

THE HAMMERING MAN

Edwin Balmer
William B. MacHarg

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The HAMMERING MAN

By Edwin Balmer and William B. MacHarg

Authors of "The Eleventh Hour" and "The Man Higher Up."

LUTHER TRANT, the psychological detective, is back on the job this month with a scientifiction tale which will keep you absorbed and will arouse your curiosity to no mean degree. The strange part about it all is that although the story is written as fiction, the results can be obtained readily any time today, as the instruments used are well known and can be found in any university and up-to-date college laboratory. Strange to say, however, our courts, so far, have not been willing to use psychological reactions, but no doubt sooner or later they will do so.

Luther Trant, on the rainy morning of April 13th, sat alone in his office. On his wrist, as he bent closely over a heap of typewritten pages spread before him on his desk, a small instrument in continual motion ticked like a watch. It was for him an hour of idleness; he was reading fiction. And with his passion for making visible and recording the workings of the

mind, he was taking a permanent record of his feelings as he read.

The instrument strapped on Trant's arm was called a sphygmograph. It carried a small steel rod which pressed tightly on his wrist artery. This rod, rising and falling with each rush of the blood wave through the artery, transmitted its motion to a system of small levers. These levers operated a stylus point, which touched the surface of a revolving drum. And as Trant had adjusted around this drum a strip of smoked paper, the stylus point traced on its sooty surface a continuous wavy line which rose and fell with each beat of the psychologist's pulse.

As the interest of the story gripped Trant, this wavy line grew flatter, with elevations farther apart. When the interest flagged, his pulse returned to its normal beat and the line became regular in its undulations. At an exciting incident, the elevations swelled to greater height. And the psychologist was noting with satisfaction how the continual variations of the line gave definite record of the story's sustained power, when he was interrupted by the sharp ring of his telephone.

An excited, choleric voice came over the wire:

"Mr. Trant? ... This is Cuthbert Edwards, of Cuthbert Edwards & Co., Michigan Avenue. You have received a communication from my son Winton this morning? Is he there now? ... No? Then he will reach your office in a very few moments. I want nothing whatever done in the matter! You understand! I will reach your office myself as soon as possible—probably within fifteen minutes—and explain!"

The sentence ended with a bump, as Cuthbert Edwards slammed his receiver back upon its hook. The psychologist, who would have recognized the name—even if not forewarned by the communication he had received that morning—as the conservative head of one of the oldest and most "exclusive" Chicago families of New England Puritan extraction, detached the sphygmograph from his wrist and drew toward him and reread the fantastic advertisement that had come to him inclosed in Winton Edwards' letter. Apparently it had been cut from the classified columns of one of the big dailies.

Eva: The 17th of the 10th, 1905! Since you and your own are safe, do you become insensible that others now again wait in your place? And those that swing in the wind! Have you forgot? If you remember and are true, communicate. And you can help save them all! N. M. 15, 45, 11, 31; 7; 13, 32, 45; 13, 36.

The letter, to the first page of which the advertisement had been pinned, was dated "Chicago, April 13th," the same day he had received it, postmarked three o'clock that morning, and written in the scrawling hand of a young man under strong emotion.

Dear Sir: Before coming to consult you, I send for your consideration the advertisement you will find inclosed. This advertisement is the one tangible piece of evidence of the amazing and inexplicable influence possessed by the "hammering man" over my *fiancée*, Miss Eva Silber. This influence has forced her to refuse to marry me—to tell me that I must think of her only as if she were dead.

This advertisement appeared first on last Monday morning in the classified columns of three Chicago papers published in English, and in the German *S*—. On Tuesday, it appeared in the same morning papers and in four evening papers and the German *A*—. It was submitted to each newspaper by mail, with no address or information other than the text as here printed, with three dollars in currency inclosed in each case to pay for its insertion. For God's sake help me, Mr. Trant! I will call on you this morning, as soon as I think you are at your office. WINTON EDWARDS.

The psychologist had hardly finished this letter, when rapid footsteps in the corridor outside stopped at his office door. Never had there been a more striking entrance into Trant's office than that of the young man who now burst in—disheveled, wet with the rain, his eyes red for want of sleep.

"She has left me, Mr. Trant!" he cried, with no prelude. "She has gone!"

As he sank dazedly into a chair, he pulled from his pocket a small leather case and handed it to the psychologist. Within was the photograph of a remarkably handsome girl in her early twenties—a girl sobered by some unusual experience, as showed most plainly in the poise of her little round head wrapped with its braid of lustrous hair, and the shadow that lurked in the steadfast eyes, though they were smiling and the full lips were smiling, too.

"You are, I presume, Mr. Winton Edwards," said Trant, picking up the letter on his desk. "Now, if you have come to me for help, Mr. Edwards, you must first give me all the information of the case that you have."

