

The Man Who Was Lost

The Man Who Was Lost

by Jacques Futrelle

I

Here are the facts in the case as they were known in the beginning to Professor Augustus S. F. X. Van Dusen, scientist and logician. After hearing a statement of the problem from the lips of its principal he declared it to be one of the most engaging that had ever come to his attention, and—

But let me begin at the beginning:

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The Thinking Machine was in the small laboratory of his modest apartments at two o'clock in the afternoon. Martha, the scientist's only servant, appeared at the door with a puzzled expression on her wrinkled face.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," she said.

"Name?" inquired The Thinking Machine, without turning.

"He—he didn't give it, sir," she stammered.

"I have told you always, Martha, to ask names of callers."

"I did ask his name, sir, and—and he said he didn't know it."

The Thinking Machine was never surprised, yet now he turned on Martha in perplexity and squinted at her fiercely through his thick glasses.

"Don't know his own name?" he repeated. "Dear me! How careless! Show the gentleman into the reception room immediately."

With no more introduction to the problem than this, therefore, The Thinking Machine passed into the other room. A stranger arose and came forward. He was tall, of apparently thirty-five years, clean shaven and had the keen, alert face of a man of affairs. He would have been handsome had it not been for dark rings under the eyes and the unusual white of his face. He was immaculately dressed from top to toe; altogether a man who would attract attention.

For a moment he regarded the scientist curiously; perhaps there was a trace of

well-bred astonishment in his manner. He gazed curiously at the enormous head, with its shock of yellow hair, and noted, too, the droop in the thin shoulders. Thus for a moment they stood, face to face, the tall stranger making The Thinking Machine dwarf-like by comparison.

“Well?” asked the scientist.

The stranger turned as if to pace back and forth across the room, then instead dropped into a chair which the scientist indicated.

“I have heard a great deal about you, Professor,” he began, in a well-modulated voice, “and at last it occurred to me to come to you for advice. I am in a most remarkable position—and I’m not insane. Don’t think that, please. But unless I see some way out of this amazing predicament I shall be. As it is now, my nerves have gone; I am not myself.”

“Your story? What is it? How can I help you?”

“I am lost, hopelessly lost,” the stranger resumed. “I know neither my home, my business, nor even my name. I know nothing whatever of myself or my life; what it was or what it might have been previous to four weeks ago. I am seeking light on my identity. Now, if there is any fee—”

“Never mind that,” the scientist put in, and he squinted steadily into the eyes of the visitor. “What do you know? From the time you remember things tell me all of it.”

He sank back into his chair, squinting steadily upward. The stranger arose, paced back and forth across the room several times and then dropped into his chair again.

“It’s perfectly incomprehensible,” he said. “It’s precisely as if I, full grown, had been born into a world of which I knew nothing except its language. The ordinary things, chairs, tables and such things, are perfectly familiar, but who I am, where I came from, why I came—of these I have no idea. I will tell you just as my impressions came to me when I awoke one morning, four weeks ago.

“It was eight or nine o’clock, I suppose. I was in a room. I knew instantly it was a hotel, but had not the faintest idea of how I got there, or of ever having seen the room before. I didn’t even know my own clothing when I started to dress. I

glanced out of my window; the scene was wholly strange to me.

“For half an hour or so I remained in my room, dressing and wondering what it meant. Then, suddenly, in the midst of my other worries, it came home to me that I didn’t know my own name, the place where I lived nor anything about myself. I didn’t know what hotel I was in. In terror I looked into a mirror. The face reflected at me was not one I knew. It didn’t seem to be the face of a stranger; it was merely not a face that I knew.

“The thing was unbelievable. Then I began a search of my clothing for some trace of my identity. I found nothing whatever that would enlighten me—not a scrap of paper of any kind, no personal or business card.”

“Have a watch?” asked The Thinking Machine.

“No.”

“Any money?”

“Yes, money,” said the stranger. “There was a bundle of more than ten thousand dollars in my pocket, in one-hundred-dollar bills. Whose it is or where it came from I don’t know. I have been living on it since, and shall continue to do so, but I don’t know if it is mine. I knew it was money when I saw it, but did not recollect ever having seen any previously.”

“Any jewelry?”

“These cuff buttons,” and the stranger exhibited a pair which he drew from his pocket.

“Go on.”

“I finally finished dressing and went down to the office. It was my purpose to find out the name of the hotel and who I was. I knew I could learn some of this from the hotel register without attracting any attention or making anyone think I was insane. I had noted the number of my room. It was twenty-seven.

“I looked over the hotel register casually. I saw I was at the Hotel Yarmouth in Boston. I looked carefully down the pages until I came to the number of my room. Opposite this number was a name—John Doane, but where the name of

the city should have been there was only a dash.”

“You realize that it is perfectly possible that John Doane is your name?” asked The Thinking Machine.

“Certainly,” was the reply. “But I have no recollection of ever having heard it before. This register showed that I had arrived at the hotel the night before—or rather that John Doane had arrived and been assigned to Room 27, and I was the John Doane, presumably. From that moment to this the hotel people have known me as John Doane, as have other people whom I have met during the four weeks since I awoke.”

“Did the handwriting recall nothing?”

“Nothing whatever.”

“Is it anything like the handwriting you write now?”

“Identical, so far as I can see.”

“Did you have any baggage or checks for baggage?”

“No. All I had was the money and this clothing I stand in. Of course, since then I have bought necessities.”

Both were silent for a long time and finally the stranger—Doane—arose and began pacing nervously again.

“That a tailor-made suit?” asked the scientist.

“Yes,” said Doane, quickly. “I know what you mean. Tailor-made garments have linen strips sewed inside the pockets on which are the names of the manufacturers and the name of the man for whom the clothes were made, together with the date. I looked for those. They had been removed, cut out.”

“Ah!” exclaimed The Thinking Machine suddenly. “No laundry marks on your linen either, I suppose?”

“No. It was all perfectly new.”

“Name of the maker on it?”

“No. That had been cut out, too.”

Doane was pacing back and forth across the reception room; the scientist lay back in his chair.

“Do you know the circumstances of your arrival at the hotel?” he asked at last.

