



THE STOLEN BRAIN
**A WONDERFUL
CRIME**

NICHOLAS CARTER

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*** START OF THE THE STOLEN BRAIN ***

THE STOLEN BRAIN
OR,
A WONDERFUL CRIME
BY
NICHOLAS CARTER

Author of the celebrated stories of Nick Carter's
adventures,
which are published exclusively in the **NEW MAGNET**

LIBRARY, conceded to be among the best
detective tales ever written.



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—
The Stolen Brain

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THE STOLEN BRAIN.

CHAPTER I.

STARTLING INFORMATION.

"There goes another, chief. That makes five so far. There surely is something going on to-night," the young man at the window declared excitedly.

It was Patsy Garvan, Nick Carter's second assistant, and he who was addressed was the great New York detective himself.

The closest friends would have known neither of them, however, unless they had been in the secret, for both were cleverly disguised.

Moreover, the room in which they seemed to be so much at home was not one of those in Nick's handsome Madison Avenue residence in New York.

It was, in fact, a room in a house miles away from there, to the northward, in the Bronx section of the great city, a short distance from the New York Zoölogical Park.

On the first of the month, about ten days before, a family, which went by the name of Webb, had moved in there. The family consisted of three persons: The father, Charles Webb; a grown son, William, and the latter's young wife, Mildred.

Such, at least, was the understanding of the neighbors. As a matter of fact, Charles Webb was Nick Carter, his "son" was better known as Patsy Garvan, the famous detective's clever assistant, and "Mildred" was Adelina Garvan, Patsy's pretty Chilean-Spanish wife, whose woman's intuitions had materially assisted in solving more than one difficult problem in the mathematics of crime.

It was a peculiar case which had brought them to that out-of-the-way neighborhood, and required delicate handling.

Their interest lay in the house next door, a big, rambling wooden structure, which, with theirs, stood somewhat apart, with vacant lots all about.

The house in question was occupied, and had been for years, by its owner, Doctor Hiram A. Grantley.

Grantley was well known in New York medical circles. Indeed, his fame was at least twenty-five years old.

He was accounted one of the most skillful surgeons in the State, which necessarily meant in the United States as well. He had a long list of remarkably daring and successful operations to his credit, and might have been one of the wealthiest and most honored men in his profession had it not been for certain unfortunate peculiarities, which had grown upon him as the years passed.

People were afraid of him—that was the sum and substance of it.

He was altogether too daring and ruthless in his methods, too ready to operate on the slightest provocation. He was never satisfied with the conservative methods of his colleagues, but was always seeking new ways of carving up the human frame. The individual patient meant nothing to him. It was a matter of supreme indifference to Doctor Hiram Grantley whether his "cases" lived or died, so long as they gave him a chance to test his theories.

Of course, he recognized as clearly as any one that a surgeon's ultimate success must lie in saving life, not in taking it. That was his goal, but, being apparently heartless, and looking upon the individuals who sought his services much as other surgeons looked upon guinea pigs—merely as subjects for experimentation—he usually preferred to try something new rather than follow a safe-and-sane procedure which had proved its worth in hundreds or thousands of cases.

That was the quickest way to advance the science of surgery, according to Grantley, and the result was that, years before, people who knew of his tendencies had ceased, for the most part, to go to him, unless they were in such desperate straits that they were willing to take a last, supreme chance.

Consequently, his practice had fallen away to a very marked extent, and, despite his acknowledged brilliancy and the many improved methods he had introduced from time to time, he had come to be looked upon with more or less distrust, even by the members of his own profession.

His income had once been a very large one, however, and when it dwindled, he gave up his house in one of the fashionable sections of the city and moved to the Bronx, where he turned the house he bought into a sort of private hospital.

His treatment at the hands of the public and his brother surgeons seemed to aggravate his tendencies rather than curb them, and he became more and more eccentric and ruthless, a sinister figure in appearance and in reputation.

When Nick Carter interested himself in Doctor Grantley, the latter was about fifty-five years of age. As a young man he had had jet-black hair and eyes. His hair was now almost white, and it was always brushed straight back from his forehead, although worn rather long.

His brows were gray and shaggy, and under them gleamed his piercing black eyes. His forehead was high and denoted great intelligence. His nose was thin, prominent, and curved like the beak of an eagle, or the nose of an Egyptian mummy.