"That is Eva Silber," young Edwards replied. "Miss Silber had been employed by us a little over a year. She came to us in answer to an advertisement. She gave us no information in regard to herself when she came, and she has given none since. Because of her marked ability my father put her in complete charge of the house's correspondence with our foreign agents; for in addition to English she speaks and writes fluently German, French, the Magyar dialect of Hungary, Russian, and Spanish.

"I was in love with her almost from the first, in spite of my father's objection to the attachment. The first Edwards of our family, Mr. Trant, came to Massachusetts in 1660. So my father has the idea that anybody who came later cannot possibly be our equal; and Miss Silber, who came to America

to work—the women of our family have stayed idly at home—did not get here until 1906."

"Coming from where?" asked the psychologist.

"I don't know," the boy answered, simply. "I think she is an Austrian; for the Magyar dialect she speaks is the least likely of the languages she knows that she would learn by choice. I spoke of this to her once and she did not contradict me." He paused to control his agitation and then went on:

"She had, so far as I know, no friends. So you see, Mr. Trant, that all that makes my father's consent to marrying her only a greater proof of her evident goodness and charm!"

"Then he did consent to your marrying her?" Trant interjected.

"Yes; two weeks ago. I had begged and begged her to, but she never had been willing to give me her promise. A week ago last Wednesday, after she had known for more than a week that father had agreed to it, she finally consented—but only conditionally. I was going away for a short business trip, and Eva told me that she wanted that much time to think it over, but when I came back she would tell me all about herself and, if I still wanted to marry her after hearing it, she would marry me. I never imagined that anyone could force her to change her mind!"

"Yet she did change her mind, you think?"

"Without question, Mr. Trant! And it seems to have been wholly because of the visit of the 'hammering man,' who

came to see her at the office the day after I left Chicago. It sounds queer to call him that; but I do not know his name or anything about him, except the fact of his hammering."

"But if the people in the office saw him, you have at least his description."

"They say he was unusually large, gross, almost bestial in appearance, and red-headed. He was plainly dressed. He asked to see Eva. When she caught sight of him she turned back and refused to speak with him."

"How did the man take her refusal?"

"He seemed very angry for a moment and then went out into the public corridor. For a long time he walked back and forth in the corridor, muttering to himself. The people in the office had practically forgotten him when they were startled by a noise of hammering or pounding in the corridor. One wall of the inner office where Eva had her desk is formed by the wall of the corridor, and the man was beating upon it with his fists."

"Hammering excitedly?" asked Trent.

"No. In a rather deliberate and measured manner. My father, who heard the sound, says it was so very distinctive as to be recognizable if heard again."

"Odd!" said Trant. "And what effect did this have on Miss Silber?"

"That is the strangest part of it, Mr. Trant. Eva had seemed worried and troubled ever since she learned the man was there, but this hammering seemed to agitate and disturb her out of all reason. At the end of the day's business she went to my father and abruptly resigned the position of trust she held with us. My father, surprised and angry at her refusal to give a reason for this action, accepted her resignation."

"You do not happen to know whether, before this visit, Miss Silber had received any letter which troubled her."

"She may have received a message at her house, but not at the office. However, there is something still more mysterious. On Sunday, my father, sorry that he had accepted her resignation so promptly, in view of our relationship, ordered the motor and went out to see her— But, good Heavens!"

More About the Lady in the Case

The loud rat-tat-tat of a cane had shaken Trant's door and cracked its ground glass from corner to corner, and the door was flung open to admit a determined little man, whose carefully groomed pink-and-whiteness was accentuated by his anger.

"Winton, go home!" The elder Edwards glared sternly at his son, and then about the office. "Mr. Trant—you are Mr.

Trant, I suppose! I want you to have nothing to do with this matter! I prefer to let the whole affair drop where it is!"

"I reserve the right, Mr. Edwards," the psychologist said, rising, "to take up or drop cases only as I myself see fit. I have heard nothing yet in your son's story to explain why you do not want the case investigated."

"Then you shall have it explained," Cuthbert Edwards answered. "I called on Miss Silber last Sunday, and it is because of what I learned there, that I want Winton to have nothing more to do with her. I went to Miss Silber on Sunday, Mr. Trant, feeling that I had been too hasty on Thursday. I offered her an apology and was reasoning with her when I heard suddenly, in an upper room, the same noises that had so disturbed the quiet of my office on Thursday afternoon!"

"You mean the hammering?" Trant exclaimed.

"Precisely, Mr. Trant! The hammering! If you had heard that sound yourself, you would know that it is a very definite and distinctive blow, given according to some intentional arrangement. I no sooner heard it and saw the uneasiness it again caused in Miss Silber, than I became certain that the same disreputable man who had been to see Miss Silber at my office was then housed in her very home. I insisted, as she was provisionally my son's promised wife, on searching the house."

"Did you find him?" Trant inquired, sharply.

"No, I did not, Mr. Trant, though I went into every room and opened every closet. I found only what appeared to be the usual inmates of the house—Miss Silber's father and the woman who kept house for her."

