

Edgar Wallace

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Edgar Wallace

The Clue of Monday's Settling

Roy Vickers

The Twelve Minute Grave

Nigel Morland

The Wrong Fire

Marten Cumberland

A Slight Case of Realism

also other stories and features

No. 8

MARCH

1965

Edgar Wallace

3/-



Edgar Wallace

EDGAR WALLACE

Mystery Magazine

Vol. II No. 8

March, 1965

Mystery, Crime, and Detection for the Aficionado

CONTENTS

STORIES

The clue of Monday's Settling	EDGAR WALLACE	3
Whistle, My Love!	JOHN SALT	16
The Twelve Minute Grave	ROY VICKERS	35
Special Treatment	MORRIS HERSHMAN	56
A Slight Case of Realism	MARTEN CUMBERLAND	59
A Change of Style	PETER ARDOUIN	66
The Black Ferry (<i>period piece</i>)	JOHN GALT	72
The Suspect Soldier	BILL KNOX	105

FEATURES

<i>Editorial: Briefly</i>		2
<i>Reportage: Personal Glimpses</i>		31
<i>Relaxation: Crossword</i>		34
<i>Competition: Three Minute Thriller</i>	ROGER GARNETT	70
<i>Enquiry: Background to Crime Readers</i>	W. E. REYNOLDS	83
<i>Crime: The Wrong Fire</i>	NIGEL MORLAND	86
New Books	JOHN DE SOLA	123
Readers Say		127

Edgar Wallace Mystery Magazine is published monthly by arrangement with Edgar Wallace, Ltd., on the 1st of each month by Edgar Wallace Magazines, Ltd. Printed in England at The Phillips Park Press, Manchester. Distributed by Representation Services, 130, Hither Green Lane, London, S.E.13. Sole agents, Australia: Gordon & Gotch (A'sia) Ltd.; New Zealand: Gordon & Gotch (N.Z.) Ltd.; South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.; Federation of Rhodesia, Zambia and Malawi: Kingstons, Ltd. © 1965 Edgar Wallace Magazines, Ltd., 4, Bradmore Road, Oxford. NIGEL MORLAND, Editor.

ICONOCLASM is the great do-it-yourself hobby of this most enlightened day and age.

No longer is the moppet canted into the world with a silver spoon in his mouth, or with the Good Fairy's gift for the future in one rose-leaf fist. Today he frequently arrives with an axe which he will duly use on his fellows – either physically or inferentially – unless he holds

instead bolts of lightning he will release against fragile reputations when he reaches manhood.

Briefly

The happy game of blasting good names is very much with it, one with the joyous souls who prefer to rip

boots off past or present idols to reveal, with shrieks of zest and merriment, the feet of clay wiser heads generally took for granted.

All these things, *pour le sport*, are to be classed with shot guns, gang wreckings, train robberies, and such pastimes. But wonder of a sort can never cease at an even more curious trend which takes music, the dance, and some grave classic of words. They are welded together, or, if you prefer, whisked round in the iconoclast's surely electronically activated mind, and out comes this modern world's notion of having your theatrical cake and eating it.

Classic of all these is *My Fair Lady*. With that only the Shavians can quarrel (but if cut, do they not bleed?)

More horrifying, more shaking, was that later epic of Hilldrop Crescent which offered Dr. Crippen, of whom let no one speak a harsh word, for he was a *dear* little man, put to music to the joy of beholders.

But now, from the United States, where the sound of falling idols is only beaten by the whirrs of spinings in graves, comes the merry, *merry* spectacle of Sherlock Holmes set to music, and (God forbid!) Mr. Holmes and Irene Adler singing a duet.

At the top end of Baker Street the locals have surely heard groans as a certain building trembles; no doubt the long knives are being sharpened wherever the Adventures and the Memoirs are enshrined within devoted minds.

It is almost the ultimate blasphemy. But not quite. The yahoos may still have us jiggling our heads as the agile killer from the Rue Morgue swings through a terpsichorean galaxy with, perhaps, Lenore, while Mr. Poe, undoubtedly a baritone, will plaintively ask "who stole my tell-tale heart away" and punch home the point with snide rhymes about the little gold bug boom-boom on sweet Marie Rogêt's buz-oom.

The Editor

Edgar Wallace

THE CLUE OF MONDAY'S SETTLING

*Written when
Freud was still a
novelty, this is
adroit meta-
physical detection
uncannily topical*

IT DID not seem possible to Ann Holter that such things could happen in an ordered world. She paced the terrace of the big house which overlooked the most beautiful vale in Somerset. Her hands were clasped behind her and there was a frown of perplexity upon her pretty face.

Everything must go . . . Sommercourt . . . the home farms . . . the house in Curzon Street . . . her horses . . . she checked a sob and was angry with herself that it needed the check.

And why?

Because John Holter had signed a paper – she thought such things only happened in books. Her father's stability she had never questioned. She knew, as all the county knew, that he was a wealthy man beyond fear of disaster. And out of the blue had come this shattering bolt. It was incredible. Then she caught sight of him. He was sitting in his favourite seat at the far end of the terrace, and she quickened her pace.

He looked up with a faint smile.

"Well, Ann? Thinking things out, too?"

"I'm trying to," she said, "but I find it difficult to make a start. You see, I don't understand business . . ."

"Sit down. I'm going to tell you a story. Sounds formidable, doesn't it? The story begins on the 18th of March when the s.s. *Phoenician Prince* left New York for Southampton. She is a vessel of 18,000 tons, one of two, the property of the Balte Brothers - Septimus Balte and Francis Balte; they are the partners who control the stock."

"Our Francis?" asked the girl in surprise.

"Our Francis," repeated John Holter grimly.

He went on:

"On board were five million in British, French and Italian notes, which had been redeemed from the American money market, and were being consigned to the Anglo-American Bank of London. They were packed in six tin cases, soldered air and water tight, and enclosed in stout wooden boxes. The boxes were deposited in the strong-room, which is on the port side of G Deck. Its door opens into a cabin which is occupied in extraordinary circumstances by a quartermaster.

"On this occasion one of the owners was on board, Mr. Francis Balte, and because of the importance of the consignment he had the quartermaster's cabin fitted up for his own use. During the day, and when Mr. Balte was absent from the cabin, it was occupied by his personal steward, Deverly.

"Francis kept the key of the strong-room in his possession. It never left him day or night. On the night of the 26th, the purser went to Francis with certain documents relating to the money. Francis opened the doors of the strong-room and the purser checked the packages; the door was closed and locked. There was no bathroom attached to the cabin, and Balte had a tin bath brought in by the steward, together with a dozen small towels. These were used to lay on the floor, with the idea of saving the carpet, which had been newly laid - in fact, especially for Mr. Balte's comfort. The steward went in later, took away the bath and six towels, the other six being unused."

Ann frowned again. What had the towels to do with the narrative?

Her father seemed to interpret her thoughts.

"I have interviewed the steward," he said, "and the loss of the towels seemed to him to be the queerest part of the whole proceedings. The next morning, as the ship approached the Needles,

the purser came down, accompanied by half a dozen seamen. Balte was asleep, but he got up and handed the key of the strong-room to the purser, who opened the doors, to find – nothing.”

He groaned.

“I should never have underwritten such a vast amount.”

“You, underwrite!” she gasped. “Is that why . . . you are responsible for the money?”

He nodded.

“It was stark madness,” he said bitterly. “Ordinarily I should only have been saddled with a small proportion of the loss. But in a moment of insanity I accepted the whole risk. That is the story.

“The ship was searched from end to end – every inch of it. The steward was on duty in the alleyway outside – he sat with his back to the door, dozing, he admits. It was impossible for anybody to get through the porthole, supposing, as was the first theory of the police, that a man let himself down over the side and scrambled through the port. The steward was full of the mystery of the towels – six towels and six boxes of notes! But in one respect he was very informative. He distinctly heard in the middle of the night a sound like that of a watch or clock being wound up. ‘Creak, creak, creak’ – he gave me a wonderful imitation.”

“What on earth was it?”

“He heard it six times, faintly but distinctly, he says now, but he also says that he thought it might have been the creaking of gear – one hears strange noises on board ship. And we come again to the fact that six towels were missing. To my mind that is significant. The boxes were very heavy, by the way, many of the notes were of small denomination and had been subjected to hydraulic pressure in the packing to get them into as small a compass as possible. Roughly each box weighed 140 pounds with its iron clamps and bands.”

Ann was interested.

“I never realised that paper money had weight,” she said. “How many five pound notes could an ordinary man carry?”

“A strong man could carry £100,000 worth,” replied Holter, “but he would not care to carry that amount very far. So there it is, my dear. Somewhere in the world is a clever thief in the possession of nearly a third of a ton of negotiable paper. And I am responsible.”

They sat in silence until –

"Daddy . . . why don't you see Bennett Audain?"

"Bennett?" He was startled, and then a smile played at the corner of his lips. "Bennett came to me just before I left London. He had heard from somebody that I was involved and, like the good fellow that he is, offered to help with . . . with money. I had an idea that I would see Frances. . . ."

Ann was thoughtful. She had met Francis Balte at the house in London - a vague, cheery man, full of commonplace phrases.

"You mean that I should let Bennett take the case in hand?" asked John Holter doubtfully. "I mistrust amateur detectives, and although I admit your cousin is clever - he is also the veriest amateur. Curiously enough the loss of the towels interested him more than the loss of the money."

Her mind was made up.

"You are to telephone Bennett that we are dining with him tonight," she said determinedly.

"My dear -"

"Daddy, you must do it - I feel that Bennett is the one man who can help."



The real seven ages of man's conscious existence may be divided into the periods when he wishes to drive a locomotive, when he wants to be a detective, an Adonis, a soldier (or sailor), a millionaire, a prime minister, and a boy.

Bennett Audain never got beyond the second, but he realised some of the others, for he was undoubtedly good-looking and as unquestionably rich.

The right kind of obsession is an invaluable asset for a young man of great possessions, and to current crime he devoted the passionate interest of the enthusiast. He was both student and worker; he had as great a knowledge of the science which is loosely described as 'criminology' as men who had gained fame in its exposition; he certainly understood the psychology of the criminal mind better than any police officer that ever came from Scotland Yard - an institution which has produced a thousand capable men, but never a genius. Indefatigable, patient, scientific in the sense that science is the 'fanaticism for veracity,' which is the scientist's basic quality.

"It is strange that a fellow like you should take up psycho-analysis. I should have thought it was just a little off your beat." John Holter looked critically through his glass of port.

"There are stranger things," said Bennett, with an amused glance at the girl. "It is strange, for example, that having taken a hundred-mile journey to consult me about the strong-room robbery, you haven't yet mentioned it."

The girl smiled, but the frown on her father's face deepened.

"Don't sneer at psychoanalysis, Daddy," she warned him.

They were dining together at Bennett Audain's house in Park Lane. The big room was dark save for the shaded lamps on the table and the soft glow that flushed the Persian rug before a dying fire.

Bennett had a nervous smile, charming in its diffidence.

"I am not accepting or rejecting the Freudian philosophy," he said, "and I'm not enough of a doctor to understand his theory of neuroses. I merely say that those responsible for the detection and prevention of crime might, with profit, employ the theory of idea-association."

A gust of wind blew a pattering of rain against the curtained window.

"Humph!" said John Holter, and looked at his watch.

Bennett laughed.

"I knew you would look at your watch when you heard the rain," he said.

"Why?"

"Association of ideas," said Bennett. "You told me when you came that you thought of leaving Ann in London and driving back alone to Sommercourt. Uncle John," he leant across, coming from the dusk of shadow into the yellow light, "if I could get the right man to question I would save you exactly a million!"

Holter frowned.

"I doubt it," he said, in his gruffest tone. "I have been caught. But I was a fool to underwrite the whole consignment – a mad fool. You can do nothing; the best and cleverest police officers are working on the case. What could you do – by psychoanalysis!"

"Bennett, who is the right man?" asked Ann eagerly.

Bennett did not answer at once.

"Where is Francis?"

The girl stared, as well she might, for the question was shot at John Holter with unexpected violence.

"I'm sorry – only I had an idea" – Bennett Audain was apologetic to a point of panic. "I – I get a little explosive at times, which is terribly unscientific –"

"But is human," smiled Ann.

John Holter got up.

"Probably at the Elysium Club - "

"We'll phone him," said Bennett. "It's rather late, but perhaps he'll come round."

Holter hesitated. Before he could make up his mind Ann had dialled the number and was speaking into the receiver.

Apparently Balte was at the club.

"He's on his way," she smiled; "poor man, he was most embarrassed to hear my voice." She returned to the table.

"Heavens, what a night! You can't go back to Sommercourt, Daddy."

The rain was swishing savagely at the windows, the ceaseless broom-like sweep of it across the panes, the faint tick of the enamel clock on the high mantelpiece, and the wheezy breathing of Bennett's old terrier, stretched before the fire, were the only sounds in the room until Francis Balte came with a clatter.

He was a stout man of thirty-five, fair and ruddy of face, and he brought into the shadowy room something of his own inexhaustible vitality.

"Glad to come, Miss Holter." He stopped dead at the sight of John Holter. "Pretty wild night, eh - I'm blessed if it has stopped blowing since I arrived. Old Sep writes that he was in Torquay yesterday, and the sea was absolutely breaking over the front - buses drenched and wrecked. Funny, being wrecked in a bus."

He put his red hands to the blaze and rattled on.

"Dreadful thing, eh, Miss Holter? What's the use of the police - eh? What's the use of 'em? Want men like Audain, full of up-to-date ideas. Wish it had been anybody but you, Holter." He shook his head mournfully.

"Ever heard of Freud?" asked Bennett, his absent gaze on the fire.

"Freud - no. German, isn't he? Nothing to do with the Germans, old boy. Who is he, anyway?"

"A professor," said Bennett lazily, "and an authority on the mind. Why don't you sit down, Mr. Balte?"

"Prefer standing, old boy. Stand and grow better - eh, Miss Holter? What about this Hun?"

"He interprets dreams - "

"Ought to be in the police, that's where he ought to be - interpreting some of those pipe-dreams they have," he chuckled.

"I will tell you what I am getting at," said Bennett and explained.

Ann held her breath, sensing the deadliness of the play.

Balte was amused.

"You say one word and I'll tell you a word it suggests?" he said. "That's a kid's game – used to play it when I was so high. You say 'sugar', I say 'sweet'; next fellow says 'orange', and so forth."

"You see, Mr. Balte," interrupted Ann, "Bennett thinks he can get at your sub-conscious mind. He believes that he can even tell what happened when you were asleep."

Balte pulled at his nose and looked down. He was thinking. He wondered if Bennett Audain could get at his mind about Ann Holter, and could put into words all that he had dreamed yet had not dared to say, all that he had schemed for. The thought caught his breath. He loved her so, this girl whose beautiful face had never left his vision; he had dared so much for her and she never knew. To her he was one of the thousands who served as a background of life.

"Try, old boy," he said huskily; "I don't believe in it, but if you can get hold of any information that will help Mr. Holter – you don't know how I feel about that – go ahead."

"Sit down."

Balte obeyed. His china-blue eyes were fixed on his interrogator.

"Ground," said Bennett unexpectedly.

"Eh – er – er – earth," responded the other.

"Dig."

"Garden."

"Hole."

"Er – I nearly said 'Devil'," chuckled Balte. "This is funny – like a game!"

But it was an earnest game with Bennett Audain. Presently:

"Shares," he said.

"Slump," it came promptly. Balte added: "Everything is slumping just now, you know . . ."

They went on quickly. Bennett recited the days of the week.

"Monday?"

A grimace – the faintest – from Balte.

"Er – unpleasant – starting the week, y'know."

Bennett shot out the days.

"Friday?"

"Calendar – thinking of a calendar, y'know."

"Key?"

"Wi- door."

He got up.

"A silly game, Audain." He shook his head reproachfully. "Admit it. I can't play games - too worried. Poor old Sep is half off his head, too."

"Where is Septimus?" asked Bennett.

"At Slapton - pike-fishing. Rum how people can sit in a punt all day . . . fishing. Well, what are you going to do, Audain? Can you help us? The police - pshaw!"

"Will you tell me this?" asked Bennett. "Are you a heavy sleeper?"

The stout man shook his head.

"Do you sleep late in the mornings?"

"No; up at six, bright and jolly." He paused. "Now I come to think of it, I was very sleepy *that* morning. Drugs, eh . . . do you think I was drugged - chloroform and that sort of thing?"

"No," said Bennett, and let him go.

"Well?" asked the girl when the door had closed upon the visitor.

"Stay up in London for a day or two," said Bennett Audain.



At seven o'clock the next morning he called a justly annoyed police inspector from his bed. Fortunately Bennett knew him very well.

"Yes, Mr. Audain; his trunks were searched. Mr. Balte insisted."

"How many trunks had he in the cabin?"

The inspector, cursing such matutinal inquisitiveness, answered:

"Four."

"Four? Big ones?"

"Yes, sir; pretty big and half empty."

"Did you smell anything peculiar about them?"

The inspector wagged his head impatiently. His legs were getting cold and the bed he had left was entrancingly warm.

"No, sir, I did *not* smell them."

"Good," said Bennett's cheerful voice.

"The worst of these amateur detectives is that they jump all ways at once," said the inspector as he shuddered back to bed.

"M'm," said his wife, on the border-line of wakefulness.

Bennett, at his end of the wire, gloomed out of the window into

the grey moist morning on to the stark, uneasy branches of park trees.

The hour was 7.5. Essential people had not yet turned in their beds; even the servants had scarcely blinked at the toil someday. Bennett Audain went back to the remains of his breakfast and wished, when he had had Francis Balte under examination, he had said, 'Paint'. Balte would surely have responded 'See'.

Francis Balte had a large house at Wimbledon. He was a bachelor, as was his brother. He was a simple man, as also was his brother. They had inherited considerable property at a time when property had a fictitious value. The cream of their father's estate had been swallowed by the Treasury in the shape of death duties. Their skimmed milk was very thin and blue in the days of the slump which followed. Stockholders in Balte Brothers Incorporated Shippers – and they were many – watched the shrinking of profits indignantly. The last general meeting of the Company had been a noisy one. There was one fellow in particular, a bald man with spectacles, Francis had noted miserably from his place on the platform – a violent, intemperate man, who had talked of a change of directors, and he had received more "hear-hears" than had Francis when he had expressed the pious hope that trade would improve and shipping return to its old prosperity.

It was Sunday morning, and Francis sat in his library. It was a room containing many shelves of books which he had never read, but the bindings of which were in the best taste. His elbows were on the table, his fingers in his untidy hair, and he was reading. Not the Sunday newspapers, his usual Sunday occupation. These were stacked, unopened, on the little table by the easy-chair. It was a book, commonly and commercially bound, and the more he read the more bewildered he grew. A little shocked also, for this volume was embarrassingly intimate.

Thus his brother found him. Septimus, lank and bent and short-sighted, glared through his powerful glasses at the studious figure and sniffed.

"Got it?" he asked.

Francis closed the book with a bang.

"It is all medical stuff," he said. "Audain is a bit cranky. Going?"

The question was unnecessary. Septimus was muffled to the chin, his fur gloves were under his arm, and his big sports car was visible from the library window.

"Well – so long."

"When will you be back?"

"Tuesday night. I've written the letter."

"Oh."

Francis stirred the fire thoughtfully.

"Create a bit of a stir, your resigning from the Board," he said; wish . . ."

"Yes?"

"No, I don't. I was going to say that I wished it was me. Better you. Everybody knows you're in bad health. . . . Warm enough?"

"Ay," said his brother, and went out pulling on his gloves.

Francis did not go to the window to see him off. He bent over the fire uncomfortably, jabbing it unreasonably.

It occurred to him after a long time that his brother had not gone. He put down the poker and shuffled across to the window – he was wearing slippers. There were two cars in the road, bonnet to bonnet, and a man was standing by the seated Septimus. They were talking.

"Audain," said Francis, and meditated, biting his lip. Presently Septimus went off and Bennett Audain came briskly up the path. Francis admitted him.

"Energetic fellow!" he cried. His voice was an octave higher than it had been when he spoke to his brother, his manner more virile and masterful. He was good cheer and complacency personified. "Come in, come in. You saw old Sep? Poor old chap!"

"He tells me that he is resigning from the shipping business." Bennett was warming his hands.

"Yes; he's going to the south of France, old Sep. Going to buy property. Queer bird. But he was always a land man – farms, houses . . . anything to do with land . . . very shrewd."

Bennett glanced at the table, and the other anticipated.

"*Interpretation of Dreams* – eh?" he chuckled. "You've got me going on Freud. Don't understand it. Of course I understand what he says about dreaming and all that . . . but that game of yours . . . eh?"

Bennett changed the subject, Francis wondering.

"Yes, this isn't a bad house," he agreed amiably. "A bit bourgeoise, but we're that kind. Quaintly constructed – would you like to see over it?"

A home and its attractions can be a man's weakness and Bradderley Manor was a source of satisfaction to Francis. In

time they came to the wind-swept grounds because there was a workshop in which old Sep laboured. It was to him what laboratory, studio, music-room, model dairy and incubatory are to other men. It was a workshop, its walls lined with tool cabinets. There was a bench, an electric lathe, vices, drills . . . an oak panel with its unfinished cupids and foliage testified to the artistry and workmanship of Septimus Balte.

"Always was a wonderful workman, old Sep," said Francis in admiration. "Do you know, he invented a new depth charge that would have made his name if -"

"That's it, is it?"

Francis looked round in surprise.

Bennett had taken from a shelf a large paint can. It had not been opened. The manufacturer's red label pasted on the top of the sunken lid was unbroken.

"That's what?"

Bennett held the can for a second and replaced it.

"Luminous paint," he said. "Lefevre's - he's the best maker, isn't he?"

Francis Balte said nothing. All the way back to the house he said nothing. Bennett followed him into the library and watched him as he filled a pipe from a tobacco jar which he took from the mantelpiece.

"Well?" he said miserably and Bennett saw tears in his eyes.

"There are two things I am not sure about," Bennett ticked them off on his fingers; "One, was 'John Steele' the cause? Two, why the towels?"

The stout man puffed furiously and all the time his eyes went blink, blink, blink.

"Friday - Calendar; that's how you knew. You wouldn't think I'd fall so easily. But you must have known all about it or why should you know I meant the *Racing Calendar*?"

"I guessed. I did not know that you and your brother had a stud of horses and raced them in the name of John Steele. That was easy to discover. When I decided that it was the *Racing Calendar* you meant, the official journal of the Jockey Club, I went to the publishers and got the register of assumed names."

The pipe puffed agitatedly.

"No . . . we lost money on racing, but that wasn't it; bad business . . . over-valuation of assets. I wonder what she will think about me . . ."

He sank down in a chair, the pipe dropped from his mouth, and he covered his face with his big red hands.



"I have no interest in punishment," said Bennett Audain, and Ann Holter, watching the pain in his delicate face, nodded. She was beginning to understand Bennett Audain.

"In solutions of curious human puzzles, yes," said Bennett, as he sipped his tea and noted joyously the first splashes of green that had come to the park trees in one night, "but not in punishment. If you like to put it that way, I am unmoral. Your father received his money?"

"Of course he did, Bennett – the six boxes arrived at his office yesterday morning."

Bennett laughed very softly.

"It is good to be alive when the buds are breaking, Ann. I feel a very happy man. Suppose you wanted a clockwork contrivance made, where would you go to get the work done? Look up the Classified Directory. No mention of clockwork-makers or makers of mechanical toys. Yet there are ten people in London who do nothing else. One of them is a man named Collett in Highbury."

"But why did you inquire about clockwork at all?" asked the girl.

"Creak!" mocked Bennett. "Did your father tell you how the steward had heard a noise, six noises, as of a watch being wound? I went to see Mr. Collett and I found him a secretive, furtive man, but reasonable. He had made a simple water-tight machine. It operated a large spool which was held in position by a catch and released three hours after it had been set. Is that clear?"

Ann nodded.

"Why water-tight?" asked Bennett. "The spool itself was outside, and presumably was designed to work in the water. Attached to the steel box containing the mechanism were two iron bolts, one at the top above the spool, one at the bottom. Now what was attached to the spool? Nothing but ten fathoms of stout light cord, a double length of it. Now do you see?"

"No," admitted the puzzled girl.

"Then I will explain further. At the end of the cord was a small cork buoy, probably covered with canvas and certainly treated with luminous paint. The towels – " he laughed. "I ought

to have thought of the use to which they would be put, but I had not seen the cabin. And the strange thing is that when I put myself in the place of Francis, it never occurred to me that if boxes weighing 140 pounds and clamped with iron were pushed through a porthole, the brass casings of the port would be scratched – unless the boxes were wrapped in cloth of some kind.”

“Then he threw the boxes into the sea!” gasped Ann, sitting back.

Bennett nodded.

“First he took the buoys and attachments from his trunks, then he wound up the mechanism, threw that and the buoy out of the porthole – the buoy being attached by a short length of chain to the under-bolt of the clockwork case – then he heaved up the money-box and pushed that after. They sank immediately. No belated passenger leaning over the rail would see a luminous buoy floating back. Nobody saw those buoys but Septimus, waiting in his motor-boat twelve miles south of Slapton Sands. And he did not see them until the three hours had passed and the spools released the boys and they came to the surface. Then he fastened a stouter rope to one of the double cords and drove it through the bolt. . . . He salvaged all six boxes in an hour, which isn't bad for a sick man.”

She shook her head helplessly.

“How . . . why . . . did you guess?”

“Guess?” Bennett's eyebrows rose. “It wasn't a guess. Who else would have stolen the boxes? In fiction the thief is the last man you suspect. In fact, the thief is the last man you'd acquit. The police always suspect the man who was last seen near the scene of the crime, and the police are generally right. I knew half the Balte secret when the word 'key' suggested 'wind' and 'Monday' – the day racing men settle their bets – suggesting 'unpleasant'.”

He looked at his watch.

“Francis and 'poor old Sep' should at this moment be boarding the *Rotterdam* at Plymouth,” he said.

“But why . . . he had heavy losses, but he would not have been ruined. Why did he want the money so badly –?”

“There is a woman in the case,” said Bennett gravely. “Somebody he dreamt about and planned for.”

“Poor man!” said Ann softly.

WHISTLE, MY LOVE!

JOHN SALT

A fresh, bright crime story with touches reminiscent of Thomas Burke's strange London. You will like Rosewarne and Manbre

NIGHT GROWLED down Paragon Street with an intermittent spiteful slash of sleet against the dark plate glass of the closed shops and the dim frosted glass of the Angel in Roseland public house.

The door of a provision shop next door to the public house opened and a girl came out. She checked the lock carefully then bent her head against the wind and hurried along Paragon Street, towards High Holborn. At the corner of Otway Street she paused uncertainly; a street lamp lit her pale upturned face with its small pointed chin and wide-set eyes which the fashion of the moment had led her to emphasize with greenish shadow and long-drawn corners.

It was a pretty face and a frightened one. The station sergeant at Holborn Central catalogued both facts as she entered the charge room, and concentrated his professional attention on the second. He lowered his height towards her and gave her a smile compound of equal parts of comfort and enquiry.

"Can I help you, Miss?"

She looked at him uncertainly. "I'm not sure, I don't know if I have done the right thing, coming here."

The sergeant noted that her voice was clear and pleasant, without a London intonation. He said comfortably: "Well you can't go far wrong here, miss. What is it, something you've lost?"

"No, I haven't lost anything; they didn't get in you see?"

The sergeant nodded. "I see, attempted burglary?"

She looked puzzled. "Not even that, or at least I don't think so."

He said patiently: "If you could start from the beginning."

"You must think I'm a dreadful fool." She smiled engagingly.

"You see I'm new to London. I live with my uncle, Mr. Bodiam. He keeps a provision shop in Paragon Street."

"The one near the Angel?"

She nodded. "I've been with him about three months. At first I didn't pay too much attention, but after they broke the windows I felt I had to do something. Uncle wouldn't, you see."

The sergeant looked doubtful. "Not really, miss."

"Oh, I'm making a dreadful mess of this. It's simply that some hooligans have taken to hammering at our doors of a night. Yesterday they broke the shop window."

The sergeant pursed his lips and shook his head. "We've had no complaint from Mr. Bodiam."

"That's just the trouble. Uncle Edgar is so gentle. He wouldn't hurt a fly, let alone call the police in."

"Not much we can do without a direct request from the injured party."

She glared at him indignantly. "I'm telling you, aren't I?"

"We'd have to hear it from Mr. Bodiam, miss."

"Can't you do anything?"

Sergeant Finch thought for a moment.

"I'll tell you what, miss. I'll have a word with the divisional officer. We'll send a man round tomorrow to have a quiet talk with your uncle. How will that suit?"

"I'd rather my uncle didn't know I came here. He told me not to fuss." Her voice was uneasy.

The sergeant nodded paternally. "That will be all right, miss, but I'd better have your name."

