Giles shall succeed me in the management of this company."

"He's already succeeded you," returned Roy, "though he's too polite to say so. Well, Titus, we've finished what we came for. Let's go back to your hotel on the hill."

As soon as the two had gone, Giles Mandon laid his chin in his hand and turned to Lamont Cranston.

"What a chap, that Roy! expressed Mandon. "He could say more to Titus in a minute than I could in a year! Well, Cranston" - Mandon's mood was becoming one of business - "I don't think you can buy into this company right at present."

Conceding that he couldn't, Cranston arose and shook hands with Mandon, who reminded him that he was to come to the house for dinner. With that, Cranston departed and went to the local hotel.

There, he sent a telegram to his investment broker, Rutledge Mann, stating that no stock could be bought in Weldorf, Granmore, Co. At the end of the telegram, Cranston added two words: "Send Marvin."

From the window of his hotel room, Cranston was still his placid self as he gazed across the town of Venetia, to the hills beyond, but the eyes that gazed were those of The Shadow. It was the laugh of The Shadow, too, that phrased itself upon Cranston's lips.

Whatever the status of Weldorf, Granmore Co., The Shadow had at least found a rift in the feud between the families that bore the same names. He was thinking in terms of Roy Weldorf and Connie Granmore; how deeply they might become involved in matters past, and future.

Much more depended on the finding of Foster's murderer than the mere solution of a mystery.

The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER VIII. CRIME TO COME

IN the morning, two people both friends of Lamont Cranston, arrived in Venetia. One was a girl named Margo Lane, the other a young man named Harry Vincent.

The Shadow was quite pleased when they arrived, because it proved that his contact man, Rutledge Mann, had lost none of his skill at understanding abbreviations.

Mann - in reality, a secret agent of The Shadow, - hadn't worried about "Marvin", a person he had never heard of before. He'd decided that "Mar" stood for Margo while "Vin" meant Vincent, so he had sent them both along.

Arriving independently, each was surprised to meet the other, but that surprise was mild when they heard the things that Cranston had to tell them.

Both Harry and Margo had read about the murder of Foster Granmore, but hadn't connected it with the death of old Daniel Weldorf, five years before. Succinctly, Cranston explained it for their benefit, in a secluded corner of the Hotel Venetia. His comments showed that he had spent his spare time delving through old court records.

"On an eventful evening five years ago," stated Cranston, "Foster Granmore stopped in at the glass factory to talk to Giles Mandon, who was working late. While there, Foster learned that Daniel Weldorf had taken home the company records, along with a steel box containing certain assets unknown to Mandon.

"At nine, that same evening, a masked man entered the Weldorf home, shot Daniel dead, and took all the items in question. Naturally, the question arose: what was in the steel box? Nobody was sure, until a New York bank announced that Daniel Weldorf had forwarded a list of bonds, valued at a quarter million dollars, on which he wanted to borrow to expand the glass factory."

Pausing, Cranston watched the expressions of his listeners. He could tell that both Harry and Margo were jumping to conclusions. He waited until he knew their thoughts were settled. Then:

"There was no proof that Daniel Weldorf actually had the bonds," continued Cranston. "If he did have, they were the property of the company. As for the records, Mandon very fortunately had some duplicates, though they were incomplete. Among them were the accounts kept by Foster Granmore. The accountants who examined them found a shortage of forty thousand dollars."

"So Foster murdered Daniel!" exclaimed Margo.

"Hold it!" put in Harry. "They sent Foster up for embezzlement, not for murder."

"Because Foster had an alibi," explained Cranston. "According to Mandon, he hadn't left the factory until a few minutes before nine. Foster claimed that he had gone back to his own house, on the other hill. Thanks to Mandon, his story stood."

Margo immediately had a theory.

"They were in it together!" she exclaimed. "Foster and Mandon! They wanted the bonds and the records -"

"So Mandon produced the duplicates," put in Harry, as Margo suddenly paused. "How would you feel, Margo, if someone handed you a double cross like that?"

"Why... why, I wouldn't stand for it!"

"Neither would Foster Granmore."

Cranston's nod corroborated Harry's opinion, and Margo decided to listen longer before voicing further opinions.

"You must both meet Giles Mandon," suggested Cranston tactfully. "You will agree that he is an individualist, who favors no one. I can testify, personally, that Foster regarded Mandon as a real friend. It was Mandon who met Foster when he returned from prison. There were others, too, who talked with Foster that same evening."

WITH that, Cranston recited his own observations, and both listeners knew that he was speaking from the viewpoint of The Shadow for they were secret agents of The Shadow. There was silence when he finished, and after a brief interval, Harry and Margo spoke their opinions, this time in agreement.

"It was Titus who murdered Foster," declared Harry. "He figured that Foster had phoned Mandon's clock, or something. Anyway, he was sure that Foster killed old Daniel."

"Ted couldn't have gained anything by killing his Uncle Foster," added Margo. "If he had, he wouldn't have told his story to Mandon."

"Ted would like to murder Titus, though."

"Yes, and if he did, somebody would want to kill him."

"You're jumping well ahead, Margo," laughed Harry. "From the way you talk, this case is a family feud!"

"Isn't it?" asked Margo.

Sobering suddenly, Harry decided that it might be. Turning to Cranston, he asked if there were other Weldorfs or Granmores, and learned that there was one of each. Then, as The Shadow began to describe Roy Weldorf and Connie Granmore, his listeners, in their turn, understood why they had been summoned to Venetia.

The suggestion of a feud wasn't far from wrong. Assuming that Daniel Weldorf had been slain by Foster Granmore, and that the latter had been killed by Titus Weldorf, it was certainly in the cards for Ted Granmore to continue the vendetta.

By his own admission, Ted had inclinations toward murder. It would be The Shadow's task to cover that situation; whether by guarding Titus or watching Ted, he did not specify.

However, as usual, The Shadow was also looking ahead. He wanted to make sure that Roy and Connie were not drawn into the vortex of crime. So far, neither had seemed in sympathy with the quarrel between their respective families, but there was a chance that tension would increase sufficiently to imbue mere bystanders with animosity, each to each.

Hence, The Shadow had summoned his agents to Venetia, that they might cover the future aspects of the case. It would be Harry's job to meet Roy Weldorf, Margo's to make friends with Connie Granmore.

By noon, The Shadow was able to fix Harry's angle. As Cranston, he arranged to lunch with the

Weldorfs, and introduced Harry to them. To Titus, Cranston broached his desire to buy stock in the glass works, and Titus bluntly informed him that it couldn't be done. Roy, more affable, specified why.

"You heard what Titus said yesterday," declared Roy. "The less Granmores in the company, the better. You're not a Granmore, Cranston, but Titus thinks you might be in cahoots with them."

Cranston gave a grieved look, and Titus broke into an immediate denial of the fact.

"It never crossed my mind," he began. "Why, to begin with, the Granmores have squandered all their money -"

"But Ted is a schemer," put in Roy. "You said so yourself, Titus. He's coming into a bonus from the stock he is selling to Mandon. That's why you have the idea that he might try to acquire some of yours, through Cranston."

"I only said that Ted might try to influence some outside party," argued Titus, "I didn't specify Mr. Cranston. But perhaps you have forgotten, Roy, that there is still another Granmore: Ted's cousin, Connie."

Apparently, Roy Weldorf had a high sense of chivalry, for his face flashed indignation when Titus brought the girl's name into the case. Then, coolly, Roy reminded:

"Connie left Venetia a few years ago, Titus. Maybe she has forgotten by this time that she ever was a Granmore."

Titus gave a sneer.

"I suppose you've forgotten you're a Weldorf!"

"Sometimes I wish I had," asserted Roy. Then, to soothe his cousin's anger: "Anyway, Titus, I agree with you that Mandon is the proper man to head the company. You've given him first say on your stock, should you decide to sell it. I am inclined to do the same."

FINDING that he couldn't persuade Titus, Cranston decided reluctantly to return to New York. He remarked that his friend Vincent was staying in Venetia, and Roy was quite pleased to learn it.

Apparently, Roy was finding it quite boring to be with Titus all the time, and would welcome the acquaintance of a likable chap like Harry. He even insisted that Harry come up to the Weldorf house for the evening.

The Shadow had worked this system before, but Harry was amazed to see how rapidly it was progressing in this instance. After Cranston left, Titus decided that he had to go over to the factory, whereupon Roy clung to Harry like a long-lost friend.

Apparently, during lunch, Cranston had foreseen that this would happen, but Harry couldn't understand it. He wondered if his chief would have similar luck when he introduced Margo to Connie Granmore.

Luck was still with The Shadow.

Driving up to Mandon's, Cranston found Connie at the house, along with Ted, who was in a sullen mood. Having brought Margo with him, Cranston introduced her, and Connie took an immediate liking to the other girl.

They hadn't talked for half an hour before Connie excused herself; returning she beamed at Cranston and

Margo and announced:

"I've just called Giles. He wants both of you to stay for dinner and spend the evening with us."

When Cranston said that he would have to go back to New York, Margo thought the game was through, but when he added that Miss Lane could accept the invitation, Connie didn't even ask why Margo was staying in Venetia. Instead, she pressed the invitation upon Margo, in a tone that wouldn't allow refusal.

Just as Roy Weldorf had wanted relief from his cousin Titus, Connie Granmore seemed to need a buffer against Ted. Whether this meant that Roy and Connie hated the family feud, or were trying to stifle an instinctive desire to join it, was still a question. To such questions, The Shadow could usually provide an answer.

As he drove away from Mandon's house, Cranston's lips wore the faintest trace of a smile. Equivalent to The Shadow's laugh, that smile told that the brain behind it was probing deep into the riddle, and coming to a firm conclusion.

Whatever that conclusion, one thing was certain: Lamont Cranston was not returning to New York.

As The Shadow, he intended to stay in Venetia to watch for new developments, which, by his calculations, might begin this very evening. Again, The Shadow was right; more than right.

Death was due again in this town where rival families ruled; doom that might strike despite The Shadow's efforts to prevent it!

CHAPTER IX. DEEP IN THE DARK

DINNER was over in the Weldorf mansion, and Harry had retired to a vast, gloomy library with Roy, when Titus joined them. Under his arm, Titus was carrying a brief case, which he tapped importantly.

"I'm going over to see Mandon," announced Titus. "I shall return in about an hour, at which time I shall have matters to discuss with you, Roy."

"Nothing valuable in the brief case, I hope," remarked Roy. "Don't forget what happened to Daniel when he carried bonds around with him."

"An ill-spoken jest!" snapped Titus. "Nevertheless, I wouldn't carry anything valuable where I am going. Ted Granmore happens to be over at Mandon's house."

As soon as Titus had gone, Roy turned to Harry and gave a noticeable shiver.

"Maybe I shouldn't have joked," said Roy. "But I have to laugh off the gloom of this old place. There's no other way to forget it. Why" - Roy looked around - "it was in this very room that Daniel was murdered! Can't you sense it?"

Harry shook his head, whereupon Roy glanced at his watch. He didn't seem to relish the fact that Titus was returning in an hour. Then Roy became very earnest.

"I've got to shake it off," he told Harry. "I think I'll go out a while, Vincent. If Titus comes back, tell him I'm upstairs and will be down shortly. He might be irritated if he found I hadn't waited around for him."

As Harry started to nod, Roy went from the library, calling back his thanks as he went. By the time Harry reached the front door, he could see Roy's car pulling from the garage, some distance away. Too late to follow, Harry was getting a new slant on why Roy had so willingly furthered their brief acquaintance.

There was certainly something that Roy wanted to cover up, and he had needed a friend to help him. A friend who didn't know too much about what was going on in Venetia. Harry had struck Roy as the perfect tool, and maybe he was right. Of all the neat yet innocent slips that Harry had ever seen accomplished, this, was about the best.

Even in his own mind, Harry couldn't be sure that Roy was actuated by any wrong purpose. It might even be that Roy had a real regard for Titus, and didn't want harm to befall him. Whatever the case, Harry found himself with no other choice but to fall in line with Roy's wishes.

There was only one solace: as yet, Roy couldn't be too deeply involved in the Weldorf-Granmore feud. At least, so Harry felt, but he was at a point where he mistrusted his own conclusions.

OVER at Mandon's house, Margo and Connie were seated on a sun porch, looking out into the moonlight, which was straggly because clouds were gathering. There was a lovely hedged-in garden in back of Mandon's, and Connie suggested that they stroll through it.

Their stroll took them to a little pergola, where they sat down. There, Connie suddenly adopted a pleading tone.

"I'd like to be alone a while," she told Margo. "It's been such a strain here, the way Ted broods so over Foster's death. Everyone seems so suspicious - that is, everyone who belongs in this hopeless town, except Giles Mandon."

Inasmuch as Margo didn't belong in Venetia, she was also excluded from Connie's criticism, so she nodded to encourage Connie to talk further. The nod proved poor policy.

"You'll help me get over it," pleaded Connie, "Won't you?"

"Of course!" replied Margo. "Tell me how I can."

"Just stay here, then," requested Connie, "while I stroll around. So that afterward you can say that we were here together."

"Very well."

It wasn't until Connie actually began her stroll that Margo became suspicious. Without waiting to decide upon an excuse, Margo started among the hedges to hunt for Connie. The hunt produced exactly what Margo feared.

At the side of the garden, she found a gate in the hedge; it opened to a path that led to a side road, and since Connie was nowhere else, it was plain that she had gone through the gate.

There was only one thing to do about it. Margo stole into the house, found a telephone beneath the stairs and dialed the Weldorf number, intending to inquire for Harry. She didn't have to ask for him, because it was Harry who answered.

"I know I'm stupid," confided Margo, "But Connie just gave me the slip. What should I do about it?"

"Don't ask me, Margo," came Harry's glum reply. "For once, I can't call you dumb. Roy walked out on me the same way, and I let him go."

"So we'll both have to sit tight -"

"Yes. Call me if anything else happens."

Margo decided to sit tight, out in the garden, inasmuch as that was where Connie would probably return. She glanced through the hallway as she went out through the sun porch, but saw no one. In Connie's case, Margo had been too late in her search; this time, she was too previous.

Scarcely had Margo gone outside before Ted Granmore appeared, sneaking down the stairs from the second floor. He stole across the hall to Mandon's study and began to turn the knob.

For a moment, Ted hesitated, looked across his shoulder toward the front door. He saw no one in the hall, and the blackness of the open doorway convinced him that no observer was about.

Ted was wrong.

That blackness had taken on a solid form. It represented a new arrival. With darkness settled, The Shadow had returned to Mandon's to begin his evening's operations. Coming from the front, he hadn't seen Connie's departure by the side gate, nor had he witnessed Margo's brief return to the house, when she phoned Harry. But The Shadow had spotted one person who needed watching: Ted Granmore.

Perhaps Ted felt an impression of eyes that he could not discern. His hand shook as he worked the doorknob, and he fumbled badly. Hearing Mandon's voice within the study, Ted suddenly decided to knock.

Mandon called for him to enter, so Ted ended his eavesdropping and opened the door. Stepping into the study, he closed the door behind him.

Immediately, The Shadow glided across the hall and demonstrated the tactics that Ted should have used. Reaching the door, he turned the knob so smoothly, so softly, that neither its motion nor its sound could have been detected within the room on the other side.

Peering in through the slight crack that he had opened, The Shadow again witnessed an interview between Ted Granmore and Giles Mandon.

"I'd like my revolver" declared Ted abruptly. "I want to turn it over to the sheriff."

Mandon eyed Ted steadily.

"You're sure about it, Ted?"

"Why not?" demanded Ted. They've found that Foster was killed by a bullet of different caliber than mine, so I'm safe. Telling my story is the only way to prove that Titus Weldorf murdered Foster. I need the gun to back it."

Mandon arose. Dubiously, he turned to the safe and began to work the combination. Deep in thought, he failed to hide the dial, and his action was slow enough for Ted to check the combination, something which Mandon didn't notice, since his back was Ted's way, though The Shadow plainly saw the eager way in which Ted craned.

As he opened the door of the safe, Mandon paused. Abruptly, he slammed the door shut and twirled the dial. Turning, he declared:

"I can't let you have the gun yet, Ted."

"Why not?" sneered Ted. "Do you think I want it to kill Titus?"

"Frankly, I do," returned Mandon. "It would be a short-cut to the thing you want: vengeance for Foster."

"Then how can I make the sheriff believe me?"

"By telling the sheriff you gave me the gun. Or, better, I can let you have the gun tomorrow. Not tonight, Ted."

"Why not tonight?"

At first, Mandon didn't want to answer. Finally he declared:

"Because Titus is on his way over here. It wouldn't be safe for you to meet him."

"I'd like to meet Titus and have a showdown with him!"

"That's just the trouble," observed Mandon. "But it's not going to happen in this house. I must ask you to go upstairs Ted, until after Titus has started home."

