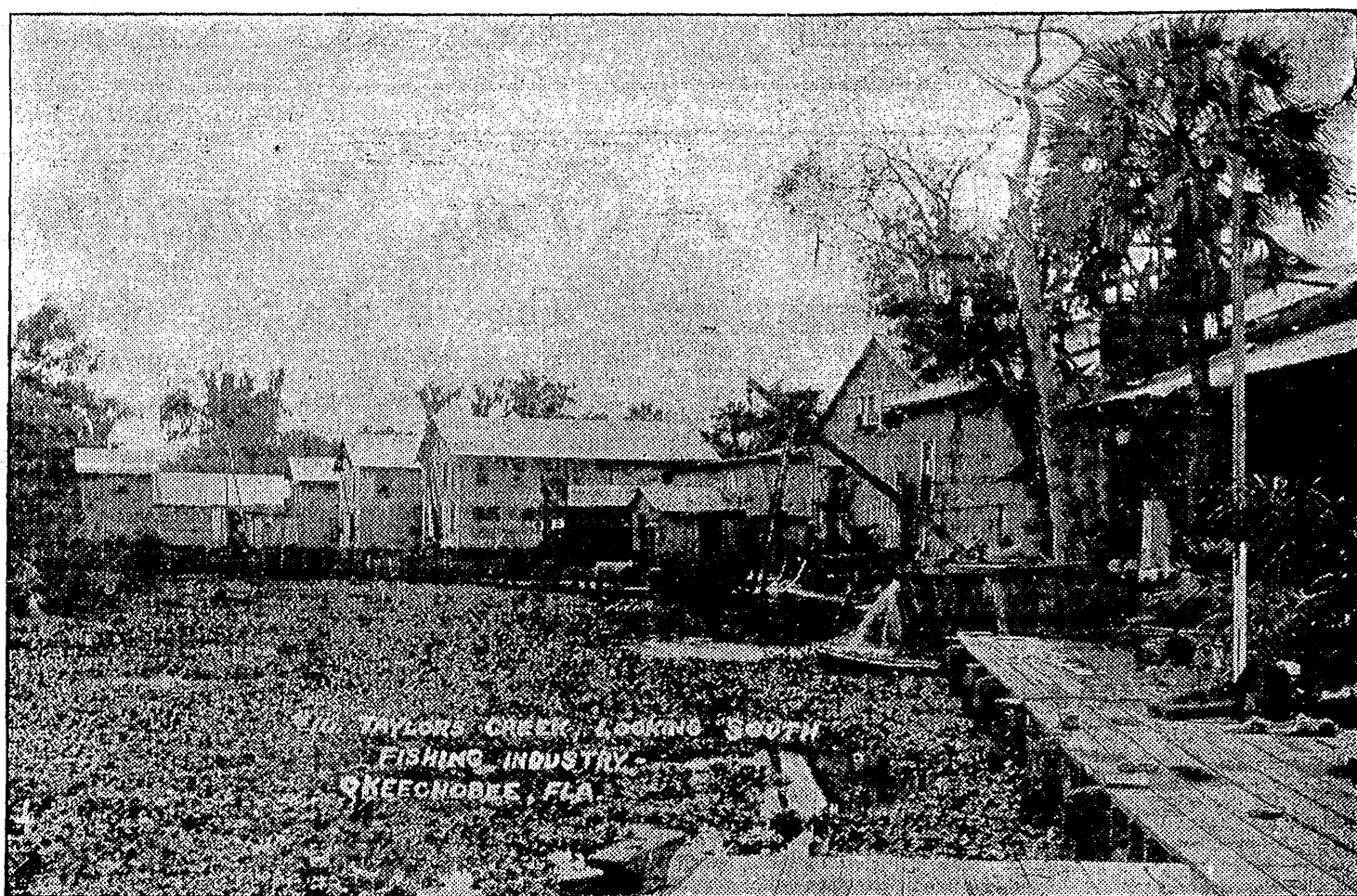