“Yes. I asked, guardedly enough, you may be sure, hinting to the clerk that I had been drunk so as not to make him think I was insane. He said I came in about eleven o’clock at night, without any baggage, paid for my room with a one-hundred-dollar bill, which he changed, registered and went upstairs. I said nothing that he recalls beyond making a request for a room.”

“The name Doane is not familiar to you?”

“No.”

“You can’t recall a wife or children?”

“No.”

“Do you speak any foreign language?”

“No.”

“Is your mind clear now? Do you remember things?”

“I remember perfectly every incident since I awoke in the hotel,” said Doane. “I seem to remember with remarkable clearness, and somehow I attach the gravest importance to the most trivial incidents.”

The Thinking Machine arose and motioned to Doane to sit down. He dropped back into a seat wearily. Then the scientist’s long, slender fingers ran lightly, deftly through the abundant black hair of his visitor. Finally they passed down from the hair and along the firm jaws; thence they went to the arms, where they pressed upon good, substantial muscles. At last the hands, well shaped and white, were examined minutely. A magnifying glass was used to facilitate this examination. Finally The Thinking Machine stared into the quick-moving,

nervous eyes of the stranger.

“Any marks at all on your body?” he asked at last.

“No,” Doane responded. “I had thought of that and sought for an hour for some sort of mark. There’s nothing—nothing.” The eyes glittered a little and finally, in a burst of nervousness, he struggled to his feet. “My God!” he exclaimed. “Is there nothing you can do? What is it all, anyway?”

“Seems to be a remarkable form of aphasia,” replied The Thinking Machine. “That’s not an uncommon disease among people whose minds and nerves are overwrought. You’ve simply lost yourself—lost your identity. If it is aphasia, you will recover in time. When, I don’t know.”

“And meantime?”

“Let me see the money you found.”

With trembling hands Doane produced a large roll of bills, principally hundreds, many of them perfectly new. The Thinking Machine examined them minutely, and finally made some memoranda on a slip of paper. The money was then returned to Doane.

“Now, what shall I do?” asked the latter.

“Don’t worry,” advised the scientist. “I’ll do what I can.”

“And—tell me who and what I am?”

“Oh, I can find that out all right,” remarked The Thinking Machine. “But there’s a possibility that you wouldn’t recall even if I told you all about yourself.”

II

When John Doane of Nowhere—to all practical purposes—left the home of The Thinking Machine he bore instructions of divers kinds. First he was to get a large map of the United States and study it closely, reading over and pronouncing aloud the name of every city, town and village he found. After an hour of this he was to take a city directory and read over the names, pronouncing them aloud as he did so. Then he was to make out a list of the various professions and higher commercial pursuits, and pronounce these. All these things were calculated, obviously, to arouse the sleeping brain. After Doane had gone The Thinking Machine called up Hutchinson Hatch, reporter, on the ‘phone.

“Come up immediately,” he requested. “There’s something that will interest you.”

“A mystery?” Hatch inquired, eagerly.

“One of the most engaging problems that has ever come to my attention,” replied the scientist.

It was only a question of a few minutes before Hatch was ushered in. He was a living interrogation point, and repressed a rush of questions with a distinct effort. The Thinking Machine finally told what he knew.

“Now it seems to be,” said The Thinking Machine, and he emphasized the “seems,” “it seems to be a case of aphasia. You know, of course, what that is. The man simply doesn’t know himself. I examined him closely. I went over his head for a sign of a possible depression, or abnormality. It didn’t appear. I examined his muscles. He has biceps of great power, is evidently now or has been athletic. His hands are white, well cared for and have no marks on them. They are not the hands of a man who has ever done physical work. The money in his pocket tends to confirm the fact that he is not of that sphere.

“Then what is he? Lawyer? Banker? Financier? What? He might be either, yet he impressed me as being rather of the business than the professional school. He has a good, square-cut jaw—the jaw of a fighting man—and his poise gives one the impression that whatever he has been doing he has been foremost in it. Being foremost in it, he would naturally drift to a city, a big city. He is typically a city

man.

“Now, please, to aid me, communicate with your correspondents in the large cities and find if such a name as John Doane appears in any directory. Is he at home now? Has he a family? All about him.”

“Do you believe John Doane is his name?” asked the reporter.

“No reason why it shouldn’t be,” said The Thinking Machine. “Yet it might not be.”

“How about inquiries in this city?”

“He can’t well be a local man,” was the reply. “He has been wandering about the streets for four weeks, and if he had lived here he would have met some one who knew him.”

“But the money?”

“I’ll probably be able to locate him through that,” said The Thinking Machine. “The matter is not at all clear to me now, but it occurs to me that he is a man of consequence, and that it was possibly necessary for some one to get rid of him for a time.”

“Well, if it’s plain aphasia, as you say,” the reporter put in, “it seems rather difficult to imagine that the attack came at a moment when it was necessary to get rid of him.”

“I say it seems like aphasia,” said the scientist, crustily, “There are known drugs which will produce the identical effect if properly administered.”

“Oh,” said Hatch. He was beginning to see.

“There is one drug particularly, made in India, and not unlike hasheesh. In a case of this kind anything is possible. To-morrow I shall ask you to take Mr. Doane down through the financial district, as an experiment. When you go there I want you particularly to get him to the sound of the ‘ticker.’ It will be an interesting experiment.”

The reporter went away and The Thinking Machine sent a telegram to the Blank

National Bank of Butte, Montana:

“To whom did you issue hundred-dollar bills, series B, numbering 846380 to 846395 inclusive? Please answer.”

It was ten o’clock next day when Hatch called on The Thinking Machine. There he was introduced to John Doane, the man who was lost. The Thinking Machine was asking questions of Mr. Doane when Hatch was ushered in.

“Did the map recall nothing?”

“Nothing.”

“Montana, Montana, Montana,” the scientist repeated monotonously; “think of it. Butte, Montana.”

Doane shook his head hopelessly, sadly.

“Cowboy, cowboy. Did you ever see a cowboy?”

Again the head shake.

“Coyote—something like a wolf—coyote. Don’t you recall ever having seen one?”

“I’m afraid it’s hopeless,” remarked the other.

There was a note of more than ordinary irritation in The Thinking Machine’s voice when he turned to Hatch.

“Mr. Hatch, will you walk through the financial district with Mr. Doane?” he asked. “Please go to the places I suggested.”