Firmly, Mandon escorted Ted from the study. By then, The Shadow had chosen a deeper recess in the hallway. Mandon called for Corbey, and the chauffeur appeared, to receive instructions.

"Mr. Granmore is going upstairs," declared Mandon. "I shall ask you to see that he remains there, Corbey. I want no intrusion while Mr. Weldorf is calling."

Nodding, Corbey gave Ted a stolid eye. Noting the chauffeur's stocky build and hard-set face, Ted shrugged and went upstairs. Mandon turned back to the study, stating that he wanted Titus shown there as soon as he arrived.

Very shortly, a car was heard out front. The doorbell rang, and a servant came from the kitchen to admit Titus. Corbey gave a gesture toward the study, and Titus was shown there. Then Corbey, suspicion in his eye, gave a glance upstairs.

He must have remembered that there was a back stairway Ted might use, for Corbey suddenly left his post and went out to the kitchen.

That gave The Shadow opportunity to move to the study. Looking in, he saw Mandon checking over papers with Titus. Their business ended, both arose, and The Shadow withdrew from the door.

This time, he edged toward the curtains that marked the darkened room where Mandon had given a party on a previous evening.

Seeing Mandon coming out with Titus, to accompany the visitor to his car, The Shadow intended to circle around through the reception room and follow outside, for from now on, he intended to take up Titus's trail.

Good policy, that roundabout trip, for it meant that The Shadow wouldn't be seen by any servants coming out through the hallway. Darkness, just beyond the curtains, loomed a welcome to The Shadow's case, and this time, this being in black, the deeper it came, the better. Yet there were limits to darkness, even in The Shadow's case, and this time he exceeded them.

There was a slight swish as The Shadow glided between the curtains. His shoulder brushed one drapery, and it stirred. But the next swish and the curtain's shake were not of The Shadow's making. They came so suddenly, that the cloaked-investigator had barely time to swing about and throw up a warding hand.

In his wheel, his foot caught the opposite curtain; the jog was only slight, but it spelled disaster for The Shadow.

A gun, sledged by a down-swinging hand, swept from the first curtain and passed The Shadow's guard. There was an impact as the weapon sidled hard against the head beneath the black slouch hat. Receiving the stroke, The Shadow sagged.

The blow from the curtain had dropped The Shadow into much deeper darkness than he had expected; that of unconsciousness!

CHAPTER X. THE HALTED MESSAGE

THE front door had hardly closed behind Mandon and Titus, when a man stepped from the curtained doorway. The man was Corbey, and he was thrusting his hand deep into a pocket. The chauffeur's face was tightened in a dead-pan expression which was too set. Its expression of innocence was forced.

In short, Corbey looked like a person who had slugged someone in the dark without giving the victim a chance. Nevertheless, considering that this was the household where he worked, Corbey was within his rights. Outside the door, he paused and looked back. Seeing no stir in the darkness, he kept on his way to the front stairs.

Mere luck had been responsible for Corbey's meeting with The Shadow. He'd taken a circuit of his own, through the sun porch, after leaving the kitchen, and had happened to come to the curtains just as The Shadow was retiring from the opposite direction.

Back at his original post, Corbey took a look up the front stairs; then waited for Mandon to return indoors.

When Mandon came, Corbey would have spoken but for an interruption. Ted Granmore appeared on the front stairs and called down to Mandon as the latter passed.

"What about Titus?" queried Ted. "Has he gone back to his house?"

"Yes," replied Mandon absently, "and I have to go to the plant. Titus has been making a valuation of the entire property, and I must look up some facts in question."

"I'll bet he made the valuation high," gibed Ted. "If you want to buy any of his stock, you'll pay double for it, Mandon!"

Mandon ignored the gibe. He entered the study and came out again, a few minutes later, carrying sheets of figures. Ted was still on the stairway; hence Corbey didn't have a chance to gesture in Mandon's direction.

In fact, Corbey was beginning to look undecided, as though he wondered whether Mandon would approve his slugging tactics with The Shadow. At any rate, the chauffeur didn't follow Mandon outside, as he might have.

Ted remained on the stairway until he heard a car pull away, out front. Then:

"There goes your boss, Corbey," said Ted. "A Grade Double-A Sucker, if ever there was one! Tell him I said so, if you want. Anyone who lets a Weldorf trim him won't resent an insult!"

With a shrug that seemed to dismiss all thoughts of Mandon, Ted turned and went upstairs. Too late to contact Mandon, Corbey returned to the curtained doorway, instead. There, he found The Shadow still motionless in the dark. Lifting the prone figure, Corbey carried his senseless prisoner around through the rear porch, to the kitchen.

WHILE that was happening, Ted Granmore reappeared near the top of the stairs. Peering down, he made sure that Corbey was not in the hallway below. Therewith, Ted sneaked downstairs. He wasn't nervous any longer. Probably thoughts of Corbey didn't worry him as much as those of Mandon, though if Ted had known of the chauffeur's skill as a slugger, he might have been perturbed.

Near the study door, Ted listened; then opened the door and entered boldly. Closing the door behind him, he smiled when he noted that Mandon had left the desk lamp turned on. Its glow carried to the safe, which was Ted's next destination.

There, Ted worked the combination carefully, and the safe came open. Inside, he found his revolver. He cracked it open and saw that it was fully loaded.

Ted had put fresh cartridges in the chambers after the shooting match outside of Foster's window. The gun needed cleaning, but Ted hadn't time to bother with such a detail. Closing the safe, he stole out from the study.

In the doorway, Ted listened. Again, he had a worried sensation that eyes were watching him, but he finally shook it off. All the while, he held his gun in his hand, ready to threaten anyone who might block him. Then, to steady his determination, he muttered, half aloud:

"A showdown with Titus. That's what I'll have, a showdown! Not here, you say, Mandon?" Ted looked around, grinning as though he wished that Mandon would appear, to raise objection. "All right, It won't be here. I'll go over to Titus's house! Why not? He came to Foster's, didn't he?"

That mumble couldn't be plainly heard, but somehow Ted's gestures were graphic enough to give some idea of what was in his mind.

Eyes were watching him from those same curtains where The Shadow had run into Corbey. The same eyes saw Ted steal across the hall and pause at the front door, where he pocketed his gun. Then, closing the door behind him, Ted went out into the night.

Margo came from the curtains.

She'd chanced upon Ted, much as Corbey had come upon The Shadow. Worried over Connie's prolonged absence, Margo had decided to come back in the house and try another call to Harry. Sight of Ted, coming from the study with a gun, had stiffened her. Fortunately, Margo was out of sight behind the curtains.

Guessing that Ted was going over to the Weldorf house, Margo saw need for an immediate warning to Harry, so she hurried across the hall and picked up the telephone.

As she did, she heard Ted's car pull away, and she listened for a repetition of the sound. There was none; therefore, The Shadow couldn't be trailing Ted. Then, deciding that he must be keeping check on Titus, Margo felt relieved, and started to make her call.

Hardly had she lifted the receiver, before she let it slide back to its hook.

Creaking footsteps were moving up behind her. They betokened heavy feet, yet cautious ones. But for the strain that gripped her, Margo would not have heard them. Something in those footfalls chilled her almost to the freezing point. It wasn't until they had reached her that she suddenly rallied, realizing that the very telephone she held could be used as a bludgeon against an attacker.

Turning, Margo started to swing the phone, only to have her hand stopped by a driving grip. Though the hand that caught her wrist as tight as metal, the voice that accompanied it was oily, almost apologetic.

"Sorry, Miss Lane," it said. "Before you make a call, I must talk to you. About something very important."

Margo was looking into the face of Corbey. Well-controlled, the chauffeur's features showed no animosity, but Margo felt that they were masking something. Then, in the same smooth tone, Corbey inquired:

"Is Miss Granmore about?"

"Why... yes," Margo faltered. "She was out in the garden. I... well, I just decided to come indoors -"

ALMOST despite herself, Margo was covering the fact of Connie's absence. She realized, suddenly, why she was doing it. Having seen Ted sneaking from Mandon's study carrying a gun, Margo was beginning to justify Connie's departure. Possibly Connie knew what Ted had in mind, and was hoping to prevent it.

But Harry had told Margo that Roy Weldorf was also at large. No wonder Margo was befuddled!

As she finished her stammer, Margo's wits returned. For one thing, she didn't have to answer Corbey's questions. Margo gave the chauffeur a cold gaze, which he returned in kind. Stiffly, Margo questioned:

"Why do you wish to see Miss Granmore?"

"Something important has happened," returned Corbey. His hand withdrew from Margo's wrist. "Something she should know about."

"Perhaps you should report it to Mr. Mandon."

"He just left for the factory. I won't be able to reach him until he arrives there. This matter cannot wait."

Margo decided to test Corbey out.

"Why bother Miss Connie?" she queried. "Isn't her cousin Ted around? Why not talk to him?"

There wasn't a change in Corbey's poker face. His gaze didn't budge from Margo's. If anything the pose was too good. It could mean that Corbey, too, had seen Ted go out. If so, he would know that Margo had seen Ted leave and was therefore playing a bluff. One that Corbey couldn't call without spoiling his own. However, the resourceful chauffeur found another way out.

"I would rather not inform Mr. Ted," stated Corbey. "This matter is one in which he might prove headstrong. I would prefer to speak to Miss Connie."

"If you'd tell me what it's all about," declared Margo, "I might call her for you."

Margo was turning away, when Corbey caught her arm again. This time, his grip was as restrained as his tone. Somewhat cryptically, the stocky chauffeur declared:

"I think that you will do, instead. Please wait here, Miss Lane and I shall explain everything."

Inasmuch as she couldn't walk away, Margo decided to remain. Corbey's grip relaxed, and he reached for the telephone. Watching Margo intently, to make sure that she didn't move more than an arm's length away, Corbey called the glass factory and left a message for Mandon, to be given him when he arrived.

"Tell Mr. Mandon that everything is quite alright here," stated Corbey, over the phone, "but please add that I think he should return as soon as possible."

That brief message failed to furnish Margo with the information that Corbey had promised. It was Corbey's next call that produced the thunderbolt. Corbey made that call to the county courthouse and asked to speak with Sheriff Clemming.

"Hello, sheriff..." Corbey's eyes were fixed on Margo. "This is Corbey... Yes, Mr. Mandon's chauffeur, calling from the house. I'd like you to come here at once and bring some deputies with you..."

"Why?" Corbey's expression became gloating, as he asked the question. "I'll tell you why, sheriff." Eyes still fastened upon Margo, Corbey was silently announcing that his words were meant for her as much as for the listener on the telephone. "Because I've captured the prowler who was around the Granmore house the night when Foster was murdered!"

There was a sharp exclamation, the sheriff's from the telephone receiver. Corbey cut it short as he dropped the receiver on the hook. He shoved his hand forward to catch Margo's wrist as she began to sway.

With a forced smile, Margo managed to cover up the horror that had swept her.

For Margo knew, from Corbey's triumphant gloat as well as the words he had uttered, that his prisoner could only be The Shadow!

CHAPTER XI. INTO THE NIGHT

POLITELY, Corbey bowed Margo toward the kitchen, and she accompanied him without a word. Silence was the only policy at this moment, for with it, Margo could cover her emotion.

Corbey knew she was perturbed but that was to be expected. Anyone would be worried in a house where a dangerous intruder had just been captured, even though the menace was over.

Such, at least, was the impression that Margo tried to give, for Corbey's benefit.

In the kitchen, they found two servants, each holding a gun. The weapons were The Shadow's automatics, and they were trained on the cloaked prisoner, who lay sprawled in a corner chair, his slouch hat tilted down over his eyes.

Looking at the other servants, Margo saw that they weren't nervy chaps like Corbey. Their faces were strained, and they had shied away from the cloaked prisoner who had been placed in their custody.

What troubled Margo was the fact that they were holding The Shadow's guns. Having taken those from The Shadow's cloak, they could very easily have looked at his face and identified him as Lamont Cranston, a recent visitor to this house.

Indeed, Margo was very sure that Corbey had looked at The Shadow's face. It would account for the way in which the chauffeur had talked to Margo, sounding her out to learn if she knew the dual identity of the masquerader.

After all, it was Cranston who had introduced Margo to this household!

In brusque style, Corbey began to show authority. Stepping to the servants, he jerked the guns from their shaky hands and chided them for being so scared.

One servant gulped that he couldn't help being scared while watching a prisoner who looked like the next thing to a ghost. The other servant, by his nod, showed that he felt the same way about it.

"You won't be worried, when you see who he is," scoffed Corbey. "That is" - he spoke as though correcting himself - "he's just some ordinary fellow, like anybody else. He's only wearing that outfit so nobody will know him. But we're going to have a look at that face of his."

Holding the two automatics, one in each hand, Corbey gestured toward The Shadow and suggested that Margo remove the prisoner's hat. Therewith, Corbey put an end to all doubt.

Unquestionably, he had already identified The Shadow as Cranston, though he hadn't let the other servants see the captive's face. Corbey was simply pretending that he didn't know, in order to witness the effect on Margo.

As they approached The Shadow's chair, Margo halted, trying to pretend that she was afraid. It didn't wash well with Corbey, as his scoffing smile revealed. The chauffeur wasn't bothering to display his poker face any longer.

"I... I think we'd better wait for Miss Connie," blurted Margo. "You wanted to talk to her, Corbey. Besides... I don't know many people here in Venetia."

"Neither does Miss Granmore," asserted Corbey. "She hasn't lived here lately. I don't see any need to wait for her, Miss Lane."

"But what about Mr. Mandon? Perhaps he -"

"We don't know how soon he can get here."

"The sheriff is coming, though!" exclaimed Margo. "We certainly ought to wait for him!"

"Of course we should!"

THERE was sarcasm in Corbey's tone. Nevertheless, he meant what he said. The chauffeur had found out exactly what he wanted: namely, that Margo knew the identity of The Shadow. She wouldn't have balked, the way she had, unless she wanted to favor the prisoner.

It was all so plain to Corbey, even though the other servants didn't recognize it. Margo, planted inside Mandon's house, while her friend Cranston roved about as The Shadow. Having so satisfied himself, Corbey was quite willing to wait until the sheriff came.

He wanted others to witness Margo's confusion when someone lifted the slouch hat to display the face beneath it. And the mental anguish that Margo was undergoing was something that meanwhile pleased Corbey, very much.

Likewise, Corbey recognized that Margo would become more desperate during the painful wait. On that account, he was watching her as closely as he watched The Shadow, though he was trying not to let her know it. One big gun dangling loosely in his left hand, Corbey kept the other toward The Shadow, but there were moments when he seemed lax.

On those occasions, he let his right hand gun nudge Margo's way, just to remind her that it would be useless to try flight.

There was a clock ticking loudly on the kitchen wall, and it told off minutes that became more grueling as they increased. Eyes lowered, Margo kept staring at The Shadow, thinking that perhaps he might be dead. There were moments when she thought she saw him stir; then she decided that the fold of his cloak had merely fluttered from a breeze that sighed through the open kitchen window.

Another storm was coming over Venetia, and the breeze was its harbinger; but storms seemed mild things, indeed, compared to the ordeal that faced The Shadow.

If still alive, he would be accused of the murder of Foster Granmore!

Such accusation would carry teeth. Ted would no longer hesitate about telling of his part in the affair. Titus Weldorf, already above suspicion, would remain so. A prejudiced local jury would hang full guilt upon one man: Lamont Cranston, alias The Shadow.

The breeze was increasing. Along with the heavier gusts came flashes of distant lightning, accompanied by the mutter of faraway thunder. But those weren't the most ominous sounds that reached Mandon's kitchen. From the slope leading up to the house came the throbs of motors, which announced the arrival of the sheriff and his men!

Even The Shadow seemed to shudder, as a heavier breeze whined in from the window and swept the folds of his cloak. Corbey gave a harsh, pleased laugh and looked at Margo. Her eyes were toward The Shadow; suddenly, they lifted, hoping that Corbey wouldn't guess something that she had just seen.

If Corbey guessed, he did it too late.

He was giving the gun a wag toward Margo, when the something that had stirred within The Shadow's cloak lashed forth with whippet speed. A gloved hand overtook Corbey's and caught the moving automatic in a solid grip. Snarling, Corbey tried to tug the trigger, and succeeded, but it didn't matter.

The Shadow, half up from the chair, had timed his grab to the exact angle. He'd stopped the gun just after its muzzle had moved away from him and before it had gone far enough to point at Margo.

Thunder reverberated through the room. Not the thunder that accompanied the outside lightning, but the roar that came with the stab of flame that the gun muzzle dispatched.

The recoil of the powerful .45 reeled Corbey backward, as a bullet gauged out a great chunk from the vacant kitchen wall. But The Shadow's hand was firm on the gun, accompanying its jounce.

