

**REAL**

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# ***Police Story***

**MAGAZINE**

**RED OGRE  
of the  
DANUBE**

**ORIENTAL  
VENGEANCE**





# CRIME CRUSADERS



Harry Brunette reaches the end of the trail after a desperate gun battle.

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# Daring Detective

15c



### Table of Contents

ORIENTAL TRAGEDY .....	by Matt Walker	4
China—An actor-headsman wreaks his deadly vengeance on-stage.		
MURDER FROM THE GRAVE .....	by John Powell	18
Hungary—A madman deals in wholesale death at the command of a dead Svengali.		
HONEYMOON DEATH .....	by Harry F. Mullett	27
Italy—Grim drama, bathed in scarlet, is enacted at a wealthy villa.		
RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE .....	by Edward S. Sullivan	41
Rumania—A crime classic that challenges belief is the bake-shop massacre.		
HORROR IN THE BELL TOWER .....	by Frank Ward	56
U.S.A.—Brilliant police work brings to bay a murdering Romeo.		
MAD MONSTER OF MORTNAS .....	by Franz Duval	66
Sweden—Seven died before Stockholm's saga of death came to a crimson climax.		
HARVEST OF THE DEAD .....	by Jack Bond	80
U.S.A.—Indiana's she-fiend comes to the end of her trail with one murder too many.		
CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS .....	by Carl Shultz	88
Germany—A sinister killer taunts police with maps directing them to his victims' graves.		
POISON ALIBI .....	by Peter Levins	109
England—A request for cremation bares a horrifying murder plot.		
SCARLET RIDDLE OF THE BRITTANY COAST .....	by Joseph Csida, Jr.	117
France—Sensational revelations follow an official probe into a mysterious death tragedy.		

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# ORIENTAL

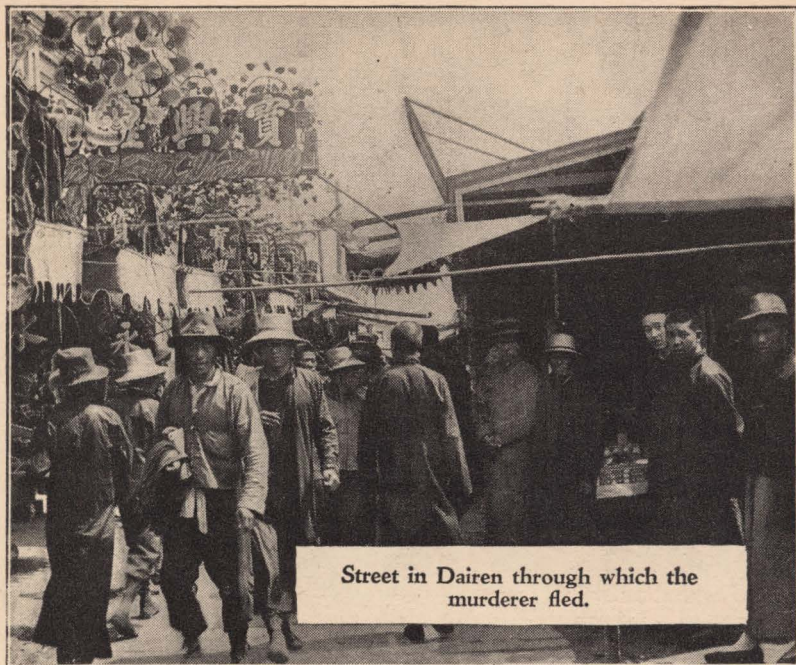
**T**HE THREE-MAN orchestra on the stage of the Celestial Theater of the Golden Nightingale began bringing its interminable music to a noisy climax. The gongs reverberated with a brassy moan, the one-stringed fiddle squealed in a frightened tremolo, and the ratskin-covered drums

boomed like an accompaniment to a weird jigadoodn.

The large audience, which had sat for nearly five hours watching what to an Occidental observer would have been an unending play, straightened on the hard benches, tense and enthralled as the huge man with the wicked

## On-Stage Vengeance of





Street in Dairen through which the murderer fled.

# TRAGEDY

By MATT WALKER

face lifted his tremendous ax for a blow at the cringing bejewelled woman kneeling, pleading, before him.

With a fierce and meaningful look at the man also cringing on

the floor, the ax-man brought down his blade with a terrific swish.

The woman's head seemed to hang from the sleek neck an instant then fell to the floor with a

## the Actor-Headsmen



soft thud, rolling grotesquely.

There was a murmur of appreciation in the audience.

Never before, they told each other, had any actor been so magnificent, never had they seen such superb drama.

The man kneeling on the stage let out a blood curdling yell as the other strode over to him and raised his red-stained weapon.

The audience laughed gleefully. They liked to see the papier-mâché stage heads fall!

The ax-man held the blade poised in mid-air and stared down at his victim making terrifying faces. Suddenly the ax fell and in a trice the head rolled to rest beside the woman's.

Jen Sing, his black-bearded face painted in the traditional frightening manner of the villains of Chinese drama, gazed out over the audience with a sinister leer.

It is not the custom in China for an actor to take a bow for a job well done, but Jen Sing did just that.

Behind him the stage hands, garbed in black to appear "invisible" to the audience, casually began to shift some props for the next act. Suddenly one of them, whose job was to pick up and care for the fake arms, legs and heads that nightly add such a gruesome touch to Celestial drama, stopped midway in the act of reaching for the woman's head.

Blood! Blood, oozing out

where no blood should be!

With horrified eyes he turned toward the prostrate man and saw blood trickling from his still stock.

For a second the stagehand stood petrified, then dashed madly off the stage with a wild shriek.

This was a cue for Jen Sing. With one more look at his appreciative audience he stalked off-stage amid a buzz of jabbered admiration.

One of the stage hands, squatting on his haunches, began dangling a butterfly on the end of a bamboo pole to give the effect of spring in the next scene. Idly he began to wonder why the actor and actress lying on the stage did not get up and walk off, as is the custom, there being no curtains in the Chinese theater to denote the end of an act. Then he noticed one of the many mongrel dogs which wander about the audience and on the stage at will, standing with its hair raised and sniffing the prostrate actress.

The audience, too, was idly watching the dog. And then they saw the blood. They had not witnessed stage acting. They had seen murder!

By the time the police arrived the theater was a bedlam, with people battling to get close to the stage and see the bodies, and others fighting to get through the crowd to the door.

Jen Sing had disappeared.

There were a thousand places



## ORIENTAL TRAGEDY

where the actor could hide, but police soon decided that he would not be likely to stay in Dairen, Manchuria, that hot August night in 1935.

From the theater manager they learned that Jen Sing, one of the finest actors in China, had that day arrived in Dairen from Peiping for a limited engagement. Police decided that his next most logical move would be to go back to the Imperial City, where he would be under the protection of Chinese authorities who were ever loathe to surrender criminals escaping the jurisdiction of the Japanese in Manchuria.

The crack South Manchuria express, *Asia*, the fastest train in the Orient, was just chuffing out of the station on its 13-hour journey to Harbin when police arrived at the depot.

A diminutive Japanese detective, Ozubu Kazuichi, managed to grab the hand rail of the last car and swung aboard.

"Watch the Shanghai trains!" he shouted to his surprised comrades on the platform.

The others—Japanese and Manchu officers patrolling the Chinese-populated Japanese city—waited for the southbound train, studying faces as they kept sharp eyes on the ticket windows.

Detective Kazuichi, who had been born in Dairen and knew the dialect better than he did his native Japanese tongue, paid little

heed to the first and second class carriages as the train roared through the night.

Reaching the third class cars in the front, he began to observe each face closely as he appeared to be struggling to find a place on the hard wooden seats. He was looking for a man with grease paint on his face. Jen Sing had had scant time to get out of his ornate and complicated costume, let alone time to take more than a few hasty daubs at his painted face while hurrying through the seething streets in his flight from the theater.

Although the sleuth realized that there was little possibility that the man had taken the *Asia Express*, heading hundreds of miles away from Peiping, the actor's home, he was playing a strong hunch. While the detective was watching the train leave the depot he had suddenly remembered that Jen Sing was to appear in the Russianized city of Harbin after his Dairen performance.

Kazuichi had reached the second coach behind the baggage car when a commotion flared up in the crowded aisle ahead of him. A group of soldiers, on board to protect the train from *hunghudtze*, or Manchu bandits, was engaged in helping the conductor struggle with a massive Chinese passenger.

The man was dressed in conservative Chinese garb with an expensive fur-lined European

coat over his blue silk jacket and trousers.

"Let me go, I tell you. I've got money for the fare!" the man was shouting.

"Why did you get on without a ticket, eh?" the conductor repeated for the third or fourth time. "It's against the rules. We'll throw you off!"

"But I've got money—" the man started to reply when a soldier let his fist fly into the man's jaw. The man sat down hard in the lap of two women. His feet flew into the air and off one foot flew a slipper. It landed at the detective's feet and he picked it up, curious.

It was not a regular Chinese street shoe, but was gaudily embossed, a stage shoe!

The detective edged his way through the crowd and brusquely told the soldiers to leave the man alone.

One of them turned with a snarl and was about to raise his fist when the little sleuth whispered with a hiss:

"In the Mikado's name: police!"

The soldier's expression turned to a sickly grin. He didn't like civilians. Yet, although in the uniform of the Mikado's troops in an alien land, he had been trained from youth to respect the police as servants of the Emperor, whose words were uttered through the lips of the police as a guidance to naughty subjects.

The soldier bowed slightly and issued commands to the others. One of them seized the huge Chinese by the coat collar and yanked him quickly to his feet.

"Police," he said, quietly. "You'd better behave yourself now."

The Chinese stared contemptuously at the little detective. He almost laughed, but he knew better with such overwhelming odds against him.

Ordering two soldiers to guard the man from behind, the detective said in Chinese: "Come with me," and led the man toward the privacy of the conductor's compartment at the front of the car.

Seated in the cramped quarters, Kazuichi questioned the man.

"You are Jen Sing, the actor?" he asked.

"Yes. Jen Sing, the greatest actor in all China!" the man boasted.

"Where were you going when you got on this train?"

"Harbin."

"Why?"

"I have an engagement to perform at the Willow Tree theater there."

"When?"

"The first day of the Ninth moon."

"Yes; but this is only the seventeenth day of August, the eighth moon," the little detective reminded him. "Why do you hurry so?"



## ORIENTAL TRAGEDY

Jen Sing glowered. "That," he said slowly, "is my concern."

"It is mine, too," replied the detective.

The Chinese was bland. "Why are you questioning me?"

Kazuichi laughed, then politely drew in his breath with a hiss, revealing fine, large teeth under his little bristling mustache. "We make it a point to always question murderers."

"You think I'm a murderer? So!"

"Yes; the actress Tai Ling and the actor Fung. Have you, perhaps, forgotten the little incident of the head chopping in the Celestial Theater of the Golden Nightingale?" The Japanese smiled broadly.

"Oh—that! Well, it was a part of the play, you know. The scene called for it."

Kazuichi shook a pudgy finger under the haughty nose of the actor and said:

"You can't use that excuse to save your neck!"

"No?"

At that minute the express came to a grinding stop. The detective stuck his head out the door of the compartment. There was commotion in the crowded car, and the soldiers ran toward the front door.

"*Hunghudtze!* Bandits!" was the alarmed cry.

Noticing that the soldiers guarding the compartment door

had vanished, Jen Sing hurled his powerful bulk at the little Japanese. Seizing him by the shoulders, the Chinese shook him like a terrier worrying a rat, and gave his head a few hard knocks against the steel wall. The detective struggled helplessly, then was stunned. Dropping the limp body to the floor, the actor streaked out the door, unnoticed by the excited passengers in the car, and dashed to the platform where he dropped to the ground and vanished into the dark Manchurian night.

The bandit scare was a false alarm. The engineer told the worried soldiers that he had seen torches blazing on the tracks ahead and stopped. It turned out that a group of peasants was searching for a missing horse that they thought had strayed into the high *kiaoliang* growing along the tracks. Laughing at what they considered a good joke on the engineer and themselves, the troops swung aboard the train as it slowly started to steam away.

The two soldiers who had been guarding the compartment walked back to resume their post. They found Kazuichi rubbing his aching head, muttering curses in Japanese and inserting Chinese words when his own tongue proved not lusty enough. Most of his language was aimed at the two soldiers.

Jen Sing hid in the high grasses as the *Asia Express* moved off. As it rounded a far curve the lights

on the rear coach winked a merry good-bye. The actor, minus the slipper that he had accidentally kicked off in the train, slowly emerged from his hiding place, wondering which way to turn. He saw the torches of the peasants bobbing along on the other side of the tracks, and hailed them.

"*Hai! Hai!*" came back their answer. "Who are you? What do you want?"

Jen Sing called back that he had been left behind by the train when he got off to see what was happening.

It seemed a likely story to the dull peasants, who never stopped to consider that it would be foolhardy, indeed, for an unarmed civilian to go poking his nose into a possible bandit trap.

"Come with us," one of the peasants invited. "There are no more trains tonight. Besides, they don't stop here, anyhow."

"Where is the nearest town?" asked Jen Sing, appearing over the tracks.

"There is a village about ten *li* off."

Ten miles. Jen Sing knew he couldn't walk that far on unknown roads on a dark night and with only one shoe.

"Thank you," he said after a moment. "I'll go with you tonight and tomorrow, perhaps, I can get another train."

"We are looking for a horse,"

one of the farmers explained by way of conversation.

Jen Sing limped along on his shoeless foot as the peasants led the way over rough trails between soy bean fields to a desolate little clutter of huts in a large clearing. One of the peasants bade him enter the largest hut, which was filled with sleeping children and several garrulous women shouting at each other in a loud sing-song. Also in the crowded one-room shack were several lean dogs and a sow, suckling a litter of piglets in a dirty corner. It was not yet midnight.

That night Jen Sing peacefully slept on a bundle of rags on a *K'ang*, a platform which extended along the side of the room. He had never slept on anything quite as filthy and like it before, being used to a comfortable carved teak bed in his palatial Peiping home. But the strain of the day numbed him. His mind was untroubled by his dastardly crime of a few hours before.

\* \* \*

Detective Kazuichi had not been too hampered by a splitting headache to move quickly in an effort to recapture the actor.

Although the *Asia Express* made few stops, the train slowed down at a fairly large town a few miles from where it had been halted by the bandit scare. Kazuichi dropped off and hurried into the railway telegraph office.



## ORIENTAL TRAGEDY

Wiring the police in Dairen, he requested that "bandit-suppression" troops be asked to scour the countryside in the vicinity where Jen Sing had escaped. At dawn soldiers began a careful canvass of peasant huts in a wide area on both sides of the SMR tracks.

But the hunt was to no avail. After three days the army barracks reported to the Dairen police that the killer apparently had either not gotten off the train, as reported, or had slipped through them and found a safe and distant haven.

But Kazuichi was not so sure. Retracing his way back along the tracks he remembered the group of peasants who had been out looking for their strayed horse. He knew that they must live in the vicinity. Teaming up with a Chinese police officer, he began a systematic tour to outlying farmer huts. The Chinese, Wong, was disguised as a farmer. As he approached each peasant he inquired if he had lost a horse recently.

Meanwhile Jen Sing, believing he was fairly safe where he was, decided to stay on with the peasant family for a few days and let the chase die down. He confided in the farmer that, as he was a stranger in Manchuria, he would like to observe the life of the people. Extracting a bill from his money bag he persuaded the peasant to let him stay.

"You have a nice life here," he

said flatteringly. "It will do a city man like me a great deal of good to get close to the soil. Give me some old clothes and I will help you till and harvest."

The farmer grinned at him toothlessly. "But why, master? You are rich. I saw just now in your purse more money than I or my sons or my son's sons could earn from the earth in our lifetimes!"

"Never mind that," commanded Jen Sing. "I like it here and I am going to stay here. And if anyone asks you foolish questions about me, you must say that I am a cousin from Whang-po, driven north by the famine. Do you understand?"

"Yes, master," replied the farmer, not understanding at all.

A few days following this conversation Jen Sing was idly lolling in the courtyard, watching the farmer's few thin hogs rooting about the edges of the hard earthen platform where the millet was threshed. A stranger quietly approached from behind.

"Pray, brother, have you lost a horse?"

Jen Sing turned in surprise. "Why, no, I have no horse." Forgetting for the moment that his host had found him while helping his neighbors hunt for such an animal, he regarded the question as ridiculous.

"I found a fine animal in my field," the stranger answered, his

face a blank. "I dare not keep it unless I can find its owner, who must be somewhere around here. I have inquired for six *li* around now."

At that moment the peasant came up from the field. "What do you want, stranger?" The farmer was suspicious. Marauding bandits often sent spies ahead to determine whether the risk of raiding a farm was worth the reprisals of the soldiers.

Jen Sing, too, was suspicious. Realizing that the two men must live within a few miles of each other and yet were unacquainted, he tried to change the subject.

"He doesn't want anything. He's just asking crazy questions!" the actor replied.

"I found a horse," said the stranger quickly.

"Was it white?" asked the farmer eagerly.

"No; brown."

"Ah, then, it is not my brother's. He lost a white one seven nights ago. Bandits got it, I guess, although I have seen none around."

The stranger regarded Jen Sing calmly. "How long have you been here?"

The actor looked at him sullenly. "Two days," he lied. "That's why I didn't know about the horse. I just came to live with my cousin here because of the famine in the south at Whang-po. It's bad there, all right."

12

The stranger's eyes twinkled. "Good actor, aren't you?"

"What do you mean?" demanded Jen Sing.

Before the other could answer Detective Kazuichi emerged from behind the hut.

"Nice work, Wong. That's our man!"

Jen Sing knew he was trapped. Scowling he watched the diminutive detective scurry toward him, grinning broadly. He felt a bracelet of cold steel snap over his wrist.

"They want to see you in Dairen, Jen," remarked Kazuichi. "They have arranged for you to appear in a little drama in the new District Courthouse."

Wong gave the big actor a shove from behind as the detective tugged. "Come along," said the Japanese.

Jen Sing balked a second and then, with Oriental fatalism, walked away meekly, without even a backward glance at the dazed farmer. That night he was lodged in a cell in Dairen charged with murder.

There was little formality in the arraignment of the actor and he was scheduled for an early trial before a Japanese judge. At this Jen Sing protested. He desired to be heard on his home soil. Several days later a Chinese lawyer, wearing a trick suit of clothes cut on the nattiest lines of New York's garment district, came up from



## ORIENTAL TRAGEDY

Shanghai. He had studied law at the University of Washington and had observed all the tricks through his thick-lensed tortoise shell glasses. He moved that the trial be transferred to Peiping.

But the people of Dairen whose imagination had been inflamed by the bizarre theater murder, insisted that the trial was their show and demanded to see it. There is always a drama with an undercurrent of tragedy and passion in a murder trial, whether it is staged in the East or the West. And Dairen is a modern city built in the manner of the Occident, and it likes its modern thrills.

When Jen Sing was first brought back from his country refuge the front pages of the newspapers screamed the news. Before midnight on the day that he was arraigned there were more than 50 curious trial devotees waiting on the steps of the pin-nacled courthouse. By 4 a. m. the crowd had swollen to more than 100, and when the courthouse doors were opened at 7:30, more than 400 tried to surge into the building, although the killer was not due to go before the bar until after 10.

Such was the temper of the people.

And so swift is Japanese justice in its puppet realm of Manchuria that Jen Sing's lawyer was afraid.

Acting quickly, he sent a plea to Peiping pointing out that the

Japanese were liable to deprive China of one of its greatest actors. He stressed the point that truly great actors were rare and becoming even scarcer with the advent of Occidental moving pictures and other imported forms of entertainment. On grounds of patriotism and in the name of a fast dying art of Ancient China, he urged that Peiping insist on conducting the trial of its own famous resident. He intimated that possibly he could be spared for the benefit of the drama.

The plea struck a responsive chord. Negotiations for the transfer of the trial immediately got under way. Although the Japanese hesitated to let the man out of their jurisdiction, they finally agreed after several weeks of patient argument. They were assured that the actor would be given a fair trial on Chinese standards, which are high.

Hundreds of police were required to escort the actor to the train as the people of Dairen mobbed the railroad station to try to prevent the extradition. As the express chugged out of the station with the prisoner aboard, a mighty howl of rage and disappointment went up from a thousand throats.

Jen Sing went on trial two weeks later in his native city. Amid all the red and gold finery of the Chinese court, it was more like the theater than a hall of justice. And Jen Sing, feeling very

much at home, suavely stepped into the leading role.

He told an amazing story:

"Ten years ago—in the Year of the Snake—I was married to Tai Ling. Although my parents had selected another bride for me, I was an ungrateful son and spurned their choice. I had seen Tai Ling a great deal among the audiences I played for, and from the stage my heart went out to her. It was love.

"I loved her so much that sometimes, when I saw her laughing eyes regarding me, I forgot how to speak my role. One day I sent her a note by one of the sweetcake men who ply their trade in the audience, asking her to meet me. It was a strange thing to do, but I felt I must meet and know her. She was very pretty.

"Tai Ling met me at the appointed place and time. She was a demure maiden, one could see at a glance. She blushed as she shyly approached the trysting place, like a little wild bird eager for crumbs held in a strange hand. I reassured her.

"After that we met frequently to take long strolls in the hills behind Peiping. The parents of Tai Ling were neither poor nor rich, but respectable. I met them, and Tai Ling and I announced that we wanted to be married. She was 15 years of age at the time.

"Tai Ling's parents were shocked. Our behaviour was not

customary. Besides, they had already selected, some years previously, a young man to be her husband. They were waiting for him to come back from school in America. He was to work for the government and his future was assured. Although I had reached a certain fame at the time, her parents were opposed to my stage profession. But we prevailed upon them, finally, and were married.

"Life was very happy for the next two years. There were no men babies, to be sure, but that failed to disturb us. I had no thoughts of taking another wife.

"In the third year of our marriage, Tai Ling began to take an increased interest in the stage. More and more women were replacing men in the female roles of the ancient theater. Tai Ling recognized that the art of the female impersonator in all the undying roles of the stage of the glorious past was dying out. She began to study plays, and act them out in front of a mirror.

"At first this greatly amused me. She did well, but not as well as a man. But that was to be expected. Finally she began to beseech me to allow her to play female roles opposite me in the plays. I refused gently at first. But her implorations became increasingly annoying.

"One summer we were to present a play which required a female character in a small part. As



## ORIENTAL TRAGEDY

the weather was insufferable, and few people attended the theater, I gave in to Tai Ling's whim.

"'Very well,' I said. 'If you want to make a fool of yourself, and me too, I will allow you to play. If the stray curs that drift in with the audience want to bark at you, you have only yourself to blame.'"

"Tai Ling was overjoyed. She learned her words carefully. Although I was angry with her, deep in my heart I was proud of her. Until these barbarian shadows that talk pictures came into the land, a woman on the stage was unheard of, but I knew the old was giving way to the new—deplorable as it is."

The crowded courtroom was silent, drinking in every word, admiring every gesture as Jen Sing told his story, half acting it out.

The actor continued in his high-pitched, sing-song stage voice:

"Now, it happened that there was this villain Fung playing in the show. He had a role that required him to do considerable conversing with Tai Ling. After they would depart from the stage, he would take her aside and instruct her in various ways of acting. Fung had been a female actor in his youth, and he could teach any woman all the tricks . . ."

The crowd did not titter. It understood perfectly. Jen Sing went on:

"After Tai Ling had played this small role she began to demand other parts, bigger parts. I remonstrated. I reminded her that she had yet failed to present me with any boys to tender to the wants of my spirit in the long days to come. I said that, now that she had been on the stage, and had found out she could act, she should be satisfied and stay home, where women belong. She should think of me and my ancestors and of how lonesome my spirit would be later if there were no sons. She laughed!

"My heart was stabbed by her laugh as cruelly and painfully as it would be with a knife. I vowed I would have another wife.

"Tai Ling laughed again. Mockingly, she said: 'My lord, have another wife. Have two, have ten—and I will have the stage. That will be my life!' Something evil had gotten into the heart of Tai Ling. It is coming from the West into all of China and changing our women, I thought. And I grew sad.

"Tai Ling had her way—she stayed upon the stage. I saw less and less of her. My fame was growing and I was being called from city to city, in the south, in the north, as far west as the Mongol villages and even into Tibet.

"One day I returned to Peiping. Tai Ling was entertaining the actor Fung *in my house!* The breath of a thousand-thousand fiery

dragons seemed to envelope me in a flame of rage. Quickly I hurried away without their seeing me and went to the theater to lock myself in the green room of the actors, where I could struggle with myself and think of what to do. It was such an unheard of thing—I do not know what China is coming to!

"Tai Ling and Fung arrived together one afternoon to appear in a play. I saw them coming and, ashamed for them, avoided them. But some one must have told them I was there . . . ."

Jen Sing took a deep breath and went on:

"The second afternoon I was summoned to the door of the theater by a strange note. It begged my pardon for the informality and begged me to meet the writer at a well-known spot near the Temple of Heaven. It was signed 'An Unknown Admirer.'

"My curiosity was aroused, of course, because few knew that I had returned to Peiping from my tour. I obeyed a strange impulse and went to keep the tryst. When I got there a strange woman was standing under a tree. She hung her head as I approached, and when I drew to within a few feet of her, she handed me a note. Surprised, I took it. Then, from behind the wall of a well four men leaped out and threw me to the ground.

"I must have been stunned, be-

cause I don't know what happened or how I was taken to a strange deserted temple in the hills outside the Great Wall. It was almost dark, and the lights of Peiping were beginning to wink like a million devils at me from below. I demanded from one of the men, who was making a fire in the shelter of a tomb, why I had been brought there.

"'Read your letter,' he grumbled as he bent to fan the blaze.

"I found the letter, which one of them had tucked carefully away in my jacket. It said that Tai Ling and Fung were running away together, and that I would be freed by the four men as soon as they had a chance to escape from Peiping.

"I was held prisoner for three days by the kidnapers. They were big men—Manchus—and they refused to say a single word to me. I tried to bribe them and they threw my money in my face. I swore then by every evil ghost in China that I would have my revenge.

"That was four years ago. I never heard of Tai Ling or Fung again. Last August I was invited to appear at the Celestial Theater of the Golden Nightingale in Dairen. The play was one of my favorites. Trouble on the railroad held up the train, and I telegraphed that I would be delayed but that, if the actors knew their roles, we could present the play



## ORIENTAL TRAGEDY

without any rehearsal. I did not even know who was playing the parts.

"The train arrived in Dairen in just enough time to allow me to get into my costume. I heard my cue and dashed onto the stage—

"There were Tai Ling and Fung, playing the roles of clandestine lovers, and I was playing the part of the outraged husband.

"So," concluded Jen Sing, "what would I do but roll off their heads as the play demanded—?"

There was deep silence from the crowd. Jen Sing sat calm, evidently enjoying himself. The judge peered at him through his tortoise shells. Then he cleared his throat and said an amazing thing:

"Jen Sing, as an outraged husband who has been kind to an undeserving wife, you probably

were within your rights in avenging a terrible stain upon your name and your ancestors. But—"

The judge stopped, picked up a peacock fan and waved it for a moment.

*"But—you should not have done such an act in public!"*

Once more the crowd shuffled anxiously.

The judge continued:

"We must uphold justice! I condemn you to the same fate as that which you dealt your unfortunate wife and her infamous lover. The sword!"

Two days later, on October 19, Jen Sing, his arms tied behind his back, bowed in the dusty courtyard of the jail. While as many people as could crowd themselves into the yard looked on, the executioner severed his head with one powerful stroke.



# MURDER



## from the GRAVE

By JOHN POWELL

To satisfy an incredible blood lust, this arch slayer took a terrible toll of human lives.

*Horror gripped Central Europe as a madman dealt in wholesale death at the black magic command of a dead Svengali.*

THE shrill whistle of the *Orient Express* shrieked through the night as the crack flyer, roaring west from Constantinople, sped along the banks of the Danube.

The passengers, who had waited up late for the passport inspection at the Yugoslav border, were retiring. Many already were in their berths, enjoying the comforting sway of the train.

As the express flashed through the night none dreamed that they would never reach Paris and its pleasures—that a horrible death

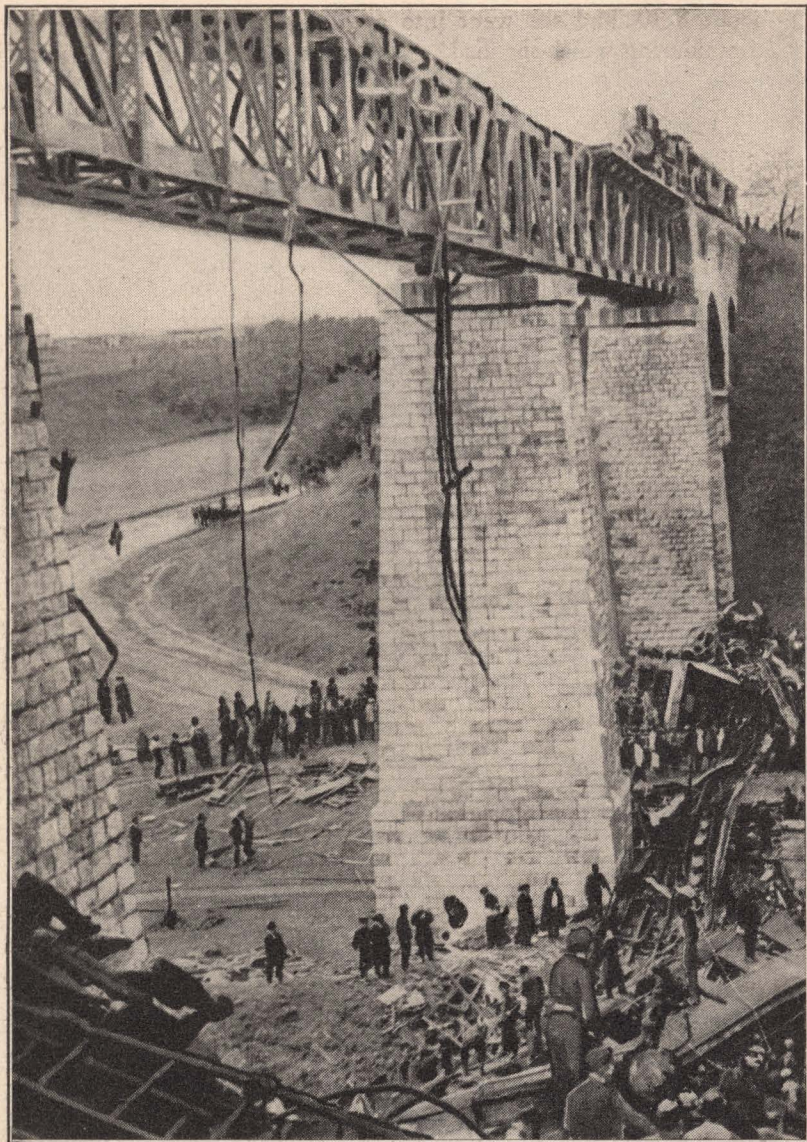
lurked ahead. There was no earthly reason for such a suspicion.