He was nearly six feet in height, very spare in build, and his long, sensitive fingers resembled claws at times, as they curved out from his bony hands.

For two or three years, Grantley had been at odds with the latest owner of the house next door, a certain John D. Wallace.

Wallace was an intelligent man of means, a retired business man, who was an ardent antivivisectionist, whereas Grantley had always been famous—or infamous, as you please—for his experiments on living animals.

The former had bought the smaller house, next door, at a time when the surgeon had tried to get hold of it, probably because he did not care for such near neighbors unless he could choose them himself. Ever since then there had been bad blood between Grantley and Wallace.

Wallace had complained of Grantley more than once, alleging that the doctor's private hospital was a nuisance, and that the howling of his animal subjects was intolerable. Nothing further had been done about it by Wallace, however, and Grantley, in retaliation, had made it as uncomfortable as he could for Wallace's tenants.

At last, Wallace had done some spying on his own account, and he had finally come to Nick Carter with a startling theory.

He believed that Doctor Grantley was not only using animals in his experiments in vivisection, but human beings as well, and he offered the detective a tempting fee to look into the matter.

The fee did not hold out as much interest to Nick as Wallace's story did, for it bore out many more or less vague rumors which he had heard.

According to Wallace and others, Doctor Grantley had recently made a surprising move. Although he was about the last man in the world who would naturally be thought of as a philanthropist, he had begun to offer his services to the poor of the East Side, and without charge.

More than that, Wallace claimed to have spent hours in the house he owned, which was vacant at the time, and had seen several patients enter the private hospital, all of whom seemed to be foreigners and far from prosperous enough to pay Grantley's regular fees, which had always been large.

Wallace also reported that he had reason to believe that bodies were carried away from time to time, under cover of darkness.

Finally, he declared that several young men, who looked like doctors, frequented the place, especially at night. From this circumstance he argued that Grantley had a following among young and unscrupulous surgeons, who came there to witness or take part in the older man's gruesome experiments.

In answer to Nick's inquiries, Wallace informed the detective that Doctor Grantley's regular establishment included Grantley himself, Doctor Siebold, his young assistant; a nurse of perhaps thirty-five, Miss Rawlinson, and a German manservant, named Hoff.

The latter was the doctor's only servant, and, apparently, did Grantley's cooking. Wallace was inclined to think that Hoff had seen army service.

It will readily be seen that the case was no ordinary one. There is no law which covers the employment of living human beings in such experiments, for the simple reason that until lately there has been no demand for it and no suspicion that the practice existed anywhere.

If a death could be proved to have occurred under such circumstances, however, and not in the ordinary course of medical or surgical practice, the person responsible could be arrested and tried for manslaughter, or, failing in that, he might be exposed and driven into retirement, if definite proof could be obtained that he used men, women, or children in his ruthless pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

The detective saw that John Wallace was not a visionary crank but a practical man of affairs, who was not likely to exaggerate. Grantley's reputation lent color to the possibility, for another thing, and, finally, the detective had strong convictions on the subject of vivisection, even as practiced upon animals.

In most cases he was willing to believe the claims of the vivisectionists that the living animals which they strapped down and cut open were generally under the influence of some drug, but, to Nick's mind, that did not alter the fact that, after the poor creatures had been mutilated in a hundred different ways, they were frequently turned loose, suffering acutely, and with their wounds uncared for.

Nick's kind heart led him to abhor such cruelty, especially when it was indulged in so freely and constantly that its oft-reiterated excuses lost most, if not all, of their original weight.

"A certain amount of vivisection, carried on under proper restrictions, may be an important factor in the advancement of science," the detective was wont to say. "I don't say it is, but it may be. Even so, it should be permitted only in the case of a few men, not indulged in by the wholesale in every medical school."

It may be imagined, therefore, that he was more than interested when it was hinted to him that Doctor Hiram Grantley had gone farther than any one else was known to have dared to go, and had extended his experiments to the defenseless and ignorant poor of the East Side.

Nick hoped that Wallace was wrong, but he determined to find out for himself as soon as possible, and made his plans accordingly.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOMB RUSE.

At Wallace's suggestion, the detective promised to occupy the empty house next door to Grantley's under an assumed name, moving in openly, as an ordinary tenant would do.