A hard twist of a gloved fist and The Shadow, now on his feet, had regained one automatic. Yet Corbey still held the odds. The Shadow was gripping his gun by the barrel, whereas Corbey had a second weapon in his left hand, with a finger set against the trigger!

WITH a cry, Margo leaped in, hoping to intervene. She was swept aside by the rapid action of the duel. Corbey was using a gun left-handed, and had to bring it up and around. He shouldered Margo aside as he wheeled with the weapon.

As for The Shadow, he sent the girl spilling farther, for he was spinning even faster, away from the arc of Corbey's aim.

At that moment, it seemed that Corbey would surely overtake The Shadow with the gun muzzle before the cloaked fighter could bring his own weapon to aim. The thing that Corbey didn't expect was the back slash of The Shadow's hand. It came, carrying the reversed automatic, with a hard, sure stroke, squarely against the borrowed gun in Corbey's left fist!

Corbey didn't have a chance to pull the trigger as the automatic went flying from his hand. The best he could do was jab his right hand into his coat pocket, to bring out his own revolver, which he carried there.

Spilled in one corner of the kitchen, Margo saw The Shadow spring the other way, toward the spot

where he had knocked the extra automatic.

Instead of pausing to regain the loose gun, The Shadow reached the light switch and pressed it. There was a door just beyond, and Corbey fired at it when the lights went off. A sudden splash of lightning showed the doorway - empty!

Then came a laugh from back within the kitchen. The Shadow hadn't forgotten his extra gun. He'd simply decided to handle the light switch first. His dive back into the kitchen had bluffed Corbey completely, and before the chauffeur could change his aim, The Shadow talked - with two guns!

Up from the floor, The Shadow's stabs were directed toward the ceiling. They were purposely harmless, but Corbey didn't know it. Corbey was diving beneath a table, and when he heard The Shadow's laugh again, the chauffeur blazed anew at the doorway. The Shadow's laugh still trailed, with a departing tone that Corbey couldn't understand until the lightning flashed again.

Strange, the way that blaze seemed clouded, only to clear itself before the flash had ended. Yet the singular occurrence explained itself when eyes turned toward the window. The thing that had blanked the lightning was a black-cloaked shape. The flare was increasing, because that same shape was sweeping out through the window, dropping from sight beyond!

Corbey fired his last shots through the vacant window. With the rumble of thunder that followed the lightning flash came the mockery of a farewell laugh, announcing that Corbey's prisoner, The Shadow, was gone into the night!

CHAPTER XII. WANTED: A KILLER

IF ever a man was gripped by savage disappointment, that man was Corbey. He wasn't going to let a prisoner vanish from his sight and get away with it. He started for a door that led outside, shouting for the servants to follow him, which they did, largely because they preferred a more ample space than the confines of the kitchen.

There were shouts from in front of the house that came when lightning flashed anew, and Margo realized that The Shadow must have been spotted by the sheriff and his men. To the echoes of outside gunfire, Margo came to her feet, wondering what next to do.

At least, the best way to help The Shadow was to stay away from trouble, so Margo took the route that led through the rear sun porch.

There, the open door to the garden was most attractive. There was a chance that The Shadow might double back among the hedges, where Margo might be able to aid him. So Margo turned and started down the steps, only to run squarely into a person coming the other way. Fortunately, an arriving lightning flash identified the person in question.

It was Connie, and she was breathless. She wanted to know what had happened, and she was trying to make Margo believe that she'd been walking among the hedges all this while. Drawing the other girl into the porch, Margo settled the situation very promptly.

"Corbey captured a prowler," declared Margo, "but whoever he was, he got away. You aren't involved, Connie, so don't worry. I'll explain that you didn't leave the garden."

"Thanks, Margo," murmured Connie. "With all this trouble between the families, I wouldn't want to be involved -"

"I understand, Connie."

"I'll do as much for you," added Connie, "if I ever can!"

Margo felt sure that Connie would soon have her chance, though it would be difficult for her to really help. Whether or not The Shadow escaped from his present pursuers, there was going to be plenty of talk when Corbey announced that his black-clad prisoner had been none other than Lamont Cranston.

As Cranston's friend, Margo would be right in the thick of embarrassing questions, and would certainly need whatever support Connie or anyone else might offer.

Shaking off pursuers was usually quite easy for The Shadow, but in this case, the lightning flashes were playing hob.

Off at the side of the house, The Shadow was in the middle of a lawn, with deputies spreading everywhere. Each flash of lightning gave them a fresh view of their fugitive, and they were shouting to one another that he was the same mysterious marauder that they had encountered at Granmores.

The deputies were shooting as they shouted, but tonight they lacked their devastating shotguns, serious weapons at this close range. Sheriff Clemming hadn't expected any trouble at Mandon's, for Corbey had indicated that everything was under control. He'd brought five deputies simply because that many happened to be around. They were all regulars, who preferred revolvers.

The deputies were wasting their fire. They hadn't a chance to wing a darting target like The Shadow. By the time they glimpsed him, a lightning flash was ended and they were simply shooting into the dark.

Corbey would have fired, too, if his gun hadn't been empty. Instead, the chauffeur was shouting suggestions, and his words made sense.

"Cut him off from the front!" bawled Corbey. "Box him in back, among the hedges!"

SHERIFF CLEMMING certified the order, and the deputies did their best to follow it. The task proved easier than they expected, for The Shadow, too, heard Corbey's shout, and it made sense to him as well.

Cutting for the rear corner of the house, The Shadow was going right where the deputies wanted him, when they saw him by another streak of lightning.

Then The Shadow was in among the hedges, and the deputies were learning that he, not they, had profited by Corbey's suggestion. Though the rear garden was cramped, the hedges furnished the very cover that The Shadow needed.

Each lightning flash showed deputies peering over hedge tops, looking for a fugitive who had purposely lost himself in the maze by the simple expedient of crouching low.

During intervals of dark, the deputies plunged about, running into each other and getting nowhere. The storm was almost on the hill, and a wind-swept drizzle promised torrents of rain that would make the hunt hopeless.

Crawling along the line of a hedge, The Shadow rolled beneath the brambles as a deputy blundered past. Finding an opening in the hedge stumps, The Shadow worked through and sneaked for the other side of the house.

He knew that if he reached the front, a short dash would take him to ample clumps of shrubbery that

adorned the sides of the curving driveway which led up into Mandon's.

It happened that Corbey guessed what The Shadow might do next and began to tell it to the deputies. Pulling themselves out of entangling hedges, they started around to the front of the house, too.

From a window, Margo and Connie saw them on the move. The Shadow, it so happened, had gone past unnoticed. But he wasn't to remain so.

Moving to a front window, the girls were just in time to witness a most startling sequel to the man hunt.

The Shadow had reached the front driveway and was well clear of the lights that glimmered from the portico outside of Mandon's front door. The rain was coming hard, pelting straight into The Shadow's face. He couldn't see the shrubs, or anything else, down the driveway, but he had his sense of direction to guide him.

Flight was the only course. The Shadow had more important matters than the dodging of deputies. As for the matter of Corbey, The Shadow was quite sure that he could offset any testimony that the chauffeur might give.

Any facts that Corbey divulged would dwindle into insignificance when more important matters were revealed. Still, it would be better if Corbey kept silent.

He was a trouble-maker, this Corbey, and The Shadow had a score to settle with him. Even Worse, Corbey was to add more trouble, His chance came as he reached the front of the house.

At that moment, The Shadow was beginning a run down the homestretch - that portion of the drive that would lead him to the shrubs.

Vivid lightning filled the sky; with it, a mighty thunderclap directly overhead. The storm had arrived in full blast, and the brilliance of that lightning flash offset the blinding fury of the rain.

Corbey saw The Shadow, and gave a triumphant bellow as he dashed in pursuit, with the deputies a dozen yards behind.

Blotting darkness had returned, and in it The Shadow reached the shrubs, which the lightning flash had shown him. He didn't drop among them, as he had when in the hedges. Instead, he zigzagged through the bed of bushes, changing course, so as to be out the path of fire if the deputies decided to rake the shrubs with gunfire.

Reaching the shrubs in the darkness, Corbey gave another shout, which The Shadow heard. So did the deputies, who were stumbling forward.

"This is where he went!" yelled Corbey. "Get him! He's the man who murdered Foster Granmore!"

Lightning blazed, as though Corbey's shout had produced it. Waving his gun across a curve of bushes that fringed the driveway, Corbey was sure that he had sighted the huddled shape he wanted. His shout rose triumphant.

"There he is! And I'll tell you who he is! His name -"

A SMASH of thunder interrupted. Lightning had blotted out but the deputies saw the stab of a gun from the shrubs where The Shadow had gone. They knew that Corbey's gun was empty, hence he couldn't have fired the shot. What they didn't know was that The Shadow hitherto had fired only to discourage persons who might aim his way.

Piling into the shrubs, they blazed away until their guns were empty, aiming in the general direction of the last shot they had seen.

More lightning showed the shrubs, but no figures among them. Caught up with the deputies, the sheriff ordered them ahead. They stumbled in and out of bushes and found themselves back by the edge of the curving drive. There, one of the deputies floundered, gave a sudden yell, and flung himself upon a prone figure.

"I've got him!"

The deputy had some one, alright, but his captive wasn't The Shadow. A glare from the sky revealed the man's identity. The deputies had found their own pal, Corbey, and he was definitely dead. The sheriff's stern tone followed the thunder's rumble.

"You fools!" boomed the sheriff. "Shooting at the man Corbey was after! You should have known you'd clip Corbey instead! Bring him up to the house!"

The procession reached the house, bringing Corbey as a burden. As Margo and Connie opened the front door, the group was outlined, not by a flash of lightning but by the glow of headlights that came swinging up the drive.

As the car reached the house, a man sprang out. He was Giles Mandon, back from the factory.

Men were laying Corbey's dead form in the hall when Mandon joined them. As they tried to tell Mandon of their blunder, he glared at them, denouncing their stupidity. He was telling the sheriff that Corbey was worth a dozen of the deputies who had slain him, when Clemming turned up from Corbey's body.

"Don't blame my men, Mr. Mandon," said the sheriff solemnly. "I don't think they dropped Corbey after all. They'd have gotten him in the back, but this bullet took him in the heart. See for yourself."

Mandon looked, and nodded. On the outskirts of the group, Margo could hear the mutter that came from the deputies. They were in accord with the sheriff's finding, not merely to excuse themselves but because the evidence pointed to another hand behind the fatal shot.

Never had matters been so ominous. As plain as words, that murmur stated:

"Wanted for murder. The Shadow!"

CHAPTER XIII. THE CHANGED TRAIL

IT was Giles Mandon who brought order out of chaos. He rapped home the point that too much time had been lost in tracking a killer, the night when Foster Granmore had died. He demanded to know what had happened in his absence, and it took Margo to tell him.

Omitting any references to Connie's disappearance of an hour, and Ted's departure, Margo stated simply that Corbey had captured an unknown intruder, who had later escaped.

By the time she finished, Margo had witnesses to support her. Two frightened servants came from where they had been hiding and solemnly nodded their heads.

Finding that Margo alone was vocal, Mandon demanded:

"Who was the intruder?"

"I didn't see his face," answered Margo. "It was covered with his hat."

The servants nodded their corroboration.

"Maybe Corbey took a look at him," suggested Mandon glumly. "If he did, that's why the fellow killed him."

"Corbey knew, alright," assured the sheriff. "He was spilling it when the thunder interrupted him. The murderer heard him, and that's why he killed him. It's going to be tough, though proving it, considering the way my men were shooting. The killer could lay it to them."

"But that bullet through the heart -"

"Corbey was yelling to us," broke in the sheriff. "He might have turned around and gotten it. Understand, I don't think he did, but it could have happened that way."

"That can be settled," decided Mandon, "by probing for the bullet and checking it with the guns your deputies were carrying."

"Kind of a big wound," observed the sheriff, looking at Corbey's body. "I'd say the bullet mushroomed against a rib. Not much chance of identifying a flat bullet. The experts will probably tell us it could have come from anybody's gun."

Mandon's expression changed suddenly. The sheriff's reference to guns in general had given Mandon a recollection. Turning to Connie, he asked grimly:

"Where's your cousin Ted?"

Connie shook her head and looked at Margo, who also professed ignorance, since she was supposed to have been out in the garden most of the time. Beckoning to the sheriff, Mandon led the way into the study. Sight of the closed safe reassured him.

"I suppose I'm worried over nothing," began Mandon. "Still I'd better make sure -"

He fingered the combination and the safe came open. Turning, Mandon showed a horrified expression, which only Margo understood. Prompted by a question from the sheriff, Mandon explained.

"There was a revolver in this safe," he said. "It belonged to Ted Granmore."

"If it belonged to Ted," queried Clemming, "what was it doing in your safe?"

"I put it there so Ted wouldn't use it," Mandon replied. "He asked for it this evening. He wanted to give it to you, sheriff."

"To me? Why.

"I suppose I'd better tell you the whole story."

THEREWITH, Mandon gave an exact account of Ted's first visit, when he brought the revolver. He told how Ted had been at the Granmore house, and detailed Ted's accusations of Titus Weldorf, along with his mention of a mystery man in black.

"I believed Ted," stated Mandon simply, "though I wasn't willing to brand Titus as Foster's murderer. The killer could have been the man in black."

"Right!" expressed the sheriff. "He was around there that night. It's up to us to find him."

"That may not prove difficult."

Mandon's steady words chilled Margo. She feared that he had somehow guessed that Cranston and The Shadow were one. Then Mandon's next statement ended her alarm, though it produced new complications.

"Ted admits being at the Granmore house," reminded Mandon, "and he was here this evening when I left. I'm wondering, sheriff, if Ted could be the mystery man he talked about."

Clemming's big hand thwacked the desk.

"There's the answer!" he exclaimed. "Ted put on that black rig so he could snoop around Foster's! He was snooping here, too, or he wouldn't have been able to get into your safe. He couldn't risk having you see his face. If he was spotted, he wanted to blame it on the unknown party in the case.

"He had to keep Corbey from recognizing him, too. But Corbey met him and slugged him cold. What's more, Corbey found out who Ted was. No wonder Ted laid for Corbey, down by the drive. It was murder, that's what!"

Mandon was motioning for silence. He had something deeper on his mind. Again, his impartiality was coming to the fore.

"We must refrain from blind accusations," declared Mandon. "Speculation is not proof. I would not say that Ted Granmore was murderously inclined, except -"

Mandon's eyes were on the open safe. He turned, his frank gaze changed to one of horror. Mandon was recalling, only too well, some of the things that Ted had said this very evening. The sheriff pressed forward.

"Except for what, Mr. Mandon?"

"Except in one case," replied Mandon slowly. "Ted wouldn't trust himself with that gun, because he was afraid he would kill Titus with it. Tonight, Ted was talking about a showdown with Titus when he came here."

"Titus Weldorf came here?"

"Yes, but he left safely. I saw to that. Titus went home just before I started to the factory -"

Mandon ended his own comment by reaching for the telephone on his desk. He lifted the receiver and began to jiggle the hook. A voice responded, only to cut off while Mandon was trying to give the Weldorf number.

Outside there was a glow of lightning, followed by receding thunder. Rain pelted heavily, and Mandon heard it.

"The storm has put the line out of commission!" exclaimed Mandon. "The service has been terrible all this week! No chance to phone Titus. Even the operator couldn't hear me. We'll have to rush over to the Weldorf house, sheriff!"

The sheriff lost no time in starting. He and his men were going out the front door, Mandon with them, when the latter turned and looked back at Connie and Margo, who were wondering if they ought to

come along, too.

Mandon told them to stay, and try the Weldorf number in about ten minutes, on the chance that the line would be in operation by that time.

MARGO didn't wait that long. She tried the hall-way phone soon after the cars had sped from the driveway. She couldn't get an answer at first, but some jiggles of the hook finally produced the operator, and Margo gave the number.

It was then that Connie intervened. She reached to take the telephone from Margo's hands.

"You'd better let me talk," began Connie. "This may be serious business, Margo. I wouldn't want you mixed in it."

"I'm a neutral," reminded Margo. "It wouldn't do for a Granmore to talk to a Weldorf."

"But I could explain things -"

"You mean you could calmly tell Titus that Ted is coming over to murder him? I don't think he'd listen."

"Roy would -"

Connie halted, then began to stammer.

"I mean Roy might," she said. "He's different from the other Weldorfs - at least they say he is, that is; I don't mean that the Weldorfs say it. I mean other people say -"

"You're too confused to talk to anyone," declared Margo. "I'll handle this matter. Wait! I'm getting an answer, and it sounds like one of the servants."

It happened to be Harry Vincent, who was expecting a call from Margo. Very briefly, Margo summed up events at Mandon, and asked if Titus had returned. Harry said that he hadn't, and added that Roy was still absent, too.

