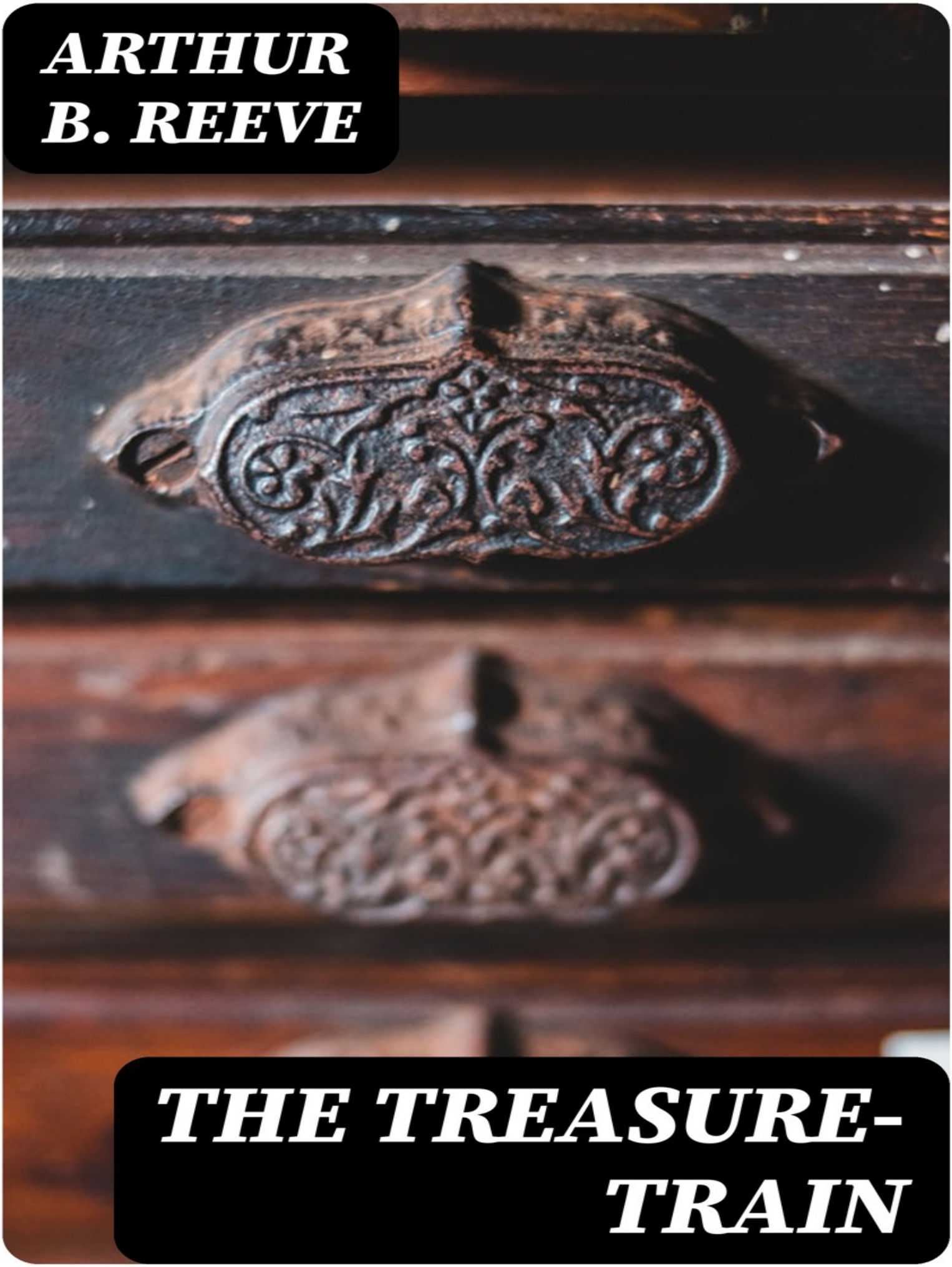
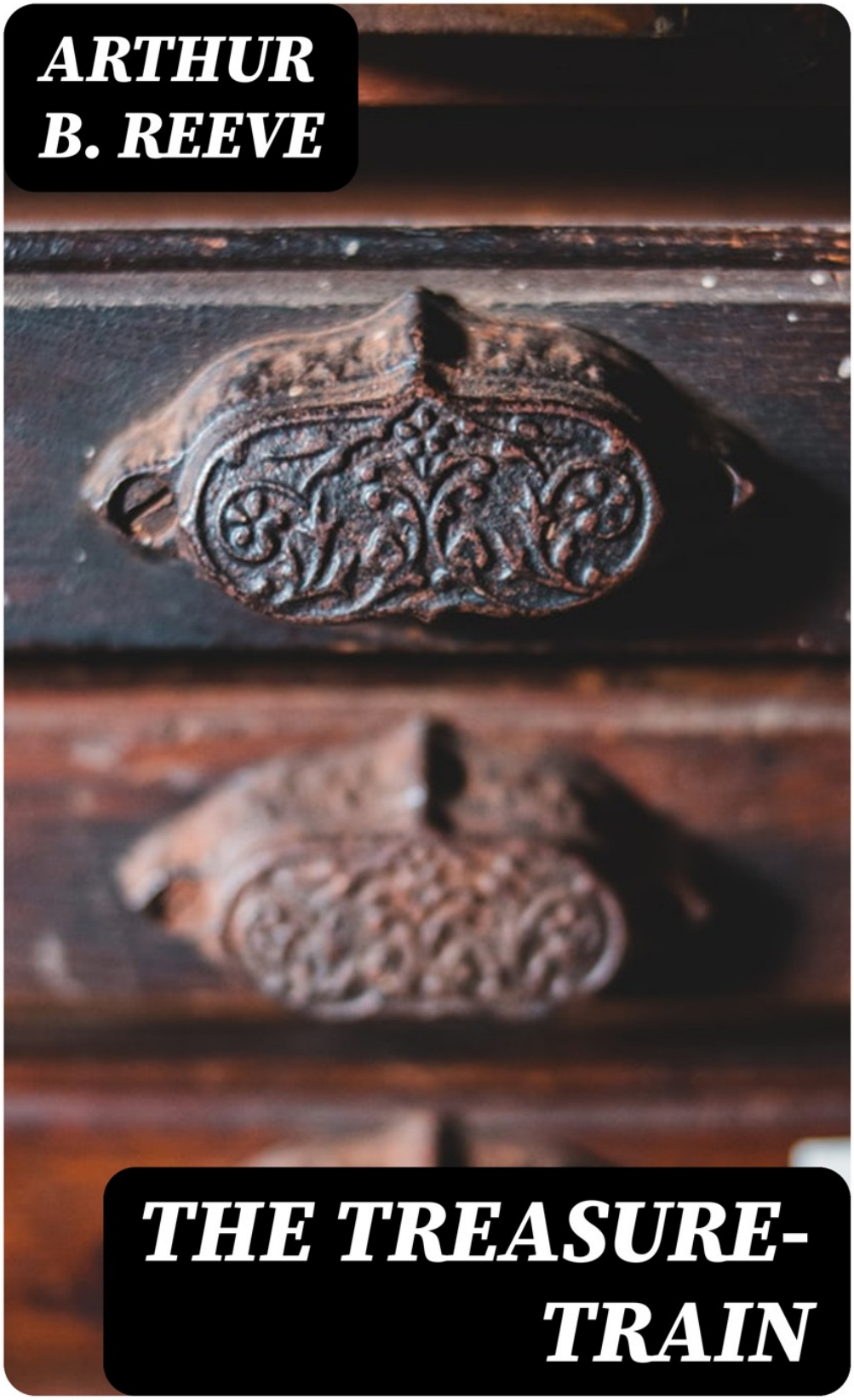

