

Gy Meredith Nicholson

COPYRIGHT CHARLES SCRIBNERS SONS - RELEASED THRU PUBLISHERS AUTOCASTER SERVICE CHAPTER I STONE spent much time thinking to attract your attention but you person, Mr. Bennett. What you the size of the missive was a distinct that the house was empty. A flash up things for her brother, Archi- were in a trance and failed to see my really need is a good hard jar. Every disappointment. bald Bennett, to do, and as Archie signals." was the ideal bachelor brother, he "I was taking my walk," he stam- you're going to do every hour of the face fell as he pondered the verse. accepted her commissions in the most mered.

market. Howard's simply swamped wished on him." with work—and we'd all appreciate

The many preoccupations of his brother-in-law, who held a seat in Archie had nothing on earth to do, it was eminently fitting that he should assume some of Featherstone's domestic burdens. Archie had planned to leave for the Canadian Rockies two days later, but he obligingly agreed to take a look at the Bailey Harbor house that had been placed so providentially within reach of his sis-

"The owner belongs to that old New England Congdon family," Mrs. Featherstone explained; "they date from the beginning of time, and some of them are a trifle eccentric." "If you're renting a house from

that family, it's just as well to look

into it carefully. All right, May, I'll inspect the premises for you." Archie was already mentally planning the details of his trip with his customary exactness. He traveled constantly in the interest of his health and knew train schedules by

Archie's condition was always a grateful topic of conversation and now Mrs. Featherstone, in her most sisterly tone, broached the subject of his health. "I haven't much faith in this idea

of your going to the Rockies; you know you tried the Alps five years ago and the altitude nearly killed

Archie smiled wanly. "I seem doomed to sit on the sidelines and watch the game," he agreed gloom-

To look at him no one would believe that he had a nerve in his tall frame. One a friend carried him that Miss Perry was an utterly unoff to a farm where an autocratic athletic trainer rejuvenated tired business men. and Archie survived the heroic treatment and reappeared bronzed and hardened and feeling life. But after a winter spent in an the end of the tramp."

specialists. dinner tonight," remarked Mrs. Fea- quences." telephone that he can't possibly come moment and she met his eyes scar- time and only divided the land, be- be a lark. so if you can arrange it, Archie—it chingly, with something of the pro- ing afraid to mention the buried The storm showed no sign of

have dinner with Weld and Co- "Eyes clear, color very good; died." burn, but if you really want me—" voice a trifle weak and suggesting "This is most exciting. It's only hunger, he explored the kitchen. The Archie And Isabel Perry will be trospective; a little self-conscious, to give zest to your enterprise." here; you know she's the dearest and unimporant nervous symptoms girl, and I always thought you real- indicaced by the rolling of bread ly did like here. Her father lost all crumbs." his money before he died and she's "I've paid doctors large fees for land up near the St. Lawrence and ble he found a telegram under a Michigan and she can't help making that." a splendid success of it."

When he found himself sitting be- consider this matter of advising ing young person." side her later at Mrs. Featherstone's you." table she said to him:

"I passed you on the street the morrow afternoon."

with the wistful smile that usually your self-confidence."

girl as though she had no great op-



sympathetic person.

walk?" he asked a little tartly.

quaintance with waiting rooms of can't be very gay about walking father inherited the land, and that's him to catch the five-eleven. when you're warned that excessive where I'm opening my camp." "There will be a few people in for fatigue may have disastrous conse- "And the gold hasn't been found?" down to think. The roof and walls

fessional scruntiny to which he had treasurer in a document that would abating and as nightfall deepened "All right, May. I was going to long been accustomed.

"Oh, that's perfectly fine of you, timidity and feeble initiative. InArchie And Isabel Perry will be trospective; a little self-conscious, to give zest to your enterprise."

"This is most exciting. It's only unfortunate that it's not pirate gold larder and, finding bacon, eggs, and

had a position as gymnasium teacher telling me the same things," he said. has dug all over it without results. plate at what he assumed to be Mrs. in Miss Gordon's school. This sum- "I wish you would write those items My father gave the Michigan scen- Congdon's place. His curiosity ovmer she's to run a girls' camp up in down for me. I'm in earnest about ery to me, but this cousin of mine ercome his scruples and he read the

Bennett's medical advisers in parti- ing anything I've suggested. I Archie discharged the driver. In cular. He was used to a great deal mean to dig for buried treasure a moment he was standing in a big of sympathy and he was convinced this summer, realizing the dream of living-room that exhaled an atmosa lifetime. Talk about romance be- phere of comfort and good taste. ing dead. My grandfather was a Fully satisfied with his investiga-"What would you call a good planter in Mississippi before the Ci- tions, Archie picked up a book, bevil War. In about 1860 he saw trou- came absorbed and read until he "Oh, ten, twenty, thirty. I've ble ahead, and as he was opposed to was roused by a clap of thunder better than he ever had felt in his done fifteen and gone to a dance at secession he turned everything he that seemed to shake the world. had into gold, bought several tracts Hurrying to the window he found office and leisure to think of himself "But you haven't my handicap," of land in Michigan and New York that the storm had already broken, as an invalid, he renewed his ac- he protested defensively. "You and secretely planted his money. My and that it would be impossible for

asked Archie, deeply interested.