Police investigators today are inclined to scoff when hints of "black magic" are linked to the commission of a violent crime. Yet there is no other explanation for the reign of death and terror inaugurated in central Europe by a fiendish murder monster.

For when the *Orient Express* was bombed from a towering viaduct with a horrible loss of life, it was a dead man's hand that placed the explosives.

Murder from the grave!





The climax of the diabolical killer's career was reached when he bombed the *Orient Express* from the viaduct near Biatorbagy, Hungary. This photo shows the result of the frightful blast.



Black magic in modern Europe!

Never has a stranger story been written into the world's criminal archives than the macabre tale of the fiend who dealt in wholesale murder because a dead man willed it. . . .

Twenty years before the *Orient Express* tragedy a theatrical entertainer who called himself Leo the Hypnotist delivered a lecture on mesmerism before the student body of Teachers' College at Kalocsa, Hungary. Leo, whose real name was John Kiss, had once been an understudy to Svengali, the Magic Hypnotizer, then gone on his own and won fame by his mesmeristic feats in the leading theaters of Europe. He prospered in a period when hypnotism was new and fascinating to the theater-going public.

After the lecture at Teachers' College, the students flocked around Leo. Among them was young Sylvester Matushka, a native of Csantaver, Hungary. The lecturer shook hands with the embryo teachers, thrilled them with his compelling eyes, and basked in their adulation. Sylvester Matushka was particularly impressed.

"Since you have the power to make subjects do your bidding," the youth said, "suppose you tell me something? Who knows? It might affect my whole life!"

The hypnotist laughed. "I'm afraid you flatter me, my lad."

Then he became serious. He took Matushka's hand in his, stared into his eyes, and said, "My young friend, you will become very famous."

Although there had been no apparent attempt to hypnotize him, Matushka nevertheless felt exceedingly strange for several days after this first meeting with Leo. The hypnotist's dark compelling eyes seemed always before him. The man's forceful, confident voice seemed to ring in his brain. But soon the effect, or the condition, passed, and Sylvester Matushka forgot about the incident. Or if he did not forget, at least he thought no more about it.

Matushka finished his schooling and became a teacher. When the war began in 1914 he enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian army. At the end of the great conflict, Matushka won an honorable discharge as a First Lieutenant, and resumed his career as a teacher. During this period, he married; and a year later his wife gave birth to a daughter. Their home life in Budapest seemed unusually happy.

One evening, not long before the baby was born in 1920, Matushka came home with a peculiar look on his face and immediately went into a bedroom and closed the door. His wife spoke to him as he entered the house but he did not answer her, did not seem to hear her. She wondered whether he had been drinking, or whether



## MURDER FROM THE GRAVE

he might perhaps be ill. Finally she went into the bedroom and found him staring at a theatrical poster which showed the face of a man. Underneath were the words, "Leo the Hypnotist."

"Sylvester, what are you doing?" she cried.

He looked at her unseeingly.

"Sylvester, what is the matter with you?"

With that he seemed to recover his senses. He stammered that he had seen this placard in a store and, recalling that he had met Leo years before while he was a student in college, had gone into the store and bought the thing.

"But why?" she asked. "Why should you want it?"

"Why?" He seemed lost for an explanation. "Well, you see, I met him—years ago. He—he said I would be—very famous."

Helen Matushka tossed her head scornfully. "He probably said that to everyone!"

"No doubt, but—" he looked at the face—"see his eyes! Do they not *hold* you? Do they not *speak* to you?"

"Sylvester, have you been drinking?" she demanded.

He shook his head. "No, I have not been drinking but—I—have—been—thinking . . ."

Shortly after this incident Matushka quit teaching. He told his wife that he was meant for bigger things. He would get into some business where he could make a

great deal of money. They would spend their later years in ease and luxury.

At first she demurred but he talked convincingly. Finally she was convinced that he could achieve any goal he might set for himself.

"I am going to be very famous!" he exclaimed. It became a favorite expression.

But fame proved somewhat elusive in the years that followed. Though Sylvester Matushka entered various businesses and earned a fair income, the world remained ignorant of his genius. He dreamed of sudden riches, lay awake nights racking his brain for ideas, inventions, that would bring him wealth and fame. But all of his dreams came to naught.

Then in 1929, a tremendous event happened in this man's life; he again met Leo the Hypnotist.

Leo, for all his talents, had fallen upon evil days. Hypnotists no longer drew the crowds. The practice had passed from the realm of the theater into the realm of medicine. More and more psychiatrists were coming to adopt it in their treatment of mental diseases. But as a form of entertainment, hypnotism was definitely dead.

Leo returned to Budapest an old man, suffering from stomach ulcers. But so far as Sylvester Matushka was concerned, he still retained his uncanny power. The former teacher, now doing rather

well in the real estate business, had only to be in Leo's presence to fall again under his spell.

Experiments have shown that soldiers who saw active service in the war invariably make easy hypnotic subjects and this seemed especially true in the case of Matushka. Leo could cause him to go into a trance instantly and he frequently did. Habitues of Budapest cafes became used to the sight of the two—the aged, ailing Leo and the enslaved Sylvester obeying the master's every command.

One day, in the Cafe New York, a newspaperman, Ernest Daranyi, witnessed a scene which he was to remember vividly at a later day. Leo hypnotized Matushka and caused him to carry out various orders while unconscious. During the demonstration Leo remarked to the reporter, "Do you know, my friend, I believe that I could make Sylvester blow up Parliament!"

"I don't believe it," said Daranyi. "It is all very well for you to make him do small harmless errands, but I think he would rebel at committing a crime."

Leo's dark eyes gleamed. "Oh, you think so, eh?"

"I am not entirely ignorant on the subject of hypnotism," retorted the newspaperman. "I happen to know that no hypnotized subject will follow a suggestion which is contrary to his fundamental personal character."

"You must not believe everything you read in books, my learned friend," replied Leo.

Almost immediately after this incident Sylvester Matushka began to interest himself in certain studies with which he had not previously been concerned. He brought home books on chemicals and explosives, and pored over them far into the night. He also displayed an intense interest in certain phases of railroad engineering, studying such matters as the width of rails, the structure of locomotives and the like.

And during all his studies he kept within view, usually on the table at which he worked, the picture of Leo the Hypnotist.

"I will work out an invention," he muttered. "I will make millions with my invention. I will be famous!"

In the spring of 1930, while fame and fortune still eluded Matushka, another event happened. An Indian fakir visited Budapest and astonished the well-nourished burghers by fasting for 12 days. When he heard about the feat, Leo immediately challenged the Indian to a fasting contest. The bout went on for 18 days, during which neither Leo nor the Indian swallowed a scrap of food, then Leo's life began to ebb and he passed into a coma.

Matushka hastened to the hypnotist's bedside. The doctors told him that there was no hope. Mat-



## MURDER FROM THE GRAVE

ushka was frantic.

Just before Leo died his eyes fluttered open. Once more his gaze caught and held the eyes of his pupil. He mumbled inaudibly, then sank back on his pillow. Matushka's mentor was dead.

But strangely enough, Leo's death had no effect upon his influence over Sylvester Matushka. The hypnotist's eyes seemed ever before him and the confident, compelling voice seemed to govern his every act. Sylvester continued to pore over his books and odd experiments—but what he planned—what strange imaginings were brewing in his brain—no one knew. The hypnotist's disciple kept his own counsel.

On the night of December 31, 1930, an attempt was made to blow up the Vienna-Berlin Express at Anspach, Austria. Fortunately the train was not derailed and the passengers escaped injury. Police immediately launched an investigation; but no clues were found and the case remained a mystery.

Eight months later the case was revived when the *Vienna Express*

was dynamited on August 9, 1931, at Jueterborg, south of Berlin. A frightful explosion hurled the train from the tracks, killing five passengers and injuring more than a hundred. Prominent among the rescuers was a tall, well dressed man of about 40 who worked like a Trojan to extricate the wounded from the twisted wreckage. Blood streamed down the man's face but he seemed insensible to his own wounds. In fact, a close observer might have received the impression that the wounded rescuer seemed acutally to enjoy the ghastly experience!



The wife of the train-wrecker, this pretty woman was ignorant of his activities. Her death, two years after her husband was sentenced to prison, was attributed to the revelations of his horrible crimes.

Central Europe was horrified by the disaster. Police concentrated upon Jueterborg, determined to track down the mad dynamiter. But scarcely had the wheels of official investigation begun to turn when the murderous

train-wrecker struck again.

On the night of September 13, 1931, Europe's crack flyer, the *Orient Express*, crossed the Yugoslav border about eleven p. m., on the run from Constantinople to Paris. Eighty passengers, most of

them asleep, rested comfortably in their compartments as the train roared along the banks of the Danube, bound for Budapest.

Near the town of Bia-Torbagy, Hungary, the train thundered out over a lofty viaduct which spanned a yawning valley. The engineer eased up on his throttle, watchful eyes scanning the gleaming rails ahead.

The speeding train had reached the center of the viaduct, over the deepest part of the chasm. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion, followed by a blinding glare of hellish flame. Blasted up from the track, the ponderous locomotive hung on the edge of the viaduct for an agonizing moment, then hurtled into the depths, with its train of cars, to the hideous accompaniment of rending steel and human cries of terror.

The shattered cars, with their gruesome freight of dead and dying, were strewn about the valley. Less seriously injured passengers squirmed from the twisted coaches and picked their way over the wreckage to aid the survivors. Many were beyond all help. They had died in that terrible plunge from the viaduct to the valley floor.

In the midst of this scene of carnage appeared the figure of a tall man, about 40 years old. His face was streaked with crimson. Blood was plainly flowing from several cuts.

But he seemed not to mind his own wounds. Tirelessly he helped clear away the wreckage and remove the dead and wounded. With his own hands he carried many unconscious and bleeding passengers from the cars. Survivors recalled his stern and commanding voice. He was like a general on a battlefield, a really heroic fellow, for he was not content merely to stand by and give orders—he plunged right into the thick of the horrible business.

And strangely enough, like that other rescuer who had appeared upon the scene of the Jueterborg holocaust he seemed actually to enjoy his work!

Word was quickly flashed to the principal cities of central Europe that the *Orient Express* had been dynamited. Horrified by the diabolical plot which had claimed 23 lives, police united in an effort to track down the murder monster.

Investigators were immediately struck by the similarity between the Bia-Torbagy disaster and the bombing of the *Vienna Express* at Jueterborg, a month earlier. But the absence of any reasonable motive baffled them. Perhaps the plot was political—part of a carefully planned campaign of terror conceived to stir up trouble in the so-called "Cock-pit of Europe." Grimly investigators grappled with the problem as they combed the vicinity of the twin tragedies in a



## MURDER FROM THE GRAVE

search for clues to the mad bomber.

Three days after the disaster Sylvester Matushka called at a Vienna railroad office and filed a claim for 200 pengoes (about \$40) which he said he had carried in his wallet, lost in the wreck. When railroad officials demanded proof that he was on the train, he became indignant. Ask any of the survivors, he exclaimed, and they would remember him. Though he, himself, had been injured, he had worked like a slave, taking the bodies out of the cars and giving first aid to the wounded.

"We do not doubt that you were on the train," said the officials. "All we ask is for some proof."

Matushka waved his arms. "Proof? Proof? I shall get you a doctor's certificate!"

"Where did you buy your ticket? Where did you board the train?"

"You should be glad I am not suing you," said Matushka. "You should be pleased I am asking only for the \$40 I lost. I shall get a doctor's certificate immediately."

He stalked out of the office, the picture of outraged honesty.

Several days later Matushka called upon a physician in Vienna, seeking a certificate. To his intense annoyance, the doctor also asked for proof that he had been on the train. After all, it was not customary for physicians to hand out cer-

tificates to anyone who applied for them. Surely it should be a simple matter for Mr. Matushka to prove that he was actually on the train and in the wreck!

Matushka stormed about the doctor's office, waving his arms and pounding the desk. How dared anyone doubt his word? Was he not a respectable citizen? Most certainly he was on the train! Ask any of the survivors—they had seen him, with blood streaming down his face, toiling away, removing the wreckage, carrying out the mangled bodies!

But the doctor said, "You must have proof."

The Vienna police, celebrated in criminal investigation for generations, heard about Matushka, questioned him briefly, then let him go. Never had they encountered a more indignant fellow. Really, this was too much—first the railroad officials with their foolish demands, then the doctor, and now the police. Had a citizen no rights?

Meanwhile, in Budapest, Dr. Josef Schweinitzer, Captain of Police in charge of the *Orient Express* investigation, learned additional details about Sylvester Matushka's behavior at the scene of the bombing. Following up this lead, Dr. Schweinitzer visited Matushka's home. He made some interesting discoveries there.

Among Matushka's papers were many railroad blueprints and

notes, as well as books on chemicals and explosives. There were blueprints and drawings of a railroad signal invention, designed to minimize the possibility of accidents. There were running schedules of all the important trains on the Continent. Among them was a penciled time-table of the *Orient Express*.

Dr. Schweinitzer rushed to Vienna and asked that Matushka be again summoned for questioning. Detectives brought him to headquarters on October 7, one week after he was first questioned.

The suspect's indignation soon subsided. He wilted under the relentless grilling of Austrian and Hungarian officers. Finally he collapsed.

"I did it, yes," he said, "but I am not to blame!"

"Then who is to blame?"

"Leo. The eyes of Leo made me do it!"

"Explain yourself."

"Leo hypnotized me. He was one of the greatest hypnotists in Europe. He made me do it!"

"A likely story! Where is this Leo?"

"He is dead."

"Dead!" They laughed.

"His body is dead but his power lives. His eyes follow me everywhere! His voice told me to do this!"

His hearers scoffed but investigation proved that there might be

a factual basis for Matushka's story. The police found witnesses who remembered the hypnotist's lecture 20 years before. Plenty of other witnesses told about Matushka's association with Leo in the months before his death on May 13, 1930. Ernest Daranyi, the reporter, distinctly remembered Leo remarking, "I could make Sylvester blow up Parliament!"

Matushka was first tried for the unsuccessful attempt to bomb the *Vienna Express* at Anspach. He was convicted June 17, 1932, and sentenced to six years in prison. After he had served two years, during which his wife died, Hungary succeeded in its efforts to "borrow" him, and he was placed on trial for the *Orient* job on November 6, 1934.

During these proceedings the defendant seemed perfectly normal when he feigned insanity, but when he dropped his mask he appeared the true maniac—or so one observer remarked. Early in the trial, when the prosecutor submitted the poster of Leo the Hypnotist in evidence, Matushka trembled and whispered, "It is he!" The man could not seem to take his eyes from the face of his nemesis.

On November 20 Matushka was found guilty and sentenced to death. However, there was no death penalty in Hungary at the time of the crime, so he is serving life imprisonment instead.



# Honeymoon DEATH

## Lake Como's Tragic Triangle

By  
HARRY F. MULLETT

THE patient little Italian donkey, with the load of firewood on his back, carefully picked his way down the lower slopes of the Alps in the roseate June dawn. Walking behind, prodding the animal with a stick, was the peasant owner, carelessly humming a tune. Below them the deep blue water of Lake Como twinkled up through the dry, bracing air.

In the quiet dawn none stirred save the peasant and his donkey, and the cattle grazing knee-deep in the dewy grass in the lowland meadows below.

But as the peasant descended toward one of the rose-bowered villas that fronted the lake he heard the high pitched laughter of a woman and the deeper chuckle of a man.

The shrieks and laughter grew louder.

"It is the crazy American couple at the Villa Legnazzi," the peasant muttered. "What is it they do now, one wonders?"



Quietly he strode to the donkey's head and laid a restraining hand on the bridle. Then, stepping through the bushes, he gained a point from which he could peer directly into the gardens of the village.

On the greensward, nude as the day they were born, pranced a man and a woman. The woman's abundant brown hair streamed wildly over her white shoulders; her slim legs twinkled as she danced and postured. The man, blowing on a twig in imitation of the Pipes of Pan, gamboled and leered like a faun.

'Round and 'round they whirled in a satyr dance. Then with a wild scream they came together, rolling over and over on the grass.

The peasant spat disgustedly, then crossed himself.

"Drunk again! And so early in the morning. A devil's dance—pah!"

With a smart rap, he prodded the donkey and went his way, muttering to himself. "It is a dance of the devils . . . and they are drunken fools, both. . ."

The peasant was accustomed to rich Europeans and idlers from all the corners of the world who came to enjoy Lake Como. But Americans were new to him. It was 1910, and few Americans had then acquired a desire to travel on the Continent.

As he drew out of earshot, the

wild laughter and the mad shrieks of the 'crazy American couple' became at last only a faint echo that mingled with the droning of the bees. . . .

The soft white moonlight of an Italian June night fell across the lake.

It bathed the tiny fishing boat and its two occupants in a flood of radiance, and was reflected again in the phosphorescent flame that followed the splashing oars.

A nightingale's liquid note sounded from a thicket at the lake's edge, and the music of a guitar hung quietly in the night, from the open window of some villa along the shore.

The boat was opposite the Villa Legnazzi, now, and its occupants could almost see into the lighted rooms, whose undrawn blinds allowed the golden gleam from the windows to stream across the formal rose gardens and lose themselves in the deep shadows at the foot of the little pier.

Suddenly the French windows of the drawing-room were opened, and a man and a woman stepped out on the terrace. The moonlight gleamed on the white arms and bosom of the woman, and sparkled in the tiara of jewels in her hair. The man, a dark shadow beside her, save only for the white splash of his shirt-front, stooped swiftly, seized the woman's hand, and pressed it fervently to his lips.



## HONEYMOON DEATH

From an inner room of the villa a querulous voice fretted:

"Mary! Mary darling! Where are you?"

The woman made some hurried exclamation and stepped within the lighted archway of the windows. For an instant the yellow glow of the lamps shone on the face of her companion—a sallow, sinister face, with burning black eyes under heavy brows. Then the big windows closed behind them, and only their shadows moved across the glass, as they walked into the room.

"It is the beautiful American woman . . . ah! so beautiful. . ." and one of the fishermen blew a kiss from his fingertips toward the lighted windows. His companion laughed meaningly:

"But the man . . . . . saw you the man?"

"The young American husband . . . . . yes?"

"Husband? bah! It was that Russian . . . . . that smuggler. . . . . spy . . . . . how it is he calls himself? . . . . . ah! . . . . . Count Ispalatoff."

"He, from whom the Americans rented the villa?"

"The same."

Nodding understandingly, the two bent once more to the oars.

They were a quarter of a mile past the Villa Legnazzi, when the silence of the night was broken abruptly by the crash of shatter-

ing glass and the shrill, anguished scream of a woman.

"A hawk in the love-birds' nest!" laughed the older fisherman, spitting into the quiet water.

"We should go back, perhaps?" The younger man spoke hesitantly.

"Bah! Let the crazy Americans quarrel! Me, I am for the dance at Gregorio's. Come on—my throat is dry as any lime-kiln."

Silence fell again over the lake. The moon's soft radiance flooded the night, and from the thicket rose again the note of the hidden bird.

But at the Villa Legnazzi the moonlight touched curtains that fluttered through the shattered glass in the big French windows; and on the terrace a gilt chair, its smashed legs awry, thrust gaunt fingers upward as though in protest.

\* \* \*

"Hola! Marco—My line is fast!"

There was deep water off the end of the pier beyond the Villa Legnazzi where the two fishermen had cast their lines.

"A rock, maybe. We will ease the boat over it."

"But it moves, Marco. Like a log . . . . . but a log swims atop of the water, eh?"

Guisseppi, kneeling on the boat's bottom, peered earnestly into the depths where his line, fast hooked to some heavy object, pulled slug-

gishly against the craft's slow drift.

"Gently, boy," laughed his companion. "There may be treasure on your hook!"

Foot by foot the dripping line came inboard. Marco, really interested by this time, let the oars drift free, directing his own gaze down into the limpid waters beneath the boat.

"I see it!" Suddenly he cried. "It is a square object . . . . a trunk, perhaps! Gently, now—gently!"

Seizing the oars again, he rowed slowly toward the dock where the pleasure boat of the Villa Legnazzi rocked idly against the wharf.

Between them the two fishermen cautiously raised their burden toward the boat's gunwale. Then, plunging brawny arms shoulder-high in the water, they dumped their catch on the dock. It was a large, double-locking trunk, clean-looking and bright as though fresh from the factory, despite the water that poured in a flood from its interior.

"Let's open it!" whispered Guiseppi, looking cautiously around.

Marco straightened and took a leisurely survey of their surroundings. There was no other boat in sight at this end of the lake. No smoke drifted from the chimneys of the Villa Legnazzi. The

house, in the warm June sunshine, was silent.

Without a word, Marco drew his heavy knife and set to work on one of the brass locks. Guiseppi followed suit. Almost simultaneously the two locks burst open, and Marco, with a swift movement, flung wide the lid, only to recoil with a startled cry:

"Santa Maria! A body!"

Guiseppi, his usually ruddy cheeks blanching beneath their tan, peered fearsomely into the trunk. Wrapped in a white sheet, jammed so tightly into the trunk that knees and chin were touching, was the body of a woman. Her skull had been crushed by repeated blows from some blunt instrument.

"It is the beautiful American woman!" stammered the young fisherman, crossing himself devoutly. "What is to be done?"

"You are the younger—you must run at once to the gendarme at Moltrasio! Tell him to send for the prefect at Como, for the medico. Run! Run!" and Marco literally thrust his companion toward the road to the village.

It was the morning of June 9, and within an hour or two, the cables were burning to America. The beautiful American woman was Mrs. Mary Scott Castle Charlton, the bride of a few weeks. A former San Francisco society belle and ex-wife of a leading San Francisco attorney,



## HONEYMOON DEATH

Neville Castle, she was a well-known star of the musical comedy stage and a distant cousin of former President Benjamin Harrison.

Speedily, the narrow road from the village of Moltrasio to the Villa Legnazzi was crowded with hurrying figures. The gendarme from the village came first. He was an important figure in flowing cape and trousers of blue with their gold stripe, and a huge sword that rendered the riding of his bicycle no easy task.

The prefect of police from Como, with the official doctor and the coroner, swirled along in a cloud of dust in an open barouche behind the swiftest pair of bays in all Como. Minor officials, sightseers, villagers and tourists surged behind. A motley throng, they swarmed on to the Villa Legnazzi's pier and even on to the terrace.

And they whispered among themselves, and muttered so that even the police heard: "It's that Count Ispalatoff! Arrest that man. He is up to no good, anyway!"

With difficulty, the gendarmery shooed the curious off the terrace so that the prefect, the doctor, and the coroner might enter. The prefect silently noted the broken glass in the big French windows. The broken chair on the terrace had disappeared.

There was little sign of disturb-

ance within the villa, save that on the floor of the big drawing-room lay a plaster statue, shattered in a hundred pieces. On its broken pedestal there yet was readable one word—"Love."

Within the Villa, all was silent. The dead woman's clothes hung in the presses. The bed in which she and her young husband, Porter Charlton, had slept, was tossed and unmade, its rich silken coverlet dragging on the carpeted floor.

But of the husband himself, there was no trace!

Once again the cables flashed swift news to New York about the missing husband, Porter Charlton, a clerk in the National City Bank of New York, son of Judge Paul Charlton of Puerto Rico, who was a classmate of former President Taft.

And as the investigation proceeded apace in the tragedy-haunted villa on the shores of beautiful Lake Como, and as the search swung into its hunt for the missing husband, socialites from San Francisco to New York were recalling anew the strange story of the fascinating Mary Scott Castle who, at almost 40, had secretly married and then fled to Europe with an infatuated youngster of 21.

As Mary Scott, daughter of Henry Harrison Scott, former Deputy Collector of the Port of San Francisco, she had been a

society belle for 20 years prior to her ill-fated meeting with young Porter Charlton.

In 1907 she had married Neville Castle, well-known San Francisco attorney, whom, if reports were true, she had led a merry life. When his money came to end, they separated. He went to Alaska to retrieve his fortunes. She went on the stage in a stock company, playing Fay Zulain in "The Princess and the Butterfly," a popular musical comedy of the day.

In 1909 she found herself in New York, still on the stage, still the center of an admiring circle who praised her beauty and her talent and showered her with jewels and gifts. One among this circle stood out—William B. Craig, wealthy broker. Their friendship blossomed rapidly—and faded as quickly.

On August 3, 1909, as Craig walked through the Hotel Waldorf-Astoria's famed Peacock Alley, a shot rang out. He staggered and dropped to his knees. Then, smiling, he drew from his left-hand vest pocket a shattered fountain pen.

Facing him, a smoking .22 revolver in her white hand, was Mrs. Castle, eyes blazing. Only the round hole in his vest pocket, and the shattered fountain pen, bore evidence of the deadly aim of the jealous actress. Here in very truth, again stranger than

any fiction, a man's life had been saved because of a deflected bullet.

Mrs. Castle's brother, Henry Harrison Scott—named after their father—a captain in the United States Army, came from Fort Wright, Fisher's Island, N. Y., and succeeded in getting her out on bail. Craig, however, refused to prosecute, and the case was dropped.

But out of it emerged young Porter Charlton. Still a boy at school when the beautiful Mary Scott had married her lawyer husband, he had been found a bank job in New York on leaving school. Inclined to tuberculosis, doctors had warned him to take life easy, not to work too hard, and to avoid all forms of dissipation in the city.

The strange case of the stage beauty and her broker friend roused young Charlton's interest. Somehow, he effected an introduction to her. Seven months later, on March 12, 1910, the 40-year-old woman of the world, still in the heyday of her beauty and fascination, was wedded to the 21-year-old, sickly bank clerk in a secret ceremony at Wilmington, Del. She gave her age as 27; he gave his as 25. So secret had been both courtship and marriage, that her brother, Captain Scott, had not even met his brother-in-law.

A few days later they sailed for Europe, announcing their inten-



## HONEYMOON DEATH

tion of taking a year's honeymoon in Italy and on the Rhine, after which young Charlton was to effect 'influential connections' with Hamburg banking houses and thenceforward make his living on the Continent as an international banker.

What money they had when they left, or how they would live during a year's expensive honeymooning, none but themselves knew. Charlton had a little money. His bride was known to own an extensive assortment of valuable jewelry, most of it given to her by her many admirers. And she had been heard to speak of "her fortune."

By easy stages the couple made their way to London, then to Paris, the Riviera. Hotelkeepers greeted them with smiles and nods of understanding, this romantic young couple of "rich Americans," so obviously in love with each other—so obviously honeymooning.

Lake Como, gem of the Italian Alps, beckoned. They established themselves in the bridal suite of the Hotel del Europa. And there began a strange series of passionate interludes, of violent quarrels, of equally exciting reconciliations.

On one day, the hotel manager observed, they would be happy as turtle-doves, strolling about with arms round each other's necks. By nightfall they would be quarreling like cat and dog. Fellow-

guests complained because the noise of their quarreling made sleep impossible. There came a night when, roused by screams from the bridal suite, the hotel-keeper burst into the room, to find Charlton madly dragging his beautiful bride, clad only in negligee, toward the street.

At the hotelman's insistent urging, they left the next day, moving their baggage to the beautiful Villa Legnazzi on the shores of the lake, which they had rented from a mysterious Russian, known to the villagers as Count Ispalatoff.

There were strange tales abroad about the count. He was a spy, the village whispered. He was a smuggler, running jewels across the border from Switzerland. But to Mrs. Charlton, experienced woman of the world as she was, the suave, polished Russian came perhaps as somewhat of a relief at times from the more callow attentions of her boyish husband.

There were gay dinner-parties at the Villa, with Ispalatoff as sole guest. There were rides across the lake in his swift powerboat. There were horseback excursions along the wooded paths by the lake. The count was wealthy, he was entertaining, and he was ready at any time to place himself entirely at the service of the beautiful American lady.

Confronted with so obvious an

example of the 'eternal triangle'—with the woman murdered and her husband missing—the police of Como did exactly what the police anywhere would have done. They placed the third member of the trio under arrest.

With unruffled calm, the suave Russian declared his innocence, telegraphed news of his predicament to the Russian ambassador, and smoked an endless chain of black cigarets in his cell in Como, while the investigators proceeded to fix the crime for a possible double murder on his shoulders.

Among his effects, when the gendarmerie searched his lodgings, was one sinister weapon—what in America we call a pair of knuckle-dusters. And from the apothecary at Moltrasio came a strange, hesitant story.

Count Ispalatoff, the apothecary declared, had borrowed the knuckle-dusters from him a week before the murder of Mrs. Charlton, stating that he was in danger of his life from some unnamed source. The medico who examined the dead woman declared her skull had been shattered by repeated blows with a dull weapon—a hammer, perhaps and, it might be, a knuckle-duster!

