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THE HORROR ON THE LINKS

by
Seabury Quinn



Author of "Servants of Satan," "The Phantom Farmhouse," etc.

IT MUST have been past midnight when the skirling of my bedroom telephone bell wakened me, for I could see the moon well down toward the western horizon as I looked through the window while reaching for the instrument.

"Dr. Trowbridge," came an excited feminine voice through the receiver, "this is Mrs. Maitland. Can you come right over? Something terrible has happened to Paul!"

"Eh?" I answered, half asleep. "What's wrong?"

"We—we don't know," she replied jerkily. "He's unconscious. You know, he'd been to the dance at the country club with Gladys Phillips. We'd all been in bed hours when we heard someone banging on the front door. Mr. Maitland went down, and when he opened the door, Paul fell into the hall. Oh, doctor, he's been terribly hurt! Won't you please come right over?"

Physicians' sleep is like a park—public property. With a sigh I climbed out of bed and into my clothes, cranked my superannuated motor to life and set out for the Maitland house.

Young Maitland lay on his bed, his eyes closed, teeth tight clenched, his

face set in an expression of unutterable dread, even in his unconsciousness. Across his shoulders and on the backs of his arms I found several long incised wounds, as though his flesh had been raked by a sharp, pronged instrument.

I sterilized and bandaged the cuts, and applied restoratives, wondering what sort of encounter had produced such hurts.

"Help, help! Oh, God, help!" the lad muttered thickly, like a person trying to call out in a nightmare. "Oh, oh, it's got me; it's"—his words gave way to a gurgling, inarticulate cry of fear, and he sat bolt upright in bed, staring about with vacant, fear-filmed eyes.

"Easy, easy, young fellow," I soothed. "Lie back, now; take it easy, you're all right, you're home in bed."

He looked incomprehendingly at me a moment, then fell to babbling inanely. "The ape-thing—the ape-thing!" he screamed in a frenzy. "It's got me! Open the door; for God's sake, open the door!"

"Here," I ordered gruffly as I drove my hypodermic into his arm. "None o' that. You quiet down."

The opiate took effect almost immediately, and I left him with his

parents while I returned to catch up the raveled ends of my interrupted sleep.

HEADLINES shrieked at me from the front page of the paper lying beside my grapefruit at breakfast:

SUPER FIEND SOUGHT IN GIRL'S SLAYING

BODY OF YOUNG WOMAN FOUND NEAR
SEDGEMOOR COUNTRY CLUB MYSTIFIES
POLICE—CRIMINAL PERVERT
BLAMED FOR KILLING—
ARREST IS IMMINENT

Almost entirely denuded of clothing, marred by a score of terrible wounds, her face battered nearly past recognition and her neck broken, the body of pretty Sarah Humphries, 19, a waitress in the employ of the Sedgemoor Country Club, was found lying in one of the bunkers of the club's golf course by John Burroughs, a green keeper, early this morning. Miss Humphries, who had been employed at the clubhouse for three months, completed her duties shortly before midnight, and, according to statements of fellow workers, declared she was going to take a short cut across the links to the Andover Road, where she could get a trolley to the city. Her body, terribly mutilated, was found about twenty-five yards from the road on the golf course this morning.

Between the golf links and the Andover Road is a dense growth of trees, and it is thought the young woman was attacked while walking along the path through the woods to the road. Deputy Coroner Nesbitt, who examined the body, gave his opinion that she had been dead about five hours when found. She had not been criminally assaulted.

Several suspicious characters have been seen in the neighborhood of the club's grounds recently, and the police are checking up on their movements. An early arrest is expected.

"There's two gintelmen to see ye, sor," Nora, my housekeeper, interrupted my perusal of the paper. "'Tis Sergeant Costello an' a Frinchman, or Eyetalyun, or sumpin. They do be warntin' ter ax ye some questions about th' murder of th' pore little Humphries gurl."

"Ask me about the murder?" I protested. "Why, the first I knew of it was when I looked at this paper, and I'm not through reading the account of the crime yet."

"That's all right, Dr. Trowbridge," Detective Sergeant Costello answered with a laugh as he entered the dining room. "We don't figure on arresting you; but we'd like to ask you some questions, if you don't mind. This is Professor de Grandin, of the Paris police. He's been doing some work for his department over here, an' when this murder broke, he offered the chief his help. We'll be needin' it, too, I'm thinkin'. Professor de Grandin, Dr. Trowbridge," he waved an introductory hand from one to the other of us.

The professor bowed stiffly from the hips, in continental fashion, then extended his hand with a friendly smile. He was a perfect example of the rare French blond type, rather under medium height, but with a military erectness of carriage which made him look several inches taller than he actually was. His light blue eyes were small and exceedingly deep-set, and would have been humorous had it not been for the curious cold directness of their gaze. With his wide mouth, light mustache waxed at the ends in two perfectly horizontal points, and those twinkling, stock-taking eyes, he reminded me of an alert tom-cat. Like a cat's, too, was his lithe, noiseless step as he crossed the room to shake hands.

"I fear Monsieur Costello gives you the misapprehension, doctor," he said in a pleasant voice, almost devoid of accent. "It is most true I am connected with the *Service de Sûreté*, but not as a vocation. My principal work is at the University of Paris and St. Lazaire Hospital; at present I combine my vocation of savant with my avocation of criminologist. You see—"

"Why," I interrupted, grasping his hand, "you are Professor Jules de Grandin, author of *Accentuated Evolution?*"

He shrugged deprecatingly. "Yes, I am he," he admitted with a smile; "but at present our inquiries lie in another field. You have a patient, one young Monsieur Paul Maitland, is it not? He was set upon last night in the Andover Road?"