ARTHUR B. REEVE
THE TREASURE-TRAIN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Arthur B. Reeve

The Treasure-Train

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Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

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THE TREASURE-TRAIN

"I am not by nature a spy, Professor Kennedy, but—well, sometimes one is forced into something like that." Maude Euston, who had sought out Craig in his laboratory, was a striking girl, not merely because she was pretty or because her gown was modish. Perhaps it was her sincerity and artlessness that made her attractive.

She was the daughter of Barry Euston, president of the Continental Express Company, and one could readily see why, aside from the position her father held, she should be among the most-sought-after young women in the city.

Miss Euston looked straight into Kennedy's eyes as she added, without waiting for him to ask a question:

"Yesterday I heard something that has made me think a great deal. You know, we live at the St. Germaine when we are in town. I've noticed for several months past that the lobbies are full of strange, foreign-looking people.

"Well, yesterday afternoon I was sitting alone in the tea-room of the hotel, waiting for some friends. On the other side of a huge palm I heard a couple whispering. I have seen the woman about the hotel often, though I know that she doesn't live there. The man I don't remember ever having

seen before. They mentioned the name of Granville Barnes, treasurer of father's company—"

"Is that so?" cut in Kennedy, quickly. "I read the story about him in the papers this morning."

As for myself, I was instantly alive with interest, too.

Granville Barnes had been suddenly stricken while riding in his car in the country, and the report had it that he was hovering between life and death in the General Hospital. The chauffeur had been stricken, too, by the same incomprehensible malady, though apparently not so badly.

How the chauffeur managed to save the car was a miracle, but he brought it to a stop beside the road, where the two were found gasping, a quarter of an hour later, by a passing motorist, who rushed them to a doctor, who had them transferred to the hospital in the city. Neither of them seemed able or willing to throw any light on what had happened.

"Just what was it you overheard?" encouraged Kennedy.