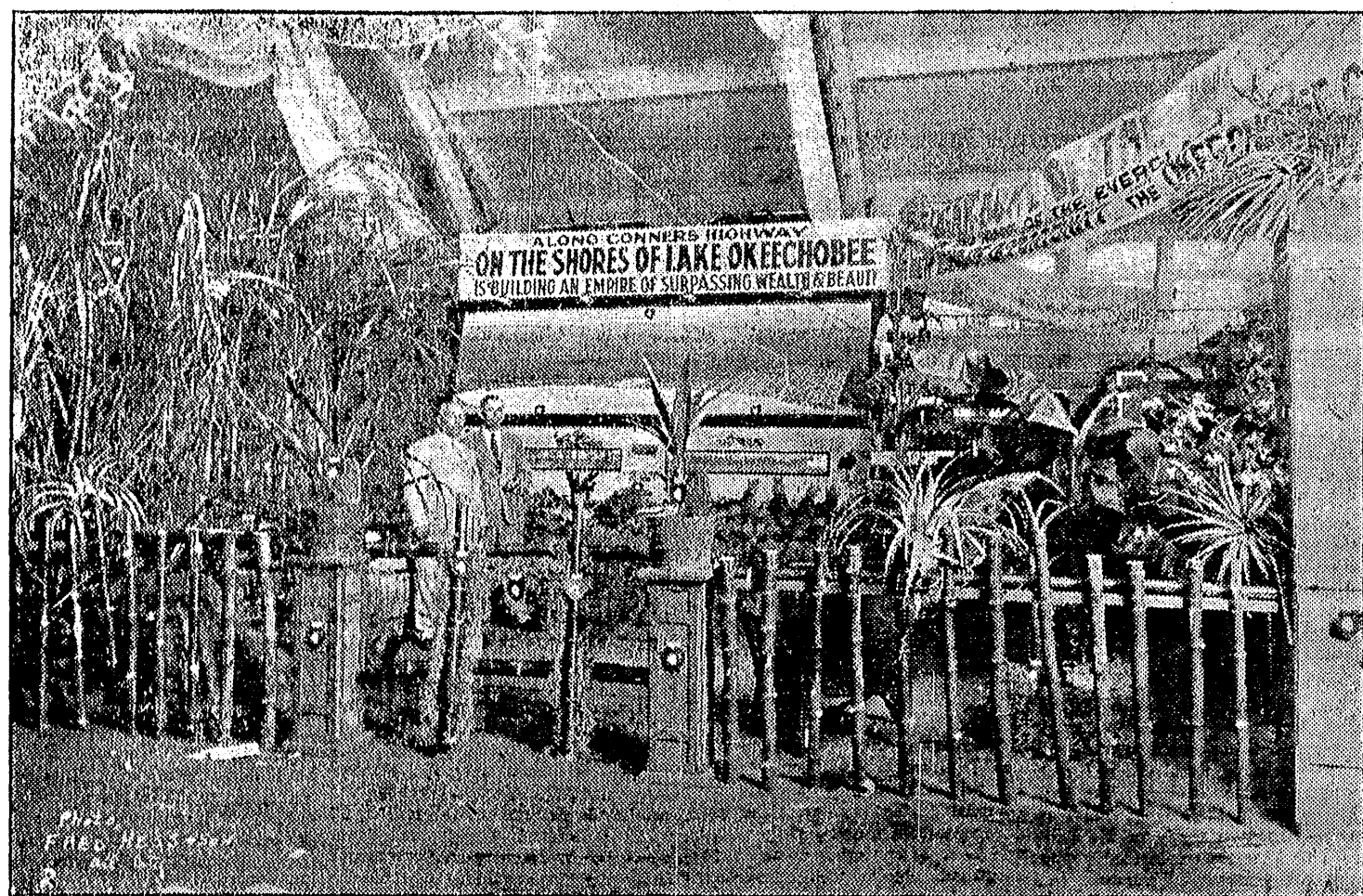