"Jill," she said hurriedly. "Jill Bodiam. I must go now. Thank you, good night."

The sergeant watched her go. Pretty, he thought, and green; pity she couldn't stay that way.



Detective-sergeant Jack Manbre called at the Bodiam shop towards dusk on the following day. The call was low on his list of priorities and he hoped to complete it within a few minutes.

The shop floor was at a lower level than the street and an awkward step gave access. The shop was lit by gas mantles, gently hissing and popping inside shades of flowered glass. One shone down on the counter, irradiating the near-bald head of a slight, elderly man who was boning a piece of bacon with a small

needle-pointed knife. Manbre stumbled over the door step and barely stifled a curse. The little man looked up and smiled pleasantly.

"That's an awkward step," he said. "I'm always meaning to have it done away with but the locals are used to it."

The gaslight now shone full on Bodiam's face. It was round and white with slack cheeks, slightly protruding eyes and a broad expanse of high domed forehead. What hair the man had was combed carefully in a circular swirl and laid in a cowlick across the front of his head. A straggling brown moustache dimmed with grey covered his upper lip, and belied the black of the cowlick.

Manbre introduced himself and stated his business. Bodiam blinked dim eyes and said diffidently, "I should hardly have thought the matter worth your trouble, Sergeant."

Manbre, who was privately of the same opinion, grunted a few more questions and watched Bodiam lift the bacon slab and clamp it into the slicer at the far end of the counter. A woman came into the shop with a shopping bag, and Manbre moved to one side. Bodiam took her order and began to turn the handle of the slicing machine. Manbre listened to the hiss of the cutting wheel then glanced up as a door opened at the back of the shop and Jill Bodiam came in with a cup of tea in her hand. She put it down beside her uncle then looked at Manbre. For him the evening suddenly gained interest. It became more interesting yet as the shop bell jangled and a second man came into the shop. He crossed to the counter and began talking to Jill.

The man's clothing was one up for Paragon Street. Manbre appraised the dark blue waisted overcoat at fifty guineas and the Italian stripe beneath it at another thirty.

Bodiam finished his bacon slicing, the woman paid him and left the shop. He picked up his cup of tea and drank it in long, noisy gulps. Somehow Manbre had not expected that. Bodiam seemed to him the sort of man who would nibble at things like a mouse and drink delicately, in all things self-deprecating, almost secretive.

Bodiam came back to Manbre and began to unbutton his white shop coat. "I am closing the shop now, Sergeant," he said.

"You'll let us know if you have any further trouble?"

The shopkeeper smiled and nodded his head. "Perhaps; it's really nothing. You have to expect that sort of thing at times."

"If you say so," Manbre agreed politely. He said good night and went out quickly, without looking again at the girl and her companion.



Back at the station he described his visit to the Divisional Inspector. Edward Rosewarne listened abstractedly. "Wasting your time weren't you?"

Manbre said defensively: "I like to know what's going on in the manor, if it's only window breaking. And they seem to be making a set against Bodiam. Why would that be?"

Rosewarne smiled bleakly. "Oh, he's not unpopular. Rather a butt in fact. Every so often the kids break his windows for the hell of it. If they did it to anyone else, they'd get pinched but the old boy never makes a charge. I suppose the girl's not used to it, that's all."

"Why is he a butt?"

"It's an old story." Rosewarne stirred irritably. "Bodiam started the shop with his wife. Business picked up so he engaged a manager to live in. The upshot was that the manager decamped with Mrs. Bodiam, the contents of the till and most of the old boy's savings. He got a bit of sympathy at the time but he was such an old woman about it that eventually people got contemptuous. The kids are simply copying the grown-ups. I don't think it worries Bodiam, though. He goes his own way, plays a bit of chess in the evenings I believe. Maybe the girl will brighten his life up; it certainly needs it."

"I think she'll do that," Manbre agreed. "Harry Bergamo came in to see her while I was there. They sounded old friends. That's queer company if you like."

Rosewarne glanced at him with a quickening of interest. "Bergamo, eh? Now that's a coincidence if I believed in such. I've got a report here on his old man."

"Cil Bergamo?"

"The same. He's a lifer on the Moor as a result of a distinguished career of thuggery. Only I don't think he'll see his sentence out."

"I heard he was ill."

"They've moved him to the Scrubs. He's in hospital there. The doctor doesn't give much for his chances. Seem's he's wandering a bit in his mind and doing a little talking."

"What about?"

Rosewarne gave him a sharp look. "About a man who whistles while he works."

Manbre leaned forward sharply. "You always said he knew something, sir."

Rosewarne grinned. "Wasn't I the clever one? Nothing of what he said makes any sense so far. With my sort of luck he'll die with whatever secret he holds."

"You were in on the first Whistler murder weren't you, sir?"

"I was," Rosewarne said heavily. He got up, stretched himself and walked to the window. "It happened out there, over a shop in St. Gile's, back end of '47 in that snowy winter. The victim was Cil Bergamo's partner." He paused reflectively. "That was my first murder, Jack. I've seen all sorts since then but I've never forgotten Lockyer sitting there in that chair. You'd have thought he was asleep until you came up close and saw the cord marks."

"He was garrotted?"

"That's the trademark," Rosewarne said sourly. "Nine like that in thirteen years and pretty stupid we've looked, I must say."

"No leads at all."

Rosewarne came back and flung himself into his chair. "Leads," he said disgustedly. "Take Lockyer; that looked simple enough. He'd quarrelled with Bergamo. There was enough hard cash in it to make it worth a killing. But it was all there with him in the room, untouched, and nobody had tried to tap his bank account or safe deposits. As for Bergamo, he was in Zurich with a dozen witnesses. He could have hired somebody to do it. We tried to prove that, even took it to court. Bergamo sued us for wrongful arrest." He relapsed into disgruntled silence.

Manbre said doubtfully, "What about the others?"

"Nothing happened for two years. Then we got two in a row, same kind of victim, a crook under a cloud, precisely similar method of killing. Nothing more till 1953, we had two that year. Somebody disturbed him on the last job and he finished it with a knife, stiletto type. That was the year somebody heard him whistling. After that the name stuck and as sure as there was a killing somebody heard him whistling. No tune that anybody could put a name to but a sort of breathy chirp. There is a general agreement that the sound was cheerful, except in its context."

Manbre shuddered. "There were four more after that?"

"That's right. The fourth was an accident. Some down and out had chosen to kip on the very doorstep of a house where the

Whistler had just done business. He gave him the knife, too, but we got a little from the poor blighter before he died. He claimed the killer was tall but stoop-shouldered, dressed in black with a deep hat pulled well down over a dead white face. He thinks the Whistler was wearing a stocking or a mask of some kind. That was the best we could get out of him."

"The last was two years ago? The year Bergamo got his stretch."

Rosewarne shrugged. "We've had two-year gaps before, the Whistler may be dead for all we know. I'll tell you what, Jack, this fellow's a maniac but he's a professional, too. I'll bet he's hired for the job. The killer knew where to find them. Most of them died in their own homes, behind locked doors; some were killed in the open streets late at night in all parts of London. The Whistler had tracked or lured them to the places in which they died. And there's another interesting thing, some of them knew they were for the high jump."

Manbre stared at the inspector. "How do you know that?"

Rosewarne shrugged. "We heard a squeak, just now and then. They wouldn't ask for police protection, of course, but they did what they could. Their hard luck was that when the word went out all their mates steered clear of them. They couldn't keep awake all the time. They had to trust somebody and though they suspected danger, they didn't know where it would come from. So they got the chopper. Eight highly unworthy citizens, and one down and out."

Manbre's gaze wandered to the window. Rosewarne smiled grimly. "He's out there somewhere, Jack, waiting to be caught if you fancy your chance."

"Will Bergamo talk?"

"Not in his right mind and the ravings of a sick man won't pass for evidence before a jury. Are you feeling brisk and debonair these days, Jack?"

The sergeant looked startled. "What's that in aid of?"

"I was thinking. It might be worth your while to cultivate the Bodiam girl, see what you can pick up about young Harry."

Manbre said resentfully: "There's something immoral about police work."



The sergeant's next meeting with Jill Bodiam was almost but not quite accidental. He had seen her hurrying down a side street

off the Strand and watched until she went into a coffee bar. He followed her, and sat down at her table.

"I hope you don't mind; we have met before."

She widened her eyes at him, then smiled slowly. "You're the detective who called at the shop."

"That's right, Jack Manbre's the name."

"Manbre," she said. "Is that English?"

"As Yorkshire pudding," he assured her. "Let's say I'm of Huguenot extraction. I don't suppose it's true."

They stirred their coffee. Manbre said: "Do you come here often?"

She giggled. "That's such a line, Sergeant. You know you followed me in here."

He grinned sheepishly. "Are you offended?"

"Takes more than that to offend me. I'm glad you did come, I find London rather lonely."

Manbre said carefully: "There is Harry of course."

She fell silent and he saw that her eyes were suspiciously bright. Then she squared her shoulders and gave him a direct look. "Sergeant, I may be from the country but I'm not a fool. I know about Harry; his father is in prison and I don't suppose he has always been honest. But he has been nice to me and I like him."

"How did you meet him?"

"He came into the shop. We sell cigarettes, small things like that, and I think he knows uncle."

"What does your uncle think of him?"

"You ask a lot of questions," she reminded him.

"I'm sorry, I only want to help you," Manbre said, and meant it.

"Well uncle doesn't like him at all; he has told me not to see him again." She paused wonderingly. "He is usually so reasonable and quiet but he got very angry about it. People don't give Harry a chance," she finished defiantly.

Manbre thought of the various chances that Harry Bergamo had been given at one time or another, then hurried on. "Do you get on well with your uncle?"

"Oh, he's a dear. My people are dead, you see, and when I wanted to come to London he offered me a home right away. He thinks of me as his own daughter now." She frowned slightly. "Which means, I'm afraid, that he likes to know just where I am at any given moment. That reminds me, I must be getting

back. He is going out to play chess with his friend tonight, and he doesn't like the place left empty."

Suddenly Manbre did not want her to go. "Couldn't we have a meal, go to the pictures or something?"

She stood up and flashed him a smile. "It's nice of you, Jack, but it isn't any good you know."

"Then it's Harry?"

"I don't know; maybe." She frowned again and her eyes had a scared look.

"Is anything the matter?" Manbre asked.

She brightened at once. "It's silly, really. It's just that I don't fancy an evening alone in the house."

Manbre said firmly: "I'll walk back with you."

At the corner of Paragon Street he took her hand. "Jill, next time you get lonely or feel scared, just remember that I'm around and come along and talk it over with me. And look, I'm sorry but I think your uncle is right about Harry. I should take his advice, if I were you."

"But you are not, are you?" she said icily. She pulled her hand away and hurried back to the shop.



Manbre did not see her again for three weeks. During that time he and Rosewarne had more to worry them than the breaking of windows in Paragon Street. Then one night a telephoned message caused Rosewarne to take a car ride out to Wormwood Scrubs. The prison doctor greeted him and led him into a small room off the main ward. "You'll have to wait for a moment, Inspector. The boy is with him."

Rosewarne grunted. "It's as close as that?"

"We think so. He has been restless for a number of days; that's usually a bad sign. This afternoon he began asking for you. He seems to have something on his mind."

"I'll bet," Rosewarne said grimly. "Is young Bergamo a frequent visitor?"

The doctor nodded. "I gather he had been a client of yours, but I'll give him credit for filial piety. We have waived a few rules for him, I admit. It can't do any harm now."

Footsteps passed along the passage. Rosewarne caught a glimpse of the younger Bergamo as he went by the open door. The inspector thought he looked angry and a little frightened.

The doctor went out, returning in a few moments. "You can go in now," he said.

Rosewarne walked down the ward towards a set of green curtained screens around a bed at the far end. An orderly moved to one side, and he saw Bergamo. The old man was the shrunken shell of the swaggering, flamboyant ruffian that he had known so well. His grey face was thin and wasted, the left side drawn and immobile; the mouth twisted. Perspiration drenched down from short-cropped curls of iron-grey hair. He moved his head restlessly from side to side on the pillow and his white, blue-veined hands plucked constantly at the coverlet. His eyes were still brightly alive; they narrowed and became crafty as he saw Rosewarne.

The inspector bent closer and caught a whiff of ether. "Well, Bergamo?"

The old man blinked his eyes and gasped. "It's caught up with me, mate. Time I talked."

"High time," Rosewarne agreed. "What do you want to say?"

Bergamo tried to laugh and choked on it. "I don't want to say, mate, 'specially to you. But I got to. Give us a drink."

Rosewarne held a spouted cup to his lips. Some of the water ran down on the old man's nightshirt. He cursed feebly and pushed the cup away.

Rosewarne sat down beside the bed. For a long time no words came and when they did, Rosewarne was eerily conscious that Bergamo spoke not to him but to unseen figures about the bed. Sometimes he pointed to one or another and addressed him softly by name. None of it made much sense until the old man suddenly thumped the bedclothes with surprising violence and shouted: "There's nothing in the papers, look at 'em, nothing in any of 'em."

Rosewarne looked at the empty coverlet. "What should there be?" he asked quietly.

Bergamo swivelled his eyes at Rosewarne. "There's been nothing for two years."

"I know it," Rosewarne said. "So what now, will there be another?"

Bergamo said hoarsely: "It's the boy, I bin talking to the boy. Come closer, mate, I'm fading."

Rosewarne put his head down close to the matted grey curls and strained hard for the old man's reedy speech.

At about the same time Jill Bodiam was making her second visit to Holborn Central. The station sergeant beamed at her. "More windows, Miss?"

She shook her head and said urgently: "I must see Sergeant Manbre."

The sergeant rang the C.I.D. room. "You're in luck, miss," he said. "Down the corridor, second door on your left."

Manbre met her at the door, took one look at her pale and anxious face and sat her down in a chair near the gas fire.

"What's up, Jill? Let's have it in short, easy sentences."

"Oh, Jack, you don't know how frightened I am."

"From the beginning," he said gently. "Slow as you like. Has some one been threatening you?"

"Not me, no."

His voice hardened. "Harry Bergamo, then?"

"Try and understand, Jack," she begged him. "It all started after I saw you that time. I knew Harry had been seeing his father in prison and I thought that was upsetting him. He wouldn't talk about it at first, then he said we weren't to meet any more."

"Good for him," Manbre thought but said nothing.

"I asked him why and nothing he said after that made any sense. It was all about him being in some kind of danger and not wanting me mixed up in it. I told him that was foolish and we went on seeing each other.

"Then he began to change. I tell you, Jack, he was scared. I mean really scared as if something or somebody was after him. He said his friends weren't talking to him any more so I tried to see more of him. Then I got the oddest feeling that the more I saw of him the more scared he got. Finally I said that if somebody was really out to do him harm, he should go to the police. But he said police protection wasn't for people like him. By then I was pretty scared myself so I tried to make him talk. He told me a horrible tale about men who had been killed by somebody they called the Whistler. I tried to talk him out of it, I think I almost succeeded, then one night something happened." She stopped and stared straight in front of her, remembering.

"Go on, Jill," Manbre said gently.

"He was walking home late one night after seeing his father when something came out at him from a dark entry. A cord or something whipped across his face. He showed me the mark

afterwards. He managed to twist himself to one side, and then he just ran."

Manbre got up and went to the door. She said anxiously: "What are you going to do?"

"You kept this to yourself too long, Jill," he said brusquely. "It's police business now. I'll get somebody to take a statement from you then we'll round up Bergamo."

She started up wildly then let her hands fall to her sides. "You're right, of course," she said dully. "I should have done it long ago."

Manbre glanced down the corridor. "Hallo, there's something up, you sit tight for a minute, Jill. I'll be back."

In the charge room one uniformed constable was buttoning his greatcoat while two others carried a clinking bundle through the open street door. Rosewarne stood by the desk completing a form. His eye fell on Manbre. "Good man. Get your coat; we're going hunting."

"Wait a minute, sir. I've got things to tell you."

"So have I," Rosewarne said. "I just came from the Scrubs. Bergamo died there half an hour ago."

Manbre blinked and saw for the first time the bleakness of Rosewarne's expression. "He talked?"

Before the inspector could reply Jill Bodiam came into the room. Manbre made a hasty explanation. Rosewarne nodded. "We'll see you home first, Miss Bodiam."

The girl's face flushed. "I - I wasn't going back there again, Inspector."

Rosewarne said crisply: "I think we'll go, just the same."

"You don't understand, Inspector. I can't go back. I left a note for uncle telling him that I was going away with Harry. He goes up to bed soon after nine as a rule so I left the note where he would find it in the morning."

"I see. Well, I think you must change your plan, Miss Bodiam. We shall take Bergamo into protective custody for the night, and you can hardly wander the streets. Where were you meeting him?"

She said in a small voice: "In Brixton, near Telford Avenue, about eleven o'clock. We always met there."

Rosewarne said briskly: "We'll take you to Paragon Street first."

Manbre was surprised to find two police cars waiting outside.

They got into the leading car and were outside the Angel in Roseland within a few minutes. The inspector took Jill's arm and led her to the shop door. "We'll use your key, if you please, Miss Bodiam."

She looked at him in surprise but fitted the key and opened the door. Rosewarne, Manbre and two constables followed her into the small room behind the shop. She pulled the hanging chain attached to a gas bracket and the mantle turned white. "I ought to tell Uncle," she murmured and hurried into the hall and up the stairs.

Rosewarne picked the crumpled note from the table and stood waiting. She came back into the room. "He isn't there," she said wonderingly.

He showed her the opened letter. "I think he must have found this. He probably went out to try and stop you."

She put a hand to her mouth. "But Harry's in danger, Uncle might get hurt, too."

"We had better hurry," Rosewarne said gently. "Come with us, Miss Bodiam." He turned to the two constables. "You stay and make sure everything is all right here."

One of the men went back to the second police car and as Manbre climbed into the first for the drive to Brixton, he heard again the clink of metal.

The police car nosed west towards Millbank then went south across Vauxhall Bridge. At Kennington Oval they turned into the Brixton Road. Near Telford Avenue Rosewarne told the driver to stop the car in a dark side-street. He looked at Jill. "You direct us from here, Miss Bodiam."

"It's a garage," she explained. "Harry keeps his car there. It was being repaired and he has been at the prison most of the day so he couldn't come and meet me in town. He said he would be there just before eleven." She glanced at her watch. "Come along, we must hurry."

Rosewarne eased her back into the seat. "Not you. You stay here with the driver. We shan't be long."

He climbed out, followed by Manbre and the co-driver. A short walk brought them to a narrow lane and Rosewarne led the way down it. On the left were the overgrown grounds of a derelict house with a crumbling brick wall on which shards of bottle glass glistened in the starlight. On the right a single petrol pump loomed starkly out of the gloom alongside a row of three brick-

built lock-up garages. The lane petered out into wasteland. Rosewarne walked a little way further then selected a vantage point in the lee of a derelict lorry. "We'll wait it out here," he said briefly. "No smoking and keep your voices low."

Manbre lowered himself gingerly on to the lorry's running-board. He pulled back his coat cuff and peered at the luminous dial of his watch. "Half an hour to go before Bergamo gets here. Couldn't we have asked the locals to pick him up?"

Rosewarne crouched beside him. "We could have but we'd have been crazy if we had. I don't know what you want, Jack, but it isn't Harry Bergamo I'm laying for tonight."

Manbre began a question but Rosewarne hissed and struck him a warning blow on the leg. Someone was coming. Slow, quiet footsteps sounded on the gravel and halted before the garage block.

They peered into the blackness but could see no more than a tall shadow darker than the night. The footsteps began again, this time in retreat, and the shadow melted into the deeper gloom beneath the glass-guarded wall. The second silence began and grew and deepened, and the night became colder. But Rosewarne was beyond cold or fatigue. His was the calm of the hunter sure of his prey yet conscious, too, of the slips and miscalculations that men may make though the way seems sure and the capture certain.



It was well after eleven when they heard Bergamo coming. The darkness of night had almost persuaded the three watchers that they were blind men, yet now Bergamo's figure stood in clear silhouette before the centre garage. His key clinked in the lock and the doors swung wide. Suddenly feet lunged and skittered on the gravel. There came a whipping, soughing sound, a scream cut short and a dreadful choking. Rosewarne and Manbre swept down on the two scuffling figures before the garage door. The inspector cuffed down with the edge of his hand and the shadows fell apart. "Lights," he bellowed. The constable snapped on his flash; Manbre felt inside the garage entrance and flipped a switch.

Yellow light flooded the gravel. Bergamo lay with his head against the garage door gasping and wrenching at his throat. Manbre knelt beside him and helped the constable remove a

white plastic cord with two wooden toggles. The constable began to massage Bergamo's throat while the man lay back and stared at him dazedly.

Manbre rose swiftly and helped Rosewarne lift the second man to his feet. The shoulders beneath his hands seemed slight and bony, and he darted a glance at Rosewarne. The inspector nodded and ripped off the black hat and the false papier-mache headpiece that it covered. "There's your tall, dark killer," he growled and dragged Edgar Bodiam into the full glare of the bare lamp bulb in the garage.

The shopkeeper turned his head and smiled at the inspector in just the way that Manbre remembered he had smiled at the woman customer when he sliced the bacon for her. He spoke in the same mild voice. "Somebody told you," he accused. "You could never have guessed."

He did not struggle as they led him back up the lane. The first car with Jill in it had drawn up at the entrance. They put Bergamo in with the girl, and themselves climbed into a second car which had drawn up behind. On the way back Bodiam began to whistle. It was not a tune, just a breathy sibilance that grew monotonous after a time. But it was, as all the witnesses had declared, the sound that a man might make when things were going well with him, when he enjoyed what he was doing.

Rosewarne confirmed the impression back at Holborn Central.

"The man is a psychopath; he enjoyed it all right, Bergamo need never have paid him."

Manbre shook his head. "I still can't believe it; those nine killings will take some proving."

"I have a piece of information that might convince you," Rosewarne said drily. "The men I left at the shop had picks and shovels and instructions to use them. They found Bodiam's wife and his manager under the cellar floor. Undoubtedly that's what started him off."

"Where does Bergamo come in?"

"He owned the shop. Bodiam killed his wife in the blitz. Things weren't too hard to cover up in those days, but Bergamo looked Bodiam up on the night of the funeral as it were. It occurred to his fine Italian brain that here was an axeman made ready to order. So Bodiam became Bergamo's private executioner and only the two old villains ever knew. Who else would guess?"

Certainly not us. It would be stretching improbability a bit far to connect a milk and water shopkeeper like Bodiam with a series of savage gangland killings. He was a cheeky swab, too; never even bothered to arrange a cover for that alleged chess playing of his. The little brown bag he carried contained his disguise and the tools of his trade, nothing else."

"What made Bergamo confess - conscience?"

"Conscience, nothing!" Rosewarne grunted. "He knew Bodiam for what he was and he was scared for his boy when Harry began sparking the old man's niece. You have to remember that Bodiam didn't consider himself a crook; the thought of young Bergamo hanging round Jill was something he couldn't stomach. Cil knew what might happen, who better? So he put the word around the grapevine that Harry was for the high jump, hoping that would scare the boy off. When that failed he knew there was no way of stopping Bodiam except by talking to me."

"I don't see that. He could have told the boy," Manbre reminded him.

Rosewarne nodded. "You would have thought so. But apparently that was the one thing the old man couldn't bring himself to admit. If a man like Cil Bergamo can be said to feel shame, that was probably the reason." He paused for a moment then said reflectively: "Incidentally that's not a bad lad, Harry Bergamo. I'd say he's off the bent these days. The girl's a good influence."

Manbre glared and relapsed into glum thought. "Poor Jill," he said at last.

Rosewarne poured coffee from an enamel jug and stared doubtfully at the muddy mixture in his cup. "Poor Jill?" he repeated. "Well, I don't know. Has it occurred to you, Jack, that it's the innocents who cause half the trouble? If she hadn't started reporting smashed windows, you would never have gone to Bodiam's shop. And if she had left Harry alone when he asked her, the old man would probably never have gone hunting again with his little piece of cord."

Manbre shook himself like a man emerging from a cold plunge. "There's a lot to be said for the bachelor state," he said heavily. "See you in the morning, sir." He yawned and went out.

PERSONAL

GLIMPSSES

Some great fictional detectives as their creators have written about them

Albert Campion

' . . . was a tall thin man in his early fifties, with fair hair, a pale face and large spectacles, who had cultivated the gentle art of unobtrusiveness until even his worst enemies were apt to overlook him until it was too late. He was known to a great many people but few were actually absolutely certain about what it was he actually did with his life. In his youth he had often been described as "the young man come about the trouble" . . . '

MARGERY ALLINGHAM (*Hide My Eyes*)

C. Auguste Dupin

'This young gentleman was of an excellent – indeed of an illustrious family, but, by a variety of untoward events, had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world, or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes. By courtesy of his creditors, there still remained in his possession a small remnant of his patrimony; and, upon the income arising from this, he managed, by means of a rigorous economy, to procure the necessaries of life . . . books, indeed, were his sole luxuries, and in Paris these are easily obtained.'

EDGAR ALLEN POE (*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*)

Sherlock Holmes

' . . . a narrative which would have been utterly incredible to me had it not been confirmed by the actual sight of the tall, spare figure and the keen, eager face which I had never thought to see again. In some manner he had learned of my own sad bereavement, and his sympathy was shown in his manner rather than in his words. "Work is the best antidote to sorrow, my dear Watson," said he, "and I have a piece of work for us both

tonight which, if we can bring it to a successful conclusion, will in itself justify a man's life on this planet . . ."

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE (*The Empty House*)

Philip Marlowe

' . . . I was as hollow and empty as the spaces between the stars. When I got home I mixed a stiff one and stood by the open window in the living-room and sipped it and listened to the ground swell of the traffic on Laurel Canyon Boulevard and looked at the glare of the big, angry city hanging over the shoulder of the hills through which the boulevard had been cut. Far off the banshee wail of police or fire sirens rose and fell, never for very long completely silent. Twenty-four hours a day somebody is running, somebody else is trying to catch him . . . a city no worse than others, a city rich and vigorous and full of pride, a city lost and beaten and full of emptiness. It all depends on where you sit and what your private score is. I didn't have one. I didn't care . . . '

RAYMOND CHANDLER (*The Long Good-Bye*)

Miss Marple

' . . . that was the chief objection, her own age and weakness. Although, for her age, her health was good, yet she was old. And if Doctor Haydock had strictly forbidden her to do practical gardening he would hardly approve of her starting out to track down a murderer. For that, in effect, was what she was planning to do . . . '

AGATHA CHRISTIE (4.50 from *Paddington*)

Mrs. Pym

'There was only one light in the room, other than that cast by the big fire, an electric standard by the over-stuffed couch on which Mrs. Pym was seated, feet up, spectacles on the end of her nose. Her whitening hair was slightly ruffled, her strong face engrossed in what she was doing. On her knees was a portable typewriter, and, as always, she was wearing a tweed suit boldly patterned . . . it was impossible to look at her without knowing that here was a great woman who took the recognition of others as a matter of course because she was both a natural leader and a highly individualised personality.'

NIGEL MORLAND (*The Dear Dead Girls*)

Mr. J. G. Reeder

'... some distant echo of J. G. Reeder's fame had penetrated into Buckinghamshire. The police officer seemed to remember that Mr. Reeder either occupied or was about to occupy a semi-official position remotely or nearly associated with police affairs. If he had been a little clearer on the subject he would also have known to be more definite in his attitude. Since he was not too sure, it was expedient, until Mr. Reeder's position became established, to ignore his presence - a peculiarly difficult course to follow when an officially absent person is standing at your elbow, murmuring flat contradictions of your vital theories.'

EDGAR WALLACE (*Red Aces*)

Sold out . . . !

If you get your EWMM from a newsagent, he is often sold out because without knowing how many customers he has got coming, he cannot be expected to guess blindly.

If you want to make sure of your copy being there for you when you call, or

If you prefer to have it delivered direct to your home, then fill out the time-saving form below.

To the Newsagent:

Please obtain and hold/deliver for me every month EDGAR WALLACE
MYSTERY MAGAZINE.