"I heard the man tell the woman," Miss Euston replied, slowly, "that now was the chance—when any of the great warring powers would welcome and wink at any blow that might cripple the other to the slightest degree. I heard him say something about the Continental Express Company, and that was enough to make me listen, for, you know, father's company is handling the big shipments of gold and securities that are coming here from abroad by way of Halifax. Then I heard her mention the names of Mr. Barnes and of Mr. Lane, too, the general manager." She paused, as though not relishing the idea of having the names bandied

about. "Last night the—the attack on him—for that is all that I can think it was—occurred."

As she stopped again, I could not help thinking what a tale of strange plotting the casual conversation suggested. New York, I knew, was full of high-class international crooks and flimflammers who had flocked there because the great field of their operations in Europe was closed. The war had literally dumped them on us. Was some one using a band of these crooks for ulterior purposes? The idea opened up wide possibilities.

"Of course," Miss Euston continued, "that is all I know; but I think I am justified in thinking that the two things—the shipment of gold here and the attack—have some connection. Oh, can't you take up the case and look into it?"

She made her appeal so winsomely that it would have been difficult to resist even if it had not promised to prove important.

"I should be glad to take up the matter," replied Craig, quickly, adding, "if Mr. Barnes will let me."

"Oh, he must!" she cried. "I haven't spoken to father, but I know that he would approve of it. I know he thinks I haven't any head for business, just because I wasn't born a boy. I want to prove to him that I can protect the companies interests. And Mr. Barnes—why, of course he will approve."

She said it with an assurance that made me wonder. It was only then that I recollected that it had been one of the excuses for printing her picture in the society columns of the Star so often that the pretty daughter of the president of the Continental was being ardently wooed by two of the company's younger officials. Granville Barnes himself was

one. The other was Rodman Lane, the young general manager. I wished now that I had paid more attention to the society news. Perhaps I should have been in a better position to judge which of them it was whom she really had chosen. As it was, two questions presented themselves to me. Was it Barnes? And had Barnes really been the victim of an attack—or of an accident?

Kennedy may have been thinking the problems over, but he gave no evidence of it. He threw on his hat and coat, and was ready in a moment to be driven in Miss Euston's car to the hospital.

There, after the usual cutting of red tape which only Miss Euston could have accomplished, we were led by a white-uniformed nurse through the silent halls to the private room occupied by Barnes.

"It's a most peculiar case," whispered the young doctor in charge, as we paused at the door. "I want you to notice his face and his cough. His pulse seems very weak, almost imperceptible at times. The stethoscope reveals subcrepitant sounds all over his lungs. It's like bronchitis or pneumonia—but it isn't either."

We entered. Barnes was lying there almost in a state of unconsciousness. As we stood watching him he opened his eyes. But he did not see us. His vision seemed to be riveted on Miss Euston. He murmured something that we could not catch, and, as his eyes closed again, his face seemed to relax into a peaceful expression, as though he were dreaming of something happy.

Suddenly, however, the old tense lines reappeared. Another idea seemed to have been suggested.

"Is—Lane—hiring the men—himself?" he murmured.

The sight of Maude Euston had prompted the thought of his rival, now with a clear field. What did it mean? Was he jealous of Lane, or did his words have a deeper meaning? What difference could it have made if Lane had a free hand in managing the shipment of treasure for the company?

Kennedy looked long and carefully at the face of the sick man. It was blue and cyanosed still, and his lips had a violet tinge. Barnes had been coughing a great deal. Now and then his mouth was flecked with foamy blood, which the nurse wiped gently away. Kennedy picked up a piece of the blood-soaked gauze.

A moment later we withdrew from the room as quietly as we had entered and tiptoed down the hall, Miss Euston and the young doctor following us more slowly. As we reached the door, I turned to see where she was. A distinguished-looking elderly gentleman, sitting in the waiting-room, had happened to glance up as she passed and had moved quickly to the hall.

"What—you here, Maude?" we heard him say.

"Yes, father. I thought I might be able to do something for Granville."

She accompanied the remark with a sidelong glance and nod at us, which Kennedy interpreted to mean that we might as well keep in the background. Euston himself, far from chiding her, seemed rather to be pleased than otherwise. We could not hear all they said, but one sentence was wafted over.

"It's most unfortunate, Maude, at just this time. It leaves the whole matter in the hands of Lane."

At the mention of Lane, which her father accompanied by a keen glance, she flushed a little and bit her lip. I wondered whether it meant more than that, of the two suitors, her father obviously preferred Barnes.

Euston had called to see Barnes, and, as the doctor led him up the hall again, Miss Euston rejoined us.

"You need not drive us back," thanked Kennedy. "Just drop us at the
Subway. I'll let you know the moment I have arrived at any conclusion."

On the train we happened to run across a former classmate, Morehead, who had gone into the brokerage business.

"Queer about that Barnes case, isn't it?" suggested Kennedy, after the usual greetings were over. Then, without suggesting that we were more than casually interested, "What does the Street think of it?"

"It is queer," rejoined Morehead. "All the boys down-town are talking about it—wondering how it will affect the transit of the gold shipments. I don't know what would happen if there should be a hitch. But they ought to be able to run the thing through all right."