OKEECHOBEE CITY NEW CENTER OF GREAT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Okeechobee exhibit which attracted much attention at Atlantic City.

Fish and ice houses along the water hyacinth covered river.

OKEECHOBEE CITY, Fla., June 27.—A real estate man, in whom I have great confidence, told me one day recently in Miami that there had never been half enough said or written about Okeechobee City. He said: "Okeechobee City and the north lake country is the safest bet in Florida." Growing even more enthusiastic, he said: "Okeechobee City is the Chicago of Florida."

When I came to Okeechobee City, I was a little surprised to find a little city of less than 2,500 people. I expected a good-natured looking elderly citizen, who was waiting with me for the post office window to open, and asked him: "Why do they call this little city, 'The Chicago of Florida'?" He said: "I don't know anything about Chicago, but I do know that if a ban was put on visitors coming to Florida, and all Flor-

ida had was only her own natives, this little city, as you call it, would be one of the most important, if not the most important city in all Florida. You probably do not know that more fish and more winter vegetables are shipped from this city, than any other city in the state and the largest number of mills in the state are located here."

With this statement, if true, I began to realize that the Chicago of Florida might not be all a joke. From the most authoritative reports I could find I learned that approximately 8,000,000 pounds of fish were shipped annually from this city. The return from 8,000,000 pounds of fish amounted to about one and a half million dollars. I learned that more channel catfish are marketed from Okeechobee City than any other place in the world.

I also learned that up to this date Lake Okeechobee fishing is unorganized and the industry, when properly developed, will produce many times the income it now brings in.

I went to H. P. Peterson, county agricultural agent, to learn of the farming activities and he told me that Okeechobee county has thousands of acres of excellent farm lands awaiting the plow. He believed that the back country is the greatest asset because it is rich in natural resources. He told me about the soils which vary from the heaviest, richest muck to the lighter, sandy textures. These soils are especially suitable for trucking, fruit growing, dairying, general farming purposes and livestock raising. Mr. Peterson came to this section a year and a half ago and not until recently has there been much

farming. He welcomes the new developments and predicts a great future for the farmer, dairyman and poultry raiser. Another feature emphasized by Mr. Peterson was the fact that this city is central to all the best markets in the state and far enough north to successfully grow corn, grapes and all products of north Florida, but still far enough south to grow avocados, winter vegetables and practically all of the products of south Florida.

THERE are 125,000 acres of hammock land in Okeechobee county of the same quality as that which produces the famous Indian river oranges. At the present time there are 800 acres planted to citrus groves.

Since the building of the Connors Highway Okeechobee county has gone highway mad. State Road No.

8 has just been completed with its \$200,000 Harding bridge, over the Kissimmee river, and leading west to Tampa and connections south. It was stated last week that the Fort Pierce highway would be completed in 90 days. State Road No. 22 is financed and contracted to be built this year. Another highway to the east, through Indian Town to Stuart, is being advocated and will be built in the near future. All these highways terminating in Okeechobee City will make it the hub of central Florida.

ANOTHER development that will mean much to Okeechobee City is Okeechobee Shores, 14 miles southeast. This is to be a sportsman's paradise, fronting seven and a half miles on the lake. Okeechobee Shores is to have wide boulevards, parks, hunting lodges, hotels, golf courses,

bridge paths, a yacht club and private estates, all built to harmonize with one another and with the natural beauty of the surroundings.

Seventeen miles southeast of Okeechobee City is the 45,000-acre development of the Curtiss-Bright Company, Indian Park. Seven million dollars is the amount set aside by this company for this development. The contract was signed last week for an attractive hotel, which will be completed before the opening of the coming winter activities. More than half a dozen residences for employes are now under construction.

The Curtiss-Bright Company will also build a town adjoining the ranch, which will be named Brighton. This town will bear the same relation to Okeechobee City that Hia-

loah bears to Miami, a valuable contributing factor.

These developments are breaking up the old, large land units. Where there has only been one family, with a few "woody cattle," there will now be a hundred families. Most of these tracts now being developed are high prairie, dotted with cabbage palm and scattered pines with an occasional evergreen oak hammock. It is a beautiful country to look upon and the most satisfactory farm and dairy land in the world.

Okeechobee City sent a full carload of fine farm products to the Florida Pageant of Progress, staged on the boardwalk at Atlantic City, N. J., recently. A story in the Atlantic Daily Press, on date of June 4, contained the following reference to

the Okeechobee county exhibit: "One of the most interesting exhibits is that of Okeechobee county, a development started a few years ago by W. J. Connors, owner of The Buffalo Courier and Daily Star. Here one can see the agricultural possibilities, where lucious fruits and early season truck is displayed. H. P. Peterson, of the United States Department of Agriculture, explains that everything grown in that country is in the Northern markets, just about the time planting is done here."

While Okeechobee City is thought of as a commercial or industrial city, I predict that in 10 years, when it has grown to a city of 50,000 or possible 100,000 people, it will be one of the beauty spots among Florida cities.