Though Connie caught only Margo's half of the conversation, she began to wonder about it. Margo was certainly going into a great many details for the benefit of a mere servant.

Hanging up, Margo noticed Connie's expression and explained that she had talked to a guest at the Weldorf house, a man named Vincent, to whom she had been introduced that afternoon. Sudden enlightenment came over Connie's face, and she gave a knowing nod. Quickly, she asked:

"Did he mention Roy Weldorf?"

"He did," replied Margo. "He said that Roy was there, and that he would tell him everything. That was why I decided to be so specific."

There was just one reason why Margo misquoted Harry. The case of Roy Weldorf was so similar to that of Connie Granmore, that Margo deemed it only fair to give him a break. Roy had slipped Harry; but, in her turn, Connie had slipped Margo. Since she had declared herself a neutral in the feud between the families, Margo couldn't very well inform a Granmore regarding a Weldorf.

"It will be alright, then," declared Connie, quite relieved. "Between them, Vincent and Roy should certainly be able to soothe Titus and Ted. I'm sure that they can, at least, keep Ted from shooting Titus - if Ted really intends to do so, which I doubt."

Margo didn't share Connie's relief. From all that she had seen, she feared that death was still on the march. As if in corroboration came a streak of lightning, a peal of thunder, both from the direction of the Weldorf hill. The storm had brought tragic happenings to Mandon's home; it might do the same to the Weldorf mansion.

Yet, withal, there was a better omen. Along with that storm had gone The Shadow. Despite the fact that he was blamed for Corbey's death, his real mission was to prevent doom. Unless murder had already struck, The Shadow was the one being who could halt it.

CHAPTER XIV. A QUESTION OF MURDER

IN the gloom of the great Weldorf library, Harry Vincent was standing by a table, gripping the telephone with one hand and thrusting the other deep into his pocket, where he could feel the comfortable touch of a gun.

He was glad that he was equipped with an automatic, even though such weapons had brought trouble to his chief, The Shadow, upon this very evening.

Harry's case was different. He was an invited guest in a house where murder threatened, and could therefore explain almost anything that happened. Inasmuch as The Shadow was at present a fugitive, Harry might have to take over the duties of his chief.

There lay the difficulty. Filling The Shadow's shoes was a tremendous problem. There were times when The Shadow had called upon Harry for such service, and this could be regarded as one of them. In that case, however, Harry should have heard from The Shadow by this time. Instead, he had only heard from Margo.

True, Margo had given valuable facts, but there were still some that Harry needed. Vital facts, upon which coming events hinged. Trying to piece the missing points was more of a riddle than Harry could solve.

The first point was Titus Weldorf.

By all calculations, Titus should be home by this time. In fact, he should have returned as much as a quarter hour ago. He had left Mandon's earlier than Mandon himself. Yet Mandon had reached the factory, and then returned to his home.

If Titus had returned, where was he now?

There was a partial answer. Titus could have driven his car into the garage without Harry hearing it. The garage was none too close to the house, and the thunder of the approaching storm could easily have drowned a motor's noise. But there was no reason why Titus should have stayed in the garage, particularly with a storm about to break upon the hill.

Next: Ted Granmore.

Ted had gained a good head start on the sheriff. A much greater range than the sheriff supposed, because Ted wasn't the man in black who was regarded as Corbey's killer. In fact, by Harry's calculations, Ted should be here by this time, too, which made matters all the worse.

The final point was Roy.

He was the "other" Weldorf. the one who wasn't supposed to be in the picture yet, though circumstances might have produced such a result. Assuming that Titus Weldorf was being stalked by Ted Granmore, it

might be that the latter was hounded by Roy Weldorf.

As he thought in such terms, Harry halted himself with a short laugh. This thing was getting beyond sensible limits. Maybe it would reach the point where Harry would fancy that Connie Granmore was on the trail of Roy Weldorf. It wouldn't do to jump ahead in such absurd fashion. Right now, Harry's problem was to see that Ted Granmore didn't find Titus Weldorf.

Since there was no chance of either being in the house, Harry decided to go outside. Rain was battering hard against the windows, so Harry borrowed one of Titus's raincoats from a rack in the hall. Opening the front door, he moved out into the storm, and turned his head to avoid the brilliance of a vivid lightning flash.

As Harry opened his eyes again he still saw a glare. It came from the headlights of a car that had labored up the steep hill and was now coming past the garage. Stepping behind a big pillar, Harry saw the car stop. A man sprang from it and started to dash up the steps, into the house. Harry recognized Roy Weldorf.

Roy's hurry was evidently caused by the storm, nothing more. He halted at sight of Harry, shook streams of rain from his hat, and questioned breathlessly:

"Is Titus back? The storm delayed me -"

"Titus isn't back," interposed Harry, "but he should be. I just had a call from Mandon's saying that Ted Granmore is on his way here, gunning for Titus."

Roy's face showed alarm. He made a sudden gesture toward the garage, which could barely be discerned in the blinding rain.

"There are lights in there," declared Roy. "I saw them when I passed. I didn't put my car inside, because I didn't want to get wet. I thought that I could go there later."

"You're going there right now," asserted Harry. "And so am I. Come on!"

They dashed to the garage and found one of its folding doors ajar. Roy was in the lead, not being burdened with a raincoat, and before Harry could stop him, the other man wrenched the door open and sprang inside. Harry followed, trying to drag Roy back. It wasn't necessary.

Roy stopped so abruptly that Harry almost bowled him over. Then both were rooted, staring at a sight that quite fulfilled their worst fears.

STANDING in the center of the large garage was Titus's car. The door on the driver's side was open, and beside it stood Ted Granmore.

He was faced toward Roy and Harry, covering them with a revolver, the one which he had taken from Mandon's safe. But the aimed weapon wasn't the thing that riveted Roy and Harry.

On the cement floor, at Ted's feet, lay the body of Titus Weldorf. Its crazy sprawl was evidence enough that Titus was quite dead.

Here was murder on display, with murderer in evidence. As a man who had just completed one kill, Ted Granmore looked quite capable of another. His face, however, was the strangest portrayal of mingled moods that Harry Vincent had ever observed.

Ted's face showed satisfaction, yet was tinged with worry. He carried a sneer that was weakened by a

twitch. At one moment, his finger would tighten as though ready to pull the gun trigger; then his hand would loosen as if it wanted to drop the revolver on the floor.

Suddenly, defiance became Ted's ruling mood.

"I know what you think!" he snarled. "You think I murdered Titus, the way he did with Foster. But this is one time circumstantial evidence doesn't hold!"

Roy started to say something, only to receive a warning nudge from Harry's elbow. Ted didn't notice Harry's shift. So Harry went further with it. Under cover of Roy's body, Harry began to work his hand into his pocket, to draw his own gun.

"Maybe Foster killed old Daniel," conceded Ted. "I wouldn't have put it past him. Foster was out for all he could get, even if it didn't include a pile of bonds that Daniel lied about. If Foster did kill Daniel" - Ted paused, emphatically - "then Titus had a right to kill Foster.

"Titus did kill Foster! I'm willing to swear to it! That gave me a right to kill Titus. I know what you're thinking, Roy! You'd like to kill me, wouldn't you? But the right isn't yours, because I didn't murder Titus!"

Ted's words had lost their sneer. They rang out clearly, as though driving home a truth. A strange truth, from a man who was standing beside the very body of his victim. So strange, that it couldn't be believed. Ted saw the doubt on Roy's face, and scowled. Then:

"Why should I lie about it," questioned Ted narrowly. "I could kill you, too, Roy, and that friend of yours, whoever he is. I'd do it if I were really a murderer, but I'm not. I'll tell you why. I'd planned to give Titus a chance to confess that he'd killed Foster. Only somebody killed him first."

As Ted finished, there came a flash of lightning and a roar of thunder, marking the passage of the storm across the hill. Ted seemed to enjoy the battering of the elements, as though the fact the lightning hadn't struck him dead could be regarded as a proof of his statements. But Roy's eyes still fixed on the body of Titus, showed no belief in Ted's story.

Watery beads appeared on Ted's forehead. Whether raindrops or perspiration, they annoyed him, and he wiped them away with his free hand. Reaching for the car door, Ted slammed it shut above Titus's body.

"Somebody got here first!" repeated Ted savagely. "I saw the car and knew it belonged to Titus. I sneaked in and saw him, sitting at the wheel. I yanked the door open and told him to come out. He came - like that!"

Reaching for the handle, Ted pulled the door wide, and ended with a down-sweeping gesture to indicate the spill of the dead body. In so doing, Ted turned without realizing it, and his gun away from the men he covered.

By then, Harry's automatic was drawn, out of sight behind Roy's back. Harry didn't lose an instant.

WHEELING, Harry yelled to Roy: "Look out!" and shoved his companion behind Titus's car. Making a forward lunge toward Ted, Harry was driving, gun first, as the fellow came about. Harry was aiming for Ted's gun hand, hoping to clip it with a quick shot.

But Ted didn't wait around. He sprang in front of the car, between its radiator and the wall of the garage. Springing to overtake him, Harry had Ted really on the run, when an obstacle presented itself.

That obstacle was the body of Titus. Tripping across it, Harry fell against the running board. Throwing his arm forward to protect his head from the front fender of the car, Harry failed to avoid a glancing blow that somewhat jarred him. With the jolt, he lost his hold on the automatic, and it clattered to the floor beside Harry's flattening form.

Over the hood of the car came Ted Granmore, his face as savage as any human's could be. His denial of murder seemed a shabby pretense, considering his present action. He intended to kill Harry in cold blood, before any human hand could stop him. Nor was any hand close enough to deliver aid. The thing that saved Harry Vincent was a laugh. A weird, strange tone that seemed more than human. Coming, as it did, in the wake of a storm wherein all the elements had loosed, that outlandish mirth might well have been uttered by a creature from another world.

The tone had stayed the hands of killers in the past, and it worked anew in the case of Ted Granmore. Poised half across the car hood, Ted forgot Harry for the moment, to look for a more formidable foe whose very mirth threatened destruction.

Ted Granmore had reason for the sudden dread that he displayed. He was hearing the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XV. STRIFE ON THE HILL.

IT took Ted Granmore only a few seconds to locate the source of The Shadow's laugh, but that brief period was enough. Not enough to give Ted a bulge against a new attacker, but sufficient for The Shadow to assure the future of his agent, Harry Vincent.

The laugh came from the door of the garage. The Shadow had arrived there just in time to witness Harry's tumble and hear the clatter of Ted's leap atop the hood of the car. Though Ted was where The Shadow couldn't see him, the fighter in black recognized the danger that Ted represented.

Therefore, The Shadow laughed.

He knew the effect that his sinister mockery would produce when it echoed within the confines of the garage. But The Shadow's vocal challenge was but the prelude to further action, that he supplied in his usual rapid style.

A sweep of blackness came hurtling forward, so suddenly, that Ted took it for something from nowhere. It was past the spot where Titus lay, and springing onward beyond Harry's rising form when Ted aimed at the thing in black.

Savagely, the man who repudiated murder, sought to kill the cloaked foe who had literally snatched one victim from his grasp. Thinking that The Shadow was coming around the front of the car, Ted aimed past the radiator and tugged his trigger twice.

Ted missed. Twice.

He couldn't understand it. He was firing at nothing but a laugh. Ted's blood shot eyes were seeing black spots against the garage wall where his bullets had smashed themselves flat. Black spots, as though The Shadow, by some mysterious process, had dematerialized himself into a multitude of specks!

The fault lay with Ted's strained vision.

At the moment that Ted's gun swung to aim, The Shadow staged one of his swift swirls. He didn't continue on to the wall. Instead he swung full about and dropped low, all in one amazing twist.

So elusive was The Shadow's fade-out, that Ted's vision, like his aim, carried onward. The man who wouldn't admit himself a killer would have sworn that he'd seen The Shadow right in front of him when he aimed.

As for the laugh, it might have come from anywhere, the way The Shadow voiced it. It wasn't surprising that Ted's imagination placed it at the one spot where it couldn't be.

The whole result was just too much for the maddened mind of Ted Granmore. Dropping to his side of the car, Ted flung himself about and dashed for the door of the garage.

Into Ted's path came Roy Weldorf. Ted didn't even see him, for Roy was canny in his lunge, coming from in back of the car. But when they grappled, Ted struck out savagely, and Roy, dodging the furious blows, dived clear across the back of the car. There, Roy came into the path of another charging fighter.

The Shadow was coming after Ted along the other side of the car, hoping to cut him off before he reached the garage door. Roy's dive spoiled The Shadow's opportunity.

Half stumbling, The Shadow was gripped by Roy, who was acting blindly, thinking that he had encountered Ted again. Clutching hard, Roy gripped The Shadow's cloak, until its owner wrenched it forcibly from his grasp. By then, Ted was out of the garage.

Wheeling in pursuit, The Shadow saw Ted outlined in the gleam of headlights from a car coming up the hill through the lessening rain. As The Shadow aimed, Ted ducked behind a tree and began to shoot at the arriving car. Another was behind it; these were the sheriff's cars, and they were followed by Mandon's.

Recognized by the newcomers, Ted became an object of immediate pursuit. Men were out of the cars, deploying while they opened fire, and Ted was ducking somewhere in the darkness beyond the driveway.

For a double reason, The Shadow decided that blackout tactics were to his own advantage. He wanted to capture Ted, and knew that he might manage it in the dark, he also wanted to keep the deputies in ignorance of his presence.

Good policy, considering that the sheriff's men wanted The Shadow for Corbey's death. The fact that they might have mistakenly identified him as Ted Granmore, occurred immediately to The Shadow; hence, his two reasons for keeping to the dark, combined to form a third.

Swinging around in back of the halted cars, The Shadow circled past the trees, to block off Ted's escape.

It would be excellent if the fighter who wasn't Ted should meet the one who was. Considering The Shadow's aptitude in darkness, there could be but one result. A brief set-to in the night, and Ted Granmore would be found dazed and helpless. This, if anything, would produce a respite in the existing feud, a breathing spell wherein facts could be established.

Off beyond the trees The Shadow waited. He could hear a man stumbling somewhere and knew that it must be Ted. The deputies were badly off the trail. A few more minutes and The Shadow's cause would be won.

SOMETHING had happened elsewhere.

In the garage, Roy Weldorf had reached Harry Vincent and pulled him to his feet. Rubbing his head, Harry was looking about, puzzled by the sounds of gunfire outside. Harry was feeling in his own pockets

for his missing automatic.

Roy saw the weapon, picked it up, and was about to hand it to its owner, when another idea struck him. Harry was staring the opposite direction, so Roy pocketed the gun himself and hurried out of the garage.

All about were flashlights. Like the headlamps of the cars, they were somewhat dimmed by the rain that had slackened to a drizzle. Since no one was finding Ted, Roy decided upon a simple course.

He started out into the darkness among the trees, on the assumption that if Ted still chanced to be around, he could be found where lights were absent.

At that moment, Ted was moving very cagily, hoping to sneak from the untenable terrain. He was heading right for The Shadow, though he didn't know it. The reason of course was that The Shadow had purposely placed himself in Ted's path, judging its direction by the occasional sounds that Ted made.

Through sheer accident, Roy was coming the same direction. Not being hunted, he was making more noise than Ted. His sounds attracted the deputies, and they suddenly started in among the trees. Seeing the lights, The Shadow made a quick shift, intending to cut Ted off sooner than he had originally planned.

Things happened in very quick succession.

Ted heard Roy's overloud approach and sprang to his feet, looking over his shoulder. At that moment, a flashlight bored through the trees. It revealed Roy to the deputies, and they saw Ted beyond. Roy saw Ted, too.

In a trice, the Weldorf-Granmore feud was carried another step onward. Roy Weldorf bounded forward, aiming the gun he carried. Ted Granmore, anxious to escape, did not turn to fire. Instead, he tried to spring off between the trees.

He stumbled, caught himself against a tree trunk, and turned like a creature at bay. Of the pursuers, only Roy saw him, for Ted had sagged into a little gully.

Aiming point-blank, Roy tugged the trigger of Harry's automatic.

By all the rules of the hunt, that shot should have driven home to Ted Granmore's brain. But Roy Weldorf missed his target by yards. Out of pitch-blackness, into the glare of the powerful flashlight, swept a cloaked shape that enveloped Roy with a single swoop.

So powerful was The Shadow's drive, that he lifted Roy clear from his feet and sent the gunshot up among the tree tops. Then Roy was somersaulting somewhere in the darkness, to land in a little daze of his own.

Other pursuers saw The Shadow. Already inclined to believe that he was Ted Granmore, they thought the question settled. They didn't stop to think how Ted had shifted position and changed attire, all in a few scant seconds. They began to shoot for the figure in black, and under such a barrage The Shadow had only one choice.