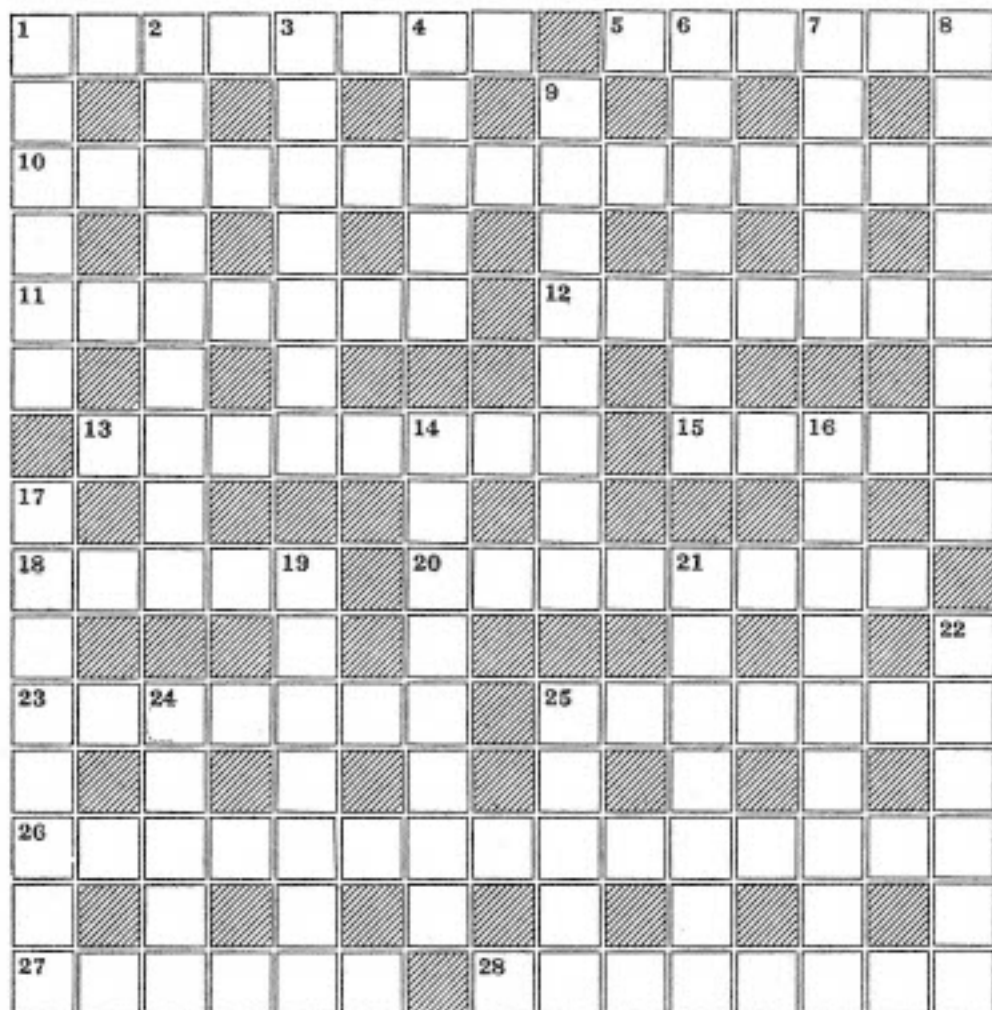
NAME

ADDRESS.....
.....
.....

(Please write in block letters)

EDGAR WALLACE MYSTERY MAGAZINE is distributed by
Representation Services, 130, Hither Green Lane, London, S.E.13

EWMM CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Dad's weapon gets him past the sentry (8)
5. Are you twice the man after drinking one? (6)
10. Edgar's novel opening for Judas? (3, 8, 4)
11. Use a knife, perhaps (7)
12. Run - pave the way for the upstart (7)
13. People most likely to blow their tops? (8)
15. Bond man but not James (5)
18. Sort of rum (5)
20. Devote a book to one (8)
23. Poisonous start to a dramatic production (7)
25. Hunt footwear (7)
26. Bright as an E.W. title? (4, 2, 3, 3, 3)
27. Sauce for the goose? (6)
28. Like a baby, strongly objecting (2, 2, 4)

DOWN

1. Police car description (6)
2. He may be found stowing away (9)
3. One way to fight? (7)
4. Get a rise somehow (5)
6. Look here (7)
7. Grass cutter (5)
8. Behaved like a killer (8)
9. How Doc's poem was written (8)
14. Nerve that's sheer impudence (8)
16. Corresponding material (9)
17. Chaser for policemen? (5, 3)
19. Redeems that man, Ross, perhaps (7)
21. Offence an old war started with (7)
22. Dabs at Scotland Yard! (6)
24. Bone-head? (5)
25. They may be controlled by a crook (5)
(Solution on page 58).

ROY VICKERS

The Twelve Minute Grave

*Another EWMM exception
to its new material rule,
a rescue from the past
of a notable example of a
classic crime writer's
best work*

ONE WOULD have thought that any husband – whether a murderer or not – would have more sense than to offer the police a lying explanation of his wife's disappearance. Crippen's many imitators, who have followed the footsteps of their master the whole way, have all given the same warning. Tell one lie, however trivial, and the police will keep you company until your wife is found in some form or another.

Yet the intelligent Robert Hainsby told the police that his wife, Brenda, often disappeared suddenly without explanation – which was disproved by the housemaid. Then he admitted that he knew she was in course of elopement – which was true – but denied that he knew the identity of her lover – a lie which was exposed within an hour.

Eloperments, as the police well know, are not always what they seem. An illicit lover of a missing woman is almost as good, from the police angle, as a husband. In this case, the lover, Charles Barstrood, lived up to their rather hasty expectations. He lied – he behaved with gross inconsistency. The result was that the highly suspicious acts of the lover cast a mantle of innocence over the equally suspicious acts of the husband – and, of course, *vice versa*.

On the first Wednesday of July of last year, Charles Barstrood,

giving himself the name of Hobson, arrived in his car at the Willoughby Hotel, Leabourne, on the south coast, some fifty miles from the suburb of Bretcham, where the Hainsby's lived. It was nearly four in the afternoon. He checked in, asked that his luggage be taken to his reservation and inquired whether his "wife" was in the hotel. Receiving a negative answer, he registered surprise and annoyance. She had told him, he said, that she would arrive about lunchtime.

At four thirty he ordered tea for two, had the table placed in the lounge, near the doors. At five, he planted himself on the terrace, trotting back to Reception every now and then to discuss possibilities. At seven, he asked the telephone girl to call the Hainsby's number.

"Hullo, Hainsby! I say, old man, can I speak to Brenda?"

"Sorry, she's not at home!" Hainsby chuckled. "That's 'Hobson', isn't it? I thought she was with you."

"She hasn't turned up."

"Don't worry, old man! She has the haziest notions of time."

Barstrood cut off and returned to the telephone girl.

"I suspect that my wife has had a road accident. Between here and Bretcham. I'll begin with the local police, if you'll put me through."

The local police had no accident to report. Nevertheless Barstrood, in the name of Hobson, begged them to take particulars. He gave a physical description of Brenda, added that she would be driving herself in a Ford car, of which he gave the number.

With the aid of the telephone girl he called the five largest towns on the route, ending with Bretcham itself, receiving a similar answer and making a similar request.

He did not go in to dinner, but had a snack in the bar. While thus occupied he was informed that the local superintendent had called in reference to the inquiry about Mrs. Hobson. In his room upstairs, Barstrood repeated his story over a couple of whiskies. The superintendent proposed that they should chart Mrs. Hobson's known movements.

"Mrs. Hobson started from your home in Bretcham -"

"No. She had just dropped in on an old friend on the way here. As a matter of fact, we haven't a home - we're looking for one. We've been abroad, and have been staying with friends in London. But I mustn't trouble you with an accident that may have happened outside your locality."

That, of course, was no use. The superintendent was following a routine that was unknown to Barstrood.

"So your friends are your only permanent address at present, Mr. Hobson? I'd better have their name and address."

Barstrood tapped a cigarette and put it down unlighted.

"That's a very awkward question, Superintendent!"

"I don't follow you, sir."

"She's not my wife. She and her husband are cat-and-dog, and go their own ways. I am certain she set out to come here – she must have – we've made all our plans for the divorce and our marriage. I want to find out where she is, and if she's alive I want to help her. But I don't intend to involve myself – nor her husband, for that matter – in a scandal. So I'm giving no addresses. I have not misled the police in any essential particular – and that keeps me the right side of the law."

The superintendent was sorry he had accepted the whisky.

"You quite understand," he said, as he got up, "that we shall now follow our own line. Goodnight!"

Whether Barstrood had forgotten that he had given the police the number of the Ford car is a moot point.



The published photographs of Brenda Hainsby tell only half the truth. The well set eyes look hazy rather than determined; but justice is done to the beautiful line of the jaw, and the nose, with its ghost of a tilt saving it from severity. The cupid's bow of the mouth flatters reality – the line was longer and thinner and betrayed the shrew, to the discerning. Her hair, crudely described by the police as ginger, was a very fine red. She was exquisitely formed – at thirty, her figure had lost nothing that mattered. Most important of all, she possessed the power, not uncommon in good-looking women of sharply defined moods, of varying her appeal. She could look ordinary or glamorous in the same setting, apparently at whim.

She was the spoilt child of a widowed physician, who left her his life savings of some twenty-three thousand pounds. She was energetic and ambitious, but untrained. She regarded her inheritance as a useful grubstake for some personable man who would turn it into a large fortune for her with reasonable speed.

Robert Hainsby was a very personable man – indeed, quite

remarkably handsome, which, as many a handsome man can testify, is as likely to prove a stumbling block as a blessing. He was a wholesaler and warehouseman, dealing in a number of the smaller appliances used in the hotel and catering trades. He was efficient, reliable and progressive, though of late years these qualities had not enabled him to make much headway in a depressed industry.

Not without reason, Brenda saw in him the man of her dreams – a docile, ornamental go-getter. She quickly made up his mind for him, not suspecting that real embryo millionaires tend to have a strong will of their own.

Hainsby thoroughly enjoyed the process of being ensnared. He liked her enthusiasm when he spoke of the prospects of his business. He made no deliberate misrepresentation. With his eyes on the red hair – and the mouth that did not seem shrewish when you looked at it like that – he felt such a grand fellow that he boasted a bit.

Retaining the odd three thousand pounds for personal emergencies, she handed him her capital, according to her plan. But not quite in the fine old Victorian fashion. She employed a lawyer. But she instructed him that there must be no clause which could hamper Robert, her motive being solely that of love. Being a very able lawyer, he produced a document, redolent of orange blossom, which unobtrusively protected his client's interests.

During the honeymoon and for the greater part of the first year, Hainsby was very nearly as happy as he had expected to be. The lights began to fade when he made some casual remark about difficult conditions in the hotel industry – the sort of remark to which the listener is not expected to pay acute attention.

“But, darling, it won't affect *us!*” exclaimed Brenda. “You said the business only required extra capital to go ahead by leaps and bounds!”

He hoped he had not said leaps and bounds, but could not remember, so he concentrated on industrial conditions. When he had finished, she told him that the bungling of others would act as a spur to himself if he looked at it in the right way. He should have more faith in himself – had she not given proof of her own deep faith in him?

Before the year was out her own faith in his ability to turn all he touched to gold lost its depth. She granted that he was a clear headed, knowledgeable man. But his personality now seemed to

her to lack punch – that streamlined certainty which, she felt sure, she could give him.

There followed a series of encouraging little talks. Streamlining, she suggested, could not be limited to working hours – it must be no less apparent in one's personal life. There were matters of dress and deportment – of the eye ever vigilant of the likes and dislikes of others – which could never be relaxed. She was very just. If she had to mention his failure to say goodbye to her before leaving for the office last Thursday, she would emphasise his correctitude in bringing her flowers for her dress the previous Tuesday week. It was just little things like that!

The repetition of that irritating phrase drove him to lose his temper and ask if she would like a divorce. She told him that she thought divorce was horrid, and that it was against her principles – which, by this time, was bad news for him.

That marked the end of the reality of their marriage. They quarrelled hardly at all – sank into a sufficiently well mannered apathy. She bought a Ford car, leaving the Chrysler to him.

The Ford, first and last, proved very expensive. The garage had to be widened. Owing to a slope of the ground, the extension had to be supported on props, but she paid for it cheerfully as the symbol of her independence.

She managed the house conscientiously with the aid of a cook-general who came at nine and left at six, but could always be bribed to stay on and serve the evening meal for Robert when Brenda wished to dine out, which was often. From the back of the house, you descended by three steps to a half acre of pleasure garden which was a nuisance to her, as jobbing gardeners had become very rare birds. She specialised in the easier flowers, notably nasturtium, which grows abundantly and looks after itself.



In the third year, Robert Hainsby's eye began to rove – and so, he supposed indifferently, did hers. A little later, he became aware of her friendship with Charles Barstrod – not that she made any effort to conceal it. She frequently invited him to the house where he would make himself amiable to Hainsby.

Hainsby assumed that her principles in the matter of divorce had broadened. But some months had passed before he related that idea to the document drawn up by Brenda's very able

lawyer. He went to his own lawyer, hinted at matrimonial problems and asked for an interpretation of the document in plain terms.

"In a nutshell," said the lawyer, "it means 'no love - no money'."

More precisely, in the event of divorce or legal separation, every one of the twenty thousand pounds would become repayable at three days' notice.

About this time Hainsby began to accumulate a small library of 'famous trials', trials for wife-murder predominating. There was nothing furtive about this. The volumes were kept on the bookshelves in the morning room. On two occasions he sent his office messenger to the booksellers for copies, one of which happened to be the trial of Crippen. His interest lay in the summary of the details of the crime. He did not read the cross-examination. He did not make any detailed study of the murderer's mistakes. It was, in fact, escapist reading - raw material for a daydream into which he had no immediate intention of translating into action.

Barstrood was himself a lawyer specialising in company law, in which he was fast making an excellent reputation. In middle age, if not before, he would probably be a wealthy man. He was well dressed, healthy and passably good looking - a revised version, as it were, of Brenda's first dream of upholstered romance.

One day, over lunch in London, Barstrood told her about an artist friend of his who had a tiny flat in the West End which he had decorated himself. The flat, he said, had been left temporarily on his hands. It would be fun, he said, to go and see the decorations. The artist's name, he said, was Hobson.

After a third visit to the flat, Brenda went there alone in the morning and made the discovery that 'Hobson' did not exist. She was not disconcerted. At their next meeting, making no mention of 'Hobson', she began with a statement of her newly broadened views of the matrimonial state. Barstrood interrupted her only to profess profound agreement and added that he himself - for instance - had an invalid wife, a very dear woman whose feelings nothing would induce him to hurt.



Brenda took it very well - very nearly created the impression that she had known it from the first, thereby winning increased

admiration from Barstrood. She satisfied herself that the tale was true and made no change in their arrangements until, a year later, the death of Mrs. Barstrood was announced in *The Times*.

Brenda was very sympathetic and consoling. At the second meeting, after the funeral, when he did not seem to need any more condolence, she said she was worried about her money affairs, as the future seemed so uncertain. She would be grateful for his advice in the matter of re-investing the twenty thousand pounds on loan to her husband's business but repayable, in a sense, at call. He gave her financial advice, to which she did not listen.

Bluntly stated, the twenty thousand was not enough. In the long run, it would doubtfully offset the bad effect created by divorcing publicity on the minds of some of the elder nabobs of the City.

In pursuit of her own purposes, Brenda practised the streamlining she preached. She thanked him very prettily for the financial advice and at their next meeting startled him out of his wits.

"Charlie!" Her voice was like a pointing finger. "Oh, Charlie, I feel so *unwashed!*"

"Darling, what on earth d'you mean?"

"'Hobson'! Talking in code on the telephone! That smirking porter at the flats! Oh, and a dozen trifles like that! While *she* was alive, I didn't mind a bit. I thought of it as flowers laid on the altar of our love – I mean all the horrid little lies and evasions I was glad to offer up as a sacrifice to you and her. But now we are no longer protecting her – it would all seem so backdoorish and sniggerish!"

"I see what you mean – and you're right, of course!" He spoke gravely, fearing rocks ahead. "All my life I shall remember with a gratitude too deep for words –"

"Dear Charlie! You always understand!"

"At the same time, we have to be practical –"

"I know! But there's nothing, really, you need do. I confessed to Robert last night."

"Oh!" It was as if the breath had been knocked out of him. "It wasn't exactly news to Robert, was it?"

"He never knew about us for certain. He has no *evidence* until I give it to him. I didn't tell him about 'Hobson's' – we can keep that as a bargaining counter, to prevent his demanding damages from you."

"Damages? But he's not hostile, is he?"

"Not hostile. A bit waspish about your not having come to him two years ago in an open manner. There was a little tough stuff – once removed, if you see what I mean. He would dam' well ask the court for ample protection for my future. Meaning damages to be settled on me in case you deserted me, Charlie!" She gave a delightful ripple of laughter. "Poor Robert simply can't begin to imagine how people like you and me feel towards each other."

Brenda had carried the position by assault. It remained only to mop up.

"When he's finished blustering, he'll have to do what I tell him. I shall tell him tonight that, if he tries to hurt you, I shall call in my twenty thousand. If he behaves nicely, he can make his own terms."

"Is he doing anything right away?"

"No – except that he's seeing his lawyer today – who will tell him, of course, that we mustn't go on living under the same roof. It seems rather mean to force Robert to turn out, so I shall go somewhere until you're ready to join me.

Barstrood had observed that the City nabobs were always quick to cut their losses without grizzling.

"You couldn't have done better, girlie! Go on keeping 'Hobson's' a secret – the flat, I mean – it would smear both of us, as *she* was alive at the time. We'll give him fresh evidence. You can turn the screw to keep my own name out of it. We'll stick to the name of 'Hobson'. In that name I'll make reservations at – the Willoughby Hotel, Leabourne."

"Charlie, how dynamic! When?"

"Sooner the better! What about the day after tomorrow – Wednesday? It's your maid's day off, isn't it? You can slip away without any fuss. I'll join you at lunch. Come in your Ford. You'll make it comfortably if you start at eleven sharp."

"Wednesday will mean a bit of a rush. Some of my clothes are marked; I'll have to re-mark, in case the chambermaids –"

"That sort of thing doesn't matter. The two weak points are the bank and the car. Don't ask your bank to forward cash. Don't park in the wrong place – look out for one-way routes – don't speed. Don't leave your driving licence in the dash –"

"Oh – the police! That reminds me. My licence must be renewed. I was pulled up last week and I swore it was in the post for renewal – though I did remember the application form. Then I clean forgot to renew it."

"That's just the sort of thing that might run us into publicity!" he grumbled. "Give me your licence. I'll renew it myself, so that there's no mistake. Here's a pen – sign that form and I'll fill in the details. I'll give you the licence at lunch on Wednesday."



Brenda was not surprised at the completeness of her victory. Men were sensible enough if you pushed them in the right direction – provided there was something to be pushed – that something which was lacking in poor Robert. Her mind became busy with small things. There were the suitcases to be packed and stowed in the Ford. She was glad that she had in hand a new costume and the most perfect little cap to go with it – in a shade of green that Charles had never seen before which suited her hair better than any other.

On the Wednesday morning when Robert knocked at her door on his way to the bathroom, she told him through the locked door that she had had a bad night, and would he mind seeing to his breakfast himself, reminding him that it was the maid's day off.

She had no feeling of guilt, believing she was hurting no one. If she was worrying at all, it was about her driving licence. What if the police stopped her on her way to Lebourne? But mostly she was thinking of her 'going-away dress'. It would make the right impression on the hotel at lunchtime.

But by lunchtime her life had come to an end and her body had been hidden.



As an indirect result of the Lebourne superintendent taking his own line, the local sergeant at Bretcham called on Robert Hainsby as the latter was leaving for the office on the following morning. The sergeant quoted the Ford's registration number.

"That's my wife's car," admitted Hainsby. He was so indifferent that the sergeant felt doubt of his own instructions.

"Can I look inside your garage, Mr. Hainsby, so that I can report definitely whether the Ford is here or not?"

"You won't find it. But look, if you wish."

In the garage the sergeant noted the Chrysler and a bare space. The floor showed a line in the cement, marking the extension. A

window in the rear was open. The sergeant thrust his head out as if he suspected that the Ford might be hidden in the garden. Immediately under him was a sloping bank, some three feet in depth almost covered with a lush growth of nasturtium. Six feet away a line of giant laurel bushes cut off his view of the garden. He walked round the garage and satisfied himself that the Ford was not in the garden.

"Could I speak to Mrs. Hainsby, please?"

"She's not here. She left yesterday in the Ford with luggage, and I don't know where she has gone. If it's a matter of a summons, I can accept service on her behalf."

"It's an inquiry from the police of another county -"

"Then I'm afraid I can't help you, Sergeant. I'll ring you as soon as I hear from her. I must hurry to catch my train."

Hainsby didn't seem to wonder why the police were interested, noted the sergeant - he didn't even ask if there had been an accident.

While Hainsby was catching his train, Charles Barstrood, as Mr. Hobson, was leaving the Willoughby Hotel and returning to London, to resume his own name. At the crossroads outside Leabourne, Barstrood's Buick, among other cars, was stopped by a policeman, who asked to see his driving licence. Impatiently, Barstrood thrust his hand into his breast pocket and brought out the little red booklet.

"This licence," said the constable, "is made out to Mrs. B. Hainsby, The Laurels, Acacia Road, Bretcham."

"*Damn!*" muttered Barstrood. He saw that there was only one way out. "I've got my wife's and she's got mine. I'm Robert Hainsby. Same address, of course."

Such an incident was not uncommon. The constable took his note, which included the number of the car, and made no further fuss.

On the outskirts of Hibberton, a small town some twenty miles Londonwards of Leabourne, Barstrood was held up by a towing operation.

A local superintendent, supported by a sergeant and three constables, was directing a break-down truck which was hauling a Ford car up a short, steep bank to the road. At the bottom of the bank, behind the Ford, a rutted cart-track wound into a plantation.

Barstrood glanced at the Ford, noted that they had not removed the luggage before hauling. To cut in now and ask what

happened to the woman, deemed to have been inside the car, would be to rivet himself into the publicity. As things were, 'Mr. Hobson' was a very shadowy figure – the Lover Who Waited In Vain. Hainsby, for his own sake, would probably manage to get that covered up. As soon as fairway was restored Barstrood drove on.



At a few minutes before six that evening, Detective Inspector Kyle, of Scotland Yard, attended by Mansbridge, a promising youngster fresh from the police college, was admitted to Hainsby's house by the maid. She said she had last seen Mrs. Hainsby on Tuesday evening. Kyle explained that it was feared that Mrs. Hainsby had met with an accident, that he would wait for Mr. Hainsby. The maid, if she wished, could go home.

Kyle made a tour of the ten-roomed house, of which four upper rooms were out of use, the furniture draped in dust sheets. The house was Victorian, but the fittings and furniture were modern, substantial and tasteful. He discovered nothing except that the couple occupied separate rooms. In the morning room he was amused at sight of Hainsby's collection of famous trials.

"Crippen, too! Looks as if we've come to the right address!"

"You told me, sir, that people who read about crime never commit one."

"Why bring that up!" grunted Kyle. "Let's have a look at the garden. See if you can pick up an idea."

Mansbridge found that the garden gave him little chance to shine.

"They don't keep a gardener," he offered. "It's all very shaggy. Marigold, poppy, nasturtium. All no-trouble flowers. And the nasturtium is spreading everywhere – needs cutting back."

"A Boy Scout could have managed that much. Let's see what's behind those laurels." He led the way. "More nasturtium for you!"

The sloping bank beneath the garage was almost covered with nasturtium cascading from a single stem.

"Planted at a different time, or in the wrong kind of soil," pronounced Mansbridge. "The others are all near full bloom. These are dying."

"So they are!" said Kyle thoughtfully. He leant forward, took a grip of the foliage and very gently pulled. The whole cascade

slithered down the bank, clear of its stem – as if it had been a quilt draped over the soil, which was now seen to bulge a little in the middle.

“We’ve got something here, sir!”

Kyle was not enthusiastic. “I’m not much of a gardener myself,” he muttered. “Help me put this back where it was.”

“Put it *back*, sir? I bet there’s a spade in that shed.” Mansbridge was eager. “Those laurels give perfect cover – none of the neighbours could see me digging.”

“I dessay! But you can’t go digging in private gardens when you’ve no warrant and no evidence. I can hear his train coming in. We’ll get round to the front.”



Hainsby seemed to accept their presence in his front garden without surprise, and took them to the morning room. His manner was steady and patient – as of a man who dislikes police questioning but has nothing to fear.

Kyle was the least starchy of officials. He would ask questions as if he believed that the suspected person was anxious to help.

“We want to get in touch with Mrs. Hainsby,” he began. “Do you mind telling us where she is?”

“I don’t know,” answered Hainsby. “I last saw her on Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning I spoke to her through the locked door of her bedroom, when she told me that she was not getting up to breakfast and reminded me that it was the maid’s day off.”

“And then?”

“I got my breakfast, caught my train and passed a routine day at the office. On Wednesday evening I saw that the Ford was out. As there was no note on the hall table saying she would not be home for dinner – she always did leave a note on such occasions – I went to her room, noted that several suitcases were missing and gave the matter no further thought until this morning, when a police sergeant turned up saying he had had an inquiry about the Ford from another county – I supposed for some traffic offence.”

“And here are the police again!” grinned Kyle. The finding of the Ford in Hibberton Wood had not been given to the newspapers – Kyle was keeping it up his sleeve. “Aren’t you beginning to feel a bit worried about your wife, Mr. Hainsby?”

“Not a bit! The fact that you’re asking me where she is means

that she hasn't had an accident on the road. As to her not telling me where she has gone, there's nothing in it. She frequently slopes off like that without a word to anyone."

"Frequently?" challenged Kyle.

"Frequently!" repeated Hainsby. "I see I shall have to explain. Our marriage crashed some four years ago. But we don't throw the furniture at each other. We really get on rather well – like a brother and sister who haven't enough in common to quarrel about anything. We each go our own way."

"This time – when she went her own way, in her car – did she take her driving licence with her?"

"Really, Inspector! How on earth do you expect me to know?"

Kyle looked at Hainsby as if to give him a chance to correct himself. Then his geniality dropped several points.

"Mr. Hainsby, at approximately nine-forty this morning, was your Buick stopped near Leabourne? Did you show a constable your wife's driving licence in mistake for your own?"

"At approximately nine-forty this morning, Inspector, I had dictated my letters and interviewed several members of my staff. My car, by the way, is a Chrysler." He added the number.

It was Hainsby's round. Kyle turned to Mansbridge.

"If Mr. Hainsby will let you use his telephone, ask Register for the name of the owner of that Buick. Here's the number."

Hainsby was apparently under the impression that the interview was at an end.

"Have a drink before you go, Inspector."

"No thanks – I'm on the wagon at present. You have said yourself that your marriage is unsuccessful. Do you think it possible that your wife has eloped?"

"Yes, it is possible – even probable." He added quickly: "But it's no use asking me for the man's name. I don't know who he is."

Kyle consulted a copy of the telephone numbers which the clerk at the Willoughby Hotel had called for Barstrood, in the name of Hobson.

"Bretcham 378. That's your number, isn't it? At about seven last night, a man giving the name of Hobson called you and received an answer. He asked you where your wife was."

"He did not," asserted Hainsby. "At about that time, a man – unknown to me, as are many of her friends – asked to speak to her. I told him she was out and he thanked me and hung up. If he gave the name of Hobson, which I doubt, I did not hear it."

Mansbridge came back and handed Kyle a folded slip on which he had written: *Buick owner: Charles Barstrood, 219, Windsor Gardens, London, W.8.*

"Does the name of Barstrood mean anything to you, Mr. Hainsby?"

"Yes. An expert in company law. Very high standing – a coming man, I should say. A one-time friend of my wife's – he used to dine here occasionally a couple of years ago."

"I put it to you that your wife's eloped – or intended to elope – with Barstrood?"

Hainsby shook his head.

"Of all the men she knew you've picked the least likely!" he exclaimed, forgetting the risk of Barstrood himself exposing the lie by revealing Brenda's negotiation with her husband for an anonymous divorce. "Their friendship was pretty warm at one time, but it cooled off. Even if he wanted to start again, which is improbable, he'd be too shrewd. He had an invalid wife then, who died recently. If he were to bolt with Brenda now, he would have to marry her after the divorce, and that would do him no good in the City."

"That certainly sounds convincing." Kyle was at his most amiable, as he rose to go. "Thank you for being so frank about your affairs, Mr. Hainsby – we appreciate that!"

In the police car that was taking them Londonwards to Barstrood, Kyle summed up:

"Ex-lover – that's what Hainsby meant – ex-lover stages an elopement. Ex-lover – don't forget the 'ex' – rings up to ask if the girl has left home, meaning he hasn't seen her since she left home. Then how the blazes did her driving licence come to be in his pocket?"

"I don't know, sir," said Mansbridge, as brightly as he could. "But I do know that, with ex-lovers, it's the woman who generally does the hanging on."

"You oughtn't to know that at your age," said Kyle. "You go on to the Yard and dig up anything you can about Barstrood, while I'm swapping yarns with him."



A house in a Kensington square connotes money. Kyle was admitted by a manservant who asked him to wait in a hall lounge then took him in a lift to the library on the second floor.

Barstrood was a cleverer man than Hainsby; but he made a more substantial mistake at his first interview.

At the Willoughby Hotel he had given the impression of a loving husband nerve-racked to incoherence – duly reported by the staff. But he received Detective Inspector Kyle with something approaching jauntiness.

“Well, I must say I didn’t know Scotland Yard would come after me for giving a fancy name to cover the girl friend! Sit down, Inspector. Whisky or a cocktail?”