TASTE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

gachtman's paradise in the Bahamas, and Nassau is the favorite resort.

Since my stay there, I had made friends with an old colored man, Joel Doxson, whose wife bore the euphonious name of Dixey Doxson, having come herself from Virginia. Joel's business in life was doing odd jobs for all the visitors who happened ashore from the yachts. He knew where the fishing was, where the fishing supplies could be got, knew practically the entire activities of the water-side.

I had told Doctor Seaman of him, and, late as it was, decided to look him up. He had told me where his small thatched cabin was located, and we wandered in that direction.

As we neared it, the weak but sweet toned voice of the old man was singing a queer, monotonous dirge—something that had been handed down from the past by his parents. It was a touch of Africa in the Bahamas.

"Ah!" murmured Doctor Seaman. "There is harmony!"

When the last note died away I called, softly, "Joel!"

"Yes, sir!"

"I just dropped over to have a talk with you."

"Very good, sir. Glad to see you, sir, any time, sir."

Seaman had expected Southern, darky dialect. He was not prepared for an almost cockney accent. A smile greeted him as my friend and we took the proffered seats, some odd stoncelled cases that here, too, betrayed the ruling industry of the island now.

"Why the music? Do you sing like that every night?" I asked the old darky, kindly.

"I'd be scornful to—only when I am moody for it," he answered, solemnly, sure of the sound of the words if not their precise meaning.

"You like harmony?" I pursued. Suddenly his eyes opened wide with joy, as if the remark had recalled to him a vision he still saw, a delightful vision. His arms, brown and thin, waved with a sort of tremulous pathetic rhythm. "My music is so little. But, ah! I heard music to-day!"

"You heard music? Over at the hotel?"

A pressure of the lips, a closing of the eyes, and he shook his head. "No, sir," he opened his eyes. "On a boat, Mr. Jamesson, a fiddle it was."

I looked across at Doctor Seaman curiously. On our walk down just now he had told me another fact about the man on his mind. He had come across a portfolio of music in Moller's studio, music arranged for a violin, and it was marked with the name of Alfred Raver.

The doctor knew of what I was thinking. He was thinking of the music scroll, too. "Jamesson," he remarked, aside, "that music was

never played by an amateur. Only some one proficient could play it. It required technique, skill, months, years of practice."

"This man has all of that," put in Joel. "Whatever those words meant, they meant melody to him, and this man had it, he knew."

"What kind of boat is the one, Joel?" I asked. "I love music, the violin, too."

"A yawl, down in the cove, not far from your place."

"So?" I wanted to question the old man, yet I did not wish to give him an inkling. "How did you meet him?"

A secretive smile was my answer—and that smile could mean only one thing—something to do with booze for the States.

"I see, Joel. You can get something else than music on board that yawl, is that it?"

"Ain't that smile of white ivory against black skin, no confirmation and no denial."

"What's the name of the boat, Joel?"

"The Vagrant, Mr. Jamesson." Joel was a bit confidential. My name sounded like a familiar brand to him. "Now don't you get Mr. Gresson into any trouble, sir. My tongue would stick to the roof of my mouth, sir, if you did."

"Don't worry," I reassured. "Is he alone on the boat, Joel?"

"No, another man, Mr. Norcross, his friend. I think it's he knows more about sailing sir, than the violin. It sounds so."

I had expected when I asked the question, that the answer would be about a girl on the boat. However, I could see that a sailing master, under the circumstances, was more essential.

Dixey came home from some racket in a cabin down the line and Joel became reticent. It was not long before the doctor and I were retracing our steps. I was insisting upon the doctor returning to our bungalow, so we could start out early in the morning on a catboat that was available to me to scrape up an acquaintance with this Gresson if it were possible.

So it was that the next morning we were out early, sailing about the cove. There was just enough breeze to make sailing a dream instead of a drudgery.

It was just as Joel had informed us. There was a yawl, a beautiful boat, about eighty feet over all, white, against whose sides the morning sun glistened as the brass gleamed.

We tacked across her bow, came about. We could hear the notes of a violin, sweet, plaintive. As the player in the cabin finished we applauded. A man appeared in the cabin doorway, saw us, waved a hand good-naturedly in our direction as we edged closer, then disappeared again down the companionway.