So it came to pass that the reporter and Doane went out together, walking through the crowded, hurrying, bustling financial district. The first place visited was a private room where market quotations were displayed on a blackboard. Mr. Doane was interested, but the scene seemed to suggest nothing. He looked upon it all as any stranger might have done. After a time they passed out. Suddenly a man came running toward them—evidently a broker.

“What’s the matter?” asked another.

“Montana’s copper’s gone to smash,” was the reply.

“Copper! Copper!” gasped Doane suddenly.

Hatch looked around quickly at his companion. Doane’s face was a study. On it was half realization and a deep perplexed wrinkle, a glimmer even of excitement.

“Copper!” he repeated.

“Does the word mean anything to you?” asked Hatch quickly. “Copper—metal, you know.”

“Copper, copper, copper,” the other repeated. Then, as Hatch looked, the queer expression faded; there came again utter hopelessness.

There are many men with powerful names who operate in the Street—some of them in copper. Hatch led Doane straight to the office of one of these men and there introduced him to a partner in the business.

“We want to talk about copper a little,” Hatch explained, still eyeing his companion.

“Do you want to buy or sell?” asked the broker.

“Sell,” said Doane suddenly. “Sell, sell, sell copper. That’s it—copper.”

He turned to Hatch, stared at him dully a moment, a deathly pallor came over his face, then, with upraised hands, fell senseless.

III

Still unconscious, the man of mystery was removed to the home of The Thinking Machine and there stretched out on a sofa. The Thinking Machine was bending over him, this time in his capacity of physician, making an examination. Hatch stood by, looking on curiously.

“I never saw anything like it,” Hatch remarked. “He just threw up his hands and collapsed. He hasn’t been conscious since.”

“It may be that when he comes to he will have recovered his memory, and in that event he will have absolutely no recollection whatever of you and me,” explained The Thinking Machine.

Doane moved a little at last, and under a stimulant the color began to creep back into his pallid face.

“Just what was said, Mr. Hatch, before he collapsed?” asked the scientist.

Hatch explained, repeating the conversation as he remembered it.

“And he said ‘sell,’ ” mused The Thinking Machine. “In other words, he thinks—or imagines he knows—that copper is to drop. I believe the first remark he heard was that copper had gone to smash—down, I presume that means?”

“Yes,” the reporter replied.

Half an hour later John Doane sat up on the couch and looked around the room.

“Ah, Professor,” he remarked. “I fainted, didn’t I?”

The Thinking Machine was disappointed because his patient had not recovered memory with consciousness. The remark showed that he was still in the same mental condition—the man who was lost.

“Sell copper, sell, sell, sell,” repeated The Thinking Machine, commandingly.

“Yes, yes, sell,” was the reply.

The reflection of some great mental struggle was on Doane's face; he was seeking to recall something which persistently eluded him.

"Copper, copper," the scientist repeated, and he exhibited a penny.

"Yes, copper," said Doane. "I know. A penny."

"Why did you say sell copper?"

"I don't know," was the weary reply. "It seemed to be an unconscious act entirely. I don't know."

He clasped and unclasped his hands nervously and sat for a long time dully staring at the floor. The fight for memory was a dramatic one.

"It seemed to me," Doane explained after awhile, "that the word copper touched some responsive chord in my memory, then it was lost again. Some time in the past, I think, I must have had something to do with copper."

"Yes," said The Thinking Machine, and he rubbed his slender fingers briskly. "Now you are coming around again."

His remarks were interrupted by the appearance of Martha at the door with a telegram. The Thinking Machine opened it hastily. What he saw perplexed him again.

"Dear me! Most extraordinary!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?" asked Hatch, curiously.

The scientist turned to Doane again.

"Do you happen to remember Preston Bell?" he demanded, emphasizing the name explosively.

"Preston Bell?" the other repeated, and again the mental struggle was apparent on his face. "Preston Bell!"

"Cashier of the Blank National Bank of Butte, Montana?" urged the other, still in an emphatic tone. "Cashier Bell?"

He leaned forward eagerly and watched the face of his patient; Hatch unconsciously did the same. Once there was almost realization, and seeing it The Thinking Machine sought to bring back full memory.

“Bell, cashier, copper,” he repeated, time after time.

The flash of realization which had been on Doane’s face passed, and there came infinite weariness—the weariness of one who is ill.

“I don’t remember,” he said at last. “I’m very tired.”

“Stretch out there on the couch and go to sleep,” advised The Thinking Machine, and he arose to arrange a pillow. “Sleep will do you more good than anything else right now. But before you lie down, let me have, please, a few of those hundred-dollar bills you found.”

Doane extended the roll of money, and then slept like a child. It was uncanny to Hatch, who had been a deeply interested spectator.

The Thinking Machine ran over the bills and finally selected fifteen of them—bills that were new and crisp. They were of an issue by the Blank National Bank of Butte, Montana. The Thinking Machine stared at the money closely, then handed it to Hatch.

“Does that look like counterfeit to you?” he asked.

“Counterfeit?” gasped Hatch. “Counterfeit?” he repeated. He took the bills and examined them. “So far as I can see they seem to be good,” he went on, “though I have never had enough experience with one-hundred-dollar bills to qualify as an expert.”

“Do you know an expert?”

“Yes.”

“See him immediately. Take fifteen bills and ask him to pass on them, each and every one. Tell him you have reason—excellent reason—to believe that they are counterfeit. When he gives his opinion come back to me.”

Hatch went away with the money in his pocket. Then The Thinking Machine

wrote another telegram, addressed to Preston Bell, cashier of the Butte Bank. It was as follows:

“Please send me full details of the manner in which money previously described was lost, with names of all persons who might have had any knowledge of the matter. Highly important to your bank and to justice. Will communicate in detail on receipt of your answer.”

Then, while his visitor slept, The Thinking Machine quietly removed his shoes and examined them. He found, almost worn away, the name of the maker. This was subjected to close scrutiny under the magnifying glass, after which The Thinking Machine arose with a perceptible expression of relief on his face.

“Why didn’t I think of that before?” he demanded of himself.

Then other telegrams went into the West. One was to a customs shoemaker in Denver, Colorado:

“To what financier or banker have you sold within three months a pair of shoes, Senate brand, calfskin blucher, number eight, D last? Do you know John Doane?”