So there they had it: Count Constantine Ispalatoff, suave, sinister, winning the love of the beautiful American lady away from her young husband. Quarrels, naturally—the hurling of

chairs through windows—shrieks—cries. Perhaps the enraged husband had tried to kill both wife and lover, had slain his wife, and then been killed by the count. It was possible that Ispalatoff, enamoured of the lovely American woman, but failing in his efforts to have her leave her husband, had slain both of them.

And in either case, this would account for young Charlton's disappearance. Authorities caused the lake to be dragged. They had divers cover every foot of the lake-bed near where the murdered woman had been found. But of Charlton's body, there was no trace.

Dramatically then, Detective Stefano Gigi, smartest sleuth in all of Lombardy, sought to wrest a surprise confession from the imperturbable count. At dawn, the knuckle-dusters on his hands, he had himself quietly admitted to Ispalatoff's cell. The prisoner was sleeping calmly, and did not waken even when the rusty doors squealed on their hinges.

Gigi stole to the cot and prodded the sleeping man sharply in the ribs. The count roused smartly and sat up, to face the gleam of the knuckle-dusters in his eyes, and to hear the voice of the detective roaring at him:

"These are yours! You murdered Mrs. Charlton! Why?"

Ispalatoff rubbed his eyes, shrugged his shoulders and reached



## HONEYMOON DEATH

for a black cigaret from his gold case:

"My friend, it is most discourteous to waken a man from his sleep. I regret, but I did not kill the lady."

"You borrowed these things from Signor Bassi, the apothecary at Como?"

"Admitted."

"Why?"

"That, my dear detective, is for you to find out."

Gigi flung from the cell, snarling his disappointment.

"You might tell them I would like breakfast, now that I am awake," the unruffled count called after him.

Failing in their effort to connect Ispalatoff with the crime, and to discover the body of the possible second victim, the authorities then began to speculate upon the theory that perhaps Charlton himself had actually slain his bride and disappeared.

They recalled the talk of wild drinking orgies, of screams in the night, of frequent quarrels. They considered again the fact that, though the woman's clothes were still in the presses at Villa Legnazzi, her jewels had disappeared, along with most of the clothing of her youthful husband.

To Milan and Genoa, to Geneva and Berlin, to Paris and London, went a description of the missing man. Gimlet-eyed detectives from Naples to Gibraltar

boarded every vessel outbound through the Mediterranean, but on none of them was there any man answering to the description of Porter Charlton. Dead or alive, the young bank clerk had vanished completely from sight.

\* \* \*

The Italian liner *Prinzess Irene*, outward bound from Genoa to New York, slipped into Marseilles just in time to allow its passengers to get newspapers whose screaming headlines told of the finding of the body of Mrs. Charlton.

Many Americans were aboard. Most of them knew of the former actress; several had met her. In the first class saloon and second class quarters the talk was all of the beautiful woman and the strange mystery of her end.

Most of the passengers refused the theory that young Charlton had killed his bride. Their opinion was well expressed by an American traveler, John Coleman of Boston, in the second class, who had boarded the vessel at Genoa:

"He's probably in the lake. . . . and maybe they'll never find him. I know Como—and, believe me, there's part of that lake so deep they've never plumbed bottom."

Excitement over the murder ran rife aboard the liner. There were rumors that a mysterious woman passenger aboard was actually a lady detective, and many

passengers were quite sorry when she left the vessel at Gibraltar.

Detectives swarmed aboard at this port and scrutinized the passengers carefully. Then, having satisfied themselves that the liner harbored no Porter Charlton among its passengers, they departed, and the Prinzess Irene turned her nose westward toward New York.

There was one man, however, who could see nothing unreasonable in the suggestion that Charlton might have slain his bride.

That man was Captain Henry Harrison Scott, U. S. A., the dead woman's brother. In Capt. Scott's mind, doubt and uncertainty eventually gave way to absolute conviction, as the Italian police, failing to secure much in the way of evidence to connect Count Ispalatoft with the crime, redoubled their exertions to find the missing husband, dead or alive.

"He was without money; he had no friends who would hide him in Europe, assuming he did it," Capt. Scott reasoned. "What more likely than that he would try to make his way to America?"

The conviction rapidly became an obsession in the army officer's mind. Obtaining a fortnight's leave from his post on Fisher's Island, Scott went to New York and told police there of his belief. He asked that a couple of detectives be told off to assist him

keep watch on all vessels docking from Europe.

"It's a big gamble, but I'll take a chance, Captain," Chief Inspector Hayes of New York's homicide squad told him. "You'll get your two men any time you need them. They'll have a 'John Doe' warrant or two handy, too, in case anything turns up."

Armed with a recent photograph and a minute description of the brother-in-law whom he had never seen, Scott took his two detectives down to Hoboken. The big Hamburg-American liner 'Deutschland' was due to dock there later that day.

In his eagerness, the army officer and his men reached the dock two hours before the German liner.

"There's an Italian boat just in," an official told him. "Maybe you'd like to look over her. The passengers are going through the customs now. They'll be off in a few minutes."

"She left too soon for my sister's murderer to have sailed on her," Scott declared, "but we might as well get a little practice."

The first class passengers were all ashore by the time Scott and his men reached the berth.

"Prinzess Irene," he read. "That's her!"

Second class passengers still crowded the Italian liners decks. Scott scanned them all carefully.



## HONEYMOON DEATH

Mostly women and a few men, elderly, some bald. The fellow he sought would be a young man of 21, tall, fair-haired, bright blue eyes, rather pale, slightly stooped.

High up on "C" deck, standing slightly aloof from the other passengers and with a suitcase at his feet, was one young man who somewhat resembled this description. It couldn't be, of course—but there was nothing like making sure, Scott reasoned.

He looked again, training a pair of field glasses on the unsuspecting passenger. It couldn't be—why! it was just sheer nonsense. The Prinzess Irene must have left Genoa almost at the same time the murder was committed, if the medical evidence meant anything.

But the impression refused to leave the excited army man's mind. And suddenly he found himself resolved to put his belief to the test.

"That man on 'C' deck is the very image of Charlton, gentleman," Scott snapped. "We're going aboard!"

They made the gang-plank on the run. Already, the stream of second-class passengers was moving out across the dock. A uniformed assistant purser thrust forward a detaining arm:

"Just a minute, please, until the passengers disembark. . . ."

One of the detectives spoke

quietly in his ear. The officer stepped aside and waved them forward.

They met the tall young man at the gangplank's head. Capt. Scott drew him aside:

"Your pardon, sir—a brief word with you. . . ."

"A hundred—if you'll make them all brief," the passenger smiled.

"Your name is . . . ."

"Coleman—John Coleman of Boston—at your service, Sir."

"It is not, by any chance, Porter Charlton?"

Scott gave the name slowly, distinctly.

"I tell you I'm John Coleman. What's all this nonsense?" and the young man, now no longer politely genial, fairly spat out the indignant denial.

Scott produced the photograph.

"I think the resemblance sufficient to warrant my seeming impertinence," he said, quietly. "Suppose we all go back to your cabin for a moment, and go into this matter further?"

"I'll see you dead first! Out of my way!" and the young man made as though to thrust his interrogator aside.

The two detectives stepped forward. One displayed a 'John Doe' warrant.

"You'll come willingly or we'll take you, with this!" he stated flatly.

The young man looked from

one to the other, then yielded with a shrug of his shoulders:

"The force of the law. . ." he murmured. Turning, he led the way down a companion ladder.

But in the cabin, under the barrage of questions fired at him by Capt. Scott and the two detectives, his bravado speedily left him. Still through it all he clung to his story that he was John Coleman of Boston.

"Search his baggage," Scott directed.

Collars, ties, toilet kit, socks, underwear, shirts . . . . . and on the shirts, in ink that once was black, but had faded to a dirty gray under laundry ministrations, a tell-tale name—"Porter Charlton."

Six hours later, under a persistent fire of questions, the man who said he was John Coleman of Boston wilted, broke.

"All right!" he sobbed, his slim hands covering his quivering face, "I'm Porter Charlton—and I murdered her. . . ."

Charlton began his amazing recital, slowly at first, then, as he gained his composure, the words flowed from him in a stream—a very torrent.

A stenographer was called.

"Yes, I killed her," he commenced. "It was not a premeditated slaying. I did it in a fit of passion. But there were reasons . . . . . reasons!"

He passed his hands across his face, and gulped avidly at a glass of ice-water.

"We were passionately in love when we married. I love her still, for that matter. I shall always love her. But she was not the woman I believed her to be. There were things about her that she had successfully hidden from me until then.

"She drank heavily. She was a drug addict. At one moment she would be on the heights—glorious! magnificent! In the next she would be plunged in the very depths of depression. And out of this she would rise, storming in a passion of rage at the veriest trifles—storming and cursing!"

The police looked at each other and nodded silently. They knew what liquor and drugs did to women.

"Yet we were happy," Charlton resumed. "In the intervals when she was sane, we loved each other passionately. Depressions, fits of violent rage, sudden storms of tears, mad outbursts of searing passion—these were the ingredients of which our honeymoon was made.

"So we went to London . . . . Paris . . . . . the Riviera. And at last to Como . . . . . Moltrasio . . . . the Villa Legnazzi. . . ."

He fell silent on this, his face working with emotion.

"We were happy there, too, between these moods of hers. Yes



## HONEYMOON DEATH

—we drank together at times; not excessively, you understand. At least, I didn't. But the spells of violence came upon her more frequently. She would curse and storm at me, taunt me because I was such a kid, and call me terrible names. . . .

"So it came to that night—June 9, I think it was. She was beyond all human endurance, raging, cursing, reviling me. I threatened to leave her if she didn't stop. She only swore at me the more.

"I don't know what happened, after that. There was a red mist in front of my eyes—something roaring in my ears. I think I went mad myself. There was a heavy wooden mallet lying at my feet. I'd been using it to mend a broken chair.

"I grabbed the mallet and swung it—again and again and again! She rolled to the floor, and when at last the mad fit left me, I knew that she was dead.

"I must get away. I must dispose of her body somehow. There was a trunk in which her clothes had come. I wrapped her in a sheet and jammed her into the trunk. Then I rolled it downstairs, out on to the pier, and at the end of the pier I dumped it into the water.

"It is very deep off the end of the pier. I figured they'd never find the body there. So I went back to the house, slept for a few hours, and then, packing a suit-

case, I left while it was still dark.

"I made my way without difficulty to Milan, then to Genoa. There, finding that the Prinzess Irene was due to sail, I booked my passage for New York, thinking I could get some money from my family, and hide somewhere until the mystery of our joint disappearance had been forgotten.

"The count? Ispatoff? Oh, he had nothing to do with it at all. Only decent fellow around there, as a matter of fact. I'm sorry it got him into trouble. But he'll be all right now, anyway, because I murdered her, all right."

The count was immediately released, with elegant apologies.

Recorder McGovern ordered the confessed murderer held pending extradition proceedings by the Italian government. For more than three years until August 14, 1913, he remained in the county jail in Jersey City.

On that day he sailed for Italy aboard the *Re d'Italia*, in custody of two Italian carabinieri and an Italian medical officer, sent by the government to examine the prisoner's sanity en route.

Three years and two months after the murder, his feet trod familiar ground as the gendarmes hurried him from the train at Como, to a prison cell there. From his cell window, looking down the lake, he could see the roofs of the village of Moltrasio, and even

the white walls of the Villa Legnazzi.

He was doomed to see those roofs and those walls for three more weary years, though at the time, none imagined it possible.

For, in that very month for which his trial was set, the hand of an assassin at Sarajevo fired a shot that rang round the world—and Europe flamed with the red horror of the World War.

When thousands were being slaughtered, what time to worry about one murderer? Charlton's trial was postponed until June, 1915—and before the tribunal could be assembled, bugles were summoning patriotic Italians to the colors. Italy had declared war on Austria!

Yet in the midst of war the civil courts thought a little of duty. The young American's trial was once more re-set, this time, for a day early in October, 1916. On October 25, after a jury had

heard all the evidence, Baron Schiaccia, the presiding judge, asked the prisoner if he wished to say anything.

"I leave myself entirely in the hands of Italian justice," the accused man answered.

Signors Gataneo and Picardo, eminent criminal lawyers, made eloquent pleas for their client. They stressed his own poor health, his provocation, his long years of languishing in prisons awaiting trial.

The jury returned a verdict of 'guilty,' adding a recommendation for mercy. Judge Schiaccia passed sentence—imprisonment for six years and eight months, less the time already served behind bars, and less the usual allowance for presumed good conduct.

At the end of another 29 days, Charlton stepped forth, a free man again. He had paid his debt to society.





# RED OGRE of the DANUBE

*The scum of the Seven Seas passed through the Balkan crossroads of Galatz and committed many violent crimes. But none was more horrible than the bake-shop massacre that made all Rumania shudder.*

By **EDWARD S. SULLIVAN**

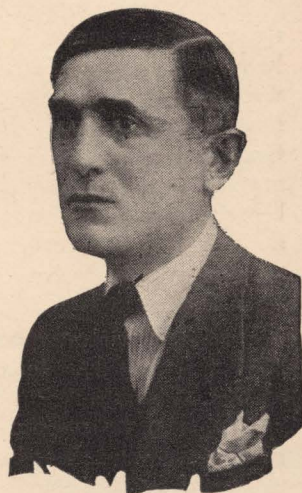
THE laborer, who had been whistling gaily as he mounted the cobbled street, stopped abruptly on the threshold of the bakery shop.

On the white tiling of the vestibule was a wide red stain.

He raised his eyes slowly and recoiled when he saw the brass door-knob splattered with crimson.

Frightened, the man looked uncertainly about. There was no one else in the narrow street at this hour—5 a. m., October 30, 1936.

From a distance came the jangle of an early trolley, the hoarse



Inspector Gherassium Gheorghiu, of Braila, Rumania, captured the murder monster single-handed as his police were combing the city for the killer.

blast of a ship's horn. The city of Galatz, Rumania's chief port on the Danube, near the mouth of the great river where it pours into the Black Sea, was just waking up.

The narrow cobbled street overlooking the harbor had not yet awakened. The laborer, on his way to work in the shivering dawn, was the first man abroad in its shadows.

He had stopped, as always, at the baker shop of Constantine Mandanis, for a copper's worth of warm sour bread to munch as he walked to work.

But there was something wrong this morning—something decidedly wrong. The inside of the shop was dark, which was not as it should be. For years, the shop of Constantine Mandanis had been a warm beacon of light an hour before dawn in the shadowy street, as he and his bakers worked to supply the waking harbor district with bread.

The workman put out a shaking hand and tried the door. It fell open at his touch.

Gingerly, he stepped into the dark shop and stood blinking while his eyes accustomed themselves to the murk.

Then he staggered back, putting his hands out before him as though to shut out the nightmare vision that confronted him. His mouth fell open, but no sound came from it.

On the counter, spread-eagled among loaves of bread and cakes, was the body of the baker, Constantine Mandanis.

His sightless eyes stared in fixed horror at the door.

The shop was a shambles. Blood was everywhere—on the floor, on the walls, on the cakes and loaves that had tumbled from shattered show-cases.

The horror-stricken man finally found tongue and emitted a shrill, womanish scream of pure terror.

The sound of his own voice loosed his legs, and he dashed into the street, as though the devil himself were after him.

The river town of Galatz, visited by ships from the seven seas and filled with the riff-raff of the Balkan kingdoms, has been the scene of many a deed of blood and violence, but none so brutal and cold-blooded as the horror that struck in the little bakery shop of Constantine Mandanis. The early morning customer had uncovered only a small part of it.

"Murder!" howled the laborer as he fled down the street. A few early risers came running from their houses. Two blocks away, the man ran into the arms of Constable Paul Tulliu, walking his waterfront beat.

"Here! What's all this? What about a murder?"

"Come with me—I won't go in there, but I'll show you!"

The constable tensed with a gasp of horror as he flashed his electric torch into the dark shop.

"It's Constantine Mendanis, the baker!"

Treading carefully, and flash-



## RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE

ing his light on the floor, Tulliu crossed the shop and leaned over the corpse.

The baker was grotesquely clad only in his underclothes and black waistcoat. His coat and trousers were missing.

The baker apparently had been hacked to death with frenzied blows of a heavy, sharp instrument. There were a score of cuts on his face alone. His skull was split open.

Stepping back carefully, without touching the corpse, the constable reached for the phone.

"Strange!" he muttered. "Where are the others? Where is Madame Mandanis?"

"There are usually four or five bakers here this time of the morning," offered the laborer, from the doorway. "Listen—you can hear the machinery in the back room. Maybe they don't know about it yet—maybe—"

"I'll call headquarters, then we'll see what's what."

As he lifted the phone, Tulliu's swinging light fell on the dark gangway that led to the rear of the building.

With a sharp exclamation, the officer dropped the phone and stepped to the gangway, his flashlight boring a yellow tunnel in the blackness.

The body of a woman in a green dressing-gown, splotted with blood, was huddled in the passageway.

The constable recognized her at a glance as Madame Paraschiva Mandanis, the baker's wife.

She had been hacked to death with the same ferocity as her husband. Her skull was split in the same manner.

Her glazed eyes were fixed on the ceiling with a look of stunned surprise.

Tulliu's first wild thought was that they had slain each other. But a second's reflection convinced him that they must have been felled instantly by the blows that smashed their skulls. Furthermore, no weapons were in evidence.

From the basement room in back came the low hum of machinery. There was a faint orange glow on the wall beside the short stairs.

"Hello, in there!" the officer called, his voice booming in the narrow passage. "Is there anyone down there?"

No answer.

Without further delay, he seized the phone and called headquarters.

The frightened laborer finally had entered the shop, taking courage as the gray dawn dispelled the shadows.

"You'd better stay with me," Tulliu said. "We'll want to talk to you. Come downstairs with me."

Stepping over the body of the woman, and swinging his torch

down the dark passage, the constable led the way to the basement.

Descending the stairs, Tulliu frowned as he felt the warm glow from the oven and heard the steady humming of the machinery. There was a strange odor—

The bake-room apparently was running as usual. Where, then, were the workmen? Had they killed their master and mistress, and fled?

Tulliu stooped under the low brick archway, then stood frozen with horror.

Behind him, the laborer emitted a thin shriek and collapsed.

Hardened as they were by the sight of the ghastly corpses in the shop, they were totally unprepared for the scene in the bake-room.

The floor was a welter of blood.

Implements, broken chairs, and the cots on which the workmen slept were strewn in wreckage on the floor.

The electric kneading machine was turning slowly. In its maw was a terrifying mixture of crimsoned dough.

Tulliu took a step into the room, and stopped again.

The doors of the low-brick oven stood open. In it, in place of Mandanis' loaves of bread, were the partly-clad and bloody bodies of four men.

The oven was turned on. They were slowly being baked!

Like the couple upstairs, they

had been fearfully hacked and battered.

Tulliu restrained his impulse to turn off the oven and the kneading machine. He must touch nothing until his superiors arrived.

Stooping over the prostrate laborer, he shook him back to consciousness.

"Come upstairs," he said gruffly. "There's no use staying down here."

Tulliu stepped to the front door for a breath of fresh air, and waved back the frightened faces that peered in the doorway as the scream of tires heralded the arrival of the officers from headquarters.

Inspector Alexander Losariu, grizzled veteran of the headquarters homicide bureau, was the first to jump out. With him were two young inspectors, a medical examiner, and a laboratory expert with his bulky camera.

Tugging at his moustache, his black eyes snapping, Losariu listened to the young constable's story, while he surveyed the bodies of the baker and his wife. Then he stepped down to the bake-room.

Glancing briefly at the bodies in the oven, he gestured to one of the young inspectors.

"Turn off that machine and put out the oven!"

The man obeyed, and the electric kneader, with its mixture of dough and blood, stopped with a shuddering groan.



## RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE

Losariu stood staring at the corpses, while the medical examiner opened his bag and went about his gruesome task.

"I'd say off-hand that these four men were dead at least eight hours," the examiner said after a brief scrutiny. "Of course, the heat of the oven——. And Mandanis and his wife, I'd say, have been dead a little shorter time than that — about six hours."

"It looks as though the murderer, or murderers, hacked these four men to death, tried to stuff the hacked pieces in the kneader to destroy them, then gave up the job and stuffed the partially dissected bodies in the oven," one of the young detectives said.

Losariu nodded grimly.

"Look around for the weapon," he ordered. "A hatchet or something like that."

The laboratory man was busy with his magnifying glass and fingerprint powders.

Losariu stepped upstairs, called in half a dozen of the neighbors who were standing in the doorway, and questioned them briefly.

The four dead men in the basement were quickly identified as the baker's helpers—Nicholas Marinesco, Philip Lucovici, Paul Fekete, and Daniel Bota.

With Mandanis, his wife, and all his workmen dead, there was no one connected with the establishment left to tell of anyone who might have had a grudge against them, or to reveal the Mandanis family affairs.

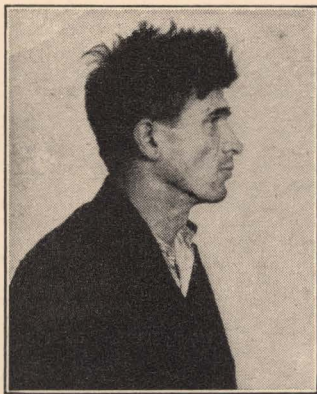
The neighbors knew little and had heard nothing throughout the night.

The sum total of the information Losariu elicited from them was that the baker had closed his shop as usual late the preceding night—he and his wife had both been in the

shop, apparently in good spirits, when the last customer left—and he had failed to open in the morning. The four workmen had been in the habit of going to bed in their cots in the bake-room, immediately after the day's work.

"Inspector, I've found something!"

It was the young constable, Tulliu, who interrupted the questioning.



**Pitying himself because he was underpaid in a bake-shop, this fiend brutally slew five men and a woman in order to rob a safe.**

"Look—I've opened the safe—it's an old-fashioned safe, with a key-hole. It opened to one of my skeleton keys. I was careful not to touch it, not to disturb any fingerprints. There's a lot of money in it—"

The inspector stooped behind the counter and examined the safe. He shuffled quickly through the sheaf of currency, and whistled in surprise. There was the equivalent of \$3,000 there.

"He always kept a lot of money on hand," Tulliu said. "He used to cash checks for many of the workmen who patronized the place."

"Strange," Losariu commented. "There are a few bloody smears on the safe door, but there seems to have been no attempt to break into it. It could have been opened easily."

"Then robbery was not the motive!"

"Either that, or the murders were done by a robber who did not study the job in advance, and did not know there was such a sum in the safe!"

Losariu directed the constable to take several of the neighbors through the bakery and living quarters, to ascertain if anything seemed to have been stolen.

He stood for a long moment regarding the corpse of Madame Mandanis. She was dressed only in a light pink chemise, a green dressing-gown, and her stockings

and slippers. Her hair was put up, as though for bed.

The medical examiner read the inspector's thoughts.

"I have examined the woman's corpse," he said. "She was not criminally attacked. This was not a sex crime."

Silently, Losariu turned and regarded the body of the baker.

"Strange," he remarked to the medical officer. "The bodies seem to be in different stages of undress. The four in the basement—two of them were in their underwear, two in nightclothes. Madame Mandanis was apparently getting ready for bed. And her husband has on his underwear, shirt, and vest, but no trousers or coat!"

At this point, the laboratory man interrupted.

"I've checked over the whole place, Inspector, but I can't find a single fingerprint worth while. The murderer's hands were covered with blood—I can find nothing but thick red smudges.

"One thing, though—the blood on the door-knob and the tiles near the door seems to be fresher than that around the bodies."

The inspector drew out his notebook and wrote cryptically for a moment.

Constable Tulliu stepped up and saluted.

"I took the people through the house, as you ordered, but they can find nothing missing. I've



## RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE

questioned some more of the neighbors—they know nothing. The inspectors are still talking to the laborer who found the bodies, but he's an innocent fellow and there's not a chance in a thousand that he has guilty knowledge."

Losariu walked down the dark gangway to the living quarters, followed by the young constable.

"There's nothing amiss back here," Talliu offered. "No signs of a struggle—"

The inspector's keen eyes darted around the room. He lifted the brass handle of a bureau drawer.

"There's blood on this handle," he pointed out. "Our murderer was searching in here."

With a few brief orders to his detectives, the inspector left the scene of butchery, got in his car, and sped back to headquarters.

He called his chief aide, Inspector Gregory Henne, into conference.

Placing a cigarette in a long holder and lighting it, Losariu spread his notebook out on his desk.

"We can reconstruct the crime tentatively," he said. "The significant thing is the different stages of undress in which the bodies were found. The key is Constantine Mandanis himself. He wore underwear, shirt, and vest, but no trousers or coat. From the position of the body, and from blood smears, it's apparent the trousers and coat were stripped

off him. There's no sign of them. The murderer took them with him. "Now, Mandanis wore no necktie, and his shoes were loosely tied. This indicates that he had been in bed—incidentally, his pajamas, crumpled, are lying on his bed. He rose and dressed hurriedly, putting on no tie and lacing his shoes carelessly.

"Something, therefore, roused him from sleep. Now, the four workmen in the basement were killed in their night garments—their clothes are folded carefully beside their cots.

"It appears that the murderer, or murderers, killed the workmen first. This noise—it could not have been done without noise—awakened Mandanis, and he dressed and hurried to the front of the shop, to meet his death. His wife, hearing the struggle, came running in and met the murderer in the gangway.

"It must have been that way. If Mandanis had been killed first, the workmen surely would have been roused by the noise. They would have thrown on some clothes and come upstairs."

"So!" Henne spread his hands in a futile gesture as Losariu paused. "Whom are we to seek?"

"Either a single strong man, capable of overcoming the husky workmen and Mandanis himself, who was a sturdy six-footer—or two or more men. I'm inclined to think the job was done by one

man alone. It was done crudely and brutally—one man might have had the luck to get away with it without leaving a trace, but two men must certainly have overlooked something, bungled something.”

“The motive doesn’t seem to have been robbery. Have we a homicidal maniac loose in the city?”

The inspector shrugged.

“Loose in the city—or out of the city. You know as well as I do the great transient population, largely made up of cut-throats, petty criminals, fugitives, and other scum that passes through Galatz on the ships. The killer may be miles away by now. I’ve already ordered a check of passengers and crews on all ships that left here this morning. A squad of inspectors is checking the cheap hotels and lodging-houses. There’s a fifty-fifty chance we may be able to pick up the fellow.”

“But why should he have taken Mandanis’ trousers and coat?”

Losariu shrugged again.

“Probably he just took a liking to them. I think when and if we catch our murderer, we’ll find him to be a powerful man, with the mind of a child.”

“What do you suppose was his motive? Why did he kill the workmen first? Did he go there to kill only one man, and kill the rest to thwart discovery?”

“That’s possible,” Losariu

said. “There’s one other significant point, though. The blood on the door apparently was fresher than that around the rooms. Which indicates that the killer stayed in the shop for some time after the murders. Was he gloating over the corpses, or was he searching for something? There are indications that he searched the place thoroughly—”

The strident jangling of the telephone interrupted him.

“Inspector Losariu speaking. Yes. What? Fine. Henne will be right out there.”

He clamped the phone down and looked triumphantly at Henne.

“We’re getting somewhere,” he said. “That was one of the men I assigned to question all of Mandanis’ friends and neighbors. He says a man has given him the description of a suspect. Go out there immediately—they’re both at the bakery.”

Inspector Henne jumped up and put on his hat.

“I hope we’re on the right track,” he said morosely. “It isn’t pleasant, to think of a murder monster roaming the city. I have a wife and children—”

In an hour, Inspector Henne was back. Losariu was closeted with a young, dark-haired man when his assistant burst into the office.

“Pardon me — I didn’t know—”



## RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE

"That's quite all right. Inspector Henne, this is Inspector Gherassim Gheorghiu, of Braila. You've heard of him?"

"Of course!" Henne shook hands with the young man eagerly. "But what a coincidence! I was just going to ask you to get in touch with the police of Braila!"

"Then M. Gheorghiu will hear your report in person. He dropped in to see me on his way back to Braila from the north."

Braila is an industrial town on the Danube 25 miles south of Galatz.

The three men sat down.

"The trail of the mass murderer leads to Braila," Henne announced. "This neighbor of Mandanis says there was a young man of Braila, whose name he doesn't know, who was madly infatuated with Madame Mandanis. She would have nothing to do with him. He pestered her, and once Mandanis threw him out of the shop. That was only a couple of weeks ago! He hasn't been seen around there since."

"You don't know his name?"

"No, but the informant says he works at a chemical works in Braila, and has given me a good description of him. He's a tall, powerful man—about the build of Mandanis himself. He has light blond hair. His first name is Jan."

"Well, there you are, Gheor-

ghiu," said Losariu, sitting back in his chair. "Pick up the man for us. He may well be the murderer."

"I'll phone my office right away, and I'll hurry back personally," the visitor said, reaching for the phone. "And meanwhile, I'd like to hear the full details of this terrible affair at the bakery—"

The next morning, a grim circle of officers closed in on a work-table at the chemical works. Inspector Gheorghiu put his hand on the shoulder of a blond young giant who looked up, startled.

"You're under arrest, Jan—," he said.

"Arrest? On what charge?"

"On suspicion of the murder of Constantine Mandanis and five other persons!"

The youth's face paled.

"This is absurd! I quarreled with Mandanis, yes. But I didn't kill him. I haven't seen him or his wife for two weeks. I read of the murder in this morning's paper. It's horrible—"

Taken to headquarters, the young prisoner continued to protest his innocence. Inspector Losariu, summoned from Galetz, arrived by auto half an hour later.

A dozen detectives hurled questions at the hapless young chemical worker.

"I'm innocent!" he cried. "I didn't have anything to do with it. I spent the night before last—the night of the murders—in a

tavern. I went home about 4 in the morning. I slept till 9—"

"That can easily be checked. Who saw you in the tavern? Who saw you go home?"

The young man thought for a moment, then reeled off a dozen names.