"So that is where they are, Doc-

tor!" I remarked, with suppressed excitement, as we were away. "Did you see that little motor tender, almost a cedar speed boat, off the davits, out on the end of a boat boom? It looked to me as if they were about to go ashore for supplies or something. Let's get back to the docks."

My surmise was right, but they must have taken their time, as we were not only in our slower cat back at the public docks, but had been hanging around an hour, it seemed, when we saw the tender of the Vagrant coming up to the landing stage.

Gresson looked at us and smiled as he caught sight of us at the top of the runway. I casually returned the greeting. I knew that on boats it is easy to make acquaintances.

Gresson was a blond, rather handsome, with a certain charming ruthlessness often mistaken for manhood. I liked his chuckle. It was boyish. A flapper would have called him adorable, simply for his shoulders, his narrow hips, those laughing blue eyes, and that chuckle. In the old days he might have been a swashbuckling knight. Now it was hard to tell. It was up to me to find out.

Gresson was the sort of person known as a good mixer. He had that easy way with him, an ability to make you think for the time being that you are the most interesting person in the world to him. He was a subtle flatterer, it is true, but most of us like it. All one had to do was to observe the readiness of laborers and visitors alike on the docks to speak to him, help him.

"Where are you chaps staying?" he asked, in his hearty, breezy way, when I had engineered ourselves alone together. "Over at the New Colonial?"

"No; we have a bungalow for a month. Are you living on your boat?"

"This time, I don't always. We're very comfortable. I have a friend with me who likes it. He doesn't care for hotels and excitement much." He smiled his fascinating smile. "I like a little life."

"Well, I have a friend up at the bungalow, the same way." We had been talking long enough to become confidential. "It's pretty quiet. I wish you could manage to come up and take dinner with us. I'm spoiling for a regular party."

"Glad to. Thanks." There was no visible evidence of suspicion yet. I was watching carefully for that.

"Can't you bring your violin?"

"We'll see. Where are you?"

"It's up there." I pointed out the place along the shore. "Let's make it for to-night."

"All right. I'll be up."

He was off, claimed by others. His popularity was a certainty about here. I wondered why. Then I began taking myself to task. I had nothing on this man. He

might be just a handsome, debonair man of the world, an accomplished violinist. Probably there were many more also who could play a violin in Nassau. Just because some violin music was found in Moller's studio and Alfred Raver could play did not make Gresson a poisoner, even though Raver was known to be hiding here under another alias.

I determined to make an exhaustive inquiry. Before the doctor and I rejoined Kennedy we had as complete a picture of the man as is possible of a stranger in a strange country. Everywhere it was the same. The man was liked. Apparently he was well known. People spoke of him as a frequent visitor. He seemed wealthy, able to indulge in all the pleasant things of life. He tipped royally. Through it all I obtained a glimpse of that man's unusual qualities. Some spoke of the delightful dinners, the exquisite cuisine, on the Vagrant. There were suggestions of art, of talent with colors. There seemed an endless variety in this man's interests. The more I inquired the more convincing became the impression that we were at least on the right trail.

"It might be well for us to get back, prepare Kennedy, give Chan a chance," suggested Doctor Seaman.

I realized the good sense in his suggestion, and we turned toward the bungalow, pausing only at the shops, loading ourselves with treasures for the kitchen. I think we had more delicacies in our arms than Craig and I had indulged in during the entire visit.

"What's the idea?" demanded Kennedy, in mild surprise.

"Just this, Craig. I'm not sure, but I think I'm on the way toward catching that exotic genius!"

Kennedy looked toward Doctor Seaman for confirmation.

"I believe Gresson is the man; you should hear the gossip about him. People have heard wonderful music coming from the yawl. We heard it. He is handsome, attractive. His dinners and parties are famous and he is spoken of as an art patron, too." Doctor Seaman was an able defender of my enthusiasm.

"What are you going to do about it?" Kennedy asked it with a certain gleam of interest.

"I've invited him up to dinner."

"Some fast workers, Walter! Hear of the crime one night—and catch the criminal the next! I have a rival. How are you going to crash him?"

"I thought that would come to me during the dinner to-night. I want you to look him over, Craig, see if you don't agree with me—and help me take him in."

Kennedy's face lighted with the joy of battle, the war of wits. "Good!" he exclaimed. "We'll trap him!"

I was wondering whether there was subtle sarcasm in that, when

Dr. Seaman interrupted. "How did the gun come along to-day? Make any headway?"

