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'Fresh from the gardens'

The Affair at Flower Acres

by CAROLYN WELLS

BEGIN HERE TODAY

The body of Douglas Raynor is found in the early evening on the floor of the sun room at Flower Acres, his Long Island home. Raynor has been shot through the heart. Standing over the dead man, pistol in hand, is Malcolm Finley, former sweetheart of Raynor's wife, Nancy. Eva Turner, Raynor's nurse, stand by the door with her hand still on the light switch. In a moment Nancy appears, white-faced and terrified. Orville Kent, Nancy's brother, comes in from the south side of the room, and then Ezra Goddard, friend of Finley, with others enter upon the scene. Police, headed by Detective Dobbins, are conducting an investigation. "I picked up the weapon after finding the body of Raynor on the floor," explains Finley. Nurse Turner fixes the time of the shot at five minutes before seven. "Is her testimony to be relied on?" asks Goddard.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER V.—(Cont'd.)

"Just what do you mean by that, Mr. Goddard?"

"Only that if Miss Turner chose, for any reason, to state the time inaccurately, she could of course do so. Myself, I think the shot was fired a trifle earlier than that."

"Now as to the weapon," Dobbins said briskly, ignoring Ezra Goddard's suggestion. "Who can identify this pistol?"

"Every one of us," Kent said, carelessly. "It was the property of my brother-in-law, and was always kept in the upper right-hand drawer of that desk, at your side."

"Was it, indeed?" and Dobbins seemed surprised. "And was it, to your knowledge, Mr. Kent, in that drawer just before the shooting?"

"To my belief, rather than knowledge—a belief based on the assumption that it was doubtless there, because that was its accustomed place."

"Or," suggested Malcolm Finley, "in the event of an ill-mentioned intruder, Mr. Raynor himself may have opened the drawer and taken the pistol out to protect himself, and so may have been shot, by his own hand or another's."

"I can't see it as a suicide," and Dobbins gave a long look at Finley. "Where was any motive for Douglas Raynor to kill himself?"

"For that matter, who had any motive to kill him?" asked Goddard.

"We won't go into that at present," Dobbins returned, quickly.

"No, don't," was Goddard's warning. "Let me tell you, Mr. Dobbins, this case is far from simple. Let me ask you to go slowly, for there are many things yet to be discovered."

"That I well know, Mr. Goddard. But this pistol is a valuable bit of evidence. We must take care of it. It will, of course, show the finger-prints of Mr. Malcolm Finley—as he handled it. If it shows no others—"

"It will prove that the murderer wore gloves," said Ezra Goddard.

"Let me come in—let me hear all this!"

The words were spoken by Dolly Fay, who came into the room, looked quickly about and then seated herself close to Nan.

"Ask me things, Mr. Detective—I can tell you a lot."

"Your evidence would be of no use, miss; we can't take children as witnesses—"

"Pooh, I guess you'll be glad to get evidence from anybody—if it's good evidence."

"Do you know anything about the matter?" asked Dobbins.

"Not a thing—"

"Why did you come over here, Dolly?" asked Nan. "I think you'd better run home again."

"Not I. I'm here to help—why, Nancy, I was in bed and I heard the telephone, and I heard our people talking about it—somebody was telling Dad the news—and I just hopped up and skittled into my togs and ran over."

"I'll take you home, Dolly," and Kent rose.

"No, Orry, you don't understand. I've a bit of detective instinct. Nan, you needn't pretend you're sorry he's dead—"

"Dolly, be quiet!" Miss Mattie glared at her. "You're a wicked little thing, and I order you to go."

"But you're not mistress here, Miss Mattie."

She was an impertinent, forward child, yet something in her manner made Ezra Goddard feel that she might be of use, and he said:

"Let the child stay if she likes. No possible witness ought to be ignored.

"For heaven's sake keep away from him."

Did you hear the shot fired, Miss Fay?"

"Oh, no! If I had I'd have been over at once. At what time did it happen?"

"A few minutes before seven," Goddard answered.

"Before seven? Then that's just when Orry and I stood on the little bridge—too far away to hear a shot—who did it?"

The girl's big eyes moved slowly from one to another.

Then she nodded her head. "A bad man from outside, of course. Did anybody see anything of him? I know who he was."

"You know who he was!" Detective Dobbins fairly jumped.

"Well—I can't say positively, of course, but—there's one way to look—you know whom I mean, Miss Mattie."

And the queer child refused to mention the person she had in mind and Miss Raynor declared she had no knowledge of what Dolly meant.

"I attach little importance to this baby talk," said Dobbins, grandly. "Mrs. Raynor, I must ask you a few personal questions. Would you prefer to see me alone—on the subject?"

"No," said Nan, faintly, and her hand slid into her brother's, while Dolly Fay, on her other side, patted her arm affectionately, "I will answer anything you ask—right here."