A squad of detectives was sent out to check the alibi. Losariu and Gheorghiu relented in their questioning while they waited for the reports.

The alibi was easily checked. More than a score of men and women were ready to testify that the suspect had been drinking in a basement tavern from 5 in the afternoon until 4 the next morning, and had gone home drunk. A man was found who had helped him home. His landlady had been awakened by the noise, and lay awake for an hour—she said she would surely have heard if he had gone out again.

Losariu shrugged—a characteristic gesture.

"I guess that lets you out, young man," he said. "In the future, keep away from other men's wives!"

He turned to Gheorghiu.

"Well, it's all in the day's work! I'll have to be getting back to Galatz. I'm not through with the spurned love theory yet. If Madame Mandanis had one admirer, she may have had others."

"But if a rejected suitor of the woman wanted to kill her and her

husband, why did he kill the four workmen?" Gheorghiu demanded. "To cover up the first two murders? But your theory is that the workmen were murdered first—"

"True," Losariu nodded. "My men are tracing the private life of each of those workmen."

The visiting inspector rose and donned his heavy overcoat.

"Well," Gheorghiu said dubiously. "You may be right in thinking that the murders sprang from a grudge against one of the victims, but to me it seems more like the purposeless, wanton work of some human beast."

"If so, that beast may strike again, Gheorghiu. Be on the alert. He may be in your city by now. Good-bye."

Gheorghiu busied himself with routine matters that had piled up in his absence, and did not think of the Mandanis case again until late that afternoon. Then, he stood up and strode to the window, frowning down at the busy street while he turned over the facts and Losariu's theories in his mind.

He came to no conclusion. There were too many conflicting facts, too many loose ends, he told himself, and after all it was none of his business.

"A fascinating case, though," he murmured half aloud. "I'll be very interested to see how it turns



## RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE

out. Losariu is seldom wrong, but—”

A uniformed officer entered and laid a stack of reports on the inspector's desk. Gheorghiu sat down and glanced at them idly.

Suddenly his interest quickened. Frowning at one of the reports, he pressed a buzzer.

“Send Officer Madescu to me at once!” he ordered, and sat rapping impatiently on the desk until the officer appeared.

“This report of yours, about the baker, Schmidt. It interests me. Tell me about it in detail.”

The officer stood at attention, stiff as a ram-rod.

“Well, sir, I was walking my beat this afternoon when Schmidt called me into his shop. He told me a man had threatened him, and he wanted to have him arrested.

“He said a man had come to his shop looking for work. The man represented himself as a skilled baker. He told him he had no vacancies. The man then asked him for a loaf of bread. Schmidt told him to get out. The man turned insulting and threatened to beat him up. Schmidt reached under the counter for his bread-knife, and the man ran away.”

“And he wants him arrested? What sort of description did he give? Your report doesn't go into much detail.”

“Well, begging your pardon,

Inspector, I didn't think there was any chance of picking the fellow up, from the few facts Schmidt gave me. And Schmidt probably wouldn't appear against him anyway—”

“I don't care about Schmidt! What did this beggar look like?”

“Why, Schmidt didn't describe him very well. He said he was a young man, not very tall, in a black suit. Sort of funny-looking, he said.”

“Funny-looking? What do you mean?” rapped the inspector.

“Well,” the embarrassed officer floundered, “just—funny-looking. That's what he said.”

“Bring the baker Schmidt to me at once!” Gheorghiu ordered. “Yes, sir!”

He stood at the window, hitting his fists together nervously, while he waited the officer's return.

The loose ends of the Galatz mass murder had suddenly fitted together in Inspector Gheorghiu's mind!

He turned suddenly, picked up the phone and called Inspector Losariu on long distance.

“I think I'm onto something,” he said. “I may be able to help you in the Mandanis murder, if you'll do something for me. Ascertain whether Mandanis ever had any more than four men working for him. Canvass other bakery shops in the vicinity, and find out if any itinerant bakers

have been looking for work lately. Call me. Thanks."

He resumed his impatient stand at the window until Officer Madescu returned with the baker, Schmidt—a little fat man with a curly beard.

"Schmidt, what do you mean by saying that this tough visitor of yours was 'funny-looking'?"

The baker considered a moment.

"Well, I don't know."

"What was it? His face? His eyes?"

"No. Not like that. He just looked queer, as I remember him."

"He was a young man, you say? How tall? Six feet?"

"Well, no. I don't think he was that tall. I think he was a short fellow. Powerful, though—big arms, like an ape."

"And he was dressed in black?"

"Yes," the baker declared positively. "Black pants and black coat."

"He had no vest?"

"No—I don't think so. I think he had a gray shirt. No hat."

"What color was his hair?"

"His hair—it was a sort of red."

Gheorghiu was making quick notes on a pad. He gestured impatiently.

"All right. You may go now. The next time you want us to arrest someone for you, take a better look at him. By the way,

would you recognize his face from a photograph?"

"No—I don't think I would. It was an ordinary face—"

"All right. Go."

The inspector picked up his telephone and gave a general order to pick up the red-headed man on sight.

A moment after he laid the telephone down, it rang.

"Gheorghiu speaking—yes, Losariu. Good work."

He made quick notes as he listened.

"Thanks. I'll call you when this lead develops. I've some checking to do."

He smiled in satisfaction as he pronged the phone and surveyed his notes. The baker Mandanis had often employed as many as six or seven skilled helpers. Their number usually varied between four and five. Usually, all of them slept in the basement.

The day before the murders, a red-headed man had been looking for work as a baker, in shops near the murder scene.

The pieces of the puzzle rapidly fell into place. This, then, explained why the luckless workmen in the bake-room had been slain first!

The murderer, Gheorghiu reasoned, was an itinerant baker. Mandanis had given him a job. After the day's work was over, he retired with the other workers in the bake-room, then rose up in



## RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE

the night to kill them—with what motive, the inspector could not guess. Roused by the commotion, Mandanis came down to the shop and met his death. His wife was next.

Thus Inspector Losariu's reasoning was borne out in part, and the report from the baker Schmidt had unlocked the secret to Gheorghiu.

The mass murderer was in Braila!

Gheorghiu realized he had not yet had dinner. He looked at the phone, then decided not to confide his theory to anyone until he should have time to think it over and test it for possible flaws. He put on his coat and went out into the street.

Dusk was closing in as the young inspector, deep in thought, walked across the park toward his favorite cafe.

There were a few loiterers in the park. Several derelicts were sitting on the benches, and some gamins played on the grass around the fountain. With his policeman's instinct for observation, Gheorghiu glanced at them unconsciously, while his mind probed the riddle of the mass murder.

Suddenly a warning bell seemed to ring in his brain. He stood still for a moment in mid-stride, then walked slowly on.

That man sitting on the bench—that red-head! The inspector, every sense alert, slowly ap-

proached the bench.

Funny-looking! That was the word! Gheorghiu repressed a grin. The man's black suit was several sizes too large for him! The cuffs of the trousers dragged on the ground, and the coat-sleeves, bulging over powerful arms, hung down and hid the man's hands.

He had no hat. His hair was sorrel-red in the deepening dusk.

Gheorghiu stepped up to the man.

"Pardon me, but have you a match?"

The red-head looked up, startled.

"No!"

The monosyllable was a surly bark.

Gheorghiu made as though to walk on, then stopped and stared at the man's coat.

"What's that on your sleeve? It looks like blood—"

With a snarling animal cry, the red-head leaped to his feet and lunged at the officer.

The young inspector was prepared. He was deceptively strong; moreover, he was an expert wrestler.

He clamped a vise-hold on the red-head's wrist, dodging his flailing arm. A jerk, and the black-garbed man sprawled on all fours on the gravel walk.

Gheorghiu was upon him as he scrambled to his feet. There was a gleam of blue steel. Handcuffs

clicked on the red-head's wrists.

The prisoner identified himself as Andrew Berila, an itinerant baker. He stoutly protested his innocence; he denied having been in Galatz recently.

Fingerprints revealed his record. Berila was his true name. He was 27 years old. He had thrice done time for robbery, and six months previously had escaped from a southern jail where he was serving a five-year sentence.

Gheorghiu bundled him into an automobile and whisked him to Losariu's office in Galatz.

"So you never saw the inside of Constantine Mandanis' shop, eh?" Losariu demanded of the prisoner. "Well, it's strange that you're wearing his trousers and coat. Too bad they didn't fit you better!"

In Rumanian police procedure, murderers are always brought to the scene of the crime and made to re-enact the slaying. Often, the corpse is preserved and placed just as it was found, for the psychological effect on the killer.

Berila knew what was coming. He was pale and trembling as they took him from the car and marched him into the shop of death.

In the bake-room, Losariu switched on the electric kneader. Its deep-toned humming filled the basement room.

The prisoner suddenly screamed like a woman and collapsed against the wall.

"All right! I'll tell! I did it! Turn that thing off! It's haunted me in my dreams!"

Smiling, Losariu switched off the kneader and made a sign to the police stenographer to take down Berila's confession.

"Mandanis hired me as a workman," he said. "The first night I was there, I got to talking with the other hands, and I learned that Mandanis had a lot of money in his safe. I made up my mind to act quickly. I was hungry, he wasn't paying me enough, and it wasn't right that he should have all that money and I none.

"That very night, when the other four workers were asleep, I got up, grabbed a hatchet from the tool-box, and finished them off. I killed each one with one stroke. I had to kill them, you see, so I wouldn't have to share the money with them.

"Then I thought I'd get rid of the bodies. I started to cut them up and feed them to the kneader, but that was slow work so I finally shoved them in the oven and lit the fire.

"After that, I went to Mandanis' bed-room and knocked on the door. I told him to come down, that I thought there was a burglar in the place.

"I was waiting for him when he came into the shop. I killed him with the hatchet before he knew what struck him.



## RED OGRE OF THE DANUBE

"Then I heard his wife coming down the gangway. I killed her, too. I hated to do that. She was a nice lady.

"Then I started to look for the keys to the safe. They weren't in Mandanis' pockets. I couldn't find them anywhere. I searched for two hours—for the keys and for any money that might be around."

"The key was on the shelf behind the counter," Losariu put in. "We found it there."

"Was it? I guess I overlooked that. Well, I tried to open the safe and couldn't. I went down to the tool-box but couldn't find anything to open the safe with. I cut my hand, looking for a tool.

"By that time, it was nearly day-break. I decided to make the

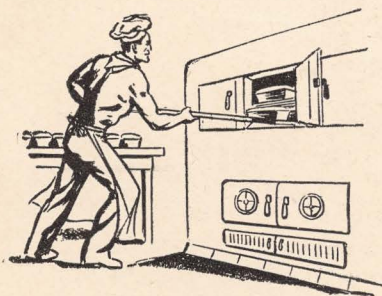
best of it and take the baker's black suit. I pulled off his coat and pants—they were enough for me. They were a little large, but that was all right. They're the best clothes I've had in years.

"There was a handful of silver in the trousers pocket. There was a gold watch in the coat.

"I went out and took a train to Braila. I used up all the silver for train fare."

The red-headed murder monster, crying like a baby, stood trial at the Galatz assizes late in November. He repeated his confession, showing no remorse but only a sort of self-pity.

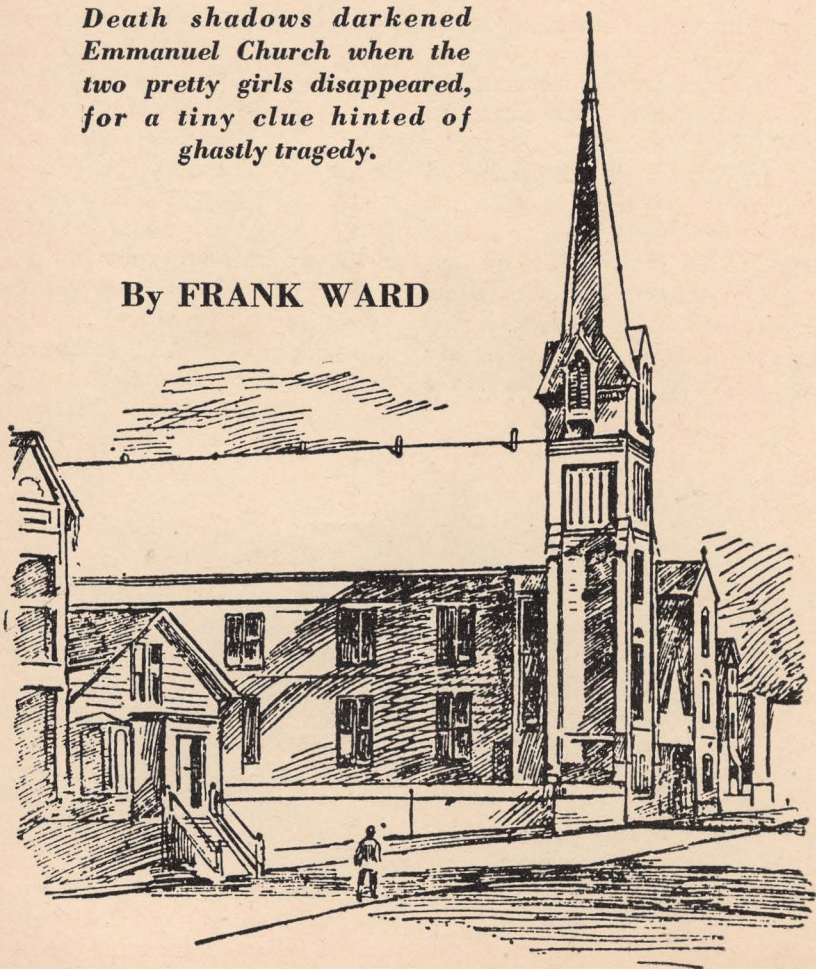
Since there is no death penalty in Rumania, he was sentenced to life at hard labor in the salt mines of Ocna-Mare.



# HORROR in the Bell Tower

*Death shadows darkened  
Emmanuel Church when the  
two pretty girls disappeared,  
for a tiny clue hinted of  
ghastly tragedy.*

By FRANK WARD





## HORROR IN THE BELL TOWER

**F**OR ten days the shadow of fear had hovered over the little church in Mission Dolores.

Good Friday had come and gone. Despite their terror, the faithful women of Emmanuel church in the Mission Dolores section of San Francisco had held their vigil of the Passion of Christ and were preparing on this Saturday morning for the services the following day. Nothing, not even the fear that gripped their hearts, must interfere with the Easter worship.

In the new church library at the foot of the bell tower one of the Endeavor society members was spending half an hour in reading and meditation. But the clamor of her thoughts made concentration difficult and she was glad when her friends' voices disturbed the cloistered silence. Even a stranger who had come to see the library room was aware of the anxiety that oppressed them all. It seemed as if the shadows of the little church concealed something too hideous to think about, something formless but terrifying.

For Blanche Lamont had not been seen since Wednesday week. Only a little while ago she had helped to plan the Easter decorations for the church. There was no explanation for her disappearance. Fear had grown in the minds of the women who whispered there on the day before Easter. What had become of their

lovely young friend?

"Marian Williams must be taking it pretty hard," one of the women remarked. "She didn't come to Endeavor meeting last night."

"It's no wonder," another commented. "Marion and Blanche are almost like sisters, such close friends they were."

The two girls resembled each other as closely as

friends sometimes do, for each was dark and attractive, young and small. Both were motherless, for at the time Marian's parents had separated and the church had helped Mrs. Williams and the three youngest children to return to Canada.

Blanche was a Montana girl who had been spending the winter with her uncle and aunt, mem-



Marian Williams was willing to face horrible death for the sake of her chum.

bers of Emmanuel church. Late-ly she attended a nearby Normal School. It was from this school that Miss Lamont had failed to return that Wednesday before Passion week—April 3, 1895.

The anxiety of her uncle and aunt had communicated itself swiftly to the church and the whole city had been seriously aroused by the disappearance. But none had been more affected than Marian Williams. She had been almost frantic in her search for her missing chum and now it seemed that she had broken down, for nothing but illness, it was felt, would have kept her from the Good Friday meeting of the Endeavor society in the home of one of its members.

Of these things the whispering women talked until their duties called them and one was sent to the closet off the library to bring out flower baskets for the decorations. The others moved toward the church auditorium where the work was to be done.

Suddenly a scream split the quiet of the place. And then another and another and another. They came from the library room and thither the other women ran in haste.

For there was terror in that voice. Each shriek was a piercing cry of horror.

As they reached the library door, these pious women saw one of their number who had come

early to the church reel back with ghastly pallor from a closet under the belfry stairs.

"She's there," this woman gasped. "Dead!"

The others pressed forward. This, they thought, had been the end of Blanche Lamont, the missing girl. But as they looked into the dimly lighted place, they too whitened with terror.

For it was not the body of Blanche Lamont who lay there in that pool of scarlet. It was that of Marian Williams.

Panic clutched at the women's hearts. One crumpled to the floor in a faint. Others rushed out of the place. One had enough presence of mind to send for the police.

The minister had arrived when the officers reached the place, and he too paled before the awful sight that faced the little group from that dreadful closet.

Another bloodstain for the church in Mission Dolores, was his thought. For the minister had only lately built up the little church after the crime of one of its earlier pastors who had slain a newspaper proprietor and then had blown out his own brains.

Marian Williams lay murdered. That was clear from the first examination of the beautiful, still form. She had been choked. Her wrists had been slashed. Part of a silver-plated case knife still gleamed from a horrid thrust in



## HORROR IN THE BELL TOWER

the region of the heart, where the weapon had been broken in the violence of the fatal blow. And as was soon discovered, two pieces of her skirt had been torn off and driven down her throat with a stick that had pierced her tongue.

Already deeply stirred by the disappearance of Miss Lamont, the city was soon at fever heat. Police immediately connected the two cases and search was renewed for the missing girl.

But now the search had narrowed to the church in Mission Dolores. No one had thought before to look there for the missing Blanche Lamont.

Stern-faced detectives went over the building with quiet determination. They examined the furnace room. They crept under unexcavated parts of the foundation. They looked in the closets and other nooks and crannies, spending an entire day in the hunt, looking no longer for a beautiful young woman who had merely stepped out of her usual life to another that might be more alluring, but for a bloodstained corpse that might have been a girl.

By nightfall the search had reached the gallery of the auditory and the door that led up a small stairway to the bell tower and steeple towering far above them.

But there the hunt was given up. It was growing too dark for effective searching. And the key

to the tower must be found, for the door was locked and the outside portion of the door-handle broken off.

Easter morning came and, while the bells of Mission Dolores joined in the paeon of chimes to the risen Saviour, the detectives resumed their gruesome search. With the sexton still hauling on his bell rope below, the officers of the law broke open the locked door and mounted the cramped little stairway to the topmost floor of the steeple some seventy-five feet above the street.

There they peered about and suddenly a guttural shout was heard.

For there in a brightly lighted corner of the belfry lay another body of a girl, a slim, white body, the limbs carefully straightened and the hands peacefully folded across the rounded breasts.

It was the body of Blanche Lamont.

There in the unused bell tower, experienced officers read a new story of grim horror.

Not a thread of clothing was in sight. Small blocks of wood had been meticulously placed under the head, shoulders, back and limbs to allow a free circulation of air.

And here appeared the first accurate hint of the nature of the killer. For the body had thus been arranged in order that it might be partly preserved by the winds that

blew about the lofty tower and so lie wasting to be discovered at some distant day, a mysterious and unidentifiable skeleton.

It was clear from the first that Blanche Lamont had been choked to death, evidently in some lower part of the church. She had then been carried or dragged up stairs from the first floor to the second, across the unused and dust-begrimed gallery, up half a dozen flights of the tower steps and there stripped of every particle of clothing.

But the mystery of what had become of her garments was not long unsolved. One by one the pitiful bits of clothing were found, each in a separate hiding place beneath the belfry roof. Her school books were found between the plaster and the framing. Even the shoes, a glove and a hairpin had been carefully stowed away.

The discovery of the school books revealed that the girl had stopped at the church on her way home from school. Marks on her throat were those of a powerful hand.

And the position of those marks

revealed that *the murderer was left handed.*

But this was not all of the gruesome discovery.

Clinging to the girl's fingers were found several short hairs, the hair of a man—her slayer. And several horsehairs had been found near the body of Miss Williams.

These hairs, together with that of the girl herself, were examined under the microscope and were carefully measured. The silky brown locks of the dead girl were found to be six two-thousandths of an inch thick. Those of the man five two-thousandths of an inch in thickness and the horse-hairs measured twenty-one two-thousandths of



A brutal slayer cut short the life of beautiful Blanche Lamont.

an inch.

More minute examination of the church now began for further clues to the identity of the killer. In the wash room of the church bloodstains were found, as if after the murder of Miss Williams, the killer had become terror stricken and careless at last, or had entered the place without a light.

Then came another astounding revelation. From Miss Lamont's



## HORROR IN THE BELL TOWER

aunt came word that a package had been sent to her the day before, that very day when Marian Williams' body had been found.

In the package were three rings that had belonged to her missing niece. They were wrapped in newspaper. And on the margin of that paper were written the names of Marian's music teacher, the church organist, and the third, the assistant superintendent of the Sunday School.

It was pencilled writing. It must have been written and mailed before either of the bodies was found. And the sender had found or had had for nearly ten days in his possession the three rings of the missing girl.

And now a new search began in the church of the Mission Dolores. It was the search for a fiendish slayer about whom some things already were known.

A man, left handed, with brown hair five two-thousandths of an inch thick. A man given to riding or who had a horse with a black mane, the hairs of which were twenty-one two-thousandths of an inch in diameter.

Was he one of the three named on the package? Or was he the man who had sent the mystery package?

The two crimes were immediately declared to be the work of this one man. The police believed that Marian Williams had left her home on Friday evening to attend

the Christian Endeavor meeting at a member's home, that she had gone first to the church and there had met a man at the side entrance. They had been seen to meet under the gas street light that shone upon the door.

They had entered the church together, the police said, and there she had been brutally choked and gagged. The attacker had groped his way to the library closet, dragged the body there and had struck again and again at the unconscious or lifeless form with a dull silver knife kept there for socials, cutting the wrists, slashing to the heart until finally the knife was broken and a part of it left in the heart wound.

To the church members the motive for such a crime was a mystery, but to the police it was only too clear. Marian had discovered or suspected the truth about her chum's disappearance.

First objects of the new search were men who bore the names given in the mysterious package. And with this went a hunt for the sender of the package himself.

Three men had been named. As for the fourth—the sender of the mysterious package—it was said the writing resembled that of a minister.

Miss Lamont's music teacher soon presented an airtight alibi both for the day of Miss Lamont's disappearance and for the night of Miss William's death. He was

advanced in years and the detectives soon eliminated him from the list of possibilities.

He had had no access to the church at times when it was supposed to be locked and it was soon strongly believed that the killer carried a key to the church.

This concentrated attention on the church organist and Theodore Durrant, who was assistant superintendent of the Sunday School and church librarian. Both, together with the pastor, carried keys to the building.

The minister was questioned first. He denied the writing on the package but a pair of shoes found in the church study and which he admitted belonged to him, bore stains that looked like blood.

These were sent to a chemist for examination and the organist was called in.

The organist readily admitted that he had been practicing his Easter music on the church organ that fateful afternoon of April 3 when Blanche Lamont was last seen alive.

He had not seen Miss Lamont that day, he said, but he had seen Theodore Durrant.

The organist declared and on further questioning insisted that he had seen Durrant come down out of the belfry that afternoon.

"He was pale as a ghost," the organist said, "and looking faint. Durrant explained that he had

been fixing the light fixtures in the belfry and had been nearly suffocated by escaping gas. He asked me for something to brace him up and I got him a drink of a restorative."

Durrant was then sent for. Questioning revealed that he was a student at the Cooper Medical college in San Francisco, in his senior year. Investigation had already revealed his devout and temperate habits, his excellent manner and reputation and his record as a promising student and an energetic church worker. He came of a refined and moderately well-to-do family.

He answered questions readily and told the officers that he had been attending a lecture at the college on the afternoon of Miss Lamont's disappearance.

The chemist reported that he was ready to tell what he had learned about the stains on the minister's shoes. When it appeared that these were merely grease, the further investigation of the minister's actions on the day of the first disappearance was dropped for the time being.

Efforts to connect the organist with the crime seemed equally fruitless. He had been present at the scene of the crime if it took place on the afternoon of that third day of April. He was declared to be physically capable of the crime and he admitted he knew the girl, but beyond this, there was



## HORROR IN THE BELL TOWER

no particle of evidence, apparently, unless his story of Durrant's conduct could be considered an effort to shift suspicion.

Suspicion of the police was rapidly veering to Durrant at this juncture.

Then there came the flat announcement that college records showed Durrant's attendance.

Questioned again the young medical student admitted he had been at the church in the late afternoon of April 3, but declared he had gone alone, having ridden on the street car at the end of the lecture to repair the sun burners under the roof. He said he entered the church, left his coat and vest in the library and went up to the gallery.

"To make the repairs," he said, "I had to lie at full length on a plank which made my head lower than my feet. In that position the blood rushed to my head. I grew faint and descending the stairs, found the organist playing in the auditorium. I asked him to get me something and he came back with a restorative. We left the church together about 6 o'clock. In the evening I went to the prayer meeting at the church. I saw Blanche's aunt there and asked if Blanche was coming to the service. She said she believed so, but Blanche didn't come, so after the meeting I went directly home and retired."

The whereabouts of the two

men was then investigated with relation to the evening of Miss Williams' disappearance. It was not quite clear what the organist had been doing that night but it was readily shown that Durrant had attended the Endeavor meeting where Marian had been expected but had failed to appear.

This seemed to clear him of all suspicion of the crime and the police turned in haste to follow neglected angles that might turn up the killer.

None of the men suspected was found to be the owner of a horse. All had ridden at one time or another but the problem of finding their mounts and checking the texture of the mane of each seemed impossible.

One of the church members reopened the lines of suspicion against Durrant.

"He was late to the meeting," one of the whispering women of that Endeavor group declared positively.

"He came in very late and I think he washed his hands in the wash room before he sat down."

This new angle was followed. Several other young men had likewise washed their hands before the meeting. One of them was found who had seen Durrant come in nearly an hour late and wash his hands.

In desperation the police rechecked their investigation of Durrant. At the medical college it

was presently declared that the class record could not be taken as conclusive proof that he was present. Students had often been known to answer "Present" for absent friends in order to save them from being reported as cutting class.

And then it was discovered that Durrant was a member of the signal corps of the California National Guard. As such he frequently rode a horse with his comrades on their heliographic expeditions to Mount Diablo where they relayed messages to the armory at San Francisco and the State Capitol at Sacramento.

At the livery stable where the signal corps horses were kept it was found that Durrant had rented a horse on the afternoon of Miss Williams' disappearance, that it was a horse he was accustomed to rent.

Quickly seizing upon the opportunity the detectives examined hairs from this horse's mane and found that it measured exactly the same as the horse-hair found beside Miss Lamont's body. Hair from the manes of others horses in the stable was either thicker or thinner.

A sample of Durrant's hair was then demanded. It proved to be the same color and the same thickness as those found clinging to the fingers of one of the girls.

Then came the further startling discovery that Durrant's key to

the side door of the church would unlock the door but would not lock it and it was remembered that the door had been found unfastened after the night of the Williams murder.

The case was closing about Durrant with startling suddenness. But there was one fact which gave the lie to the investigation. Miss Lamont had clearly been strangled by a left-handed man but Durrant, as clearly, was right handed.

Once more the case appeared about to bog down when the story of another member of the church of tragedy revealed that Durrant was ambidexterous. He could write with either hand and could throw a ball with either hand. Neither right nor lefthanded, he could use either hand equally well.

With this new evidence, the detectives went back to the medical school and began questioning the hundred or more students who had attended the class lecture where Durrant was supposed to have been on that fatal afternoon. One by one sixty-two of the students denied they had answered to Durrant's name. But the sixty-third admitted that he had done so—at Durrant's request.

A warrant was instantly issued charging the assistant Sunday School superintendent with murder.

Officers rushed to serve the paper. But Durrant was not at home. He had gone to Mount



## HORROR IN THE BELL TOWER

Diablo at noon that day, riding the horse whose hair had figured in the investigation. He was riding once more with the signal corps.

Far up on the distant mountain, a group of men were engaged in flashing signals by means of reflected sun rays—the heliograph—and receiving similar flashes from San Francisco.

Standing beside one of his officers, young Durrant read and spelled out a message:

**PRIVATE THEODORE  
DURRANT CHARGED  
WITH MURDER. OFFICER  
COMING. HOLD HIM.**

He waited quietly for the arrival of the policeman and went quietly back with him.

He was promptly indicted and went to trial first for the murder of Blanche Lamont.

His denial of guilt was steadfast. A weakness of the state's case was that no bloody clothing

belonging to Durrant was ever discovered and there were no eye-witnesses of either murder.

But the jury found him guilty of murder in the first degree and sentenced him, on November 1, to die on February 21, 1896.

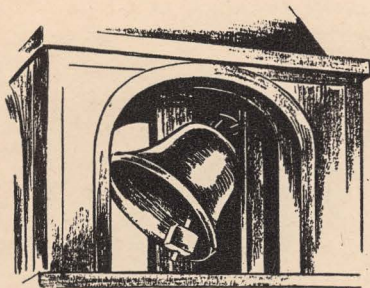
The case was bitterly fought. Three reprieves were granted while it was carried to the United States Supreme court and it was January 7, 1898, nearly three years after the crime, when Durrant went to his death on the gallows.

As the hangman adjusted the black cap, the doomed man announced his desire to speak.

He denied his guilt but forgave his prosecutors and prophesied that one day the true criminal would be discovered.

"I go to meet my God with forgiveness for all men," his last words rang out.

Thus the ghastly murders of the Mission Dolores were avenged.