"I think I overcame the trouble this morning. A little more work on it this afternoon and I'll have it for the finishing touches tomorrow. I'll feel more like taking an interest in this case when that gun is off my mind."

During the rest of the afternoon I was as busy over my dinner as a bride at the first dinner party for the in-law family after the honeymoon. I wanted the choicest food, the best wine. I wanted the table just right. If there was to be a proper denouement for my aesthetic poisoner, I wanted it at an aesthetic meal in an aesthetic environment.

Finally things were arranged to suit me. I had poked around in the pantry for the choicest china the little place afforded—some Scandinavian pottery with its bold and brilliant decorations in violets, reds, and greens. I ignored Chan's objections. He was evidently thinking of the owner's interests. I insisted on its use.

A colored glass set almost the equal in beauty of color to any glass turned out by the Venetian glass blowers of old, purple as the tints of the skies at home in the autumn, were in harmony with the flowers of the china. Perfect clusters of purple grapes openly flirting with yellow tints of bananas against which they rested delighted the eye. Even Kennedy bestowed an honest compliment on our efforts. We had everything ready, waiting for the guest and the hoped-for expose.

Suddenly Chan announced the arrival of Gresson.

It was no effort at all to entertain Gresson. His travels about the casinos and sporting resorts of the Continent had given him a fund of anecdotes that would interest any group, and he told them in an inimitable manner.

As we entered the dining room, almost alfresco, glassed over, with vines trailing over the overhead glass, I expected to hear Gresson make some remark about the artistic effects we had achieved on the room and on the table. I watched him eagerly, anticipating from his artistic reputation an expression of pleasure, some exclamation of delight.

My spirits fell very low indeed when he took his place calmly, apparently oblivious to all the effects I had worked so hard to create for the benefit of his aesthetic personality. I was plainly discouraged, if not disconcerted.

Gresson's only remark relating even remotely to the appointments was, "No ladies here, to-night?" I think he was amazed at our fussing over a stag.

My most tempting viands disap-

peared with no more approval than any hungry man living on the water would show a well-cooked, well-battered meal. I had hoped to make him betray his exquisite love for the beautiful—and I had failed.

I began to wonder again. Was this Gresson cleverer than I suspected? Was it I who was the bonehead? Had he imagined, after entering, that things were not above-board, as he had thought, and was he trying to conceal and disguise his real self?

Craig suppressed a smile in my direction as if he would have delighted to say: "It's your case, Walter. Handle it!" He was gaining much pleasure watching me with my recalcitrant suspect.

I breathed an inward sigh of relief at last. Craig was coming to my rescue. It was toward the end of the dinner. He had taken his glass of Rhine wine and looked at it closely, sipped it. "Do you know, Gresson, no one can fool me on this. I've bought a lot of it. But I don't know how to take it back, unless I take it back inside of me."

Gresson looked at him thoughtfully, said nothing, smiled.

"I have tasted wines all over the world," continued Kennedy, slowly, fishing, "and can almost recognize any vintage. It is a great gift in these days of poor wines and high prices."

"I am something of a connoisseur myself." At last Gresson was biting. "Not much that has been faked gets by me. When we get back home, look me up. I was fortunate to lay in a stock before prohibition."

"It's strange, isn't it, how people are born with those various gifts?" asked Doctor Seaman. "As a doctor it has always interested me. Some never forget a face. Others have exaggerated memories for musical notes. It may happen with any sense and in many occupations. Back home I have a friend who is employed by one of the largest Fifth avenue jewelry establishments. For what, do you suppose? He knows diamonds! Not an imperfect stone gets by his eyes!"

I was watching Gresson carefully. He was strangely silent, and at the mention of diamonds I imagined I saw the first slight nervous fluttering of the eyelids.

"Well, there are many jobs like that. Every big perfume house employs special men with a special sense of smell." It sounded like a tame remark after I made it, when I considered how worked up I felt playing this game of cat and mouse with Gresson.

Gresson suddenly tried to change the subject to the violin. "I hope you fellows don't think I'm sour for not bringing the fiddle over, but I didn't want to bore you."

Again we were at an impasse. I yielded to Kennedy, Kennedy was

quite ready. He sought to draw him out along musical lines. He mentioned the names of the most popular composers of the day, he talked of their most recent work, criticizing and comparing. Only the most fragmentary remarks now were made by Gresson.

