And when millions like it better it must be so.

"SALADA" TEA

'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, stands by the door with her hand on the light switch. In a moment Nancy appears, whitefaced 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. Detective Dobbins investigates. Now an autopsy reveals that Raynor, before meeting death by a bullet, was being systematically dosed with arsenic.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

"She did it!" Miss Mattie broke out, between her sobs. "Nan did it—I saw her slip a tablet—"

"Hush!" Orville Kent fairly thundered at her. "I insist that Miss Raynor shall not be allowed to talk. She is beside herself with nervous excitement and is not responsible for what she says."

Kent was whitefaced and stern.

"Mr. Kent," Fraser said, "you must not defeat the ends of justice—"

"I don't want to," Kent stormed back; "but I refuse to sit here and let my sister be slandered and wickedly accused by a woman who would willingly perjure herself to convict my sister of a crime she is incapable of committing. You have no right, Doctor Fraser, to listen to the ravings of a mad woman—"

"There, there, Mr. Kent," Dobbins broke in, "you do harm rather than good to your sister's cause by such a violent outburst. This investigation must be made. We must ask questions of those present, as they are the ones most likely to know the facts. Miss Raynor, do you accuse—"

"No," and Mattie Raynor sat bolt upright, and controlled herself sufficiently to speak quietly. "No, I accuse nobody. I spoke impulsively, and I retract anything I said—or suggested."

Nan looked at her with a sort of dumb gratitude.

Then Ezra Goddard spoke.

"It is a strange case," he said; "but I should say, Doctor Fraser, that as the poisoner did not succeed in his efforts and the person who shot Mr. Raynor did carry out his fatal intention, that the poisoning matter sinks into insignificance before the matter of the shooting."

"Not at all, Mr. Goddard. The poisoner is quite as much a criminal in intent as the one who fired the pistol. Moreover, it is my theory that they are one and the same. We must admit the desire to kill Mr. Raynor on the part of somebody. The situation suggests that this would-be murderer tried the poison process, and finding that too slow or too inefficacious resorted to the quicker and surer means of shooting."

"Well," said Orville Kent, shortly, "get busy then, and find out who it was. But go about it by inquiry and evidence and not by the imbecile method of accusing an entirely unsuspected person!"

"The situation is narrowing itself down," Doctor Fraser said slowly. "While I regret the necessity, I must, Mrs. Raynor, ask you for a frank statement of your attitude toward your late husband."

"My attitude?" Nan said, her head held erect and her dark eyes blazing with indignation; "that is a strange question, sir. I can only say that my attitude toward my husband was that of respect, honor and admiration."

"And love—Mrs. Raynor?"

"I don't know just how to answer that." The beautiful brows knitted. "I assume I must answer, however, so I will say that while there was comradeship and harmony between my husband and myself, there was not what might be called deep affection."

"Why did you marry him?"

"For reasons of my own—quite apart from affection or—"

"A matter of expediency, then?"

"Exactly." Nan seemed pleased with the word.

"And the reason for the expedience?"

"That I cannot tell you. If you can persuade me that it is necessary I may do so—but otherwise, I shall not answer that question."

Fraser paid no attention to the anger of her brother, but continued to question Mrs. Raynor.

"Had you noticed the symptoms I described as being those of poison?"

"I had noticed that my husband did not seem very well, but I ascribed it to the changing diet he was eternally trying."

"Meaning that Miss Turner experimented on him?" said Fraser quickly.

"Only in the pursuit of her duty. I know that my husband was a faddist as to his diet, and I know that Miss Turner, as well as other dietitians he has employed, did her best to please him."

Instead of seeming gratified at this vindication of herself, Eva Turner looked curiously at the speaker.

"I thank you," she said, at last, nodding her head in Nan's direction, "but I am in no need of your championship, Mrs. Raynor. Nor am I especially interested in the matter of poisoning. I should say, Doctor Fraser, that the shot that killed Mr. Raynor was far more important than poison that didn't kill him! And I will ask you to remember that I was the one who turned on the lights just in time to see two people in the room with the dead man—either of whom—she paused, and then went on firmly, "both of whom are secretly glad of the poor man's death."

Orville Kent turned on her in a fury of passion, but Ezra Goddard laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"Keep quiet, Kent," he said, "Miss Turner, you are making a grave statement."

"I am," she responded, her face white and set, "but you can determine the truth of it for yourself. As the principal witness, as the one who first turned the light on a deed done in the dark, I hold that my testimony is of utmost importance and should be considered first of all."