With weaving stride, he picked the first darkness that he could reach. His fade-out was so sudden that even his direction proved deceptive. But the bullets that raked the tree trunks produced another target.

Hearing the whining slugs, Ted Granmore found his feet and dashed away. Flashlights promptly spotted him, but he kept on running, and his start was enough to take him out of gun range.

All very suddenly, Ted had become himself again, in the opinion of the sheriff's men. It didn't matter how

he had shed the cloak that they thought he was wearing. Ted was their quarry, and they intended to trap him, never realizing that they were cutting off the one pursuer who really could have bagged the fugitive.

Though quite safe in the darkness, The Shadow had no further chance to join the chase.

TED doubled his trail. He cut back toward the garage. There wasn't a person to block him off. Every man, Giles Mandon and Sheriff Clemming included, had started in among the trees. Harry Vincent was coming from the garage, but he no longer had a gun, and all he could do was drop back out of sight.

Ted didn't even see Harry. Turning toward the hill below the garage, Ted loped to a car that he had parked just off the road. Springing into the vehicle, he loosened the hand brake and let the car coast. It was whirling down the hill before any one could overtake him.

Others were climbing into their cars, eager to give pursuit. Strife on the hill had ended in a motorized chase. Cars were scudding down into the valley, their lights swinging wildly as they made sharp turns. The only men not in the chase were Harry Vincent and Roy Weldorf, who were meeting in the center of the driveway in rather groggy fashion.

This wasn't The Shadow's chase, either. His opportunity had passed. He had tossed aside his chance to capture Ted, rather than take a dead prisoner into camp. But for The Shadow's intervention, Roy would have dropped Ted with bullets and the family vendetta would have moved along another peg.

From all that he had seen, The Shadow had full reason to class Ted Granmore as a murderer, and therefore a man who deserved death. Ted Granmore, standing above the body of Titus Weldorf, had pleaded innocence, but The Shadow had not been present to hear it.

What The Shadow had viewed was Ted's later effort to kill Harry Vincent, in a truly murderous fashion. Ordinarily, The Shadow would not have prevented someone else from stopping a man like Ted with bullets. But the case of Roy Weldorf was not ordinary.

Had Roy slain Ted Granmore, The Shadow's best-laid plans would have met a sudden end. Weldorf versus Granmore, with death the purpose, was something that The Shadow intended to obliterate so thoroughly, that the world would forget that talk of such a feud had ever existed.

Tonight, The Shadow had failed to prevent the murder of Titus Weldorf, but he had forestalled the death of Ted Granmore. Superficially, the cases seemed no different, since the evidence of murder was equal against both.

But there was a difference. The Shadow knew.

That was why Harry Vincent heard the whisper of a parting laugh from somewhere among the rain-swept trees. A grim laugh, yet one that promised to sweep away the cloud of mystery that hovered over a crime-deluged town.

The laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XVI. PROOF OF MURDER

WHEN Sheriff Clemming and Giles Mandon returned to the Weldorf mansion, they came without their escort of deputies. The sheriff had assigned his men to important duty - that of covering all the roads around the township.

Ted Granmore had escaped his pursuers, but they had found his car, abandoned near a washed-out bridge. It wouldn't be safe for Ted to try to travel farther.

On the contrary, Sheriff Clemming could not predict Ted's immediate capture. Ted knew the territory around Venetia, inside out, and it might take weeks to find him. These hill lands had once been the habitat of outlaws, and anyone familiar with the legends of those days could easily take advantage of forgotten hiding places throughout the countryside.

Added to that, the devastation caused by the recent floods would render a man hunt practically impossible. Hence, the sheriff was resigned to the task of keeping Ted boxed in within his present bounds.

That Ted Granmore had murdered Titus Weldorf seemed a self-evident fact.

When he viewed Titus's body, lying beside the car in the garage, the sheriff turned to Mandon, who shook his head. In face of such evidence as this, Mandon could hardly voice his previous belief in things that Ted had said.

When Harry and Roy told how they had surprised Ted on this scene of death, the case looked as good as closed. There was just one rift in Ted's favor.

It came when the two witnesses declared that Ted had denied the murder, claiming that he had found Titus dead in the car. But the statement was so palpably absurd that the sheriff immediately rejected it.

"Ted tried to bluff you," declared the sheriff. "Nobody would have been here in the garage, lying in wait for Titus. If he'd been killed somewhere else, how could he have driven himself home? If you two fellows had only come here sooner, you'd have been in time to keep Ted from killing Titus."

Roy gave quick response.

"Yes, sheriff, it was too bad," said Roy. "If we'd only seen the lights in the garage a little earlier, we'd know more about this case."

"You saw the garage lights?"

"Of course!" Roy was speaking in matter-of-fact style. "That's why Vincent and I hurried down from the house."

The sheriff stepped to the garage door and looked toward the mansion. The rain was over and the lights in the house showed clearly, so the sheriff assumed that the garage lights could be seen from the mansion.

Harry could have testified that the garage lights weren't visible from the house at the time Roy mentioned. Then, nothing could be seen amid the deluge that was pouring from the sky.

However, even though Harry said nothing, Roy coolly put a spike in such testimony.

"There were no strangers hereabouts," Roy told the sheriff. "At least, not to my knowledge. Of course" - Roy gave a light laugh - "Vincent might be counted a stranger, but I can vouch for the fact that he didn't leave the house all evening. In fact, when he and I came down here to the garage, I was leading the way."

Roy ended by giving Harry a friendly thwack upon the shoulders, as though he had done him a great favor. In a way, Roy had. He was clearing Harry entirely. But it happened that Roy was doing himself an even better turn.

Without so stating, Roy was indicating that he, himself, had been in the house all the while, a fact which

only Harry could deny.

If he did deny it, Harry would thereupon put himself in a bad spot. He would be admitting that he was at large at the time of Titus's death. People might begin to believe Ted's wild yarn that someone else had slain Titus. That someone else could be none other than Harry Vincent.

Very clever of Roy Weldorf, to preserve his own alibi by affording one for Harry! It gave Harry the distinct suspicion that Roy, not Ted, might have had a hand in Titus's death.

If Harry had seen the hasty way in which Roy had later tried to shoot Ted, during the chase among the trees, the suspicion would have enlarged itself.

However, only one person had witnessed that event: The Shadow.

At present, The Shadow was again in the offing. He was watching the conference at the garage from darkness across the driveway. He saw the looks that Harry exchanged with Roy. The Shadow was pleased because Harry maintained a stolid expression, that showed no traces of the suspicion that he must certainly have felt.

Roy's actions on this evening were becoming more important in The Shadow's mind. They were reaching the point where they demanded thorough investigation.

Accepting Roy's testimony at its face value, Sheriff Clemming stroked his chin and stared at Titus's car, whereupon Giles Mandon gave an approving nod.

"I wouldn't overlook a single clue, sheriff," declared Mandon. "When you find Ted, he will still deny that he murdered Titus, and after all, no one witnessed the actual crime. Often, a man's guilt or innocence depends upon some vital but forgotten detail."

Impressed by Mandon's suggestion, the sheriff began an inspection of the car. He admitted, reluctantly, that Titus could have fallen from the driver's seat, as Ted claimed. The keys were missing from the ignition lock, however, and that proved a moot point. It indicated that Titus had driven the car into the garage and drawn out the ignition key.

Looking to the floor, the sheriff saw a silvery glimmer and found a ring of keys. He tried them, and one fitted the ignition, lock. Promptly, the sheriff called upon the others to bear witness to the fact.

"Evidence against Ted Granmore!" announced the sheriff. "If Titus Weldorf had been dead when Ted found him, the keys would still be in the lock."

"That doesn't quite follow," began Mandon. "I'll admit a dead man couldn't have drawn a key from a lock. But Titus might have taken out the key while alive, and yet remained in the car a while."

"What for?" demanded the sheriff. "There was a storm coming up. Why would Titus stick around, instead of going into the house?"

"I don't know," admitted Mandon. "I suppose he would normally have put the keys in his pocket. There wasn't anything else to do with them."

"He might have thought of using another key," put in Roy. "Maybe there was something in the trunk, and he was wondering if he ought to take it with him or leave it here. I've often puzzled over such things, myself."

The sheriff took the keys to the trunk and unlocked it. Looking in the rear compartment, he saw nothing

at first, but finally observed the end of a newspaper-wrapped package poking from the upright spare tire that occupied one side of the compartment.

Leaning in, the sheriff brought the package out. As he ripped off the wrapping, his eyes went startled.

Two objects fell from the sheriff's hands and thudded the floor of the compartment. Together, those objects constituted a pair of square-toed shoes. They were old shoes, of the size and the type that Titus wore, and they were caked with dry mud, that broke off in chunks when the shoes thudded to the floor of the trunk compartment.

"So Titus did kill Foster!" spoke the sheriff, in a slow, dull tone. "The gall of him, suggesting that we use his shoes as models to track down a murderer! Well, we know that Titus murdered Foster and had evidence to get rid of, but we're equally certain" - he swung to the others - "that Ted murdered Titus, and we'll prove that, too!"

"How?" queried Mandon.

"By the bullet in Titus's body," returned the sheriff. "I don't think it flattened, like the one that hit Corbey. When we find Ted, he'll still have his gun, because he won't feel safe without it. We'll get that gun and clinch our case!"

AS the men turned from the garage, blackness receded. All during the discussions, a black-cloaked figure had loomed in the very doorway as a silent, unseen member of the group.

So smoothly did The Shadow blend into the outer darkness, that it seemed literally to swallow him. Watching from the thickness of the night, The Shadow saw men separate.

Mandon and the sheriff were going back to town, while Harry and Roy were turning toward the house. The Shadow followed the latter pair, entered the front door after them, and from the gloom of a huge hallway watched them go into the library. The Shadow saw Roy turn and hand Harry his automatic.

"You'd better keep this, Vincent," declared Roy solemnly. "I shouldn't have borrowed it in the first place."

"I didn't know you did borrow it," said Harry.

"I picked it up while you were groggy," explained Roy. "And I'd have killed Ted with it, if something hadn't tripped me. It's a horrible thing" - Roy clapped his hand to his head - "to realize that you might have killed a man!"

"Wouldn't you have been justified?"

"At the time, perhaps, but not now, Vincent. Since we've learned that Titus actually murdered Foster, we know that there really is a feud. I'd be perpetuating it, if I took a shot at Ted Granmore.

"I hate this quarrel, Vincent! Now that it's my turn to kill, according to the rules of vendetta, I'm going to show how I really feel by ending the whole thing!"

There was sincerity in Roy's tone, but it was very much like the double alibi that he had given for himself and Harry. The fact made Harry wonder. He wanted to believe Roy, because he looked like a man worthy of trust; but, after all, he was a Weldorf and murder might run in the blood.

It even occurred to Harry that Roy's way of stopping the feud could have been by killing his own kinsman, Titus, and getting revenge on the Granmores by blaming it on Ted. Anyone might stoop to any

depths, in the midst of all this muddle.

Perhaps Roy sensed Harry's doubts. If so, he used the best system to quell them. Roy turned the conversation to another subject. He began by stating that he was sorry he had come to Venetia; that once he left, he'd never visit the town again. He preferred the small city in Missouri where he had started in business on his own, and was making out quite well.

"It's great to be settled down," declared Roy. "Out there, we've forgotten all about this stodgy town, and we never mention families. I'd like you to stop off sometime, Vincent. I think you're one person who would understand."

There was one person who already understood. He was The Shadow. Moving out from the Weldorf mansion, The Shadow gave a low-toned laugh.

The Shadow could more than surmise why Roy Weldorf had been so cagy on the matter of his absence from the house, this evening. The Shadow's theory was so good, that he was resolved to test it promptly.

However, The Shadow had a matter of his own that needed immediate attention. In this business where murder was being pinned on people right and left, The Shadow did not care to share a portion of the burden, not even in the mind of a person who trusted him. So The Shadow's course through the darkened night led him back to Mandon's.

SKIRTING the house, The Shadow heard voices from the enclosed porch. Margo was talking to Connie, and they were discussing the tragic death of Titus Weldorf, along with the flight of Ted Granmore. Corbey's death had dropped to a minor subject, and whenever it chanced to be mentioned, The Shadow could almost hear Margo shudder.

Mostly, however, the two girls talked of Ted.

"I never did like Ted," admitted Connie. "Maybe I should stand by my own cousin, and I probably would if I belonged to any other family. But... well, I just don't like to be considered a Granmore."

Margo murmured that she felt she understood.

"I suppose that Ted was justified," proceeded Connie. "That is, for killing Titus Weldorf. Of course, Corbey's case was different. Still, it might have been an accident. What do you think, Margo?"

"I'd say it was an accident," replied Margo. "But what about Ted? Do you think they'll find him after the floods have ended?"

Connie laughed softly.

"They call these floods!" she explained. "I wish these people could see real ones! Why, when the Mississippi River spreads across its banks, it covers a dozen counties larger than this one! Out there, they'd have to use boats to hunt a fugitive like Ted!"

"From the way the sheriff talked," declared Margo "they'll have to use bloodhounds in this territory. But Mandon says that once they bring in dogs, Ted will know they're after him. Mandon advises strategy."

"So would I," said Connie. "Giles should be able to propose a better way. I suppose we'll hear all about it tomorrow. So good night, Margo." Connie rose, turned toward the door that led into the house, and paused, to add softly: "And thanks a lot!"

After Connie had gone, Margo waited hopefully. Very soon, she heard the whisper that she expected. Springing to the open window of the porch, she found The Shadow waiting there.

Eagerly, Margo began to pour what facts she had learned, only to have The Shadow stop her.

"We'll get to the point, Margo," he undertoned. "You're wondering why I killed Corbey."

"Yes," admitted Margo, "I am."

"The answer is quite simple," The Shadow informed. "I didn't kill him."

"Then it was Ted, after all!"

"Quite unlikely, Margo. I think we can place the blame on someone else."

"Not on Connie!" exclaimed Margo. "She'd gone away, I know, but she was back by that time -"

Margo halted. Another name had come to her mind; that of Roy Weldorf. Only too well did Margo remember that Roy had slipped Harry this same evening. It all began to form a picture: Ted hunting Titus, while Roy, in his turn, was seeking Ted. But The Shadow pursued the topic no further.

"Watch Connie carefully," was all he said. "She may be drawn deep into the case before it is all over. If anything serious threatens, contact Harry."

There was a swish beyond the open window, the vague semblance of a cloaked figure moving off between the hedges. Then only the fading whisper of a laugh announced The Shadow's departure for a destination unknown.

CHAPTER XVII. MANDON'S STRATEGY

ANOTHER funeral was over - that of Titus Weldorf. Harry had attended it in company with Roy, and the two were back in the Weldorf mansion. There, with four lawyers in attendance, they were going over Titus's papers when Giles Mandon arrived.

The setting was peaceful compared with the night when Titus Weldorf had met a violent end. It was afternoon and the day was very bright, even though the huge library carried an air of perpetual gloom. In fact, Roy needed a table lamp in order to read the various papers that the lawyers presented to him.

"The estate is quite in order," said Roy to Mandon, "and it looks as though I am the principal heir, although I am not interested in any of Titus's money."

Though casually uttered, Roy's words could have carried a very sinister significance, one that did not escape Harry Vincent. So far, vengeance had appeared as the primary motive in the deaths of Weldorfs and Granmores. By that token, Ted Granmore was marked as the slayer of Titus Weldorf.

Perhaps vengeance was not the real rule of the insidious game. Murder could have a profit motive. It certainly applied in Roy's case, even though he brushed the thought aside so lightly. In fact, Roy's admission of disinterest in the feud had been worrying Harry steadily ever since the other night. Lack of one motive for murder could indicate another, where Roy was concerned.

Coupled to that, Harry had heard from Margo. She was still staying at Mandon's, by request of Connie Granmore. Though nothing had occurred to make contact necessary. Margo had called Harry anyway. The reason was that Margo feared doubts on Harry's part.

He, too, had heard talk of how Corbey had been killed by a masquerader in black, commonly accepted as Ted Granmore. Harry, of course, would know that the person in question was The Shadow. Since The Shadow was absent, Harry could be suffering the same qualms that had earlier afflicted Margo.

So Margo had phoned, to put Harry right. He'd said nothing of his own suspicions regarding Roy Weldorf. But Harry now had a good idea of why The Shadow had departed. It was very likely that the mysterious investigator had gone to check on matters that concerned Roy Weldorf.

Harry's reflections ended when Roy spoke again. There was a grim chuckle to Roy's tone, as he read off some of the items in Titus's will.

"Fifty thousand dollars for a special mausoleum," read Roy. "Well, I'm not surprised. Titus wanted it built on this hillside, so we'll put it there. People can point to it and say: 'There lies the last of the Weldorfs.' I'm sure Titus would like it."