"Miss Silber's father? Has Miss Silber a father?" Trant interrupted.

"He is hardly worth mentioning, Mr. Trant," the younger Edwards explained. "He must have suffered at some time from a brain trouble that has partly deprived him of his faculties, I believe. Neither he nor the housekeeper, who is not in Eva's confidence, is likely to be able to help us in this matter."

"The man may have slipped out of the house unseen, Mr. Edwards."

"Quite impossible," Cuthbert Edwards asserted. "Miss Silber lived in a little house west of Ravenswood. There are very few houses, none within at least a quarter of a mile of her. The ground is flat, and no one could have got away without being seen by me."

"Your story so far is certainly very peculiar," the psychologist commented, "and it gains interest with every detail. Are you certain it was not this second interview with your father," he turned again to the boy, "that made Miss Silber refuse you?"

"No; it was not. When I got back yesterday and learned from father what had happened, I went out at once to Eva, at

her home. She had changed utterly! Not her feelings toward me, for I felt certain even then that she loved me! But an influence—the influence of this man—had come between us! She told me there was no longer any question of her marrying! She refused the explanation she had promised to make to me! She told me to go away and forget her, or—as I wrote you—to think of her as dead!

"You can imagine my feelings! I could not sleep last night after I had left her. As I was wandering about the house, I saw the evening paper lying spread out on the library table and my eye caught her name in it. It was this advertisement that I sent you, Mr. Trant! Late as it was, I called up the newspaper offices and learned the facts regarding its insertion. At daybreak I motored out to see Eva. The house was empty! I went round it in the mud and rain, peering in at the windows. Even the housekeeper was no longer there, and the neighbors could tell me nothing of the time or manner of their leaving. Nor has any word come from her to the office."

"That is all, then," the psychologist said, thoughtfully. "The 17th of the 10th, 1905," he reread the beginning of the advertisement. "That is, of course, a date, the 17th of the 10th month, and it is put there to recall to Miss Silber some event of which it would be sure to remind her. I suppose you know of no private significance this date might have for her, or you would have mentioned it."

"None on the 17th; no, Mr. Trant," young Edwards replied. "If it were only the 30th I might help you; for I know that on that date Eva celebrates some sort of anniversary at home."

In Search of the "Hammering Man"

Trant opened a bulky almanac lying on his desk, and as he glanced swiftly down the page his eyes flashed suddenly with comprehension. "You are correct, I think, as to the influence of the so-called 'hammering man' on her movements," the psychologist said. "But as to her connection with the man and her reasons, that is another matter. But of that I cannot say till I have had half an hour to myself at the Crerar Library."

"The library, Mr. Trant?" cried young Edwards, in surprise.

"Yes; and, as speed is certainly essential, I hope you still have your motor below."

As young Edwards nodded, the psychologist seized his hat and gloves and his instrument case, and preceded the others from the office. Half an hour later he descended from the library to rejoin the Edwardses waiting in the motor.

"The man who inserted that advertisement—the 'hammering man,' I believe, of whom we are in search," he announced briefly, "is named N. Meyan, and he is lodging, or at least can be addressed, at No. 7 Coy Court. The case has suddenly developed far darker and more villainous aspects even than I feared. Please order the chauffeur to go there as rapidly as possible."

Coy Court, at which, twenty minutes later, he bade young Edwards stop the motor, proved to be one of those short intersecting streets that start from the crowded thoroughfare of Halsted Street, run squalidly a block or two east or west, and stop short against the sooty wall of a foundry or machine shop. Number 7, the third house on the left—like many of its neighbors, whose windows bore Greek, Jewish, or Lithuanian signs—was given up in the basement to a store, but the upper floors were plainly devoted to lodgings.

The door was opened by a slattern little girl of eight.

"Does N. Meyan live here?" the psychologist asked. "And is he in?" Then, as the child nodded to the first inquiry and shook her head at the second, "When will he be back?"

"He comes to-night again, sure. Perhaps sooner. But to-night, or to-morrow, he goes away for good. He have paid only till to-morrow."

"I was right, you see, in saying we had need for haste," Trant said to young Edwards. "But there is one thing we can try, even though he is not here. Let me have the picture you showed me this morning!"

He took from the boy's hand the picture of Eva Silber, opened the leather case, and held it so the child could see.

"Do you know that lady?"

"Yes!" The child showed sudden interest. "It is Mr. Meyan's wife."

"His wife!" cried young Edwards.

"So," the psychologist said swiftly to the little girl, "you have seen this lady here?"

"She comes last night." The child had grown suddenly loquacious. "Because she is coming, Mr. Meyan makes trouble that we should get a room ready for her. Already she has sent her things. And we get ready the room next to his. But because she wants still another room, she goes away last night again. Rooms come not so easy here; we have many people. But now we have another, so to-night she is coming again."

"Does it now seem necessary for us to press this investigation further?" Cuthbert Edwards said, caustically.