The plan was carried out with comparatively little delay, and Patsy was chosen because he was married and could bring his wife along to give an air of domesticity to the establishment.

The "Webbs" had moved in ten days before; their furniture having been carefully selected in different secondhand stores of the better class.

Charles Webb, the "father," went downtown every day, but it was understood in the neighborhood that "Will" was temporarily out of work. That explained why he remained at home all day.

A close but secret watch had been kept on the doctor's house, and its regular occupants had been studied as thoroughly as possible under the circumstances.

Doctor Siebold, Grantley's assistant, had proved to be a man in his early thirties, evidently of German descent, whose keen, searching eyes seemed to belie his too agreeable expression and his suave manners.

Kate Rawlinson, the nurse, seemed to be thoroughly efficient, as she must have been to please Doctor Grantley; but her face, which was rather good looking, in a pinched, tight-lipped way, had a hard, forbidding expression, which warned one not to look to her for much human sympathy, to say the least.

As for Hoff, the German servant, Nick found it easy to agree with Wallace that he had been a soldier. He was fully six feet in height, powerfully built, with a scarred face, keen blue eyes, and a sandy mustache, the points of which were trained rakishly upward, after the model of his emperor's.

Of the lot, he was the only one who seemed likely to give much trouble in a physical encounter, if it came to that. Siebold was slight and wore glasses, and Doctor Grantley

himself, while undoubtedly strong and wiry, did not impress one as a fighting man.

That remained to be seen, however.

It was Hoff who always answered the door, and he did it with an air of suspicion and a brusqueness which suggested a sentry on duty.

Little real progress had been made by the detectives, despite their vigilance. They had discovered that Wallace was correct in saying that patients who seemed to be in humble circumstances were frequently brought to Doctor Grantley's, or came of their own accord, and they had verified Wallace's report that several young men, obviously doctors, frequented the place, but that had only been ascertained after a tedious wait.

For the first few days after the Webbs moved in, there appeared to be little activity next door, probably because Doctor Grantley was more or less suspicious, in a general way, of the newcomers, whose presence he doubtless resented.

He would naturally have waited to see if they were going to show any embarrassing interest in his doings. Their apparent inclination to attend strictly to their own affairs, however, seemed to reassure him. Shrewd as he was, he did not dream of the watch which was being maintained, day and night, over his house.

Presently his attitude of caution relaxed, and things went on as they had been going. Nevertheless, with all their advantages, Nick and his assistant were not in a position to draw any very definite conclusion for some time, and in the end they were little the wiser.

They decided that they would have to resort to some more active method of getting the evidence they desired. Many different plans were discussed and rejected. In the meantime, two of Nick's other assistants, well disguised, were sent to the doctor's house on different, plausible errands, but they did not succeed in penetrating it far enough to learn anything of value.

Furthermore, although the windows of the Webb house were left open night and day, no sounds suggestive of torture were heard, and whatever went on in the private hospital must have been well cloaked and unaccompanied by any excitement.

Nick and Patsy finally determined upon a ruse. They had learned enough to know that the house was carefully guarded by the watchful Hoff, who prowled around at all hours. Besides, they wished to gain access to it when the young doctors were there, for it was reasonable to suppose that at such times the most important experiments took place, whatever their nature might be.

But with five or six extra men in the house, in addition to its regular occupants, the chances for secret entrance were decidedly slim, to say nothing of the likelihood that the investigators could get into position to witness the proceedings.

Therefore, it seemed necessary to wait until the occasion seemed as promising as possible, and then to force an entrance under cover of some exciting diversion, which could be counted upon to draw away, temporarily, the attention of Grantley and his chosen disciples.

It meant a dangerous plunge, for, if it failed to uncover the desired evidence, for any reason, it would unavoidably reveal to Doctor Grantley the fact that he was under suspicion. He would be put on his guard in that case and it would be far more difficult thereafter to trip him up, even if he was not of the sort to put up a fight or attempt to retaliate.

Not only that, but there was little likelihood that such a device would catch the man and his associates in the midst of a punishable crime.

Time was passing, however, and the detective felt it necessary to push matters. His attention was needed elsewhere, and he made up his mind that if he could expose Grantley's methods and show that the eccentric surgeon was actually engaged in unwarranted experiments on his poor and obscure patients, public opinion would do the rest and drive the doctor out of the country, or, at least, force him to give up his questionable practices.