"The last of the Weldorfs?" inquired Mandon. "What about yourself, Roy?"

"I'm not staying in Venetia, Giles. I'll liquidate the estate, see Titus's silly endowments given homes for cats or whatever else he meant them for. I'll sell this property and add it to the residue."

"Including Titus's interest in Weldorf, Granmore, Co.?"

Nodding, Roy reached for another sheaf of documents and handed them to Mandon.

"The stock is to be sold," declared Roy. "However, there is one proviso: It must never, under any condition, become the property of a Granmore."

"I suppose that you will buy it," remarked Mandon. "You should, Roy. It's worth much more than par."

"That's one reason why I'm not keeping it," declared Roy, with a smile. "I'm putting everything into cash, as I told you. It happens that you have already offered better than par value for Titus's stock. So I'm letting you buy it, Giles."

THANKS glowed from Mandon's appreciative eyes. The glass factory was his pride, and he had every right to regard himself as its real head. He wanted to control the company outright, and Roy was willing that Mandon should.

"You're paying liberally for Titus's stock," Roy told Mandon, "though I'm sure it's worth the price you offer. Titus was a hard bargainer, but you've done wonders with the business. I still have some shares of my own in the company. Will you take mine at the same figure?"

Mandon nodded, more pleased than ever. Smiling, Roy gestured to the group about him.

"With four lawyers present," declared Roy, "we should be able to draw up a final contract. They can copy the terms that you and Titus agreed upon. And now, Giles" - Roy's smile broadened - "you have only to acquire the Granmore interest."

"I've done as much," stated Mandon. "Ted's shares are already mine, though I've promised him a ten percent bonus. Connie has agreed to sell me her interest at the same price."

"A nice girl, Connie," approved Roy. "Too bad she's a Granmore. After all, it doesn't matter. I'm not proud of my family. I don't suppose that she's afflicted with any misguided loyalty toward hers."

"She isn't," returned Mandon. "I wish you could meet her, Roy. I know you'd like her."

Roy shook his head.

"It wouldn't do for us to be seen together in Venetia," he declared. "People would think that Connie and I intended to murder each other. Perhaps, somewhere else -"

He paused abruptly, threw a glance at the lawyers, who were drawing up the contract for the stock sale. Then, taking Mandon's arm, Roy beckoned for Harry to follow them. Leading the way from the library, Roy stopped in the hall to draw his companions into a deep recess in back of a great stairway.

The alcove was as gloomy as the library, for its window was of thick richly-stained glass, a product of Weldorf, Granmore Co. that had been installed here in the days when the two families had been friendly.

Indeed, this was something of an ancestral alcove, for the Weldorf mansion had been built by Roy's grandfather, and, strange though it seemed, the first guests who had admired this alcove had been Granmores.

The stained-glass windows threw a mottled cloud upon the faces of the men in the alcove. Watching Roy Weldorf and Giles Mandon, Harry saw them dyed with many colors. It was impossible to analyze facial expressions in that dim, varied light. Nor could voices reveal the real thoughts behind them, for the solemn setting produced low, restrained tones.

"Before I leave Venetia, declared Roy Weldorf, "one thing must be settled: the matter of Ted Granmore."

"I've thought of that," spoke Mandon. "I know that you are opposed to family quarreling, Roy, but people would begin to wonder, if you were totally indifferent regarding Titus's death."

"That's it exactly!" affirmed Roy. "It is my duty to settle all unfinished business, and Ted comes in that category."

ROY'S words drilled home to Harry. How nearly Roy had settled that very business, the night when The Shadow had spilled him when his gun was trained on Ted Granmore!

Again, Harry remembered his own misgivings concerned Roy. If Roy had actually killed Titus, he couldn't afford to leave Venetia with Ted at large. Once captured, Ted would cry innocence, and people might believe him, unless Roy happened to be around as Ted's relentless accuser.

All this could be but fancy in Harry's mind. Possibly, Roy was trying to do the right thing and go through with proper obligations that rested upon the last surviving relative of Titus Weldorf.

Apparently Mandon was accepting that viewpoint, though it was difficult to form a true conclusion of anyone's sentiments in this strange light, where all talk was subdued.

"Ted confided in you before, Giles," pressed Roy. "Perhaps he would do the same again, if given the opportunity."

"You mean I might persuade Ted to give himself up?"

"I think you could." Roy's tone firmed. "You would have to use strategy, of course."

Mandon considered the problem, then shook his head. He didn't seem to feel there was a chance.

"Corbey's death is the real trouble," asserted Mandon. "Ted would feel that I would never forgive him on that count."

"Let him think that you don't know he killed Corbey."

"But we do know he killed Corbey," Mandon argued. "All we know about a prowler in black was that Ted claimed he saw him. Up here, after Titus was murdered, we saw both Ted and some one in black, but not together. Everyone agrees that Ted was just putting on an act to fool us."

As he finished, Mandon studied Roy in the queer light. Despite the many hues that tinted Roy's face, Mandon managed to catch some flicker of its expression. Sharply, he queried:

"Do you agree, Roy?"

"Frankly, I don't," returned Roy. "I'll tell you why, Giles. I saw them both at the same time: Ted and this mystery man, in the garage." Roy swung to Harry. "So did you, Vincent."

"Hardly!" Harry forced a laugh. "I'd gone bye-bye when I stumbled over Titus!"

"So you had," Roy recalled. He swung to Mandon. "Well, Giles, you can at least take my word for it."

Mandon nodded.

"I think it would work," he said slowly. "I'll pass it along to the sheriff, Roy. When word gets out that there are two persons in the case, Ted will learn it, wherever he is hiding. Newspapers have been missing from R.F.D. boxes throughout the county. The sheriff is sure that Ted is picking them up."

"Good enough," decided Roy. "Make it look as though the other man is a suspect in Titus's murder, too. Then Ted will certainly communicate with you."

"Perhaps not," returned Mandon glumly. Suddenly, his eyes showed clearly in the dim light. "But Ted would certainly try to reach his cousin Connie!"

Roy reached out and gripped Mandon's arm. Despite the tricky light, alarm was plain on Roy's face.

"Don't let Connie get mixed in this, Giles!"

"Why not?" queried Mandon, in surprise. "Ted wouldn't hurt her. She's a Granmore. I don't understand, Roy."

Roy's grip relaxed from Mandon's arm, and his laugh came short and hard. The confines of the alcove made the tone ugly, and a sneer showed on Roy's lips, an expression that even the illusion of the lights could not dispel.

"You should understand," declared Roy, "because you stated the reason, Giles. Connie is a Granmore. If she met Ted, she wouldn't tell you where. Promise me this, Giles: that you, or some trusted person, will keep Connie strictly in sight from the time this new word goes out."

"I shall, Roy," assured Mandon, "and I have the right person to help me. We'll start working on this right away."

By the "right person", Mandon meant Margo - a fact that Harry recognized. Remarking that the sooner he saw Sheriff Clemming, the better, Mandon turned away.

Starting to follow, Harry glanced and saw Roy still standing in the alcove. Flickering light threw stains of red and green across Roy's visage, giving it a definitely satanic tinge, that faded suddenly as Roy stepped away from the queer glow.

Wondering whether or not that light had shown Roy Weldorf in his true colors, Harry Vincent found himself wishing that The Shadow would soon return. If Harry's guess proved right, new clouds of doom were gathering above the murder-stricken town of Venetia!

CHAPTER XVIII. THE SHADOW'S RETURN

THAT evening, Giles Mandon did more than announce his plan of strategy to Margo Lane and Connie Granmore. He declared that it was already in operation, and in proof, he displayed a copy of the evening newspaper. A special edition, rushed through the press, carried a great scarehead shouting the possible innocence of Ted Granmore, wanted for two murders.

Connie read the headlines, then looked steadily at Mandon, to query:

"Do you believe this, Giles?"

"Frankly, I don't," returned Mandon, "but Roy Weldorf does. At least he says he does, and he wants me to go through with it."

"Was it Roy's idea?"

"In a sense, yes. But I suppose that I was really responsible for its development. You may not agree, Connie, but the only hope for Ted is to have him give himself up and face all accusations squarely. That's why I've gone through with it."

Connie nodded. She saw Mandon's point perfectly. He had more to say, however.

"It may require your co-operation, Connie -"

"I understand," said Connie. "You'd like me to answer the telephone whenever it rings, just in case it's Ted who happens to be calling. I'm to learn where he is, and tell you."

"Exactly! So that I can go to see him; nothing more. I promise you this, Connie: I won't take the sheriff to where Ted is; not until Ted personally agrees."

Mandon's statement was fair enough, and Margo, catching Connie's eye, gave an approving nod. Gradually, deep wrinkles effaced themselves from Connie's forehead, and she nodded, too. In fact, Connie's lips showed a smile when she declared:

"If Roy Weldorf is willing to give Ted a fair trial, who am I to object? Since I have your word, Giles, that Roy will deal squarely, I'll go through with it. I know that no Granmore is supposed to trust a Weldorf, but perhaps I am the exception to the general rule."

It was shortly afterward that Mandon drew Margo into another room and told her to keep Connie in sight, whenever possible. Margo gave a firm nod in return. She hadn't forgotten the other evening, when Connie slipped away, and this night Margo didn't intend to let it happen again.

"We'll take turns in the job," added Mandon, "so Connie won't know that she is under surveillance. We mustn't let her weaken in her determination. Ted's pleas might influence her, you know."

Again Margo nodded, but she was thinking of something else. While murder remained a mystery in Venetia, a huge burden still rested on The Shadow. It was even on the increase, that burden, and the evidence lay in Margo's sight. Those big headlines that blared the story of a mystery killer!

The Shadow!

Mandon saw Margo's shudder, but misinterpreted it. He thought that Connie's friend was thinking in terms of Ted Granmore. Mandon tried immediately to reassure Margo.

"Ted is no fiend," declared Mandon. "He killed Corbey under stress, and he thought he was performing a duty when he murdered Titus. Having done what he set out to do, he will be sick of death. If he were innocent, it might be different. A man who feels that the whole world has wrongfully denounced him, is apt to prove dangerous."

Mandon's words were actually quite soothing. All Margo needed was some reassurance regarding The Shadow's status in the case. Convinced that Mandon didn't believe that a mystery killer was in the thing, Margo showed immediate relief.

Again, Mandon came to a wrong conclusion. He thought that Margo wasn't worried about any possible complications with Ted.

THEN began the death watch. Though it began quite smoothly, the evening became a horror. Never before had Margo known such suspense, not even when the clock in Mandon's kitchen had ticked off minutes that promised catastrophe for The Shadow.

There was too much to think about, while waiting for that call from Ted - the call that might never come. Connie began to show strain, and Margo felt the same, though for a different reason. A new, and very serious, alarm was growing in Margo's mind.

Margo was sure that The Shadow had left Venetia with the full conviction that it would take at least a week for the sheriff and his men to find Ted Granmore. But that was before Giles Mandon had evolved his present strategy.

As matters now stood, there was a chance that Ted would be found at the end of the second day since Titus's death.

More than that, the system itself seemed dangerous. Why, Margo couldn't understand, but she at least sensed some of the factors in the matter. Seeking to meet Ted in some obscure place might prove very serious for Mandon, or anyone else who tried it. Even worse, this was the sort of emergency in which The Shadow expected Margo to communicate with Harry.

Such communication was impossible. If Margo called the Weldorf house from Mandon's, it would be a give-away. Even to attempt to use the telephone was taboo, since Mandon was keeping the line open for Ted's call.

Only one thing kept Margo sane under the stress of this strange vigil: Harry, at least knew what was going on, because he was over at the Weldorf house with Roy.

It happened that Harry was having troubles of his own, a fact which didn't occur to Margo. Harry was solidly determined to prevent Roy from slipping away alone, as he had on a previous important occasion.

In his pocket, Harry had his gun, and intended to use it as a persuader should Roy attempt to embark on another mystery trip. Harry was doubly on the alert, because he had good reason to suspect that Roy had a gun of his own, though Roy disavowed the use of weapons.

They received one call at the Weldorf mansion, and it was Roy who answered it. He talked briefly, then turned grimly to Harry, suggesting that they resume the chess game that they were playing in the library.

Harry's curiosity gained the better of him.

"Who was it, Roy?"

"Sheriff Clemming," Roy replied. "Calling up to say that they haven't heard from Ted, as yet."

"But Ted won't call the sheriff."

"Mandon may, if Connie hears from Ted."

That was all, but each succeeding minute carried greater tension, and with the fleeting time, Harry felt further concern over the question that still bothered Margo: namely, when The Shadow would return.

At Mandon's there was a call from the sheriff, too. Connie answered, and turned the phone over to Mandon, who ended the call abruptly and turned apologetically to the girl.

"I assure you, Connie," declared Mandon, "that I won't inform the sheriff until after I've talked personally with Ted -"

"I believe you, Giles," broke in Connie. "It's the strain of all this waiting that worries me. If only -"

Connie broke into a half sob and Mandon tried to soothe her. Discreetly, Margo strolled to the front door, feeling that it would be better to have Mandon call her, should Connie reach a pitch of hysterics.

At last, Margo saw Mandon beckon. She approached, to find that Connie's sobs had quieted.

"I think that Connie ought to go to bed," decided Mandon. "The ordeal has been too much for her."

"But what if Ted calls?" blurted Connie. "I'll have to talk to him."

"Margo can waken you," said Mandon. "You'll see Connie upstairs, won't you, Margo?"

Nodding agreement, Margo understood that Mandon wanted her to make sure that Connie really went to bed. It was an excellent idea from Margo's viewpoint, for it meant that Connie couldn't slip out of the house. Still, the chance of Connie's doing so seemed slight, considering that she was obviously anxious to be around if Ted phoned.

FROM the window of Connie's room, Margo kept watching the twinkling lights of Venetia, with the blackness of the hills beyond, wondering how close Ted might be lurking, if at all.

From the darkness of the room behind her Margo heard the bed creak, as Connie settled into the pillows with a grateful sigh.

Then, a similar sigh almost slipped from Margo's lips. Off above the invisible horizon, she saw other lights, dots of red and green, that were approaching like a brace of shooting stars. They represented an airplane cutting through the night, making for the landing field near the outskirts of the town.

It wasn't the time for a commercial ship to be arriving. Those lights could mean but one thing only:

The Shadow had returned!

Twenty minutes was all it would require for him to reach Mandon's, once the plane landed. Everything was safe at last, though Margo wasn't taking any chances.

Starting from the room, she paused beside the bed to make sure that Connie's clothes were really discarded and lying on a chair. Ostensibly, however, Margo was only stopping to say good night to Connie.

"Get a real nap," advised Margo. "Maybe it will last until morning. Ted probably won't call tonight. And Connie" - Margo put her next words with all the assurance that she could command - "I know that everything is going to turn out right!"

It seemed to Margo that nothing could matter, now that The Shadow had returned. Only twenty minutes longer, and each of those minutes would lessen the strain, instead of increasing it. Never in her life had Margo felt more glad, until she took a step across the threshold. There, a sound halted her.

The telephone was ringing from the floor below, and its discordant note drummed hard in Margo's ears. She heard Connie gasp: "It's Ted!" and despite herself, Margo believed that it was.

Ted's call coming now, when The Shadow was almost at hand! To Margo, the clangor of that bell was like a note of doom that could not be forestalled.

Doom it was to be, again despite The Shadow!

CHAPTER XIX. DEATH'S MEETING

THINGS began to move swiftly, too swiftly for Margo. Before she could even leave the doorway, Connie came flying through, attired in dressing gown and slippers, to dash downstairs.

She arrived there while the telephone was still ringing, with Mandon standing beside it. He raised his hand warningly, and Connie nodded. Her nervousness was gone; she was ready for the task that she felt sure would spell an end to a bitter feud.

It was Margo who felt nervous, as she watched from the stairs to see Connie lift the receiver and speak a firm hello. Then Connie was talking eagerly.

"Yes, Ted," she was saying. "This is Connie... Of course I've seen the newspaper... Yes, I'd like to believe what it says - that some other person killed Titus... Certainly, I'll see you!" Connie paused to give a light laugh. "Why should I be afraid?... Right a-away, and alone?... Very well, Ted. At the old quarry..."

Hanging up the telephone, Connie turned to Mandon without saying a word. No speech was necessary; he had heard her mention the quarry. Mandon gave a musing nod.

"The old quarry," he said. "The telephone must be still connected in the watchman's shack. You know the place, Connie, where we used to get the limestone for manufacturing glass. It's on the road that curves north between here and the Weldorf hill."

Connie knew the road, and Margo was taking mental notes. She hoped that Mandon would deliberate a while. If only he would wait long enough for The Shadow to arrive!

"I'll go over there and talk to Ted," decided Mandon. "I think I can persuade him to give himself up."