A second telegram went to the Chief of Police of Denver. It was:

“Please wire if any financier, banker or business man has been out of your city for five weeks or more, presumably on business trip. Do you know John Doane?”

Then The Thinking Machine sat down to wait. At last the door bell rang and Hatch entered.

“Well?” demanded the scientist, impatiently.

“The expert declares those are not counterfeit,” said Hatch.

Now The Thinking Machine was surprised. It was shown clearly by the quick lifting of the eyebrows, by a sudden snap of his jaws, by a quick forward movement of the yellow head.

“Well, well, well!” he exclaimed at last. Then again: “Well, well!”

“What is it?”

“See here,” and The Thinking Machine took the hundred-dollar bills in his own hands. “These bills, perfectly new and crisp, were issued by the Blank National Bank of Butte, and the fact that they are in proper sequence would indicate that they were issued to one individual at the same time, probably recently. There can be no doubt of that. The numbers run from 846380 to 846395, all series B.”

“I see,” said Hatch.

“Now read that,” and the scientist extended to the reporter the telegram Martha had brought in just before Hatch had gone away. Hatch read this:

“Series B, hundred-dollar bills 846380 to 846395 issued by this bank are not in existence. Were destroyed by fire, together with twenty-seven others of the same series. Government has been asked to grant permission to reissue these numbers.

Preston Bell, Cashier.”

The reporter looked up with a question in his eyes.

“It means,” said The Thinking Machine, “that this man is either a thief or the victim of some sort of financial jugglery.”

“In that case is he what he pretends to be—a man who doesn’t know himself?” asked the reporter.

“Than remains to be seen.”

IV

Event followed event with startling rapidity during the next few hours. First came a message from the Chief of Police of Denver. No capitalist or financier of consequence was out of Denver at the moment, so far as his men could ascertain. Longer search might be fruitful. He did not know John Doane. One John Doane in the directory was a teamster.

Then from the Blank National Bank came another telegram signed "Preston Bell, Cashier," reciting the circumstances of the disappearance of the hundred-dollar bills. The Blank National Bank had moved into a new structure; within a week there had been a fire which destroyed it. Several packages of money, including one package of hundred-dollar bills, among them those specified by The Thinking Machine, had been burned. President Harrison of the bank immediately made affidavit to the Government that these bills were left in his office.

The Thinking Machine studied this telegram carefully and from time to time glanced at it while Hatch made his report. This was as to the work of the correspondents who had been seeking John Doane. They found many men of the name and reported at length on each. One by one The Thinking Machine heard the reports, then shook his head.

Finally he reverted again to the telegram, and after consideration sent another—this time to the Chief of Police of Butte. In it he asked these questions:

"Has there ever been any financial trouble in Blank National Bank? Was there an embezzlement or shortage at any time? What is reputation of President Harrison? What is reputation of Cashier Bell? Do you know John Doane?"

In due course of events the answer came. It was brief and to the point. It said:

"Harrison recently embezzled \$175,000 and disappeared. Bell's reputation excellent; now out of city. Don't know John Doane. If you have any trace of Harrison, wire quick."

This answer came just after Doane awoke, apparently greatly refreshed, but himself gain—that is, himself in so far as he was still lost. For an hour The Thinking Machine pounded him with questions—questions of all sorts, serious,

religious and at times seemingly silly. They apparently aroused no trace of memory, save when the name Preston Bell was mentioned; then there was the strange, puzzled expression on Doane's face.

"Harrison—do you know him?" asked the scientist. "President of the Blank National Bank of Butte?"

There was only an uncomprehending stare for an answer. After a long time of this The Thinking Machine instructed Hatch and Doane to go for a walk. He had still a faint hope that some one might recognize Doane and speak to him. As they wandered aimlessly on two persons spoke to him. One was a man who nodded and passed on.

"Who was that?" asked Hatch quickly. "Do you remember ever having seen him before?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "He stops at my hotel. He knows me as Doane."

It was just a few minutes before six o'clock when, walking slowly, they passed a great office building. Coming toward them was a well-dressed, active man of thirty-five years or so. As he approached he removed a cigar from his lips.

"Hello, Harry!" he exclaimed, and reached for Doane's hand.

"Hello," said Doane, but there was no trace of recognition in his voice.

"How's Pittsburg?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, all right, I guess," said Doane, and there came new wrinkles of perplexity in his brow. "Allow me, Mr. — Mr. — really I have forgotten your name—"

"Manning," laughed the other.

"Mr. Hatch, Mr. Manning."

The reporter shook hands with Manning eagerly; he saw now a new line of possibilities suddenly revealed. Here was a man who knew Doane as Harry—and then Pittsburg, too.

"Last time I saw you was in Pittsburg, wasn't it?" Manning rattled on, as he led

the way into a nearby café. “By George, that was a stiff game that night! Remember that jack full I held? It cost me nineteen hundred dollars,” he added, ruefully.

“Yes, I remember,” said Doane, but Hatch knew that he did not. And meanwhile a thousand questions were surging through the reporter’s brain.

“Poker hands as expensive as that are liable to be long remembered,” remarked Hatch, casually. “How long ago was that?”

“Three years, wasn’t it, Harry?” asked Manning.

“All of that, I should say,” was the reply.

“Twenty hours at the table,” said Manning, and again he laughed cheerfully. “I was woozy when we finished.”

Inside the café they sought out a table in a corner. No one else was near. When the waiter had gone, Hatch leaned over and looked Doane straight in the eyes.

“Shall I asked some questions?” he inquired.

“Yes, yes,” said the other eagerly.

“What—what is it?” asked Manning.

“It’s a remarkably strange chain of circumstances,” said Hatch, in explanation. “This man whom you call Harry, we know as John Doane. What is his real name? Harry what?”

Manning stared at the reporter for a moment in amazement, then gradually a smile came to his lips.

“What are you trying to do?” he asked. “Is this a joke?”

“No, my God, man, can’t you see?” exclaimed Doane, fiercely. “I’m ill, sick, something. I’ve lost my memory, all of my past. I don’t remember anything about myself. What is my name?”

“Well, by George!” exclaimed Manning. “By George! I don’t believe I know

your full name. Harry—Harry—what?”

He drew from his pocket several letters and half a dozen scraps of paper and ran over them. Then he looked carefully through a worn notebook.