The newspapers could be counted on to make the most of the sensation, and it would almost certainly result in the passing of stringent laws against human vivisection, as well as the unauthorized administration of various experimental serums in the case of unsuspecting persons, especially children, of which there had recently been many instances in New York.

That would be a great step in advance, and it would make possible Grantley's subsequent conviction, if legal proof could be obtained in regard to his past performances, or if he should ever resume such practices in the State at some future time.

Half a loaf was better than no bread. That was the way Nick looked at it. Thus far he had tried in vain, by means of numerous inquiries on the East Side and elsewhere, to find a single instance of a suspicious death under Grantley's care. He had little doubt that there were plenty of cases of that sort, but he had not happened to come across them, and his time was precious.

Finally, he planned to explode a large bomb in front of his house, by means of an electrical connection.

The bomb was to be placed in the middle of the street, which was not extensively used at any time, and Nick counted on the deafening noise of the explosion to draw the occupants of Grantley's house into the street, or, at any rate, away from the operating room.

While they were temporarily absent, Nick and Patsy were to break into the doctor's house at the rear and make their way as rapidly as possible to the operating room, the location of which they had roughly determined by a process of elimination.

They intended to take with them an expert witness in the person of Doctor Willis Cooke, a friend of Nick's and one of the ablest of the city's younger surgeons, who was noted for his opposition to vivisection in almost all of its forms.

In addition to this qualification, Doctor Cooke was a strapping fellow, an athlete, and a champion trap shooter, who could be depended upon to give a good account of himself if it came to a fight.

Doctor Cooke's presence would be important, because he could determine at a glance the nature of the experiment in progress, whether legitimate or otherwise, and his testimony would be taken by the public as authoritative, where Nick's, not being that of a specialist, might be open to question.

On the night in question, when Patsy made the observation recorded at the beginning of the first chapter, the young surgeon was in the room with the detective and the latter's assistant.

He had arrived unobtrusively at the Webb house some time before, having been summoned by Nick when it became clear that something out of the ordinary was about to take place at the private hospital next door.

A young girl of eighteen or thereabouts, evidently a Jewess, had been brought there in a taxi by Doctor Siebold that afternoon.

She was noticeably pretty and seemed to be in ill health, although she had alighted from the machine without assistance. Patsy had witnessed her arrival and had reported the circumstance to Nick when the latter put in an appearance about five-thirty.

It looked as if interesting developments might be looked for that night, and, as the bomb was all in readiness to be planted, Nick decided to telephone for Doctor Cooke.

By half past eight five men had arrived and been admitted by the watchful Hoff. The detectives had, of course, no means of knowing that the pretty Jewess was to be the subject of the night's experiments, but it seemed probable. In any event, there was something of more than ordinary interest scheduled.

Nick waited until nine o'clock to see if any others would arrive. One did, about a quarter of nine. He was obviously in a hurry, which indicated that he was late.

When another fifteen minutes passed, without incident, Nick inferred that no others were coming. He decided to delay still longer, though, for he wished to give Grantley time to get to work.

The delay might mean a great deal to the victim of the vivisectionists, but that, unfortunately, could not be helped. It would do no good to break in prematurely, for, unless an operation of some questionable kind was in progress when the interruption came, nothing would be gained, and Doctor Grantley would be justified in taking legal action against the intruders.

But when nine-fifteen came, the tender-hearted detective could stand the suspense no longer.

"Heaven knows what may be happening to that poor girl—or some one else!" he exclaimed. "See if the coast is clear, Patsy."

The street was deserted, and Nick's assistant slipped out and placed the bomb at a sufficient distance from the two houses to prevent any material damage.

A small electric wire was attached to it in such a way that the explosion would free it and allow it to be drawn quickly into the house as soon as it had done its work.

Nick and Patsy were armed, although they did not look for any resistance of the kind in which there would be gun play, and the detective had supplied Doctor Cooke with an automatic.

They would be greatly outnumbered, of course, if Grantley and the others returned to the operating room and found them there, which they fully expected. Therefore, it was well to be on the safe side, despite the fact that they did not look for weapons in the hands of any of the surgeons.