“Whisky, please,” said Kyle, feeling that, with this type, a snub would retard progress. He waited for Barstrood to ask some anxious question about the fate of the woman with whom he was deemed to be deeply in love.

Barstrood made a bad first impression by missing this chance.

“As far as I’m involved, I can give you the whole thing in a few words. Their marriage crashed years ago, so I don’t feel an outsize blackguard.

“I expected her to be waiting for me at the hotel. About seven I got really worried. I rang up on the chance that she might have been taken ill before starting. Hainsby answered – said he didn’t know where she was but assumed she was with me. So then I rang the police stations along the road.”

“She starts off to join you at Leabourne and vanishes on the way. We shall have to go back a bit. When did you last see her?”

“Monday last – we lunched together in Town.” He sighed, somewhat heavily. “I little thought we had said goodbye for ever.”

“When did she give you her driving licence?”

There was an instant of hesitation before Barstrood laughed it off.

“I see what you’ve got hold of. That constable at the cross-roads! I couldn’t burden him with all my sorrows, so I told him that it was my wife’s licence. That committed me to saying I was Robert Hainsby – you’d have done the same yourself, Inspector – own up!”

“Can I see that licence, please?”

For a woman’s licence it was unusually the worse for wear. The cardboard binding, though clean, was much crinkled, with a tendency to bend inwards – as if someone had tried to squeeze it into the shape of a cylinder. Kyle appropriated it.

“You haven’t told me when she gave it to you.”

"Over lunch on Monday." He related the circumstances in which he had insisted on himself renewing Brenda's licence.

"I don't understand why you had it sent to you instead of directly to her," objected Kyle. "With an elopement on your mind, it seems unnatural to go to all that trouble to cover the risk of a fine of forty shillings."

"It wasn't the fine I was afraid of – it was the publicity. In a police court she'd have to give her real name. The hotel would have turned us out. I planned to run the divorce so that my name would be kept out of the papers. Hence the 'Hobson' layout."

Kyle was in doubt. It was just possible that Barstrood was telling the truth about that licence.

"You'll have a job to keep out of the headlines if we find her for you – alive or dead."

"It'll be 'dead'," said Barstrood. "You know it as well as I do, Inspector, or you wouldn't be here."

"As I am here," grinned Kyle, "can you give me a lead?"

"Maybe I can give you a few facts. She had twenty thousand pounds in her husband's business – at call, mind you! But she told Hainsby she would accept any arrangement he liked to propose about repayment, provided he used the name 'Hobson' for the divorce. You can check the money with her lawyers." He added a name and address. "Listen to the rest of it! She told me that she had made a will in his favour when they married, and that she'd make a new one in my favour when she and I married. If she was telling me the truth about the wills, Hainsby stands to gain twenty thousand by her death."

This, Kyle admitted to himself, was an eye-opener.

"The inference being that her husband killed her?" asked Kyle. "But apparently she drove away in her own car on Wednesday."

"Did anybody see her?" challenged Barstrood. "And how d'you know that car was driven out on Wednesday morning? He could have killed her on Tuesday night."

"But what about the car?"

"The car was a blind. He could have driven it into that wood any time between Tuesday night and dawn on Thursday. And why did he choose Hibberton Wood? Because it's on the road she'd have taken to join me."

Kyle cursed at this revelation that news of the finding of the Ford had leaked.

"What would be the sense of that?" he asked.

“To point the finger at me – so that you fellers would come around and ask me to account for my time, between Tuesday night and my turning up at the hotel. I didn’t go to the office on Wednesday, and heaven only knows whether my man noticed what time I left here – I didn’t! I have a private lock-up for my car and nobody checks my comings and goings. And here you are getting me all hot-and-bothered about that driving licence and one thing and another!”



Kyle arrived at the Yard in a doubtful temper.

“Mansbridge! That order I gave about keeping the Ford car out of the news – ”

“Quite all right, sir. The Chief himself took it in hand. There’s nothing in any of the evening papers, and the agencies promised not to handle it if it came in.”

“Are you dead sure it was in none of the papers – nor on the ticker?”

“Quite sure, sir. I checked up while I was waiting for you.”

Kyle beamed.

“Then try this one. How does Barstrood know that the Ford car was fished out of the wood at Hibberton?”

Mansbridge looked disappointed.

“It’s on his road to London – he might have seen it on the way up.”

“And not made a single inquiry – about the woman he says he intended to marry? You won’t say Barstrood put the car there himself, because you can’t forget those nasturtiums!”

Kyle was reading Mansbridge’s notes when Sergeant Rawlings came into the room with a sheaf of papers.

“The three suitcases in the Ford, sir. Sergeant Amy Kilner’s report. She says the items are okay, but she’s sure they were packed by a man in a hurry. She’s written her reasons. Nightdress wrapped round outdoor shoes, and so on. Must’ve been a funny sort o’ man, she says.”

“The nasturtiums for my money,” muttered young Mansbridge.

On the following afternoon, Kyle was again visiting The Laurels, Bretcham.

The policewoman’s report on the packing of the suitcases was powerful support for Barstrood’s assertion – that the movements of the Ford car were a blind.

"That maid must know whether Mrs. Hainsby did or did not pack those cases," said Kyle. "I sha'n't want you on this, Mansbridge. You can have a nap in the back seat."

The maid showed signs of being helpful. She had been with the Hainsbys all their married life. She agreed that they lived as strangers. But she had never known Mrs. Hainsby to leave home suddenly without explanation – there were always letters to be forwarded. Kyle had been working at her for less than fifteen minutes and they were tackling the question of packing when there was a knock on the door of the morning room.

"Can I speak to you privately, sir?" asked Mansbridge, who had let himself in by the back door.

They went into the dining-room. Even then Mansbridge lowered his voice.

"Body in woman's dress between the props of the garage extension. I dug about a couple of feet through that bank under that dead nasturtium. I found what looked like blood on some of the earth I turned."

"So you were right after all, boy!" exclaimed Kyle. Go into the morning room and talk poppycock to that girl so that she can't hear me telephoning."

Mansbridge was in danger of drying up by the time Kyle let him out and again took him to the dining-room.

"I want the body officially identified before Hainsby comes home – that is, about a quarter to seven. That girl's no good – she'll throw hysterics. Take the car and bring Barstrood here; try to be back before six thirty."

"What shall I tell him, sir?"

"You can give him the facts – in confidence, of course. Tell him exactly why we want him – make a special favour appeal. If you can't find him, or he won't come, bring Mrs. Hainsby's lawyer instead." He added: "I told you to wait in the car. If you do this sort o' thing too often, they'll make you an inspector – and then you'll wish you'd always obeyed your orders."



By six the body of Brenda Hainsby lay on a trestle table in the garage and the doctor was making the preparations necessary for his preliminary examination. In due course he reported to Kyle.

"Our old friend the blunt instrument – a fairly heavy iron bar, and long enough to give a good leverage – for instance, that tyre

lever now standing in the corner of the garage. The skull was shattered and death was instantaneous. I can't place the time – a couple of days, plus or minus." He added: "I have – er – tidied things up a bit."

Kyle went into the garage with him. The clothing, a smart costume in green, bore hardly any trace of contact with the soil, as it had indeed been lying in a space between the props of the floor. A sequined, caplike hat was slightly askew.

"That left hand?" asked Kyle.

"Yes, I'll deal with that presently," said the doctor.

"O – kay!" Kyle turned towards the half open door. "Hold up a minute, Doctor." Mansbridge was between the folding doors, Barstrood behind him.

"Very good of you, Mr. Barstrood! Your idea that the car was used as a blind was a straight tip. You're saving me a vast amount of bother."

"That's all right!" Barstrood was a little wintry. "But Hainsby is due in a few minutes. Surely he could identify his own wife!"

"Evidence against himself! Liable to be struck out on application by defence – I see you've never had a criminal for a client, Mr. Barstrood. This way, if you feel up to it."

Barstrood faced the ordeal without a tremor. Back in the open air he was a trifle unsteady. Mansbridge took his arm and helped him into the house. The dining-room had been converted into local headquarters. Three men were seated at the table, writing. Sergeant Rawlings was in charge.

"Give me an identification form – Mr. Barstrood is in a hurry," said Kyle. There was nowhere to sit. Kyle invited Barstrood into the morning-room where he courteously filled in the answers himself, and troubled Barstrood for his signature only.

"What a rigmarole!" exclaimed Barstrood. "Damn! That's Hainsby's voice in the hall."

Sergeant Rawlings appeared, handed Kyle a cardboard folder.

"From the doctor, sir."

Kyle was reading the contents when Hainsby came in, shut the door behind him and leant against it, glaring at Kyle.

"Two of your men followed me from the station, as if I would bolt like a rabbit. You've found her body here, haven't you! Under the garage! I know! This morning I nerved myself to walk round to the back. The nasturtium was all withered. I knew she was there, of course! Why have you got Barstrood here?" He

gave a cackling laugh "You can't imagine *he* had anything to do with it."

"Sit down, Mr. Hainsby!" Kyle barked it out as an order. "I'll give you a moment or two to get your breath and pull yourself together." He reopened the folder Rawlings had brought him and affected to re-read the contents.

"This is very painful to me," said Barstrood, and made to leave the room. But Kyle had taken Hainsby's place at the door. Hainsby burst into misguided speech.

"You are going to ask me whether I killed Brenda. Yes, I did – a hundred times in the imagination! And buried her under the garage. In your sense – No, I did not kill my wife. But I don't expect you to take that seriously. Good lord – " he pointed excitedly at the bookshelf, " – it's all written down there! The trial of Alfred Byker. He buried her under his garage, and he – "

"Shut up, Hainsby!" shouted Kyle. When the other had subsided: "Mr. Barstrood has frankly admitted that he was in course of eloping with deceased. You knew it. You lied to us about it because she threatened to call in her loan of twenty thousand pounds if you mentioned his name in connection with divorce. Why bother to lie to us about it? How could she carry out her threat when she was lying dead under the garage?"

"I didn't *know* she was lying dead – "

"I agree that you didn't know she was dead, Hainsby. I agree that you did kill her. So why all this hysteria?"

Kyle turned to Barstrood.

"Would you like to cut the rigmarole, as you call it, and answer a single question? Did *you* kill her?"

"I shall report that question, Inspector," Barstrood glared. "As you seem to be waiting for an answer: No. I did not kill Mrs. Hainsby."

"What a pity!" sighed Kyle. "I'll tell you just how it was done and see if you change your mind. You turned up here on Wednesday morning very soon after Hainsby had left. You pulled up those nasturtiums and dug a good wide tunnel to the hollow under the flooring. It didn't take very long as there's only about a couple o' feet of soil – my junior did the job in twelve minutes.

"You waited about until she came out, dressed up for lunch at a smart hotel. All smiles on both sides. By a trick you induced her to walk with you to the back of the garage. Just as she was

about to step behind those laurel bushes she stopped short. 'Oh! My driving licence!' she said - or words to that effect."

Kyle produced the driving licence, dropped it on an occasional table, close to Barstrood. The crinkled cardboard definitely bent inwards.

"To keep her sweet and to avoid discussion, you gave her the licence. As she stepped behind the laurels, you struck her with that tyre lever which you had planted where you wanted it.

"She was dead by the time she reached the ground. The contraction of the muscles in the moment of death had crushed the cardboard of the licence. Look at it!

"You were quick-witted enough to spot that the licence might be evidence against you, so you coaxed it from the hand and subsequently straightened it out. You put the earth back - and you put the nasturtiums back, knowing that the flowers would quickly die and call attention to that spot. Then you went to the Ford, still in the garage, and messed her packing about, to suggest that the packing had been done hastily by Hainsby. You drove the Ford to Hibberton, dumped it and then got back to your Buick which you had garaged overnight at Maenton. Did you kill Mrs. Hainsby, Barstrood?"

"Well, I'm damned! exploded Barstrood. "The whole pyramid of nonsense built on that driving licence! I protest against being arrested and I shall bring a civil action if you detain me."

"It isn't built on the driving licence," said Kyle. "It's built on the envelope. You handed it to her in the envelope in which it had come to your flat. She took it in her left hand tore the envelope with her right hand and removed the licence. You took the licence out of her right hand. You didn't think to take the envelope out of her left hand. The doctor did that. You can see it if you like - only don't try to touch it."

Kyle opened the folder. Barstrood stared at a torn and much creased official envelope, rubber stamped '*Motor Vehicle Licensing Dept.,*' addressed to *Mrs. Hainsby, c/o C. Barstrood, Esq., 219 Windsor Gardens, London, W.8.,* and postmarked for the last post on Tuesday night.

"That was delivered at your house, Barstrood, by the first delivery on Wednesday morning," said Kyle. "Could anyone on earth but you have handed it to her?"

SPECIAL TREATMENT

MORRIS HERSHMAN

*American prisons have their
own problems, but rules are
international*

"I'VE CALLED you two up here," the warden said, "because I think we've all been given a big opportunity on account of—believe it or not—the fire that's hit the prison."

He tapped his fingers against the rear window of the sleek dark car that was taking him to the scene of the fire. Deputy-Warden Foy looked at him curiously in the driver's mirror. His colleague, Vedova, watched with a sullen grimace.

"I was on my way back to town just twenty minutes ago when I heard about the fire," the warden said, "and I couldn't help thinking that here was a chance to start from the ground up on a new prison and make some long overdue reforms, while we're at it."

"Maybe you could fill up the new jail with honest people," Vedova said humorlessly.

"In a new prison we might be able to cut out the 60-day tryout period when a recently arrived man sits by himself and doesn't work. That probably drives a man stir-mad, alone."

"We always handle 'em the same way." Vedova's breath whistled between his teeth. "The rules say we have to."

"Rules can be changed," the warden stated grimly. "Instead of four men in a cell, with two of them sleeping on the floor on mattresses because there isn't space or money for more beds, we'll try having two men in a cell in a new jail, and make sure that none of those men are queers."

"But the rules don't say nothing about that."

"This is a chance to make new rules, Vedova. And I think we'll cut out this business of waking men for a head count every thirty minutes at night. A good night's sleep never hurt anybody."

"Goddam!" Vedova smashed a blunt fist into a thick calloused palm. "We ain't running no —"

“. . . country club,” the warden finished for him, smiling wryly. “Any place where a man is kept in prison can’t be called a country club.”

As Vedova scowled, the warden glanced out the window at the familiar night-tinted countryside rushing past. “And then there’s the food. Maybe we can stop saving money on it, and give the men some decent meals, for a change. Maybe we can give the men a knife and fork, too, instead of making them eat everything with a spoon.”

Vedova spread his arms. “They’ll be living like kings, the whole pack of ’em.”

“About letters,” the warden went on smoothly. “We could drop the restriction of only three letters a month to the people on a special list. And we don’t have to automatically hold up letters ten days for processing. We can give the men newspapers every day and electric razors, if they want ’em.”

Foy asked, “How about the rule of silence? No talking after work.”

“We might be able to scrap that during a recreation period in the new prison. They can be watched more effectively.”

The back of Vedova’s neck grew pink. Foy asked, “Are those the only changes you figure on, Warden?”

“I was thinking about the guards, too.”

“What about ’em, Warden?”

“I want you boys to take some of them aside and tell them for once in their lives to be civil to the prisoners. They don’t have to shine the prisoners’ shoes; nothing like that. But I don’t want them smacking men around or daring a man to look crooked at them, and then reporting the man for solitary. In a new prison we might be able to shake up the guard system entirely.”

“You know what most of the guards are like, Warden,” Foy said smoothly. “A bunch of stupes. They can’t make any more money at different jobs, so they come here. You can’t ever get an idea through their heads.”

“Just the same,” the warden said, “we’ll try it now and see what happens.”

The car swerved into a vast courtyard. Apprehensively the warden looked out. The two wings were still standing, though one full side of each wing had been dyed coal black by the fire. The twenty-foot heap of powdery rubble between the wings was all that remained of the massive main building, complete with administrative offices and records.

The warden asked quietly, "Where are the men?"

"In their cells, sir."

"I mean, the men who were housed in the main building. The bulk of the prison population."

Vedova looked embarrassed. "Well, we didn't know what to do about 'em, Warden."

"How do you mean?"

"When the fire broke out, me and Foy figured it would be under control very soon. It got so bad, though, that the two of us had to run for our lives. The guards had to run, too. There was no other way to handle it. You know this building was like a bunch of phone booths, with no room to do anything."

"But all you had to do was pull some switches and open the cell doors. You know that."

"We couldn't." Vedova said definitely. "The rules say that the men are supposed to be in their cells at night."

"For heav -"

"We didn't know what they'd do if we let 'em out. We didn't know where they'd get to, what they might try."

"But now that you know they're dead, or that most of them have got to be, after this, you can be sure you did your job."

The warden's fury gave way to a despairing numbness. He couldn't have known that his two deputy wardens would be so rule-bound and rigid.

If he had known it, he would have tempered his zeal for a complete reform of the system in all its physical aspects as well as its psychological ones.

If he had known what would happen, he would not have tried to hasten a complete reform himself by setting the fire with a delayed action fuse before he had left the prison a few hours ago.

© Morris Hershman, 1965.

SOLUTION TO *EWMM* CROSSWORD (PAGE 34)

ACROSS. 1, Pa's-sword. 5, Double. 10, The Traitor's Gate. 11, Operate. 12, Parvenu. 13, Hotheads. 15, Ernie. 18, Queer. 20, Dedicate. 23, Arsenic. 25, Slipper. 26, Clue of the New Pin. 27, Relish. 28, Up in arms.

DOWN. 1, Patrol (car). 2, Stevedore. 3, War-path. 4, Raise. 6, Observe. 7, Blade. 8, Executed. 9, Composed. 14, Audacity. 16, Notepaper. 17, Squad car. 19, Ransoms. 21, Crime-an (War). 22, Prints. 24, Skull. 25, Sheep.

A SLIGHT CASE OF REALISM

MARTEN CUMBERLAND

AT THE corner of Greek Street and Cambridge Circus Mr. Geoffrey Luce stopped abruptly. His mild eyes gazed with considerable irritation at the sky. It was going to rain. It was, in fact, raining already. Large drops fell on the grey pavement, and left marks like dark, circular bruises.

Mr. Luce made an impatient, clucking sound with his tongue. He hated rain. Moreover, having just attended a shareholders' meeting, he wore a morning-coat; a silk hat, and white spats. These things were in peril. True, he carried a neatly-rolled umbrella, but he had no wish to unfurl it. A rolled umbrella presents well; it is carried like a cane; it is convenient. But an umbrella once unrolled loses all its dignity. When wet, it must be carried loosely flapping, unsightly and embarrassing. Most annoying!

Mr. Luce looked about him. It did not appear as though the rain would continue for long. Just a shower. There was no taxi in sight; by the time he found one he would be wet. The glossy, silk hat . . .!

He retraced his steps hurriedly. A minute ago he had passed some kind of Italian restaurant. It was rather dingy; ancient pastry decorated its windows; flies moved about, sluggishly. Scarcely the place he was accustomed to enter, but still, in an emergency . . .! He would be sheltered from the shower. No doubt they could give him a cup of tea. He had just bought a copy of *The Economic Monthly*, and he could read that article by Professor Max Elden on 'The Quantitative Theory of Money'.

Entering the little restaurant, he found it rather dark. It was four in the afternoon, but there was no sign of life inside. Mr. Luce sat down at a marble-topped table, and put his hat carefully on a chair beside him.

A mirror on the opposite wall threw back his reflection. It showed a thin-faced man of about forty-five, with scanty, sandy

hair, and protuberant, brown eyes magnified by pince-nez. His neck was long and scraggy. He looked rather like an elderly fowl.

He glanced round the shabby room with disfavour. There was a warm, heavy scent of cooking mingled with an odour of disinfectant. On the walls hung advertisements for vermouth and for *Asti spumante*. No one came near Mr. Luce. He neither saw, nor heard any sign of a waiter. For five minutes he waited, and only the heavy splash of rain kept him where he was. Then, greatly daring, he drew a coin from his pocket and rapped sharply on the marble top of the table.

He was answered at once. A voice, somewhere behind a curtain at the end of the room, shouted a response:

"Voila! Voila!"

A man came forward hurriedly. Mr. Luce's pale eyebrows rose as he observed that this individual wore no coat or waistcoat.

"You want?"

"Would you be good enough," said Mr. Luce, "to let me have a small pot of tea; not too strong. I should like some sliced lemon. No milk, or sugar."

"Yes," said the coatless one, and departed.

Mr. Luce sighed, and picked up *The Economic Monthly*. A light came into his eyes as he turned the pages. He took off his pince-nez and polished them with a white handkerchief.

'The Quantitative Theory of Money,' by Professor Max Elden.

He began to read:

The courage of the man who swallowed the first oyster is proverbial, but when Sieur Antoine Montchretien de Vatteville indited the first treatise on political economy, he little knew the storm of controversy, the pothor of dissension, the confusion and muddled thinking that he was about to launch upon an unhappy world. Had he done so . . .

Mr. Luce chuckled. He read on, appreciatively, only pausing when his tea came. He poured out the thin, tepid liquid, and added a slice of lemon. He was in the middle of the article when he became aware that a man had entered the restaurant, and was seated at the next table, barely a yard away.

Mr. Luce frowned. Suddenly he was irritatingly conscious of this stranger's presence. Despite determined efforts to concentrate upon the scholarly humour of Professor Elden, this intruder broke in ruthlessly upon Mr. Luce's thoughts. He could hear the man's heavy breathing. Out of the corner of one eye Mr. Luce

saw a bulky, hirsute, exotic figure. The odour of garlic was discernible.

Continuing to read, Mr. Luce made a faint, clucking sound with his tongue. The stranger clapped his hands loudly and stamped his feet. The coatless one came hurrying. There was an order given in a language which Mr. Luce recognised as Italian. The stranger received some queer, purple-red liquid in a long glass.

Grimly, Mr. Luce read on: *Prices, at present, are regulated by the amount of money-units in circulation at any given time as against the number of consumable commodity-units in the market. If an equation . . .*

He stopped reading. He was conscious that the stranger had shifted his position, and was now uncomfortably close. The smell of garlic became disconcerting. The man was going to speak!

Looking up, Mr. Luce met dark, passionate eyes fixed in a melancholy stare.

"Ave you?" whispered the stranger. "Ave you ever commit' murder?"

The Economic Monthly slipped from between Mr. Luce's fingers, and fell on the table.

"I . . . I beg your pardon?"

The stranger laughed. It was an explosive laugh that sounded in Mr. Luce's ears like a hooter.

"You 'ave not! I see that you 'ave not!"

Mr. Luce shuddered. Glancing at his persecutor he saw a swarthy, black-eyed individual, whose white teeth flashed beneath a ferocious moustache.

"No!" said the stranger, with conviction. "Never, you commit the murder; even if you see the woman you love in the arms of a man who pretend to be your best friend! Even though you love and 'ate at the same time; if all the blood in your body stir and burn because of this girl you . . ."

"Really!" said Mr. Luce. "I am afraid I . . ."

Again the stranger uttered his dreadful laugh. He leaned forward, closer.

"But, do you know," he whispered. "Do you know the greatest thrill this dreary life can give? It is to commit the murder!"

He made a spacious gesture of not over-clean hands. His tall glass went over with a crash. Purple-red liquid formed in a pool upon the marble table. The stranger brushed the pool carelessly

to the floor with one hand, and purple drops fell from his fingers on the floor.

"No matter," he said. "I do not want to drink, I want to talk. I *must* talk!"

Mr. Luce gazed at the red, dripping hand, and shivered.

"Yes! The greatest thrill belong to the man who commit the murder! You are a man of intelligence, no? You work with the 'ead - that, one sees at a glance. You 'ave imagination. You are a schoolmaster, no?"

"Really!" said Mr. Luce.

"A professor of college, perhaps?" said the stranger, and Mr. Luce was mollified. "You read learned books. Then you 'ave imagination. Figure to yourself the feelings, the exultation of one who commit the murder, and 'ave 'is revenge. He is a god! He walks these dull streets of London, and 'e carry the 'ead in the clouds! 'E want to cry aloud: 'I - I am greater than you; I dare more; I dare to kill a man, and a woman. Move from my path you poor bloodless ones, 'ere is a god among you'!"

The stranger came even closer. Despite himself Mr. Luce was fascinated. The other's dark eyes were upon him with the fixity of hypnosis. A cloud of garlic, no bigger than a man's hand but infinitely more potent, almost asphyxiated him.

"That is *the* thrill," said the stranger. . .

He leaned across the table. One of his hands rested firmly upon *The Economic Monthly*; with the other he took a grip upon the lapels of Mr. Luce's coat.

"I - I mean the murderer - 'e walk the streets, and 'e look at your big, red-faced policeman. The policeman move slowly; 'e pull up the pantaloons. Ha, ha! But, if the murderer say one leetle word, that policeman's face change the colour! 'E forget then to pull the pantaloons! The murderer whisper: 'I am the man you look for! I am the god who dare to take the life of a man and a woman this morning.' Ha, ha! It is droll, no?"

Mr. Luce was now looking about him wildly. He had no doubt that he was in the presence of a lunatic. At any moment the man might become dangerous. Mr. Luce felt terribly alone in this empty, gloomy, malodorous spot.

"Yes, it is droll!" cried his persecutor. "But it is indeed droll!"

Again, he gave his dreadful laugh, and the sound moved Mr. Luce to desperation. Somehow he weaned his lapels from the over-affectionate grasp of the madman.

"Please excuse me," he muttered, and rose to his feet.

As he did so golden hope shone before his eyes. The rain was over. The sun, coming from behind the clouds, flashed an aura of splendour along the already drying pavements of Greek Street.

Mr. Luce collected his silk hat, his umbrella, and *The Economic Monthly*. He placed a shilling on the table beneath his tea-cup. It was probably more than the price, but his one desire now was to escape.

"You go?" inquired the lunatic, reproachfully. "I bore you, then?"

"No, no," said Mr. Luce. "Most interesting; extremely interesting! Regret that I can't stay. Train to catch."

He almost ran from the restaurant. A passing taxi blessedly appeared.

"Baker Street Station," cried Mr. Luce, and fell back on the seat with a sigh of profound relief.



Forty minutes later he arrived at Rickmansworth. He walked slowly from the station to Acacia Avenue. As he approached his house – *Sans Souci* – he saw that his wife had already observed him from a front window. She herself opened the door.

"You're rather late, dear," she remarked.

"I was held up by the . . . er . . . rain, Mildred," said Mr. Luce. She lifted her face, and he kissed her cheek.

As he was changing his clothes upstairs he thought over his terrible adventure. He might easily have lost his life! The man was certainly mad!

Later, after dinner, he would tell Mildred all about it. He would not tell her at once because he was determined to finish that very interesting article by Professor Elden. He had been interrupted, and disturbed quite enough. Really, he hardly knew what the article was all about! He would have to start again from the beginning.

Washed, and clad in a tasteful suit of quiet grey, Mr. Luce descended to the drawing-room. With a little sigh, he sank into an armchair. His wife sat on the sofa reading an evening paper.

He opened *The Economic Monthly*. A light came into his eyes as he turned the pages. He took off his pince-nez and polished them with a white silk handkerchief. He began to read.

He was interrupted by a little cry from his wife.

"Really, Mildred!" he said.

"I'm sorry. I can't help it, dear," said Mrs. Luce. "There's been a most dreadful murder! Some Italians, in Soho. A man and a woman stabbed this morning. A neighbour, a Greek tailor saw a pool of blood trickling from beneath a door; he went for the police, and . . ."

"Really!"

Mr. Luce frowned at his wife, and at the newspaper she held in her hands.

"How many times must I tell you that I am not interested in these sordid and unpleasant affairs? The very sight of that news-sheet in this house offends me, Mildred! How much of your time do you give to perusing it? At a moderate estimate, an hour, or hour and a half *per diem*. Such time, spent in reading really informative works, would in a few years give you the rudiments of a not inconsiderable culture. But, instead, you waste your time in ill-written, ill-digested, highly sensational nonsense, on television . . ."

Again Mr. Luce was interrupted by a cry from his wife. She had risen to her feet, and her eyes were fixed upon *The Economic Monthly* in her husband's hands.

"Geoffrey!" she gasped.

"What is it?"

"Look! Look!"

Mrs. Luce turned back the cover of the economic journal. Upon its plain, buff surface was the clear imprint of a human thumb marked in a purplish red.

"Great Heavens!" gasped Mrs. Luce.

She held up her evening paper, and there, too, was the mark of a thumb photographed upon the front page.

"Geoffrey! This is what it says: 'The police have every reason to believe the crime is the outcome of a jealous quarrel and that the murderer may be one of the Italian colony residing in London. On a wall of the fatal room the murderer apparently left a clear imprint of his blood-stained thumb. We reproduce an exclusive photograph of this thumb-print, above'.

"You see, Geoffrey?" gasped Mrs. Luce. "That thumb-print on your book . . . It looks awfully like the one in the paper here. For a moment, I thought . . ."

