The Chase of the Golden Plate

Jacques Futrelle

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graph of George Francis Hayden a
of an apartment.

"Mr. Herbert and I searched the
growing idea, based on the established
George Francis Hayden, that he was th
in the college incident, was proven whe
this ring there—the ring that was stole
tion—with the initials of the owner in it.

The Thinking Machine produced the r
offered it to Detective Mallory, who had
the earth to slip away from him slowly but
and he examined it with a new and absorb
trust.

"Mr. Herbert and I learned of the insura
fraud in another manner—that is, when we kn
that George Francis Hayden was not dead,
know there had been a fraud. Mr. Hayden ha
been known lately as Chester Goodrich. He ha
been missing since Mr. Herbert, in his absence, re
opened the place and the jewels in his apartments.
I may add that, up to the day of the masked ball,
he was protected from casual recognition by a full
beard. He is now clean-shaven."

The Thinking Machine glanced at Mr. Mal-

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PART I

THE BURGLAR AND THE GIRL

CHAPTER I

CARDINAL RICHELIEU and the Mikado stepped out on a narrow balcony overlooking the entrance to Seven Oaks, lighted their cigarettes and stood idly watching the throng as it poured up the wide marble steps. Here was an over-corpulent Dowager Empress of China, there an Indian warrior in full paint and toggery, and mincing along behind him two giggling Geisha girls. Next, in splendid robes of rank, came the Czar of Russia. The Mikado smiled.

"An old enemy of mine," he remarked to the Cardinal.

A Watteau Shepherdess was assisted out of an

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"A figure which immediately arrested attention"

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CHAPTER II

HALF an hour later the Burglar stood alone, thoughtfully watching the dancers as they whirled by. A light hand fell on his arm—he started a little—and in his ear sounded a voice soft with the tone of a caress.

"Excellent, Dick, excellent!"

The Burglar turned quickly to face a girl—a Girl of the Golden West, with deliciously rounded chin, slightly parted rose-red lips, and sparkling, eager eyes as blue as—as blue as—well, they were blue eyes. An envious mask hid cheeks and brow, but above a sombrero was perched arrogantly on crisp, ruddy-gold hair, flaunting a tricoloured ribbon. A revolver swung at her hip—the wrong hip—and a Bowie knife, singularly inoffensive in appearance, was thrust through her girdle. The Burglar looked curiously a moment, then smiled.

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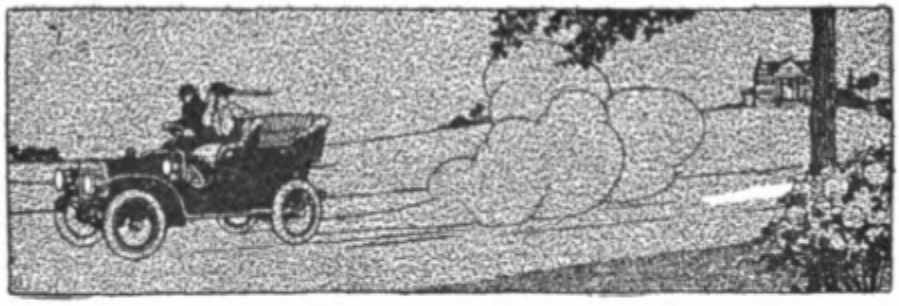

CHAPTER III

STUYVESANT RANDOLPH, millionaire, owner of Seven Oaks and host of the masked ball, was able to tell the police only what happened, and not the manner of its happening. Briefly, this was that a thief, cunningly disguised as a Burglar with dark lantern and revolver in hand, had surreptitiously attended the masked ball by entering at the front door and presenting an invitation card. And when Mr. Randolph got this far in his story even *he* couldn't keep his face straight.

The sum total of everyone's knowledge, therefore, was this:

Soon after the grand march a servant entered the smoking-room and found the Burglar there alone, standing beside an open window, looking out. This smoking-room connected, by a corridor, with a small dining-room where the Randolph

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