"I have a patient named Paul Maitland," I admitted, "but I don't know where he received his injuries."

"Nor do we," he answered with a smile, "but we shall inquire. You will go with us while we question him? No?"

"Why, yes," I acquiesced. "I should be looking in on him this morning, anyhow."

"AND now, Monsieur," Professor de Grandin began when introductions had been completed, "you will please to tell us what happened last night to you. Yes?"

Paul looked uncomfortably from one of us to the other and swallowed nervously. "I don't like to think of it," he confessed, "much less talk about it; but here's the truth, believe it or not:

"I took Gladys home from the club about 11 o'clock, for she had developed a headache. After I'd said good-night to her I decided to go home and turn in, and had gotten nearly here when I reached in my pocket for a cigarette. My case was gone, and I remembered laying it on a window ledge just before my last dance.

"The Mater gave me that case last birthday, and I didn't want to lose it, so, instead of telephoning the club and asking one of the fellows to slip it in his pocket, like a fool, I decided to drive back for it.

"You know—or at least Dr. Trowbridge and Sergeant Costello do—the Andover Road dips down in a little

valley and curves over by the edge of the golf course between the eighth and ninth holes. I was just in that part of the road nearest the links when I heard a woman scream twice—it really wasn't two screams, more like one and a half, for her second cry was shut off almost before it started.

"I had a gun in my pocket, a little .22 automatic—good thing I did, too—so I yanked it out and drew up at the roadside, leaving my engine running. That was lucky, too, believe me.

"I ran into the woods, yelling at the top of my voice, and there in the path I saw something dark, like a woman's body, lying. I started toward it when there was a rustling in the trees overhead and—*plop!*—something dropped right into the path in front of me.

"Gentlemen, I don't know what it was, but I know it wasn't anything human. It wasn't quite as tall as I, but looked about twice as broad, and its hands hung down—clear down to the ground.

"I yelled, 'Hey, what're you doin'?' and pointed my gun at it, and it didn't answer, just started jumping up and down, bouncing with its feet and hands on the ground at once. I tell you, it gave me the horrors.

"'Snap out of it!' I yelled again, 'or I'll blow your head off.' Next moment—I was so nervous and excited I didn't really know what I was doing—I let fly with the pistol, right in the thing's face.

"That came near being my last shot, too. Believe me or not, that thing, whatever it was, reached out, snatched the gun out of my hand and *broke it*. Yes, sir, snapped that pistol in two with its bare hands as easily as I could break a match stick.

"And then it was on me. I felt one of its hands go clear over my shoulder, from breast to back in a single clutch, and it pulled me toward it. Ugh! It was hairy, sir. Hairy as an ape!"

"*Morbleu!* Yes! And then?" de Grandin murmured eagerly.

"Then I lunged out with all my might and kicked it on the shins. It released its grip a second, and I beat it. Ran as I never did on the quarter-mile track, jumped into the car and took off down the road with everything wide open. But I got these gashes in my back and arms before I got into the roadster. He made three or four grabs for me, and every one of 'em took the flesh away where his nails raked me. By the time I got home I was almost crazy with fright and pain and loss of blood. I remember kicking and banging on the door and yelling for the folks to open, and then I went out like a light."

The boy paused and regarded us seriously. "I know you think I'm the biggest liar out of jail," he announced; "but I've been telling you the absolute, honest-to-goodness truth."

Costello looked skeptical, but de Grandin nodded eagerly, affirmatively. "But of course, you speak truth," he replied. "Now tell me, young Monsieur, if you can, this *poilu*, this hairy one, how was he dressed?"

"Um," Paul wrinkled his brow in an effort at remembrance. "I can't say surely, for it was dark in the woods and I was pretty much excited, but—I—think he was in evening clothes. Yes; I'd swear to it. I saw his white shirt bosom."

"Ah," muttered de Grandin softly. "A hairy thing, a fellow who leaps up and down like a jumping-jack or an ape in his anger, and in evening clothes. It is to think, *mes amis*."

"I'll say it is," Costello agreed. "What sort o' hootch did they have out to th' club last night, young feller?"

"Dr. Trowbridge is wanted on the 'phone, please," a maid announced from the door. "You can take it on

this one, if you wish, sir; it's connected with the main line."

I picked up the instrument from young Maitland's bedside table and called, "Hello, Dr. Trowbridge speaking."

"This is Mrs. Comstock, doctor," a voice informed me. "Your housekeeper told us you were at Mrs. Maitland's. Can you come to my house, please? Mr. Manly, my daughter's fiancé, was hurt last night."

"Hurt last night?" I repeated.

"Yes, out by the country club."

"Very well, I'll be over shortly," I answered, then held out my hand to de Grandin.

"Sorry to have to run away," I apologized, "but another man was hurt at the club last night."

"Ah?" he replied interrogatively.

"That club, it is an unfortunate place. May I accompany you, doctor? This other man, he may tell us something also."

"Very well," I agreed, "I'll be pleased to have your company."

YOUNG Manly's injury proved to be a gunshot wound inflicted by a small caliber weapon, and was located in the left shoulder. He was very reticent concerning its cause, and neither de Grandin nor I felt inclined to inquire too insistently, for Mrs. Comstock hovered about the sickroom from our entrance until the treatment was concluded.