Mr. Luce jumped to his feet.

"You thought I was the murderer, I suppose?" he said, with heavy sarcasm. "Really, this revelling in the reports of sensational crimes have, I believe, addled your brain! I am going down to the

club, where perhaps I can read in peace. I shall be back to dinner at precisely a quarter past eight."

He went from the room, and almost banged the door behind him.

Walking towards the Conservative Club, he crossed the common, and his eyes fell upon a wire refuse basket already half-filled with paper and orange-peel.

Mr. Geoffrey Luce looked about him, and noted that there was no one in his immediate neighbourhood. He slipped *The Economic Monthly* from under his arm, and pulled off the cover. This, he tore into pieces, and dropped into the basket amid the other rubbish.

Of course the man in Greek Street had been mad. Of course his wife's idea, that the two thumb-prints were alike, was absurd. One thing Mr. Luce was quite determined upon. On no consideration whatever would he become mixed up in anything sordid or unpleasant!

© Marten Cumberland, 1965.

CLASSIFIED

TUITION

LEARN WHILE YOU SLEEP. Details: The Sleep-Learning Association, 14, Belsize Crescent, London, N.W.3. SW1 6160.

TYPEWRITING SERVICES

HIGH-CLASS ELECTRIC TYPING OF MSS., &c., carefully and speedily executed - Lilian Dryland, 24, Canham Road, London, S.E.25. LIV. 3650.

TAPE-RECORDINGS (including Stenorette) transcribed. General typing. Clients visited by appointment. Scripts a speciality. - P. John, 67, Sedlescombe Road, London, S.W.6. FUL. 6093.

SERVICES

THE ASHLEY MARRIAGE BUREAU, 10, Corporation Street, Manchester, 4. Reliable service for success and happiness.

HEATHER JENNER MARRIAGE BUREAU. Established 1939. Personal interviews. 124, New Bond Street, London, W.1. MAYfair 9634. General advice bureau incorporated.

A Change of Style

PETER ARDOUIN

*A second tale from a new
writer – artless and deceptively
simple, but strangely lifelike*

I KNEW it was a good job, the best I'd ever done. Clean, neat, tidy, no loose ends left hanging out, and so different, too. This was one little job that ex-Chief Inspector Bloody Ames would not be able to parade his knowledge about.

Oh yes! I knew who he was talking about, when he said, 'A criminal's *modus operandi* is frequently as indicative of the man as if he had left his finger-prints in every room.'

I was inside when he said that; he'd put me there the day before. He knew I liked Georgian silver, and when all that stuff went missing from that sale-room, he didn't think twice, just went and got a search warrant.

Of course he didn't find it, but he found about twenty watches I'd got left over from my evening's work in that jewellery shop down the High Street. I knew where the silver went. If you will have ex-Con men as auctioneers what do you expect, but I wasn't going to tell that old fool.

When I came out I decided to change my style. I'd got a little money put by, so I was able to get my stamp card up to date, for nothing marks an ex-lag more than an empty card, and got myself a job as a delivery man to a big grocery warehouse.

I went and saw a mate of mine who in his day had been one of the best peter men in the game. Not one of those who, with a handful of jelly, turns every Saturday night into a November the Fifth in some bank or other, but one who, given half an hour's peace and quiet, could open, clean out and close some of the best makes of safes in the country. He's retired now, and ekes

out his pension by teaching some of his friends the art of the game.

After about six months this mate of mine told me I was as good as I would ever be and that it was time I went and got some practice. This was what I'd been waiting for, because I'd already got somewhere lined up.

In my job as van man I delivered every day to the canteen of a big self-service store, and I'd got pretty pally with one of the girls who worked there. It was from her I'd learned that the store only paid the takings into the bank every other day – Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Also on Thursday night not only were the day's takings in the safe, but the wages for the staff as well. She said she had got this from her old boy friend, who worked in the cashier's office.

I also found out that they'd got a new security manager who was trying to get this changed, so I didn't have all that time to play with. I made it my business to get a butcher's at this golden lined money box. That wasn't all that hard to arrange, a small, deliberate mistake in one of my delivery chits soon had me in the cashier's office, explaining and confusing a disinterested clerk, while I glanced at one of the biggest safes I'd ever seen. If security went with size I wouldn't have stood a chance, but the lock on the door wouldn't have kept a hungry dog away from a juicy bone. I left the office with my soul doing joyful cartwheels. Even the burglar alarms were so ancient that a child could have walked in without rousing a mouse, let alone all the coppers in the area.



The following Thursday night saw me going over the top of the double padlocked gate. I wasn't worried about the nightwatchman; he suffered with his feet during cold weather, and as there was a bit of a nip in the air, I knew he'd be nursing them in front of his stove. I wasn't expecting him to hear me, either, dressed as I was in woollen overalls and rubber shoes. You see, I read all the best spy stories, and I had all the equipment, even latex gloves covered with linen outers, to protect them till I needed them.

I decided that I'd go for the office from inside of the store, for although there were some windows from the yard, I've known sash cords go at the most inconvenient time, usually when I'm half-way through. Anyway, the side door into the store only had a simple mortice lock, as had the office door.

It took me ten minutes to get inside and started on the safe. After I'd got a rough idea as to the order of the combination, I had the tumblers clicking into place like a squad of well drilled marines, falling in on parade.

When I opened the door my heart skipped a beat, because all I could see on the shelves were books, and somehow during all the months of planning I'd always imagined that the Green stuff would be stacked up in front of me. I found it, of course, in the end, in one of the drawers at the bottom of the safe. It was done up in bundles of a hundred – three bundles of fives, six of ones and I forget how many of ten shillings, most of them pretty dirty. Still, I wasn't being fussy that night. I picked them all up and stuck them away in the various pockets under my overalls.

I had a quick look round to make sure I hadn't missed anything, but the only other cash around was copper and silver in bags; you only take that sort of stuff if you have a wheel-barrow handy. All I had to do was clear up shut the safe door and leave.

I didn't lock any doors behind me, not because I had any clever reason but because I just wanted to get the hell out of the place – reaction, I suppose. A few moments later I was looking carefully over the top of the gate. I didn't want to do what a mate of mine did once, and drop on the shoulders of a rozzer having a crafty fag in the dark.

Still, my luck really was with me that night. All I saw on my way home were two courting couples, who were much too busy to notice me scurrying in the shadows.



It wasn't till the next morning that the cards started to fall the wrong way up. Normally I'm a pretty early riser. I got into the habit in stir, and never got out of it. But that morning what with a late night and all the excitement, I'd decided to have a lay in. It must have been about ten o'clock when there was a knock on the door, and I heard my landlady outside say to someone, "I know he's in; he told me he wasn't going to work this morning. I haven't seen him go out."

Well, I had to get up and let who ever it was in. I live by myself; my Missus was one of those who didn't wait.

When I saw who it was I wished I'd stayed in bed. When you're in my trade you can always spot a busy. He went through the usual little speech as he walked in, went straight over to the

bed, pulled back the pillow and there underneath was the night's takings.

One look at the door showed me it was pointless to try and run for it. Standing in the doorway was a big lump of fat and bone dressed in blue, and there wasn't room to get a sheet of newspaper out, let alone me.

I didn't say anything then, or later, down at the station when they charged me. I wanted to find out how they'd rumbled before I made any statements. One of the things I know is, if you're going to tell lies make sure they're good ones. The best way to tell good lies is to give them a lot of thought beforehand.

To start with, though, I had to discover where I'd slipped up. I knew nobody could have grassed on me because I always work alone; nobody even knew I was going to do a job that night. I hadn't left any prints; I'd even remembered to check my gloves, to make sure they weren't torn before I'd left the cashier's office. Many a blokes have gone down for a stretch because the figure or palm of the glove has been torn, and there have been dabs on everything.

The job itself wasn't like anything else I'd ever done. Before, I've always gone for small jewellery shops and antique shops, and always in through a window, never a door.

No matter how hard I thought, I just could not see where I'd gone wrong; at no time had I ever been seen near the place by any copper. That was one of the reasons why I'd stayed at home that Friday morning, because I knew I'd got to make a delivery to the store that morning, and the place would have been lousy with coppers. With a record like mine, somebody would have been bound to recognize me, which would have meant explanations, and I'd have lost my job as a van driver. This was the last thing I wanted to happen just yet; it gave me a chance to case all the shops and offices I delivered to, getting of jobs lined up for the future.

I still hadn't found the answer the next morning when they took me up before the local magistrates. Of course they remanded me in custody till the next Quarter Sessions. But I did find out how they'd got on to me.

I'd been spotted the very first day I'd made a delivery at the store, and they had merely been waiting to see what I was at.

Who spotted me? The new Security Manager, Ex-Chief Inspector, Mr. Bloody Ames.

THREE MINUTE THRILLER

DANGER — DEATH AT WORK

Roger Garnett

A contest with a difference. EWMM wants you to solve a simple whodunit, but first read the story . . .

SERGEANT HATCHER had never been to a fun fair before; he found it both fascinating and unusual.

The place, Laker's Mammoth Amusement Centre, was in an old block of buildings just off the Strand, and therefore practically on Scotland Yard's doorstep.

John Laker, the owner, had at one time been an able journalist, but he had taken to drink and his writing powers died. From an uncle he inherited the fun fair and ran it successfully, though he betrayed an extraordinary talent for making enemies.

When he was murdered there were six prime suspects, or, at least, people with strong motives. They were the keeper of the rifle range, who had lost his charter the previous day; a sacked under-manager; Dakers, the knife-thrower, fined heavily for being drunk on the job; Guerdain, the organization's rat-catcher (an essential job in those old buildings), warned of the sack for being insolent; Kismah, operator of a flea circus, unfairly sacked; and Fred Laker, a wild waster who quarrelled continually with his father.

Laker had been found stabbed in his office with a long knife that had been left in the wound. There were no witnesses; the crime had happened at a very busy part of the evening when customers and staff were in continual movement, and detection seemed hopeless. Laker's blotter, Hatcher found, was marked with doodles and aimless scribbings, one or two enclosed in oblongs as if they were worth remembering.

Hatcher read them dubiously. One said 'it wasn't like the jabberwock' and the other, 'what we captured we threw away and what we could not catch we kept' which, when he came to think of it, were as nonsensical as the whole atmosphere of the case.

He grilled the suspects . . . and in the end took the problem back to Superintendent Black, that wise old C.I.D. chief who

had solved more mysteries by never leaving his desk than most of his young men in the field.

"That all, Sergeant?" He nodded contentedly, leaned back, and told Hatcher the name of the murderer.

Within an hour the arrest had been made, and the killer had confessed.

You have all the clues in the narrative . . . and one red herring. It is up to you to send in (a) the identity of the murderer and (b) the reason for your choice. Just a few words will do it, and please address your entry to:

Three Minute Thriller No. 1, 4 Bradmore Road, OXFORD.

All entries must be received on or before March 30, 1965. The first correct solution opened will be rewarded with two guineas. The winner's answer will appear in an early issue of E.W.M.M.

E W M M

April issue includes

Edgar Wallace

Marten Cumberland and
'Saturnin Dax'

Charles Franklin

Death and the
Golden West

and many other top-level stories

period piece

THE BLACK FERRY

JOHN GALT

EWMM's second gem in this unusual series. It is written with immense vigour, and all the melodramatic conventions of its eighteenth-century creation. Inextricably involved with dreams and destiny, this is the story of the world's first dream detective

I WAS then returning from my first session at college. The weather had for some time before been uncommonly wet, every brook and stream was swollen far beyond its banks, the meadows were flooded, and the river itself was increased to a raging Hellespont, insomuch that the ferry was only practicable for an hour before and after high tide.

The day was showery and stormy, by which I was detained at the inn until late in the afternoon, so that it was dark before I reached the ferry-house, and the tide did not serve for safe crossing until midnight. I was therefore obliged to sit by the fire and wait the time, a circumstance which gave me some uneasiness, for the ferryman was old and infirm, and Dick his son, who usually attended the boat during the night, happened to be then absent, the day having been such that it was not expected any travellers would seek to pass over that night.

The presence of Dick was not, however, absolutely necessary, for the boat swung from side to side by a rope anchored in the middle of the stream, and, on account of the strong current, another rope had been stretched across by which passengers could draw themselves over without assistance, an easy task to those who had the sleight of it, but it was not so to me, who still wore my arm in a sling.

While sitting at the fireside conversing with the ferryman and

his wife, a smart, good-looking country lad, with a recruit's cockade in his hat, came in, accompanied by a young woman who was far advanced in pregnancy. They were told the state of the ferry, and that unless the recruit undertook to conduct the boat himself, they must wait the return of Dick.

They had been only that day married, and were on their way to join a detachment of the regiment in which Ralph Nocton, as the recruit was called, had that evening enlisted, the parish officers having obliged him to marry the girl. Whatever might have been their former love and intimacy, they were not many minutes in the house when he became sullen and morose towards her; nor was she more amiable towards him. He said little, but he often looked at her with an indignant eye, as she reproached him for having so rashly enlisted, to abandon her and his unborn baby, assuring him that she would never part from him while life and power lasted.

Though it could not be denied that she possessed both beauty and an attractive person, there was yet a silly vixen humour about her ill calculated to conciliate. I did not therefore wonder to hear that Nocton had married her with reluctance; I only regretted that the parish officers were so inaccessible to commiseration, and so void of conscience as to be guilty of rendering the poor fellow miserable for life to avert the hazard of the child becoming a burden on the parish.

The ferryman and his wife endeavoured to reconcile them to their lot; and the recruit, who appeared to be naturally reckless and generous, seemed willing to be appeased; but his weak companion was capricious and pettish. On one occasion, when a sudden shower beat hard against the window, she cried out, with little regard to decorum, that she would go no farther that night.

"You may do as you please, Mary Blake," said Nocton, "but go I must, for the detachment marches tomorrow morning. It was only to give you time to prepare to come with me that the Captain consented to let me remain so late in the town."

She, however, only remonstrated bitterly at his cruelty in forcing her to travel, in her condition, and in such weather. Nocton refused to listen to her, but told her somewhat doggedly, more so than was consistent with the habitual cheerful cast of his physiognomy, "that although he had already been ruined by her, he trusted she had not yet the power to make him a deserter."

He then went out, and remained some time alone. When he returned, his appearance was surprisingly changed; his face was

of an ashy paleness; his eyes bright, febrile, and eager, and his lip quivered as he said:

"Come, Mary, I can wait no longer; the boat is ready, the river is not so wild, and the rain is over."

In vain she protested; he was firm; and she had no option but either to go or to be left behind. The old ferryman accompanied them to the boat, saw them embark, and gave the recruit some instruction how to manage the ropes, as it was still rather early in the tide. On returning into the house, he remarked facetiously to his wife:

"I can never see why young men should be always blamed, and all pity reserved for the damsels."

At this moment a rattling shower of rain and hail burst like a platoon of small shot on the window, and a flash of vivid lightning was followed by one of the most tremendous peals of thunder I have ever heard.

"Hark!" cried the old woman startling, "was not that a shriek?" We listened, but the cry was not repeated; we rushed to the door, but no other sound was heard than the raging of the river, and the roar of the sea-waves breaking on the bar.



Dick soon after came home, and the boat having swung back to her station, I embarked with him, and reached the opposite inn, where I soon went to bed. Scarcely had I laid my head on the pillow when a sudden inexplicable terror fell upon me; I shook with an unknown horror; I was, as it were, conscious that some invisible being was hovering beside me, and could hardly muster fortitude enough to refrain from rousing the house. At last I fell asleep; it was perturbed and unsound; strange dreams and vague fears scared me awake, and in them were dreadful images of a soldier murdering a female, and open graves, and gibbet-irons swinging in the wind. My remembrance has no parallel to such another night.

In the morning the cloud on my spirit was gone, and I rose at my accustomed hour, and cheerily resumed my journey. It was a bright morning, all things were glittering and fresh in the rising sun, the recruit and his damsel were entirely forgotten, and I thought no more of them.

But when the night returned next year, I was seized with an unaccountable dejection; it weighed me down; I tried to shake it off, but was unable; the mind was diseased, and could no more by

resolution shake off its discomfort, than the body by activity can expel a fever. I retired to my bed greatly depressed, but nevertheless I fell asleep. At midnight, however, I was summoned to awake by a hideous and undefinable terror; it was the same vague consciousness of some invisible visitor being near that I had once before experienced, as I have described, and I again recollected Nocton and Mary Blake in the same instant; I saw – for I cannot now believe that it was less than apparitional – the unhappy pair reproaching one another.

As I looked, questioning the integrity of my sight, the wretched bride turned round and looked at me. How shall I express my horror, when, for the ruddy beauty which she once possessed, I beheld the charnel visage of a skull; I started up and cried aloud with such alarming vehemence, that the whole inmates of the house, with lights in their hands, were instantly in the room – shame would not let me tell what I had seen, and, endeavouring to laugh, I accused the nightmare of the disturbance.

This happened while I was at a watering-place on the west coast. I was living in a boarding-house with several strangers; among them was a tall pale German gentleman, of a grave impressive physiognomy. He was the most intelligent and shrewdest observer I have ever met with, and he had to a singular degree the gift of a discerning spirit. In the morning when we rose from the breakfast-table, he took me by the arm, and led me out upon the lawn in front of the house, and when we were at some distance from the rest of the company, said:

“Excuse me, sir, for I must ask an impertinent question. Was it indeed the dream of the nightmare that alarmed you last night?”

“I have no objection to answer you freely; but tell me first, why you ask such a question?”

“It is but reasonable. I had a friend who was a painter; none ever possessed an imagination which discerned better how nature in her mysteries should appear. One of his pictures was the scene of Brutus when his evil genius summoned him to Philippi, and, strange to tell, you bear some resemblance to the painted Brutus. When, with the others, I broke into your room last night, you looked so like the Brutus in his picture, that I could have sworn you were amazed with the vision of a ghost.”

I related to him what I have done to you.

“It is wonderful,” said he; “what inconceivable sympathy hath linked you to the fate of these unhappy persons. There is some-

thing more in this renewed visitation than the phantasma of a dream."

The remark smote me with an uncomfortable sensation of dread, and for a short time my flesh crawled as it were upon my bones. But the impression soon wore off, and was again entirely forgotten.

When the anniversary again returned, I was seized with the same heaviness and objectless horror of mind; it hung upon me with bodings and auguries until I went to bed, and then after my first sleep I was a third time roused by another fit of the same inscrutable panic. On this occasion, however, the vision was different. I beheld only Nocton, pale and wounded, stretched on a bed, and on the coverlet lay a pair of new epaulettes, as if just unfolded from a paper.



For seven years I was thus annually afflicted. The vision in each was different, but I saw no more of Mary Blake. On the fourth occasion, I beheld Nocton sitting in the uniform of an aide-de-camp at a table, with the customary tokens of conviviality before him; it was only part of a scene, such as one beholds in a mirror.

On the fifth occasion, he appeared to be ascending, sword in hand, the rampart of a battery; the sun was setting behind him, and the shadows and forms of a strange land, with the domes and pagodas of an oriental country, lay in wide extent around: it was a picture, but far more vivid than painting can exhibit.

On the sixth time, he appeared again stretched upon a couch; his complexion was sullen, not from wounds, but disease, and there appeared at his bedside the figure of a general officer, with a star on his breast, with whose conversation he appeared pleased, though languid.

But on the seventh and last occasion on which the horrors of the visions were repeated, I saw him on horseback in a field of battle; and while I looked at him, he was struck on the face by a sabre, and the blood flowed down upon his regimentals.



Years passed after this, during which I had none of these dismal exhibitions. My mind and memory resumed their healthful tone. I recollected, without these intervening years of oblivion, Nocton and Mary Blake, occasionally, as one thinks of things past, and I told my friends of the curious periodical returns of the

visitations to me as remarkable metaphysical phenomena. By an odd coincidence, it so happened that my German friend was always present when I related my dreams. He in the intervals sometimes spoke to me of them, but my answers were vague, for my reminiscences were imperfect. It was not so with him. All I told he distinctly recorded and preserved in a book wherein he wrote down the minutest thing that I had witnessed in my visions. I do not mention his name, because he is a modest and retiring man, in bad health, and who has long sequestered himself from company. His rank, however, is so distinguished, that his name could not be stated without the hazard of exposing him to impertinent curiosity. But to proceed.

Exactly fourteen years – twice seven it was – I remember well, because for the first seven I had been haunted as I have described, and for the other seven I had been placed in my living. At the end of that period of fourteen years, my German friend paid me a visit here. He came in the forenoon, and we spent an agreeable day together, for he was a man of much recondite knowledge. I have seen none so wonderfully possessed of all sort of occult learning.

He was an astrologer of the true kind, for in him it was not a pretence but a science; he scorned horoscopes and fortune-tellers with the just derision of a philosopher, but he had a beautiful conception of the reciprocal dependencies of nature. He affected not to penetrate to causes, but he spoke of effects with a luminous and religious eloquence. He described to me how the tides followed the phases of the moon; but he denied the Newtonian notion that they were caused by the procession of the lunar changes. He explained to me that when the sun entered Aries, and the other signs of the zodiac, how his progression could be traced on this earth by the development of plants and flowers, and the passions, diseases, and affections of animals and man; but that the stars were more than the celestial signs of these terrestrial phenomena he ridiculed as the conceptions of the insane theory.

His learning in the curious art of alchemy was equally sublime. He laughed at the fancy of an immortal elixir, and his notion of the mythology of the philosopher's stone was the very essence and spirituality of ethics. The elixir of immortality he described to me as an allegory, which, from its component parts, emblems of talents and virtues, only showed that perseverance, industry, goodwill, and gift from God, were the requisite ingredients necessary to attain renown.

His knowledge of the philosopher's stone was still more

beautiful. He referred to the writings of the Rosicrucians, whose secrets were couched in artificial symbols, to prove that the sages of that sect were not the fools that the lesser wise of later days would represent them. The self-denial, the patience, the humility, the trusting in God, the treasuring of time by lamp and calculation which the venerable alchemists recommended, he used to say, were only the elements which constitute the conduct of the youth that would attain to riches and honour; and these different stages which are illuminated in the alchemical volumes as descriptive of stages in the process of making the stone, were but hieroglyphical devices to explain the effects of well-applied human virtue and industry.

To me it was amazing to what clear simplicity he reduced all things, and on what a variety of subjects his bright and splendid fancy threw a fair and affecting light. All those demi-sciences – physiognomy – palmistry – scaleology, etc., even magic and witchcraft, obtained from his interpretations a philosophical credibility.

In disquisitions on these subjects we spent the anniversary. He had by then enlarged the periphery of my comprehension; he had added to my knowledge, and inspired me with a profounder respect for himself.

He was an accomplished musician, in the remotest, if I may use the expression, depths of the art. His performance on the piano-forte was simple, heavy, and seemingly the labour of an unpractised hand, but his expression was beyond all epithet exquisite and solemn; his airs were grave, devotional, and pathetic, consisting of the simplest harmonic combinations; but they were wonderful; every note was a portion of an invocation; every melody the voice of a passion or a feeling supplied with elocution.



We had spent the day in the fields, where he illustrated his astrological opinions by appeals to plants, and leaves, and flowers, and other attributes of the season, with such delightful perspicuity that no time can efface from the registers of my memory the substance of his discourses. In the evening he delighted me with his miraculous music, and, as the night advanced, I was almost persuaded that he was one of those extraordinary men who are said sometimes to acquire communion with spirits and dominion over demons.

Just as we were about to sit down to our frugal supper, literally or philosophically so, as if it had been served for Zeno himself,

Dick, the son of the old ferryman, who by this time was some years dead, came to the door, and requested to speak with me in private. Of course I obeyed, when he informed me that he had brought across the ferry that night a gentleman officer, from a far country, who was in bad health, and whom he could not accommodate properly in the ferry-house.

"The inn," said Dick, "is too far off, for he is lame, and has an open wound in the thigh. I have therefore ventured to bring him here, sure that you will be glad to give him a bed for the night. His servant tells me that he was esteemed the bravest officer in all the service in the Mysore of India."

It was impossible to resist this appeal. I went to the door where the gentleman was waiting, and with true-heartedness expressed how great my satisfaction would be if my house could afford him any comfort.

I took him in with me to the room where my German friend was sitting. I was much pleased with the gentleness and unaffected simplicity of his manners.

He was a handsome middle-aged man – his person was robust and well formed – his features had been originally handsome, but they were disfigured by a scar, which had materially changed their symmetry. His conversation was not distinguished by any remarkable intelligence, but after the high intellectual excitement which I had enjoyed all day with my philosophical companion, it was agreeable and gentlemanly.

Several times during supper, something came across my mind as if I had seen him before, but I could neither recollect when nor where; and I observed that more than once he looked at me as if under the influence of some research in his memory. At last, I observed that his eyes were dimmed with tears, which assured me that he then recollected me. But I considered it a duty of hospitality not to inquire aught concerning him more than he was pleased to tell himself.

In the meantime, my German friend, I perceived, was watching us both, but suddenly he ceased to be interested, and appeared absorbed in thought, while good manners required me to make some efforts to entertain my guest. This led on to some inquiry concerning the scene of his services, and he told us that he had been many years in India.

"On this day eight years ago," said he, "I was in the battle of Borupknow, where I received the wound which has so disfigured me in the face."

At that moment I accidentally threw my eyes upon my German friend – the look which he gave me in answer, caused me to shudder from head to foot, and I began to ruminat of Nocton the recruit, and Mary Blake, while my friend continued the conversation in a light desultory manner, as it would have seemed to any stranger, but to me it was awful and oracular. He spoke to the stranger on all manner of topics, but ever and anon he brought him back, as if without design, to speak of the accidents of fortune which had befallen him on the anniversary of that day, giving it as a reason for his curious remarks, that most men observed anniversaries, time and experience having taught them to notice, that there were curious coincidences with respect to times, and places, and individuals – things, which of themselves form part of the great demonstration of the wisdom and skill displayed in the construction, not only of the mechanical, but the mortal world, showing that each was a portion of one and the same thing.

“I have been,” said he to the stranger, “an observer and recorder of such things. I have my book of registration here in this house; I will fetch it from my bed-chamber, and we shall see in what other things, as far as your fortunes have been concerned, how it corresponds with the accidents of your life on this anniversary.”

I observed that the stranger paled a little at this proposal, and said, with an affectation of carelessness while he was evidently disturbed, that he would see it in the morning. But the philosopher was too intent upon his purpose to forbear. I know not what came upon me, but I urged him to bring the book. This visibly disconcerted the stranger still more, and his emotion became, as it were, a motive which induced me, in a peremptory manner, to require the production of the book, for I felt that strange horror, so often experienced, returning upon me; and was constrained, by an irresistible impulse, to seek an explanation of the circumstances by which I had for so many years suffered such an eclipse of mind.



The stranger seeing how intent both of us were, desisted from his wish to procrastinate the curious disclosure which my friend said he could make; but it was evident he was not at ease. Indeed he was so much the reverse, that when the German went for his book, he again proposed to retire, and only consented to abide at

my jocular entreaty, until he should learn what his future fortunes were to be, by the truth of what would be told him of the past.

My friend soon returned with the book. It was a remarkable volume, covered with vellum, shut with three brazen clasps, secured by a lock of curious construction. Altogether it was a strange, antique, and necromantic-looking volume. The corner was studded with knobs of brass, with a small mirror in the centre, round which were inscribed in Teutonic characters, words to the effect, 'I WILL SHOW THEE THYSELF.' Before unlocking the clasp, my friend gave the book to the stranger, explained some of the emblematic devices which adorned the cover, and particularly the words of the motto that surrounded the little mirror.

Whether it was from design, or that the symbols required it, the explanations of my friend were mystical and abstruse; and I could see that they produced an effect on the stranger, so strong that it was evident he could with difficulty maintain his self-possession. The colour entirely faded from his countenance; he became wan and cadaverous, and his hand shook violently as he returned the volume to the philosopher, who, on receiving it back, said:

"There are things in this volume which may not be revealed to every eye, yet to those who may not discover to what they relate, they will seem trivial notations."

He then applied the key to the lock, and unclosed the volume. My stranger guest began to breathe hard and audibly. The German turned over the vellum leaves searchingly and carefully. At last he found his record and description of my last vision, which he read aloud. It was not only minute in the main circumstances in which I had seen Nocton, but it contained an account of many things, the still life, as it is called, of the picture, which I had forgotten, and among other particulars a picturesque account of the old General whom I saw standing at the bedside.

"By all that's holy," cried the stranger, "it is old Crippington himself – the queue of his hair was, as you say, always crooked, owing to a habit he had of pulling it when vexed – where could you find the description of all this?"

I was petrified; I sat motionless as a statue, but a fearful vibration thrilled through my whole frame.

My friend looked back in his book, and found the description of my sixth vision. It contained the particulars of the crisis of battle in which, as the stranger described, he had received the wound in his face. It affected him less than the other, but still the effect upon him was impressive.

