



AN ITALIAN LABOURER CONVICTED AS A BLACK HAND CRIMINAL.

gold earrings, and all that, he there, what can I do? True, I can run him in, and shall. But that's as far as I go; that's where I get off. We haven't a splinter of evidence against him. All we can do is hold him until the morning looking over; and then hang him, thumb print him, and haul him out to the force. What does he care? We've got nothing on him. So far as we're concerned, he's as safe as Bishop Potter or the Rev. Thomas Dixon. And all the time, mind you, we know as surely as we're alive, that he's a Black Hand. But we're without proof, ye see! The Digos he's blackmailing and scabbing and blowing up with bombs are afraid to say a word and these you are?

While my detective friend was talking, we arrived at the bridge. As we walked along, not on the bridge, but to one side of the approach, which with each step lifted itself higher and still higher over our heads, his experienced glances roved hither and yon.

"He's our man, sure enough!" he suddenly exclaimed.

My eye caught the gentleman almost even with the detective's. The waiting son of Sicily was about thirty, eyes and hair as black as a crow, skin the colour of a saddle. The gold earrings and red neckcloth being a red silk handkerchief - were in great evidence.

Collared, he couldn't talk a word of English, or said he couldn't, and looked at once frightened and fierce. There was a pistol on him, which the officer promptly confiscated.

"Carrying concealed weapons," exclaimed my friend, as he made for Mul-



THIS YOUNG MAN IS SERVING A 15 YEAR SENTENCE.

berry street with his prey. It's the worst he'll get. That means ten and costs - that is, if some politician doesn't butt in and beg him off with the magistrate. Either way, within forty-eight hours he'll be back on the job as a Black Hand; and those behind him will, in all chance, make the victim who didn't come in with that 500 dollars this evening take his choice between paying double and getting a knife between his ribs. They'll accuse him of putting up this 'pull'. Sure, they'll charge him with giving the police the tip, and either he'll pay double or they'll settle him for squealing." My detective gave me this brief lesson in Black Hand

ways and means, as we journeyed toward Mulberry street.

At the station nothing could be drawn from the captive; he had been "waiting for a friend," that was all. A suspicious feature, one full of suggestion, was that a well-to-do Italian contractor came rushing into the station, not ten minutes behind the prisoner, ready to go bail.

My detective friend gave me another small experience. "Come into Elizabeth street," he said, "and I'll show you something."

The place he led me to was a dingy Italian restaurant. There was a sloppy, uneven bar in one corner. The proprietor, an unwieldy individual in need of a bath, was lumbering about in elephantine fashion among the tables. When he saw my companion, he broke into deprecatory smiles, and commenced an apology in pantomime made up of deep bowings, shrugged shoulders, palms turned up and outward.

"Giuseppe was so thoughtful as to permit me to precede him. As I stepped into what was rather a cellar than a basement - it was under the rear of the building, and twenty feet back from the street line - I found myself in the midst of at least twenty of the most villainous looking cutthroats ever seen outside a dime novel. They were squatted about rude tables drinking chianti.

"As I came in, they got upon their feet, as though my advent were a signal. It flashed upon me that I'd been brought there to be trimmed. Giuseppe's brother wasn't there; the business was a plant. I wheeled; Giuseppe was just locking the door. I never hesitated; I knew it to be neck or nothing for my life. I whipped out my Colt's 38, and clapped it against the small of Giuseppe's back.

"Open the door!" I said. "Giuseppe started to make a protest, just as you saw him to-night; but I wouldn't listen.

never in more danger! When we of the Italian Squad have to visit Giuseppe's Black Hand headquarters, we go in mobs of five. They'd have killed you, and buried you right there in that cellar. They'd have been dancing on you for the next ten years to come."

"But do you believe that?" I asked. "Believe it!" repeated my detective. "Nothing surer! Those Digos meant to cook (kill) me. It was getting Giuseppe so dead to rights that saved me."

"Well, then," said I, "why don't you arrest Giuseppe?" My detective laughed. "What could I prove? Its one of those cases I've been talking about, where you know it, and still can't show it. Why, if I were to run Giuseppe in, it's two to one he'd not only be declared innocent, but land me with charges for putting a gun on him."

"Still," I protested, "even though you didn't arrest him, I shouldn't have supposed you'd now be so friendly with one who, within twenty-four hours, had been trying to murder you."

"What's to be gained by getting sore about it? No; it's all in the day's work. Also, the first thing he knows, I'll have Giuseppe where I can put him away."

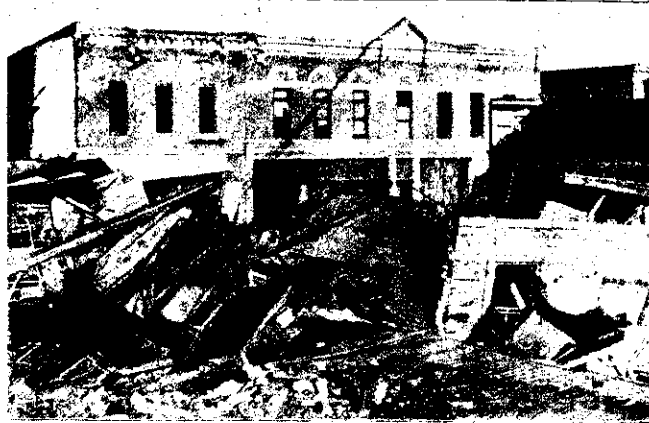
Considered carefully, the Italian criminal presents these points of distinction: When he gets ready to assassinate, he arms himself with a knife. Fearing assassination, he equips himself with a gun, since his notion of defence is to shoot. The truth is he would sooner use a gun than a knife; but the latter is silent, which is important when he himself fears arrest. Defending himself, he does not care how much uproar the gun makes.