Disappointment and defeat met us at every turn. Here was not my erotic lover of the beautiful. Art failed to stimulate his imagination. We could not get a reaction out of him on anything. He was perfectly wellbred, but dull on everything else but what he wished to discuss. I glanced in hopeless surrender at Craig.

Craig called Chan. "Get me some tea, Chan."

There was an understanding glance between Craig and the Chinaman. Two hours before I should have been horrified if anyone had suggested serving tea to Gresson at dinner that night. Now I was so disgruntled over my failure that they could have served him cyanide without causing me to raise a hand.

"I just happened to think about this tea," Craig put in casually, by way of explanation. "It is a Formosa 1492, unexcelled, makes the most wonderful brew imaginable. Kennedy was now busy making tea. I had qualified on so many perfectly lady-like jobs that afternoon that I expected next to be asked to pour. It was my party. I had to see it through."

But Kennedy completed the job with the efficient help of Chan. All the while Kennedy was telling us interesting facts he had learned about the many varieties of teas, the Oolong from Formosa, the Orange Pekoe, Pekoe Souchong from China, the green teas from India and Ceylon, and the brick tea for the use of Tibetans.

As the cups were passed, Gresson himself seemed bored. At last he looked about him and observed that all had been served.

"There are so many grades," he murmured.

He leaned over the table, took up the sugar tongs, and dropped a lump of sugar into his cup. There was silence.

As Gresson held the cup to his lips and sipped, now delightedly, we heard the put! put! put! of a motor boat.

From his seat Craig could look out over the cove or bay. So could I. A tender, the tender of the Vagrant, was slipping away from the yawl, headed across to the other side, perhaps out of the cove.

Suddenly Kennedy looked from the boat to the man sipping his sweetened tea so comfortably. He was taking it with evident relish.

Craig rose quickly. "Walter, I must stop that tender. It is getting away, to the other side."

Gresson started to rise, but sank back in his chair. Kennedy had absently, methodically taken a small

automatic from his pocket. "Come with us—go ahead!" Kennedy hurried us up to the bluff where the gun had been set. Quickly he manipulated it. A moment and the long-arm steel knife of shot rained out over the water. The man in the tender put on more speed. The rain of shot just followed him, circled, fell directly ahead. He stopped, shut off his engine. The hint was plain.

"Doctor, take charge of this gun. Let the man see you. That is all that is necessary. He won't start that engine till we get to him. Now for your boat, Walter."

Kennedy, with his hat in his pocket, made Gresson walk down the bluff ahead to my cat, get in, seat himself forward.

A sullen, handsome, dark-haired man glared and swore at us from the tender, but he, too, was covered by Kennedy. I saw in the tender, hastily thrown, a violin in its case, music magazines, some books, too, to while away quiet hours when the get-away was accomplished and the hiding was good. I wondered what Gresson was thinking. He looked so sour and quiet. Were both of them waiting for a chance to tumble out and escape? We were watching them too closely as we turned back toward the yawl.

"I'm going to look through the Vagrant, Walter. Keep them covered."

In the main cabin he started in. Set in the woodwork was a chronometer. It was not long before Kennedy passed before it. Then I noticed what had caught his eye. The "XII" was not precisely at the top. He reached up, turned it to its proper vertical position. The chronometer screwed into the wood work. Counterclockwise Kennedy continued turning it thoughtfully. It came out.

Back of the chronometer was an empty space, a veritable hidden wall safe built in the mahogany.

Craig wheeled. He looked again from the empty wall safe toward Norcross. Then he stepped over quickly, felt Norcross, patting him over swiftly as one who sought something on the hip.

About his waist he found a lump. He reached in, pulled out a small chamois bag. By now my eyes were bulging, what with watching Craig and covering these two. Would Craig never open it? He was so deliberate. I could not wait.

Slowly Craig opened the bag on the table in the cabin. There were the diamonds of the dead actress, the amazing Moller!

"Norcross, I want you," repeated Kennedy. "I want you. You're the erratic genius we're looking for, the connoisseur of diamonds and, no doubt, of tea. I don't care for your friend, Gresson, here. He's no taster—just a gambler, your stall, your foil. He puts sugar in his tea!" (Copyright, 1925, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)