"Indeed you will," put in Miss Mattie. "You're in a desperate position, Nancy—I want to hear what you have to say. For it is an open secret—"

"You are not being interrogated, Miss Raynor," Goddard interrupted her; "kindly be silent."

"Be silent yourself, Mr. Goddard. You are, I know, a friend of Mr. Finley, and you, of couse, fear any disclosures that will involve him, but let me tell you those disclosures must be made—the affair of Nancy and Malcolm Finley must be made public, and then the motive for the doing away of my poor brother can no longer be a mystery."

"Oho," and Dobbins looked enlightened, "that's how it is, is it? Now, Mrs. Raynor, since you are ready to answer me, just what were your personal relations with your late husband? Amicable or—otherwise?"

"Amicable—certainly," and Nan's clear, cool voice came as a surprise to all who listened.

"Ah—certainly." The detective was at a loss just how to carry on his grilling process. "You held your husband then in high esteem?"

"Indeed, yes, Mr. Dobbins."

"Mrs. Raynor," the detective looked at her severely, "you have a different mental attitude now from that which you showed when I questioned you before. I may say you have a grip on yourself. I cannot, therefore, place entire confidence in your statements. I shall have to ask corroboration. Miss Raynor, do you assert that there was no jarring note in the marital attitude of Mr. and Mrs. Raynor?"

"I do not assert that, Mr. Dobbins, but the exact contrary. My brother and his wife were both uncongenial and unhappy. They had few, if any, tastes in common, there was constant friction, even quarrels."

Nancy Raynor looked at Miss Mattie with a cold scorn that would have withered a less belligerent nature.

And then the medical examiner came in from the other room.

"There are strange developments in this case," he said; I suggest, Mr. Dobbins, that you defer your further questioning until morning. I must also inform you, Mrs. Raynor, that we have to take away your husband's body tonight. An autopsy is necessary. Dobbins, let everything remain as it is until tomorrow. The household may retire—nobody may leave the house—who is this child?"

"I'm Dolly Fay—a neighbor. I'm going to stay the night with Mrs. Raynor."

"But, Dolly, dear," Nan said gently, "what will your mother think when she finds your room vacant?"

"Oh, that's all right. I pinned a note on my pillow, telling her I had come over here."

Fraser, the county examiner, gave a few more instructions to the detective and went away.

CHAPTER VI.

A LOT YET TO BE TOLD.

Dolly Fay slept in Douglas Raynor's room, and though she was asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow, Nan Raynor in the adjoining room was busily moving about for a long time. But when at last sheer exhaustion made Nan fall into troubled slumber as daylight began at dawn, Dolly awoke refreshed and alert.

She hopped out of bed and ran to look at Nan. Seeing her asleep, the girl tiptoed away, and her quick eyes caught sight of a bit of folded paper under the door.

She picked it up and without unfolding it, laid it on Nan's dressing table. Then, reconsidering, she woke Nan up to tell her of it.

Wide awake at once, "Give it to me," the older woman said.

Sitting up in bed, she read these lines.

"Dear Heart: At least, please be advised by me in this. Keep a quiet but gentle pose and answer questions straightforwardly but admit nothing. M. F."

(To be continued.)

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ISSUE No. 21—'29

Trade With Russia

Washington Post: The experience of the British should silence those who are working for Soviet recognition by the United States. Stahlin's Government is sparing no effort to entice the United States into an arrangement through which American capital would be poured into the coffers of the Soviet in the hopes of expanding trade. Loans and credit, besides diplomatic recognition of an insecure Communist Government, which is a deadly enemy of the so-called capitalistic nation, is the offer that has been held out to England and America. Propaganda as to the advantages of trade with the Soviet is a poor brand of trickery through which the Reds hope to finance their communistic schemes. The Russian people have nothing with which to buy. They have been ruined by the fool theories of one dictator after another. Any amount of capital would not assure the reconstruction of the country as long as the Reds are in control.

Britten and Great Britain

Baltimore Sun: Mr. Britten is in a constant state of eruption against Europe. He bellows about the British once a week and he is certainly singularly successful in grabbing newspaper space for his frequent fulminations. This is accounted for in two ways. One is that he plays the "Monday morning game," which means he selects Monday mornings, on which newspapers, as a rule, are less crowded than other days, to release his statements. The other is because of his extraordinary persistency, an idea of which can be gained from the remark of an old Chicago politician who knows him well. Asked what sort of man Britten is, the boss said: "Fred isn't a bad fellow, but he is persistent. He is the sort of fellow who, if he knocks on your front door and you don't open it, will come in through the coal hole."

There is nothing worse for music than to have it all day and every day until at last it becomes as familiar as the central heating of the house.—Sir Hugh Allen.

Minard's Liniment relieves pain.