"*Nom d'un petit porc!*" de Grandin muttered as we left the Comstock residence. "He is close-mouthed, that one. Almost, it would seem—pah! I talk the rot. Let us get to the morgue, *cher docteur*. You shall drive me there in your motor and tell me what it is you see. Ofttimes you gentlemen of the general practise see things which we specialists overlook because of the mental blinders of our specialities. *N'est-ce-pas?*"

In the cold, uncharitable light of the city mortuary we viewed the re-

mains of poor little Sarah Humphries. As the newspaper had said, she was disfigured by twenty or more wounds, running, for the most part, in converging lines down her shoulders and arms, deeply incised, deep enough to reveal the bone where skin and flesh had been completely shorn through in places. On her throat and neck were five distinct livid patches, one some three inches in size, roughly square, the other four extending in parallel lines almost completely around her neck, terminating in deeply pitted scars, as though the talons of some predatory beast had been sunk into her flesh. But the most terrifying item of the grisly sight was the poor girl's face. Repeated blows had reduced her once pretty features to an empurpled level, bits of sand and fine gravel still bedded in the cuticle told how her countenance must have been ground into the earth with terrific force. Never, since my days as emergency hospital interne, had I seen so sickening an array of injuries on a single body.

"Eh, what do you see, my friend?" the little Frenchman demanded in a raucous whisper. "You think—what?"

"It's terrible"—I began, but he interrupted impatiently:

"But of course. One does not expect the beautiful at the morgue. I ask what you see, not for your esthetic impressions. *Pardieu!*"

"If you want to know what interests me most," I answered, "it is those wounds on her shoulder and arms. Except in degree, they are exactly like those which I treated on young Maitland last night."

"Ah—yes?" de Grandin responded, his little blue eyes dancing with excitement, his cat's-whiskers mustache bristling more fiercely than ever. "Name of a little blue man! We begin to make progress. Now,"—he touched the lividities on the dead girl's throat daintily with the tip of

one well manicured nail—"these marks, do they tell you anything?"

I shook my head. "Possibly the bruise left by some sort of garrote," I hazarded. "They are too long and thick for fingerprints; besides, there's no thumb mark."

"Ha, ha," he laughed mirthlessly. "No thumb mark, do you say? My dear sir, had there been a thumb mark, I should have been all at sea. These marks, they are the stigmata of truth on the young Monsieur Maitland's story. When were you last at the zoo, eh?"

"At the zoo?" I echoed stupidly.

"But of course, have you never noted the quadrumana, how they take hold? My dear sir, it would, perhaps, not be too great an exaggeration to say the thumb is the difference between man and monkey. Man and the chimpanzee grasp an object with the fingers, using the thumb as a fulcrum. The gorilla, the orang-utan, the gibbon, he is a fool, he knows not how to use his thumb. "Now see"—again he indicated the bruises—"this large patch, that represents the heel of the hand, these encircling lines, they are the fingers, these wounds, they are nail prints. Name of an old one-eyed tom-cat! It was truth the young Maitland told. It was an ape which accosted him in the *bois*. An ape in evening clothes! What think you from that, *hein?*"

"God knows," I answered helplessly. "I give up."

"*Qui, Monsieur le Docteur,*" de Grandin lapsed into his native tongue in his earnestness, "truly, God does know. But I, do I give up? Me, I am like your so splendid Paul Jones, I have but commenced to fight!"

He turned abruptly from the dead girl and, seizing my elbow, urged me from the morgue. "No more, no more now," he declared. "You have your mission of help to the sick to perform, and I have my work, also, to do. If you will take me once more to your

charming suburb I will leave you to your duties while I pursue mine, and, if the imposition is not too great, I will dwell at your house while on this case. You consent? Good!

"Until tonight, then," he hailed as he leaped agilely from the car at the village limits. "I shall attempt to be at the house before you have—how do you say?—hit into the straw? *Bien, au revoir, cher ami.*"

IT WAS somewhere about 8 o'clock when de Grandin returned to my house, laden with almost enough bundles to tax a motor truck's capacity. "Great Scott, professor," I exclaimed as he laid his parcels on a convenient chair and gave me a grin which sent the waxed points of his mustache shooting upward like a miniature pair of horns, "have you been buying out the town?"

"Almost," he admitted as he seated himself and lit a vile-smelling French cigarette. "I have talked much with the grocer, the druggist, the garage keeper and the tobacconist, and at each place I make purchases. I am, for the time, a new resident of your so pleasant suburb, anxious to find out about my neighbors and my new home. I have talk, talk, talk. I have milled over much wordy chaff, *hélas!* But from it I have extracted some good meal, *grâce à dieu!*

He fixed his curiously unwinking cat-stare on me and asked: "You have a Monsieur Kalmar resident here, have you not?"

"Yes," I replied, "I believe we have."

"And you can tell me of him?"—he paused, raising eyebrows questioningly.

"No," I answered, "I'm afraid I can't. He's lived here about a year, and kept very much to himself. As far as I know, he has made friends with no one in the village, and has been visited by no one but the tradesmen. I've been given to understand

he is a scientist of some sort, and took the old Means place, out on the And-over Road, so he could pursue his experiments in quiet."

"Ah, yes, I see," de Grandin tapped his cigarette case thoughtfully with his finger tips, "that much I have already gathered from my talks this day. Now tell me, if you can, is this Monsieur All-Unknown a friend of the young Manly's—the gentleman whose wound from gunshot you treated this morning?"