The record of the fifth vision produced a more visible alarm. The description was vivid to an extreme degree – the appearance of Nocton, sword in hand, on the rampart – the animation of the assault, and the gorgeous landscape of domes and pagodas, was limned with words as vividly as a painter could have made the scene. The stranger seemed to forget his anxiety, and was delighted with the reminiscences which the description recalled.

But when the record of the fourth vision was read, wherein Nocton was described as sitting in the regimentals of an aide-de-camp, at a convivial table, he exclaimed, as if unconscious of his words:

“It was on that night I had first the honour of dining with the German general.”

The inexorable philosopher proceeded, and read what I had told him of Nocton, stretched pale and wounded on a bed, with new epaulettes spread on the coverlet, as if just unfolded from a paper. The stranger started from his seat, and cried with a hollow and fearful voice:

“This is the book of life.”

The German turned over to the second vision, which he read slowly and mournfully, especially the description of my own feelings, when I beheld the charnel visage of Mary Blake. The stranger, who had risen from his seat, and was panting with horror, cried out with a shrill howl, as it were:

“On that night as I was sitting in my tent, methought her spirit came and reproached me.”

I could not speak, but my German friend rose from his seat, and holding the volume in his left hand, touched it with his right, and looking sternly at the stranger, said:

“In this volume, and in your own conscience, are the evidences which prove that you are Ralph Nocton, and that on this night, twice seven years ago, you murdered Mary Blake.”

The miserable stranger lost all self-command, and cried in consternation:

“It is true, the waters raged; the rain and the hail came; she bitterly upbraided me; I flung her from the boat; the lightning flashed, and the thunder – Oh! it was not so dreadful as her drowning execrations.”

Before any answer could be given to this confession, he staggered from the spot, and almost in the same instant fell dead upon the floor.

Background to Crime Readers

W. E. REYNOLDS

A personal investigation by an aficionado which EWMM offers for your interest, a check on the tastes of a small cross-section of the crime-reading public

MOST RETIRED men take up a hobby of some sort, and as a confirmed reader of whodunits, it has been my hobby to travel round and investigate what my fellow aficionados read.

People were most generous in aiding me – strangers of whom I asked questions, librarians in many towns, people connected with booksellers and libraries – they were all most helpful and enabled me to compile a sort of one-man opinion poll.

One thing did emerge, which will be obvious: The strength of the crime-reading habit is both deep and wide. For every person who said: “I never read the stuff,” I came across four or more who certainly did. It would seem that the whodunit is easily the top in popularity.

Figures were not my business, but trends emerged which proved to be fascinating. Regional tastes I did not touch because the survey was not widely enough planned for such a thing, but there seemed no real difference in the whodunit’s popularity in town or country.

A great many opinions seemed to be against the blood-bath and gory murder school; sex and sadism were deplored, but these opinions came from the general, ‘hard-cover’ readers as opposed to those who preferred a diet of the more lurid of the smaller paper-back novels. Eroticism and alcoholic excess did not seem to be popular, and Mickey Spillane, once the god of those who prefer the rough-and-tough thriller, seemed unknown to a great many readers.

The true crime novel, the reasonably conventional, true-to-form whodunit is widely liked. Rather than any decline setting in (which, like the drama, is frequently prophesied as coming), the taste continues to grow – indirectly, the James Bond cult is a

segment of this. But, from the aficionado's point of view, the Bond cult is suspect and, to a large extent, bogus since it has overwhelmed some excellent books with shouts of acclaim that are fashionable rather than genuine.

Once people begin reading crime novels, they seldom give up the habit. And no class of book is accepted by quite such a wide public, one that truly ranges from the great intellectuals to the near illiterate. Also, it is noticeable that crime fans pass their taste on to their children – in answer to questions almost every other person under thirty admitted getting 'the habit' from parents or relatives and their recommendations.

One thing became clear, and is particularly interesting: on every side it seemed that crime fans either began to read a whodunit that was fancied, but either before progressing (or, as was often the case, as Lesson One) the reader turned to Edgar Wallace.

Reading Wallace, either singly or in dozens, worked a peculiar metamorphosis on the reader, bringing him not only into the magic circle but in some fashion stamping him as an initiate. Most people spoke of Wallace's books lightly, sometimes patronisingly, sometimes casually, but every opinion was to the effect that the book 'could not' be put down until it was finished, and that whatever the faults the story was invariably first-rate – the magic, even so many years after his death, remained as potent as ever. Those who had not read Edgar Wallace were almost to be counted on one hand; not once have I met a person, *anywhere*, who did not know his name and used it as a synonym for all crime fiction.

Women readers showed a curious aversion for their own sex in crime fiction; Christie, Eberhart, and Marsh, were the exceptions. Allingham is the writer for the educated woman as is Sayers. Christie's 'Miss Marple' is liked more than 'Mrs. Bradley' by women readers, men seem to prefer Porot. Morland's 'Mrs. Pym' is a favourite with older women readers (a form of sublimation, since Mrs. Pym is vigorous in middle-age and dominates men?)

Michael Gilbert is a favourite of the intellectual male reader, as is Edmund Crispin. Julian Symons has a following among business men while Simenon cuts across all lines and is a general favourite.

One of the curious little facts which arose was the manner in which readers went to library shelves. There was a first movement

(if no particular book was sought) for the section of books covering authors whose surnames begin with 'C' – Christie, Creasey, Chandler, and such were often taken out without even opening the covers; 'G', 'M', 'A' and 'R' followed in that order. Those who wanted a particular book often failed to take anything else if they did not get what they originally asked for.

Short stories in book form seemed to have a reasonably large following but (I personally found), readers evinced an almost pathological hatred for authors or publishers who failed to ensure that their books were clearly marked as 'short stories' – readers who took such books in the belief they were full length novels made their resentment plain. Books which were shown to be short stories were readily taken out from libraries.

The trend, if anything, showed a gradual turn to the more dramatic, or even melo-dramatic, crime story. The examine-every-paving-stone school appears to be losing ground in favour of good plots, more action, strong characterisation and more humour.

Pure sensation does not appear to be very popular, but excitement in the story or its telling are appreciated.

All in all, this single survey revealed the enormous strength of the crime story and its hold on every class. The total of readers is certainly growing rapidly. The new gods are popular, but the faithful devotion to the old-timers is impressive – in other fields of fiction characters grow up, age, and die, but crime aficionados take it in their stride that a favourite detective has not altered a hair in perhaps twenty years!

© W. E. Reynolds, 1965.

★★★★ COMING . . .

a new short story by

MARGERY ALLINGHAM



THE WRONG FIRE

NIGEL MORLAND

*The famous Sidney Fox matricide case
is recalled to mind as the parallel
to this fascinating murder and
trial set in South Africa*

THE INTEMPERATE habits of her son must have been the paramount thought of Mrs. Barbara Gertruida Hauptfleisch one January afternoon, when she was in the backyard of her house, occupied with the family wash.

Her home was a small white building in no way different from its neighbours standing on the fringe of Richmond, a little town inhabited by some thousand people, mainly of Boer stock.

It was an attractive and charming place in the highlands of South Africa's Cape Province. Cape Town was some 700 miles to the south-east while a handful of miles to the north was Table Mountain – namesake of Cape Town's famous landmark – and beyond it the big railway junction town of De Aar.

Mrs. Hauptfleisch, a hard-working maternity and general nurse, stared across the open country, blue eyes shaded from the blazing African sun by the wide brim of her hat. She looked a typical countrywoman – sturdy, white-haired, and carrying her 67 years with all the ease of a hard and healthy life.

The church clock down the road struck two just as Mrs. Christina Botes, from the next door house, came into her own back garden. The women exchanged the light gossip of those known to each other for years. Mrs. Hauptfleisch said she was going in for her afternoon sleep, a rule rather than an exception for the old of rural Richmond.

Mrs. Botes watched her friend go, unaware she was seeing

her in life for the last time. She shook a commiserating head, troubled at her neighbour's difficulties.

The chief of these was her son and only child, Petrus Stephanus Francois Hauptfleisch. He worried not only Mrs. Botes and the nearby people, but the town's community-conscious burghers as well.

A good-looking man in his early forties, he had served in World War I. His record had been excellent during the four years he had spent at the European theatre, though he had done nothing spectacular but had acquitted himself well.



On his return to Richmond in 1919 he had brought with him a wife and child, and a legacy of unsettlement caused by the Great War which resulted in him spending far too much time in the town's bars. This became so bad that the wife and child, never more than shadowy figures in the story, left him for good.

This did nothing to lessen his hunger for liquor. He gave up farming, in which he was expert, and worked for a local butcher until two saloon companions persuaded him to set up as a slaughterer for the market; he did reasonably well at it.

But because he disliked living on his own, he moved into his mother's home and began to make her life miserable. This she endured meekly with the patience of a generation to whom menfolk were rulers, but when he was in drink he often became dangerous and violent. His mother became so frightened that she actually feared for her safety, fleeing for protection to the Botes' house.

The burghers grew tired of Hauptfleisch and his drunken behaviour. They ordered his name to be put on the black-list – this meant no retailer in Richmond could sell alcohol to him and, so strong was local feeling in general, nobody would even give him a secret drink.

With the community's wrath on his head the dark, handsome Hauptfleisch seemed to take it easy for a time. His unaccustomed if most welcome sobriety made such a good general impression over quite a long period that it was felt he had been punished enough. His name was temporarily removed from the black-list in the hope he would behave in the future. It was a forlorn hope indeed.

Three days later, on the dark, windy night of December 11,

1924, he returned home roaring drunk. He frightened his always affectionate but timorous mother to such an extent that she hurried to the safety of a neighbouring house where she told its owner, Peter Theron, her son not only threatened to stone her but had hurled heavy granite chips on to the roof to show what he intended to do to her.

Theron promptly sent for the local constable when he did not seem to be able to do anything with the frenzied man. Even the collective wrath of the quickly gathered neighbours seemed to have no effect in quelling the drunk. Mrs. Hauptfleisch was nearly hysterical with terror and flatly refused to sleep under the same roof as her son. Driven by this fear, even if it was told reluctantly, she revealed many other threats he had made against her in the past.

The constable duly heard all this and, urged by the spectators, told Hauptfleisch he had best spend the night in the cells as a lesson. The South Africans of those days used the full power of the law reluctantly and every communal method of correction was tried on sinners before they were, so to speak, finally thrown to the wolves.



In the morning, sober and in a hateful mood, Hauptfleisch was questioned by a fellow prisoner as to why he was in jail. The answering tirade was grim. He openly accused his mother of constantly trying to stop him from drinking, then made fearful threats against her backed with filthy language.

When details of these threats reached the town burghers they immediately put Hauptfleisch back on the black-list. This time it was to be permanent both for his own good and for the protection of his unfortunate mother. This well-meaning civic decision was her death warrant.

Four days later Hauptfleisch got hold of the young son of a neighbour, telling him about some greasy clothes needing a good cleaning. He gave the boy a bottle and asked him to go and buy sixpennyworth of petrol, making an excuse for not going himself which the boy barely noticed.

The fact that Hauptfleisch did not go himself served no purpose and was chiefly governed by the petrol seller being Peter Theron, a man who had every reason to know all about the town drunk and his ways. In view of what happened later it was a very crude attempt to hide the trail - Theron, a short, bright-eyed

man with a shrewd mind, would have demanded to know why Hauptfleisch was buying petrol considering he was none too particular about his clothes, unlike his clean and painstakingly tidy mother.

For nearly a month Petrus Hauptfleisch behaved in an exemplary manner. If he was not particularly pleasant at home, he was never openly rude. He seemed to spend his time wandering about, speaking civilly to anyone who would listen, and behaving like a reasonably dutiful son. It was such a complete alteration of character and habit that it aroused as much comment and curiosity as his previous habitual drunkenness.

Then came Tuesday, January 13, a day of blazing sunshine when Mrs. Hauptfleisch, still unable to believe in the era of peace at home, decided to get the washing done. Being of cautious Dutch stock, she still at heart had a daily fear of her son's return to his natural craze for liquor. She did not hide her belief the next outbreak would be all the worse for weeks of unnatural abstinence.

After the clock struck its two notes from the church, and she had gone into the house, there was silence.



The brown door of the Hauptfleisch house opened at approximately twenty minutes past three and Petrus walked into the brilliant outer world.

He was dressed in his usual clothes, a rather rumpled suit, an open-necked shirt and the sort of boots much favoured by the farmers of the district. With hands in jacket pockets, and a dirty old *veldhoed* shading his dark eyes and untidy hair, he strolled to the front entrance of the Botes' home where he paused to greet Johanna Botes, the 20-year-old eldest daughter. She was on the veranda sewing. Hauptfleisch breezily asked if she was preparing her trousseau. He made a number of other heavily jocular remarks to Johanna; being used to the rough humour of Richmond men, she took them in good part.

He moved off, still in a leisurely fashion, across the street to visit a Mrs. Jacob Nieuwoudt, finding her darning stockings in the front parlour and keeping an eye on the street through the shading jalousies. He refused a friendly invitation to stay a while and talk, offering as an excuse – or an attempted alibi – the news he was off to Pienaar's Store and then on to Conradi, the grocer.

His progress was so ostentatiously casual that he did not reach Pienaar's, a short distance away, for at least ten minutes. Once there he chattered idly and read a newspaper on the counter. At 4 o'clock he supposedly set off on the brief walk to Conradi's . . . and later found himself up against the serious problem of explaining why he did not reach that shop to make his purchases until 5.15.

There was to be his own story, ignored as an obvious falsehood, that he had suddenly decided to dash off to the hilly part of the country outside the town where he sought (to oblige a friend) a missing goat and kid, taking them back to a 'somebody' rather difficult to find.

What certainly did happen was that Peter Booyen, a boarding-house keeper living down the road on the same side as the Hauptfleisch dwelling, went for a stroll later that afternoon when the heat had diminished. Just as he arrived level with it, he saw Petrus Hauptfleisch a few yards from his own front door, clearly having just come out. Hauptfleisch seemed to be looking somewhat deliberately in the other direction at that moment Booyen heard the church clock, a hundred yards away, strike five.

In Conradi's, to which he sauntered without hurry, Hauptfleisch bought some sugar and cigarettes, remaining to gossip for half-an-hour, then walked homewards with another customer.

The pair separated. Hauptfleisch called in at Mrs. Botes', to offer the wholly extraneous information that he was back again from the shops, then he went home.

It could not have been more than a minute later that he burst out of his front door like a wild man, shouting in a great voice: "Oh, God, help . . . help!"



He ran straight to Mrs. Nieuwoudt's, meeting her on the way out, alarmed by his cries. He explained that his mother had been burned in the kitchen fire, then ran back home with an agility suggesting he wished to get inside before Mrs. Botes, nearly at his front gate, could get there.

The house was dark. Every window was closed, darkened by drawn blinds and shutters. Stumbling across the dim kitchen, Mrs. Botes managed to throw open the back door so they could at last see round the room.

Lying half naked on the stove, dreadfully burned, was old Mrs. Hauptfleisch. If that was not enough Mrs. Botes suddenly

became aware of a strong roasting smell which caused her to reel back against the wall, sick and faint.

The stove should be mentioned in order to visualize it, for it was a South African contrivance like nothing so much as a table of bricks set against corner walls.

Comprising an oblong built of brick, some thirty inches high, it was about forty inches wide at the top and perhaps just under five feet long. On one side, set into the brickwork and flush with the top, was an ordinary cooking stove of the type much favoured by thrifty peasants; leading from it was a closed smoke-pipe to the outer air. On the right, that is on the level top surface of the brick, was an open hearth on which a fire could be maintained, smoke and fumes being drawn off by the chimney-canopy above.

It was on this, with her feet towards the kitchen, that Mrs. Hauptfleisch lay on her right side. Her face and most of her upper body were charred, her hair gone except for a patch on which she rested in a pile of warm ash. The burning was visibly extensive and severe. That she was quite dead needed no confirmation.

On the floor were some scorched clothes, and by her head was a box of matches still retaining their shape until a touch caused them to disintegrate. There were also some pieces of broken glass in the fire ash and, on the kitchen table, stood a cork. At the foot of the stove was a stool so placed that it might have been used for standing on to enable someone to reach a greater height.

It was Petrus Hauptfleisch who at last took hold of his mother's body and eased it down from the stove to the stool, where she remained until official help arrived.

*

Dr. Johannes Henrikus Bam, the District Surgeon, was fetched by a neighbour's small boy. Until he learned all the facts, brisk, forthright Dr. Bam could not entirely believe the news. He had known and liked Barbara Hauptfleisch for 22 years; she had indeed been in his employ as a nurse for that period. A healthy, active woman who had never known an illness, he had found her – on an occasion when he had to give her a medical examination – in remarkably sound physical condition for her age. She was timorous and cautious in her habits, and prone to 'nerves', but her health was as much constitutional as her care of it.

Dr. Bam found the body partially covered by a blanket; this he removed to see the arms were in what might be called a pugilistic attitude of defence, the hands stilled in a semi-clenched position. He reprimanded Hauptfleisch for moving his mother at all – it had been, the son explained, an instinctive action to screen her.

Hauptfleisch said he had left the house at about three and most anxious for the doctor to realize what must have happened was that his mother had attempted to clean the chimney by burning it out with ignited petrol. "I warned her never to do such a thing," he added.

It sounded absurd, particularly in view of the old woman's always careful behaviour. Bam found it hard to hide his disbelief at such a notion, and was uneasy when he peered up the chimney with the help of a torch. It was almost spotless and nowhere was there sign of someone undertaking the removal of soot with burning petrol, an action no sensible person would risk at any time.

He became very troubled indeed when Mrs. van Niekerk, one of the several neighbours now in the house, whispered to him in alarm that Mrs. Hauptfleisch's bed bore depressions and untidiness as if she had been resting on it that afternoon, perhaps for her siesta. The neighbours knew that not only would she never have left her bed untidy, but she certainly would not have come out of the bedroom partially dressed or have removed any clothing except in complete privacy.

The dead woman was laid on the kitchen table where Dr. Bam made a cursory initial examination, uncovering some startling facts.

The first thing was the lividity, the gravitation of the blood to the lowest part of a body after death. There were patches of it a few inches square in the middle of the back and by the heels.

Knowing that normal lividity takes anything up to twelve hours to form, though it is usually constant by eight, Dr. Bam also knew the condition was hastened by asphyxia and by certain diseases – these last he could wash out in this particular case.

As the longest the woman could have been dead was just under four hours, she must have been lying *on her back* for an hour or more and had therefore been placed after death, as she was found, on her right side.

There were blisters on the body, the right thigh and arm. The blisters all had air in them except two which held fluid –

despite the fact the two water-blisters raised some argument at a later date, they are not worth special attention.

The air blisters, however, were easily recognizable as having been caused *after* death by burning. As he noted his finds, Dr. Bam wondered if he was faced with matricide.

There was an official post-mortem the following morning when the doctor went thoroughly into the matter, seeking confirmations or denials of the superficial findings he had made the previous day. The police and local magistrate had now taken charge.

It seemed that death had taken place through suffocation, perhaps by a pillow used on the woman when she was sleeping in her own bed, partially undressed because of the heat. The position of her hands suggested a futile grip on the killer's wrists but Hauptfleisch bore no marks on his wrists or arms.

The scorching of the salient parts of the head and shoulders ruled out any ancillary signs – marks, scratches, or indications of violence – which could have confirmed or even denied any conclusions to be drawn. But there was a distinct recent internal haemorrhage in the mesentery and sub-cutaneous bruising at the level of the navel, caused by a blow or possibly by the knee of an attacker, holding his victim down until she was still.

It was routine for Dr. Bam to check whether the suspected asphyxia had been the result of fire; had it been so there would have been traces of soot and carbon in the trachea or bronchial tubes. Nothing of that nature was to be seen and the engorged, dark-coloured and air-filled lungs revealed that death could not have been instantaneous. The blood was black and fluid, proving that asphyxia was indeed the answer. Neither any sign of heart trouble nor any disease of the internal organs could be discerned – the post-mortem report mentioned the engorgement of the right side of the heart (not an uncommon post-mortem finding) hyperaemia of both lungs which were also engorged. Significantly, the mouth was charred but the pharynx and oesophagus normal.

From all his conclusions Dr. Bam reached a series of clear indications which did not envisage accident.



Petrus Hauptfleisch behaved with that extraordinary foolishness common to so many murderers by going on Thursday, the day after the post-mortem, to visit his mother's solicitor.

The questions he put gained for him the information that he was to inherit a poor little estate of about £600. He enjoyed this knowledge, if enjoy it he did, for just three days.

On Sunday, undisturbed by the Sabbath or perhaps because of it, local policemen arrived at mid-morning at his home to take Hauptfleisch into custody on suspicion of murder.

At the summary hearing before the district magistrate, the court was disturbed by the openly angry attitude of the public, for the dead woman had been well known and widely liked. This hostility was so great that Hauptfleisch, on being committed for trial, got his solicitors to apply for a change of venue to have the trial held in the less prejudiced atmosphere of distant Cape Town.

A point of law arose of great interest to the legal profession, it being something seldom heard in the courts.

Hauptfleisch desired the larger part of his mother's estate to be released into the hands of his lawyers in order to pay the costs of his coming defence.

Under the prevailing Roman-Dutch authorities, which naturally have much to do with South African life, it had always been laid down, in this case as well as others, that a man could not benefit from the possessions of his victim in a murder case. Hauptfleisch was accused of his mother's death since that he was being tried for it, and therefore he could not take advantage of her will.

Against this, British and South African law presumed a man innocent until his guilt was proved – it was not even his task to prove himself innocent but for the prosecution to prove him guilty. This being so, Hauptfleisch had not yet been tried and since he was officially innocent he was therefore given permission to draw the requisite amount from the estate.

The police case suggested the evidence was complete. When the events leading up to the old lady's death were re-checked they became more and more circumstantial. But, innured as the police were to wrong-doers, it was still a horrible mental picture to visualize Hauptfleisch carrying the semi-nude, asphyxiated corpse of his mother to the kitchen stove and there laying it down, pouring on petrol and igniting it.

Yet his mind worked with icy precision. He had put the petrol bottle into the flames so that it broke and remained there as if dropped by the accident victim; even the cork was on the kitchen table as she might have left it. There is no telling when he blacked out the house. It could be presumed, therefore, his

calculating mind was in control as he carried his mother through the hot darkness to her destination in the kitchen. It must have been an immense shock, not that he ever betrayed it, when he walked out of the house and closed the door on its secret, to run straight into Booysen just before the church clock struck five.

The trial began at Cape Town Criminal Sessions on Monday, September 21, 1925, before Mr. Justice Van Zyl. The Attorney-General, Mr. E. W. Douglass, K.C., led for the Crown; the defence was in the hands of Mr. R. P. B. Davis, K.C., who was later elevated to the bench.

Not unlike the methods of the great reigning London silks of the time, Sir Edward Marshall Hall and Sir Henry Curtis Bennett, Douglass and Davis thoroughly grounded themselves in the important angles of medical jurisprudence knowing only too well how the case was going to hinge on that vital branch of scientific criminology.

The Crown's case was to depend largely on the exact nature of Hauptfleisch's movements on the afternoon of his mother's death, his previous treatment of her and his various threats, and on the findings of Dr. Johannes Bam. Also down to be called was Dr. Willem Lubbe, a prominent De Aar surgeon and [its Medical Officer of Health. Medical evidence on both sides was to rule the trial. In fact the experts fought so bitterly and managed to say so many conflicting things that it took an exhumation to still public argument after the trial was over.

The blisters on the body came in for much discussion, ending in their acceptance for what they were and what they represented, post-mortem blisters by burning.

Dr. W. F. Wicht, the District Surgeon of Cape Town, and another well-known medical man, Dr. David P. Marais, the defence let it be known, were prepared to suggest that on Dr. Bam's findings they "think it is actually probable the unfortunate woman died a perfectly natural death."

When this came up, Dr. Bam stated he did not agree, and even the lay onlooker was led to wonder how these two eminent gentlemen could have reached such a strange conclusion.

Next in order of vigorous discussion was the position in which the body was found; here Dr. Lubbe strongly backed Dr. Bam's post-mortem findings, concluding to the effect that "all the authorities in the world hold such conditions point to asphyxia."

Another point aroused warm argument. When Dr. Bam had first seen the body he had touched it, noticing that though there

was slight warmth barely discernible, it was practically cold. Admitted the test was a rough one, but it was in the hands of an experienced medical man who had used the test many times.

Certain facts can be considered here, such as that a body may retain heat after asphyxia for longer than normal. The average fall in temperature in the dead is variable and dependent on several circumstances, but it may be said that in the first few hours it is approximately in the region of 1.5° F. per hour, and even slightly more – regional factors, local conditions, and other things make their contribution of variation in either direction. But, generally, it can be said the surface of the body will be *cold* within eight to twelve hours. Dr. Lubbe had this to say about testing a body's cooling process by Dr. Bam's method:

"Some of the greatest authorities hold that the cooling-off of a body is the most reliable factor by which one can determine the time of death . . . The hand may be put on the body, but that would not be the surest test.

"A lot would depend on the warmth of the hand and the person who makes the examination. For instance, a man like Dr. Bam, who has practised for many years, is accustomed to do it . . . he would be able to distinguish between a high and low temperature . . . he is a man of long experience and his estimation may be good. But not absolutely accurate."

These comments were fair enough, but tended to channel expert assumptions just a little too finely – any properly trained man, or even an intelligent student, in many branches of scientific criminology could by touch ascertain as much as had Dr. Bam. Correctly, as Dr. Lubbe gave in his evidence, a rectal thermometer was the accepted method of determining cooling-off.



To counter the conclusions of Dr. Bam, the defence brought in Mr. John J. Muller, who had been a leading official analyst and was now a practising analytical chemist.

The trend of Mr. Davis's questions to his witness was an endeavour to show what might have happened with the use of petrol. Muller, from the existing clues on the kitchen hearth, constructed a reasonably ingenious picture.

He mentioned the difficulty of lighting a fire from the fuel available and explained that vapourized petrol – it is the vapour, not the liquid which catches alight – would accumulate like an invisible cloud in the confined space of the chimney when the

contents of the bottle were poured out on the hearth. Putting a naked flame near this vapour would have resulted in a violent puff, a minor explosion, of instant fire. The bottle standing nearby could have been upset at the same moment, supplying more petrol for the blaze and being itself fragmented by heat. Thus could Mrs. Hauptfleisch have died, and there was the added fact that "petrol does not give off much soot" and that "I think it would be very difficult to detect it with the naked eye. On paper or a white slab you could detect it, but I think it would be very difficult in a body, and you would have to take smears . . . (carbon) is practically like a film."

The Attorney-General wanted Muller's views not only clarified, but went after them to show they could equally well apply to the manner in which the crime was committed according to the Crown; Mr. Douglass asked:

Q. Have you ever heard of petrol being used for cleaning a chimney?

A. No.

Q. Do you think it is likely that a woman who had expressed herself as nervous about some petrol which her son had in the house, would work in the chimney to try and clean it with petrol?

A. I don't say it was used for that purpose. It may have been used for cleaning clothes. Some persons are not aware of the inflammability of petrol.

Q. Evidently this woman was. Do I understand you to say it is possible that she was working with petrol on this hearth; that she struck a match and the petrol caught alight in the bottle, and that the bottle may have fallen over and broken?

A. First the vapour would catch alight. I tried that.

Q. What would happen then?

A. The bottle burns in that case for half a minute and then goes out.

Q. In this case we have a piece of the broken bottle. Do you think that bottle, when it was alight, may have fallen over and broken?

A. In falling over the petrol would be spilt. I assume the bottle was sufficiently full to overflow when on its side, and all that petrol must set alight and the heat of that would be on the bottle and it would crack.

Q. That is, the petrol thrown over the hearth?

A. Yes.

Q. That would cause a flame?

A. The flame would be first.

Q. The flame first and then the bottle knocked over, and then cracked?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think that is what happened in this case?

A. Judging from the evidence I have heard, and judging from the position of the bottle, and the marks on the deceased.

To get a complete qualification as he saw it, Mr. Douglass emphasized heavily:

Q. In your theory you think the woman might have been overwhelmed by a sudden flame?

A. As the Doctor (Bam) says he discovered no carbon that she inhaled; that her nostrils or mouth were not in the carbon path of the flame. Finding the matches and things there she must practically (have) had a sudden death if there was no detectable smell of petrol in the lungs. If she inhaled in the flame she must have had a smell of petrol in the lungs. I don't say it is absolutely essential, but it would possibly be. Finding no carbon, I think she either did not inhale from the sooty part of the flame, but from the zone of the vapourized petrol.

Then Mr. Douglass demanded further emphasis from Mr. Muller which, in its way, qualified the crime as the Crown visualized it:

Q. It is very hard to theorise. Do you think it is probable that the woman was cleaning that place with petrol and accidentally broke the bottle, setting it alight and fell with her head just there, making a depression in the ash and disturbing nothing else?