"It's a pretty ticklish piece of business, then?" I suggested.

"Well, you know the state of the market just now—a little push one way or the other means a lot. And I suppose you know that the insiders on the Street have boosted Continental Express up until it is practically one of the 'war stocks,' too. Well, good-by—here's my station."

We had scarcely returned to the laboratory, however, when a car drove up furiously and a young man bustled in to see us.

"You do not know me," he introduced, "but I am Rodman Lane, general manager of the Continental Express. You know our company has had charge of the big shipments of gold and securities to New York. I suppose you've read about what happened to Barnes, our treasurer. I don't know anything about it—haven't even time to find out. All I know is that it puts more work on me, and I'm nearly crazy already."

I watched him narrowly.

"We've had little trouble of any kind so far," he hurried on, "until just now I learned that all the roads over which we are likely to send the shipments have been finding many more broken rails than usual."

Kennedy had been following him keenly.

"I should like to see some samples of them," he observed.

"You would?" said Lane, eagerly. "I've a couple of sections sawed from rails down at my office, where I asked the officials to send them."

We made a hurried trip down to the express company's office. Kennedy examined the sections of rails minutely with a strong pocket-lens.

"No ordinary break," he commented. "You can see that it was an explosive that was used—an explosive well and properly tamped down with wet clay. Without tamping, the rails would have been bent, not broken."

"Done by wreckers, then?" Lane asked.

"Certainly not defective rails," replied Kennedy. "Still, I don't think you need worry so much about them for the next train. You know what to guard against. Having been discovered, whoever they are, they'll probably not try it again. It's some new wrinkle that must be guarded against."

It was small comfort, but Craig was accustomed to being brutally frank.

"Have you taken any other precautions now that you didn't take before?"

"Yes," replied Lane, slowly; "the railroad has been experimenting with wireless on its trains. We have placed wireless on ours, too. They can't cut us off by cutting wires. Then, of course, as before, we shall use a pilot-train to run ahead and a strong guard on the train itself. But now I feel that there may be something else that we can do. So I have come to you."

"When does the next shipment start?" asked Kennedy.

"To-morrow, from Halifax."

Kennedy appeared to be considering something.

"The trouble," he said, at length, "is likely to be at this end. Perhaps before the train starts something may happen that will tell us just what additional measures to take as it approaches New York."

While Kennedy was at work with the blood-soaked gauze that he had taken from Barnes, I could do nothing but try to place the relative positions of the various actors in the little drama that was unfolding. Lane himself puzzled me. Sometimes I felt almost sure that he knew that Miss Euston had come to Kennedy, and that he was trying, in this way, to keep in touch with what was being done for Barnes.

Some things I knew already. Barnes was comparatively wealthy, and had evidently the stamp of approval of Maude Euston's father. As for Lane, he was far from wealthy, although ambitious.

The company was in a delicate situation where an act of omission would count for as much as an act of commission. Whoever could foresee what was going to happen might capitalize that information for much money. If there was a plot and Barnes had been a victim, what was its nature? I recalled Miss Euston's overheard conversation in the tea-room. Both names had been mentioned. In short, I soon found myself wondering whether some one might not have tempted Lane either to do or not to do something.

"I wish you'd go over to the St. Germaine, Walter," remarked Kennedy, at length, looking up from his work. "Don't tell Miss Euston of Lane's visit. But ask her if she will keep an eye out for that woman she heard talking—and the man, too. They may drop in again. And tell her that if she hears anything else, no matter how trivial, about Barnes, she must let me know."

I was glad of the commission. Not only had I been unable to arrive anywhere in my conjectures, but it was something even to have a chance to talk with a girl like Maude Euston.

Fortunately I found her at home and, though she was rather disappointed that I had nothing to report, she received me graciously, and we spent the rest of the evening watching the varied life of the fashionable hostelry in the hope of chancing on the holders of the strange conversation in the tea-room.

Once in a while an idea would occur to her of some one who was in a position to keep her informed if anything further happened to Barnes, and she would despatch a messenger with a little note. Finally, as it grew late and the adventuress of the tea-room episode seemed unlikely to favor the St. Germaine with her presence again that night, I made my excuses, having had the satisfaction only of having delivered Kennedy's message, without accomplishing anything more. In fact, I was still unable to determine whether there was any sentiment stronger than sympathy that prompted her to come to Kennedy about Barnes. As for Lane, his name was scarcely mentioned except when it was necessary.

It was early the next morning that I rejoined Craig at the laboratory. I found him studying the solution which he had extracted from the blood-soaked gauze after first removing the blood in a little distilled water.

Before him was his new spectroscope, and I could see that now he was satisfied with what the uncannily delicate light-detective had told him. He pricked his finger and let a drop of blood fall into a little fresh distilled water, some of which he placed in the spectroscope.