As he spoke, the sound of measured, heavy blows came to them down the dark stair apparently from the second floor of the building. The elder Edwards cried, excitedly and triumphantly:

"What is that? Listen! That man—Meyan, if it is Meyan—must be here! For that is the same hammering!"

"This is even better luck than we could have expected!" exclaimed the psychologist; and he slipped by the child and sped swiftly up the stairs, with his companions closely following. At the head of the flight he passed by a stunted woman—whose marked resemblance to the little girl below established at once her two relationships as mother and landlady—and a trembling old man, and with the elder

Edwards tore open door after door of the rooms upon that floor and the floor above before the woman could prevent him. The rooms were all empty.

"Meyan must have escaped!" said Cuthbert Edwards, as they returned, crestfallen, to the second story. "But we have proof at least that the child spoke the truth in saying Miss Silber had been here to see him, for she hardly would have allowed her father to come here without her."

"Her father! So this is Miss Silber's father!" Trant swiftly turned to examine with the keenest interest the old man who shrank back, shivering and shuddering, toward a corner. Even in that darkened hall he conveyed to the psychologist an impression of hoary whiteness. His hair and beard were snowy white; the dead pallor of his skin was the unhealthy whiteness of potato shoots that have sprouted in a cellar, and the iris of his eyes had faded until it was almost indistinguishable. Yet there remained something in the man's appearance which told Trant that he was not really old—that he still should be moving, daring, self-confident, a leader among men, instead of cringing and shrinking thus at the slightest move of these chance visitors.

"Meyan? Is it because you are looking for Meyan that you have made all this disturbance?" the woman broke in. "Then why didn't you ask? For now he is at the saloon, I think, only across the street."

"Then we will go there at once; but I will ask you," he turned to the elder Edwards, "to wait for us at the motor, for

two of us will be enough for my purpose and more than two may defeat it by alarming Meyan."

Trant descended the stairs, took his instrument case from the motor, and with young Edwards crossed the street quickly to the saloon.

The Story Told by the Pulse Record of a Russian

A dozen idlers leaned against the bar or sat in chairs tilted against the wall. Trant examined these idlers one after another closely. The only man at whom he did not seem to look was one who, as the only red-headed man in the place, must plainly be Meyan. "Red-headed" was the only description they had of him, but meager as it was, with the landlady's statement as to Meyan being in the saloon, Trant resolved to test him.

The psychologist took an envelope from his pocket and wrote rapidly upon the back of it.

"I am going to try something," he whispered, as he flicked the envelope across the table to Edwards. "It may not succeed, but if I am able to get Meyan into a test, then go into that back room and speak aloud what I have written on the envelope, as though you had just come in with somebody."

Then, as Edwards nodded his comprehension, the psychologist turned easily to the man nearest him at the bar

—a pallid Lithuanian sweatshop worker.

"I suppose you can stand a lot of that?" Trant nodded to his glass of pungent whisky. "Still—it has its effect on you. Sends your heart action up—quickens your pulse."

"What are you?" the man grinned; "temperance lecturer?"

"Something like that," the psychologist answered. "At least, I can show you the effect whisky has upon your heart."

He picked up the instrument case and opened it. The loungers gathered about him and Trant saw with satisfaction that they thought him an itinerant temperance advocate. They stared curiously at the instrument he had taken from its case.

"It goes on the arm," he explained. The Lithuanian, with a grin toward his companions, began to turn up his sleeve. "Not you," Trant said; "you just had a drink."

"Is there a drink in this? I ain't had a drink since breakfast!" said another who pushed up to the table and bared his blue-veined forearm for Trant to fasten the instrument to it.

Young Winton Edwards, watching as curiously as the others, saw Trant fasten the sphygmograph on the mechanic's arm, and the stylus point commence to trace on the sooty surface a wavy line, the normal record of the mechanic's pulse.

"You see it!" Trant pointed out to the others the record, as it unwound slowly from the drum. "Every thought you have,

every feeling, every sensation—taste, touch, smell—changes the beating of your heart and shows upon this little record. I could show through that whether you had a secret you were trying to conceal, as readily as I will show the effect whisky has on you, or as I can learn whether this man likes the smell of onion." He took from the free-lunch on the bar a slice of onion, which he held under the man's nose. "Ah! you don't like onion! But the whisky will make you forget its smell, I suspect."

As the odor of the whisky reached the man's nostrils, the record line—which when he smelled the onion had become suddenly flattened with elevations nearer together, as the pulse beat weakly but more quickly—began to return to the shape it had had at first. He tossed off the liquor, rolling it upon his tongue, and all saw the record regain its first appearance; then, as the stimulant began to take effect, the pencil point lifted higher at each rise and the elevations became farther apart. They stared and laughed.

"Whisky effects you about normally, I should say," Trant began to unfasten the sphygmograph from the man's wrist. "I have heard it said that black-haired men, like you, feel its effect least of all; light-haired men more; men with red hair like mine feel the greatest effect, it's said. We red-haired men have to be careful with whisky."