A. From what I have heard it is not impossible.

Q. But highly improbable?

A. I would not go so far as to say highly improbable.

Q. Is it not more likely that the body was put there in that position and then deliberately set alight with petrol or some other fluid?

A. That could have happened, but I would not say it is more likely.

One of the witnesses on whom Mr. Davis counted to help the defence was Dr. William Frederick Wicht, both District Surgeon for Cape Town and lecturer on Medical Jurisprudence at the University.

His views were blunt and dogmatic in answer to the questions of Mr. David:

Q. You have heard Dr. Bam's evidence that he found this lividity on the skin in marked patches, and that he detected no hypostases, no gravitation of the blood, in the internal organs at all, with the exception of one slight place on the kidneys which he was not certain about. Is that possible, impossible, probable, or improbable?

A. I consider it impossible.

Q. Why?

A. If you did not get it the law of gravity must be all wrong.

Q. Because lividity is due to gravitation?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you form any idea, supposing Dr. Bam says he did not see this, as to what may have happened?

A. In a case like that, in my opinion, one of two things. That he looked very carelessly or mistook it for congestion ante-mortem or something.

Q. Do you find in the books that it is possible to mistake one for the other?

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. Dr. Bam says this. He said he found first of all the left heart empty and the right heart distended with blood.

He drew on that as one of the signs of suffocation. What do you say about that?

A. I would not place any reliance on that at all.

Q. Why?

A. When rigor mortis sets in it involves voluntary and involuntary muscles.

Q. And what happens?

A. When the heart is involved in rigor mortis it contracts.

Q. The whole heart?

A. Yes, it contracts. The left side is very much more powerful than the right and it invariably happens once rigor mortis sets in that you find the left side empty and the right side distended, because it could not expel all the blood.

Q. Is that the reason or not, why the books tell us that really nothing can be drawn in a question of engorgement of the organs, especially the heart, unless a post mortem is conducted immediately?

A. I daresay it is.

Q. He next says that it was suffocation because the blood

was extremely dark and fluid. Have you found or have you not found, the blood extremely dark and fluid in cases where there could be no question of suffocation?

A. I often find dark fluid blood in post mortems where there was not the faintest suspicion of suffocation.

Q. What is that due to?

A. Dark fluid blood is due to rich carbon dioxide blood.

Q. And that is due to non-aeration of the blood?

A. Yes.

Q. Supposing a person dies suddenly at the moment when the lungs were fully expanded with air?

A. The blood would be rich in carbon dioxide at the end of respiration.

Later on Dr. Wicht dealt with Dr. Bam's checking the approximate time of the death by putting his hand on the body of Mrs. Hauptfleisch:

A. It is practically impossible to state the time by touch.

You might be able to say there is heat or no heat, but it is impossible to fix the temperature at the time. That is my opinion.

His views on the blisters found on the body were not too clear, but he questioned the lack of marks on the woman, and her son, if suffocation had been used, for more violence than necessary was often used in such actions with the resultant traces: "Although Dr. Bam says it is not so, I say he is wrong," he explained after pointing out the internal conditions described could be obtained if death were due to shock. "I maintain that what he mistook for congestion of the lungs was post-mortem lividity. That is the very thing Taylor warns us against, and I think Dr. Bam walked into the trap."

His final opinions offered to Mr. Davis were very flat indeed.

Q. I want to ask you this question: Do you think it very likely or less likely that this woman died from natural causes than she died from violence?

A. I think it more likely that she died from accidental death, from burns or shock, but not from asphyxia.

Q. You are quite certain?

A. I am absolutely certain, judging from the evidence.

The Attorney-General undertook a lengthy cross-examination of Dr. Wicht and though he intimated that Dr. Bam, as the man on the spot at the time of the death, was surely the best person to judge the condition of the deceased, it would not make Dr. Wicht alter a word of his views. He even offered an elaborate

theory which was both imaginative and remarkable, even if the known facts did not bear it out.

In a remote sense he was supported by Dr. David Peter Marais, a medical practitioner with considerable pathological experience in Cape Town and, more so, in England.

The Attorney-General, Mr. Douglass, brought in the vital question by getting it underlined with Dr. Marais's views:

Q. Dr. Bam said he carried out this post mortem examination to the best of his ability, and that from his examination, and other signs, he has definitely come to the conclusion that death was due to suffocation or asphyxia. Are you prepared to say definitely that he must be wrong?

A. I simply say that he has made a deduction which the findings do not justify or warrant. There is insufficient to justify a dogmatic diagnosis, and to have been certain it would have been wiser to have inspected all the organs with some other doctor. A microscopic examination might have helped further. I don't for a moment impute incompetence. Far from it.

Q. He might and he might not be right in his deductions, or do you say definitely that he must be wrong?

A. He may and he may not be right.

This final answer can be regarded as a medical man's extreme caution, a scientific hesitance by avoiding a blunt decision in favour of a precise seat on a fence.

Throughout the trial authorities had been quoted at a great rate – Taylor, Dixon-Mann, Wilks, and others. It seemed the collective opinions of many had been sought to dispute Dr. Bam.

The conflict of experts was baffling to laymen. Even if the faces of the jury were reasonably impassive, knowing ones in court realized that here were some more baffled people. More than once it seemed as if Mr. Justice Van Zyl was tempted to make an interjection, but he refrained.

To those who put unquestioning trust in doctors, it was deeply troubling to see how they could argue with each other. The reporters present were inclined to suspend judgment and even to side with Dr. Bam – his evidence had been forthright and clear. Despite attack and dispute, it remained fundamentally unchanged and could still be taken as a sound expression of trained opinion and observation. Bam was a stolid, patient witness who explained his findings honestly. If he lacked the colourful qualities of Dr. Wicht, he was still the type of medical man

capable of inspiring belief in ordinary people . . . and in juries, usually capable of great collective shrewdness.

On the hot and clear morning of September 24, the fourth day, amid such a loud rustle of interest and attention from the public that the judge was frowning, Petrus Hauptfleisch was put on the stand by the Attorney-General.

The story offered by the accused man was not a strong one. He tried to suggest the petrol he sent the 14-year-old boy for was at his mother's request, but failed to explain why he had not gone for it himself. He had no reasonable explanation for his treatment of his mother, and tried to accuse of untruths those who had heard him abuse her. His answers were often shifty, though never so much as when he was asked whether or not his house was dark when he had supposedly gone to make his shocking discovery of the dead woman on the stove – there was a subdued murmur of incredulity when he insisted that he was probably too shocked to notice, a remarkable view considering that Mrs. Botes, when she followed into the kitchen to see what was wrong, could only just discern the outline of the table in the middle of the room.

In many replies he was wholly unsatisfactory, and more than once Mr. Douglass appeared to be stifling his disgust with difficulty. At times Hauptfleisch, though not only accusing witnesses of lying, thought "perhaps the real facts" had slipped their memories. He flatly denied using bad language to his mother despite the strongest evidence to the contrary.

His evidence continued to be vague and unsatisfactory. Like so many criminals in the past, what he had to say did not really become thread-bare until he offered it out of his own mouth in the witness-box. The implacable, disinterested air of orthodox justice prevailing in the court revealed it for the tawdry nonsense it was; it showed again and again why careful lawyers prefer often not to let their clients go into the witness-box.

After the addresses on both sides the following day, the judge summed up fairly comprehensively, dealing very ably with the chaotic medical details. It was dark by the time the jury came back at seven o'clock, having been absent for two-and-a-half hours. Their verdict was unanimous against the prisoner.

Emotionally, but firmly, and in the local Dutch which Hauptfleisch spoke, Mr. Justice Van Zyl asked the customary question as to if there was anything the prisoner wished to say before sentence was passed:

“Hauptfleisch, die jurie het jou skuldig gevind van Moord. Is daar iets wat jy vir my wil sê voor die doodvonnais uitgespreek word?”

It was some moments before the condemned prisoner could speak, or before he had formed the words he wished to speak. Then he had a slow, emphatic speech which upset many in the court but which, because of its sanctimonious qualities, can be reproduced in full. The translation is a true one, without embroidery; it leaves a feeling of nausea:

“My Lord and gentlemen of the jury,” he said, “in this matter my learned counsel has already pointed out to you the leading factors in the case, and I really cannot say anything to supplement his address.

“But as this opportunity is afforded me, I would like to say something about the effect this prosecution has had on me personally. The crime with which I am charged is one I consider the most dastardly, namely, matricide.

“It is, for me, inconceivable that any man with ordinary intelligence, unless he is mentally deranged, could stoop to take the life of one who conceived his very existence, nursed it, and gave him life. It is a crime for which I have had great abhorrence since puberty. That in itself is sufficient to justify my innocence.

“The very fact that I am suspected thereof murdering my mother, coupled with this prosecution, has, during these many months of awaiting trial – about eight months in all – caused me incomprehensible mental agony. Had I been guilty of the commission of this crime, I would gladly and voluntarily have made confession to gain the punishment which would have terminated my agonized existence.

“I was an only son, an only child, in consequence of which I was spoilt and my feelings restricted.

“The result was bad company. All these facts combined, strongly stimulated by extraneous influences, turned me out other than the dutiful son my mother expected.

“I have no compunction in acknowledging these facts. For although I am disgraced by the fact that I am suspected, I cannot do otherwise, in duty to my wife and child. Although it is further humiliation, I cannot remain silent.

“My learned counsel has dissected the evidence and, I think, in analysing the various depositions, the element of possibility of a crime having been committed is alone impossible; while the rest is mainly circumstantial.

"Such being the case, there is a doubt. I know there is a doubt. No man is convicted of a crime unless he is proved guilty conclusively. And I humbly submit that the evidence tendered by the Crown is too unfounded, too slender, too doubtful, to justify a conviction.

"In conclusion, therefore, my Lord and gentlemen of the jury, I humbly commit myself to the clemency of this Court, knowing full well that I shall receive the degree of justice and mercy that I so humbly and urgently solicit.

"It is not only punishing me, my Lord, an innocent man. I am now condemned. It is not only I who am punished, but my innocent wife and child. They, too, must suffer."

As a matter of interest, it is well to record that one of the jurymen, many years later, told me that the jury's deliberations were occupied with a careful discussion of the medical evidence, and an acceptance of Dr. Bam's conclusions exactly as they were offered. There was no doubt at all of the accused's guilt.



There was considerable controversy after the verdict and though Hauptfleisch protested his innocence with great vigour, he was not given leave to appeal since no point of law was involved. But the Department of Justice acted with a great deal of wisdom both in dealing with the pleas made to it by Hauptfleisch, and the undoubted bewilderment of the general public over the medical debate in court.

It was ruled that the body of Barbara Hauptfleisch should be exhumed and examined by pathologists to set at rest any doubts or to broadcast any new findings.

This somewhat unprecedented step resulted in a disinterment, revealing the corpse in a fair state of preservation. It was possible to check all the main points at dispute in the trial, and the examination concluded with a report saying that there was no reason at all for not accepting in full the medical evidence given by the prosecution; it meant Dr. Bam was wholly correct in his conclusions.

Petrus Hauptfleisch was hanged on December 23, 1925, declaring his innocence to the last. There remained no doubt the case was proved and justice had been well and truly done.

THE SUSPECT SOLDIER

*Realistic and tough,
this is a private eye tale
new in background and
motive*

BILL KNOX

BOOTS CRASHED on the cobbles at the main gate of Edinburgh Castle as a squad of kilted infantrymen went through the time-honoured routine of changing sentries. A watching half-circle of tourists clicked cameras in the warm sunlight, capturing the colourful scene from a variety of carefully chosen angles which, they hoped, would delight the neighbours back home.

A hundred yards away, in the cool gloom of a room in one of the castle's grey stone buildings, Cam Gordon frowned unhappily at the two uniformed men sitting opposite him. The red-tabbed brigadier carefully avoided his gaze by staring out of the narrow high-set window opposite while his companion, Captain Hatson of the army's Special Investigation Branch, spent an unusually long time over lighting a cigarette.

It was Hatson who finally broke the silence. "It's never pleasant to be asked to spy on a friend," he murmured. "But in a situation like this, Gordon, the end justifies the means. We've got to know if we're right . . . if your friend Ewton is a traitor."

The investigator flushed. "The idea's crazy."

"Is it?" said Hatson. "Stranger things have happened. Think of the situation, Gordon - can you honestly blame us?"

Think . . . Cam gave a wry smile. He'd been doing little else for the last twenty minutes, ever since he'd met the two army men and heard their story.

Just over medium height, stockily built, the dark-haired sole partner of Gordon Investigations had been sent through to Edinburgh by Mr. Deathstone, the elderly, crusty-mannered Glasgow lawyer who had a direct line from a Government department in Whitehall to his quiet, old-fashioned office - and when that telephone rang, the result usually meant Cam working in a new capacity.

Being enfolded by the army atmosphere within the castle had been like stepping back over the years, back to when he, too, had worn khaki, including a front-line spell in Korea. It was in Korea that he had met Bob Ewton. Ewton had been a fresh-faced second lieutenant acting as spotter for a 25 pounder artillery troop – and Cam's main job at times had been to make sure the Gunner kept his head down when the bullets came too close.

They'd kept in touch when it was over – for a spell, though it was close to a handful of years since they'd last met.

And now Major Robert Ewton, second-in-command at an experimental proving unit at an army firing range in East Lothian, seemed to be up to his neck in the worst kind of trouble.

The red-tabbed brigadier cleared his throat. "You see, Gordon, while most people worry about H-bombs, we've got to be ready for the old-fashioned type of warfare. And this new gunsight almost outdates radar in the field. It's common knowledge that there are rockets which can 'home' on the heat from an aircraft's engine – or another rocket. This gunsight registers on the second or so of heat-flash created when an enemy artillery piece fires, locks its own weapon on the position and range, and that's that."

Captain Hatson nodded. "Obviously, a number of security screened personnel know it exists and have something to do with handling it. But only a few know the way it works, and Major Ewton is one of them."

Cam had heard it already. The first hint had been in an agent's report that Iron Curtain technicians had been turned on the task of masking heat-flash from guns. The obvious reason was a leak from the East Lothian testing ground, and the security mill had begun grinding. Without surface sign, man after man in the unit had been cleared.

But Major Ewton now had a question-mark beside his name.

How did it come about that a lump sum of two thousand pounds in cash had suddenly been deposited in his bank account – when until then he'd been comparatively short of funds?

There were other significant details. Ewton had been noticed recently to have become nervy and irritable in his dealings with other range personnel. Then why had his Norwegian wife Gerda made a sudden trip to Oslo and back with the explanation that her father was ill – when a check had revealed that both her parents were in the best of health?

"All right." Cam made his decision. "I'll do it. But first, I'll have to think of a way to make contact."

The SIB man relaxed. "That's simple enough. In two days time, on Saturday afternoon, Ewton's wife has entered her dog, a Dalmatian, for a championship show being held in Dunbar. Ewton will be with her, and the rest is up to you."



A steady downpour of rain was falling when Cam arrived in Dunbar on the show day. He parked his dark green Mercedes in a street nearby, then walked along to the hall where the dog show was in progress. Inside, he joined the crowd packed round the judging ring then drifted casually along the fringe of spectators and into the area beyond. All round, a seemingly endless array of animals were being brushed, combed, and otherwise prepared for their big moment.

There was only the one Dalmatian – a lazy, yawning animal being tended by a tall, attractive brunette who wore a tweed skirt and a heavy white fisherman-knit sweater. As he edged closer to the brunette, a hand suddenly gripped his arm.

"Since when were you interested in dogs?" demanded Bob Ewton. He wore sports jacket and flannels, and had tired lines round his eyes but was obviously pleased at their meeting. "It's good to see you, Cam. But what are you doing in this part of the world?"

"Taking a few days holiday, Bob – and getting in some golf," Gordon answered, with suitable surprise. "How's life?"

Ewton shrugged. "Not too bad. The army doesn't change much under the surface." Then he brightened. "Interested in the dalmatian? It's my wife's dog – yes, I'm married now. Come and be introduced to the missus."

Gerda Ewton, only a faint trace of accent in her soft, pleasantly husky voice, greeted Cam in a cool but friendly fashion. "Bob has talked of you often, Mr. Gordon," she told him, while beside her the big Dalmatian dog stretched comfortably. "Just now I must go for a little while – it is time I took Blot to the judging ring. But you will wait?"

Her husband rubbed his chin. "Look, Cam, why not come home with us for a meal once this is over? We'd planned to stay and have a few drinks with some people, but this is an occasion.

"Gerda and I can make some diplomatic excuse or other, and then we can have the evening to ourselves."

"We would both like that," agreed the Norwegian girl.

"Then it's arranged," Cam answered.

The two men watched as Gerda Ewton led the Dalmatian towards the show ring and went before the judges.

Suddenly, Ewton nudged Cam. "Here's where I make those apologies," he murmured. "The tweedy character approaching – Captain Vallon, from the camp."

Cam turned slightly to one side as the newcomer, thin, brisk and with a bushing moustache, greeted his friend. "Hello, Major – Mrs. Ewton's dog going to scoop the prize-list, eh?"

Ewton shook his head. "I doubt it. Oh, Vallon – I'm sorry, but we're going to have to call off that drink we'd arranged with you and Doctor Loth. Gerda's got a bit of a headache, and we're leaving for home once this is over."

The other man shrugged. "Can't be helped, old boy. The Doc's around somewhere, but if you don't see him, I'll explain."

As Vallon went off into the crowd again, Cam took out his cigarettes. "Who is Doctor Loth?" he asked, as they lit up.

Bob Ewton blew a smoke-cloud. "An archaeologist. An interesting character – he's got permission to dig at a spot near the camp, and now he spends most of the week down great holes in the earth, looking for traces of the old Picts who used to run around these parts years ago."

A scattering of applause from the crowd brought their attention back to the showring, and a few moments later the judging of the larger dogs class over, Gerda Ewton rejoined them, the Dalmatian at her side.

"A third place," she told them. "I had hoped for better, but the judge she is a . . . a . . ."

"I know the word, but never mind," soothed her husband. "Well, let's pack up and go." He began to put the dog brushes and equipment into a small canvas grip, then raised an eyebrow. "Here comes Doctor Loth. Well, excuses ready, Gerda – you've got a headache!"

The archaeologist, small, middle-aged, wearing rimless glasses, bustled towards them, then frowned as Ewton made the same apologies as before.

"A pity, a great pity," he declared. "I had been looking forward to our evening. Still – another time."

"Any new progress at the excavation site?" queried Ewton.

Doctor Loth shook his head. "It is a slow process, Major Ewton. This rain is an additional handicap, turning the earth to mud. Well, I will see you again."

"That's that," sighed Ewton. "Well, we can go now. "We've got our transport outside, an old shooting brake."

"I'll follow you in my own car," suggested Cam. "Then there won't be any complications about my getting back."

"That might be a good idea. The camp is about twelve miles out; we've rented a cottage practically next door to it."

As they reached the exit door, Gerda Ewton hesitated. "Bob - will you wait for me a moment? I have forgotten something." She thrust the Dalmatian's lead into her husband's hand, and darted back into the crowded hall.

"Women -" sighed Ewton.

On a sudden impulse, Cam turned to him. "I need some cigarettes," he declared. "There's a kiosk in the hall - I'll be right back."

Inside the hall again, he pushed his way through the crowd, trying to spot the brunette. Then, as he glimpsed her, he drew back behind a handy pillar.

Gerda Ewton was standing with Doctor Loth, and the middle-aged archaeologist had a cold frown on his face as he talked to her. As Cam watched, the girl bit her lip, then nodded. The archaeologist spoke again, then, as Gerda Ewton turned away, Cam pushed into the crowd once more.

He was back with Bob Ewton when she rejoined them.

"Now that we're finally ready," said Ewton with mild sarcasm, "where's your car parked, Cam?"

"Why don't you go along with Mr. Gordon?" suggested his wife. "I'll take the shooting brake, and I can get a few things in the grocer's shop on the way."

"Sounds sensible," agreed her husband.

On the journey to the camp, Ewton sat back in the passenger seat and talked reasonably freely.

"I've always liked the army," he mused. "But, well, lately I've been wondering if it isn't time I got out. Gerda would like it - a permanent home of our own, all that goes with it."

"And more money," suggested Cam casually. "Even on today's pay scales, there's not much chance of putting money in the bank."

He sensed the others' sharp glance, but Ewton made no reply. Conversation seemed to dry up after that.

They were first to arrive at the cottage; Gerda Ewton didn't arrive until half an hour later.

"A puncture," she explained. "But now, I get our meal."

Cam looked out of the cottage window. The rain had stopped, but the ground was dark and wet. Gerda Ewton's shooting brake was parked just outside, the tyres stained with a red mud clay.

He watched her over the meal. The brunette was outwardly cheerful, but he felt that she was partly acting, covering up a nervous tension. Once they'd finished, and the table had been cleared, she turned to her husband.

"Bob, I have a letter to write - can I use your typewriter? It will give you a chance to talk with Mr. Gordon."

"Help yourself," Ewton agreed.

For the next half hour he and Cam talked of their old service days together, then Gerda Ewton rejoined them.

"Letter finished?" queried her husband.

She nodded. "I will post it later. A drink, Mr. Gordon?"

Before Cam could answer, the telephone in the hall beyond began ringing.

"I'll get it." Ewton rose from his chair. He went out, closing the room door behind him. Cam heard the muffled sound of his voice, the ting as the receiver was replaced, then Ewton re-entered the room. His expression had changed, and he ground out the butt of a cigarette in the nearest ashtray with unnecessary violence.

"I've got to go out - something has turned up at the camp," he told them. "Sorry we've got to cut this short, Cam."

Cam rose. "That's all right. I'm in Dunbar for a few days, and you know the hotel. We'll get together."

Ewton nodded. "Oh, Gerda, I'll post that letter for you on the way. I'll change into uniform now."

His wife hesitated, then agreed. "I'll get it."

A few minutes later, Cam drove back to Dunbar and went to his hotel room, puzzling over the next move in the situation. He gave up after a spell, went down to the lounge, and settled down to watch television, a lager at his elbow.

He wasn't left undisturbed for long. A waiter came across, and called him to the telephone. Cam took the call in the box beside the reception desk.

"Cam . . . it's Bob Ewton," crackled the voice over the line, a voice with a note of desperate urgency. "Look, I - I can't

explain now. But I need help. There's nobody else I can ask. Can you come straight out – something's happened to Gerda!"



The dark green car ate the dozen or so miles of winding road to the outskirts of the camp in record time. Cam Gordon braked the car to a sliding stop outside the cottage. As he got out Major Ewton came down the garden path towards him, his face grey with anxiety.

"What's happened, Bob?"

"I – I don't know, Cam. They – they warned me they'd do it, but I didn't believe them."

"Let's get back inside." Cam guided his friend back into the cottage, shut the door, and glanced around.

The neat, tidy living room he'd seen less than two hours before now looked as if it had been the scene of a brawl. Chairs were overturned, ornaments smashed, and across the width of the light blue carpet there was a dark red trail of blood. The Dalmatian, Blot, was curled tight in one corner, whining feebly.

"Called the police?" asked Cam.

Ewton shook his head. "I can't. Not yet, Cam . . . for Gerda's sake, I can't."

Cam sighed. "Let's get down to cases. Who are 'they'?"

"That's just it – I don't know!"

Going over to the sideboard, Cam poured the other man a stiff drink of whisky and handed him the glass. "Get that down – and listen to me, Bob. I'm going to level with you, and take a chance."

Ewton gulped the liquor then looked at him in puzzled fashion. "What d'you mean?"

"That the only reason I was at that dog show today was to contact you," said Cam quietly. "The Army sent me, Bob – because we were friends, because they're in a panic over a leakage about a certain gunsight – and because nowadays I make a living sorting out trouble."

"You mean they think I'm selling out." Ewton's voice was bitter. "Why?"

"For a start, two thousand pounds in your bank account," Cam told him. "But right now, let's worry about Gerda. When did this happen?"

Ewton bit his lip again. "I got back half an hour ago – the

place was like this, and the dog was lying by the door. I thought he'd been killed at first, but he came round. Gerda . . ." his voice trailed away, and he looked over at the blood trail.

"You said they warned you. Better start at the beginning, Bob," said Cam. "The quicker you tell me, the quicker we may be able to do something about it."

Ewton lit a cigarette and took a long draw on it. "You're right, Cam. But I don't want the police or the army in on it yet - not until we're sure it won't harm Gerda's safety." He accepted Cam's nod, moved across the room and stroked the Dalmatian's head. "It began a month ago, with a telephone call. A man's voice said I'd better meet him.

"He said it involved Gerda, so I went. You see, Gerda isn't Norwegian by birth, Cam. She was one of a batch of refugee kids given homes by the Norwegians after the war. Her real parents well, let's say that in some people's narrow view she might rate as a poor security risk, especially when her husband is in a top-secret experimental unit."

"And the army don't know?"

Ewton shook his head. "When we married, I wasn't connected with secret stuff - and she had a Norwegian passport. There didn't seem any need. Anyway, I went to the meeting place, a pub in Edinburgh, and met the man. He came right out with it - they wanted me to start feeding them information. And when I told him what to do, he said I'd already been paid for it - asked me how the army would react if they knew about Gerda, and knew that there was two thousand in my bank account I couldn't explain away. They'd paid the money in that day!"

Cam gave a soft whistle. "A nasty spot for anyone," he agreed. "Did you tell Gerda?"

"No." Ewton sighed. "Maybe I should - but I didn't. I know, I should have told the security boys. But it wasn't easy, Cam, especially when a buzz was going around that the S.I.B. were probing a leak about the gunsight."

Two weeks after the Edinburgh meeting, Ewton had been contacted again - and had stalled for time, pretending to be ready to agree.

"The man I'd met was obviously only a messenger. I'd a crazy idea that if I found out who the big boy was, and turned the lot over to security, then Gerda and I would be cleared.

"That phone call this evening was to another meeting. The same man turned up - and said they wanted details of the gun-

sight or Gerda would suffer. He said I'd know what they meant when I got home, and that they'd give me 48 hours."

Cam nodded. "How about the information they've already gathered, Bob? Who gave them it?"

Ewton flushed. "I didn't - and Gerda wouldn't. Anyway, she knows next to nothing about it, and I don't talk shop at home. Cam, what can I do?"

"For a start, think. If you hadn't met me, you'd both have spent the evening in town, right?"

The other man agreed.

"And your friends would be thorough enough to know that. Yet you told only two people - Captain Vallon and then that archaeologist, Dr. Loth. Let's start with Loth, seeing he specializes in digging up the past." He spotted something on the carpet, half-hidden by a chair, and stooped to pick it up . . . a small piece of torn, bloodstained cloth, heavy and coarse. "Don't worry too much about Gerda, Bob. Somebody was bleeding when they left here - but it looks to me as if your dog sank his teeth into one of your visitors, and got thumped on the head for his pains. Pity you can't talk, Blot."

The Dalmatian gave a faint wag of its tail at the sound of its name.

"Come on," said Cam, heading for the door. "It's still not too late to pay a call - let's see how Loth reacts. After that, we'll check on Vallon."

Dr. Loth had been in the area about three months, explained Bob Ewton as Cam hurried the car in the direction of the archaeologist's camp. He had permission from a local landowner to investigate an area of wild hillside believed to have once been the site of a Pictish village.

"But he's a harmless character," declared Ewton. "Captain Vallon introduced us -" his expression suddenly changed.

"And Vallon might have known just enough about the gunsight to be responsible for the initial leak," Cam said dryly, talking the car round a corner in a fast, controlled skid. "Maybe even to suggest Gerda's background was worth probing - that's the way these characters work."



The sun was low on the horizon as, Ewton directing, Cam Gordon steered the car off the main road, bounced it along a rough track, and finally halted at the archaeologist's camp.

Dr. Loth's base consisted of four large tents, flanked by several high mounds of excavated earth, rain-spread into mud which squelched beneath their feet as they walked towards the largest tent.

"Been here before?" asked Cam softly.

"Once," agreed Ewton. "He has half a dozen men working during the week – navvies hired for the heavy digging.

"He and a couple of assistants take over when the delicate work begins." Ewton stiffened. "There's Loth – coming from his tent."

"Just introduce me," murmured Cam. "Say I wanted to see a digging site, and keep quiet after that."

The small, middle-aged doctor waited while they approached. He wore rubber boots on his feet, and was busy polishing his rimless glasses with a large white handkerchief. As they reached him, he put on the glasses and gazed at them with puzzled curiosity.

"Major Ewton! I didn't expect you here tonight – how is your wife?"

Bob Ewton mumbled that Gerda was feeling a little better, then introduced Cam.

"Of course," beamed Dr. Loth. "You are welcome, Mr Gordon, though I am afraid that so far we have made no great discoveries. A digging project is a matter of luck – following clues, not knowing whether it will take days or months to strike the correct solution. Perhaps you understand the difficulties of such an investigation?"

The words were innocent, but they might – Cam kept his own manner equally friendly. "What do you hope to locate, Dr. Loth?"