Connie gripped Mandon's arm.

"I'd better go along, Giles -"

"No." Mandon shook his head. "It wouldn't be safe, Connie. Ted is excitable. Sometimes I'm the only person who can handle him."

"But I promised that I'd see him."

"You will see him, Connie. I'll bring Ted back here. Go up to bed again, and I'll have Margo stay down here." With a wave of dismissal, Mandon began to muse again: "Which car will I take? The keys are in the sedan out front. But the coupe will be better. I'll go to the garage and get it."

Slowly, Connie was going upstairs, passing Margo on the way. Mandon threw an upward look and shook his head reprovingly. Connie gave a pout, then tightened her lips grimly. Turning abruptly she increased her pace up to the room, her slippers clattering all the way.

As soon as Connie was out of sight, Mandon spoke to Margo. "Connie must stay here," he undertoned. "It really wouldn't be safe. Besides, I promised someone -"

He paused, and Margo understood that he meant Roy Weldorf. Margo could readily recognize that Ted might not trust a meeting between two Granmores. There were moments of silence, that Margo counted as a precious delay. Then:

"As soon as you can, call the sheriff," ordered Mandon. "Tell him to have his men surround the quarry hill."

Margo's eyes opened wide.

"You're going to turn Ted over?"

"Certainly not!" replied Mandon indignantly. "I just want him to be handy in case Ted surrenders."

Mandon's voice had raised. Over it, Margo thought she heard the patter of feet in the hallway above, and feared that Connie was stealing back without her slippers. She gestured warningly to Mandon, who tilted his head and looked across Margo's shoulders, up the stairs.

"It's alright," declared Mandon, with a smile. "Connie hasn't sneaked back to listen. As I said, if I have the sheriff there -"

"You won't be able to bring Ted here," interposed Margo, seeking more delay, "but you told Connie that you would."

"I'll bring him," promised Mandon solemnly. "Sheriff Clemming will come along, too. There wasn't any mention of the sheriff in my bargain with Connie." Mandon paused, shook his head slowly. "It's the only safe way."

MARGO was about to agree, when she fancied those footfalls again. This time, she turned, but there was no one near the top of the stairs. Margo even went a few steps up to assure herself that Connie wasn't eavesdropping. Mandon decided to end that worry. He beckoned Margo out to the kitchen.

There, while the same ticking clock marked off the seconds that were bringing The Shadow, Mandon detailed things that Margo was to tell the sheriff. He said he would blink in dots and dashes from the hill, after he talked to Ted.

He was trying to arrange a simple code with his flashlight, using the whole alphabet, which Mandon said he didn't entirely remember, when an interruption came.

It was a car motor starting. Mandon hurried out to the hall, with Margo after him. Hearing the car whizz away, Mandon changed direction and dashed upstairs. He paused at Connie's door only long enough to give a single rap, then flung the door open.

The bed was empty. Connie's slippers and kimono were lying on it, but her shoes and dress were gone

from the chair. She'd hurried into her clothes while Mandon and Margo were in the kitchen, which meant that she had actually overheard their conversation and was on her way to warn Ted. The car that had left was Mandon's sedan, which he had left out front, with the key still in the lock.

Speeding downstairs again, Mandon grabbed the telephone. Margo thought he was going to phone the sheriff, but he still intended to leave that to her. Instead, he called the Weldorf number and began to talk to Roy.

"Ted called from the quarry," began Mandon, "and Connie has gone there... No, no, Roy! I didn't intend to let her go... Yes, I remember our discussion... She misunderstood something I said, and thought I was breaking a promise I made to her..."

"Yes, you can get there as soon as she can... I'll be right along, and the sheriff will be coming, too... Let Connie handle it her way, unless she tries to help Ted escape... Alright, Roy. I won't waste any more time..."

Mandon hung up, and to all intents the call was over. So, at least, was Margo's impression, but Mandon knew matters were different at the other end.

In the Weldorf mansion, Roy was still talking to a dead line, and making an excellent pretense for the benefit of Harry, who was standing by.

"Why, no!" Roy spoke in a tone of surprise. "What would make you think I had a gun, Giles?... The one the other night? That belonged to Vincent... Yes, I'll let you talk to him..."

Roy handed the phone to Harry, who said hello before he realized that the line was dead. That word was the only one that Harry spoke. Taking advantage of Harry's unguarded position, Roy swung a fist upward, past the telephone, and clipped Harry squarely on the jaw.

Reeling, Harry tried to swing the phone Roy's way. With a sweep, Roy flung it aside and hurled himself, full force, before Harry could recover. Landing hard on the floor, Harry took another jolt.

Roy's hand snaked into Harry's pocket and brought out the gun it found there. While Harry was still trying to shake off the results of the attack, Roy dashed from the house, armed with the borrowed automatic.

Over at Mandon's Margo was at the telephone. She heard Mandon's car spurting from the garage and wondered if she ought to call the sheriff, as Mandon had ordered. He'd shouted back the same instructions when he left. If Margo didn't comply, she'd find it difficult, explaining matters afterward.

Then, as Margo falteringly raised the receiver, her ordeal reached its end. A voice spoke in her ear, but it wasn't from the telephone. It was a whispered tone: The Shadow's. Simultaneously, a black-gloved hand took the telephone from Margo's hand. Turning, Margo gave a glad cry.

There stood The Shadow, arrived at last.

It took only a few moments for Margo to blurt all she knew. Thrusting the telephone back to her, The Shadow ordered Margo to complete the call to the sheriff. Before she could raise the receiver, he was gone.

Speeding away in the car that he had brought from the airport, The Shadow was making for the old quarry on the north road. He could see lights climbing the hill ahead, two sets of them, coming from different directions. One represented Roy's car; the other, Connie's.

Then, lower down, behind Connie's car, The Shadow saw lights that stood for Mandon. Those lights were halfway up the slope when The Shadow's car reached the bottom. He was gaining, but time was shortening. Doom was looming closer.

Death was scheduled to preside at that meeting by the quarry. The Shadow knew!

CHAPTER XX. THE LONE WITNESS

GUN in hand, Roy Weldorf stumbled along the path that led to the old shack beside the quarry. He'd reached the hilltop first, as Mandon had predicted, but his road hadn't taken him close enough to the place he wanted. He could see the shack ahead of him outlined in the glow of lights that had arrived near it while he was still on the way.

Those lights blacked off, and Roy stumbled worse than ever, but kept up his pace. Connie had reached Ted first, but there was still a chance that Roy could arrive soon enough.

The door of the shack creaked open. The dull gleam of an oil lantern showed Ted Granmore, holding the same revolver that had served him in the past. Ted heard Connie's voice and recognized it. He beckoned her into the shack, but she stopped in the doorway.

"Quickly, Ted!" Connie was breathless. "I have a car waiting! Take it -"

Ted interrupted savagely. His hand snatched Connie's wrist; he twisted her aside and poked his gun out into the dark. By the light from the lamp, Connie saw his face, bleary and unshaven. His voice was a hoarse snarl.

"Take it where?" he demanded. "Into a trap? I thought no one was coming with you."

"No one did," assured Connie. "I can explain later, if you call me at Mandon's again. It's only... well, only that I wanted to keep my promise -"

Ted interrupted savagely. He was looking toward the road along which Connie had come, thinking that he saw the blink of car lights. Wonderingly, Connie studied her cousin's face, realizing that he must be quite as desperate as Mandon had pictured him.

"If you'll listen to reason, Ted," began Connie, "and give yourself up -"

"To pay for a crime I didn't do?" snapped Ted. "What chance does a Granmore have? They'd accuse me of murdering my own uncle, if they could! You should have heard them whitewash Titus Weldorf on the question of Foster's death.

"Why can't they turn that rule the other way around? Why shouldn't they brand the Weldorfs the way they have us? They'd learn, soon enough, that I didn't kill Titus! There's only one man who could have. His name is Roy -"

Ted didn't add the hated name of "Weldorf". Another man had pushed into the light. Roy was pressing between Ted and Connie thrusting the girl aside. Roy's borrowed gun was jabbing close to Ted's ribs.

"Drop that revolver, Ted!"

All the fight seemed to leave Ted in one vicious spasm. As he snarled, his fingers loosened and his revolver clanked from a stone. Pushing Connie farther away, Roy lowered the automatic and stated calmly:

"You are both coming along with me."

His eyes shifted to Connie as he spoke, and Ted saw a chance. With a savage fury, the hunted man hurled himself, bare fisted, upon the last of the hated Weldorfs.

In that moment, Connie's loyalty to her cousin seemed blanked by her duty to aid a man in danger. Her scream was frantic.

SWINGING to meet Ted, Roy tossed his gun across the other man's shoulder, preferring to meet him in two-fisted style. Perhaps his recent success in subduing Harry had given Roy a grand impression of his punching power, but it didn't work in this case. Ted was too ardent with his grapple. Locking, the two reeled into the darkness.

Inside the shack, Connie saw the telephone. She sprang for it, to make a call. Then, realizing that immediate aid was needed, she remembered Ted's revolver. Pouncing to the doorway, Connie picked up the weapon and brandished it toward the two figures in the gloom outside.

"Stop it!" cried Connie. "I'll shoot!"

She didn't mean the threat, but it took effect. The fighters twisted apart, and she saw one - that she was sure must be Ted - launch himself in a new fling that sent his adversary sprawling.

Excitedly, Connie looked to see where Roy had landed, but he didn't come back into the light. For the moment, Connie feared that he had gone over the quarry edge. She gave a wild surge forward, and picked the wrong direction.

It was Connie who felt the sudden skid of stones beneath her feet, and saw the whitened mass of limestone that formed a perpendicular path below. She, not Roy, had found the brink, and she couldn't halt herself!

Blackness actually loomed up to receive her. But it wasn't the blackness of the depths.

A cloaked arm caught the girl, spun her about and flung her to the solid ground. What might have happened to Connie was told by the clatter of the loosened rocks that went plunging in her stead.

Sprawled full length, Connie was too frightened to budge. A great splash came floating upward as the stones reached the stagnant pool that filled the quarry bottom.

The girl hadn't an idea who had rescued her. She couldn't realize that another figure had arrived upon the scene, intent upon halting the strife between Roy and Ted.

The Shadow, bent upon one rescue, had seen a more immediate need for another. He had accomplished it by a lunge along the quarry edge. His strong arm had scooped Connie back and flung her to safety after she had begun an actual fall!

Behind Connie's back, a black shape was still gyrating on the limestone fringe. Only by inches had The Shadow saved himself from a plunge in Connie's stead. He was half over the brink when the falling stones splashed.

Clawing for the holds that his feet had missed, The Shadow was finding them with his hands. Poor holds, that loosened in chunks each time he gripped, only to have The Shadow grab anew for firmer rock.

Then, as if the struggle were too much, The Shadow's twisting form took a sideward slide farther along the brink. There were more tumbles of loosened stones as the whitish limestone showed in all its breadth,

with no splotch of black to dim it!

Connie saw nothing of The Shadow's fateful struggle. Eyes fixed ahead, she was watching a man against the dim light from the shack. That man was Ted Granmore. He was on his feet, a trifle groggy, and his hands were clutching ahead of him, as though seeking another grip on Roy's throat.

Roy wasn't anywhere in sight, so Connie knew that he must be where he had rolled when the grapple broke. All that Roy would need to do was rise and swoop to make an easy capture, for Ted was really dizzy.

Roy didn't make that move.

As Connie looked for him, his gun spoke, instead. It knifed a sharp stab from the darkness, straight for an open target in the shape of Ted Granmore. To Connie, that shot was like a well-aimed arrow, for she witnessed its instantaneous effect.

Ted jolted high, his hands flapping toward his chest, only to fail before they reached it. With a twisty topple, Ted Granmore caved forward, dead.

IT had all the form of outright murder, that death stab from the dark, for Ted was helpless, unarmed, when he became the target. With a low moan, Connie crept forward on hands and knees to reach the body of her cousin.

A great silence seemed to reign, save for faint splashes from the quarry pool. Then, like a strange specter from another world, a black-cloaked figure returned to the scene. It came over the quarry brink, that form in black, inching upward cautiously.

With the grip of gloved fingers, the pressure of soft-toed shoes, The Shadow had literally clung to the quarry wall at the time when he had spread full length along it. He'd dug hard into the spaces left by trickling stones, and his fourfold grip had saved him.

The Shadow's ears had heard the shot from the death gun, but he hadn't been able to hurry his return. Rolling to solid terrain, he stayed flat, and watched Connie as she bent above Ted's fallen form.

Then, from somewhere on the road, The Shadow heard a man's long call. It was answered by other shouts, below. Lights were coming up the hill.

A glow showed cars parked crooked by the road. One was The Shadow's, another belonged to Mandon. The third car, highest up was also Mandon's, but it was the sedan that Connie had used. Near the cars was Mandon, gesturing to the headlights that revealed him. As they reached him, men sprang out to join him. No one had to point what lay ahead. Everyone could see.

Roy Weldorf was on his hands and knees, trying to rise further. The effort failed him, for a knee gave under him. As he heard men dashing toward him, Roy clutched a gun from the ground and came up to his feet.

It was Harry's automatic, but Roy had no chance to use it. Sheriff Clemming and two deputies were upon him. Seeing their faces in the light, Roy gave a weary smile and handed them the gun.

"Never used it," he declared. "I dropped it deliberately, and took my chances on a slugfest with Ted."

They helped Roy to his feet and turned him toward the shack. Roy saw Connie rise from beside Ted's body, and he gave his chin a worried rub.

"I must have hit him harder than he hit me," declared Roy. "Hope I didn't hurt him too much. Anyway, there he is, sheriff - ready to answer for the murder of Titus."

It seemed to dawn very slowly upon Roy that Ted had already answered for anything he might be called upon to give account for. Roy's captors had shoved him right above Ted's body, when their prisoner gasped his realization that his recent opponent was dead. Then, shaking off his daze, Roy looked about.

One by one, accusing faces met him, until his eyes reached Connie Granmore. She, of all persons present, was the one who should have been most vengeful. But Roy, saw understanding in her gaze. He said, quite simply:

"I didn't kill him, Connie."

As a Granmore, Connie should have denounced Roy's words as a lie. Ted's death marked another score in the feud; a point for the Weldorf faction. Here was Connie's chance to add a tally for her side, and with it produce the final win for the house of Granmore.

Only for a moment did Connie hesitate. Then, with what seemed total disregard for justice and revenge, she said:

"I believe you, Roy."

Others present refused to accept that verdict. They took Roy and Connie to waiting cars and started for the courthouse, under command of Sheriff Clemming, who also ordered the bringing of Ted's body.

For several minutes, many lights were shining, but none turned toward the quarry edge. All occupied with other matters, none saw the motionless watcher whose cloaked shape formed a curious blob upon the ground.

Nor was The Shadow's car observed among the gathering of vehicles. The last men to go down the hill assumed that it belonged to others of the sheriff's band.

When the scene was his, alone, The Shadow arose and moved toward the dim shack. Eerie mirth whispered from his hidden lips. It seemed to creep across the quarry edge, to be gathered by those very depths from which The Shadow had saved two victims, one of them himself.

Ghostly were the prolonged echoes that stirred back from the blackened gulf that The Shadow had defied!

Using the telephone in the shack, The Shadow called Harry Vincent and received a reply. Uncertain as to Roy's destination, Harry had been forced to call Margo, and that, plus other delays, had prevented him from getting started. The Shadow gave Harry certain instructions, then went to his car.

AT the local courthouse, Sheriff Clemming was giving his interpretation of a third degree. He was waving Harry's gun in front of Roy's eyes, demanding that the prisoner admit he had slain Ted.

Headshakes were Roy's only answer, even when Giles Mandon inserted the suggestion that Roy might have some claim to self-defense. Finally, Mandon said:

"I'll go and see if I can find old judge Wilman. Roy needs a lawyer, and I'm sure the judge will handle his case. I'll be back within an hour, sheriff."

The sheriff hoped to make progress in that hour. He was tired of finding murderers as victims, in this ceaseless feud. If Roy wouldn't admit that he had killed Ted, Clemming intended to prove it despite him.

So the sheriff concentrated his verbal barrage on Connie.

"I want the truth and nothing but!" stormed Clemming. "Remember, young lady, perjury is a crime. I know you're opposed to all this feuding, and that's why you're standing up for a culprit who don't deserve it. But you're going to hang it on him, just the same, as sure as your name is Connie Granmore!"

Defiantly, her lips tight pressed, Connie faced the sheriff. He put a question sharply:

"You saw the shot that killed your cousin Ted?"

Connie nodded, slowly.

"And you can name the man who fired it?"

"No," returned Connie, not to be trapped by an impersonal question. "I only saw the shot."