"Not that I know," I replied. "I've never seen them together. Manly is a queer, moody sort of chap, never has much to say to anyone. How Millicent Comstock came to fall in love with him I've no idea. He rides well, and is highly thought of by her mother, but those are about the only qualifications he has as a husband, that I've been able to see."

"He is very strong, no?" de Grandin queried.

"I don't know," I had to confess.

"Well, then," he returned, "listen at me. You think de Grandin is a fool, eh? Perhaps yes; perhaps no. This day I make other business besides talk. I go to that Comstock lady's house and reconnoiter. In an ash-can I find one pair of patent leather dress shoes, much scratched. I grease the palm of a servant and find out they are that Monsieur Manly's. I also look farther and find one white-linen dress shirt, with blood on it. It is torn about the cuffs and split at the shoulder, that shirt. It, too, I find, belong to Monsieur Manly. I am like a Jewish second-hand man when I talk with that servant of Madam Comstock—I buy from him that shirt and those shoes. Behold!"

Undoing a parcel, he exhibited a pair of dress shoes and a shirt, as though they were curios of priceless value. "In Paris we have ways of making the inanimate talk," he asserted as he thrust his hand into his pocket and drew forth a bit of folded

paper. "That shirt and those shoes I put through the third degree, and I find this." Opening the paper he disclosed three coarse, dull-brown hairs, varying from a half-inch to three inches in length.

I examined them curiously. From their appearance they might have been from a man's head, for they were too long and insufficiently curved to be body-hairs, but their texture seemed too harsh for human growth.

"Um," I commented non-committally.

"Um," he mocked. "You cannot classify them, eh? No?"

"No," I admitted. "They are entirely too coarse to have come from Manly's head. Besides, they are almost black; his hair is a distinct brown."

"My friend," de Grandin leaned forward suddenly, staring me straight in the eyes, "those hairs, I have seen such before. So have you, but you do not recognize. *They are from a gorilla!*"

"Impossible!" I jerked back. "How could a gorilla's hair get on Manly's shirt?"

"Not on," he corrected, still gazing directly at me. "They were *in* it, below the neck line, where a bullet had torn through the linen and wounded him. The hairs were embedded in the dried blood. Look at this garment"—he held the shirt before me for inspection—"behold how it is split. It has been upon a body too big for it. Monsieur Trowbridge, that shirt was worn by the thing—the monster—which killed that pitiful girl dead on the links last night, which attacked the young Maitland a few minutes later—and which got this paint from the side of Madam Comstock's house on these shoes when it climbed that house last night.

"You start, you stare? You say to yourself, 'De Grandin, he is *caduc*—mad?' Listen, I prove each step in the ladder:

"This morning, while you examine Monsieur Manly's wound, I examine him and his room. On his window sill I note a few scrapes—such scrapes as one who drag his legs and feet might make climbing over the window ledge. I look out at the window, and on the white-painted side of the house I find fresh paint-scratches. Too, also, I find marks on the painted iron pipe which carry the water from the roof down in rainy weather. That pipe runs down the corner of the house, near Manly's window, but too far away for a man to reach it from the sill. But if that man have arms as long as my leg, what then? Ah, he could make the reach most easy.

"Now, when I buy these shoes, that shirt, from the Comstock servant, I note the paint on the shoe, and the scratch also thereon. I compare the paint on the shoe with the paint on the house-sides. He are the same.

"I note that shirt, how he are blood-stained, how he are all burst, as though the man who wear him suddenly grow great and break him out. I find the beast-hairs in the blood-stain on the shirt. I take that shirt to the laundry and ask the excellent *Chinois*, 'Whose shirt are this?'

"He reply, 'Not know.'

"I say, 'You are liar, but I give you this'—I show him a bill of ten dollar—'to tell the truth.'

"He take my bill and smile like summer as he reply, 'Mr. Manly's. *Voilà!* You see?'

"No, I'll be hanged if I do," I denied.

He bent forward again, speaking with rapid earnestness: "That servant, he tell me more. Last night the young Manly was nervous—what you call ill at ease. He complain of headache, of backache—he feel r-r-rotten. He go to bed early, and his *amoureuse*, she go without him to the country club dance. The old madam, she, too, go to bed.

"The young man, he go for walk, because he can not sleep, he tell that servant that this morning. But the servant, he was up with the toothache all night, and while he hear the young man come in after midnight, he did not hear him leave.

"Now, what you think? A policeman of the motorcycle tell me he see the young Manly come from that Monsieur Kalmar's house, staggering like one drunk. He wonders, that policeman, if Monsieur Kalmar keep so much to himself because he are a legger-of-the-boot? Eh? What now, cher docteur? You say what?"

"Damn it!" I exploded, "You're piecing out the silliest nonsense-story I ever heard, de Grandin. One of us is crazy as hell, and I don't think it's I!"

"Neither of us is crazy, *mon vieux*," he returned gravely, "but men have gone mad with knowing what I know, and madder yet with suspect what I am beginning to suspect. Will you drive me past the house of Monsieur Kalmar?"

A few minutes' run carried us out to the lonely house occupied by the eccentric old man whose year's residence near the village had been a twelve months' mystery.

"Ah, ha," de Grandin exclaimed as we passed the place, "he works late, this one. Observe, the light burns in his workshop."