# MAD MONSTER

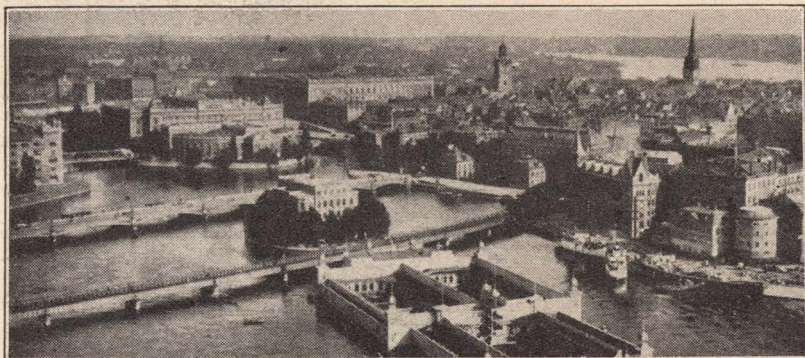
*A shrieking blizzard cloaked the murderer when he slew three old aristocrats. Then the fiend struck thrice again. When police closed in on the killer a seventh murder and suicide ended Stockholm's horrible saga of death.*

A BLIZZARD swept over the Island of Mortnäs near Stockholm, Sweden, on the first day of March, 1932. In their gray stone villa on the hillside, Fritz Zetterberg's bed-ridden wife lay watching the snow and ice form fantastic patterns on the windows. She could hear her sister moving about in the adjoining kitchen, preparing the evening meal.

In past years the elderly Zet-

terbergs had used their villa only during the fashionable summer season, but this winter their income had been greatly reduced by the depression, so that they had stayed on at the island rather than open their Stockholm house. Mrs. Zetterberg two weeks before, had fallen on the ice, severely injuring her back and legs, and her sister had come to care for her.

The invalid turned her eyes



Revulsion at the heinous murders committed by a petted and spoiled member of its proud aristocracy swept Stockholm, above, proud capital of Sweden.



# of MORTNAs

By FRANZ DUVAL

**The pretty and aristocratic woman at right helped the mad killer and in turn became the seventh victim of his frenzy.**

from the windows to the door as she caught the sound of heavy boots stamping down the long hallway. Her face lighted in a tender smile as her 70-year-old husband put his fur-capped head in the door and called a cheery "hello".

Shaking the snow from his shoulders, he added, "It's a wild night outdoors."

He had barely finished speaking when the knocker on the front door clanged loudly. The old people looked at each other in astonishment; they had few visitors this time of year, especially in such weather.

"I'll answer," called Mr. Zetterberg, and moved rapidly toward the front stairs.

He had recently turned the villa into two apartments, renting out the one on the ground floor during the summer season while he and his wife occupied the up-



per one. Mrs. Zetterberg could hear him descending the stairs to the front door. She strained her ears to catch the voice of the caller. Footsteps mounted the steps, started down the hall, then suddenly stopped. She listened intently but could not distinguish the voice.

All at once her eyes dilated in horror as a blood-curdling yell came from her husband. "Fritz!

Fritz!" she screamed and tried to rise. Then she stiffened in terror as his shadow went stumbling past the door, followed by another.

At his second agonized shriek she tried desperately to move her powerless legs, groaning piteously with the effort. Almost at the same moment an ear-splitting scream came from her sister, then a thud, and silence. She must reach her loved ones. Tears poured down her wrinkled cheeks. She gasped helplessly, "Fritz! Hilda!"

As a shadowy form appeared in the doorway, eyes gleaming, she managed to get one leg out of the bed, but the other wouldn't move. She lay rigidly staring, made no outcry as the figure with its maniacal eyes slowly advanced like a phantom in a nightmare. She gripped the bedclothing with both hands, tried to raise it over her face as her eyes caught sight of the bloody iron bar in the raised hand. Cowering, she cried out as the man leaped.

The iron bar crashed downward, across the woman's white forehead and sent her body pitching from the bed. It lay motionless, face down. Without a glance at the dead woman, the figure threw down the iron bar; it landed with a loud noise and rolled close to the crushed white head. Within a few moments the killer emerged into the vastness of the stormy night.

Three nights later two muffled

figures fought their way through the snowdrifts toward the Zetterberg villa. They pushed forward in silence, their bodies bent against the force of the biting wind that stung their faces. The heavier of the two was Murder Commissioner Gustavsson of Stockholm. His companion was Chief of Detectives Thour.

When they entered the grounds, and trudged up the slight incline to the front door, Thour said, "I hope the local police have obeyed instructions to leave everything as they found it."

Gustavsson did not reply. His eyes were fixed on the washing hanging on a line at their right. The clothes were frozen stiff and, silhouetted against the dark sky, they hung swaying like figures from a gibbet. Then the detective's eyes caught the ladder leaning against the house at the rear.

The door opened and Chief Johnson of the Mortnas district stood aside to let the Stockholm officials enter. He led them upstairs and along the narrow hall.

In the kitchen doorway the detectives recoiled at the dreadful sight that met them. Near the stove, the body of old Fritz Zetterberg lay on its back, arms extended at either side. His head and face were crushed and covered with dried blood. Draped across the kitchen table was the body of Kristina Hedstom, face down, arms dangling.



## MAD MONSTER OF MORTNAS

Gustavsson walked over and stooped to examine the woman's head, while Thour knelt beside the body of the old man. From the doorway the district official said, "This isn't all, gentlemen."

He led the way to the bedroom and switched on the light. The detective stared at the pitiable figure of Mrs. Zetterberg, face down in a large spot of dried blood. One leg had caught in the bedding, remaining raised there. Cold rage swept through Gustavsson as he stepped up beside the body. One glance showed that the old woman's skull also had been crushed. He turned at an exclamation from Thour and saw his associate bending to pick up a length of iron pipe, about a yard long.

Stepping nearer, Gustavsson saw that one end was dark red, while bits of earth clung to the other end. "H'mm," he remarked, "looks like the markers they use as fence-posts hereabouts."

As he spoke the commissioner glanced about the room. Dark bloodstains were on the walls, floor

and even the ceiling. A look of grim determination was in his face as he addressed Johnson in the doorway.

"Where's the medical examiner?"

"He just arrived. He's in the kitchen now."

"Who discovered the bodies? They've evidently been dead for some time."

Johnson nodded, "We think about three days," he said. "A young business man who lives here on the island — Carl Carlsson — found them late this afternoon and called me. I asked him to wait downstairs in the empty apartment so you could question him. He knew the Zetterbergs quite well."

"Good," said Gustavsson. "First we'll have a look about the house."

Together the three detectives went down the narrow hall to the living room. Standing in the middle of the large tastefully furnished room, Gustavsson glanced about. Everything seemed in perfect order. Suddenly, however, his sharp eyes focused on a small safe in one corner. Quickly he crossed



Gaily draining a glass of champagne at a merry party, this brutal killer stepped away from the dinner table and shot himself as he walked into the arms of the police.

to examine it and saw that the door stood ajar. He opened it up and looked at the neatly piled papers. There was no sign of disorder or of anyone having ransacked it. Yet the orderliness of the entire apartment made the commissioner doubt that old Zetterberg himself would have left the door guarding his most precious possessions so carelessly open.

Straightening he said to Thour, who stood watching him, "I believe the killer came here for the purpose of obtaining something which he figured Zetterberg kept in this safe. We may find valuable fingerprints on the door."

Johnson volunteered, "I've sent my men into the village to round up everybody who can give any information and bring them here."

Ignoring the remark, Gustavsson went on into the kitchen and spoke to the doctor, who was bent over the body near the stove. "How long have they been dead?" he asked.

"At least 36 hours."

"As the woman was peeling potatoes, it must have been around dinner time," mused Thour.

Gustavsson nodded. "Zetterberg hadn't yet removed his cap and boots. He must have just entered the house. I wonder," he said as his eyes narrowed, "if he brought the killer in with him? Obviously, it was some one he knew."

While he was speaking, the commissioner had stooped to re-

move the wallet from the dead man's pocket. He examined the contents and then went on, "It wasn't money the murderer was after. There are 280 kronen in this pocketbook."

The doctor looked up from his work. "Zetterberg's skull was crushed with one blow through his fur cap," he announced. "To accomplish that the killer must have been a powerful man."

"Let's talk with the young man who found the bodies," suggested Gustavsson, abruptly.

Once more they went down the hallway, Johnson and Thour in the lead. Near the telephone table Gustavsson stopped to stare at some marks on the ceiling. He took his flash from his pocket and snapped it on to get a better light. Thour and Johnson looked on in bewilderment as the commissioner raised first one arm, then the other, keeping his eyes fixed on the marks in the low ceiling. Finally a look of satisfaction spread over his face. Without a word he continued on and went down the stairs.

In the living room of the vacant apartment on the first floor, a blond young man rose as the three officials entered. Gustavsson shivered slightly; the room was cold as ice. "You discovered the bodies?" he asked.

The youth's face was haggard. He nodded. His voice was husky as he told how he had become wor-



## MAD MONSTER OF MORTNAS

ried when he hadn't been able to reach his friends on the telephone that afternoon. He had come by the house and seen a light burning in the kitchen window. As it was early afternoon, he had thought that was rather queer. He knocked and called for some time, but no one answered. At last he went to the next neighbor, from whom the Zetterbergs bought their milk.

The neighbor had also become worried as Mr. Zetterberg hadn't been around for milk for two days. So together the men had returned to the villa and Carlsson procured a ladder from the barn and climbed up to the kitchen window. Perspiration broke out on the young man's forehead as he told of looking in and seeing his old friend and the dead woman at the table.

Gustavsson eyed the young man narrowly as he began asking him questions. A loud knock on the door, followed by scuffling feet, interrupted the conversation.

Johnson left the room and returned presently, saying: "My men have discovered two fishermen who saw a man walking toward the villa late Wednesday afternoon. It was so stormy they couldn't see plainly, but they think the man was a stranger on the island."

"Bring the men here," ordered Gustavsson.

The men were brought into the room. They stood shifting their weight from one foot to another,



Baron Hjalmar von Sydow, one of the great financial figures of Sweden, was bludgeoned by the murdering monster who sought funds to flee the scene of five other killings.

gazing first at Carlsson, whom they knew, then at the police officials. Their description of the man they had seen was too vague to be of much help, but they added bits of information to Carlsson's story and the detectives learned of Mrs. Zetterberg's injury. The three agreed that the kindly old couple could not possibly have any enemies who would wish to destroy them. To the question as to whether the men knew anything of Mr. Zetterberg's movements on the days just previous to the crime, Carlsson spoke up.

"He went to Stockholm on Saturday. He told me he expected to transact business at the bank."

Thour got out his notebook and took down the name of the bank,

which the young man seemed to know. His information, thought Thour, indicates that he was extremely intimate with the dead man.

Gustavsson had seated himself during the interviews. Now he stood up. He sent for Johnson. "See that everything is fingerprinted. Send the bodies to Stockholm. Make a careful check of every inhabitant of the island and find out where each one was on Wednesday afternoon and evening."

When he had removed all the papers from the safe, he called Thour to him. "Let's go back to town," he said.

Johnson had stood uncertainly in the doorway as the two officials took their departure. He went out into the night a few steps and called after them softly. Gustavsson turned inquiringly.

"May I accompany you to your car?" the district official said hesitantly. "You don't know the island." Then, after a moment he added, "Besides, the killer may be hiding somewhere. As you ordered, the men are looking for him. But if he's a maniac he may attack you."

Gustavsson stared in astonishment. "Go back into the house, Johnson," he said crisply. "Thour and I can look out for ourselves."

Slowly the tired men trudged in the direction where they had left the chauffeur with their car when the drifts became too deep to drive

through. They were chilled to the bone. There had been no heat in the villa. Taking out his flash, Thour played it in a semi-circle before them as they went slowly forward. By this time it was well past midnight.

The island, a gay resort in summer, now seemed like a barren wasteland. The few houses they saw loomed darkly, like monsters poised to spring. Gustavsson's head was thrust forward. He thought: "What manner of man could the killer be to strike down defenseless old people?"

His assistant was playing the flash in a widening circle, examining the ground ahead. His voice sounded faraway as he shouted against the wind, "I'm sure we left the car here."

Gustavsson studied the snow-covered ground. "There are no wheel tracks here. It must be further on."

They walked on but had only gone a few paces when Thour grabbed his superior's arm. "Look!"

Glancing into the yellow fan of the flashlight's glare, the commissioner saw a man running toward them. Gripping his gun, he said from the corner of his mouth, "Keep him covered." Then tramped determinedly forward.

The running man was almost on them when Thour gave a sharp exclamation, then relaxed. "What's the matter, Axel?" he



## MAD MONSTER OF MORTNAS

called as he recognized the commissioner's chauffeur.

The man halted, gasping for breath. "I went to hunt up a farmhouse and get some hot coffee and when I got back a man was bending over the hood of the car," he blurted. "When he saw me he ran off. I tried to follow, but he disappeared. I thought I'd better run to the villa and tell you."

"I see," said the commissioner dryly.

When they had made their way to the machine and were at last headed back for Stockholm, the two officials sat silently staring straight ahead. Thour fumbled with his frozen fingers, pulled out a cigarette from his pocket and lit it. Then he settled back. Gustavsson pulled his fur-collared overcoat higher about his ears, and said:

"We've got one thing, at any rate. The killer is left-handed."

Thour removed the cigarette from his mouth and stared in frank astonishment. "How do you figure that?" he asked.

"Those marks over the telephone on the ceiling in the hall were made by the iron bar. The murderer must have first attacked Zetterberg there, but the old man escaped to the kitchen, where his assailant followed and killed him. The hallway, I found, was so narrow at that point that a man's body can only stand in one place. I found that only with my left

arm could I have made those marks."

Crushing out his cigarette, Thour remarked, "The fact that one of the fence-posts used commonly on the island was the murder weapon may mean that the murderer was a native."

Gustavsson nodded in agreement. "We haven't much to go on," he said gravely.

When they reached headquarters they were greeted by the news, telephoned a few moments before, that a man was found to be missing from the island. Thour sent word back to Johnson about the man who had tampered with their car and wondered if it were the same person and if he had been trying to start the machine in order to make his escape.

Thour and Gustavsson conferred until long after daylight. Gustavsson leaned his tired arms on the desk, clasped his hands and stared at the opposite wall as he talked.

"I believe," he said with conviction, "that some paper was removed from the safe and that, in spite of the fact Zetterberg wasn't robbed, money may be behind the crime. The old man loaned out money occasionally to people he knew. It's possible the killer was one of these. One thing is sure, he must have known the man or he never would have admitted him to his house and brought him upstairs.

The phone on the commissioner's desk rang stridently. Leaning over, he answered it. When he hung up he announced, "The fingerprints on the pipe match those on the safe."

Thour got up and paced the room. "That trip Zetterberg made to Stockholm on Saturday may develop into something," he said.

Before the bank had opened for business that morning, Thour was closeted with the officials. They recalled Zetterberg's visit and said he seemed excited. He had drawn 300 kronen, had gone off for about two hours and then returned to ask one of the tellers a question. Then the elderly man was seen stepping into a taxi at the stand in front of the bank.

Thour hurried out to find the taxi, which luckily was parked outside at the moment. The chauffeur told him he had driven Zetterberg to an apartment in the most exclusive residential section of the city, on North Malarstrand. He had heard his fare ask the doorman for the Baron von Sydow's apartment. When he had learned this news, the inspector got into his own car and sped to the Malarstrand address.

As he sent the machine through the morning traffic, he pondered on what possible connection the illustrious baron could have with the almost obscure Zetterberg. Baron Hjalmar von Sydow was one of the great financial figures

of Sweden, and one of the richest men in the land. None of the papers in Zetterberg's safe had suggested business dealings between the two. He parked his car, took the elevator to the third floor and rang the bell at the baron's apartment.

A maid admitted him and led him across an impressive entrance hall and a magnificently furnished drawing room to the baron's study. The nobleman, a large man, loomed from behind an ornately carved desk. He looked at his visitor with coldly inquiring eyes.

"You have doubtless read of the murder over at Mortnas," Thour explained. "We are checking Mr. Zetterberg's movements just prior to the crime, and have learned that he visited you here on Saturday morning. I hope you can aid us with information?"

The imposing man did not answer at once. Finally he said, "I have known Zetterberg for a number of years. I read of his death with regret. His visit to me held nothing which would help you in solving his-murder."

Thour said good-bye and walked out of the room. As he emerged into the street his eyes held a look of puzzled uncertainty. "The baron's hiding something," he said aloud as he drove back to headquarters.

The next afternoon the phone rang. Gustavsson answered. Thour unconsciously sprang up as



## MAD MONSTER OF MORTNAS

he saw his chief get half out of his chair and say: "We'll be right there."

As he dropped the phone back in place Gustavsson stood up and stepped around his desk. Thour waited for him to speak. At last the commissioner turned and faced his assistant.

"Baron von Sydow has just been found murdered at his home!"

Thour followed Gustavsson to the parked police car before the headquarters building. Together they raced through the streets, the police siren sending a warning ahead of them. Gustavsson suddenly remarked, "Two women servants were also murdered."

Thour stared thoughtfully ahead. "If he had only disclosed the nature of old Zetterberg's visit on Saturday we might have prevented this. But it's obvious now that some connection exists between the Mortnas crime and this one."

As the car came to a halt before the Malarstrand street apartments, Gustavsson nodded in agreement, and climbed quickly out.

Thour knew the way and strode into the spacious drawing room. He saw a group of men gathered about a sofa. Gustavsson was close behind him as the men stood aside, disclosing the huge figure of the Baron von Sydow. The upper part of his head was crushed and bleeding. The inspector

stopped in his tracks as his quick eyes followed a trail of blood stretching across the expensive carpet.

"He was evidently killed in the dining room and then dragged in here," one of the detectives explained.

"Where are the other bodies?" asked the commissioner.

"In the back part of the apartment," replied the man. "The old housekeeper, Karolina Herou, was killed in the servants' sitting room, just off the kitchen. Her skull was crushed just like the baron's." He gestured toward the mutilated head. "The young maid, Ebba Hamm, was struck down in the kitchen."

"Who discovered the bodies?" asked Gustavsson quickly.

"The baron's little niece, Monica Schwartz, when she came home from school about a half hour ago."

When they had examined the bodies, Gustavsson said, "You'll notice, Thour, that they've all met death in the same way that the Zetterberg family was wiped out."

His assistant nodded dejectedly. Together they went over the entire apartment for clues, ordered detectives to question everyone in the building as to whether the murderer had been seen, and sent still others to check on the baron's movements throughout the day. No trace of the murder weapon was found nor any other clue.

Not one of them had seen anyone enter the apartment.

The commissioner asked his assistant to bring in the young niece who had discovered the tragedy. When the frightened 13-year-old girl hesitantly came into the study where the two officials sat in conference, Thour rose, went over and took her by the hand. She stared up at him with a tear-stained face, but stood very erect and answered their questions as well as she could.

The child explained that she had come home from school around 4:30. "When no one answered the bell I couldn't understand it. I didn't know what to do, so I went to the neighbors upstairs and they got the elevator boy to let us in with a passkey. My uncle was on the sofa, all covered with blood."

Dismissing the girl, Gustavsson questioned the elevator attendants for the second time. They still insisted that they had brought no one up to the apartment except the baron and Miss Monica. However, all the attendants admitted that the doorman often stepped away from the entrance to help people in and out of their cars, or call a taxi. At such times it would have been possible for someone to slip unnoticed into the building and mount the stairway instead of using the elevator.

The eight room apartment had been searched for fingerprints, and

the experts had been ordered to compare them with those of the Zetterberg killer.

One fact developed: the baron's wallet was missing, and his business associates informed the detectives that he usually carried large sums of money.

When the bodies had been removed to the morgue, Thour examined the sofa for the first time and gave a low whistle as he picked up one of the pillows to look behind it. Gustavsson stared, then picked up the blood-stained piece of cloth. It was a part of a pink chemise, edged in expensive lace. Under another pillow was the rest of the chemise, with the shoulder straps broken.

"This was used," he said, "to wipe up blood. "At last we're getting somewhere. Neither the little niece nor the servants would have owned such a slip. There's a woman mixed up in the crimes. She wasn't strong enough to have done the killing, but she must have been here, and reached up under her dress to tear the slip from her body to mop up the blood."

The commissioner and his assistant left several gendarmes on guard in the apartment and went back to headquarters. When they arrived there, they were informed that the manager of the exclusive Tegner restaurant had been trying to reach the commissioner on the phone. He would talk to no one else.



## MAD MONSTER OF MORTNAS

Gustavsson put in a call for the man. As he listened his tired eyes brightened, his shoulders straightened. "Come on!" he shouted to Thour as he hung up. "We're on the killer's trail!"

They drove to the Restaurant Tegner. The manager was waiting for them at the entrance, a long paper-wrapped package in his hand. He handed it to Gustavsson who tore off the wrappings and disclosed a newly-cut piece of lead pipe.

"It was left in the washroom during tea time," he explained. "An attendant found it about half an hour ago. Dozens of men went into the washroom at that hour. We have no idea who left it. That's blood at one end, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied Gustavsson slowly, "that's blood." He eyed the pipe grimly, then studied the wrapping paper. His eyes gleamed as he announced, "It carries the name of the store where the pipe was purchased. I'll trace this and have the fingerprints on the pipe developed."

Thour was watching the commissioner with narrowed, excited eyes. The chief went on issuing crisp orders. "You take my car, drive to the University of Upsala, where the baron's only son, Frederick, is attending the university. We must get news to him of his father's death. He may be able to supply a few clues. But more than that, we must protect him

from the murdering fiend. He may be the next victim! It's not necessary for me to tell you that the situation is more than critical. Reach the boy as soon as possible. I'll phone the Upsala police to locate him for you."

Thour ran out to the car and drove the short distance to the university town in record time. When the car stopped abruptly before the Upsala police headquarters, his hand was already on the door handle. He sprang out and hurried inside.

An officer was waiting for him with the news that the young baron had been located. He was dining with his beautiful young wife and a group of friends at the Hotel Gillet. The Upsala chief had gone over there and was waiting for Thour at the hotel. With this information, the inspector drove to the hotel. In the lobby Chief Ericsson met him with the remark:

"The young man is in the dining room and still safe."

The hotel manager came hurrying forward. "Inspector Thour is wanted on the phone," he said, leading the way to his office.

Thour picked up the phone and heard Gustavsson's voice in Stockholm. His face went gray. After he hung up, he stood leaning against the desk for a moment, then said curtly: "Please go into the dining room, and bring the young Baron von Sydow to me in

the lobby. I'll be near the dining room entrance. Don't let him out of your sight. Hurry!"

The tense tone of the police official's voice sent the manager rapidly from the room. Following him, Thour beckoned to Ericsson. Glancing about, the inspector saw that the lobby was crowded with men and women in evening clothes. He frowned, as he took up a stand where he could keep his eye on the dining room. As Ericsson came up beside him, he whispered a few words in the chief's ear.

Thour could see the hotel manager approach a table where eight young people sat dining and laughing. Leaning over, the manager whispered to the blond young man at the head of the table. The young man smiled, raised his champagne glass, then reached over pulled one of the red roses from a huge vase in the center of the table and threw it to attract his lovely wife's attention.

She lifted her glass and drained it, then the baron rose, she got up, too, and stepped around the table, linking her arm in his. Laughingly they excused themselves and followed the manager. Near the entrance, the young man caught sight of Thour and Ericsson. He leaned over and quickly kissed his young wife. They were still some distance away, but Thour caught sight of a gleaming object in the baron's left hand.

The detective sprang forward. Before he reached the couple there was a deafening report. The baron straightened, as the girl slumped to the floor. A second shot rang out. The Baron Frederick von Sydow pitched full length at Thour's feet.

The dining room and lobby were thrown into an instant uproar. Screams of panic-stricken women were heard above the shouts of the men as Thour dropped on one knee beside the two prostrate figures. Both were dead.

Thour stood up and, taking a handkerchief from his breast pocket, mopped his moist brow as he stared down at the handsome young couple. His face was a picture of sad bewilderment.

The news that Commissioner Gustavsson had telephoned him a few minutes before was that the hardware store had identified the young baron as the purchaser of the lead pipe. Also, that a taxi chauffeur had been found who had driven the young couple from the hardware store to the apartment of the baron's father. They had gone into the building, ordering the cab to remain on a nearby corner, had come out shortly after 4 o'clock and ordered him to drive them to the Restaurant Tegner. The blood-stained slip had belonged to the young baroness. In the young man's pocket was found his father's missing wallet.



## MAD MONSTER OF MORTNAS

Thour ordered the bodies sent to Stockholm, then drove back to give Gustavsson the details of the last two deaths in the dreadful series of crimes. He thought of the young people's background as the car shot through the cold night. The youth and his wife were the pampered children of Sweden's aristocracy, both fabulously rich, fast and wild. Before her marriage the girl had calmly announced to her father one day that she was to have a child, that Frederick von Sydow was the father.

She was promptly shipped off to Italy, where the couple were married and the child was born, a little girl whom they called Monica. Leaving the child with her parents, the young people returned to college and their old, wild life.

But Baron von Sydow had refused to increase his son's allowance, so Frederick, Thour reasoned (the deduction afterward was proved to be correct), went to his father's acquaintance, old Zetterberg and borrowed money from him. When he didn't pay it back Zetterberg had visited the baron—to complain. The father had reproached his son and, in a maniacal fury, the youth had gone to

Mortnas and slain the Zetterberg family.

Thour wondered if it was because the father suspected his son's guilt that he had been so reticent about Zetterberg's Saturday visit. Realizing the police would soon track him down, the young baron was frantic to escape, but had no money. He had gone to his father's apartment hoping to find money concealed there. He had killed the servants, knowing they would tell he had been there. Then he had murdered his father. The girl had looked on, afterward tearing off her slip to wipe up the blood.

When her evening gown was removed at the morgue, she was found to have no slip underneath. She had changed her clothes but hadn't bothered to put on another one.

It developed that some months before, during a fire in which he had been trapped, the young man had leaped from a second-story window, suffering a severe injury about the head. Experts now said that this partially explained his fiendish urge to kill and his maniacal crimes which were so revolting to the law-abiding citizens of Sweden.



# HARVEST



Ray Lamphere, farmhand, helped the demon-woman  
bury her mutilated paramour.



# of the DEAD

*Indiana's she-fiend practiced her crimson trade unchallenged until the ashes of her home betrayed a lurid secret.*

BY JACK BOND



Belle Gunness, the Indiana ogress, lured a score of men to a ghastly death.

THE story of Belle Gunness and her nefarious operations is one unrivaled in the annals of violent crime. Powerful as two ordinary men, and with abnormal cunning, she found it easy to dispose of her victims, many of whom were larger and stronger than herself. Fully a score of men are believed to have succumbed to the wiles of this murdering adventuress.

Those who knew Belle declare emphatically that she was lacking in beauty of figure and form, but to many men she was strangely attractive. She was five feet, seven inches tall and her weight was close to 225 pounds. Yet she so lured and befuddled the minds of her lovers with her own particular method of physical attraction that each one gladly gave her every

dollar he had. Before the fateful night of April 27, 1908, she had murdered more lovers than most women attract.

The parents of Belle were wandering gypsies in Norway, who gave exhibitions of sword swallowing followed by a spectacle then new to the country people—a decapitation act. In this scene the father placed the mother's head on a block, swung a glittering broad-axe, and the head apparently fell into the basket. These performances continued until just before Belle's birth.

After a temporary rest, the troupe again went on the road,

little Belle in time being one of the amused spectators of the thrills nightly given by her parents. But one day the mother spied the child chopping off the head of her doll and with the instinct given to mothers called off the show at once.

Several years later Belle witnessed the death of her grandfather who fell from an upper landing in their home. This was followed by her father's accidental death when he slipped and fell on a knife. Thus, early in her career, the girl became used to death in all its horror.

Her mysterious power of attraction was first apparent after her arrival in America. Max Sorenson, a private detective, fell in love with the young Norwegian girl and became her first husband.

After twelve months of marriage, Belle was furious to discover she would ever be childless. According to the best information available of her early life, she adopted a little waif, named it Lucy, and reared it as if it were her own flesh and blood. But Lucy "disappeared" one day, and then within varying periods, other children were "adopted," only to vanish in a short time.

One night the Sorenson home caught fire and was destroyed. The insurance money gave Belle the gold greed that was to be her curse. Noting that her husband's life insurance policy would expire on

July 31, 1900, Belle cast an appraising eye around for better insurance and more of it. So, without arousing suspicion in the mind of her husband, she persuaded him to apply for a \$5,000 policy in another company. His application passed favorably, and on July 30, he was notified that the policy had gone into force that noon. Belle noted that there was just exactly one day in which her man carried two policies, the total being \$8,500. How simple it would be; just a touch of arsenic in his coffee, and she was rich! Without a trace of compunction she carried the plan through, the companies paying without question.

Seldom in the histories of criminals do we find women culprits changing their method of taking life. Catherine Wilson, wholesale poisoner, always used that method; but this is the only time, it is believed, that Belle poisoned a victim.

Near La Porte, Indiana, lies a small farm that was looked upon by the neighboring and townspeople as a hoodoo, owing to several unsolved deaths that had occurred on the place while occupied by different tenants. With Belle went Peter Gunness whom she had married a short time before. The farm, bearing a haunted romance that kept others away, just suited the woman. Under her direction the house and outbuildings were put in repair



## HARVEST OF THE DEAD

and repainted; gardens and flowers were planted, and within a few months the old farm was lovely. Since Belle and Peter were unable to agree on any subject, an "accident" took place which removed the slow and phlegmatic husband. A meat axe fell on his head, so Belle told the coroner, and it fell with force enough to split his skull. While the body was still warm Belle collected his \$3,000 insurance.

Sending to a town some distance away, she engaged the services of a mason to build a "smokehouse," and insisted that it join the building on the ground floor. This would give direct entry from the kitchen. The ordinary smokehouse is built proof against a number of things but Belle had additional ideas. It must be soundproof, and stronger than the average. Inside were hung meat-hooks, and also she installed a vat, cutting machines, and tools that would aid in dissecting "hogs."