cousin of mine, who inherited the the adventure. In arranging the tahas been digging on my land, most message: "Your case interests me and I'll unwarrantably. He's rather a dash-

When it came time for Isabel to Bailey Harbor, Maine.

nett was hovering near to offer his istic touch of cruelty. We may as began dressing. services in calling her car. "Nothing like that for me. But But the children you cannot have. coffee and munching toast and jam placing the key under the door mat -" she hesitated and said with mock Remember that I relinquish none to fortify himself for his journey. stole through the garden. The man gravity, 'i'f you're not afraid of the of my rights on this point. I de- He had shot and perhaps killed a he had shot down might even now night air or the excessive fatique, mand that you surrender Edith at man, and his mind surged now with be lying dead in his path, and he you might take me home. That will once and I will communicate with self-accusations. He needn't have lifted his feet high to avoid stumb-

She spoke of her plans for the enough to come to me. summer with charming candor as they sat off at a brisk pace.

meant to conduct an outdoor school Congdon household found here for girls, moving it from Michigan painful corroboration. to Florida with the changing seasons.

After speculating on the affair for a few moments he went ahead with

the reflection of his head had preschief shire border.

sented a fair target to the startled (CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

ed the future.

"I wish you all good luck," he said ter of his fate. ening I've spent since-"

some fun out of it."

counting on that. If I don't get it ion. I will be terribly disappointed." You shall have it, sir."

CHAPTER II

wounding him—this would solve the disappointment: problem. Finally she hit upon these lines and copied them in her best He either fears his fate too much.

Or his deserts are small, That dares not put it to the touch To gain or lose it all. After reading the lines aloud sev-

would serve her purpose admirably quickly, his pulse was regular. and dispatched it to Mr. Bennett im- The thief had become more caumediately.

morning you know exactly what He opened it guardedly, and his just about Archie's left hand. A day. It's routine that kills. Sup- It was a neat, well-bred slap at him Then a hand groped along the wall amiable spirit and his services were "'My walk.'" she repeated. "You pose you were to hold up a bank as a man without initiative or cour- seeking the switch. Archie could speak as though you had a monop- messenger in Wall Street and skip age. At the dinner table she had hear its soft rasping over the wall. "The agent who's been looking up oly of that form of exercise. I must with a satchelful of negotiable secur- expressed much the same thought As the switch snapped the room

and this one is unexpectedly on the man with a certain number of miles the bank in a taxi, walk in and return was the way Isabel Perry thought of raised his arm and passed his hand wished on him."

"Four a day." Archie confessed, in the old family pew at Trinity when but he experienced a pleasant tingle light. The burglar's shoulders droopit if you could run up there for us." with an air of resignation; "two in you went in to say your prayers. in the blood when he reflected that ed as he gaped at Archie's figure the morning and two before dinner. Here would be an opportunity to this may have been the wrong read- which was reflected in a long mirror. By the doctor's orders," he added break the force of habit and awaken ing and very different from the sense The eyes of the two men met, the Congress and took his job seriously, evoked sympathetic murmurs in fem
"Am I to understand that you soared as he decided that the last intruder jerked a nistal from his practice what you preach? I don't line was intended to be read unbrok- intruder jerked a pistol from his "Oh, the doctors" remarked the mean to be imperitent, but really, enly and that it constituted a chal- pocket and fired point blank into the

> head, a flash of her brown eyes. and moving adventures.

> Congdon house.

The confidences of the chauffeur able consequences of his encounter. only mildly interested Archie. It He must leave the house and escape was unseasonably warm and the air from Bailey Harbor before daybreak was lifeless and humid. and he went upstairs and hurriedly "Think it will rain?" he asked the

"Yep," he replied with a glance ONE BEST at the sea. "There's going to be a inion of doctors in general or of Mr. "Oh, I'm perfectly capable of do- They reached the house and

He turned on the lights and sat rang under the downpour and he therstone as he rose to go; "very She was not wholly without feel- "Not a coin so far. You see decided that after all to spend the simple, you know; and Howard just ing for her face grew grave for a grandfather made his will in war night in an abandoned house would

> become a public record when he the gloom he set about making him-bread, he decided that the cooking of "Oh, the pirate in the story is a supper would be a jolly incident of