Port of Agadis, Long Closed, Is Now Semi-Open

Coastwise Traffic Imports Admitted to Moroccan City —Exports Barred

London.—Agadir, that long-closed port south of the Atlas Mountains, in Morocco, which figured so prominently in the European diplomatic disputes which preceded the Great War, is now semi-open according to a report of the British Vice-Consul at Mogador.

A considerable import trade has sprung up in certain overseas imports into Morocco, between Casablanca and Agadir, particularly in tea and sugar, and consequently the port of Agadir has been kept open for coastwise traffic (imports). This is not likely now to be altered as, in the middle of this summer, the consul believes that Agadir will be thrown open to deep sea imports and exports on the lines of the other Moroccan ports.

At present, the Government does not permit Agadir to export at all direct but—as for the past 12 years—the inhabitants of Sous have to take their produce across the Atlas Mountains to the port of Mogador. The leading Mogador merchants, whose trade must be heavily hit once Agadir is fully open, have already secured sites and in many cases put up buildings at Agadir. The latest development is the opening by some of the Mogador merchants of a sub-depot at Sidi Mokhtar, about 60 miles east of Mogador on the road to Marrakeesh, in order to intercept there cereals from Sous destined for Marrakeesh.

Great building activity generally is now going on at Agadir, and land values at the port, which is naturally sheltered and the only sea outlet for a coastline several hundred miles long, have risen very rapidly. With the completion of three motoring roads which the Franco-Moroccan Government is now driving over the Southern Atlas into Sous, two of which are actually open, that country must play a prominent part in Moroccan agricultural and commercial development.

Its chief products are cereals, almonds, gum, wool, goatskins, olives and arghan oil. The last is peculiar to this region but ha snot hitherto been used outside Morocco. Owing to shortness of supply of this of late, however, Morocco has been importing considerable quantities of Soya oil, the price of which is cheaper than olive oil. The Sous is very rich in copper and, according to the reports of the Mannesmann brothers, rich also in other materials, but no official reports are yet available on this point nor is it yet open to prospecting. The latter, however, will no doubt be allowed as soon as Agadir is thrown fully open.

The stepping-stones to scientific knowledge principally consist of the errors of past professors. Sir William Beach-Thomas.

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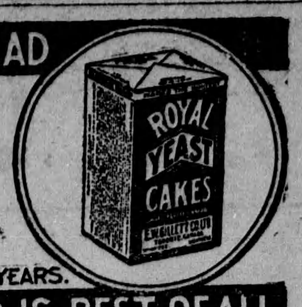

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HOME-BAKED BREAD IS BEST OF ALL

China Unlocks Remote Parts By Road System

Motorbuses Penetrate to Backward Regions as Long-Distance Routes Open

Peiping—Chinese officials are considering proposals for reconstruction of the war-torn country, but the money for them is not forthcoming. One project, however ,has made headway during the past year, and that is the construction of automobile highways in several provinces, which open up hitherto isolated districts to the outside world.

Some highways have been built under the direction of the China International Famine Relief Association, with its American engineers, but perhaps more significance may be attached to those which have been built by the Chinese, with no foreign advice or assistance.

The Chinese Bureau of Economic Information reports that five great highways have been opened to motor traffic during the past few months, and that 13 other highways have been partially completed, and will be finished during the summer. Chinese engineers have also drawn plans for 11 others, and when these have been completed, China will have a finer highway system than in the most prosperous days of empire.

Chinese officials have been impressed by the fact that the highways already completed have paid for themselves within a short time. In a country where labor is so cheap the cost of construction is not great, and highway building is especially useful in times when so many men and women are out of work. As a rule, the provincial governments which build the highways have shared in the purchase of motorbuses which use them, and the profits from these enterprises have been quick and substantial. The Chinese farmers have taken readily to the new vehicles, and automobile buses now run into districts which had never seen such conveyances a year or two ago.

Some of the greatest progress has been made in Shansi, which has been known as the "model province" under the beneficent rule of Marshal Yen Hsi-shan. Some 3000 miles were completed before the civil wars stopped the work. Since then an additional 1000 miles has been completed, and another 2000 miles is contemplated during the summer.

Use Minard's for the rub down.

The Dangerous Walker

London Daily News and Westminster (Lib.): Sir William Joynson-Hicks is undoubtedly right in stating that it is "a very dangerous occupation in life" to be a pedestrian. His warning to the motoring community will also find general approval. But when he seems to endorse the attitude of the pedestrian in his refusal to recognize that he is bound to exercise greater care because of the new types of vehicle on the roads, the roads, the Home Secretary is fostering a dangerous illusion. We cannot go back to the pre-motor days, and it is idle to suggest that the pedestrian is entitled to challenge the new traffic any more than he can fairly defy bicycles or country gigs. Every user of the road must learn a new sense of accommodation to others wh traverse it with equal rights.

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