Sure enough, from a window at the rear of the house a shaft of electric light cut the evening shadows, and, as we stopped the car and gazed, we could see Kalmar's bent form, swathed in a laboratory apron, passing and repassing the window as he shuffled nervously back and forth across the room.

"Let us go," de Grandin suggested, turning from his silent contemplation of the worker. "While we drive back, I will tell you a story.

"Before the war which racked the world, there came to Paris from

the University of Vienna one Doctor Beneckendorff. As a man he was intolerable, as a scholar he was incomparable. The knowledge of the greatest savants concerning organic evolution and comparative anatomy were but as children's A, B, C to that one. With my own two eyes I have seen him perform experiments which, in an age less tolerant of learning—perhaps in your own America, with its so curious laws against the teaching of scientific truth—would have brought him to the stake as a wizard.

"But science is God's tool, my friend, and it is not meant that man should play at being God. That man, he went too far. We had to restrain him in prison."

"Yes!" I answered, not particularly interested in the narrative. "What did he do?"

"Eh, what did he not do?" de Grandin replied. "Children of the poor were found missing at night. They were nowhere. The gendarmes' search narrowed to the laboratory of this Beneckendorff, and there they found not the poor infants, but a half-score ape-creatures, not wholly human, not wholly simian, but partaking horribly of the appearance of each, with fur and handlike feet, but with the face of something which had once been of mankind. They were dead, those poor ones, fortunately for them.

"He proved mad, like the bug of June, as you Americans say, but ah, my friend, what a mentality, what a fine brain gone bad!

"We shut him up for the safety of the public, and for the safety of the race we burned his notebooks and destroyed the serums with which he had injected the human babes to turn them into apes."

"Impossible!" I exclaimed.

"Incredible, yes," de Grandin admitted, "but not, unfortunately, impossible—for him. His secret entered the madhouse with him; but in the

turbulent days of war when the *Boche* thundered at the gates of Paris, he escaped."

"Good God!" I cried. "You mean to say, de Grandin, this mad fiend, this maker of monsters, is loose on the world?"

He shrugged his shoulders with Gallic fatalism. "Perhaps. All trace of him has vanished, though there are reports he was later seen in the Congo Belge."

"But—"

"Ah, no, I ramble on like a fool. Of what connection is this remembrance of mine with the case of Sarah Humphries? *Pardieu*, none!

"One favor, Monsieur, if you please; let me accompany you once more when you attend the young Manly. I would have a one minute's talk with Madam Comstock. Perhaps—"

His voice trailed off into silence.

MRS. CORNELIA COMSTOCK was a lady of imposing physique and even more imposing manner. She was wont to receive respectful and ceremonious consideration from society reporters, her fellow club members, even from solicitors for "causes". But to de Grandin she was simply a woman who had information which he desired. Prefacing his inquiry with the sort of bow none but a Frenchman can achieve, he began directly:

"Madam Comstock, do you, or did you ever, know one Dr. Beneckendorff?"

Mrs. Comstock, who was used to dominating her husband, her daughter and all mankind in general, drew herself stiffly erect and directed a withering gaze at him.

"My good man—" she began, as though he were an overcharging taxi driver, but the Frenchman met her cold eyes with eyes equally cold and uncompromising.

"You will answer my questions, please," he told her. "Primarily I represent the Republic of France; but I also represent humanity. Once more, please, did you ever know a Dr. Beneckendorff?"

Mrs. Comstock's imperious glance lowered before de Grandin's unwinking stare, and her thin lips twitched slightly as she replied, "Yes."

"Ah. We make progress. When did you know him—in what circumstances? Believe me, you may speak in confidence before me and Dr. Trowbridge, but please to speak frankly. The importance is great."

"I knew Otto Beneckendorff many years ago," the lady answered in a low voice. "He had just come to this country from Europe, and was teaching science at the university near which I lived as a girl. We—we were engaged."

"Ah! So. And your betrothal, was broken? For what reason, please?"

Looking at her, I could scarcely recognize the community's social dictator in Mrs. Cornelia Comstock as she regarded de Grandin with wondering, frightened eyes. She shivered, as though she felt a sudden draft of chilled air, before answering. "He—he was impossible, sir. We had vivisectionists, even in those days—but this man seemed to torture poor, helpless animals for the love of it. I gave him back his ring when he boasted of one of his experiments to me. He seemed to enjoy telling how the poor beast suffered before it died."

"*Eh bien*," de Grandin shot me a meaning glance, as though I, too, followed the thread his examination unraveled, "we do progress. Good. Your betrothal, then, was broken. He left you, this so cruel experimenter. Did he leave in friendship?" He leaned forward, waxed cat-mustaches bristling, as he waited her reply in breathless eagerness.

Mrs. Comstock looked like one on the verge of fainting as she almost whispered: "No, no; he left me with a terrible threat. I remember his very words—can I ever forget them? He said, 'I go from you; but I shall return. Nothing but death can cheat me. I shall bring on you and yours a horror such as no man has known since the days before Adam.'"

De Grandin almost danced as she finished speaking. "Ah, ha," he exclaimed, "the explanation is ours! The mystery is almost solved. Thank you, Madam. If you will tell me one more little thing, I shall retire and trouble you no more:

"Your daughter, she is betrothed to one Monsieur Manly. Tell me, I beg, when and where did she meet this young man?"

"I introduced them," the lady replied with a return of something of her frigid manner. "Mr. Manly came to my husband with letters of introduction from an old schoolmate of his—a fellow student at the university—in Capetown."