New York, June 10, 1917. Mrs. Alice B. Congdon, "I shall expect the document to- say good-night to her hostess, Ben- Your letter has your character-

Isabel was enthusiastic about the er that domestic difficulties were resummer camp; if it succeeded she sponsible for the breaking up of the that had splintered the mirror had He gained the road, glanced to-

There was no questions of her the preparation of his supper. He making a success of it, he said, mar- wished Isabel could see him and know veling at her vitality, her exuberance that for once the routine of his life the confidence with which she view- had been interrupted only to find himself resourceful and the easy mas-

when they reached the house of the He made a point of washing the friend she was visiting. "The camp dishes and putting them carefully will be a great success-I'm sure of away. These matters attended to, that. This has been the happiest ev- he roamed over the house which now had a new interest for him since the "Since you began taking every- Congdon family skelton had come thing so hard? Please quit looking out of its closet and danced round on your life as a burden; try to get the dinner table. In a drawer of the desk was an automatic pistol and "Don't forget me in the rush of a box of cartridges. This Archie things And particularly don't for-get that note of instructions. I'm a bad idea to be prepared for invas-

Then he switched off the lights in She surveyed him gravely, then the lower rooms and established himanswered lightly, "Oh, very well. self in the guest chamber. He was half asleep when he was roused by footsteps on the veranda below.

CHAPTER III Archie didn't know that the note It was close upon midnight and caused Isabel a great deal of trou- the presence of a prowler on the ble. She must write a note that premises caused his heart to galwould not require an answer; this lop wildly. He seized the pistol. she felt to be imperatively demanded crept to the window and peered cauby the circumstance. She thought tiously out, when a sound in the Archibald Bennett a nice fellow and room below renewed his alarm. He she was sorry for him, but no more gained the door in two jumps. He and no less sorry than she would could hear the opening and closing of have been for any one else who fail- drawers and see the flash of an eleced to find the world a pleasant place tric lamp as the intruder moved to live in. Something a little cryp- swiftly about. Then through the tic, yet something that would dis- vast silence of the big house the uncourage further confidences without known gave voice to his anger and

"Well, I'll be dammed!" A series of quick flashes on the wall gave warning of the intruder's invasion of the upper rooms. Archie drew back and waited. His

thoughts and emotions in this hour of danger interested him. It was immensely gratifying to him to realeral times she decided that they ize that while his heart was beating

tious and was tiptoeing up the un-The note reached Archie just as carpeted treads of the stair, still he was leaving his sister's house. sending occasionally a bar of light He had hoped for a long letter in the ahead. He was now coming boldly MRS. HOWARD FEATHER- other day and made frantic efforts "You're a tremendously formal vein of the girl's chaffing humor, and down the hall as though satisfied of his lamp fell upon the door frame flash clipped the dark for an instant. a summer house for us says this is say you didn't appear to be enjoying ities and then, after the papers were that was condensed in the verse, but flooded with light. The bewildering an unusual opportunity, as there are yourself. Your aspect was wholly through ragging the police for their the quotation, unrelieved by her glare leaping out of the darkness a few places to let at Bailey Harbor funeral and your demeanor that of a inefficiency you would drive up to smile, carried a sting. Perhaps this held the man in the doorway and he lenge flung at him with a toss of her mirror. The report crashed horribly in the room, followed by the tinkle of Archie was lulled to sleep by the fragments of glass. Archie aimed at encouraging thought that what she the doorway, but his shot seemed onhad done was to give him a 'com- ly to hasten the man's flight. A rug mission to redeem himself by strange slipped and the fugitive fell with a frightened yell that rang clearly thru At two o'clock he reached Bailey the house. In the hall Archie turn-Harbor. He stepped into the only ed on all the lights and gaining the taxi in sight and drove to the vil- landing fired at the retreating figlage druggist's for the key to the ure as it lurched toward the front door. At the crack of the gun the "Just go in and take your time to fugitive stopped short, clapped his it," said the man. "Lights and wa- hand to his shoulder and groaned, ter haven't been turned off and if then sprang through the front door you take the house your folks can and Bennett heard immediately the step right in. If you don't find it quick patter of his feet on the walk. convenient to stop here again, just The lock bore no evidence of havleave the key under the door mat." ing been forced. The frame of the "I guess you'll find the place all photograph of the young girl that had shipshape," said the driver, as they so charmed him lay on the floor face set off. "Folks came up early but down. Bennett picked it up and didn't stay long. Left in a hurry. found that the picture had been re-Family troubles, I reckon. I don't moved. It was a curious business, know nothin'. mind ye, but there's but he dismissed the susbject from talk she had trouble with her hus- his mind to consider the graver business of how to avaid the disagree-

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dering as he reflected that the bullet emergency.

marksman.

really been meant for him, and it ward the house, and set off in the struck with great precision just where general direction of the New Hamp-



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