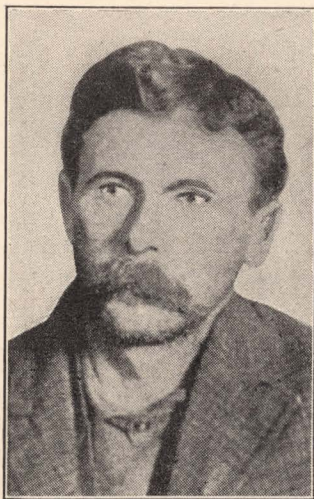
Criminologists are dazed when they study the premeditated acts of Belle Gunness in her prepara-

tions of what was to be the most terrible chain of activities since the Burke and Hare cases. She laid out a plot of ground near the house, fenced it with dog-proof wire eight feet high, and barred its one entrance with a padlocked

gate. From a merchant she bought 200 sacks of chicken feed but warned him that some of the sacks probably would be lost, so she offered to pay for them right away. She journeyed to Chicago and procured poison, for although she probably did not intend to use that as an "eliminator," once in a while, she figured, it might be safer.

To another merchant she said that she required quantities of quicklime to clean out cesspools near the house, so she purchased quicklime by the barrel. On Sundays, that her neighbors might think her pious and God-fearing, she went to the services in the little country church. By means of these subterfuges Belle Gunness set the stage for the first act.

*Personal — Comely widow who owns large farm in one*



To Ray Lamphere, castoff lover, the terrible secret was revealed.

*of the finest districts in La Porte County, Indiana, desires to make the acquaintance of gentleman equally well provided, with view of joining fortunes. No replies by letter considered unless sender is willing to follow answer with personal visit.*

This advertisement in a number of scattered farm publications drew answers as sugar draws flies. By dint of careful and crafty answers, Belle eliminated those who might have near relatives that would follow up any sudden disappearance, or who might gossip to others about the pretty widow they were going to get. With her victim carefully selected from the list of replies, Belle would bombard him with such loving and sensuous read-between-the-line letters that he would lose no time in converting available real estate into cash. Then he would hasten to the side of the charming lady in Indiana.

In this manner she snared Olaf Lindboe from Chicago. Olaf was husky; likewise he was foxy, so that he arrived at the home of the widow with only \$200, a fine fur overcoat and a gold watch. Belle was peeved that he had no more; she took his money, then set him to work on the farm without wages, insinuating that she would marry him, but that he must prove his love for her by working a while.

After several months Olaf got tired of this arrangement and wanted a showdown. He got it. One night Belle put the remains of the big man in a hole he had dug for garbage—at least that was what she told him it was for.

Soon came Eric Gerhalt of Iola, Wisconsin. In a Scandinavian paper he saw the luring ad and answered it. A short correspondence, and Gerhalt one day was seen driving up to the Gunness home with a horse and buggy. Several weeks of a mad love orgy, and then he also disappeared. Belle had his outfit, which she sent to Michigan City and sold.

By this time she had the system down pat. The fact that she did not need to tie herself down to any one man only served to increase the flame that was consuming her.

John Moo of Elbow Lake, Minnesota, was another who tarried for a while in the house of the seductive Belle, only to fill a grave in the little enclosure that could plainly be seen from the living-room window. How many there were is a question. Some think fifty, others say a score. But the remains that were dug up after fire destroyed the house seem to indicate that the latter figure probably is more nearly correct.

With diabolical ingenuity, she sprinkled the graves with quicklime. All the bodies had been dissected and placed in gunny sacks.



## HARVEST OF THE DEAD

What if there were crimson stains in the smokehouse? Didn't she butcher calves and sheep therein? And to crown her method, she was said to have used the same system that Bartholin, the Chicago murderer, used to fool the authorities—she put into the graves pieces of dead animals, and bones; the mixture, being acted upon by the quicklime, made identification almost impossible.

About this time there came into her life a man who was destined to be her nemesis, but was the only one of her victims able to thrill her voluptuous being. This was Ray Lamphere, a well-built young man whom she met on the street in La Porte and who answered her smile with a promise to go to work for her. For several months he dominated the widow—she seemed infatuated with him, but absolutely refused to marry him.

One night, another victim having arrived, she ordered the sullen farmhand to change to another room. For six days her new victim was her lord; then she sent Ray to another town on a wild goose chase that he might not be present when she put the finishing touches to her new flame. Lamphere, suspicious, returned in a few hours, and was greeted with a veritable shambles. To his leering, questioning look, she vouchsafed the information that the man had tried to kill her and that she had fought back. Without showing

any sign of his suspicions, Lamphere advised her to bury the body with his help. She had to comply, for she saw now that this apparently uncouth farmhand knew her secret and had her bound. From then on he was a partner in her crimes, it is believed.

Bluff, hearty, good-natured Andrew Helgelein of Aberdeen, South Dakota, came into the net. After an exchange of letters covering months, Belle finally wrote a note that brought him in a rush. She met him and for the time being put Lamphere out of the way.

Several days and nights the stolid Andrew basked in the love smiles of the widow, while she gradually converted him to the idea of turning his available securities into cash. This accomplished, it was not long before Andrew dropped from sight, but a brother of his, who knew where he had gone, took it upon himself to institute an inquiry by mail.

Did a little thing like that bother Belle? No, indeed! In answer to his inquiry regarding his brother, he received the following letter:

"Dearest brother of the best friend I have in the world: It is with tears flooding my eyes and a heart overburdened with grief that I write you about your dear brother—my sweetheart. He has gone from here, I know not where. As I think of him my

heart bleeds. May God bless him wherever he may be!

"As I lie awake nights thinking of him I wonder where he is and whether he is safe. I would do anything in the world to find him. He left my house seemingly happy, and since that time in January I have not seen him.

"Sell off everything he owns, get together as much of your own money as you can, and come here. During the first part of May we shall go to seek him. Bring the money in cash, because it will be so much easier to handle that way. Oh, my dear, good brother-in-law, what a happy reunion we shall have when we find Andrew! I will fly to his arms and never, oh, never be separated from him again.

"Yours in great sorrow,  
"BELLE GUNNESS."

But Else Helgelein fortunately was not to be another victim of the murderess. The veil of mystery surrounding the numerous disappearances was ripped aside and Belle Gunness was held up to the world as a cold-blooded fiend second to none.

The night of April 27, 1908, the Gunness farmhouse burned to the ground, and the following morning sympathetic neighbors gathered sorrowfully around the scene of desolation, commenting on the fine qualities of the lonely widow who had struggled so hard for a living. In whispers they re-

told the gruesome tales that had haunted the place before its occupancy by Mrs. Gunness. Searchers in the ruins quickly found the bodies of four persons—those of a woman and three children.

The head of the woman's body was missing, but it was generally accepted that it was Mrs. Gunness who had fallen a victim to the flames. Then officials took measurements and astounded the people by announcing that it was the body of a woman much smaller than the mistress of the murder farm. Ray Lamphere had been seen in the vicinity just before the fire, and since she had craftily sowed the seeds of distrust against him by boldly informing the authorities that he had threatened her, officers placed him under arrest and charged him with the crime.

The picture of the man was published in the newspapers with an account of the fire and the finding of the bodies in the ruins. Else Helgelein, brother of the missing Andrew, read the account and pondered. Thinking he might be able to find some trace of his brother, he hurried to La Porte and instituted inquiries. Patiently he interviewed townspeople and farmers, but came no nearer to the solution. To the officials who listened, he reported his suspicions, but scant attention was paid to him.

Then Helgelein began the un-



## HARVEST OF THE DEAD

raveling of the crimes, performing a piece of detective work that was without parallel. Day after day he haunted the scene. Finally a former farmhand informed him of the holes dug for "garbage." This set him thinking.

The next day shovels slowly commenced to uncover the terrible things discovered in the fenced-in plot of ground. Bones, some eaten away by action of the quicklime, were dug up; and the first body brought to light and identified was that of the unfortunate Andrew Helgelein. Soon the remains of ten victims were in the little shed used as a temporary morgue, and the officials, hardened though they were by constant touch with crime, shuddered and sickened as the ground gave up the gruesome remains of victim after victim.

Then the cry went up: Where

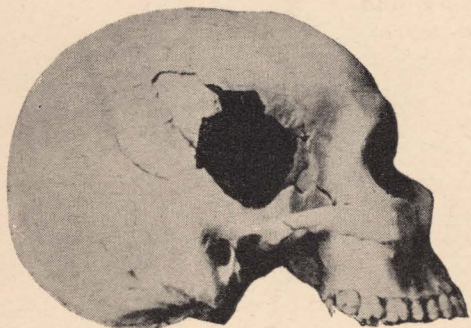
is Belle Gunness, the murderess? Is it her body that was taken from the ruins, or is it that of another of her victims?

Theories flew thick and fast; some held to the belief that she converted much of her holdings into cash and created a suspicion against Lamphere that would lay the blame for the fire to him. She knew that her race was run after the stolid farmhand had penetrated her secret; that she must fly before he gave her away. Others clung to the opinion that he really killed her in revenge, and as proof of this they pointed out that the skulls of the three children plainly showed that blows had been struck.

Lamphere was sent to prison, but this did not solve the mystery. Even now men will be found who assert that Belle Gunness is still alive.



# CLUE CRUSHED



By  
**CARL SHULTZ**

The skulls of the victims all received the same kind of temple-crushing death blow. It was the silent killer's trademark.

**"T**WENTY-ONE stiletto wounds! Mein Gott, is there any hope of restoring her to consciousness?"

Commissioner Momberg bent over the form of the handsome young woman as she lay barely breathing while an interne worked frantically to stem the crimson streams that welled from her chest, throat and forehead.

"That I cannot tell you," replied the interne. "My opinion is that the woman will not die for some time. The knifer's aim was not perfect. He struck for a vital spot each time and yet he missed in every instance by the slightest fraction of an inch."

"Revive her if you can! I must have a statement from her. This

is no ordinary case."

Commissioner Momberg, chief of the homicide squad of the Dusseldorf police, turned to two plain-clothes men who had accompanied him to the hospital.

"Let us get to Flöngern as fast as possible."

The trio stepped into their automobile and raced toward the Flöngern district on the eastern outskirts of Dusseldorf, the shriek of their siren destroying the quiet of the outlying sections that February Sunday night.

"Herr Commissioner," inquired one of the men, "Why do you say this is not ordinary case of knifing?"

"Because," replied Momberg, "if the only object the assailant



# of the SKULLS

*Hissing like a snake, the dread monster struck quickly in the dark and was gone. All Germany was terrorized by his attacks. Here is the inside story of how police trapped the taunting fiend who sent them maps showing where to find his victims' bodies.*

Wily in the ways of eluding police, this man gave Dusseldorf officials months of worry. When finally captured, he gloatingly admitted 35 major crimes.



had in mind was to get the girl out of the road, he would have used a heavier weapon and he would not have had to stab her 21 times.

"You saw that the wounds were deep but very small in width. Fifteen of them in the chest, five in the throat and one in the forehead. We know from the first report that the woman was waylaid on a dark street. The man who attacked her armed himself in advance. He could have chosen a different weapon and made sure of his job. But he didn't because he wanted to torture his victim hideously, to obtain a thrill of pleasure out of every knife thrust. He expected her to die of course. But that light stiletto he used luckily missed the heart, the jugular vein

and the brain.

"That slash across her forehead was the result of a savage blow at the temple, probably the last one struck, which went a trifle too far to the left to cause death.

"No ordinary knifer aims at the temple. I don't want to take snap judgment, but I feel confident if we don't capture this criminal within a short time, we will hear from him again—he's a lust killer, such as shows up in a community only once in a century, a maniac perhaps, and capable of any kind of outrage."

Near the scene of the crime, Momberg and his men were met by Flingern officers. "Who is this woman and what have you learned about the attack?" Momberg

snapped. "Have you her assailant under arrest?"

"No, Herr Commissioner. We have no clue to the knifer. The woman is Frau Olga Kuehn, the wife of a steel worker. She was returning from church alone. As she turned into the dimly lighted street near her home she was attacked and stabbed. Her body was found a few minutes later by a neighbor who stumbled across it."

"Did no one hear any outcry or see any suspicious person?"

"One neighbor heard a scream which seemed to have been smothered just as it started. He rushed to his window and peered out, but it was too dark to see anyone. Outside of that, we have learned nothing."

All night long, Flingern was combed for evidence. Frau Kuehn was a respectable woman without an enemy in the world. Her husband was confined to his bed with illness and was unable to offer the slightest suggestion as to a motive for the attack. No strangers had been seen in Flingern that day and every undesirable questioned was able to account for his presence at the time of the stabbing.

Monday noon, Momberg received news from the hospital at Dusseldorf that he might talk to Frau Kuehn. Confident she could give him some description that would help solve the mystery, the Commissioner hurried to her bedside. But he was doomed to dis-

appointment. Frau Kuehn knew nothing except that as she passed into some particularly deep shadows she was seized from behind. She attempted to shriek but a hand was clapped over her mouth and she saw a flash of steel and felt a stinging sensation in her chest. Again the flashing blade and she lost consciousness.

The dragnet was thrown out, not only in Flingern, but in the entire city of Dusseldorf. At midnight, after 40 sleepless hours, Momberg went to bed. He was sleeping soundly when awakened by a fiercely ringing telephone. Still half asleep but realizing he would not be called except on a matter of grave importance, he grasped the receiver.

"Herr Commissioner," came a voice over the wire, "you are wanted at Flingern right away."

"Have they got the man?"

"No," came the reply, "there is another stabbing—a girl murdered."

Momberg's big car fairly flew to Flingern where he found a throng gathered about a vacant lot not far from the spot where Frau Kuehn had been attacked.

The coroner had preceded him. A pair of husky policemen forced a passageway through the ring of spectators and escorted the chief of the homicide squad to a corner where a heap of charred twigs was still smouldering. The odor of burning flesh told plainly the



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

method the murderer had resorted to to hide his crime.

"I've done nothing, Herr Commissioner," the coroner said, extending his hand to Momberg, "except to pull the body out of the ashes and cover it with this tarpaulin." The medical officers flung back the canvass, revealing the body of a small girl. The lower extremities had been badly burned. The chest, head and arms had not suffered much from the fire and the face was recognizable.

"Mein Gott!" exclaimed the commissioner, "it is just as I feared. A half hundred stab wounds in her throat and breast—all deep and narrow. And one in the temple. This time he did not miss that vital spot."

It was quickly established that the girl was Rosa, the 9-year-old daughter of Wilhelm Ohliger, proprietor of a Flingern bakery. She had gone out that previous afternoon to visit a schoolmate. So engrossed were the children in their play that Rosa did not leave her little friend's house until 6 o'clock. It was then quite dark. Nothing more was seen of her until morning when three steel workers, crossing the vacant lot, noticed the smouldering boughs and smelled the odor of scorching flesh.

Saturday night found Momberg in his office, long after his regular hours, still going over the reports on the Flingern case.

Momberg's phone buzzed. The girl at the exchange had been directed to call him only in case of greatest importance.

In a second he was talking with the chief officer at Flingern station.

"No, it isn't suicide," was the reply. "Nor is it one of the ordinary street brawls. I counted 29 stab wounds in the poor devil's chest and throat."

For the third time in a week, Momberg's car was roaring through the streets of the Rhenish metropolis toward its eastern suburb.

In an ill-lighted street in Flingern the car halted and the members of the murder squad alighted. Momberg elbowed his way through the crowd.

A glance confirmed all his suspicion. The rays of the flashlamp revealed a face covered with matted blood, eyes fairly bursting from their sockets testifying to the fear that beset the victim before a vital spot had been reached by his assailant, and a terrific stab in the temple.

The coroner examined the wounds. "Seventeen on the breast." He counted slowly. "Twelve on the throat. Twenty-nine in all."

"Don't overlook that one," cautioned Momberg. "That's the murderer's trademark—the one in the temple."

The dead man was well known

to many of the bystanders. He was Rudolph Scheer, a laborer about 50 years old, who had been without work for some time. Scheer had been in various saloons during the evening. At the last one, not far from his home, the bartender had refused to pour him another drink. "You have had more than enough," Scheer had been told. "Why don't you go home instead of making a pig of yourself?"

Scheer took the advice good naturedly. Shortly after he left the saloon, a wild cry was heard. Scores of people ran from their homes and shops, for all nerves were unstrung by the events of the week. They found Rudolph Scheer murdered, almost on his own doorstep.

February passed, and March. The police were getting nowhere.

There was only one bright spot in the whole situation. There had been no more crimes since Scheer was killed, seven weeks before.

But on the evening of April 3, another crime turned all Dusseldorf topsy turvy with excitement. Barbara Pennig, a young woman of good family, was walking along the street near her home in the old city, miles away from Flingern, when she noticed a man was following her, walking rapidly and endeavoring to overtake her.

Then, without warning, a lariat whizzed through the air. It

caught the girl around the neck and before she realized what had happened, it was being drawn deathly tight and a man with a soft hat pulled over his face was reaching for her with a claw-like hand. His features were indistinguishable but his breath came and went through his teeth with a hideous hissing sound that almost rendered Fraulein Pennig petrified with fear.

Fortunately the girl wore a fur neckpiece which prevented the lariat from garroting her. As the claw-like hand neared her throat she let out a series of screams that alarmed the whole neighborhood.

Witnesses heard the sound of running feet. They found the girl in a dead faint, the lariat still around her neck. But save for shock, she was uninjured.

Two days later there was another assault.

The section where the attack occurred was a lonely one, even for Flingern.

Police found that Frau Flake was the woman attacked. She was approaching her home when she heard the swish of a rope as it settled about her neck. A moment later she was gasping for breath and was being dragged across the street into a garden. She endeavored to scream but the rope cut into her throat. She was a woman of immense strength, however, and realizing that she was being drawn into the hands of the mon-



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

ster, she grabbed the rope and began battling with all her strength.

Fortunately the man with the lariat slipped and momentarily let the rope slack. Frau Flake seized the noose at her neck and released the tension long enough to cry:

"Murder! The stabber! The roper! Help!

Frau Flake's terrified yells brought half a dozen neighbors running to the scene.

But as before, they were too late to apprehend the would-be assassin or see what he looked like.

The reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the much-sought fiend was increased from 1,000 to 3,000 marks. A flood of false clues, originated in overworked imaginations, poured in upon the police.

Only one of these, however, made any impression upon Momberg. That was the experience of two workmen who reported they had seen a man running out of a field some little time after Frau Flake had been roped by the Flingern terror.

"We did not think the man was the stabber," one of the workmen said, "but the more we reflected upon the matter, the more we felt we ought to tell our story to you."

"Did you attempt to halt the man?" Momberg asked.

"Yes," was the answer, "I asked him why he was running as though the devil was after him.

He replied, 'I am afraid of murderers' and sped away."

"Do you have any idea who he was?"

"I feel sure it was Johannes Staussberg and so does Heinrich." The man's companion nodded in confirmation.

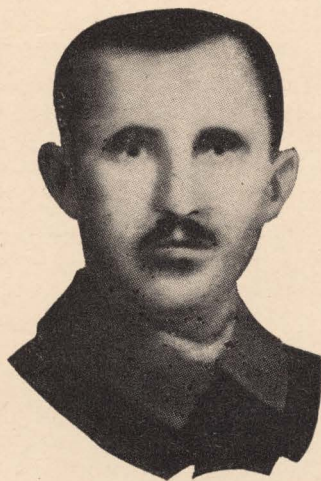
"But we are sure Staussberg would not hurt anyone. He is quite harmless, even if he is wrong up here."

The speaker tapped his head significantly.

"He is insane?" questioned Momberg.

"Yes."

Momberg, accompanied by the murder squad's most expert criminologists, hastened to the Flingern police station. The chief of that district could not restrain his laughter when he found that



Twenty-nine stab wounds were counted on the body of Rudolph Scheer.

Momberg was seeking Johannes Staussberg.

"I have known this Hans, as we call him, for years. He is an idiot, but he wouldn't hurt a kitten, much less kill Scheer."

A call at the Staussberg home, however, put an entirely new complexion on the case and gave the officers the surprise of their lives.

Hans was not in. His father, however, a notorious drunkard enjoying a heavy hangover, met them gruffly at the door, and demanded to know what they wanted.

"We came to talk to Hans," Momberg said.

"Then you are officers from Dusseldorf! I might as well tell you everything.

"My Hans you know is *vericht*. The other day I wanted my knife and was much vexed because I could not find it. I asked Hans if he had seen it. He told me he had taken my knife and buried it.

"I demanded to know why he had done such a thing. 'Because,' he replied, 'I used the knife to kill Rudolph Scheer and I didn't want someone to see me with it.'"

At this moment Frau Staussberg entered.

"It is too bad," said Momberg with a view to taking the woman by surprise, "that Hans should suddenly become violent."

Frau Staussberg stared. "What do you mean?" she ventured at last, her hands trembling.

"There is no need to cover up this affair," Momberg retorted. "Your husband has told me the whole story of your son's confession that he killed Rudolph Scheer."

The huge hausfrau laughed hysterically.

"Him!" she shrieked, pointing at her husband, "that rotten old sot. He would sell his soul for a drink of schnapps. He's lying in the hope of getting the 3,000 marks reward. Three thousand marks! That would keep the old goat in liquor until he dies of the snakes."

Evidently she got word to Hans to lay low for he did not return home for two days. Meantime, police discovered considerable evidence to corroborate the story told by the drunken father.

Neighbors remembered having heard Hans threaten violence to Scheer because the latter had called him "a weakling."

For two days after the killing of Scheer, Hans had not been seen by anyone. Then he appeared in a clean and well pressed suit—something very unusual in his humble life. His mother, he told neighbors, had cleaned his clothes with naphtha and pressed them.

Returning to the Staussberg home, Momberg found Hans still missing. The mother denied her son had ever threatened to kill Scheer or that she had cleaned his clothing after the murder. Later



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

she admitted this was true but insisted it was a coincidence. But the crushing blow to her hopes came two days later when Hans, picked up by police who had shadowed the mother to his hide-out, weakened under the questioning of the judge before whom he was arraigned, and made a complete confession. The result was a sentence to life in an asylum.

Two months later I dropped into Momberg's office just as he was about to knock off work.

"Well, Schultz," he said smiling broadly, "I can sleep a bit more peacefully, now. What a relief it is to get that series of crimes out of mind—the constant calls about more outbreaks. And then the roasting of the papers, ach! I hate to think about it.

"But let's quit talking shop. Suppose I call up Commissioner Gaertner and have him meet us. We will go over in the old city and have some Dussel beer."

No sooner had he obtained a connection with Gaertner than his face blanched.

"You don't say so!" he exclaimed. "I'll be right over." He slammed the receiver and sprang for the door, shouting as he went:

"No party tonight. The Flin-gern monster is at it again!"

Commissioner Momberg burst like a hurricane into Gaertner's office.

"How did he get away?" he demanded, out of breath.

"Get away?" Gaertner asked. "Who?"

"Why Staussberg, who else?" shouted Momberg. "You don't mean to tell me you haven't found out yet? You told me yourself another girl had been stabbed in the same way as the other Flin-gerners. Anyway, get Bedburg asylum on long distance. Mean-time tell me what happened. You said the girl was rushed to the hospital; can she give a description of her assailant?"

"The girl's unconscious. The police doctor says it's doubtful if she ever regains her senses. Thirty or more wounds in her head, throat and chest."

The telephone rang. Gaertner reached for it but Momberg was quicker.

"Is that Bedburg asylum?" he barked. "This is Commissioner Momberg, Dusseldorf police. Is Staussberg in his cell?"

Momberg waited while his nervous fingers beat a tattoo on the desk.

Momberg suddenly became attentive. "Yes, I'm still here," he said. . . "What's that? . . . He is in his cell. . . Donnervetter!" The commissioner slumped in his chair.

"Well," he said, "if Staussberg is in his cell, someone else must have done it—someone who imitated his method of killing. . . .

"Gentlemen, we've arrested the wrong man! The idiot Hans is

not the Flingern monster. We will have to begin all over again."

Momberg had scarcely sunk into an uneasy slumber that night until his phone rang.

"He's at it again with a vengeance," came the voice over the phone. "We just got word that a Frau Mantel, a pretty young woman, was waylaid between Flingern and Grafenberg, by a man who stepped from behind a tree and without a word of warning stabbed her in the abdomen."

Momberg glanced at his watch. "One o'clock," he mumbled.

Two hours later, the phone again summoned him.

"More trouble!" came the voice. "Man named Fritz Kornblum just brought to a hospital by a Flingern patrolman who found him in the street, unconscious, and bleeding from numerous dagger wounds in the head."

"Eight attacks in all and three tonight!" Momberg sprang out of bed and hurried to his office. It was 3 a. m. but sleep was impossible.

And for weeks, with scarcely any rest, he battled futilely against the monster of Flingern whose frightful attacks came with such sickening rapidity that the citizens of all Dusseldorf were terrorized.

A demand for help from the Prussian state at length became so vigorous that it could no longer be ignored.

"I wish you'd give us a short

account of the Flingern crimes since the reappearance of the murderer on the night of August 22, when three persons were knifed. We are familiar with the affairs up to that time."

The speaker was Inspector Genat, of Berlin. He had been ordered to Dusseldorf, along with Commissioner Busdorf and Dr. Braschwitz, by the Prussian government in an effort to break the reign of terror. Momberg picked up the official data before him, and began:

"On the morning of August 24, two days after the three people had been wounded by an unknown stabber, Gertrude Hamacher, aged 5, and Luise Lenzen, 14, were found dead in a garden plot at Flehe, bordering on Flingern. Both girls had been stabbed repeatedly in the head, throat and chest with a stiletto-like instrument.

"The children were last seen at 9 o'clock the night before at a country fair. According to the coroner, the children had first been strangled, a feature not observed in any of the other Flingern crimes. There were marks on the victims' necks which probably indicated that they had been lassoed and garroted before being savagely knifed.

"On Sunday night, August 25, Gertrud Schulte, a 24-year-old servant girl, was found suffering from more than 20 stab wounds



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

in the head, neck and throat. She was exceptionally strong and had given the knifer a hard battle. She had been with her assailant all afternoon and she furnished us a detailed description of him. I shall speak of this later in connection with another case. The girl has practically recovered now, although the doctors say it is a miracle she lived. Gertrud was the eleventh victim of the Flingern monster. On September 9, came the twelfth case.

"An unidentified girl was found dead on the banks of the Rhine at the identical spot where Fraulein Schulte was attacked. She had been killed with a hammer and her head was beaten beyond all recognition."

"Did you ever identify her?" inquired Gennat.

"Yes," Momberg returned, "she was Ida Reuter, a servant girl. Several young people remembered seeing the girl in company of a strange man at a dance place on the Rhine the evening before. Her escort, they said, was a little over medium height of powerful build and between 30 and 40 years old. His features were generally described as firm-lipped and with a heavy, under-shot jaw, which gave him a determined and rather sinister appearance. The latter differs entirely from Miss Schulte's story.

"Several features of the Reuter killing differed from the other

attacks. She was killed with a hammer, not with a stiletto, and had been criminally assaulted."

"Case No. 13 was a month later. A girl named Elizabeth Doerrier was found slain with a hammer in a lonely street between Flinberg and Grafenberg.

"On October 26, Frau Meurer, 36, was found unconscious in a Flingern street, frightfully injured by hammer blows. She is now recovering but cannot give a coherent description of him.

"Frau Meurer met the man on her way home from work about 9 o'clock at night. He tried to enter into a conversation with her but she neither answered him nor looked at him, although the street at that point was well lighted. As they entered the dimly lighted section of Flingern, the man reviled the city fathers for not providing better lights.

"And as he reached that point he struck her a frightful blow with a hammer he evidently had kept concealed in his sleeve. I talked with Frau Meurer, but she cannot remember his face. I asked her to try hard to reconstruct his picture in her mind. She thought for some time, then her only reply was: 'Well, he was a rather pleasing sort of man.'

"I had this fact in mind when I said I would again refer to what the Schulte girl had said of her assailant. Fraulein Schulte had been out all afternoon with the

man who attacked her. He had bought her sweets and 'behaved rather gentlemanly.' She thought the man was about 32, slender, good looking, well mannered and nicely dressed. He had one particular eccentricity. When he talked his tongue kept darting out of his mouth. And just before he stabbed her she could hear his breath come and go like a serpent's hiss.

"At the time I was deeply impressed with what the girl said. Now I am inclined to believe she idealized the man, that unintentionally she described to us an imaginary figure."

"Who do you say that?" inquired Dr. Braschwitz.

"Because," Momberg answered. "the girl later told the nurse and subsequently confirmed the statement to me, that, although the man intended to murder her and thought he had done so, she bore him no grudge because he was such a pleasing sort of gentleman."

The commissioner laid aside the last of his notes.

For a moment the five men sat silent. Busdorf shot a questioning glance at his chief and upon receiving a nod was about to speak when the telephone rang. Momberg reached for the receiver, then hesitated and addressing Gaertner, said:

"You answer it. Unless it's important, say I'm not in."

After listening for a moment, Gaertner covered the telephone with his hand and announced:

"It's the editor of *Freiheit*. Wants you personally. Something connected with the Albermann affair."

"Well I'll have to talk to him, I suppose," Momberg replied, taking the phone. "Albermann's the name of that girl reported missing at Flingern night before last."

"Hello. . . . Momberg speaking. . . . Well, isn't it too premature to call it a case? Every time a child stays out late now its parents are afraid it has fallen into the hands of the monster. . . . The nervousness is quite understandable. I don't even know whether the Albermann child is still missing. I was just calling for a report when you telephoned."

While Momberg was speaking, the other telephone rang and Gaertner answered, scribbled a few notes on a bit of paper and put it on the homicide chief's desk.

Momberg did not spare the note a glance, so intent was he on what the editor was saying.

"I did not catch the last," he said, "will you repeat it? . . . You received a map through the mail? . . . Words printed with blue pencil saying 'Albermann lying at Haniel's wall! . . . Will you send me the map immediately?'"