"Hey! there's a red-headed man," one of the crowd cried, suddenly, pointing. "Try it on him."

Two enthusiasts at once broke from the group and rushed eagerly to Meyan. He had continued, inattentive through all,

to read his newspaper; but now he laid it down. Trant and young Edwards, as he rose and slouched half curiously toward them, could see plainly for the first time his strongly boned, coarsely powerful face, and heavy-lidded eyes, and the grossly muscular strength of his big-framed body.

"Pah! your watered whisky!" he jeered in a strangely thick and heavy voice, when the test had been explained to him. "I am used to stronger drinks!"

He grinned derisively in the surrounding faces, kicked a chair up to the table and sat down. Trant glanced toward Edwards, and Edwards moved silently back from the group and disappeared unnoticed through the partition door. Then the psychologist swiftly adjusted the sphygmograph upon the out-stretched arm and watched intently an instant until the stylus point had caught up the strong and even pulse which set it rising and falling in perfect rhythm. As he turned to the bar for the whisky, the rear door slammed and the voice Trant was expecting spoke:

"Yes; it was at Warsaw the police took him. He was taken without warning and from his friend's house. What next? The prisons are full, but they keep on filling them; the graveyards will be full next!"

Following Up the Clew of the Sphygmograph

"Look! look!" cried the Lithuanian beside Trant at the table. "He bragged about watered whisky, but just the sight of it makes his heart beat bigger and stronger!"

Trant bent eagerly over the smoked paper, watching the stronger, slower pulse beat which the record showed.

"Yes; before he takes the whisky his pulse is strengthened," Trant answered; "for that is how the pulse acts when a man is pleased and exults!"

He waited now, almost inattentively, while Meyan drank the whisky and the others grew silent in defeat as the giant's pulse, true to his boast, showed almost no variation under the fiery liquor.

"Pah, such child-foolishness!" Meyan, with steady hand, set the glass back on the table. Then, as Trant unclasped the straps around his arm, he rose, yawned in their faces, and lounged out of the place.

The psychologist turned to meet young Edwards as he hurried in, and together they went out to join the father at the motor.

"We can do nothing sooner than to-night," Trant said, shortly, an expression of keen anxiety on his face. "I must learn more about this man, but my inquiries must be conducted alone. If you will meet me here again at seven o'clock to-night, say at the pawn-broker's shop we passed upon the corner, I hope to be able to solve the mystery of the 'hammering man,' and the influence he is undoubtedly

exerting on Miss Silber. I may say," he added after a moment, "that I would not attach too much weight to the child's statement that Miss Silber is Meyan's wife. It is understood, then, that you will meet me here to-night as I have suggested."

He nodded to his clients, and ran to catch a passing trolley car.

Promptly at seven o'clock in accordance with Trant's directions, young Winton Edwards and his father entered the pawnshop and started negotiations for a loan. Almost immediately after they arrived there, Trant joined them, still carrying in his hand his instrument case. The boy and his father closed their negotiations and went out with Trant into the street. They saw then, to their surprise, that the psychologist was not alone. Two men were awaiting them, each of whom carried a case like Trant's. The elder of the two, a man between fifty and sixty years old, met young Edwards' stare with a benignant glance of his pale blue eyes through an immense pair of gold spectacles. The other was young, pale, broad-browed, with an intelligent face, and his gaze was fixed in a look of dreamy contemplation. They were dressed as mechanics, but their general appearance was not that of workmen.

The door of Meyan's lodging house was opened to them by the landlady. She led the way to the second floor, but paused to show a room to Trant.

"That is Meyan's room," Trant explained. "We will wait for him over here." He followed the woman into a small and

stuffy bed-room on the other side of the hall. "We had better not speak while we are waiting and—we had better wait in the dark."

In the strange, stuffy, darkened little room the five sat in silence. Footsteps passed often in the street outside, and twice some one went through the hall. A half hour they waited thus. Then a heavier footstep warned them of Meyan coming. A moment later, the front door opened again and admitted—as Trant felt from the effect of the first tone which reached the boy waiting at his side—Eva Silber. Trant quickly prevented him from going out. It was only after several minutes that he turned on the light and motioned to the two strangers who had come with him. They immediately rose and left the room.

"I am going to submit you both to a very trying ordeal," Trant said to his clients, in a tone so low it could not reach the hallway, "and it will require great self-control on your part. Within five, or I hope at most ten, minutes, I am going to show you into Meyan's room where you will find, among other persons, Meyan himself and Miss Silber. I want you to promise that neither of you will attempt to question or to speak to Miss Silber until I give you leave. Otherwise I cannot allow you to go in there, and I have my own reasons for wanting you to be present."

"If it is essential, Mr. Trant—" the elder Edwards said.

Trant looked to the boy, who nodded.

"Thank you," said the psychologist; and he went out and closed the door upon them.