Patsy's wife was instructed to rush out of the house immediately after the explosion, to pretend to be greatly mystified and terrorized, and to say that her husband and father-in-law were both downtown.

In that way it was hoped that any suspicions Grantley might have would be nipped in the bud for the time being, and that pretty "Mrs. Webb's" distress would delay the return of the doctors to the house.

The electric wire was a long one, extending from the bomb in the street through one of the open front windows, and so to a concealed battery.

Nick and his two companions took their places in the back yard, under cover of the fence separating Grantley's grounds from theirs.

Nick and Patsy carried burglars' tools, so as to be ready for a quick entry.

The seconds dragged by.

Boom!

An ear-splitting report rent the air.

Adelina had fired the bomb and was doubtless drawing in the wire, preparatory to running out and playing the other part assigned to her.

Without a second's delay the two detectives swarmed over the fence and ran silently toward the rear of the private hospital, with Doctor Cooke close at their heels.

CHAPTER III.

AN APPALLING SIGHT.

They heard a commotion in Grantley's house, and the scuffling of many feet as they ran across the yard.

Evidently the occupants were scurrying to the front to see what had happened. The ruse seemed to have worked so far. It remained to be seen how successfully the rest would turn out.

Nick and his companions were already under cover back of the doctor's house before any one emerged at the front.

They found the rear door locked, and left it alone after giving the knob one quick wrench. The nearest windows were all fastened, but Nick's jimmy was put to use at once, and in half a minute a sharp click told that the catch had given way.

The window was pried up swiftly but silently and the detective slipped in, his example being imitated at once by the others.

They found themselves in a large kitchen, which was brightly lighted, and which gave evidence that Hoff had been there very recently, probably at the time of the explosion, for there was a dishpan in the sink and dishes in the draining rack alongside.

In their previous study of the windows they had learned that there was a rear stairway, for they had often seen Hoff passing a small window as he went up and down.

They had reason to believe that the operating room was on the second floor, somewhere in the center of the house, and they meant to reach it, if possible, by way of the rear stairs.

In fact, that was their only hope of doing so unobserved, since they could not count on the bomb having emptied the house completely.

The door from the kitchen into the lower hall had been left open, and Nick and his friends dodged through it. Fortunately, the hall contained a turn, which shut them off from observation on the part of those on the front stairs and at the door.

They heard hurried footsteps descending the other stairs, however, and concluded that several persons were clustered about the front door.

The rear stairway was easily located, and they started upward with as much care as their desire for haste permitted. It was no part of their plan to leave the house again without being seen. They knew that was practically out of the question. However, they wished to see as much as they could before they were discovered, and were, naturally, anxious to find something that would justify their intrusion before Doctor Grantley became aware of their presence.

But luck was against them.

When they reached the head of the servants' stairs, they saw the open door of an unusually brightly lighted room about fifteen feet ahead of them.

The detective instantly came to the conclusion that they had found the room they sought, for the brilliancy of the light told him that a big arc lamp, or other illuminating device of similar power, must be in use.

As he started toward the door, however, he became aware, for the first time, that there was a figure standing in the dimmer light of the hall, beyond the operating room, probably at the head of the first flight at the front.

More than that, the figure's posture was a tense, listening one, and a white face was turned over its shoulder.

The form was that of a woman in a nurse's garb. Undoubtedly their presence had been detected by Miss Rawlinson, who had evidently not seen fit to descend the stairs with the rest, but was waiting for their report as to the cause of the explosion.

When Nick first caught sight of her, she had seemed to be held spellbound by this unlooked-for invasion from the rear, but in a moment she recovered her self-possession.

"Help, Doctor Grantley—quick!" she called down the front stairs, in a high, shrill voice. "There are men in the house! It's a trick!"

And as soon as she had shrieked her warning, instead of running to meet her friends, she turned and came flying along the hall toward the detectives.

Nick had thrown all caution to the winds as soon as he saw her looking at him. With a low-toned command to the

others to follow him, he had leaped forward, and when the nurse started back to meet him—or, more likely, with the idea of keeping him out of the operating room if she could—he had almost reached the brightly lighted doorway.

“Stop! What are you doing here?” the woman demanded harshly. “You must not do——”

But, although the detective heard a clamor of alarm downstairs and the sounds of running feet, he ignored the nurse and sprang into the room.