“I don’ know,” he confessed. “I had your name and address in an old notebook, but I suppose I burned it. I remember, though, I met you in the Lincoln Club in Pittsburg three years ago. I called you Harry because everyone was calling everyone else by his first name. Your last name made no impression on me at all. By George!” he concluded, in a new burst of amazement.

“What were the circumstances, exactly?” asked Hatch.

“I’m a traveling man,” Manning explained. “I go everywhere. A friend gave me a card to the Lincoln Club in Pittsburg and I went there. There were five or six of us playing poker, among them Mr.—Mr. Doane here. I sat at the same table with him for twenty hours or so, but I can’t recall his last name to save me. It isn’t Doane, I’m positive. I have an excellent memory for faces, and I know you’re the man. Don’t you remember me?”

“I haven’t the slightest recollection of ever having seen you before in my life,” was Doane’s slow reply. “I have no recollection of ever having been in Pittsburg—no recollection of anything.”

“Do you know if Mr. Doane is a resident of Pittsburg?” Hatch inquired. “Or was he there as a visitor, as you were?”

“Couldn’t tell you to save my life,” replied Manning. “Lord, it’s amazing, isn’t it? You don’t remember me? You called me Bill all evening.”

The other man shook his head.

“Well, say, is there anything I can do for you?”

“Nothing, thanks,” said Doane. “Only tell me my name, and who I am.”

“Lord, I don’t know.”

“What sort of a club is the Lincoln?” asked Hatch.

“It’s a sort of a millionaire’s club,” Manning explained. “Lots of iron men belong to it. I had considerable business with them—that’s what took me to Pittsburg.”

“And you are absolutely positive this is the man you met there?”

“Why, I know it. I never forget faces; it’s my business to remember them.”

“Did he say anything about a family?”

“Not that I recall. A man doesn’t usually speak of his family at a poker table.”

“Do you remember the exact date or the month?”

“I think it was in January or February possibly,” was the reply. “It was bitterly cold and the snow was all smoked up. Yes, I’m positive it was in January, three years ago.”

After awhile the men separated. Manning was stopping at the Hotel Teutonic and willingly gave his name and permanent address to Hatch, explaining at the same time that he would be in the city for several days and was perfectly willing to help in any way he could. He took also the address of The Thinking Machine.

From the caf  Hatch and Doane returned to the scientist. They found him with two telegrams spread out on a table before him. Briefly Hatch told the story of the meeting with Manning, while Doane sank down with his head in his hands. The Thinking Machine listened without comment.

“Here,” he said, at the conclusion of the recital, and he offered one of the telegrams to Hatch. “I got the name of a shoemaker from Mr. Doane’s shoe and wired to him in Denver, asking if he had a record of the sale. This is the answer. Read it aloud.”

Hatch did so.

“Shoes such as described made nine weeks ago for Preston Bell, cashier Blank National Bank of Butte. Don’t know John Doane.”

“Well—what—” Doane began, bewildered.

“It means that you are Preston Bell,” said Hatch, emphatically.

“No,” said The Thinking Machine, quickly. “It means that there is only a strong probability of it.”

*

The door bell rang. After a moment Martha appeared.

“A lady to see you, sir,” she said.

“Her name?”

“Mrs. John Doane.”

“Gentlemen, kindly step into the next room,” requested The Thinking Machine.

Together Hatch and Doane passed through the door. There was an expression of —of—no man may say what—on Doane’s face as he went.

“Show her in here, Martha,” instructed the scientist.

There was a rustle of silk in the hall, the curtains on the door were pulled apart quickly and a richly gowned woman rushed into the room.

“My husband? Is he here?” she demanded, breathlessly. “I went to the hotel; they said he came here for treatment. Please, please, is he here?”

“A moment, madam,” said The Thinking Machine. He stepped to the door through which Hatch and Doane had gone, and said something. One of them appeared in the door. It was Hutchinson Hatch.

“John, John, my darling husband,” and the woman flung her arms about Hatch’s neck. “Don’t you know me?”

With blushing face Hatch looked over her shoulder into the eyes of The Thinking Machine, who stood briskly rubbing his hands. Never before in his long acquaintance with the scientist had Hatch seen him smile.

V

For a time there was silence, broken only by sobs, as the woman clung frantically to Hatch, with her face buried on his shoulder. Then:

“Don’t you remember me?” she asked again and again. “Your wife? Don’t you remember me?”

Hatch could still see the trace of a smile on the scientist’s face, and said nothing.

“You are positive this gentleman is your husband?” inquired The Thinking Machine, finally.

“Oh, I know,” the woman sobbed. “Oh, John, don’t you remember me?” She drew away a little and looked deeply into the reporter’s eyes. “Don’t you remember me, John?”

“Can’t say that I ever saw you before,” said Hatch, truthfully enough. “I—I—fact is—”

“Mr. Doane’s memory is wholly gone now,” explained The Thinking Machine. “Meanwhile, perhaps you would tell me something about him. He is my patient. I am particularly interested.”

The voice was soothing; it had lost for the moment its perpetual irritation. The woman sat down beside Hatch. Her face, pretty enough in a bold sort of way, was turned to The Thinking Machine inquiringly. With one hand she stroked that of the reporter.

“Where are you from?” began the scientist. “I mean where is the home of John Doane?”

“In Buffalo,” she replied, glibly. “Didn’t he even remember that?”

“And what’s his business?”

“His health has been bad for some time and recently he gave up active business,” said the woman. “Previously he was connected with a bank.”

“When did you see him last?”

“Six weeks ago. He left the house one day and I have never heard from him since. I had Pinkerton men searching and at last they reported he was at the Yarmouth Hotel. I came on immediately. And now we shall go back to Buffalo.” She turned to Hatch with a languishing glance. “Shall we not, dear?”

“Whatever Professor Van Dusen thinks best,” was the equivocal reply.

Slowly the glimmer of amusement was passing out of the squint eyes of The Thinking Machine; as Hatch looked he saw a hardening of the lines of the mouth. There was an explosion coming. He knew it. Yet when the scientist spoke his voice was more velvety than ever.

“Mrs. Doane, do you happen to be acquainted with a drug which produces temporary loss of memory?”

She stared at him, but did not lose her self-possession.

“No,” she said finally. “Why?”

“You know, of course, that this man is not your husband?”