Fully a quarter of an hour had passed, in spite of Trant's promise to summon them in ten minutes, before the psychologist again opened the door and ushered them into the room they already knew as Meyan's.

The long table in the center of the room had been cleared, and behind it three men sat in a row. Two of these were the strangers who had come with Trant, and the cases they had carried, together with the one Trant himself had brought, stood open under the table. The man who sat between these two was Meyan. Near the table stood Miss Silber.

At sight of her, Winton Edwards made one swift step forward before he recollected the promise he had made, and checked himself. Eva Silber had grown pale as death. She stood now with small hands clenched tight against her breast, staring into the face of the young American she loved. Trant closed the door and locked it.

A Story of the Russian Revolution

"We can begin now, I think," he said.

He stooped at once over the instrument cases and brought out from them three folding screens, about eighteen inches square when extended, which he set on the table—one in front of each of the three men. At the bottom of each screen

was a circular hole just large enough for a man's arm to go through; and at Trant's command the men put their arms through them. Stooping again swiftly over the instrument cases, Trant took out three sphygmographs.

He rapidly adjusted these on the arms of the three men, and set in motion the revolving drums, against which the pencil points traced their wavy fines on smoked paper. His clients, leaning forward in their interest, could then understand the purpose of the screens, which were designed to hide the pitilessly exact records from the three men.

For several moments Trant allowed the instruments to run quietly, until the men had recovered from the nervousness caused by the beginning of the test.

"I am going to ask Miss Silber to tell you now, as briefly as she can," he said, after a pause, evenly and steadily, "the circumstances of her father's connection with the Russian revolution which brought him to the state you have seen, and the reasons why she has left you to go with this man to Russia."

"To Russia?" broke from Winton Edwards.

"To Russia, yes!" The girl's pale cheeks glowed. "You have seen my father, what he is, what they have made of him, and you did not know he was a Russian? You have seen him as he is! Let me tell you—you, who wear proudly the badge of your revolution fought in seven short years by your great-grandfathers—what my father was!

"Before I was born—it was in the year 1887—my father was a student in Moscow. He had already married my mother the year before. The Czar, finding even the teachings he had been advised to permit made people dangerous, closed the universities. Father and his fellow students protested. They were imprisoned; and they kept my father, who had led the protest, so long that I was three years old before he saw his home again!

"But suffering and prison could not frighten him! In Zurich, before he went to Moscow, he had been trained for a doctor. And seeing how powerless the protest of the students had been, he determined to go among the people. So he made himself a medical missionary to the poorest, the most oppressed, the most miserable; and wherever he was called to carry a cure for disease, he carried, too, a word of hope, of courage, of protest, a cry for freedom!

"Late one night, in a terrible snowstorm, just twenty years ago, a peasant brought to our door a note, unsigned for the sake of safety, it seemed, telling father that an escaped political prisoner was dying of exposure and starvation in a hut on a deserted farm ten miles from the town. My father hurried to his horse and set out, with food and fagots, and by morning, through the cold and deep snow, he reached the place.

"There he found a man apparently freezing to death, and fed and warmed him; and when the fellow was able to tell his pitiful tale, father boldly encouraged him, told him of the organization of protest he was forming, and asked him to join. Little by little father told him all he had done and all his

plans. At nightfall father held out his hand to say farewell, when the other pulled a pistol from his pocket. In the fight that followed, father was able only to wound the other upon the chest with the blunt knife they had used to cut their food, before the spy called a confederate down from the loft, and father was overcome.

"On the information of these police spies, without trial of any sort—father's friends could discover only that the name of his betrayer was Valerian Urth—father was sentenced to solitary confinement in an underground cell for life! And my mother—because she sent food and fagots to a supposed convict—was exiled to Siberia! Ten years ago, her sister who took me, received word that she died on the convict island of Sakhalin; but my father—" she gasped for breath—"lived, at least!"

She stopped as suddenly as she had begun. Trant, who had stooped swiftly to watch his records more closely when the name of the police spy was mentioned, still kept his gaze steadfastly upon his instruments. Suddenly he motioned to the girl to complete her narrative.

"Five years ago, when I was eighteen, I left my mother's sister and went back to my father's friends, such of them as were still free," she continued. "Many who had worked with him for the organization, had been caught or betrayed. But others and more had come in their places; and they had work for me. I might move about with less suspicion than a man. So I helped prepare for the strikes of 1905, which at last so terrified the Czar that on the 30th of October he issued his manifesto to free those in prison. I had helped to free my

father with the rest. I took him to Hungary and left him with friends while I came here. Now, do you not understand why I am going back?" she turned in pitiful appeal to young Edwards. "It is because there is work again in Russia for me to do! The Russian government is taking vengeance today for the amnesty of 1905 which freed my father!"

