

the general

Evening darkness settled in upon the whole of London. There on Victoria Street The General had long been an unconditionally and well respected, accepted fixture. No one, other than the Chief Inspector of course, and most probably his Assistant and possibly Superintendent Mayhew really knew exactly what the fellow's true position was, or for that matter, how exactly he had come to attain it. Hardly anyone was left on staff who could remember what it had been like before he had come.

His silence, reticence and aloof, unyielding manner were all quite accepted without questioning by the many members of the Yard staff. The General more often than not simply appeared, quite unanticipated, with little if any advanced warning and all. Someone would be hard at work at their desk, discussing matters in the operations room, or even chatting up a suspect in the incident room look up and find those rather disquieting topaz eyes fixed firmly upon himself. After a few moments The

General usually turned and quite that unhurried, without uttering a single sound, simply left the room as silently as he had come.

Following Superintendent Charles Carlton's most unexpected, unforeseen, death November past, what with all the horrible aspects **that** dreadful incident had included and all; the General himself had appeared to be just that especially proper distraught. It appeared that an overwhelming sadness seemed to fill the old gentleman. The cove's reaction had been rather a surprise. No one could say just why that was or even why it should be. Certainly, there had never appeared to be any warmth at all between the two.

The death of the seasoned officer had been just an absolutely dreadful, awful shock to everyone of course. Who on earth might ever expect a copper to be slain under the wheels of a hit and run driver? And, that circumstance taking place right in front of the Yard Victoria Street Headquarters Building itself then? No one of course. Quite Unthinkable. Still, such an incident was not simply

possibility, it was an absolute fact. It had indeed happened.

Following Superintendent Carlton's shocking death The General had quite accordingly become, if such were possible, even more aloof than usual. Holding himself completely apart then for a period of some several weeks the fellow was frequently seen prowling about. Preferring at the first to sit completely alone in the Operations Room, or to engage in long strolls of solitary walks out along The Embankment, The General had at last finally begun to eat a little more. Had even come in to join one or another for Elevenses. And to the great enormous relief of them all there at Scotland Yard headquarters, he had at last once again begun to even sit in on an official conference now and again.

The old duffer with his oval eyes, glaring silent, contemptuous disapproval at nearly everything, absolutely everyone, stared fixedly at first one then another as he stalked silently throughout the whole of the Victoria Street Building. With great happiness everyone

noted; The General was finally nearly back to his normal, unpleasant, disdainful self.