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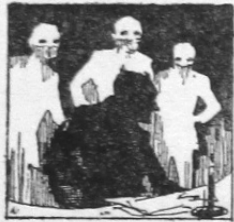
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In his collar was found a tie pin, the head being a cleverly carved crystal skull, a receptacle for a deadly poison that had killed him.

The at the police station Joan was declared to be a notorious character of the underworld.

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A girl in a tight fitting black velvet suit who enters his room from the outside after midnight, a friendly but distrustful Mr. Smith who occupies room 260, a second visit from the black velvet lady and a chase over the roof, and then the sounds of a struggle and a man hurled from the window to his death—are the incidents of this three days at the hotel. But his adventures continue; the scene of excitement moves to a country house occupied by the lady and her father and days and nights provide thrill after thrill. Mr. Smith wins his round and then is beaten by superior numbers and finally throws in his lot with the Black Velvet party. A more unscrupulous and dangerous adversary is Gonzalez, the Mexican. Peters, who is the perfect butler or gunman to order, is one of the most skilfully drawn characters of modern mystery. By mutual understanding the struggle is carried on without invoking the aid of the police.

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Katrinka, the plotter’s alluring niece, bitterly aware that her uncle plays with her as a pawn on his vast chess board, faces alone, amid sensational events, the parting of her ways.

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By EDWARD GELLIBRAND

When Alan Dawson, a young London doctor and Kenneth O’Brien, now a man of means, after serving in a West African Bush station, took a small cottage in peaceful Drayton’s Oak, they little imagined how involved they were to become in solving the mystery of the Windblow suicides.



“Windblow,” a Tudor Mansion, has a fateful room in which no one (except of quite unblemished character) can sleep without a tragic end. The next morning the rash occupier is found hanging in a cupboard.

Dawson and O’Brien, invited by Croker, the owner of the house are present when the test and the subsequent demise of another guest occur. Not satisfied that the happening is due to supernatural agency, they make every effort to find the human factor in the case. This leads them to suspect many people and many strange things are discovered; they come under the shadow of death itself, but whenever the trail seems lost some chance word leads them to it again.

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A golden jewelled star, with nine points, an ornament which had long lain hidden in a lumber room, was the instrument Fate used to snatch Max Prescott out of his easy, uneventful life. Unwittingly he incurred the hostility of the Nine Masters of the Golden Star, and from a touring actor with no higher ambitions than a West End engagement he became a performer in a mighty drama played by unseen actors all over the world. He took part in the culminating act, fought out in a lonely, icy waste, and survived to tell the tale. But what of "P," the sinister, shadowy head of the Star? Was he swallowed up by the demon snows, or does he still live to trouble the world?

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Two schoolboys, Robert and Antoine, form a wonderful conception of 'love and woman,' which they propose to live up to when they get older. On leaving college, Antoine becomes dissolute, having a large income, but Robert keeps his vow and avoids women—until the War. The world-conflict alters things for them, for Robert becomes a mystic whilst Antoine, thoroughly shaken up by his wounds, reforms and becomes a member of the staff of the League of Nations. Robert goes to Norway as a lecturer, and while there, meets a young Russian refugee whom he falls in love with and makes his mistress. Here Antoine comes on the scene again and he and Sophie fall in love with each other tacitly whilst tending Robert, who, it is discovered, contracted cancer as a result of the War. An estrangement creeps in between Robert and Sophie, who having taken a doctor's degree looks after him until he suddenly dies. Thereupon Antoine marries her and they are happy together for a while, but he develops a doubt as to whether Sophie could have saved Robert's life *if* she had not been in love with him (Antoine). Antoine then gets several medical opinions, which do not all coincide, and is racked with the torture of his thoughts. A problem of the novel is—should Antoine's love for Sophie have borne him safe above all those doubts and given him the faith to understand that her love for him was such that while sacrificing all for him, it could not have mastered her honour to the extent of letting Robert die while there was a possible chance of saving his life? 7s. 6d. net



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The pirate songs are a jolly contribution and will be quoted by all readers.

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All the women of the House of Vardon have been proud, passionate and unhappy, and it seems likely that Elizabeth Vardon, the only child of Sir Timothy Vardon, will not escape this destiny.

Motherless and with very little to engage her interests, the girl has read and dreamed of romantic love and has concentrated all her glowing young affections on Roger Tretham, a young engineer, the only friend she has ever had of her own age.

Driven within herself at the loss of Roger, and hating the new life with her father and the wealthy wife he has



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“LOVE’S OUTCAST”—*continued*

brought to Vardon, Elizabeth marries Elmer Powers, a rich middle-aged American. Her new life is weary in the extreme. Quite innocently Elizabeth drifts into a very compromising situation, and Powers, horrified and enraged, obtains a divorce. Elizabeth, full of bitter resentment, refuses to defend.

Drifting and friendless she marries Paul Abbott, the man who could have proved her innocence to Powers, if he had chosen. The fate of the Vardon women seems unescapable for Elizabeth and she suffers all the bitterness of disillusion. Finally the choice comes between her pride and her happiness.

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“The Beautiful Scythian”

By GERARD SHELLEY, Author of *Blue Steppes*



For a young Englishman to be suddenly plunged into a very mixed company of all nationalities under the roof of a very respectable boarding house in the gay town of Wiesbaden is sure to be the prelude to a lively time. In *The Beautiful Scythian* the characters are swept by the eternal

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