"Look through it," he said. "Blood diluted with water shows the well-known dark bands between D and E, known as the oxyhemoglobin absorption." I looked as he indicated and saw the dark bands. "Now," he went on, "I add some of this other liquid."

He picked up a bottle of something with a faint greenish tinge.

"See the bands gradually fade?"

I watched, and indeed they did diminish in intensity and finally disappear, leaving an uninterrupted and brilliant spectrum.

"My spectroscope," he said, simply, "shows that the blood-crystals of Barnes are colorless. Barnes was poisoned—by some gas, I think. I wish I had time to hunt along the road where the accident took place." As he said it, he walked over and drew from a cabinet several peculiar arrangements made of gauze.

He was about to say something more when there came a knock at the door. Kennedy shoved the gauze arrangements into his pocket and opened it. It was Maude Euston, breathless and agitated.

"Oh, Mr. Kennedy, have you heard?" she cried. "You asked me to keep a watch whether anything more happened to Mr. Barnes. So I asked some friends of his to let me know of anything. He has a yacht, the Sea Gull, which has been lying off City Island. Well, last night the captain received a message to go to the hospital, that Mr. Barnes wanted to see him. Of course it was a fake. Mr. Barnes was too sick to see anybody on business. But when the captain got back, he found that, on one pretext or another, the crew had been got ashore—and the Sea Gull is gone—stolen! Some men in a small boat must have overpowered the engineer. Anyhow, she has disappeared. I know that no one could expect to steal a yacht—at least for very long. She'd be recognized soon. But they must know that, too."

Kennedy looked at his watch.

"It is only a few hours since the train started from Halifax," he considered. "It will be due in New York early to-

morrow morning—twenty million dollars in gold and thirty millions in securities—a seven-car steel train, with forty armed guards!"

"I know it," she said, anxiously, "and I am so afraid something is going to happen—ever since I had to play the spy. But what could any one want with a yacht?"

Kennedy shrugged his shoulders non-committally.

"It is one of the things that Mr. Lane must guard against," he remarked, simply. She looked up quickly.

"Mr. Lane?" she repeated.

"Yes," replied Kennedy; "the protection of the train has fallen on him. I shall meet the train myself when it gets to Worcester and come in on it. I don't think there can be any danger before it reaches that point."

"Will Mr. Lane go with you?"

"He must," decided Kennedy. "That train must be delivered safely here in this city."

Maude Euston gave Craig one of her penetrating, direct looks.

"You think there is danger, then?"

"I cannot say," he replied.

"Then I am going with you!" she exclaimed.

Kennedy paused and met her eyes. I do not know whether he read what was back of her sudden decision. At least I could not, unless there was something about Rodman Lane which she wished to have cleared up. Kennedy seemed to read her character and know that a girl like Maude Euston would be a help in any emergency.

"Very well," he agreed; "meet us at Mr. Lane's office in half an hour.

Walter, see whether you can find Whiting."

Whiting was one of Kennedy's students with whom he had been lately conducting some experiments. I hurried out and managed to locate him.

"What is it you suspect?" I asked, when we returned. "A wreck—some spectacular stroke at the nations that are shipping the gold?"

"Perhaps," he replied, absently, as he and Whiting hurriedly assembled some parts of instruments that were on a table in an adjoining room.

"Perhaps?" I repeated. "What else might there be?"

"Robbery."

"Robbery!" I exclaimed. "Of twenty million dollars? Why, man, just consider the mere weight of the metal!"

"That's all very well," he replied, warming up a bit as he saw that Whiting was getting things together quickly. "But it needs only a bit of twenty millions to make a snug fortune —" He paused and straightened up as the gathering of the peculiar electrical apparatus, whatever it was, was completed. "And," he went on quickly, "consider the effect on the stock-market of the news. That's the big thing."

I could only gasp.

"A modern train-robbery, planned in the heart of dense traffic!"

"Why not?" he queried. "Nothing is impossible if you can only take the other fellow unawares. Our job is not to be taken unawares. Are you ready, Whiting?"

"Yes, sir," replied the student, shouldering the apparatus, for which I was very thankful, for my arms had frequently

ached carrying about some of Kennedy's weird but often weighty apparatus.

We piled into a taxicab and made a quick journey to the office of the Continental Express. Maude Euston had already preceded us, and we found her standing by Lane's desk as he paced the floor.

"Please, Miss Euston, don't go," he was saying as we entered.

"But I want to go," she persisted, more than ever determined, apparently.

"I have engaged Professor Kennedy just for the purpose of foreseeing what new attack can be made on us," he said.

"You have engaged Professor Kennedy?" she asked. "I think I have a prior claim there, haven't I?" she appealed.

Kennedy stood for a moment looking from one to the other. What was there in the motives that actuated them? Was it fear, hate, love, jealousy?

"I can serve my two clients only if they yield to me," Craig remarked, quietly. "Don't set that down, Whiting. Which is it—yes or no?"

Neither Lane nor Miss Euston looked at each other for a moment.