The commissioner put down the receiver and looked around the



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

room. To his amazement, it was empty. Gaertner and the three Berliners had gone. His glance fell on the note Gaertner had left. It read:

"Grafenberg station reports body small girl found dead at wall Haniel factory, Grafenberg. I'm ordering a car. We will wait for you downstairs."

"Himmel!" exclaimed Momberg, "the monster is now notifying the press of his murders and sending them maps of the murder scenes!" And he rushed down the stairway to the waiting auto.

An hour and a half later Gennat, Busdorf, Dr. Braschwitz and the two Dusseldorf detectives, Gaertner and Etz, reassembled at Momberg's office, after a swift trip to the Haniel factory. Momberg who had stayed behind at Grafenberg, was to join them.

"Dreadful," Dr. Braschwitz, the celebrated Berlin criminologist, said. "The devil must have been in a frenzy. Thirty wounds I counted in that child's chest alone, and 19 in her head and throat! All of them with that slender, narrow stiletto-like instrument." He shuddered.

At this moment Momberg arrived. He had not told his associates about the call from the editor. In his hand was a large envelope from which he extracted a smaller yellow envelope in which was an oblong piece of packing paper. He laid the three

objects on his desk and studied them carefully for a moment, then beckoned to his visitors.

"Here," he said, "is a map that was in the morning mail to *Freiheit*. Gennat, will you read what is printed there?"

"Albermann lying at Haniel's wall," the inspector read. "What or who is Albermann?"

"That," replied Momberg, "is the name of the girl we found stabbed to death at the factory wall."

Busdorf had picked up the envelope. "Why," he exclaimed, "it was mailed last night at 11 o'clock, before the police heard of the body being found."

"Yes, yes," snapped Gennat. "But will you please help me on this? The map has more on it than the Haniel factory. These two parallel lines apparently stand for a road. Here it says 'pasture' and 'woods.' Nothing like that around the factory. And look at this. It says: 'Dig at cross for body.'"

"We did not have to dig for the girl's body. And is there a place around there called P-a-p-e-n-d-e-l-l-e?"

"It's a large farm," said Etz. "But that's miles from the Haniel factory." . . .

Busdorf drew the job of heading 100 workers, armed with picks and shovels, to dig for the body of still another victim of the arch slayer.

From early morning until night, the workers toiled. Darkness did not stop the sleuth. He had bonfires lighted. For two hours more picks were swung vigorously. But there was no signs of a corpse. At last yielding to the protests of the men who objected to the long hours, he decided to call it a day.

Other clues, which proved quite as futile, engaged the attention of the sleuths for the next two days. Then, in the afternoon mail, came a yellow envelope of familiar type addressed to Inspector Gennat in care of Commissioner Momberg. In it was a third map, drawn on yellow packing paper. Crude block characters read: "*Dig further.*" A dotted line from the paved road across the fields toward the woods led to a spot where Busdorf was sure he had set his men digging vigorously for the corpse. Not far from it an arrow pointed to a black figure labelled "stone."

It was impossible to get a shovel gang that late. Early the next day Busdorf and 100 men left the roadway and took a narrow path they had worn when returning from their search of the previous Tuesday. Busdorf glanced at his map as they marched along and was amazed to find that the dotted line corresponded with the narrow track they were following. The unknown draftsman had been at the scene of the search since

they had given up the undertaking three nights before!

The stone was easily located. The ground was turned to a depth of two feet over a considerable area, yet no trace of a grave.

Darkness was falling. Busdorf ordered the searchlights trained on the stone and the area surrounding it. Then, dividing his men into two shifts, he ordered them to start on "a real excavation" and by working them in relays made tremendous progress.

At the end of a half hour, the spade of a workman brought up a bit of cloth.

A few minutes later, more than six feet beneath the surface, was revealed the corpse of an 18-year-old servant girl, Maria Hahn, who had disappeared on August 23.

Despite the decomposition, the coroner found the girl had been killed by a shower of stiletto wounds. She was the fifteenth victim of the monster of Dusseldorf.

Finding the bodies was not difficult. But locating the slayer himself was another matter. And after six weeks more of search, Inspector Gennat was forced to return to Berlin admitting that he had been unable to accomplish any more than Momberg. Winter drifted by and one May evening Momberg was preparing to leave for home when a clerk announced a woman to see him. She would talk to no one else.



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

The clerk brought in an elderly, working-class woman. She curt-sied several times before she would sit down and Momberg had to ask her three times to state her business. Then, twisting a handkerchief vigorously, she said in a timid voice:

"Herr Commissioner, I wonder what the world is coming to!"

Momberg, wondering whether the woman was quite sane, replied: "I'm sure, I can't tell you. But why do you ask?"

"Why because a decent girl can't go out on the streets any more after dark." She fumbled in her handbag and extracted a small envelope which she handed to Momberg. The letter meant little to the commissioner. Clumsily it told how the woman's daughter, Maria Buttlies, had had "a dreadful experience" on the night of May 14. Momberg looked at the calendar. That was a week ago. He was about to hand the letter back to the woman when his eyes fell on these words:

"I was surprised that he would act that way, *he was such a pleasing sort of man.*"

That was the same expression Frau Meurer and Gertrud Schulte had used in describing the Flin-gern stabber!

"And she said something about this fellow's rooms," he muttered, turning back over the screeed through which he had rushed so sketchily. "Good heavens!" he

whispered to himself, "here it is. She was in the man's quarters. If it was the stabber, this girl must know where he lives."

As fast as a police car could fetch her, Maria Buttlies was shown into Momberg's office. She was a short and rather plump country girl of 20.

"I had been working as a servant and my mistress told me she could not afford to keep me any longer," the girl said. "I had to have some place to go so I decided to hunt up the home for working girls until I could find a position. That would be cheaper than taking a room. I became confused as to directions and asked a young man for information.

"He had been drinking, I guess. Anyhow he took me by the arm and said, 'Come along, red cheeks.' I pulled away but he again grabbed me and demanded that I come with him. We scuffled for a few seconds when an older man came along and demanded to know what the difficulty was.

"I felt sure the speaker was a detective from the way he spoke. He said he would show me where the working girls' home was and we took a car. We rode quite a distance. Then at a big square, we left the trolley. He insisted that I go up to his flat and have a bottle of beer and a sandwich. It was late and I was hungry. I thought nothing wrong about the suggestions, for the fellow was

such a pleasing sort, and he had just driven away a masher. After lunch, though, he suggested I spend the night with him.

"I was shocked and frightened. But the man quickly changed his attitude. 'There now,' he said, 'really I'm glad you are not one of those frivolous maidens. I like you better for it. Come with me and I will take you to the shelterless girls' home.'

"He took me by the arm and we walked for a long time. He kept talking all along so pleasantly I didn't realize we had gone so far. Nor did I have any idea where we were. The streets were only dimly lighted.

"Suddenly he turned and seized me by the throat. Fire seemed to leap from his eyes. As he spoke, his breath came and went like the hiss of an adder and he had a habit of thrusting out his tongue between words. 'You remember where I live, don't you?'

"How I kept from fainting, I don't know. Never had I seen such a wild look on anyone's face. And his grasp was like a vice. 'How could I know?' I replied. 'You led me in circles.'"

"Surely," cried the commissioner, "you don't mean to tell me you don't remember where that man lived! Think hard!"

"Sure I remember," was the naive answer.

"Then you can give me the address?"

"No. But I can find it. We got off the tram at a big square."

Momberg sighed. There were numerous places that answered that description. "Well," he urged kindly, "then what happened?"

The words came in a whisper—"he violated me!"

Momberg shot a few questions at the girl. She knew she had taken the car with her assailant at the Rhine bridge. It was a No. 2 tram. Momberg knew the one to which she referred—it had its terminus in Flingern.

Accompanied by Commissioners Gaertner and Etz, they went to the Rhine bridge. Soon a No. 2 trolley hove in sight. They boarded it and crossed a number of "big squares." When the car entered the Flingern district she got up and gazed eagerly out the window. At the next halt, Worringer square, she led her escorts to the street. But she was puzzled. Five big thoroughfares opened upon the square.

"It was one of these three streets to the right," she said, "but I can't remember which." At last however she decided on Mettmanner street and followed it a little distance to a row of flat buildings. No. 73 looked much like the place and the detectives accompanied her inside. After looking over the arrangement of the rooms she decided she was wrong and tried No. 75. The entrance did not



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

seem familiar and they proceeded to No. 77. Then Maria decided to go back to No. 75. "Yes," she said, "I am sure this is it. I would know the flat if I went inside it." The detectives obtained admittance to all of the flats with the exception of those on the top floor. There was no one at home. But the arrangement of the rooms on the other floors, Maria decided, was not the same as the ones in which she had been enticed. And the flat on the upper floor would be similar in arrangement to those they had obtained entrance. For three hours more, the search continued on first one street, then another, but without any luck. Momberg decided to call off the hunt for the time being. The girl was getting flustered. They would try again in the afternoon. His first impulse was to take Maria with him to lunch. But he decided it would be better for her to be alone and collect her senses. And handing her some money he ordered her to meet him at 3 o'clock.

When the detective had gone, Maria stood staring wide-eyed into the traffic. "I am sure I can find that place. It must be somewhere in that row of buildings. And she tripped along to No. 75 and went straight to the top floor. This time there was someone at home. A woman came out on the landing from one of the apartments. Maria glanced inside. The arrangement was different from

those on the other floors and quite like the one in which the "pleasing sort of man" lived.

"Good day," exclaimed Maria, bowing. "I am just looking at rooms."

Maria was so intent upon satisfying herself that she had found the place she was hunting, she did not notice a man come out of the adjoining apartment.

The figure turned and gazed intently at the girl. Then, noiselessly as a wraith, it vanished down the staircase.

"Well, there are no rooms to rent here. But maybe if you'd ask next door at Herr Peter Kuerten's you'd find the information you want."

But Maria did not try next door. She fairly flew downstairs and arrived at headquarters half an hour before the appointed time.

"Commissioner," she cried joyously. "I've found the man. His name is Peter Kuerten. He lives at 75 Mettmanner on the third floor."

Police who called to arrest Peter Kuerten were told by his wife that he had left that afternoon without saying when he would be back. She expected him not later than midnight. A cordon was thrown about the apartment making it impossible for the man to return or his wife to leave without detection. The following day Frau Kuerten confessed that an hour after he left home her hus-

band had sent a note saying he would not return because the police were looking for him.

Search at Kuerten's place of employment and the beer parlors he usually frequented revealed no trace of the fugitive. Momberg returned to the Kuerten home and gave the woman such a vigorous third degree that she admitted the note she received from her husband also directed her to meet him at the railway station the following noon and bring him a change of clothing.

At 11 o'clock the next morning an hour before the appointed time, Mrs. Kuerten, her face leaden and lined, walked into the depot carrying a bag which contained the clothing her spouse had requested. She was accompanied by a short heavy-set companion who wore a black dress and whose features were largely obscured by a red shawl. The two took a seat and waited silently.

Mingling with the scurrying throng were Commissioners Momberg and Gaertner and a half dozen detectives.

It was past noon. Momberg and his men began to fear their quarry had been tipped off. Then presently a rather tall man with remarkably heavy arms and small shifting eyes walked in through one of the train gates. He was evidently nervous and had a habit of moistening his lips repeatedly with his tongue. His eyes caught

sight of Mrs. Kuerten who arose.

"Good," he said huskily: "I knew you would not fail me. I must leave town—". His eyes dropped momentarily on the figure beneath the shawl. Then satisfied that he need have no concern from her, he went on: "I may be gone some time."

"I'm sorry," Mrs. Kuerten said in a tremolo voice, "but you will come back when you can?" Her eyes welled. "Yes," said Kuerten. "I'll be back as soon as it is safe. I am paying for a past you know nothing about. But it is nothing serious." He took the bag and turned toward the train gate.

Immediately a grip of steel fastened itself on his muscular arm. To his amazement that heavy grasp came from beneath the flaming shawl. He gave a mighty lurch and would have wrested himself loose even though the figure in the shawl was none other than Detective Kemp disguised to act as an unsuspecting escort for Mrs. Kuerten, had the sleuth not growled in tones unmistakably masculine:

"Just a minute. You're under arrest. I may have to shoot you if you make the slightest resistance."

A study of the department's records revealed that Kuerten had spent 17 years in prison. All his offenses had been theft and robbery. Not once had there been



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

any sex crimes charged against him.

Maria Buttlies was placed in the ante-room of Momberg's office. As Kuerten was being led before the commissioner, he came face to face with his girl accuser. His cheeks blanched, his beady little eyes darted from side to side and he found it necessary to moisten his lips.

"Why, good morning!" Maria cried, "you haven't forgotten the girl you promised to take to the working girls' shelter have you?"

Kuerten hung his head and continued into Momberg's office. On arriving there, his nerve was entirely gone.

"Do you want to know now why you are under arrest?" Momberg asked.

"I think I know," came the reply.

"You're willing to make a statement of guilt?"

Kuerten nodded, and Commissioner Gaertner stepped to the door and summoned a stenographer.

"I don't know where to start," protested the prisoner.

"Suppose you tell us why you intended to leave Dusseldorf."

"Well, I stepped out of the door of my flat the other day and I saw the Buttlies girl on the landing. She did not see me but I knew she was on my trail; that I would be arrested."

"Then you confess that you criminally assaulted the girl?"

"Yes," came the stilted and apparently self-satisfied statement, "that in a moment of distraction I lost my mental equilibrium so far as to yield to a passing aberration of the type you reproach me with."

It was as if Kuerten was mimicking the oratory of a country minister.

"You know of course," interrupted Gaertner, "that you will be given a long term for this offense?"

For hours Kuerten was questioned about the numerous attacks on other women. Invariably he assumed an outraged tone that he should even be suspected of such offenses. His one crime, he said, had been committed against Maria Buttlies.

Surprise questions were fired at him, but he had a ready reply. The commissioners were about ready to play what they hoped would be their trump card by confronting Kuerten with Frau Meurer.

In a corner of his office was a wicket for the purpose of permitting witnesses to study a prisoner without being seen themselves. Frau Meurer stared at Kuerten so fiercely his ears must have burned. When she finished she shook her head. "I'm not sure," she said.

"Very well," sighed Momberg. "You may go, but hold yourself to return at a moment's notice."

Photographs of the maimed and murdered and other ghastly relics of the crimes were placed on the table before the suspect while he was subjected to a grilling. But it was futile.

Momberg and his assistants were just closing their desks for the day when a telegram arrived from Inspector Gennat, of Berlin. The commissioner read it over and handed it to Gaertner. "There," he said, "is a poser. Gennant will be here tomorrow noon. At present we have nothing but a prisoner who admits assaulting a girl and denies all of the other attacks.

"We've got to have this case clinched against Kuerten or be ready to release him by tomorrow noon."

Momberg gave a start. "Say!" he almost shouted, "no wonder Frau Meurer didn't recognize Kuerten today. She didn't hear him talk. Get her here the first thing in the morning. And Gertrud Schulte, let's have her here."

The following morning Kuerten was taken before Commissioner Gaertner. Momberg, Frau Meurer and Gertrud Schulte remained in an adjoining room where they could hear everything.

"Well, Kuerten," Gaertner said in his most convincing tones, "Commissioner Momberg has requested me to turn you over to the courts for the Buttlies assault. There is a little discrepancy in

the confession I'd like you to straighten out."

The prisoner fell hard. He was evidently overjoyed that there was to be no further interrogation about the stabbings.

"I will be only too glad to oblige you," Kuerten said. "You do not know how you worried me by your false accusations about the other women."

There was a shriek of maddened rage.

Frau Meurer had listened attentively to the "pleasing sort" of words from the next office, then her face became ashen, her eyes narrowed and she burst into Gaertner's office like a lioness.

"Villain! Murderer! Why did you want to kill me, you monster!"

Momberg, who had followed on the woman's heels, saw Kuerten spin around. For a moment the prisoner stared wildly at Frau Meurer. Then his face became strangely contorted. His shoulders sagged.

Immediately Kuerten was asked again if he was ready to make a detailed confession. He started dictating one of the weirdest documents in the history of German criminal annals. He went over the history of the various stabbings, hammerings, and lassoings with such fidelity to detail that the commissioners were astounded. Not only did he confess the horrible series of crimes with



## CLUE OF THE CRUSHED SKULLS

which the Dusseldorfers were familiar but he admitted being guilty of numerous cases of arson and of committing two murders in middle Germany before the war for which another man was convicted on circumstantial evidence and was serving a life sentence.

Kuerten's story was almost complete when Inspecto Gennat, accompanied by Commissioner Busdorf and Dr. Braschwitz, arrived.

"The prisoner has admitted all of the Flingern murders," Momberg said gleefully, "and it will probably interest you to know that he confesses two ante-bellum murders in middle Germany—35 major crimes in all.

"He hasn't confessed to burning Rome and taking the responsibility off of Nero?" inquired Braschwitz with a twinkling eye.

"You will have plenty of opportunity to examine him," replied Momberg.

"Now, Kuerten," the commissioner said, "there are a few things I want to clear up. These maps of the Albermann and Hahn cases, did you draw them yourself?"

"Yes."

"Take this paper and pencil and make a rough copy from memory."

The prisoner did so with surprising speed, using his left hand. "You see," he said smiling, "if I had wanted to play false with you,

I should have used my right hand and proven I was a liar. I am naturally right handed."

"Now one more thing," said Momberg, "what did you do with your stiletto?"

Kuerten threw back his head and laughed. "Stiletto! I got a laugh every time I saw that word in the newspapers. I never owned a stiletto in all my life."

"Then what did you use?"

"Just a pair of barber's scissors. Sharp, narrow and long enough for the purpose. I could take out the screw and have a blade in either hand. Two stilettos! Then in a jiffy I could put them together again and have an innocent implement in my pocket."

Again Kuerten threw his head back and gave vent to an eerie laugh which made even the blood of the hardboiled officers tingle.

Momberg handed a pen to Kuerten who signed the confession. "Now, Inspector Gennat, have you or your assistants anything to ask the prisoner?" he asked. But no sooner had the Berliner started to interrogate the prisoner about the middle Germany murders and some of the arson cases to which he had confessed than Momberg was called from the office.

It was Commissioner Etz. "Flingern is calling again," he apologized, "but I didn't want to turn the phone into your office un-

der the circumstances. Will you talk to them here?"

With a trembling hand, Momberg took the phone.

"Just received word that a girl had been strangled to death," came the voice from Flingern headquarters. "Haven't any of the details. I will be glad to let you have them at the earliest possible moment."

"Himmel!" exclaimed Momberg hanging up the receiver, "is it possible the Flingern murderer is at it again—just as we have a confession?"

He called Gaertner and instructed him to remain in charge of the prisoner. "I'm off to Flingern."

When Momberg returned, Kuerten had been placed back in his cell. Gennat smilingly extended his hand and said:

"Commissioner, I want to congratulate you. I could not believe this story. But I happen to have worked on these middle Germany murder cases. This fellow knows what he is talking about. I believe Kuerten is guilty as he says."

"Great!" smiled Momberg. "You don't know how relieved I am. I've just been to Flingern again, you know. A girl murdered out there. Fortunately, when I got all the facts, I found it was only the case of a child whose shawl caught on a doorknob and strangled her to death."





# POISON ALIBI

By PETER LEVINS

*One by one the patients at the nursing home quietly died. There was no suspicion until a strange request came for a cremation, and a deadly needle pointed to poisonings.*

"I SHOULD say that death was caused by a cerebral hemorrhage," said the doctor. "You say she hasn't been well these last few days?"

Dorothea Waddingham, operator of a nursing home for elderly ladies in Nottingham, England, nodded, her eyes fixed on the corpse. "But it wasn't until yesterday that I became concerned about her—or rather, last evening," she said. "You may recall she seemed in fair enough health when you last called, doctor."

"And she seemed to have a stroke?"

"Yes. She'd eaten a rather large meal, and it upset her stomach.



Then at 2 o'clock this morning she had the stroke."

"It is too bad you did not call me sooner," he said.

"I didn't send for you because it was so late," she explained, "and I thought she might carry on that way for several days. About 8:30 this morning she seemed to fall asleep, and I thought everything was all right. But when I looked at her again her face was blue and she was breathing heavily."

"And she died at about 10 o'clock?"

"A little later than that, I should say, doctor."

Dr. George Herbert Mansfield, attending physician to the nursing home, wrote out a certificate stating that Miss Ada Louise Baguley, aged 50, had died shortly after 10 o'clock the morning of September 11, 1935, and that the cause of death had been a cerebral hemorrhage. As he performed this duty, the doctor remarked, "The poor woman didn't survive her mother very long, did she?"

He referred to Mrs. Louise Baguley, 87-year-old widow of a Burton Joyce shoemaker, who had entered the nursing home with her daughter early in the year, and who had passed away on May 12. Dr. Mansfield had been the attending physician then, also, and had certified that a cardiac congestion had killed the aged woman. Both the mother and daughter had been partially crippled by paralysis.

"Er—doctor," said Nurse Waddingham, as he was about to depart. "Miss Baguley often told

me that when she died she wanted to be cremated. Just what do I have to do about that?"

"Has she expressed that wish in writing?" he inquired.

"I don't know. I haven't looked through her effects. Is that required?"

"Yes. There should be something in writing, showing that she wished to be cremated rather buried."

Dr. Mansfield left.

A few hours later Dorothea Waddingham delivered to John Owens, cremation officer, the following letter, dated August 29, 1935:

"I desire to be cremated at my death for health's sake, and it is my wish to remain with nurse; and my last wish is my relatives shall not know of my death."

The letter had been witnessed by "R. J. Sullivan."

Owens puzzled over the words "and my last wish is my relatives shall not know of my death." That seemed a strange attitude.

"Why did she write that?" he asked Waddingham.

"She was through with her relatives."

"Why?"

"They had treated her badly—she wanted to have nothing more to do with any of them. She was completely devoted to me."

The cremation officer asked who Mr. Sullivan was, and Wad-



## POISON ALIBI

dingham replied that he was her assistant.

Owens mulled over this matter for some time after Nurse Waddingham left his office, and then communicated with the coroner.

The coroner communicated with the police, who checked their records and discovered that, before moving to Nottingham, Dorothea Waddingham had operated a "rest home for the aged" at Bingham, that she had been convicted three times of larceny, and that in five years eleven patients had died in her two institutions. She had five young children, two of whom had been born some while after the death of her husband, Thomas Willoughby Leach. Although she operated the home under her maiden name, she was known among her patients and in the neighborhood as "Mrs. Sullivan." She was now 34-years-old, and Sullivan was 41.

The police learned that there was at least one relative of the Baguleys—a nephew of Mrs. Louise Baguley named Lawrence Baguley. They got in touch with him.

He gave one look at his cousin's letter expressing her wish to be cremated, and exclaimed, "That is not Ada's handwriting!"

Could he assist the authorities in this matter, the police asked. He

said he certainly could, and forthwith launched into his story.

He said that when his aunt and cousin entered Nurse Waddingham's place the agreement had been that they were to pay, together, five pounds (about \$25) a week. But they had been there only a few weeks when Miss Waddingham wrote him, complaining that the two patients were not paying enough for the service she was giving them.

"I can tell you why she wrote me this letter," he said. "She had discovered that my aunt had been left about \$8,000 by her husband."

How much more a week had she asked?

"That's just the point," he replied. "She did not ask for so much more a week. What she suggested was that Mrs. Baguley's property be turned over to her, and in return the patients would be cared for the rest of their lives without any further financial worries.

"Naturally, I was not at all attracted to this proposition. Incidentally, I was executor of my uncle's estate. I wrote Waddingham at once, saying that I considered \$25 a week a fair fee for housing and boarding my aunt and cousin."

A few weeks later, he continued, a curious thing happened. He had gone to the nursing home on

April 7 to visit his relatives, and had been refused admittance. Waddingham's assistant—and lover—had come to the door and told him that the patients did not wish to see him. When Baguley exclaimed, "I don't believe that!" Sullivan retorted that he would have to believe it, and slammed the door in his face.

"I thought over the situation for several days, wondering just what to do about it," he continued, "and then I sent Ada a registered letter, advising her not to turn over any money to Waddingham. You see, the money had actually been left in the name of my cousin, the income to go to her mother as long as she lived. It was two weeks before I got a reply. I received a letter signed with Ada's name, but it was not in Ada's handwriting!"

The letter, which he turned over to the authorities, follows:

"Dear Lawrence:

"I received your registered letter, and see by the letter you are still in Scotland, but I do not like you saying what you did about Joe (meaning Ronald Joseph Sullivan), as he is kindness itself to me and my mother, and he is the only one that done anything for us through all our troubles.

"He is very upset about it, and I am sorry to say that mother is very ill indeed, and it is through  
112

all this worry and talking that done it.

"So would you mind sending your bill along, as I want to settle everything up—you need not worry about me, I am quite all right and comfortable, and quite able to manage our affairs—as the solicitors have got everything in hand and want me to get all my bills in so that I can settle up.

"Hoping that you are both keeping well. Best love.

ADA."

There was a postscript in the same handwriting:

"I should like to know what you mean about that chap, Joe, as you call him. If you ever cross my path you will know what that means. There is always straightforwardness carried on here, and, mark my words, we know what you have been trying to do. If you are not careful, you will regret it, so keep your eyes open in the future. And Miss Baguley is quite aware I am writing this."

The postscript was not signed, but it seemed obvious that Sullivan himself had written it. The bill mentioned referred to services performed by Baguley, as executor of his uncle's will, in administering the estate.

Investigators learned that, not long after the nephew's frustrated attempt to visit his relatives, Sullivan called at the Midland Bank



## POISON ALIBI

in Nottingham and presented a letter, written by him but signed in Ada Baguley's handwriting, requesting the equivalent of \$260. The bank had refused to allow this sum to be withdrawn.

"But Miss Baguley wishes it!" Sullivan exclaimed.

"No doubt," said John R. Alcock, sub-manager of the bank. "But her signature will have to be witnessed by a solicitor. I shall write her to that effect."

Alcock did write her that same day, with the result that, on April 17, Ada Baguley made a personal visit to the bank. She came in a car driven by Sullivan, and accompanied by another woman. Because of her crippled condition, due to the paralysis, she had remained in the machine while Sullivan went inside and got Alcock. When she told the sub-manager she wished to withdraw the cash, there was nothing for the bank to do but grant her request.

After a few days another event occurred in the strange sequence.

Sullivan approached John K. Lang, solicitor for the two patients, and informed him that Ada wished to make a settlement of her estate.

"I would not advise a settlement," Lang said.

"But she wishes it!" said Sullivan.

"Nevertheless," said Lang, "I do not think it wise."

A day or so later, Sullivan visited Lang and declared that Ada still wished to make a settlement, adding that a certain firm of solicitors would act in the matter.

On top of this, Sullivan had informed Lang that Miss Baguley wished to make a will. As in the case of the bank, the solicitor simply had to comply. He prepared the will, which stipulated that, should Ada survive her mother, the entire estate and effects should go to Dorothea Waddingham and Ronald Sullivan in equal shares, in consideration of services rendered. Lang had to assist the all but helpless woman in signing the will, for she had great difficulty in holding a pen in her hand.

That happened on May 7, 1935—and five days later Mrs. Louise Baguley suddenly passed away. Cause of death—a congestion of the heart.

There was an interval of four months, and then—it was Ada's turn.

Ada Baguley spent September 10 in her invalid chair in the garden of the nursing home, her meals being brought to her by Sullivan. That evening she was put to bed as usual. Suddenly, at two in the morning, she became violently ill—her eyes staring, breath labored, face very flushed. Her face turned a bluish color at

about 8:30, and she went into a coma during which she died.

Dr. Mansfield, questioned by detectives, said that he had never suspected anything about either illness. He had known Nurse Waddingham for several years, first attending her at the birth of her third child, and had always considered her most capable and trustworthy. He had never considered himself as the medical attendant of the patients at the home, but Miss Waddingham had usually called upon him whenever she wished a doctor for one of the patients.

He admitted he had signed both certificates largely on information supplied by the nurse and her assistant.

Police descended upon the home, arrested Waddingham and Sullivan, and took possession of the body.

Chief Superintendent G. W. Downs, in a search of the premises, found a small cardboard box in the bathroom. It contained a hypodermic syringe and two bottles labeled "morphine sulphate, 100 hypodermic tablets, half-grain, poison over two per cent." He also found spare needles for the syringe.

"This is an outrage," said Waddingham. "I gave Miss Baguley medicine about 8 in the evening. The medicine was prescribed by Dr. Mansfield. It was the last

dose. If she choked on it, I can't help that, because she often choked on it. I put her to bed right after that. Joe helped lift her in. She spoke of having a headache and cried and was very depressed.

"Miss Baguley made a will in favor of me and Mr. Sullivan, and I wished she had not. I think it is the will that has caused all this upset. I'm the last person in the world for you to accuse in this case. Why, many's the time Miss Baguley said to me, 'If you will look after me I will look after you.' Those were her very words."

What about the letter that had not been written by Ada Baguley? What about the letter saying she wished to be cremated, she was asked.

"Maybe it's true she didn't write them herself," said the accused woman. "But they were written at her dictation, because she couldn't write them herself. She was so crippled she could hardly sign her name."

Did Nurse Waddingham fear the results of the autopsy?

"Why should I?" she retorted. "I have nothing to be afraid of. No matter what the autopsy shows, I can't be held responsible. Please keep in mind that both these women had been taking medicine for years. Maybe they took too much."

Before many hours had passed, the police knew what had caused



## POISON ALIBI

the death of Ada Baguley. The autopsy showed that she had died, not of a cerebral hemorrhage, but from failure of a degenerated heart, brought about by a congestion of the lungs. And this condition had resulted from the administration of a large quantity of morphine. The doctors also reported that there was an indication that some heroin had been given the patient.

What had Nurse Waddingham to say to this?