"Traces of a people who were here before the Roman invasion," said the other man. "So far, we have a few pieces of crude pottery, bones, similar things."

He led them to the nearest of the earth mounds, and gestured to a ten feet deep trench running on its faraway side. "These trenches are random – all we know is that what we seek is around here somewhere."

They strolled back towards the tents. Casually, Cam halted by the nearest, lifted the flap, and peered in. The interior was filled with digging tools.

"What's in the other tents?" he asked cheerfully.

"Two are living accommodation – one for myself, the other

for my assistants," said the archaeologist. "The hired men travel here daily. The fourth tent I use as an office."

"Mind if I see?" Without waiting, Cam strode round the canvas tents, looking into each with an air of easy curiosity. "Very interesting," he agreed, his eyes flashing a negative signal towards Bob Ewton. "The Major wasn't sure whether you'd be here or not, Dr. Loth. He thought you might be staying in town."

The archaeologist sniffed in frosty fashion. "That was so, Mr. Gordon. But when Captain Vallon told me he had to return urgently to camp, I was left alone. I decided to come back here. My two assistants are due back shortly – in fact, I plan to have supper waiting them."

There was no invitation to stay to share the supper. Cam and Bob Ewton said good-bye, returned to the car, and drove back through the mud to the main road.

"What do you think?" The major's expression was strained.

"Everything seemed as it should, Bob." Cam shrugged. "He could be lying – but why should Captain Vallon have to return so urgently to camp soon after you told him you wouldn't be staying in town? What's Vallon's job at the experimental range?"

"Attached to signals," growled Ewton. "He was posted here about three months ago after a spell of duty in Malaya – at least, that's what he told me."

"Let's find out if he did go back to the range," said Cam, his eyes hard. "If not, then an interesting situation could exist." His foot pressed down on the accelerator.

Ten minutes later, they reached the high-fenced boundary of the experimental range and slowed to a halt at the main gate. The sentry snapped a salute as he recognised Ewton.

"Evening, sir. Lucky you turned up. There's an officer just arrived in the guardroom, looking for you."

"Captain Vallon?" queried Ewton.

The sentry shook his head. "Haven't seen him all evening, sir."

They left the car and went into the guardroom. A khaki-clad officer turned from the telephone as they entered. Cam felt an immediate foreboding – it was Captain Hatson, the Special Investigation Branch man who had launched him on the case.

"Captain –"

Hatson ignored him. "Major Ewton, you're under arrest," he snapped. "I don't think I need to tell you the charges."

Bob Ewton's mouth fell open and he stood, too stunned to reply.

"Captain, I think you're making a mistake," said Cam Gordon. "We came here looking for an officer called Vallon. He's the one who may have questions to answer."

Hatson shook his head. "Sorry, Gordon. Vallon is one of my men. He's been working under cover here on special security ever since the gunsight project began." He turned towards Ewton. "Major, do you deny posting a letter this evening?"

"No." Bob Ewton was bewildered. "It was my wife's - why?"

"The letter was typewritten," said Hatson grimly. "It contained a microdot message - on the heatflash sight. Where is your wife?"

"That's why we came," Cam told him. "Vallon may know."

Captain Hatson shook his head. "That's no help, Gordon. Hatson's job was to tail Major Ewton. He's in hospital now, with a fractured skull, unconscious - and not expected to live."

"What happened to him?" demanded Cam, the change in the situation taking him by surprise. "And this letter - are you sure it is the one posted by Major Ewton?"

Captain Hatson leaned back against the guardroom wall, his face grim and angry. "That we found Vallon was sheer luck. He was dumped from a car on a side road five miles from here - thrown into a patch of bushes. He'd probably have died there, undiscovered, if a poacher out with his dog hadn't seen the car stop, and gone over afterwards to find out what was going on. If Vallon dies, it's murder."

"I didn't know Vallon was a security man," said Bob Ewton, still dazed.

"Naturally," said Hatson bleakly. He pursed his lips. "We didn't even tell Mr. Gordon, to avoid - complications. Vallon telephoned me twice this evening. The first time, he reported that you, Major Ewton, had taken Gordon to your home. The second time, he said he'd seen you leave the house, post the letter - and that he was going to follow you. Well, we got the letter, addressed to Norway." The SIB man turned to Cam. "You know the microdot technique?"

Cam nodded. "Microscopic photographs. You cut the final print with the point of a hypodermic needle, stick it on a typewritten letter, and it is the same size as a full stop. At the other end, they enlarge the photograph back to regular size."

"We've already done that," said Hatson. "It contained details

of last week's test programme on the gunsight. Can you explain that away, Major?"

Ewton stood silent.

"I saw Bob being handed that letter by his wife," Cam admitted. "But don't jump to conclusions – I did that once already today, about Captain Vallon, and was wrong." Quickly, he sketched Ewton's story for the SIB man.

Captain Hatson listened, his manner thawing a little. "If this is true, you were in a difficult situation, Major," he admitted. "Look, I'll come straight to the point. In the face of all that has happened, do you trust your wife?"

"Implicitly."

"But the letter?"

Over by the guardroom window, Cam looked out at his car and then rubbed his chin with one hand. "Let's tackle another angle. After I met the Ewtons at that dog show, Gerda Ewton went back in the hall, saying she'd forgotten something. I went in after her – and saw her talking with Dr. Loth.

"Then she drove home on her own, while Ewton came with me. She was late arriving, and said the car had had a puncture. The wheels were covered in a red mud – the same red mud that's on my tyres now. And we've just come from Dr. Loth's digging site – the soil around here is grey, unless you've dug down really deep!"

Ewton was puzzled. "Cam, when I got the phone message arranging that meeting tonight, the man mentioned you by name – he told me 'get rid of your old army pal, Gordon'."

"Then he had to be working with Dr. Loth!" exclaimed Cam. "Gerda must have told Loth, then Loth told the man who contacted you."

"Which brings your wife back in the picture again," said the SIB man with grave emphasis. "I'm sorry, Major Ewton . . ."

"What do we know about Dr. Loth?" demanded Cam.

Hatson shrugged. "He seems all right. Vallon checked on him when he arrived, and his archaeology background is genuine. Vallon became quite friendly with him – and of course, he has the landowner's permission to re-examine the old Pictish underground house and see if there are others around."

"You mean there is an underground house, one that's been found?" Cam exchanged a glance with Ewton. "I thought Dr. Loth was still trying to locate it."

"No, you've got it wrong." Hatson was confident. "It was

found – oh, almost a hundred years ago, just about the same time as another was located at Chrichton, in Midlothian. I looked up the reference books when I heard about Loth's plan . . . there's a regular underground rabbit warren on that hillside."

"Which he carefully avoided mentioning, snapped Cam. "Is Major Ewton still under arrest?"

Captain Hatson hesitated. "Let's say he's still being questioned," he compromised.

"And the gunsight information which has been escaping isn't fully detailed?"

The SIB man shook his head.

"The answer could be underground at the Pict's house. Gerda Ewton could be there too." He turned towards the door. "Shall we find out?"

Hatson patted his revolver holster, reached over to the weapon rack beside him, and tossed a second holstered pistol towards Cam.

"A good idea," he agreed. Then, slowly, he took a Sten gun from the same rack. "Major?"

Bob Ewton's glance was thanks enough.



It was late dusk by the time they reached the archaeology camp. Cam pulled the car off the road a good quarter mile distance away, switched off the engine, and smiled at his two companions. "Ready for a long, muddy walk?"

Together, they trudged the remaining distance across the hillside while the night grew steadily darker. A twin twinkle of lights ahead marked where the camp tents were situated.

"There's someone over by the nearest tent," Hatson warned.

"He moved in between us and the light."

Cam thought wistfully of his newly cleaned suit, then, like the others, dropped to the ground. They crawled nearer, until the figure was plainly visible – a tall, thin man smoking a cigarette as he strolled casually around the mounds of dug-up earth.

"Guard duty – I'll take him," murmured Hatson, wriggling forward. His uniform blended into the night, and they lost trace of him within a moment or two. Then, from on ahead, they heard a faint thud and a grunt. Soon, Hatson reappeared dragging his quarry by the heels.

"No time for finesse," he apologised. "I didn't give him much more than a tap."

The stranger was already coming round. Cam clapped a hand over the man's mouth to stifle his groaning then held the barrel of his borrowed revolver close under the man's nose.

"One shout, and I'll thump you with this," he warned, letting the cold metal touch the man's skin. "Is Mrs. Ewton down there?"

The man gulped. "Never heard of her."

"No?" Cam gripped the man's arm, saw him wince, and suddenly pulled the man's sleeve up over his elbow. A white bandage was round the stranger's forearm. "The Ewton's dog has sharp teeth," murmured Cam. "Now, listen. I'm not with the army, so I don't have to obey rules.

"I'm going to gag you, and then I'm going to leave you alone with Major Ewton – and he doesn't feel like obeying rules either." He took his tie off one-handed, and Bob Ewton crowded closer, the Sten in his hand.

The man stared at them, saw only cold determination, and paled. "She's in the Pict's house. She's – she's okay."

"Who are you – one of Loth's 'assistants'?" prodded Cam. "Loth and your running-mate – are they down with her?"

The man nodded.

"How do we get in?"

"Through the main stores tent – wooden hatch under a ground-sheet." The reply was just too eager.

"Is that the only way?" Hatson demanded.

Their prisoner hesitated, then, as Ewton pressed still closer, he shook his head. "Escape hole – in a clump of bushes thirty yards over on the right."

They left him there, bound and gagged.

"I'll go in the back way," said Cam. "Hatson, you and Ewton give me a couple of minutes, then come in via the tent hatch. Got a torch?"

Hatson handed over a small pen-light. "You take it – there's bound to be a lamp of some kind in those tents."

Cam headed off in the direction indicated. The patch of bushes was easy enough to find, but the escape hole leading to the prehistoric hideaway was more difficult.

At last he found it, a dark, narrow gap almost jammed by foliage, and wriggled through, flashing the pen-torch beam for a second to get his bearings. The tunnel, walled in rough stone,

damp, little more than man-width, sloped downwards for about twenty feet. Beyond, he heard a murmur of voices – but it was still pitch dark, and another torch-flash showed he was in what had probably been a Pict's spare bedroom – an L shaped room about eight feet broad, walls and low ceiling composed of boulders and slabs of raw stone which, though they'd stood for so long, still looked ready to collapse at any moment. A green canvas sheet covered a bulking mass to one side. Cam lifted the canvas, flashed the torch, and gave a satisfied nod.

He crept a little further, and pale light gleamed ahead. At a small table, beside a bottled gas lantern, Dr. Loth talked quietly to another man. Nearby, Gerda Ewton lay on the stone floor, her back propped against the rough wall, one hand and foot tied close together. She was between him and the two men, which was the way he wanted it.

Any moment. . . . Cam jerked as, instead of the two men coming down from the other end, there was a muffled shot, a second, and then a short, staccato burst from the Sten gun.

Dr. Loth and his companion sprang to their feet. Their eyes turned towards the tent-hatch, a small black automatic appearing in the archaeologist's hand.

"Stay right where you are – don't spoil the picture." Cam stepped out from cover, the revolver, massive by comparison, glinting in the lamplight.

Loth grunted, whirled – and Cam squeezed the trigger. The .38 roared, echoing in the boulder-stone chamber. The bullet hit Loth high in the leg, and he tumbled, dropping the automatic. Seconds later, Bob Ewton burst into the underground room, the Sten gun ready.

"Okay, Cam?" he demanded – then, as Cam nodded, he crossed over to his wife. A little slower, his left arm hanging limp, Captain Hatson appeared behind him.

"The contact man arrived just as we were coming down, Gordon," he winced. "The Sten fixed him – thanks, Major Ewton."

Ewton used a pen-knife to cut his wife's bonds, then glanced over at their prisoners. "Why shoot him in the leg, Cam? Now one of us will have to carry him."

"I aimed for his shoulder," said Cam ruefully. "But I always said a .38 was an unpredictable contraption. Feel all right, Mrs. Ewton?"

The brunette nodded. "Now, yes."

"Want to talk about it?"

"Let it wait - " began her husband.

She shook her head. "It is better now, Bob. These men tell me unless I help them they let the army know I am not Norwegian - that I am a refugee, with relatives behind the Curtain. They said this would get you into serious trouble - even court martial.

"So I take letters they give me, put them in our envelopes, and send them to my adopted parents in Oslo. They know I am in some kind of trouble, and give the letters to a man who calls."

"And I can guess where the letters go from there," Hatson said. "Mrs. Ewton, did you tell them anything about the gun-sight?"

"No - because I knew nothing," she told him. "Tonight, they come to the house, and take me to here. I struggled, and Blot tried to help me. . . ."

"The dog's all right," said Cam. "Captain, there's a load of short-wave receiving equipment in this place. All they had to do was monitor the W.T. chit-chat going on when an experimental shoot was under way at the range."

Ewton made an exclamation. "We should have thought of that - they're near enough to pick up short-range transmissions, and the same trick has been worked abroad, on the frontiers, by both sides. They'd get some stuff that way - and they planned to squeeze the rest of the information out of me." He turned to Hatson. "What happens about Gerda, Captain?"

Hatson rubbed his chin. "I'll work on that - but it won't be drastic, I promise."

*

Next morning, back in the gloomy office in Edinburgh Castle, where they'd first met, the SIB man gave Cam his verdict.

"After last night, my masters are calling it square - provided she sends off another letter to Oslo. Norwegian security can pick up the contact when he collects - though we may suggest it go through, with some not quite accurate detail which could cause useful confusion."

His face darkened. "We checked on Loth, of course. He's a phoney. The real Dr. Loth is probably buried at the foot of one of those excavation trenches."

"How about your security man, Vallon?" asked Cam.

The SIB captain looked happier. "He'll pull through. He's Regular Army – and you know the saying about Regular officers. We're all solid bone from the neck up. It takes more than a thump on the head to kill us!" He sighed. "And now the real work begins, sorting things out with the civil authorities . . . but, thanks, Cam."

Cam Gordon made a half salute, and went out.

© Bill Knox, 1965.

*If you are interested in **TRUE CRIME**
you should be reading*

CRIMINOLOGY

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIME MAGAZINE

CRIMINOLOGY, published every two months at 2s. 6d., presents authentic and vividly-told **FACTUAL** articles on crime and espionage written by **EXPERTS**.

CRIMINOLOGY is not just another crime magazine. It is unique in its field.

IF YOU would like to receive a sample copy of **CRIMINOLOGY**, the International Crime Magazine, send 1s. 6d. (stamps or postal order), to:

**SENTINEL PRESS, CHURCH ROAD, HARTLEY,
DARTFORD, KENT, ENGLAND**

READERS outside Great Britain and Eire may have a sample copy **FREE** on application.

NEW BOOKS

JOHN de SOLA

HISS THE VILLAIN, Michael Booth (*Eyre & Spottiswoode*, 35s.)

A notable panorama of villainy, magnificently illustrated, and a must for every reader who wants a book to keep, and for constant re-browsing.

The whole gamut of melodrama is here, including the wicked Sir Jasper who one likes a great deal more than the grubby villains of much of today's drama. Virtue is gloriously triumphant, and so white that SM7 and the rest of them could not compete, not even with 100 washings; vice is wicked bad and black, but it was for audiences that liked the hokum laid on good and thick, adored a moral, and demanded that true love must overcome all. Come to think of it, it may be exactly what we are missing in entertainment now, where – except in crime plays – dirt is tops, and a pervert makes a better hero than Frank Fearless.

TRIO FOR BLUNT INSTRUMENTS, Rex Stout (*Collins*, 15s.)

For thirty-one years I have been a passionate devotee of Nero Wolfe; on my shelves the first edition of *Fer-de-Lance* has its place of honour with *The Four Just Men*, *The Roman Hat Mystery*, and the other great modern firsts I will yield when limpets yield.

Here is a Wolfe threesome, novelettes which Rex Stout can always contrive with such immense skill. The first and longest tells of an executive who swan-dives from a 10th floor window just before bootblack, Peter Vassos, arrives to freshen his footwear, and so initiates the story. The second tale shows Archie Goodwin's neck well (if innocently) out, and Wolfe pontificating on sweet corn and solutions with all the old skill. The last story is perhaps the best (if one must make a choice); a four-in-hand necktie arrives for Goodwin, well laced with bloodstains which tips him into as nice a problem as you can meet in a row of library shelves.

This Rex Stout is unfailingly good, and what else can you expect from the man who once dogmatised splendidly to the

effect that, 'My theory is that people who don't like mystery stories are anarchists'.

A LONG COOL DAY IN HELL, Gerald Kersh (*Heinemann*, 18s.)

Mr. Kersh is another very clever writer. At times he has given us some brilliant crime stories, notable for their intensely masculine style.

But this book cannot be included. Briefly, the story concerns Lily Star Clarke, a newswoman (the type every old-time reporter loathes). This blonde and painfully smart young woman is sent to trail a billionaire recluse named Reeves, who dislikes being known to the public at all. He is 'unmasked', as it were, and the newswoman is nearly shot after a vigorous race through a narrative even quicker on its feet than she is.

Fundamentally, this is slickly professional and able. But in some fashion it is indecisive, as if Mr. Kersh has been overcome with admiration for some of the diamond-hard American crime writers, but hesitated in fighting them seriously on their own ground.

MRS. MURPHY'S UNDERPANTS, Frederic Brown (*Boardman*, 12s. 6d.)

There used to be a very good comic artist who sat on the top of a step-ladder to get an unusual, other-worldly perspective on his subjects at ground level.

Frederic Brown's stories have always contained this quality, plus an oddly Poe-sian slant on the mundane. He repeats the trick in this tale of Ed, and his uncle, Am Hunter, a pair of Chicago private eyes, who get involved with the fearsome Vince Dolan and his entirely charming family. The plot matters less than the book's excellent, and expert, treatment – the abstract Mrs. Murphy, bless her, flits here and there like King Charles' head.

And since her couplets are as remarkable as her underpants, let me ask one, too: 'Who put Ed and Am in Mrs. Murphy's jam?'

THE UNPROFESSIONAL SPY, Michael Underwood (*Macdonald*, 15s.)

Nobody knows his law better among crime writers than Mr. Underwood, who never yet turned out a bad book.

In this Martin Ainsworth has no sooner finished an unsuccessful defence of an accused spy at the Central Criminal Court, than he is co-opted himself on an Intelligence job. Having, before World War Two, been the boy friend of a German woman named Elli Seidler, he is asked to renew the acquaintance. She is in the East German Intelligence Service and has been impervious to all attempts to trap her, but a former lover might succeed . . .

Baldly, the nub of the book sounds trite. It is anything but. Mr. Underwood knows every inch of Berlin; he writes a sort of crime-cum-spy story with verve and grim humour, and, above all, manages to present real life in the raw without dragging in the kitchen sink.

THE MAN IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT, Ira Walker (*Abelard-Schuman*, 13s. 6d.)

An innocent man is found guilty of manslaughter, and commits suicide. His father reckons that one of the jury that tried his son must have persuaded his fellows to bring in their verdict. A private eye is engaged to dig out the juror.

The suspects (which seems as good a word as any) are gathered in an aeroplane, and the sorting out begins until the final unmasking and, I must confess, a most adroit twist.

Somehow or other this took me back to the days of J. S. Fletcher; the conception is dated (air travel notwithstanding) that so very capable a writer should have pondered more carefully before writing it.

A SCATTER OF PAPERBACKS

CANARY MURDER CASE, The, S.S. Van Dine (*Panther*, 3s. 6d.)

This splendid old grandpappy of the modern whodunit features the great Philo Vance, is based on the real-life 'Dot' King murder. It dates back to 1926 when Vance had a vogue and a fame easily equal to that of James Bond.

CLOSE QUARTERS, Michael Gilbert (*Hodder & Stoughton*, 2s. 6d.)

One always approaches Michael Gilbert with the feeling that he could not write a bad book if he tried. And *Close Quarters* is of

the time when *Smallbone, Deceased* – so gentle and worldly – was still fresh to us. So very readable.

FRANKENSTEIN, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (*Corgi*, 2s. 6d.)

Scarcely a whodunit, but welcome indeed. The monster was first constructed in 1818, and still manages to strike terror into the guileless heart (if one could *only* manage to disperse the shade of Boris Karloff, hovering off-stage).

MIRROR FOR MURDER, A. Charles Franklin (*Corgi*, 5s.)

A fine, remarkably compassionate survey of murder over the past 250 years. There is a kindness about Mr. Franklin when he deals with sick murderers which contains an understanding and tolerance worthy of better subjects.

SAINT v. SCOTLAND YARD, THE, Leslie Charteris (*Hodder & Stoughton*, 3s. 6d.)

Again no whodunit, but long shorts presenting Mr. Templar, riding off in all directions; versifying (*must* he?); putting the police in their place and rescuing maidens' Mr. Charteris never misses a trick, though he occasionally strains.

EW BOOK MART

*A service for EWMM readers without
charge for buying, selling, or
exchanging any books by*

EDGAR WALLACE

OFFERED: *The Thief in the Night*, Readers Library (damaged spine), and *The Man Who Was Nobody*, Ward Lock 1929 ed., foxed. Exchange, what have you? Box A50, EWMM.

EARLY EW's and war-time paper covers (1914–18). Anything up to 1925 considered for purchase. Collector, Flat 1, Nyewood House, The Avenue, Nyewood Lane, Bognor Regis.

Readers Say . . .

Extracts from current letters. Opinions expressed are those of the writers. Publication in this open forum does not necessarily mean that EWMM agrees with any views offered.

Do Vampires Care?

Since forensic scientists have assured us that blood incompatibles can be used to poison people, if injected into unwilling hosts, it prompts me to wonder how on earth Dracula and his brood managed. Wouldn't they be in trouble, sucking blood belonging to other groups than their own?

Chesham Bois, Bucks.

E. M. E. TURNER

● *The question defeats itself, sir. Dracula and his colleagues drank blood (sic!) which, judging by what happened to various human blood drinkers in history, is not the same as injecting it.*

Alibis

Would it be possible for your most interesting magazine to publish some stories that illustrate the fascinating angle of alibis in crime. The cast-iron alibi is, of course, in itself the perfect defence, but it has its own inherent weakness in that no one can usually remember what they were doing at any particular time or place.

London, S.W.1

NICHOLAS E. BROOKS

Story Suggestions

I vastly enjoyed your 'period piece', an editorial flash of inspiration and something quite 'new'. Can you extend the idea to some of the forgotten 'not quite period pieces' like, for example, *Cleek of Scotland Yard*, from just before World War One, Richard Marsh's *Judith Lee* (about the same time), and Anna Katharine Green's *Ebenezer Gryce*? I am sure many readers like myself would send you bouquets.

London, W.8.

J. F. PALING

● *The editorial cheek is duly pink with gratification. Alibi stories will be kept in mind, but the 'not quite period pieces' may contain copyright difficulties. Investigations will be made.*

Science v. Crime

With so many scientific aids for beating the criminal, and with technology constantly advancing, it seems terrible to know that the British crime rate has climbed so high. The gap between the numbers of crimes and the numbers of arrests makes one wonder if our police are any good.

Port Isaac, Cornwall.

MAURICE HANFORD

● *Science has limited uses. There are only two certain deterrents to most crime – enough policemen on the beat and a magistracy capable of administering tough and lasting punishment.*

Genius in Old Jeans

As a working journalist and interviewer, both here and in the U.S.A., I have always been surprised at the difference between crime writers and other expert writers of fiction.

The former are usually tidy, well-tailored, trim, and with clean nails. Their clothes are conservative and they are invariably solid citizens in outlook and habit.

Those who write the so-called 'straight' fiction (from psychology to love) often seem to be scruffy in appearance, sometimes dressed in jeans or tramp's clothing. They are Leftish in tendency and perfectly capable of behaving as the public darkly suspects all artists *do* behave.

Liverpool 1.

JOHN KATONA

● *Generalisations, sir, and fighting words which may well bring wrath on your head. But, as we gaze proudly on our clean nails, we raise the neatly brushed hat of collective crime writers to you.*

Fingerprints

The People newspaper published some very strong claims that fingerprints can be forged. I had always believed the system, after so long, is infallible. Is it possible that forgery can now be achieved successfully?

Reading, Berks.

E. F. CROWDY

● *The People is welcome to its illusions, but you may feel reassured in the knowledge that it is quite impossible to forge latent fingerprints – and this is the vital factor – so that they will fool experts.*

It's a gift-

to yourself, a subscription to *Edgar Wallace Mystery Magazine*. It means that we will post your copy direct to you every month. And if you would like somebody else to share your pleasure with you, why not take up a subscription for a relative or friend? Months of enjoyable reading will come out of this gift . . . pamper yourself for once!

**To the Publisher, Edgar Wallace Magazines, Ltd.,
4, Bradmore Road, OXFORD, U.K.**

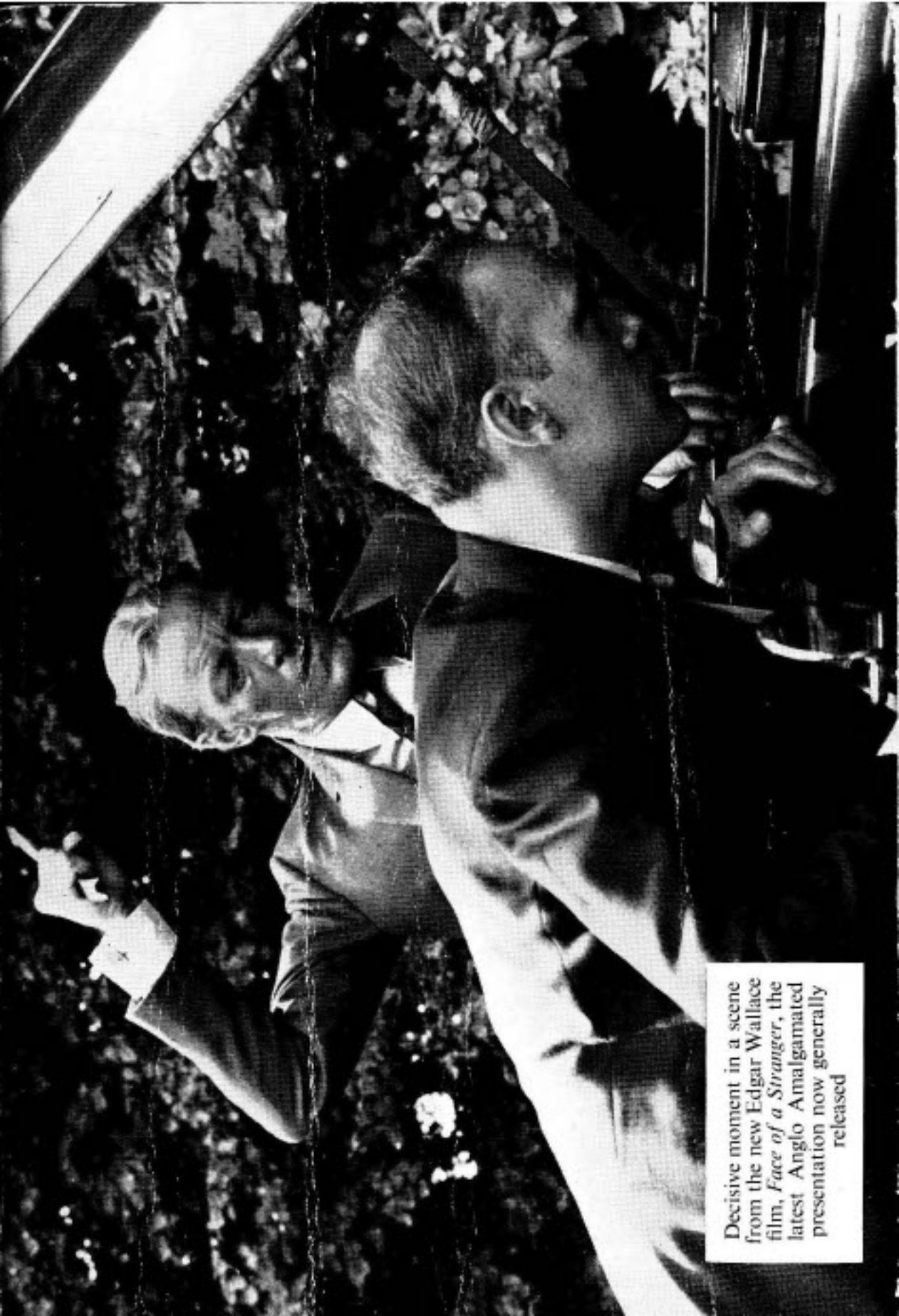
Please send *EWMM* for 12 months (40/-) 6 months (20/-)
I enclose cash cheque money/postal order.

(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

NAME

ADDRESS

(COMMENCE WITH ISSUE No.)



Decisive moment in a scene from the new Edgar Wallace film, *Face of a Stranger*, the latest Anglo-Amalgamated presentation now generally released