"Eh?" de Grandin almost shrieked. "Capetown, do you say? Capetown, South Africa? *Nom d'un petit bon-homme!* From Capetown! When was this, Madam, please?"

"A year ago. Why—"

"And Monsieur Manly, he has lived with you how long?" the question shut off her offended protest half uttered.

"Mr. Manly is *stopping* with us," she answered icily. "He is to marry my daughter, Millicent, next month. Really, sir, I fail to see what interest the Republic of France, which you represent, and humanity, which you also claim to represent, can have in my private affairs. If—"

"And this Capetown friend," de Grandin interrupted feverishly. "Tell me, his name was what, and his business?"

"I—"

"Tell me!" he cried impatiently, extending his slender hands as though to choke the answer from her. "*Nom d'un fusil!* I must know. At once!"

"We do not know his street and number," Mrs. Comstock replied. "His name is Alexander Findlay, and he is a diamond factor."

"Ah, ah! *Bien.* Thank you, Madam. You have been most kind," said de Grandin, and he struck his heels together and bowed as though hinged at the hips.

IT WAS past midnight when the 'phone rang insistently. "Western Union speaking," a girl's voice announced over the wire. "Cablegram for Dr. de Grandin. Ready?"

"Yes," I answered, seizing the pencil and pad beside the instrument. "Read it, please."

"No person by name Alexander Findlay diamond factor known here no record of such person in last five years. Signed, Burlingame, Inspector of Police."

"The cable is from Capetown, South Africa," she added as I finished jotting down her dictation.

"Very good," I replied. "Forward a typed confirmation in the morning, please."

Then I went to de Grandin's room with the message.

"*Mille tonnerres!*" he shouted, flinging the covers back, as I read him the cablegram: de Grandin, he is a fool, *hein?* Listen—" he leaped from the bed and raced across the room to where his coat hung over a chair. Extracting a black-leather notebook, almost as large as a desk dictionary, he thumbed its pages rapidly, finally found the entry he sought. "Behold! This Monsieur Kalmar, whom no one knows about, he have lived here ten months and twenty-six days. I have it from that so stupid real estate broker who think I ask information for a directory of scientists.

"That young Monsieur Manly, he have known those Comstocks for 'about a year.' He bring them a letter of introduction from a schoolmate of Monsieur Comstock who are unknown to the Capetown police. *Par-dieu!* Hereafter Jules de Grandin he sleep all day and prowl all night. Tomorrow, Monsieur, you shall introduce me to the gun merchant. I desire to possess one Winchester rifle."

THE time drifted by, de Grandin going, gun in hand, each night to his lonely vigil; but no developments in the mystery of the Humphries murder or the attack on Paul Maitland were reported.

The date for Millicent Comstock's wedding approached and the big mansion was filled to overflowing with boisterous young folks; still de Grandin continued to invert the time, sleeping by day, patrolling by night.

Two nights before the marriage day he accosted me as he came downstairs. "Trowbridge, my friend, you have been most patient with me. If you will come tonight, I think, perhaps, I can show you some result."

"All right," I agreed, "I haven't the slightest idea what all this folde-rol is about, but I'm willing to be convinced."

At his request I got out my car and drove to within a block of the Comstock house, parking the machine in a small copse of trees where it would be readily accessible, yet effectually concealed.

"My friend," de Grandin began as we skirted the Comstock lawn, keeping well hidden in the shadows, "I am not certain of what I do. I am like one who walks an unfamiliar path with a hoodwink on his eyes; yet my brain tell me I follow no false road. No man knows what part Tanit, the Moon Goddess, plays in the affairs of men, even today, when her name is forgotten by all but dusty-dry antiquaries. This we know, how-

ever; at the entrance of life our appearance is governed, in the matter of days, by the phase of the moon. You, as a physician with obstetrical knowledge, know that. Too, when the time to go approach, the crisis of disease is often governed by the moon's phase. Why this is we know not; that it is we know full well. Suppose, then, the cellular organization of a body be violently, unnaturally, changed, and nature's whole force be exerted toward a readjustment. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the moon, which affect childbirth and death, might have some force to apply in such a case?"

"I dare say," I conceded, "but I don't follow you. Just what is it you expect, or suspect, de Grandin?"

"Nothing," he answered. "I suspect nothing, I affirm nothing, I deny nothing. I am agnostic, but I am hopeful. If events prove me a dotting fool, making a great, black *lutin* of my own shadow, no one will be happier than I. But he who prepares for the worst is most agreeably disappointed if the best occurs."

He touched my elbow. "Here we rest awhile," he murmured, squatting in the shadow of a small clump of dwarf pines. "That light, it is in the window of Mademoiselle Millicent's room, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

"Yes," I confirmed, wondering if I were on a fool's errand with a lunatic for company.

The merrymaking inside the house was wearing to a close as we took our station; within half an hour the mansion was shrouded in quiet darkness.

De Grandin fidgeted nervously, fussing with the lock of his gun, ejecting and reinserting cartridges, playing a devil's tattoo on the barrel with his long, tapering fingers.

Almost like a floodlight turned on the scene, the moon's radiance suddenly deluged the house, grounds and surroundings with silver as the wind swept aside a veil of clouds. "Ah,"

de Grandin muttered, "now we shall see what we shall see—perhaps."