This time the question had its effect. The woman arose suddenly stared at the two men, and her face went white.

“Not?—not?—what do you mean?”

“I mean,” and the voice reassumed its tone of irritation, “I mean that I shall send for the police and give you in their charge unless you tell me the truth about this affair. Is that perfectly clear to you?”

The woman’s lips were pressed tightly together. She saw that she had fallen into some sort of a trap; her gloved hands were clenched fiercely; the pallor faded and a flush of anger came.

“Further, for fear you don’t quite follow me even now,” explained The Thinking Machine, “I will say that I know all about this copper deal of which this so-called John Doane was the victim. I know his condition now. If you tell the truth you may escape prison—if you don’t, there is a long term, not only for you, but for

your fellowconspirators. Now will you talk?"

"No," said the woman. She arose as if to go out.

"Never mind that," said The Thinking Machine. "You had better stay where you are. You will be locked up at the proper moment. Mr. Hatch, please 'phone for Detective Mallory."

Hatch arose and passed into the adjoining room.

"You tricked me," the woman screamed suddenly, fiercely.

"Yes," the other agreed, complacently. "Next time be sure you know your own husband. Meanwhile where is Harrison?"

"Not another word," was the quick reply.

"Very well," said the scientist, calmly. "Detective Mallory will be here in a few minutes. Meanwhile I'll lock this door."

"You have no right--" the woman began.

Without heeding the remark, The Thinking Machine passed into the adjoining room. There for half an hour he talked earnestly to Hatch and Doane. At the end of that time he sent a telegram to the manager of the Lincoln club in Pittsburg, as follows:

"Does your visitors' book show any man, registered there in the month of January three years ago, whose first name is Harry or Henry? If so, please wire name and description, also name of man whose guest he was."

This telegram was dispatched. A few minutes later the door bell rang and Detective Mallory entered.

"What is it?" he inquired.

"A prisoner for you in the next room," was the reply. "A woman. I charge her with conspiracy to defraud a man who for the present we will call John Doane. That may or may not be his name."

“What do you know about it?” asked the detective.

“A great deal now—more after awhile. I shall tell you then. Meanwhile take this woman. You gentlemen, I should suggest, might go out somewhere this evening. If you drop by afterwards there may be an answer to a few telegrams which will make this matter clear.”

Protestingly the mysterious woman was led away by Detective Mallory; and Doane and Hatch followed shortly after. The next act of the Thinking Machine was to write a telegram addressed to Mrs. Preston Bell, Butte, Montana. Here it is:

“Your husband suffering temporary mental trouble here. Can you come on immediately? Answer.”

When the messenger boy came for the telegram he found a man on the stoop. The Thinking Machine received the telegram, and the man, who gave to Martha the name of Manning, was announced.

“Manning, too,” mused the scientist. “Show him in.”

“I don’t know if you know why I am here,” explained Manning.

“Oh, yes,” said the scientist. “You have remembered Doane’s name. What is it, please?”

Manning was too frankly surprised to answer and only stared at the scientist.

“Yes, that’s right,” he said finally, and he smiled. “His name is Pillsbury. I recall it now.”

“And what made you recall it?”

“I noticed an advertisement in a magazine with the name in large letters. It instantly came to me that that was Doane’s real name.”

“Thanks,” remarked the scientist. “And the woman—who is she?”

“What woman?” asked Manning.

“Never mind, then. I am deeply obliged for your information. I don’t suppose you know anything else about it?”

“No,” said Manning. He was a little bewildered, and after awhile went away.

For an hour or more The Thinking Machine sat with finger tips pressed together staring at the ceiling. His meditations were interrupted by Martha.

“Another telegram, sir.”

The Thinking Machine took it eagerly. It was from the manager of the Lincoln Club in Pittsburg:

“Henry C. Carney, Harry Meltz, Henry Blake, Henry W. Tolman, Harry Pillsbury, Henry Calvert and Henry Louis Smith all visitors to club in month you name. Which do you want to learn more about?”

It took more than an hour for The Thinking Machine to establish long distance connection by ‘phone with Pittsburg. When he had finished talking he seemed satisfied.

“Now,” he mused. “The answer from Mrs. Bell.”

It was nearly midnight when that came. Hatch and Doane had returned from a theater and were talking to the scientist when the telegram was brought in.

“Anything important?” asked Doane, anxiously.

“Yes,” said the scientist, and he slipped a finger beneath the flap of the envelope. “It’s clear now. It was an engaging problem from first to last, and now—”

He opened the telegram and glanced at it; then with bewilderment on his face and mouth slightly open he sank down at the table and leaned forward with his head on his arms. The message fluttered to the table and Hatch read this:

“Man in Boston can’t be my husband. He is now in Honolulu. I received cablegram from him to-day.

“Mrs. Preston Bell.”

VI

IT was thirtysix hours later that the three men met again. The Thinking Machine had abruptly dismissed Hatch and Doane the last time. The reporter knew that something wholly unexpected had happened. He could only conjecture that this had to do with Preston Bell. When the three met again it was in Detective Mallory's office at police headquarters. The mysterious woman who had claimed Doane for her husband was present, as were Mallory, Hatch, Doane and The Thinking Machine.

"Has this woman given any name?" was the scientist's first question.

"Mary Jones," replied the detective, with a grin.

"And address?"

"No."

"Is her picture in the Rogues' Gallery?"

"No. I looked carefully."

"Anybody called to ask about her?"

"A man—yes. That is, he didn't ask about her—he merely asked some general questions, which now we believe were to find out about her."

The Thinking Machine arose and walked over to the woman. She looked up at him defiantly.

"There has been a mistake made, Mr. Mallory," said the scientist. "It's my fault entirely. Let this woman go. I am sorry to have done her so grave an injustice."

Instantly the woman was on her feet, her face radiant. A look of disgust crept into Mallory's face.

"I can't let her go now without arraignment," the detective growled. "It ain't regular."

“You must let her go, Mr. Mallory,” commanded The Thinking Machine, and over the woman’s shoulder the detective saw an astonishing thing. The Thinking Machine winked. It was a decided, long, pronounced wink.

“Oh, all right,” he said, “but it ain’t regular at that.”

The woman passed out of the room hurriedly, her silken skirts rustling loudly. She was free again. Immediately she disappeared. The Thinking Machine’s entire manner changed.