"Is it in my hands?" repeated Craig.

"Yes," bit off Lane, sourly.

"And you, Miss Euston?"

"Of course," she answered.

"Then we all go," decided Craig. "Lane, may I install this thing in your telegraph-room outside?"

"Anything you say," Lane returned, unmollified.

Whiting set to work immediately, while Kennedy gave him the final instructions.

Neither Lane nor Miss Euston spoke a word, even when I left the room for a moment, fearing that three was a crowd. I could not help wondering whether she might not have heard something more from the woman in the tea-room conversation than she had told us. If she had, she had been more frank with Lane than with us. She must have told him. Certainly she had not told us. It was the only way I could account for the armed truce that seemed to exist as, hour after hour, our train carried us nearer the point where we were to meet the treasure-train.

At Worcester we had still a long wait for the argosy that was causing so much anxiety and danger. It was long after the time scheduled that we left finally, on our return journey, late at night.

Ahead of us went a dummy pilot-train to be sacrificed if any bridges or trestles were blown up or if any new attempts were made at producing artificially broken rails. We four established ourselves as best we could in a car in the center of the treasure-train, with one of the armed guards as company. Mile after mile we reeled off, ever southward and westward.

We must have crossed the State of Connecticut and have been approaching
Long Island Sound, when suddenly the train stopped with a jerk.
Ordinarily there is nothing to grow alarmed about at the mere stopping

of a train. But this was an unusual train under unusual circumstances.

No one said a word as we peered out. Down the track the signals seemed to show a clear road. What was the matter?

"Look!" exclaimed Kennedy, suddenly.

Off a distance ahead I could see what looked like a long row of white fuses sticking up in the faint starlight. From them the fresh west wind seemed to blow a thick curtain of greenish-yellow smoke which swept across the track, enveloping the engine and the forward cars and now advancing toward us like the "yellow wind" of northern China. It seemed to spread thickly on the ground, rising scarcely more than sixteen or eighteen feet.

A moment and the cloud began to fill the air about us. There was a paralyzing odor. I looked about at the others, gasping and coughing. As the cloud rolled on, inexorably increasing in density, it seemed literally to grip the lungs.

It flashed over me that already the engineer and fireman had been overcome, though not before the engineer had been able to stop the train.

As the cloud advanced, the armed guards ran from it, shouting, one now and then falling, overcome. For the moment none of us knew what to do. Should we run and desert the train for which we had dared so much? To stay was death.

Quickly Kennedy pulled from his pocket the gauze arrangements he had had in his hand that morning just as Miss Euston's knock had interrupted his conversation with me. Hurriedly he shoved one into Miss Euston's hands, then to Lane, then to me, and to the guard who was with us.

"Wet them!" he cried, as he fitted his own over his nose and staggered to a water-cooler.

"What is it?" I gasped, hoarsely, as we all imitated his every action.

"Chlorin gas," he rasped back, "the same gas that overcame Granville Barnes. These masks are impregnated with a glycerin solution of sodium phosphate. It was chlorin that destroyed the red coloring matter in Barnes's blood. No wonder, when this action of just a whiff of it on us is so rapid. Even a short time longer and death would follow. It destroys without the possibility of reconstitution, and it leaves a dangerous deposit of albumin. How do you feel?"

"All right," I lied.

We looked out again. The things that looked like fuses were not bombs, as I had expected, but big reinforced bottles of gas compressed at high pressure, with the taps open. The supply was not inexhaustible. In fact, it was decidedly limited. But it seemed to have been calculated to a nicety to do the work. Only the panting of the locomotive now broke the stillness as Kennedy and I moved forward along the track.

Crack! rang out a shot.

"Get on the other side of the train—quick!" ordered Craig.

In the shadow, aside from the direction in which the wind was wafting the gas, we could now just barely discern a heavy but powerful motor-truck and figures moving about it. As I peered out from the shelter of the train, I realized what it all meant. The truck, which had probably conveyed the gas-tanks from the rendezvous where they had been collected, was there now to convey to some dark wharf what

of the treasure could be seized. There the stolen yacht was waiting to carry it off.

"Don't move—don't fire," cautioned Kennedy. "Perhaps they will think it was only a shadow they saw. Let them act first. They must. They haven't any too much time. Let them get impatient."

For some minutes we waited.

Sure enough, separated widely, but converging toward the treasure-train at last, we could see several dark figures making their way from the road across a strip of field and over the rails. I made a move with my gun.

"Don't," whispered Kennedy. "Let them get together."

His ruse was clever. Evidently they thought that it had been indeed a wraith at which they had fired. Swiftly now they hurried to the nearest of the gold-laden cars. We could hear them, breaking in where the guards had either been rendered unconscious or had fled.

I looked around at Maude Euston. She was the calmest of us all as she whispered:

"They are in the car. Can't we DO something?"

"Lane," whispered Kennedy, "crawl through under the trucks with me. Walter, and you, Dugan," he added, to the guard, "go down the other side. We must rush them—in the car."