Records Given by the Instrument

She checked herself again and turned to Trant to see if he would force her still to proceed. But he was facing intently, as if fascinated, the strange "hammering man" and his two stranger companions; yet he was not watching their faces or their figures at all. His eyes followed the little stylus points which, before each of the three, continually traced their lines of record. Then he took quickly from his pocket a folded paper, yellow with age, worn, creased, and pierced with pin marks. In the sight of all he unfolded it swiftly upon the table before the three, refolded it, and put it back into his pocket. And though at sight of it no face changed among the three, even Trant's clients could see how one line now suddenly grew flat, with low elevations, irregular and far apart, as the pencil point seemed almost to stop its motion over the smoked paper of the man in the middle, Meyan.

"That is all," said Trant, in a tone of assured triumph, as he unstrapped the sphygmographs from their wrists. "You can speak now, Mr. Edwards."

"Eva!" cried Winton Edwards, in wild appeal. "You are not married to this man?"

"Married? No!" the girl exclaimed in horror. "Until last Thursday, when he came to the office, I never saw him! But he has come to call me for the cause which must be to me higher and holier than love! I must leave my love for the cause of the Russian revolution!"

"In the cause of the revolution"! So!" Meyan now, with a heavy slouch of his muscular body, left his two companions at the table and moved up beside the girl. "Have any more of you anything to say to her before she goes back with me to Russia?"

"To her?—no!" Trant replied. "But to you—and to these gentlemen," he motioned to the two who had sat at the table with Meyan, "I have to announce the result of my test, for which they are waiting. This elder gentleman is Ivan Munikov, who was forced to leave Russia eight years ago because his pamphlet on 'Inalienable Rights' had incurred the displeasure of the police. This younger man is Dmitri Vasili, who was exiled to Siberia for political offenses at thirteen years of age, but escaped to America. They both are members of the Russian revolutionary organization in Chicago."

"But the test—the test!" cried Vasili.

1. Sphygmograph record of healthy pulse under normal conditions. 2 and 3. Sphygmograph records of Dmitri Vasili and Ivan Munikov when Eva Silber told of her father's betrayal; the lower and rapid pulsation thus recorded indicate grief and horror. 4. Record of Meyan on this occasion; the strong and bounding pulse indicates joy. 5. Meyan's sphygmograph record when Trant shows the yellow note that betrayed Herman Silber; the feeble, jerky pulse indicates sudden and overwhelming fear.

"The test," the psychologist turned sternly to face Meyan, "has shown as conclusively and irrefutably as I could hope that this man is not the revolutionist he claims to be, but is, as we suspected might be the case, an agent of the Russian secret police. And not only that! It has shown just as truly, though this fact was at first wholly unsuspected by me, that he—this agent of police who would have betrayed the daughter now and taken her back to Russia to be punished for her share in the agitation of 1905—is the same agent, who twenty years ago, betrayed the father, Herman Silber, into imprisonment! True name from false I do not know; but this man, who calls himself Meyan now, called himself then, Valerian Urth!"

"Valerian Urth!" Eva Silber cried, staggering back into Winton Edwards' arms.

But Meyan made a disdainful gesture with his huge, fat hands. "Bah! you would try to prove such things by your foolish test?"

"Then you will not refuse, of course," Trant demanded, sternly, "to show us if there is a knife-scar on your chest?"

Even as Meyan would have repeated his denial, Vasili and Munikov leaped from the rear of the room and tore his shirt from his breast. The psychologist rubbed and beat the skin, and the blood rose to the surface, revealing the thin line of an almost invisible and time-effaced scar.

"Our case is proved, I think!" The psychologist turned from the two who stared with eyes hot with hate at the cringing spy, and again faced his clients.

He unlocked the door, and handed the key to Munikov; then, picking up his instrument cases and record sheets, with Miss Silber and his clients he left the room and entered the landlady's sitting room.

A Happy Denouement

"When I received Mr. Edwards' letter this morning," Trant said in answer to the questions that showered upon him, "it was clear to me at once that the advertisement he inclosed depended for its appeal on reminding Eva Silber of some event of prime importance to herself, but also, from the wording employed, of popular or national significance as

well. You further told me that October 30th was a special holiday with Miss Silber. That, I found, to be the date of the Czar's manifesto of freedom and declaration of amnesty to political prisoners. At once it flashed upon me!

"Eva Silber was a Russian. The difference between the 17th given in the advertisements and the 30th—thirteen days—is just the present difference between the old-style calendar used in Russia and ours.

"Before going to the Crerar Library, then, it was clear that we had to do with a Russian revolutionary intrigue. At the library I obtained the key to the cipher and translated the advertisement, obtaining the name of Meyan and his address, and also the name and address of Dmitri Vasili, a well-known pro-revolutionary writer. To my surprise, Vasili knew nothing of any revolutionist named Meyan. It was inconceivable that a revolutionary emissary should come to Chicago and he not know of it. It became necessary to find Meyan immediately.

"My first direct clew was the hammering that we heard in this house. It was too much to suppose that in two separate instances this hammering should be heard, and in each case Eva's father be present and no other discoverable agent, and that still he should have had nothing to do with it. Obviously, it must have been Herman Silber who did the hammering at Eva's home and here in this house. It was obvious, too, that Herman Silber was the 'your own' of the advertisement.