"I see." The sheriff took a few short paces, turned suddenly and snapped: "Who else was up there by the quarry;"

"Why, only... only -"

Connie tried to catch herself, too late. Her lips were starting to frame the name "Roy Weldorf", which in itself would be the incriminating proof that the sheriff needed. Connie didn't realize that The Shadow had been present, too. Her escape from the quarry brink had seemed a weird whirl in which some superhuman agency had saved her.

Again, The Shadow came to Connie's aid. As she, the law's lone witness to Ted's death, was about to brand Roy Weldorf as a killer, an interruption filled the room, so forcefully that it totally drowned Connie's halting gasp.

Like a token from the beyond, a strange, powerful mirth countermanded all else. It rose in strident tone to a sardonic pitch, that reached a fierce crescendo and shivered into untraceable echoes that murmured from every wall.

Listeners froze, and stared in absolute bewilderment, as they heard the laugh of The Shadow!

CHAPTER XXI. THE MURDER MOTIVE

EYES were staring everywhere save toward the door from which The Shadow's laugh had come. That door, only slightly ajar, was closing slowly but tightly.

Shaking away the thing that he wanted to class as imagination, Sheriff Clemming turned anew to Connie Granmore. He wanted her to repeat the name that she had started to give, but Connie's lips had tightened. Angrily, the sheriff thrust his face toward the girl's, determined to make her denounce Roy Weldorf.

There wasn't time. The door was opening, and everyone was swinging in alarm, fearful that they were to meet that dread being called The Shadow. Instead, they saw Lamont Cranston enter, in his quiet, impassive way. His eyes showed inquiring surprise as he stepped across the room.

Ignoring Cranston, the sheriff spoke stormily to Connie, saying:

"You saw Roy Weldorf murder Ted Granmore! You'll speak the truth -"

A dry chuckle intervened. It hadn't any semblance to The Shadow's laugh, that mirth that came from

Cranston. As the sheriff wheeled angrily, Cranston shook his head. He was drawing a long envelope from his pocket.

"I wouldn't bother, sheriff. It isn't any use. This girl can't serve you as a witness."

Sheriff Clemming didn't appreciate Cranston's interruption. He gave a contemptuous glare, then spoke:

"I'm from Missouri, Mr. Cranston."

"Quite a coincidence," returned Cranston casually. "I have just returned from there. I brought along this certified copy of a certain legal document." He passed the envelope to Clemming. "Look it over, sheriff."

Then, while the sheriff was tearing open the envelope, the calm-mannered Mr. Cranston added:

"Granmores and Weldorfs might wish to kill each other. Granmores might kill Granmores; Weldorfs might even kill Weldorfs. They could testify against their own kind, too. One Weldorf could bear witness to a murder by another Weldorf, sheriff, but not under all circumstances. No woman can legally serve as a witness against her husband!"

The sheriff's eyes were staring as he heard Cranston words. He gazed at the duplicate document in his hands. It was a copy of a marriage certificate, one year old, bearing the names of Roy Weldorf and Connie Granmore!

WITH a happy sob, Connie reached Roy's arms. All need for pretext was over. They'd come to Venetia separately, Roy as a Weldorf, Connie as a Granmore, hoping to quell the feud between the families - Roy by hobnobbing with Titus, Connie by talking to Ted.

They'd felt that knowledge of their marriage would cause their feud-mad relatives to reject them. So Roy and Connie had kept that information to themselves.

It explained why Roy had left the Weldorf mansion that night when Titus was slain, the very time at which Connie had slipped away from Mandon's. Roy had driven over to meet Connie, so that they could spend an hour together, making plans. They thought they had gathered the situation well in hand, only to have tragedy stalk anew. Tragedy which neither could fully understand.

They could have told all this themselves, Roy and Connie. The strain of present circumstance had made them feel that mention of their marriage would be charged as a deception, to be used against them. It hadn't occurred to either that the statement would automatically make Ted's death an unwitnessed fact, with Connie out of it entirely.

That vital point had been recognized only by Lamont Cranston, otherwise The Shadow. He had used the same perspicacity that had earlier enabled him to divine the true status of Roy and Connie, from remarks that they had made, separately, to Harry and Margo.

Roy's reference to "we" as living in Missouri, and Connie's mention of floods in that vicinity, were the basis for Cranston's trip to the Midwest.

Tension relieved, Roy was telling his story to the sheriff without interruption. He'd wanted to reach Ted Granmore, to tell him that Roy sought no vengeance for the death of Titus Weldorf. It could all have worked if Giles Mandon had performed the function of intermediary, as originally arranged.

Mandon's modifications had mixed Connie in the case. Unable to contact Roy, she had dashed off to meet Ted. Hearing from Mandon, Roy had feared that Connie's rashness would imperil her, particularly if she told Ted she was married to Roy. Roy feared for Connie because she was now a Weldorf, and

therefore fair game for any Granmore who might be murder bent!

Step by step, such facts were building their own logic, and all the while Cranston smiled, for it was working out as he had foreseen. Nevertheless, there was grimness in that smile. The Shadow had hoped to crack the case before it bloomed with further death: namely, that of Ted Granmore.

The Shadow's new entry, as Cranston, had been much like a last-minute reprieve granted to Roy Weldorf. But he couldn't blame Roy for having hurried the search for Ted. Such effort had been sincere enough on Roy's part, and he wouldn't have attempted it had he guessed the coming consequences. Even Roy's slugging of Harry could be forgiven. Roy had needed to get started, and carry a gun with him, in behalf of his wife, Connie.

The sheriff's telephone was ringing, and while Clemming still kept nodding over Roy's statements, Cranston answered the call. It was for him, he said. A plane was about to take off from the airport and he would have to catch it.

So Cranston left, keeping to himself the fact that the call was actually from Harry Vincent, supplying a much-needed report.

Hard upon Cranston's departure, Sheriff Clemming thwacked a big fist against his open palm, and exclaimed:

"The man in black! That's who!"

Eyes turned quizzically in Clemming's direction.

"Can't you see?" the sheriff demanded. "He must have been up by the quarry. He's the fellow who killed Ted Granmore in cold blood! Whatever he thinks he is - a mysterious avenger, or what-not, he's been taking people's lives: Corbey's, then Ted's -"

Connie started to interrupt. She was calmer, and she was gaining definite recollections of a black-clad rescuer who had saved her from a fall into the quarry. It wasn't fair, this accusation of the mysterious personage in black. Connie was about to speak for The Shadow, when he spoke for himself.

Again, The Shadow laughed.

This time, they saw him. He was standing openly in the doorway, his burning eyes boring from beneath the brim of his slouch hat. His laugh carried an off-key note. It was more than sinister; it had an insidious sound.

He wasn't belying the sheriff's charge. Rather, he seemed to approve it. Sheriff and deputies came to their feet, reaching for their guns.

One term, alone, could fit their present impression of The Shadow:

Man of murder!

WHEELING before a single gun was fully drawn, The Shadow sprang off through a corridor. They were after him, pell-mell, but he outraced them from the courthouse. He was in a car, speeding off, flinging back a defiant laugh, when they arrived upon the steps to blaze useless shots after him. Scrambling into their own cars, the sheriff's men started in pursuit. Roy and Connie followed.

The Shadow's trail was leading out of town, until it reached the foot of the Granmore hill. There, he swung for the grade, but not before pursuers spied his taillights. The chase roared up the hill, passing

some cars parked near the top. It didn't stop until it reached the mansion. There, The Shadow hurled his car along the rough driveway, right to the front door.

On this occasion, he made for the front door the moment he was out of his car. The deputies thought that it would block him, for the house was closed, with old Tukes gone.

They were halting their cars along the driveway, and were springing out to aim at the cloaked fugitive, when they saw the front door swing. The Shadow was actually entering the house!

Pursuers poured after him. The Shadow had waited for them in the hallway, but when they spied him, he wheeled before they could aim their guns. He was diving for the very room where Foster Granmore had been murdered on that stormy night of his return from prison.

But The Shadow, as on the earlier occasion, changed the direction of his stride outside the door itself.

With a twist, he dodged back into the space close by the stairs. Not an eye saw that deceptive swirl. The door of the room was closed, and the hall was dark. Perfect strategy on The Shadow's part, but the illusion was to gain a helping hand.

There was a clatter as the door of Foster Granmore's room was yanked inward from the other side. Arriving men saw a figure against the dim glow of a single lamp. A figure that sprang back into the room, giving the effect that the man in question was The Shadow, continuing his mad rush.

Before the startled man could slam the door again, the deputies were upon him, covering him with guns from every angle. Over their shoulders looked the square-jawed face of Sheriff Clemming.

The square jaw hung open. Eyes bulged above it. For the sheriff was viewing the last man he expected to see: Giles Mandon!

On the table lay a great batch of green. Its mass represented the listed bonds that had disappeared at the time when old Daniel Weldorf met a sudden end, five years ago.

That Mandon had brought them here was evident, for the bonds were lying beside a metal box that the sheriff remembered having seen in Mandon's safe.

Above the fireplace was an open square of tile, which showed an empty space. Mandon had come here to plant the missing bonds in the cache that once held Foster's embezzled funds. Instead of forty thousand in cash, Mandon was hiding a quarter million in other wealth!

Tense stillness was broken by The Shadow's laugh. No longer was it faked to lead the law along a wrong trail to a right destination. That work was accomplished. The Shadow's tone was an accusation of crime, a taunt flung at Giles Mandon, who recoiled when he heard it.

Others turned to see The Shadow stepping in from the hall. Instead of a fugitive, the cloaked avenger loomed as a champion of justice.

"YOU killed Daniel Weldorf, five years ago," The Shadow told Mandon. "You pinned suspicion on Foster Granmore by revealing him as an embezzler. Then, generously" - The Shadow put sarcasm in the word - "you exonerated him of murder by giving him an alibi, saying that he was with you at nine o'clock, the time of Daniel's death."

"Foster had no exact knowledge of the time element. He never guessed that his alibi was really yours, Mandon. By accusing him on one count, clearing him on another, you bluffed the law completely, Mandon. So Foster went to prison, and you were regarded as an honest man.

"However, you couldn't reap your golden harvest. It wasn't until after you murdered Daniel Weldorf that you learned that he had sent a list of his bonds to a New York bank."

Pausing, The Shadow gestured to the space above the hearth. Resuming, he declared that Mandon must certainly have searched the Granmore mansion until he found the embezzled cash that Foster had hidden. Mandon had used that cash toward buying stock in the glass factory, largely Foster's and Ted's.

Then The Shadow painted a startling picture of happenings on the night of Foster's return from prison.

"You came from your own house, Mandon," accused The Shadow. "Corbey accompanied you, but he stopped at the footbridge. You put on old shoes that had belonged to Titus Weldorf. You made tracks to the road, then followed the solid gravel and reached the window yonder.

"From outside that window" - The Shadow's finger pointed - "you murdered Foster, after Titus had gone. You were the man whom Ted encountered in the dark!"

Mandon glowered as the others stared. The Shadow further declared that Mandon had dashed to the footbridge, leaving Titus's tracks behind him. Changing shoes again, he had helped dump the bridge that Corbey had already loosened, sending it down into the gorge.

"I saw the wreckage that night," spoke The Shadow. "By morning, the flood had washed it away. If the bridge had crashed as early as you said it had, there would have been no debris left by evening!"

Almost ashen, Mandon's face revealed that The Shadow had spoken facts. No longer could Mandon hope to dispute this amazing investigator who had suspected his part so early in the game. Then The Shadow's tone struck a solemn note, as he mentioned his chance meeting with Corbey.

The Shadow had foreseen that Mandon would carry the chain of murder farther; but the cloaked fighter was out of things at the time of the next stroke. Slugged by Corbey, The Shadow wasn't able to be present when Mandon went out with Titus to the latter's car. There, Mandon deliberately murdered Titus with Ted's gun!

Returning into the house, Mandon had replaced the gun in the safe. Instead of leaving in his own car, he'd driven Titus's, carrying its dead owner back to the Weldorf garage. There, he'd picked up a car of his own, hidden somewhere near, and had driven to the factory.

Meanwhile Ted, falling for Mandon's bait of letting him learn the safe combination, had regained his gun.

Going over to demand a showdown regarding Foster's death, Ted had found Titus murdered! He'd fled in the face of the false evidence against him; and Mandon had later coaxed the sheriff into finding Titus's old shoes, which Mandon, himself, had planted in the back of the dead man's car!

In between had come the death of Corbey - delivered, not by The Shadow but by Mandon, who had halted his car below his own house when returning from the factory.

For Mandon, hearing Corbey's threat to expose someone, had mistaken the cry. He didn't know about Corbey's capture of The Shadow. Thinking of his own hide, Mandon thought his accomplice, Corbey, was turning against him.

So Mandon fired the fatal shot and sped back to his car. Therewith, he disposed of the one man, Corbey, who could have revealed his game from the inside. Safer than ever, Mandon had then decided to murder Ted Granmore and put the blame on Roy Weldorf, continuing the fake vendetta.

The stroke had come this evening. Arriving to find Roy struggling with Ted near the quarry shack,

Mandon had grabbed up Roy's discarded gun. Connie's near fall into the quarry had occupied The Shadow with her rescue at a most untimely moment.

Ted had felled Roy with a stunning punch, and Mandon, creeping in, had stabbed the shot to Ted's heart. He'd fled, leaving the gun close to Roy, who found it while recovering from his fray with Ted.

"The reason for these murders lies before you," concluded The Shadow, gesturing to the stacks of bonds. "From man after man, Weldorf and Granmore, Mandon was buying up shares in the glass works, and death was an aid to that game.

"His finish was to have all dead except Roy and Connie. With Roy incriminated for Ted's death, and Connie a witness against him, crime looked perfect.

"Roy had given options on the last of the Weldorf holdings in the company. With prison facing him, he would never have canceled the options. Connie, who hated the town and all it represented, was sure to sell the last of the Granmore shares. An honest enough procedure on the part of Mandon, who was paying proper prices for the stock. But it promised something for the future."

STEPPING forward, The Shadow pushed Mandon aside and picked up a sheaf of bonds, gesturing them in the direction of the empty space beneath the mantel-piece.

"These belonged to Weldorf, Granmore Co.," reminded The Shadow. "Once he owned the business outright, these bonds would be Mandon's property, should they be brought to light. Planted here, he could find them whenever he chose. A week from now... a month... or a year!

"A lucky find, dating back five years. Bonds supposedly hidden by Foster Granmore, branding him, at last, as the slayer of Daniel Weldorf, and thereby explaining the whole feud between the families. This wealth, a quarter million dollars, would then belong to Giles Mandon, friend of Weldorfs and Granmores, and impartial killer of both!"

All eyes turned on Mandon, the one-man vendetta who had slain four persons with his imaginary feud. Perhaps the fact that he had managed those deaths separately made Mandon believe that he could deal with combined numbers, even when The Shadow was included.

Springing about, Mandon sprang for the window, crashed through and landed on the ground outside.

The Shadow bounded after him. From across the lawn, car lights blazed, flicked on by Margo. Beside their glow rose Harry Vincent, with a ready gun. He'd gone to Mandon's, contacted Margo, and they had watched Mandon return home and leave. After a call to Cranston, they had followed.

Trapped between The Shadow and his aiming agent, Mandon made a quick dart for the front of the house. He was half around the corner, waving a gun, an open target for the aiming automatics. The Shadow was about to press a trigger and drop Mandon, wounded, as a trophy for the law, when a great roar sounded.

Reserve deputies had arrived out front, with shotguns. Hearing shouts to stop Mandon at all cost, they had spotted him in the car lights and responded. A deluge of close-range shot felled Mandon permanently.

When Roy and Connie came dashing out from the house with Sheriff Clemming, they stopped short to stare at the master murderer, who had found death as his own reward.

The face of Giles Mandon wore an ugly grimace, unlike anything in life. Not even when The Shadow trapped him, had he let his features betray the inner evil that was his. He'd done his utmost toward the

extermination of Weldorfs and Granmores, but Mandon had failed.

One of each family survived, and they were united. To Roy and Connie would go full control of the factory their friendly ancestors had founded, and their holdings would include the reclaimed quarter million that Giles Mandon, himself, had restored under the persuasive pressure of The Shadow.

When Roy and Connie looked for The Shadow, he was gone. He had joined Harry and Margo in the waiting car, and it was coasting silently down the hill, unnoticed. Its taillights passed a turn and blinked from sight. Not until then did The Shadow's parting token arrive.

It came in the form of a triumphant laugh, that picked up echoes from the great gray walls of the massive Granmore mansion, where The Shadow's quest had begun and ended.

Strange mirth that faded, trailing, yet lived in the ears of those who heard it. Walls plucked that laugh and echoed it, as though the huge house, itself, approved The Shadow's conquest over crime.

Such was the farewell of The Shadow!

The End