As Kennedy crawled under the train again I saw Maude Euston follow Lane closely.

How it happened I cannot describe, for the simple reason that I don't remember. I know that it was a short, sharp dash, that the fight was a fight of fists in which guns were discharged wildly in the air against the will of the gunner.

But from the moment when Kennedy's voice rang out in the door, "Hands up!" to the time that I saw that we had the robbers lined up with their backs against the heavy cases of the precious metal for which they had planned and risked so much, it is a blank of grim death-struggle.

I remember my surprise at seeing one of them a woman, and I thought I must be mistaken. I looked about. No; there was Maude Euston standing just beside Lane.

I think it must have been that which recalled me and made me realize that it was a reality and not a dream. The two women stood glaring at each other.

"The woman in the tea-room!" exclaimed Miss Euston. "It was about this—robbery—then, that I heard you talking the other afternoon."

I looked at the face before me. It was, had been, a handsome face. But now it was cold and hard, with that heartless expression of the adventuress. The men seemed to take their plight hard. But, as she looked into the clear, gray eyes of the other woman, the adventuress seemed to gain rather than lose in defiance.

"Robbery?" she repeated, bitterly. "This is only a beginning."

"A beginning. What do you mean?"

It was Lane who spoke. Slowly she turned toward him.

"You know well enough what I mean."

The implication that she intended was clear. She had addressed the remark to him, but it was a stab at Maude Euston.

"I know only what you wanted me to do—and I refused. Is there more still?"

I wondered whether Lane could really have been involved.

"Quick—what DO you mean?" demanded Kennedy, authoritatively.

The woman turned to him:

"Suppose this news of the robbery is out? What will happen? Do you want me to tell you, young lady?" she added, turning again to Maude Euston. "I'll tell you. The stock of the Continental Express Company will fall like a house of cards. And then? Those who have sold it at the top price will buy it back again at the bottom. The company is sound. The depression will not last—perhaps will be over in a day, a week, a month. Then the operators can send it up again. Don't you see? It is the old method of manipulation in a new form. It is a war-stock gamble. Other stocks will be affected the same way. This is our reward—what we can get out of it by playing this game for which the materials are furnished free. We have played it—and lost. The manipulators will get their reward on the stock-market this morning. But they must still reckon with us—even if we have lost." She said it with a sort of grim humor.

"And you have put Granville Barnes out of the way, first?" I asked, remembering the chlorin. She laughed shrilly.

"That was an accident—his own carelessness. He was carrying a tank of it for us. Only his chauffeur's presence of mind in throwing it into the shrubbery by the road saved his life and reputation. No, young man; he was one of the manipulators, too. But the chief of them was—" She paused as if to enjoy one brief moment of triumph at least. "The president of the company," she added.

"No, no, no!" cried Maude Euston.

"Yes, yes, yes! He does not dare deny it. They were all in it."

"Mrs. Labret—you lie!" towered Lane, in a surging passion, as he stepped forward and shook his finger at her. "You lie and you know it. There is an old saying about the fury of a woman scorned." She paid no attention to him whatever.

"Maude Euston," she hissed, as though Lane had been as inarticulate as the boxes of gold about, "you have saved your lover's reputation—perhaps. At least the shipment is safe. But you have ruined your father. The deal will go through. Already that has been arranged. You may as well tell Kennedy to let us go and let the thing go through. It involves more than us."

Kennedy had been standing back a bit, carefully keeping them all covered. He glanced a moment out of the corner of his eye at Maude Euston, but said nothing.

It was a terrible situation. Had Lane really been in it? That question was overshadowed by the mention of her father. Impulsively she turned to Craig.

"Oh, save him!" she cried. "Can't anything be done to save my father in spite of himself?"

"It is too late," mocked Mrs. Labret. "People will read the account of the robbery in the papers, even if it didn't take place. They will see it before they see a denial. Orders will flood in to sell the stock. No; it can't be stopped."

Kennedy glanced momentarily at me.

"Is there still time to catch the last morning edition of the Star,

Walter?" he asked, quietly. I glanced at my watch.

"We may try. It's possible."

"Write a despatch—an accident to the engine—train delayed—now proceeding—anything. Here, Dugan, you keep them covered. Shoot to kill if there's a move."

Kennedy had begun feverishly setting up the part of the apparatus which he had brought after Whiting had set up his.

"What can you do?" hissed Mrs. Labret. "You can't get word through. Orders have been issued that the telegraph operators are under no circumstances to give out news about this train. The wireless is out of commission, too—the operator overcome. The robbery story has been prepared and given out by this time. Already reporters are being assigned to follow it up."

I looked over at Kennedy. If orders had been given for such secrecy by Barry Euston, how could my despatch do any good? It would be held back by the operators.

Craig quickly slung a wire over those by the side of the track and seized what I had written, sending furiously.

"What are you doing?" I asked. "You heard what she said."

