

ed both men warmly. Iff had written many a glowing essay for the Irishman's review. He wanted both to dine with him, but once again Iff declined, pleading another engagement. After a few moments' chat he walked off, leaving the two old friends together.

They dined at the club, and pointedly confined the conversation to the libel case, and politics in general. With their second cigars, Flynn rose. "Come round to Mount Street," he said, "I've a lot to tell you." So they strolled off in the bright autumn weather to the maisonette where Flynn lived.

## V

They made themselves at ease on the big Chesterfield. It was a strange room, a symphony of green. The walls were covered with panels of green silk; the floor was covered with a great green carpet from Algeria; the upholstery was of green morocco; the ceiling was washed in delicate eau-de-Nil with designs by Gauguin, and the lamps were shaded by soft tissues of emerald. Even the drinks were of the same color: Chartreuse, the original shipping, and crème de menthe and absinthe. Flynn's man brought cigarettes and cigars in a box of malachite, and set them down with the spirits. Flynn dismissed him for the night.

"Well," said Jack, when the man had gone, "I see you got away with it all right."

"I had a scare this afternoon. Old Iff made rings round me at chess, and then proceeded to develop a theory of the—exploit—that was so near the truth that I thought for half a moment that he had guessed something. Luckily, he's just an old crank in everybody's eyes; but, by Jove, he can play chess!"

"Iff's one of the biggest minds in England; but the second-raters always win in London."

"Well, what about your end of the bet?"

"Oh, there's no news yet. But they'll find the bodies next week when my tenancy of the place expires."

"Bodies!"

"Two. You see, I went after your friend Ezra Robinson and the fair Duval. I knew from you of the appointment on the anniversary of the murder, but not the place; so I had him shadowed from the day of the bet. I took a room in the old quarter of Marseilles, when I found that he had stopped there. I got myself up as Francis Ridley, whom you may remember in certain amateur theatricals.

"I got them along to make a night of it, and filled them up with cocaine, while I took—mostly borax. Then when we got to the stage of exhaustion and collapse, I unslung a convenient hammock that hung in the room and told them what I meant to do. And then I hanged them by the neck until they were dead, and may the Lord have mercy on their souls! Next day I crossed to Algiers, went down to El Kantara and shot moufflon—I'm having a fine head mounted especially for you—then I came back through Italy and Germany. That's all!"

"I say," cried Ffoulkes, shocked, "that's hardly in the spirit of the bet, old man. I don't see any moral turpitude involved!"

"You wretched hypocrite," retorted Flynn, "it was deliberate murder by both French and English law. I don't see what you can want more than that. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, with your legal mind!"

But the lawyer was not satisfied. He began to argue, and ultimately turned the discussion into what

was as near a quarrel as such old friends could ever contemplate. In fact, Ffoulkes saw the danger, and went home at an unusually early hour.

Flynn dismissed the matter from his mind, and passed the night in composing sonnets, in French, to the honor of the green goddess—absinthe.

## VI.

A month later. Flynn had been unusually busy, and saw little of his friends. Twice he dined with Ffoulkes, but the latter was more moody and irritable than ever. He had lost three important cases, and seemed altogether out of luck. His looks reflected his worry as much as his manners. Flynn asked him to come to Paris for a week's rest; he refused; Flynn went alone.

Returning to London, he called at the chambers in Lincoln's Inn. They were shut up. He went on to the club, hoping for news.

Almost the first man he saw was an old college friend, a judge, the very man to have the latest tidings. Probably Ffoulkes had been in court that day.

"Hush! it's terrible," said the judge, and drew Flynn into a corner of the lounge. "They had to take him away yesterday. He had persecution mania, a hopeless form, I'm afraid. Hadn't slept for a month. Said he was afraid of being murdered in his sleep! These things are too bad to talk about; I'm going home. Brace up!" The judge rose and went; but when Flynn came out of the stupor into which the intelligence had thrown him, he found Iff seated at his side.

"You've heard? Isn't it awful?"

"No," replied Iff, "not more so than the fact that two and two make four. Which in a sense is awful indeed, and according as you are for or against the tendency of the universe, is encouraging or terrifying. But it is fatal and inexorable. Perhaps to say that is to say enough!"

"Explain what you mean."

"A little while ago," replied the old mystic, "he came here to play chess with me—you remember; you were there, the day of your return. Well, I mastered his mind; I saw its limitations; I mapped its roads; I measured its heights and depths; I calculated its reactions. I beat him easily, at odds. We then began to talk of the Marsden mystery, and I analyzed the mind of the man who killed Mrs. Robinson—a mind like his own. I showed that the coincidence of dates was probably a deliberate false trail. I then asked who would be likely to think of such a point, who would have vivid reason to think of that date. I was speaking in perfectly general terms; no suspicion of him had crossed my mind. He instantly suggested himself. I knew how he played chess; so I knew that he must have had himself in view subconsciously; that he must be trying to put me off the scent by boldness. It was just the same type of tactics as choosing the anniversary of the first murder. From that instant I knew that he was guilty.

"A moment later he confirmed me. I suggested that a man like himself might kill for such a motive as pride; and he replied that he took pride in the administration of justice. Now after that libel action, and coming from such a man, the English hypocrisy, which might have been natural in a lesser man, was a complete confession. Therefore I determined to punish him. I knew there was only one