"To test Meyan, whom we found in the saloon, was not difficult. I arranged to have him overhear some one speaking of an arrest at Warsaw, which would at once suggest itself as

a hotbed of Russian revolutionists to either a revolutionist or a police agent; but the idea would certainly give positive and very opposite reactions if the man were a true revolutionist or if he were a spy. Meyan's pulse so strengthened and slowed—as under a pleasurable stimulus—that I felt I had received confirmation of my suspicions, though I had not then the information which would enable me to expose the man. To secure this I sought out Dmitri Vasili. He introduced me to Munikov, who had been a friend of Silber before his imprisonment, and between them I got the history of Herman Silber and his daughter.

"I explained to Munikov and Vasili that the methods of the psychological laboratory would be as efficacious in picking out a spy as I have many times proved them to be in convicting the criminal.

"Every emotion reacts upon the pulse, which strengthens in joy and weakens in sorrow, grows slower with anger, faster with despair; and as every slightest variation is detected and registered by the Sphygmograph—I felt certain that if I could test the three men together by having Miss Silber tell her father's story aloud, I could determine conclusively by comparison of the records of the two revolutionists with that of Meyan, what his sympathies really were. I arranged with them to come here with me to-night, and after Meyan had arrived, they went as representatives of the revolutionary movement to ask his credentials.

"When he could furnish none, they proposed, and in fact forced him, into this test. It is a dangerous thing to endeavor to pass one's self off as a revolutionist, and it was safer for

him to submit to a test than to have his mission frustrated by incurring not only their suspicion, but possibly death. Completely ignorant of the pitiless powers of psychological methods, and confiding in his steely nerves, which undoubtedly have carried him through many less searching ordeals, he agreed. You saw how perfectly he was able to control his face and every movement of his body while the test went on. But you can see here," Trant spread out his strips of smoked paper, "on these records, which I shall preserve by passing them through a bath of varnish, how useless that self-control was, since the sphygmograph recorded by its moving stylus the hidden feelings of his heart.

"As I lay these side by side, you can see how consistently at each point in the story, Munikov and Vasili experienced the same feelings, but Meyan had feelings which were different. I did not dream, of course, when I started the test that I would discover in Meyan the same man who had betrayed Herman Silber. It was only when at her first mention of Valerian Urth I obtained from Meyan this startling and remarkable record," he pointed to a place where the line suddenly had grown almost straight and flat, "that I realized that if the man before me was not himself Urth, he at least had some close and oppressive connection with him.

"Eva Silber had still the note that had been sent to summon her father on the errand of mercy which had caused his imprisonment.

"She gave it to me before you entered the room. I was certain that of all men in the world there was but one who

could recognize or feel any emotion at sight of that yellowed and time-worn paper; and that man was Valerian Urth, who had used it to betray Herman Silber.

"I showed it to Meyan, and obtained this really amazing reaction which ends his record." The psychologist pointed to the record. "It assured me that Meyan and Urth were one."

"This is amazing, Mr. Trant," Cuthbert Edwards said. "But you have left unexplained the most perplexing feature of all—the hammering!"

"To communicate with one another from their solitary cells, Russian prisoners long ago devised a code of spelling letters by knocking upon the wall—a code widely spread and known by every revolutionist. It is extremely simple; the letters of the alphabet," Trant took from his pocket a slip of paper, "are arranged in this manner."

He set down rapidly the alphabet, omitting two letters, arranged in four lines, thus:

a	b	c	d	e	f
g	h	i	k	l	m
n	o	p	r	s	t
u	v	w	x	y	z

"A letter is made," the psychologist explained, "by giving first the proper number of knocks for the line, a short pause, then knocks for the number of the letter in the line. For

instance, *e* is one knock and then five; *y* is four knocks and then five.

"By means of this code I translated the figures in the advertisement and obtained Meyan's name and address. I presume he used it not only in the advertisement, but at the office, because his long experience had taught him that Herman Silber, as many another man condemned to the horrors of a Russian prison for a term of years, had probably lost the power of speech, and continued to communicate, in freedom, by the means he had used for so many years in prison."

"Wonderful, Mr. Trant, wonderful!" exclaimed Cuthbert Edwards. "I only regret that we can do nothing to Meyan; for there is no law, I think, by which he can be punished."

The psychologist's face darkened.

"Vengeance is not ours," he answered. "But I have given the key of Meyan's room to Munikov!"

The elder Edwards, clearing his throat, moved over toward Eva and put his arm about her.

"Since you cannot go back to Russia," he said awkwardly, "will you not let me welcome you into your place in my home?" And as the son sprang swiftly forward and caught his father's hand, Trant took up his instrument cases and went out alone into the warm April night.

THE END

[The end of *The Hammering Man* by Edwin Balmer and
William B. MacHarg]