Patsy entered a moment or two later, but Doctor Cooke, who brought up the rear, was intercepted by the nurse, who fearlessly grabbed him and sought to hold him back, calling wildly to her employer and the others to hurry.

It went against the grain, but the young surgeon, knowing that every second was precious, kept on his way after a momentary pause.

He did not lay a finger upon the nurse. He simply dragged her with him, despite all of her struggles to hold him back, as a football player drags the opponents who are trying to down him.

Thus the three gained access to the room before any of the men reached the head of the stairs.

The sight that met their gaze was an appalling one, and their hearts contracted with horror and pity.

A girl, plainly the same one whom Patsy had seen arriving that afternoon, lay on an operating table, in the full glare of a large arc lamp, which was shaded in such a way as to throw all of its rays downward with pitiless intensity.

At first glance she appeared to be lifeless, but she was doubtless merely under the influence of some anæsthetic.

In fact, there was the best reason in the world for thinking that she was alive—her heart was in full view, its rhythmic contractions being revealed in the most ghastly way.

The lower part of her body was covered with a sheet, but the upper part was bare, and a great hole had been cut in the wall of her chest, through which her beating heart had been lifted out.

Something had been inserted beneath the heart, after it had been raised through the incision, with the result that the naked organ, red and pulsating, stood out in startling relief against the whiteness of her body.

“Good Lord!” exclaimed the detective reverently, as he got his first view of it. “The fiends!”

Patsy, used as he was to scenes of crime and bloodshed, actually shrank back a little as his eyes fell upon the horrible spectacle, and even Doctor Cooke was visibly affected when he staggered in, with the nurse clinging desperately to him.

Nick and Patsy made way for him without attempting to draw nearer to the table. They had seen all they could endure for the moment, and were already waiting for the advent of the surgeons.

Willis Cooke kept on to the unconscious girl’s side, however, without paying any more attention to the nurse than if she had been a puppy tugging at his trousers leg.

He bent over the still, mutilated form, scrutinized the exposed heart for a moment, and then took in the thinness of the arms, the prominence of the ribs in the slightly emaciated body, and the rather sunken cheeks, in which faint spots of unnatural color still lingered, despite the pallor, due to the drug and the operation.

Suddenly he raised his head and turned to Nick. His jaw was suggestively prominent, and there was a steely glitter in his eyes, which boded no good to Doctor Hiram Grantley and the latter’s associates.

“There is absolutely no excuse for this,” he said quickly, as if conscious that those responsible for the girl’s condition were already at the door. “Her heart is perfectly healthy. She has tuberculosis—that’s the way Grantley got his hands on her. I suppose he promised to cure——”

But he had no time to finish the sentence.

At that moment Doctor Grantley himself, clothed in white from head to foot, burst into the room, a malignant snarl on his strongly marked, sinister face.

And after him came Doctor Siebold and the six visiting surgeons.

“What is the meaning of this?” howled Grantley. “Who are you and what in thunder are you doing in my house, curse you!”

And with that he jerked out one of the drawers of a desk which stood beside the door and took out a couple of revolvers, one of which he started to pass to his assistant.

CHAPTER IV.

NICK STIRS UP THE ANIMALS.

Nick, Patsy, and Doctor Cooke had concealed their weapons in order not to provoke trouble unnecessarily. At this move on Grantley's part, however, Nick whipped out his automatic and covered the surgeon.

"None of that, my man!" he commanded. "We're all armed."

The sharply spoken words and the steady muzzles of the three automatics—for Nick's companions had followed suit immediately—froze Doctor Grantley into inaction for a moment.

One hand was still extended toward Doctor Siebold, but it had been arrested in mid-air, and the younger surgeon made no attempt to take the weapon.

All eyes were fixed upon Nick Carter, save those of his own companions.

"I don't care a whoop whether you're armed or not," Grantley snarled, but he made no further attempt at aggression. As a matter of fact, he lowered his extended arm. "You can't bluff me like that," he went on. "What do you want here, anyway?"

He was trying his best to bluff it out, but it was obvious that he was not finding it an easy matter.

Suddenly his eyes shifted to Doctor Cooke, and he gave a start of recognition. At the same time a still more frightened look came into his eyes.