She retorted that Ada Baguley had been taking morphine for years, and that therefore she must have died because she had taken too much.

Investigating this, the police contacted the family physician in Burton Joyce. He said that he had prescribed for Ada Baguley, and that his prescription had contained a small amount of morphine. The maximum that he had prescribed was 24 doses, and that she used this same prescription 12 years before entering the nursing home.

He said that he did not believe she had died from taking an overdose.

Would he say that taking the whole 24 doses would prove fatal? He replied that he could not say whether it would or not.

Miss Baguley's crippled condition precluded the idea of suicide, in the opinion of the police. In

order to have taken an overdose of morphine, it would have been necessary for some one to bring medicine to her, or else carry her to the lethal draught. As neither prisoner would admit they had done any such thing, the only plausible conclusion under the circumstances was that the death drink had been given her without her knowledge or consent.

"We are entirely innocent," stated Dorothea Waddingham. "Besides, I don't know why anyone should get so excited about the death of a couple of helpless old cripples."

This remark did not exactly advance her chances.

Soon after the inquest opened, the question of Mrs. Louise Baguley's death became an issue of importance. The proceedings were adjourned pending an autopsy upon the body of the older woman. The body was immediately exhumed from Caunton cemetery, and analysis of the vital organs showed that she, too, had been dispatched with morphine.

"I don't believe it," said Waddingham. She insisted that she was being made the victim of an atrocious frame-up.

What if the authorities were to exhume various other bodies, she was asked. "Let them," she retorted. "I don't care how many bodies they dig up, or what they find in 'em. Suppose they find

morphine in some of the other bodies—what's that to me? The Baguleys weren't the first patients of mine to use morphine."

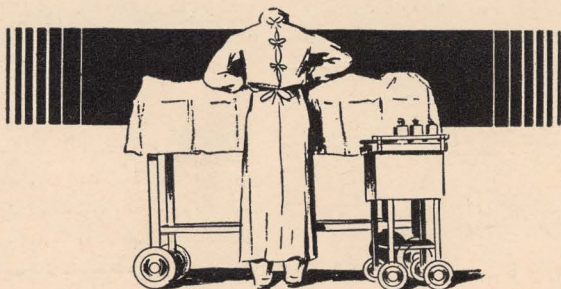
The trial of Dorothea Waddingham and Ronald Joseph Sullivan took place at the Nottingham Assizes the following February. Mr. Justice Goodard presided; the prosecutors were the celebrated Norman Birkett and J. P. Stimson; and the defense attorneys were J. F. Eales and William Smith, for Nurse Waddingham, and A. M. Lyons and John Smith, for Sullivan. Waddingham became hysterical almost as soon as the proceedings opened, and continued to have emotional outbursts every day. On occasion she had to be carried from the courtroom. More than once, apparently hoping for sympathy from the jury, she openly nursed her youngest child while the trial was in progress.

But the jury refused to be affected. Although they acquitted Sullivan, they decided:

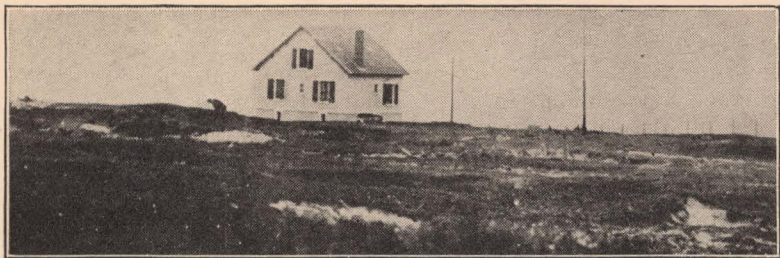
"That Ada Baguley met her death by a fatal dose of morphine or heroin, or both. Our considered opinion is that there was a conspiracy. Our verdict is one of willful murder against Nurse Waddingham."

On April 16, 1936, a great crowd gathered at Winson Green Prison, Birmingham. Police stood shoulder to shoulder, blocking all roads to the institution. Among the more active visitors was Mrs. Violet van der Elst, wealthy Englishwoman, who has been waging a one-woman campaign against capital punishment for years. When she arrived in her limousine, followed by a van containing a loud speaker apparatus, a policeman stopped her and informed her she could not approach any closer to the prison gates. A dozen officers pushed her car back.

The loud speaker broadcast the hymn, "Abide with Me" as Dorothea Waddingham plunged to her death on the gallows.







In this bleak farmhouse crimson death claimed  
youthful Georgette Henriot,

# Scarlet Riddle of the Brittany Coast

By JOSEPH CSIDA, JR.

**“COME** quickly! Something terrible has happened!”

The colorfully uniformed gendarme leaned tensely forward over his desk at Police Headquarters in the town of Lorient, in Brittany, France. Pressing the receiver against his ear, he said: “Speak more slowly please. Who are you?”

“Monsieur Vincent Leroy,” the urgent voice shouted. “I am the telephone operator at Guidel. A

moment ago a call came in from LeFort. Yes . . . LeFort, the home of Monsieur Michel Henriot. I answered the call. But from the telephone no voice replied. Silence there was for a moment. And then screams, wild cries like those of a beast. Then loud reports, like a revolver being fired. Two reports there were. I repeated, ‘Allo, allo,’ but no one answered. Then, of a sudden, the wire was dead.”

The gendarme scrawled quick

notes on a pad before him. With hardly a pause, Vincent Leroy went on:

"Monsieur Henriot breeds the silver fox at LeFort," he told the officer. "Six of them he has. And they are beautiful and vicious. Perhaps the foxes came into the house. Perhaps. . ."

"Thank you," the gendarme cut him short. "We shall investigate immediately."

The door of a private office opened and a stocky, well-built man walked out.

"Monsieur Le Commissaire," the gendarme rose, addressed the man, "a report of peculiar happenings at home of Michel Henriot has just come in."

And he repeated Vincent's Leroy's story to his superior.

Commissioner Peyrouserre, superintendent of the French Surete Nationale at Lorient, listened intently. Before the officer had completed his story he said crisply:

"Come. We go at once."

With two other officers, the Commissioner went down to the police car parked at the curb. Michel Henriot was the son of Lorient's distinguished 62-year-old District Attorney, Rene Henriot, who had enjoyed a long, honorable career as a navy officer before taking over the duties of the Lorient prosecutor's office. If a crime had been committed at LeFort, the home which he had built for his son, it would create a sensation

throughout the whole of France. And the Commissioner knew the lonely, desolate stretch of coastland where LeFort was situated. Anything might happen at such a place!

Dusk was falling quickly now. The great chimney-stacks of Lorient's factories had ceased their all-day belching of black smoke clouds. The riveting hammers in the great shipyards had halted their monotonous rat-tat-tating. It was 6:45 on the evening of May 8, 1934.

Commissioner Peyrouserre wondered, as the car raced on its way, what had happened at LeFort. He had plenty of time in which to speculate, for the home of Prosecutor Henriot's son was ten miles from Lorient. After a long, silent ride, with the Commissioner engrossed in thought and the gendarmes and chauffeur quietly intent, they reached the hard-dirt road of the rocky coast line. Night had thrown a blanket of almost-complete darkness over the land. The angry muttering of the Atlantic, swishing and swirling across the sand beach, drowned out the purring of the police car's motor. Presently, three rectangular squares of light showed in the blackness, the windows of Michel Henriot's isolated home.

The Commissioner knew the history of this forsaken stretch of land. Centuries ago, on the very spot where Michel Henriot's home



## RIDDLE OF THE BRITTANY COAST

now stood, a menacing fortress had served as stern sentinel for this section of the Brittany Coast. But the Fortress had crumbled and fallen to ruin, and in 1931, District Attorney Henriot had purchased the land. There he built a house large enough for his only son, Michel, to carry on his fox-breeding activities. Here the boy lived with his 19-year-old wife, Georgette. The house, straight and unornamental, resembled in no way a fortress. But the fishermen and peasants of the nearby village of Guidel still referred to it as LeFort.

The police car came to a halt and the Commissioner and his assistants walked up the short path to the house. Michael Henriot must have seen the car's headlights, for he stood in the doorway as the officers reached it. There was a dull, dazed look on his face. His large, sad eyes stared vacantly before him. As though the motion might clear his head, he wiped the dark, tousled hair back from his forehead.

"My wife," he said tonelessly, "has been murdered."

Even as he spoke, he led Commissioner Peyrouser and his men into the house.

"Here," he said sadly, "in the bedroom!"

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed one of the gendarmes.

The crimson sight which met their eyes was one to call for such

an exclamation. On a divan against one wall of the room lay the body of Georgette Deglave Henriot. Her thick black hair was dyed a shocking red. Horrible bruises and gashes, seeping scarlet, marred her head and face. The heavy, long-sleeved white sweater which she wore was torn and blotched, so that it was as much crimson as white.

"Mon Dieu!" the gendarme repeated.

And Michel Henriot stood there, gaping at the thing that had been his wife.

"Have you touched the body?" the Commissioner asked, and when the husband did not seem to hear, he repeated his query.

"No," the 23-year-old son of Lorient's District Attorney said, "No! She is as I found her."

Commissioner Peyrouser walked up to the divan, looked closely at the battered corpse.

"Apparently," he said, more to himself than to the others, "she was severely beaten with a heavy instrument of some kind . . . and then shot." His gaze moved slowly from an ugly round hole in her right temple to a jagged circle of crimson over her right breast.

Then he viewed the room in which they stood. It was almost as bare and desolate as the land on which the house stood. There were, in addition to the divan, a four-legged stool, a bed and, in the center of the room, a large,

circular table covered with a colorful tablecloth. The box-type telephone had been smashed and torn down from the wall. Near the leg of the table the Commissioner saw a long rifle.

"Take that," he ordered one of the gendarmes. "And be careful not to get your fingerprints on it."

He instructed two of the gendarmes to inspect the grounds about the house, and the third he ordered to make a thorough examination of the other rooms. He, himself, remained in the bedroom with Michel Henriot who still stared at the body of his murdered wife, as though unaware of the Commissioner's presence.

"Monsieur Henriot, please," the Commissioner began gently, "I realize how you must feel. But I know you wish to help us capture the murderer of Madame Henriot and bring him to justice. Please tell me what you know of this."

"I know nothing," the young man said in the same spiritless voice he had used earlier. "Mon Dieu, if only I could be of help to you, but I know nothing."

"You were not here when the . . . when this happened?" the Commissioner asked.

"No. I had been in the village making some purchases. I returned only about fifteen minutes before you arrived. I wanted to go to call you myself, but I couldn't leave her. The telephone had been

ripped out. I found her there just as you see her . . . dead!"

"Do you know anyone who might have done such a thing?" the Commissioner questioned.

"No one! Anyone! Georgette was a harmless, timid girl. But here in this God-forsaken country anyone might have done this. Perhaps a tramp came in to steal, and Georgette saw him. Perhaps . . ."

One of the gendarmes walked into the room.

"Monsieur Le Commissaire," he announced. "I found this in the living room."

In his hand, held with a large white handkerchief, he showed a heavy poker, its shaft dark and red.

And a moment later the two officers who had inspected the ground outside the building reported that their search had proved fruitless.

"I think we have both the weapons used in this crime," Commissioner Peyrouser said.

"Monsieur Henriot," he addressed the dazed young husband again, "perhaps you would like to come back to Lorient with us. Your father will supervise and direct the investigation of this unfortunate crime. And I know he will be a comfort to you at a time like this."

"Yes," Michel Henriot replied, "I should like to go with you. I want to see my father."



## RIDDLE OF THE BRITTANY COAST

The Commissioner detailed one of the men to wait at LeFort for the coroner. He would have to make an autopsy of the body. Perhaps the autopsy would reveal a motive for the crime. Although there was nothing, aside from the evident signs of a struggle, to indicate that Georgette Henriot had been criminally assaulted, it was not altogether an impossibility. And if the autopsy showed that she had been so attacked, the hunt would be narrowed down. In such an event the police would seek a degenerate.

Michel Henriot walked to the car ahead of the Commissioner and his two men. The four started the drive back to Lorient. This time they took a longer route, for they drove first to the village of Guidel, where a gendarme left the car and walked down the village street to question the peasants and fishermen.

The officer whom Peyroussere had detailed to this investigation was one who had himself grown up with these simple, hard-working people. And the task required exactly such a man. The Commissioner knew what an investi-

gator was up against in attempting to learn anything from the Breton peasants and fishermen. They were honest, taciturn people of the soil and the sea. But they had inherited from their Celtic forbears vivid imaginations. They were exceedingly superstitious. As soon as they learned that death had come to LeFort, one of their strongest superstitions would come into play. Ankou, the Spirit of Death, they would tell the officer, had visited isolated LeFort. The more superstitious of the people would even recall the unmistak-

able signs which warn of Ankou's coming. One fisherman would tell of seeing a glowing ball of fire resting on the tiled roof of LeFort. Another would whisper of the sea-bird which had come to his house and tapped on the window-pane with its sharp beak. A peasant would

speak in hushed tones of the grain which had been stolen from his fields by a cow or the cattle which had bellowed loudly by the light of the moon. Another peasant would swear that he had been unable to light a candle or that he had split two pairs of wooden shoes in a single week.



Pretty Madame Henriot, brutally cudgelled by a merciless slayer, was avenged when a peasant told what he had seen.

## REAL POLICE STORY MAGAZINE

As the car rolled through the picturesque streets of Guidel, the plaster houses were dark silhouettes in the blackness of the night. Commissioner Peyrouserne turned to the 23-year old widower who still stared before him in the same dull way the Commissioner had first noticed.

"Monsieur Henriot," Peyroupere asked quietly, "was Madame Henriot a peasant girl of Guidel?"

"No," Michel answered, "she came from Noyon. Her parents still live there. She visited them only last month."

"How long had you been married, Monsieur?"

"Six months," Michel said sadly. "We were married in Noyon, October 10, 1933."

Presently the car slid to a halt before the home of Prosecutor René Henriot in Lorient.

"You will not mind," the Commissioner asked, "if I go up with you to your father?"

White-haired, distinguished District Attorney Henriot, was neatly attired in a conservative lounging robe when Commissioner Peyrouserne and Michel entered.

"Michel!" he exclaimed when he saw them. "What has happened?"

The Commissioner saw that it was impossible for the young man to tell the ghastly story.

"Monsieur Henriot," he addressed the Prosecutor, "Madame Henriot has been murdered. Beaten

with a heavy poker, and shot. As yet, we have learned very little. But I wish to express my deepest sympathy and to assure you that we will do everything to catch the fiend who committed this crime."

Strong emotions troubled the District Attorney's finely featured face. He held his hand out to the Commissioner.

"Let me know, please, if you learn anything."

Back at Police Headquarters, the Commissioner set the wheels of the investigation in motion. The coroner was immediately sent to LeFort. The long rifle and the murder-poker were turned over to fingerprint experts. Two men were dispatched to Noyon the little provincial town where Michel had said Georgette's family lived. Perhaps her parents or her sisters could furnish a lead from which the investigators could work.

Shortly, the fingerprint experts brought in their report. And Commissioner Peyrouserne received his first set-back in the case. There were many fingerprints on both the rifle and poker but they were so smudged as to be altogether useless. It was hours later when another disappointing report came in. The gendarme who had been handling the interrogation of the peasants of Guidel telephoned headquarters to say that he had talked with more than a dozen of Guidel's citizens and had learned nothing more than that several of



## RIDDLE OF THE BRITTANY COAST

them had known Ankou, the Spirit of Death, would come to LeFort. Of the lives of Michel and Georgette Henriot they knew very little. Michel, apparently, kept to himself and had not made the acquaintance of any of the villagers. He left his silver foxes at LeFort only to come into Guidel to shop. Georgette, had been even more shy and reticent, than her husband. The two, it appeared, had been one of those couples who needed only each other and were sufficient unto themselves.

The coroner's report on the autopsy, the following day, also proved of little value. Georgette had, as the Commissioner already knew, been severely battered about the head and shoulders with the heavy poker, which the police had in their possession. The rifle bullet which had pierced her heart was the actual cause of death. The other bullet had entered her right temple. The 19-year old girl had not been criminally attacked, and a check-up of the few articles of value at LeFort showed that nothing had been stolen. So the probabilities that the murder had been committed by a sex maniac or a thieving tramp were practically eliminated. Unless, of course, the thief had been so frightened after killing Georgette that his only thought was of flight.

District Attorney René Henriot, tired lines on his face bearing mute evidence of the sleepless night he

had suffered, came into the office as Commissioner Peyrouseré laid aside the coroner's report.

"Are there any developments, Commissioner?"

Peyrouseré shook his head slowly.

"None, Monsieur Henriot. Every channel of investigation seems to have come to a dead end." When disappointment showed plainly on the prosecutor's face, the Commissioner hastened to reassure him.

"Do not lose heart, Monsieur. We have only begun the investigation. Before the day is out I expect to have some interesting developments."

As the District Attorney lowered his tired body into the chair at the side of the desk, Commissioner Peyrouseré asked:

"Was young Monsieur Henriot able to tell you anything which might have a bearing on the crime? Last night I asked him only a few questions. I thought you would rather speak with him yourself."

"He could tell me nothing," Prosecutor Henriot said, "he was in Guidel when the murder took place. He saw no one, found nothing which might help us."

"I cannot understand it, he continued puzzledly. "Georgette was such a sweet, timid little thing. I cannot conceive of any one wishing to harm her. She was a good child and brave. It required cour-

age to live alone down there at LeFort."

"Had young Monsieur Henriot known his wife long before their marriage?" the Commissioner asked.

"No," Prosecutor Henriot said. "That is a strange thing. Michel has always kept much to himself. He was never a ladies' man. And in recent years his interest in fox-breeding has kept him quite busy. I thought it would be a good thing for him if he married, so I inserted an advertisement in 'Chasseur Francais', you know, the farm journal which has a matrimonial bureau section. I stated in the advertisement that a young man of means wished to meet a young woman of equal financial situation for the purpose of matrimony. And Georgette answered the advertisement. She lived in Noyon, where her father has a large and prosperous farm. Michel corresponded with Georgette and eventually they met. Last October we went to Noyon, and Michel and Georgette were married. Georgette's family are very nice people. Simple, but hard-working and honest. I have always prided myself on the fact that I had brought Michel and Georgette together."

"Yes, Monsieur Henriot," the Commissioner put in at last, "but you knew very little of Georgette's past. Perhaps. . ."

"No, no, Commissioner. You will find nothing in the past of

Georgette or her family. I know they are fine people."

Commissioner Peyrouseré's phone rang. He lifted the receiver. The managing director of the Paris office of a large French insurance company was calling to say he had received a wire from Prosecutor René Henriot. He read the wire to the Commissioner:

"Madame Henriot assassinated broad daylight. Tramp."

Commissioner Peyrouseré turned away from the phone, asked his colleague about the wire.

"Yes," Prosecutor Henriot said, "I sent the telegram. It was necessary, of course, to notify the insurance company."

The Commissioner turned back to the telephone.

"C'est vrai," he said. "Madame Henriot has been assassinated."

The managing director's voice came crisp and hard over the phone:

"Monsieur Le Commissaire, please expect a representative of our company to call on you shortly."

With a puzzled frown, the Commissioner hung up. He told his colleague the managing director's message. But Prosecutor Henriot managed a sad smile.

"The insurance companies!" he exclaimed. "They are always suspicious. They do not like to pay."



## RIDDLE OF THE BRITTANY COAST

Later that afternoon, the gendarme handling the investigation at Guidel called again. He had still been unable to learn anything of importance. The news of the murder had spread throughout the village and the peasants and fishermen were harder to talk to than ever. A strong feeling of terror had enveloped the entire village. There were many ugly whispers and rumors. But nothing definite had come to light. Commissioner Peyroussere instructed his officer to keep on the job and to report at the office that evening.

The alarm which had been sent out brought no better results. Several tramps had been picked up in various sections of the country but they had all quickly proved their innocence. None of them had been near LeFort at 6:30 on the previous evening.

Shortly after the disappointing news of the futile broadcast had been transmitted to the Commissioner, what promised to be the first real break in the case happened. A thin, tall detective, one of the men who had been rushed to Noyon to question the members of Georgette's family, came into the office. There was an unmistakable air of suppressed excitement about him.

"Monsieur Le Commissaire, I think we have struck on something which may solve this crime." He reached in his pocket for a

sheaf of papers, as the Commissioner waved him to a chair.

"These," the detective said, handing the papers to the Commissioner, "are letters written by Georgette Henriot to her 17-year-old sister, Marie-Therese."

The Commissioner read the letters, slowly. His eyes widened and he frowned puzzledly at certain portions of the letters. Beginning with one dated October 24, 1933, and written from Paris, and continuing at frequent intervals up until March of 1934, the letters were a veritable chapter-by-chapter story of a young wife's unhappy married life. Almost from the first day of their marriage, Georgette had found her husband's advances distasteful. She had, the letters revealed, not permitted him his husbandly rights, until after their return from the Paris honeymoon. As time went on she found Michel less and less bearable until finally she grew to despise him. In the more recent letters she told her sister how Michel had begun to abuse and beat her. In March she had written that she was thinking of leaving her husband and returning to her parents' home in Noyon, as she had indeed done early the next month. But before the first of May she had again returned to LeFort. There must have remained some vestige of the love she had once felt for Michel.

The Commissioner congratulated

ed his subordinate on a fine piece of work, and left to take the letters to District Attorney René Henriot's office. This was a job that was extremely distasteful to him, for he knew what a man's only son could mean to him. And he knew, too, that René Henriot was the type of a public official who would investigate a crime thoroughly and completely, no matter whom it would hurt. Despite himself, he hoped that the letters would lead to no further revelations. He consoled himself with the reflection that there is, after all, quite a difference between a man who beats his wife and one who murders her.

Prosecutor Henriot read the letters as carefully as the Commissioner had read them. Long before he finished, it was obvious to the Commissioner that they were a complete and unexpected surprise to the District Attorney. Never before had Prosecutor Henriot ever had reason to believe that his son's marriage was anything but a happy one. When he finished reading the letters he placed them on his desk, picked up the telephone and called his home.

"Michel," he ordered coldly, when his son answered, "Come to my office at once!"

Slowly, deep in thought, he placed the telephone back in its cradle.

"Monsieur Le Commissaire,"

he said. "Please remain here. When Michel arrives I want you to ask him any questions you desire. We must learn the truth."

Commissioner Peyrouserre nodded silently.

"Of course," the District Attorney said in hardly more than a whisper, "the letters may mean nothing. A man may beat his wife and still not be a murderer."

"Of course," Commissioner Peyrouserre agreed quickly.

Michel Henriot arrived promptly at his father's office. That same look of dazed sadness was still on the young man's face. For two long hours, the Prosecutor grilled his only son relentlessly. Often when he fired an unusually cruel question, he winced almost imperceptibly. But Commissioner Peyrouserre knew what he must be suffering. Despite his anxiety to solve the horrible murder of Georgette Henriot, he was almost relieved when at the end of the grilling Michel still held steadfast to his claim that he had not murdered his wife. He admitted from the first, even before his father showed him Georgette's letters, that he had on occasion beat his wife. It was the desolation, the bleak, never-ending loneliness of the Brittany Coast where they lived, he said, which drove him to it.

So thorough had the Prosecutor's questioning been that the Commissioner could think of few



## RIDDLE OF THE BRITTANY COAST

questions to ask. Michel answered them without hesitation and finally left the office with the Commissioner.

Nothing further of importance occurred on that day, but early the next morning, May 10, 1934, the representative of the Paris insurance company was ushered into Commissioner Peyrouseré's private office. District Attorney Henriot had expressed a desire to be present at the Commissioner's meeting with the insurance man.

"Monsieur Henriot," the Insurance Company's representative began, "you sent us this telegram concerning your daughter-in-law's death?"

District Attorney Henriot nodded.

"Did you know that your son took out this policy in his wife's name?"

"But certainly," the Prosecutor said, "it is entirely proper, isn't it? Madame Henriot was under age—she was only 19 years old."

"Yes, it is proper. But do you know the stipulations of this policy? Do you know the amount of this policy?" He did not wait for a reply this time.

"The policy was for 800,000 francs," he went on. (800,000 francs is approximately \$50,000.) "And Michel Henriot is the sole beneficiary. The policy expressly states that Michel Henriot shall receive the 800,000 francs in the event Madame Henriot dies by

drowning, is killed in an automobile accident and . . ." he paused for effect, ". . . and in the event that Madame Henriot is murdered."

Commissioner Peyrouseré straightened up in his chair. Here, unquestionably, was sufficient motive for the crime. Many a person has been murdered for less than 800,000 francs. But District Attorney Henriot said calmly:

"Such a policy and the fact that your company agreed to underwrite it is entirely understandable to me. And it will be understandable to anyone who has ever seen the place where my son lives. There is no other house for miles around. It is a house set off by itself on a bleak, deserted stretch of coastland."

The insurance representative rose and said quietly: "That is all very true, Monsieur Henriot, but we felt it our duty to report the existence of the policy and its stipulations to the police."

The District Attorney nodded quiet agreement.

When the insurance man had left, Prosecutor Henriot stood wearily and said to Commissioner Peyrouseré:

"The facts of this policy make it imperative, mon ami, that I withdraw from the case. I cannot believe that Michel committed this terrible crime. But I wish another prosecutor to work with you on the case. It would

not matter how unflinchingly I faced all the facts in this crime. It would make no difference how hard I tried to bring this case to a successful conclusion. The people would say I was protecting my son. They would feel that I was withholding important evidence. They would believe that I was not performing the duties of my office, as they should be performed."

The next day, May 11, Commissioner Peyrouseré himself, went to Noyon to see Georgette's family. He felt the money motive which had come to light might lead him to further discoveries at Noyon. His guess, however, brought further revelations which upset the entire trend of the evidence and made the case once more an insane puzzle. He learned that Georgette's peasant father had set up a trust fund of 145,000 francs (about \$9,000) for the girl. This money was to become hers when she reached the age of 21. There was also a smaller fund of some 60,000 francs (about \$3,750) which she could get only with her father's consent. The only money she possessed at the time of the marriage which Michel could touch, was 220,000 francs (\$14,000). Commissioner Peyrouseré turned this jumbled financial situation over in his mind, tried to fit it into the murder puzzle. From these facts, it certainly appeared that if money

were the real motive behind the crime, Michel would have more to gain by allowing his wife to live at least until she reached the age of 21.

Commissioner Peyrouseré reviewed the facts he had learned up to this time as he drove back to Lorient. It was, of course, possible that Michel Henriot needed money. Fox-breeding was an expensive occupation and one which required a steady investment of capital. On the other hand, District Attorney Henriot was a wealthy man and it seemed logical to believe that his son could have gone to him for whatever money he needed. But even if it was granted that Michel did not wish to go to his father for money, that he had made up his mind to get it himself, why should he have murdered his wife? The 220,000 francs which had been Georgette's dowry at the time of their marriage was available to Michel from the very first day of the marriage. The 145,000 francs would become Georgette's when she was 21 years old, which meant that in another year or so she would have received the money. And the remaining 60,000 francs the girl could only get with her father's consent. To get his hands on this last, Michel would have had to convince Monsieur Deglave that he needed it for a worthwhile investment. And there was still another clause in the condi-



## RIDDLE OF THE BRITTANY COAST

tions under which Georgette was to receive the money. A clause which tended to knock the motive of money into a cocked hat. The clause specified that in the event of the girl's death, all the money would be returned to her family!

But on his return to his office in Lorient the Commissioner found a new witness waiting for him. The gendarme who had been interrogating the good citizens of Guidel had brought in a Monsieur LeCrom. LeCrom told the Commissioner that about 6 p. m. on the evening of the murder he had been walking along the sandy beach which ran past LeFort. He had seen a man come out of the house. The man, he was certain, was Monsieur Michel Henriot!

And so the next morning, on May 12, 1934, four days after the crimson body of Georgette Deglave Henriot had been found at LeFort, Commissioner Peyrouserre placed Michel Henriot under arrest for the murder of his wife. At Police Headquarters he was faced with the circumstantial evidence which had piled up against him. Again Georgette's letters! The 800,000 franc insurance policy! And, finally, Monsieur LeCrom of Guidel was brought in. LeCrom identified Michel for the police. Still the prosecutor's son denied his guilt. He had a logical and quick answer for their every charge un-

til, after hours of relentless examination, he broke down and confessed to the murder.

"I hated my wife as bitterly as she hated me," he cried. "Never would she do what I asked of her. Always she teased me, persecuted me, made me feel that I was a beast unfit to be near her."

He had insisted on the clause in the insurance policy which specified that he would receive the money in case of death by an automobile accident because Georgette had been a reckless driver and he had high hopes that she might some day kill herself while driving.

"I really went to the village," he told the officers. "When I came back she was drinking wine. She teased me cruelly and told me that I ought to drink with her. How could I keep on living with that woman? I was so angry that I seized the poker and began to beat her. When she took the telephone receiver from the hook, I grabbed the rifle and shot her."

Michel Henriot's trial which began on June 27 at Vannes, the county seat, was one of the most sensational France has ever known. Great crowds gathered outside the courtroom. Shouts of "Give him death," rose from the angry mass of peasants and fishermen jostling each other in the large square. District Attorney René Henriot, of course, did not

handle the prosecution of the confessed murderer. He hired Maitre Beineix, one of France's most famous criminal lawyers, to defend his son. Monsieur Beineix was assisted in the defense by Monsieur Legrand of Lorient. The trial lasted five days. And during its course, distinguished, white-haired Rene Henriot and his stooped 60-year-old wife gave testimony. The prosecutor and Michel's mother dramatically took a great portion of their son's blame

upon themselves. They told the court that the fact that they had kept Michel in solitary seclusion until he was 10 years old must have thwarted Michel's social sense. Perhaps their touching testimony, the desperate plea of a father and mother, saved Michel Henriot from the guillotine, but it was inevitable that he should receive his just punishment. He was convicted and sentenced by Advocate General Genicon to serve 20 years at hard labor.





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