As though his words had been a cue, there echoed from the house before us a scream of such wild, bewildered terror as few men have been unfortunate enough to hear. In the course of twenty years' active practise of medicine I had heard almost every sort of cry that physical anguish can wring from tortured flesh, but never anything like this. Fear—stark, hideous fear—played on the vocal cords of the screamer like a madman twanging a harp, bringing forth a symphony of terror that stopped the breath, hot and sulfurous, in my throat, and sent an itching tingle through my scalp.

"A-a-ah!" de Grandin exclaimed in a rising tone as he grasped his rifle and stared fixedly at the house. "*Grand Dieu*, grant he comes forth. Only that, and I shall be content."

Light flashed inside the house. The patter of terrified feet sounded among the babel of wondering, questioning voices, but the scream was not repeated.

"A-a-ah!" de Grandin breathed again, his voice razor-edged with excitement. "Look, my friend. *Le gorille!* Behold, he comes!"

Emerging from Millicent's window, horrible as a devil from lowest hell, was a great, hairy head set low upon a pair of shoulders which must have been four feet across. An arm which, somehow, reminded me of a giant snake, slipped forth, grasped the cast-iron downspout at the corner of the house, and drew a thickset, misshapen body after it. A leg, tipped with a prehensile, handlike foot, was thrown over the sill, and, like a spider from its lair, the monster leaped from the darkened window and hung a moment to the iron pipe with its sable body silhouetted against the white walls of the house.

But what was that, that white-robed form which hung pendent from

the grasp of the beast's free arm? My staring eyes strained across the moonlit night and my mouth went dry with horror.

Like a beautiful, white moth inert in the grasp of the spider, her fair hair unbound and falling like a golden veil before her marble-white face, her night clothing rent into a motley of tatters, Millicent Comstock hung in the creature's grasp.

"Shoot, shoot, man; for God's sake, shoot!" I screamed, but only a whisper, inaudible ten feet away, came from my fear-thickened lips.

"Silence, fool!" de Grandin ground between his teeth, as he pressed his gunstock against his cheek and drew the muzzle in line with the descending brute's body.

Slowly, so slowly it seemed an hour was consumed in the process, the great primate descended the water-pipe, leaping the last fifteen feet of the trip and crouching on the moonlit lawn, its tiny, deepset eyes glaring malignantly, as though it challenged the world for possession of its prey.

I could hear de Grandin's breath rasping in his nostrils as he sighted his gun and drew the trigger.

A roar like a bursting shell sounded as the smokeless powder's flash burned a gash in the night and a bullet went screaming through the air.

Again de Grandin fired, throwing the magazine mechanism with feverish haste.

The monster staggered drunkenly against the house as the detonation of the first shot sounded. With the second, it dropped Millicent's body to the lawn and uttered a cry which was part roar, part snarl, and, trailing one of its hairy arms helplessly, leaped toward the woods, crossing the grass plot in great, awkward leaps which reminded me, absurdly, of the bouncing of a huge inflated ball.

"Attend Mademoiselle," de Grandin commanded sharply, throwing a fresh cartridge into his firing cham-

ber. "I will see to the hairy one. Have no fear, I have shot his brethren in Africa."

I BENT above the girl's huddled body, putting my ear to her breast. Faint but perceptible, I made out a heart-beat, and lifted her in my arms, carrying her toward the house.

"Dr. Trowbridge!" Mrs. Comstock, followed by a throng of frightened, half-clothed guests, met me at the front door. "What has happened? Good heavens, Millicent!" She rushed forward, seizing her daughter's flaccid hands in both her own trembling ones. "Oh, what is it; what is it?"

"Help me get Millicent to bed and get me some smelling salts and some brandy," I commanded, ignoring her questions.

A few minutes later, with restoratives applied and electric pads at her feet and back, the girl showed signs of returning consciousness. "Get out—all of you," I ordered curtly. Hysterical women, even patients' mothers, are no fit occupants for the room when consciousness is regained after profound shock.

Millicent stirred in her faint, rolling her head feebly from side to side and moaning. "Oh, oh, the ape-thing—the ape-thing!" she whimpered in a small, childish voice. It was not till several hours later I realized she used exactly the term Paul Maitland had employed when recovering from his faint.

"All right, dear," I comforted. "It's all right, now. You're safe in bed. Old Dr. Trowbridge is here; he won't let anything hurt you."

She half opened her lovely eyes, saw me sitting beside her, and smiled sleepily in reassurance. Next moment she was soundly and naturally asleep, both her hands clasping one of mine.

"DOCTOR, Dr. Trowbridge," Mrs. Comstock whispered from the bedroom door. "We've searched all over the place, and there's no sign of Mr. Manly. Do—do you suppose anything could have happened to him?"

"I think it quite likely something could—and did," I answered, turning from her to smooth her daughter's hair.

"PAR la barbe d'un bouc noir!" de Grandin exclaimed as, disheveled, but with a light of exhilaration in his direct blue eyes, he met me in the Comstock hall some two hours later. "Chère Madam Comstock, you are to be congratulated. But for my so brave colleague, Dr. Trowbridge, and my own lowly self, your charming daughter had shared the fate of that never-enough-to-be-pitied Sarah Humphries.

"Trowbridge, *mon vieux*, I have not been quite frank with you. I have not told you all. But this thing, it was so incredible, so seemingly impossible, that you would not have believed. Even now, knowing what you know, having seen with your two eyes what you have seen this night, you do not quite believe. *Eh bien*, perhaps it is better so.

