

story.

"Ananda Haramzada Swamy is a Doctor of Philosophy of the University of London. He is 33 years old, and has a wife, to whom two children have been born —"

"By a previous marriage? I asked because of your phrasing."

"It's a long story, and has nothing to do with the case. Haramzada Swamy — let us call him the Swamy for short — is an Eurasian; and curiously enough, it is his father that was black, a Tamil. The mother was an Englishwoman."

Simon Iff pursed his lips. "He is a man of loose morals," continued the Commissioner, puffing at his long pipe, "and rents an apartment, or rather a bedroom with bathroom attached, on the fifth floor of St. Noc's Mansions, near Hyde Park. This room is a mere assignation chamber. It is furnished only with a divan, a wardrobe, and a small cupboard full of liquors and tobacco. The room is, however, sumptuous in the Oriental style, and the walls are covered with obscene pictures and photographs. He allowed no one to enter, naturally enough, but used to send his wife weekly to dust it."

Simon Iff could not restrain another gesture of disgust.

"The whole block of apartments is 'under the Rose,' as it were; but — please note this — although in a general way we ask no questions as to the doings of the inhabitants and their visitors, we maintain a correspondingly strict supervision of them, on the watch always for anything outside what I may call honest, straightforward immorality."

"I see," said Iff, thoughtfully.

"The last masked ball of the season took place at Covent Garden on the first Saturday in July. Haramzada was present, and won a prize for the magnificence of his costume, that of a Persian prince of the 15th century. I may mention that he was a critic of art, as well as of philosophy. He left on the arm of a masked lady, who had not competed; no one had seen her face. They went direct in a taxi to the Swami's flat. This was about 3 a. m.; the time is uncertain. It may have been much earlier. A few minutes before five, however, and this time is accurate within ten minutes, Haramzada was seen, in his ordinary day costume, creeping down the stairs, stealthily and swiftly. The lift man only saw him by chance. He had gone up to the fifth floor on a ring, only to find no one there. Irritated, he left the lift, and looked over the stairs, just chancing to see the Swami as he crossed the hall. He supposed, naturally, that the lady was with him.

"Now comes the hand of Providence. It was the custom of that wicked elevator attendant to search the rooms of the tenants, when he was sure of their absence, and not too likely to be caught off duty; his hope was to find what he has since described to us, in a burst of candor, as 'perks'; videlicet, any small objects of value which seemed to him unlikely to be missed. So he pulled his lever, and went up to the fifth floor, opened the Swami's flat with his master key, and entered. The light was switched on.

"The body of a nearly naked woman lay before him. Blood was pouring from a wound in the head; but life was perhaps not extinct. Daniels, as the man was called, acted quickly and properly. He called a doctor on the telephone, describing the nature of the wound, and then notified us. He then had a messenger sent for the man who would normally have relieved him at seven o'clock, so that he might remain on guard.

"When our men arrived, a minute before the doctor, we found Daniels trying various primitive methods of first aid.

"Detective-Inspector Brown took in the situation at a glance. While the doctor attended the wounded woman, he telephoned headquarters, and a general alarm was sent out for the apprehension of the Swamy.

"At 5-45 the doctor, who had been working energetically to restore consciousness to the victim of the outrage, pronounced life extinct. Daniels was dismissed, but two minutes later he reappeared with the news that the Swamy was in the street outside.

"Brown flung open the window, and cautiously looked out. The Swamy, with his coat collar turned up, and his slouch hat pulled well over his face, was approaching the door in a very furtive manner. Brown determined to give him a free hand. He telephoned down to the other porter to go up to the ninth floor, so as to give the Eurasian his chance to enter unobserved. The door of his flat was closed, and the party awaited developments.

"Unfortunately there was no place where our men could hide. The wardrobe would only have concealed one man. In a few minutes the steps of the Swamy were heard coming up the stairs; a key was pushed into the lock; the door opened; our men seized him. The creature collapsed, mentally and physically, in their arms. It was actually found necessary to apply restoratives. The wretch had evidently counted upon ample leisure to dispose of the body."

"Why had he left the place at all?" This from Jack Flynn.

"Evidently in order to dispose of the proceeds of the robbery. Doubtless he has some safe cache. Well, to continue. When he came to, he was arrested and cautioned. He said, however, that he knew nothing about the matter at all; denied that he knew the woman, or of her presence. Charged at the police court with the murder, he reserved his defence, and was remanded for a week. The same day he wrote out a long rambling statement which I can only call fantastically feeble. The following week he was committed for trial. He then issued another statement, entirely contradicting the former, and endeavoring to explain it away. It is, however, as contrary to ascertained fact as the earlier effort. I expect the truth is that the animal is almost mad with fear. He had probably arranged a safe way of disposing of the boy, which was upset by the chance of the early discovery of the crime.

"The murdered woman was identified by her husband on the afternoon following the crime. As you know, it was old Sybil Lady Brooke-Hunter, a leader of the smart set, fast, alcoholic, a plague to her old husband, who should have divorced her ten years ago. She haunted every shady rendezvous in London in search of adventure —"

"Well, she found one all right!" put in Jack Flynn.

"She did. That night she was wearing over ten thousands pounds worth of jewelry, like a fool, as she was. It has all disappeared. Daniels noticed that she was wearing it when she entered St. Noc's Mansions.

"The curious part of the case is her husband's attitude. He refuses to believe that she was ever guilty of an indiscretion in her life; insists that her wanderings in London were purely philanthropic, that she must have been drugged or chloroformed or hypnotized or what not. He is an old man of Puritan views; 'if I believed her guilty of so much as a flirtation,' he said to