“Put your best man to follow her,” he directed rapidly. “Let him go to her home and arrest the man who is with her as her husband. Then bring them both back here, after searching their rooms for money.”

“Why—what—what is all this?” demanded Mallory, amazed.

“The man who inquired for her, who is with her, is wanted for a \$175,000 embezzlement in Butte, Montana. Don’t let your man lose sight of her.”

The detective left the room hurriedly. Ten minutes later he returned to find The Thinking Machine leaning back in his chair with eyes upturned. Hatch and Doane were waiting, both impatiently.

“Now Mr. Mallory,” said the scientist, “I shall try to make this matter as clear to you as it is to me. By the time I finish I expect your man will be back here with this woman and the embezzler. His name is Harrison; I don’t know hers. I can’t believe she is Mrs. Harrison, yet he has, I suppose, a wife. But here’s the story. It is the chaining together of fact after fact; a necessary logical sequence to a series of incidents, which are, separately, deeply puzzling.”

The detective lighted a cigar and the others disposed themselves comfortably to listen.

“This gentleman came to me,” began The Thinking Machine, “with a story of loss of memory. He told me that he knew neither his name, home, occupation, nor anything whatever about himself. At the moment it struck me as a case for a mental expert; still I was interested. It seemed to be a remarkable case of aphasia, and I so regarded it until he told me that he had \$10,000 in bills, that he had no watch, that everything which might possibly be of value in establishing his identity had been removed from his clothing. This included even the names

of the makers of his linen. That showed intent, deliberation.

“Then I knew it could not be aphasia. That disease strikes a man suddenly as he walks the street, as he sleeps, as he works, but never gives any desire to remove traces of one’s identity. On the contrary, a man is still apparently sound mentally—he has merely forgotten something—and usually his first desire is to find out who he is. This gentleman had that desire, and in trying to find some clew he showed a mind capable of grasping at every possible opportunity. Nearly every question I asked had been anticipated. Thus I recognized that he must be a more than usually astute man.

“But if not aphasia, what was it? What caused his condition? A drug? I remembered that there was such a drug in India, not unlike hasheesh. Therefore for the moment I assumed a drug. It gave me a working basis. Then what did I have? A man of striking mentality who was the victim of some sort of plot, who had been drugged until he lost himself, and in that way disposed of. The handwriting might be the same, for handwriting is rarely affected by a mental disorder; it is a physical function.

“So far, so good. I examined his head for a possible accident. Nothing. His hands were white and in no way calloused. Seeking to reconcile the fact that he had been a man of strong mentality, with all other things a financier or banker, occurred to me. The same things might have indicated a lawyer, but the poise of this man, his elaborate care in dress, all these things made me think him the financier rather than the lawyer.

“Then I examined some money he had when he awoke. Fifteen or sixteen of the hundreddollar bills were new and in sequence. They were issued by a national bank. To whom? The possibilities were that the bank would have a record. I wired, asking about this, and also asked Mr. Hatch to have his correspondents make inquiries in various cities for a John Doane. It was not impossible that John Doane was his name. Now I believe it will be safe for me to say that when he registered at the hotel he was drugged, his own name slipped his mind, and he signed John Doane—the first name that came to him. That is not his name.

“While waiting an answer from the bank I tried to arouse his memory by referring to things in the West. It appeared possible that he might have brought the money from the West with him. Then, still with the idea that he was a financier, I sent him to the financial district. There was a result. The word

‘copper’ aroused him so that he fainted after shouting, ‘Sell copper, sell, sell, sell.’

“In a way my estimate of the man was confirmed. He was or had been in a copper deal, selling copper in the market, or planning to do so. I know nothing of the intricacies of the stock market. But there came instantly to me the thought that a man who would faint away in such a case must be vitally interested as well as ill. Thus I had a financier, in a copper deal, drugged as result of a conspiracy. Do you follow me, Mr. Mallory?”

“Sure,” was the reply.

“At this point I received a telegram from the Butte bank telling me that the hundreddollar bills I asked about had been burned. This telegram was signed ‘Preston Bell, Cashier.’ If that were true, the bills this man had were counterfeit. There were no ifs about that. I asked him if he knew Preston Bell. It was the only name of a person to arouse him in any way. A man knows his own name better than anything in the world. Therefore was it his? For a moment I presumed it was.

“Thus the case stood: Preston Bell, cashier of the Butte bank, had been drugged, was the victim of a conspiracy, which was probably a part of some great move in copper. But if this man were Preston Bell, how came the signature there? Part of the office regulation? It happens hundreds of times that a name is so used, particularly on telegrams.

“Well, this man who was lost—Doane, or Preston Bell—went to sleep in my apartments. At that time I believed it fully possible that he was a counterfeiter, as the bills were supposedly burned, and sent Mr. Hatch to consult an expert. I also wired for details of the fire loss in Butte and names of persons who had any knowledge of the matter. This done, I removed and examined this gentleman’s shoes for the name of the maker. I found it. The shoes were of fine quality, probably made to order for him.

“Remember, at this time I believed this gentleman to be Preston Bell, for reasons I have stated. I wired to the maker or retailer to know if he had a record of a sale of the shoes, describing them in detail, to any financier or banker. I also wired to the Denver police to know if any financier or banker had been away from there for four or five weeks. Then came the somewhat startling information, through

Mr. Hatch, that the hundred-dollar bills were genuine. That answer meant that Preston Bell—as I had begun to think of him—was as either a thief or the victim of some sort of financial conspiracy.”

During the silence which followed every eye was turned on the man who was lost—Doane or Preston Bell. He sat staring straight ahead of him with hands nervously clenched. On his face was written the sign of a desperate mental struggle. He was still trying to recall the past.

“Then,” The Thinking Machine resumed, “I heard from the Denver police. There was no leading financier or banker out of the city so far as they could learn hurriedly. It was not conclusive, but it aided me. Also I received another telegram from Butte, signed Preston Bell, telling me the circumstances of the supposed burning of the hundred-dollar bills. It did not show that they were burned at all; it was merely an assumption that they had been. They were last seen in President Harrison’s office.”

“Harrison, Harrison, Harrison,” repeated Doane.