"To begin: When this *sacré* Beneckendorff was in the madhouse, he raved continually about his confinement cheating him of his revenge—the revenge he had so long planned against one Madam Comstock of America.

"We French, we are logical, not like you English and Americans. We write down and keep for possible reference even what a madman say. Why not? It may be useful some day.

"Now, friend Trowbridge, I tell you some time ago this Beneckendorff were reported in the Congo Belgique. Yes? But I do not tell you he were reported in charge of a young, half-grown gorilla. No.

"When this *pauvre* Mademoiselle Humphries is killed in that so terrible manner I remember my own African days and I say to me, 'Ah, ha, it look as if *Monsieur le Gorille*—the gorilla—have been about this place. I ask to know if any such have escape from a circus or zoo from near by or far. All answers are no.

"Then that Sergeant Costello, he bring me to this so splendid savant, Dr. Trowbridge, and with him I go to interview that young Paul Maitland who have encountered much strangeness on the golf links where the young woman was killed.

"And what do he tell me? He relate of a thing that have hair, that jump up and down like an enraged ape and that act like a gorilla, *but wear man's evening clothes. Parbleu!* It is to think! No gorilla have escape, yet what *seems* one is here encountered, wearing the clothes of a man. I search my memory. I remember that madman and the poor infants he turn into monkey-things with his damnable serums.

"I say: 'If he can turn man-children into monkey-things, why not can he turn ape-things into men-things? Eh?'

"I find one Dr. Kalmar live here unknown. I search about, and learn a certain man here are seen coming from his place in secret. I also find in this certain man's discarded shirt the hair of a gorilla. *Morbleu!* I think some more, and the thoughts I think are not pleasant thoughts.

"I reason: 'Suppose this serum which make a man-thing of an ape are not permanent? What then? If it are not renewed at times, the man becomes an ape again.' You follow? *Bien.*

"Now, the other day, I learn something which make me think some more. This Beneckendorff, he rave against one Madam Comstock. You, Madam Comstock, admit you once knew this Beneckendorff. He have

loved you, as he understand love; now he hate you as only he with his diseased, but great brain, can hate. Is it not against you he plan his devilish scheme? I think so.

"I send a cablegram—never mind who to; Dr. Trowbridge knows that—and I get the answer I expect, but fear. The man in whose shirt I find those gorilla hairs is no man at all, he is one terrible masquerade of a man. So. Now, I reason, 'Suppose this masquerading monkey-thing do not get his serum as expected, what will he do?' I fear to answer my own question, but I do answer it, just the same, and I buy a gun.

"This gun have bullets of soft lead, and I make them still more efficient by cutting a V-shaped notch in each of their heads. When they strike something they spread out for a space you could not cover with your hand.

"*Voilà!* I take my gun and wait. Tonight what I have expect come about. I am ready. I shoot, and each time my bullet strike, it tear a great hole in the body of the man-who-is-an-ape. He drop his prey and seek the shelter his little ape-brain tell him to fly to. He goes to the house of this so unknown Dr. Kalmar. I follow quick.

"The ape are tortured with my bullet wounds. When he reach the house of Kalmar, he is angry, and set upon this Kalmar and tear him to pieces, even as he have killed poor Sarah Humphries before. I, arriving with my gun, I kill the gorilla with one more shot.

"But before I come back here I recognize the dead corpse of that Dr. Kalmar. He are one and the same as that Beneckendorff who have escape from our Paris madhouse.

"I destroy his devil's brews with which he make monkeys of men and men of monkeys. It is better their secret be never known.

(Continued on page 574)

The Horror on the Links

(Continued from page 462)

“I think the Mademoiselle Humphries were so unfortunate as to meet this man-ape when he were on his way to Kalmar’s house, as he had been taught to come. As man, perhaps, he knew not this Kalmar, or, as we know him, Beneckendorff; but as brute this Beneckendorff was the only man he

know—his master, the man who brought him from Africa.

“When he find that poor girl, she scream, and his savageness become uppermost—believe me, the gorilla is ten thousand times more savage than the lion—and he tear her to pieces. He also try to tear the young Mait-

land to pieces; but, luckily for him and for us, he fail, and we get the story which put us on the track.

“*Voilà!* It is finished. *Triomphe!* I make my report to the good Sergeant Costello, and show him the bodies at Kalmar’s house. Then I return to France. The ministry of health, they will be glad to know that Beneckendorff is no more.”

“But, Monsieur de Grandin,” Mrs. Comstock demanded, “who was this man—or this ape—you killed?”

I held my breath as de Grandin fixed his direct stare on her, then sighed with relief as he replied, “I can not say, Madam.”

“Well”—Mrs. Comstock’s natural disputatiousness came to the surface —“I think it’s *very queer* you know so much about him; but don’t know his name.”

“Ah, Madam,” he shook his head sadly, “there are very many queer things in life; things which may puzzle even you. I bid you good night.”

“WHEN the police look for Monsieur Manly—*mon dieu*, what a name for an ape-thing!—they will be puzzled,” he told me as we walked toward my waiting motor. “I must remember to warn Sergeant Costello to enter that disappearance on his books as a case permanently unsolved. No one will ever know the true facts but you, I and the French Ministry of Health, Trowbridge, my friend. The public, they would not believe, even if we told them.”

I wonder if they will?

FURTHER ADVENTURES

of the little French scientist, de Grandin, will be narrated in “The Tenants of Broussac.” Watch for this story.