"You are right, Miss Turner," Dobbins said; "if you saw the dead man and those two people in the room, there can be no doubt but that one of them fired the fatal shot. The question is, which one?"

"That ought to be easy for a detective to discover," Miss Turner said, carelessly.

The woman's face was almost distorted by fury.

Goddard looker at her curiously. Why should she be so wrought up over the matter? Why so bitter toward Nancy Raynor, and, inferentially, toward Finley? Was she in love with the dead man? Or with Finley?"

And then Miss Mattie broke in again.

"Oh, Nan," she cried, in a wailing tone, "oh, Nancy, why did you do it? I saw you—I saw you drop pellets in Douglas' teacup—twice I saw you—"

"Did you do that, Mrs. Raynor?" Fraser fired at her, suddenly.

"Yes—" faltered Nan, "yes, I did."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SOLE CLEW.

The afternoon sun shone brightly on the great beds of blossoms at Flower Acres.

The funeral of Douglas Raynor had taken place, and the family had gathered again on the western terrace for the tea that was daily served there.

The law had stayed the investigation of the tragedy until after the last rites were held for the victim, but even now the sinister figure of the detective was seen coming toward them.

"I say," declared Kent, "that's too bad. Nan musn't be interviewed now. She's all in with nervous excitement and fatigue. That detestable Dobbins person can surely wait till tomorrow—"

"I'll tell him so," said Ezra Goddard, quietly, and he rose and went to meet Dobbins.

"Come and talk to me first," Goddard said, leading the detective into the library. "Surely you don't want to intrude upon Mrs. Raynor just now. You're on the wrong track, Dobbins. Mrs. Raynor never shot her husband."

"Then Finley did it. It rests between the two. And at any rate, she was poisoning him. Why, it's an open and shut case. Here's the lady, with an elderly husband, who is unkind—positively cruel to her, and here's a younger man, in love with her and she with him—"

"Hold on there, Dobbins."

"You can't deny it. I find that Finley was a rejected suitor when she married old Raynor—for his wealth, of course. Now, she's stood two years or thereabouts of the old man, and she just gave out. She couldn't put up with him any longer. So, she being a deep sort, takes to a slow poisoning process. Three different people have told me they have seen her slipping little white tablets into the tea cup or wine glass of her husband."

"I can't believe it!"

"They said it, anyway. The sister is one—and two other credible witnesses say the same. Now, you must admit that looks bad. Ugly—that's what it is—the whole case is ugly."

"It is—I grant you that. But you must remember, Miss Raynor is no friend of her brother's wife—they have never been congenial—"

"That's neither here nor there. Say they couldn't hit it off together, that's no reason for Miss Mattie to make up a falsehood about the poison."

"They may have been harmless tablets—bicarbonate of soda—"

"No, no. The man had a nurse looking after him—why would the wife administer medicine—and why secretly?"

"That secrecy business may be a mistake. Or merely a secret from Mr. Raynor, who would have been angry if he had thought his wife was dosing him.'

"All right, Mr. Goddard, if that is the true version of the tablets, then surely Mrs. Raynor can't object to explaining it as such. She will have every chance to vindicate herself, and Lord knows, I hope she can do it. But my duty is plain, and I think the sooner I get at a serious inquiry, the better."

(To be continued.)

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Saint John Telegraph-Journal (Ind.): Canada's products are all those of the north temperate zone. Canada has no tropical products, and modern conditions make economic interdependence between tropical and temperate producing countries essential. This is the foundation of the growing trade activity between Canada and the West Indies. The Empire produces within its confines everything needed. If there be a choice, therefore, between a product of the Empire and that of another country it is obvious self-interest to buy in the Empire. The consumer is not always aware how great an influence he may exert in this. When he inquires at a store for a specific article he should first ask himself whether it is an Imperial product.

Mother: "What is this drawing supposed to be, Tom?" Tom: "A train, Mother." Mother: "But there are no carriages." Tom: "Oh, the engine draws them!"

For sunburn, apply Minard's Liniment

Joan was at her friend's party, and had received from Mother strict instructions not to say "Yes" when asked if she would like a second piece of birthday cake. "Will you have another piece of cake, Joan?" asked her hostess. "Thank you very much," said Joan. "The idea is not repugnant to me."

"The Duke of Wellington once slept in that bed," volunteered the landlord. "U'm." "And sat in that very chair you are now sitting in." "And refused to eat this ham sandwich, I s'pose," interposed the tourist. "Well, I don't think I want it, either."

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The proposed tariff on imported antique furniture is doubtless necessary for the purpose of protecting our American manufacturers of antiques. —"Nashville Southern Lumberman."

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