"So that's it, is it?" he growled. "You're behind this, you young whippersnapper!"

"I am not 'behind' it," Cooke corrected. "Nothing would have given me greater pleasure, but, as it happens, I was merely asked to come along in order to give a surgeon's opinion of your scientific orgies. I have seen all that is necessary. There is nothing the matter with your victim's heart—nothing whatever. You had absolutely no excuse, either from the standpoint of surgery or humanity, for performing any sort of an operation upon it, least of all to drag it out of this poor child's body and make a show of it. Her lungs are more or less affected, that is all, and it was

doubtless to the excuse of treating her for tuberculosis that you got her in your power. If I had not seen with my own eyes, Doctor Grantley, I would not have believed it possible that any doctor could be guilty of such a fiendish misuse of professional privileges. What did you expect to find that you did not already know, and if these satellites of yours were so ignorant of heart action—which I am not prepared to believe even of them—why could you not enlighten them just as well with a dog or a cat or a guinea pig?”

Doctor Cooke’s fiery earnestness and withering scorn were good to see, but Grantley’s attitude remained one of sullen defiance.

“None of your business!” he retorted angrily. “I refuse to answer to my inferiors for anything I do. What’s more, I’m beyond the reach of the law, and you know it. I am searching for something of which you and your kind have never dreamed, and if I choose to use a piece of worthless human flesh, doomed already by disease, it is no affair of yours or the world’s.”

“Don’t be too sure of that,” Nick spoke up. “By the way, permit me to introduce myself. I am Nick Carter, the detective, of whom you may possibly have heard, and this is one of my assistants. We have been living next door to you for a short time, but quite long enough to become convinced that there was something radically wrong here.”

Doctor Grantley paled at the mention of Nick’s name, and a perceptible tremor of surprise and fear passed over the group of doctors behind him. Seeing this, Doctor Cooke broke in grimly:

“And while we’re about it, Mr. Carter, I might as well make known to you a couple of Grantley’s hangers-on there. I know two of them well by sight. The one with the mustache is Doctor Hunter, and the one with reddish hair is Doctor Willard. I can furnish you with their addresses if you wish.”

The two men named cringed before Doctor Cooke’s accusing finger.

“Thank you, Cooke, that will help,” Nick replied quietly. “And now, gentlemen, I am afraid I shall have to give you another little jolt. I am a special officer and am quite within my rights in arresting you all for malpractice, which I intend to do forthwith. The nurse, here, will be detained as a material witness.”

"I'd like to see you try it!" stormed Grantley. "Such a charge is ridiculous. I can take the position that the displacement of the heart was only incidental, that I was really trying to find a surgical method of dealing with tuberculosis. Nobody could prove that I wasn't, and I can get any number of expert witnesses to testify in my behalf, or, at least, to admit that I might have been looking for what I claimed. You wouldn't have a leg to stand on. I tell you there's no law that can touch me."

"Perhaps not," admitted the detective. "That is comparatively unimportant, however."

"Unimportant? How the devil do you make that out?"

"The charge of malpractice is a good-enough excuse for your arrest. After that the newspapers will try your case before a jury of millions, and when they finish, the argument for the prosecution——"

Doctor Grantley quailed.

"You mean——" he began, in an unsteady voice.

"I mean that public opinion is going to be given an opportunity to try and condemn you, Grantley," Nick answered evenly. "I know as well as you do that you're in very little danger of a prison sentence, as things are now, but the greatest punishment of all is available—the universal execration of your fellow men. That is going to be meted out to you and your accomplices, and the result of your showing up will be that laws will be speedily passed to cover such revolting crimes as this. In short, we're going to 'break' you, Grantley. You have no one but yourself to blame, and you will deserve all you get. Incidentally, I might add that I am ransacking the East Side for other evidence against you, in connection with previous offenses of this sort, which I have reason to believe have ended fatally for your victims. The charge I shall make against you to-night will serve to hold you until one of manslaughter can be sustained."

Patsy Garvan looked at his chief in surprise. It was decidedly unlike Nick to bandy words in this way, or to "rub it in," either before or after arrest. In the present instance, moreover, his assistant feared that he was making trouble for himself and his companions. He was giving away his hand in a peculiarly reckless fashion, and it was more than possible that Grantley and the others, seeing the pit that