The bomb, so often in the employ of the Black Hand, is meant rather to intimidate than kill, and to warn a victim through the destruction of his property, that it is foolishly useless to resist the society's demands. Knife and pistol, the Black Hand handit learns to use in Italy; the art of dynamite he picks up here. Every contractor, blasting out the foundations of a building, is conducting a seminary where bombs, in their construction and employment, can be studied; and it is there the ambitious Black Hand goes to school.

The pet crimes of the Italian are robbery and extortion. Also, being artistic in temperament, he is ever a finished forger.

The Black Hand Society is a Fact.

The steady success with which they work; the cool assurance wherewith they place and explode their bombs; the savage certainty that marks the dealing out of death whenever - either for safety



THE RUINS OF A FRUIT STORE DESTROYED BY BLACK HAND DYNAMITERS.

Face to Face With Death.

The detective, object of all this apologetic puffiness, began to laugh. The two, he and the girly, bathless Italian, shook hands in the most charming manner.

"I was a little too quick for you - eh, Giuseppe?" said the detective. "Your mob didn't have time to get in their work, did they? But I'll give you credit; it was the finest frame-up I ever went against."

While the detective was talking, the fat Italian, the very soul of an affable yet protesting urbanity, went signifying with snakes of the head, and repressive though respectful waves of his hands, how wholly wrong the detective was in his assumptions.

"You make th' meestake!" said the Italian, when he saw a chance to be heard. "Sure, you make th' meestake!" He kept repeating this again and again.

"All right," laughed the detective, who didn't belong, by the way, to Petrosino's Italian Squad; "it's all right, Giuseppe, I'm free to admit that you came mighty near putting one over on me nearer than you ever will again. I'll keep my lamps on you lads from Sicily hereafter."

We got cigars - very bad cigars - of the deprecatory publican, and came away. The whole had been Greek to me, and I was brisk to discover what it meant.

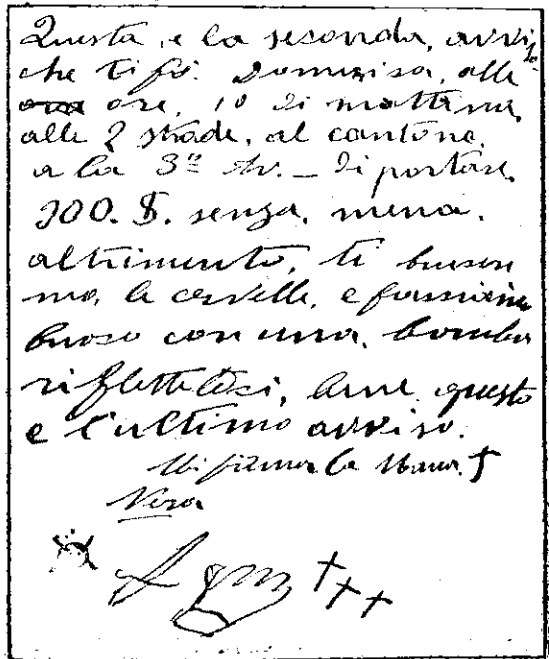
"It was last night," explained my detective. "I was looking for Giuseppe's brother, whom I suspected of having had something to do with a check forgery. I told Giuseppe I was looking for the brother, and urged him to turn him out where I could have a talk with him. 'Maybe, after I've talked with him,' I explained, 'I won't arrest him. But in any event he may as well show up. As it stands, he can't stay in New York. If he's innocent, it would be better for him to clear himself and have the business over.' Giuseppe kept putting me off, and lying, and declaring that he didn't know where his brother was.

"At last I crowded Giuseppe a little. I told him - what was the fact - that the plate used to engrave the forged check blanks had been made in his place. At that, he asked me to call around last night at eleven o'clock, and he'd have his brother there. When I showed up, he suggested that we go downstairs into the basement; his brother was down there, he said.

"Open the door!" I commanded. "If one of your gang moves, I'll shoot you in two."

A Quick-witted Escape.

"Out we went; and I can tell you I breathed freer when I found myself in the street. I told one of the Italian detectives about it, and he looked at me in wonder. 'Why,' says he, 'you were



FACSIMILE OF A TYPICAL BLACK HAND LETTER, WHICH, TRANSLATED, READS:

This is the second time that I have warned you, Sunday at ten o'clock in the morning, at the corner of Second Street and Third Avenue, bring three hundred dollars without fail. Otherwise we will set fire to you and blow you up with a bomb. Consider this matter well, for this is the last warning I will give you.

I sign the Black Hand. J