“Vaguely I could see the possibility of something financially wrong in the bank. Possibly Harrison, even Mr. Bell here, knew of it. Banks do not apply for permission to reissue bills unless they are positive of the original loss. Yet here were the bills. Obviously some sort of jugglery. I wired to the police of Butte, asking some questions. The answer was that Harrison had embezzled \$175,000 and had disappeared. Now I knew he had part of the missing, supposedly burned, bills with him. It was obvious. Was Bell also a thief?

“The same telegram said that Mr. Bell’s reputation was of the best, and he was out of the city. That confirmed my belief that it was an office rule to sign telegrams with the cashier’s name, and further made me positive that this man was Preston Bell. The chain of circumstances was complete. It was two and two—inevitable result, four.

“Now, what was the plot? Something to do with copper, and there was an embezzlement. Then, still seeking a man who knew Bell personally, I sent him out walking with Hatch. I had done so before. Suddenly another figure came into the mystery—a confusing one at the moment. This was a Mr. Manning, who knew Doane, or Bell, as Harry—something; met him in Pittsburg three years ago, in the Lincoln Club.

“It was just after Mr. Hatch told me of this man that I received a telegram from the shoemaker in Denver. It said that he had made a shoe such as I described within a few months for Preston Bell. I had asked if a sale had been made to a financier or banker; I got the name back by wire.

“At this point a woman appeared to claim John Doane as her husband. With no definite purpose, save general precaution, I asked Mr. Hatch to see her first. She imagined he was Doane and embraced him, calling him John. Therefore she was a fraud. She did not know John Doane, or Preston Bell, by sight. Was she acting under the direction of some one else? If so, whose?”

There was as a pause as The Thinking Machine readjusted himself in the chair. After a time he went on:

“There are shades of emotion intuition, call it what you will, so subtle that it is difficult to express them in words. As I had instinctively associated Harrison with Bell’s present condition I instinctively associated this woman with Harrison. For not a word of the affair had appeared in a newspaper; only a very few persons knew of it. Was it possible that the stranger Manning was backing the woman in an effort to get the \$10,000? That remained to be seen. I questioned the woman; she would say nothing. She is clever, but she blundered badly in claiming Mr. Hatch for a husband.”

The reporter blushed modestly.

“I asked her flatly about a drug. She was quite calm and her manner indicated that she knew nothing of it. Yet I presume she did. Then I sprung the bombshell, and she saw she had made a mistake. I gave her over to Detective Mallory and she was locked up. This done, I wired to the Lincoln Club in Pittsburg to find out about this mysterious ‘Harry’ who had come into the case. I was so confident then that I also wired to Mrs. Bell in Butte, presuming that there was a Mrs. Bell, asking about her husband.

“Then Manning came to see me. I knew he came because he had remembered the name he knew you by,” and The Thinking Machine turned to the central figure in this strange entanglement of identity, “although he seemed surprised when I told him as much. He knew you as Harry Pillsbury. I asked him who the woman was. His manner told me that he knew nothing whatever of her. Then it came back to her as an associate of Harrison, your enemy for some reason, and I

could see it in no other light. It was her purpose to get hold of you and possibly keep you a prisoner, at least until some gigantic deal in which copper figured was disposed of. That was what I surmised.

“Then another telegram came from the Lincoln Club in Pittsburg. The name of Harry Pillsbury appeared as a visitor in the book in January, three years ago. It was you—Manning is not the sort of man to be mistaken—and then there remained only one point to be solved as I then saw the case. That was an answer from Mrs. Preston Bell, if there was a Mrs. Bell. She would know where her husband was.”

Again there was silence. A thousand things were running through Bell’s mind. The story had been told so pointedly, and was so vitally a part of him, that semi-recollection was again on his face.

“That telegram said that Preston Bell was in Honolulu; that the wife had received a cable dispatch that day. Then, frankly, I was puzzled; so puzzled, in fact, that the entire fabric I had constructed seemed to melt away before my eyes. It took me hours to readjust it. I tried it all over in detail, and then the theory which would reconcile every fact in the case was evolved. That theory is right—as right as that two and two make four. It’s logic.”

It was half an hour later when a detective entered and spoke to Detective Mallory aside.

“Fine!” said Mallory. “Bring ‘em in.”

Then there reappeared the woman who had been a prisoner and a man of fifty years.

“Harrison!” exclaimed Bell, suddenly. He staggered to his feet with outstretched hands. “Harrison! I know! I know!”

“Good, good, very good,” said The Thinking Machine.

Bell’s nervously twitching hands were reaching for Harrison’s throat when he was pushed aside by Detective Mallory. He stood pallid for a moment, then sank down on the floor in a heap. He was senseless. The Thinking Machine made a hurried examination.

“Good!” he remarked again. “When he recovers he will remember everything except what has happened since he has been in Boston. Meanwhile, Mr. Harrison, we know all about the little affair of the drug, the battle for new copper workings in Honolulu, and your partner there has been arrested. Your drug didn’t do its work well enough. Have you anything to add?”

The prisoner was silent.

“Did you search his rooms?” asked The Thinking Machine of the detective who had made the double arrest.

“Yes, and found this.”

It was a large roll of money. The Thinking Machine ran over it lightly—\$70,000—scanning the numbers of the bills. At last he held forth half a dozen. They were among the twentyseven reported to have been burned in the bank fire in Butte.

Harrison and the woman were led away. Subsequently it developed that he had been systematically robbing the bank of which he was president for years; was responsible for the fire, at which time he had evidently expected to make a great haul; and that the woman was not his wife. Following his arrest this entire story came out; also the facts of the gigantic copper deal, in which he had rid himself of Bell, who was his partner, and had sent another man to Honolulu in Bell’s name to buy up options on some valuable copper property there. This confederate in Honolulu had sent the cable dispatches to the wife in Butte. She accepted them without question.

It was a day or so later that Hatch dropped in to see The Thinking Machine and asked a few questions.

“How did Bell happen to have that \$10,000?”

“It was given to him, probably, because it was safer to have him rambling about the country, not knowing who he was as, than to kill him.”

“And how did he happen to be here?”

“That question may be answered at the trial.”

“And how did it come that Bell was once known as Harry Pillsbury?”

“Bell is a director in United States Steel, I have since learned. There was a secret meeting of this board in Pittsburg three years ago. He went incognito to attend that meeting and was introduced at the Lincoln Club as Harry Pillsbury.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Hatch.