"One thing you can be certain of," he answered, "that despatch can never be stolen or tapped by spies."

"Why—what is this?" I asked, pointing to the instrument.

"The invention of Major Squier, of the army," he replied, "by which any number of messages may be sent at the same time over the same wire without the slightest conflict. Really it consists in making wireless electric waves travel along, instead of inside, the wire. In other words, he had

discovered the means of concentrating the energy of a wireless wave on a given point instead of letting it riot all over the face of the earth.

"It is the principle of wireless. But in ordinary wireless less than one-millionth part of the original sending force reaches the point for which it is intended. The rest is scattered through space in all directions. If the vibrations of a current are of a certain number per second, the current will follow a wire to which it is, as it were, attached, instead of passing off into space.

"All the energy in wireless formerly wasted in radiation in every direction now devotes itself solely to driving the current through the ether about the wire. Thus it goes until it reaches the point where Whiting is—where the vibrations correspond to its own and are in tune. There it reproduces the sending impulse. It is wired wireless."

Craig had long since finished sending his wired wireless message. We waited impatiently. The seconds seemed to drag like hours.

Far off, now, we could hear a whistle as a train finally approached slowly into our block, creeping up to see what was wrong. But that made no difference now. It was not any help they could give us that we wanted. A greater problem, the saving of one man's name and the re-establishment of another, confronted us.

Unexpectedly the little wired wireless instrument before us began to buzz. Quickly Kennedy seized a pencil and wrote as the message that no hand of man could interfere with was flashed back to us.

"It is for you, Walter, from the Star," he said, simply handing me what he had written on the back of an old envelope.

I read, almost afraid to read:

Robbery story killed. Black type across page-head last edition,

"Treasure-train safe!"

McGRATH.

"Show it to Miss Euston," Craig added, simply, gathering up his wired wireless set, just as the crew from the train behind us ran up. "She may like to know that she has saved her father from himself through misunderstanding her lover."

I thought Maude Euston would faint as she clutched the message. Lane caught her as she reeled backward.

"Rodman—can you—forgive me?" she murmured, simply, yielding to him and looking up into his face.

II

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THE TRUTH DETECTOR

"You haven't heard—no one outside has heard—of the strange illness and the robbery of my employer, Mr. Mansfield—'Diamond Jack' Mansfield, you know."

Our visitor was a slight, very pretty, but extremely nervous girl, who had given us a card bearing the name Miss Helen Grey.

"Illness—robbery?" repeated Kennedy, at once interested and turning a quick glance at me.

I shrugged my shoulders in the negative. Neither the Star nor any of the other papers had had a word about it.

"Why, what's the trouble?" he continued to Miss Grey.

"You see," she explained, hurrying on, "I'm Mr. Mansfield's private secretary, and—oh, Professor Kennedy, I don't know, but I'm afraid it is a case for a detective rather than a doctor." She paused a moment and leaned forward nearer to us. "I think he has been poisoned!"

The words themselves were startling enough without the evident perturbation of the girl. Whatever one might think, there was no doubt that she firmly believed what she professed to fear. More than that, I fancied I detected a deeper feeling in her tone than merely loyalty to her employer.

"Diamond Jack" Mansfield was known in Wall Street as a successful promoter, on the White Way as an assiduous first-nighter, in the sporting fraternity as a keen plunger. But of all his hobbies, none had gained him more notoriety than his veritable passion for collecting diamonds.

He came by his sobriquet honestly. I remembered once having seen him, and he was, in fact, a walking De Beers mine. For his personal adornment, more than a million dollars' worth of gems did relay duty. He had scores of sets, every one of them fit for a king of diamonds. It was a curious hobby for a great, strong man, yet he was not alone

in his love of and sheer affection for things beautiful. Not love of display or desire to attract notice to himself had prompted him to collect diamonds, but the mere pleasure of owning them, of associating with them. It was a hobby.

It was not strange, therefore, to suspect that Mansfield might, after all, have been the victim of some kind of attack. He went about with perfect freedom, in spite of the knowledge that crooks must have possessed about his hoard.

"What makes you think he has been poisoned?" asked Kennedy, betraying no show of doubt that Miss Grey might be right.

"Oh, it's so strange, so sudden!" she murmured.

"But how do you think it could have happened?" he persisted.

"It must have been at the little supper-party he gave at his apartment last night," she answered, thoughtfully, then added, more slowly, "and yet, it was not until this morning, eight or ten hours after the party, that he became ill." She shuddered. "Paroxysms of nausea, followed by stupor and such terrible prostration. His valet discovered him and sent for Doctor Murray—and then for me."

"How about the robbery?" prompted Kennedy, as it became evident that it was Mansfield's physical condition more than anything else that was on Miss Grey's mind.

"Oh yes"—she recalled herself—"I suppose you know something of his gems? Most people do." Kennedy nodded. "He usually keeps them in a safe-deposit vault downtown, from which he will get whatever set he feels like wearing. Last night it was the one he calls his sporting-set that he