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, 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; Miss Mattie, Raynor's sister, and others, enter upon the scene. Detective Dobbins heads the police investigation. An autopsy reveals that Raynor was being systematically poisoned by arsenic, and Nancy is suspected as the poisoner of her brutal husband. Dobbins comes to interview Nancy, but is intercepted by Goddard.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

"That's all right, Mr. Dobbins—and I'll make you this proposition. Let me help you and I'll agree to play fair. You tell me all you discover and I'll tell you what I learn."

"Humph. What can you learn?"

"Don's be supercilious. You may yet be glad to come around to my theory."

"Have you one?"

"Rather! And a good one. It is that an outsider, an evil intentioned intruder came in and shot Raynor at dusk, and made away without being seen."

"Fine fairy story!"

"Not at all—he left his footprint on the sun room floor."

"Very good of him, I'm sure! And from that footprint, will you please tell me the color of his hair and what clothes he wore? Also his age and height? I've read story books, you see!"

"Then if you have, why didn't you find that footprint for yourself?" Goddard spoke seriously. "It's right there, under the eyes of anybody who chooses to look for it."

"Is it there yet?"

"Yes, unless it has been washed off today. I saw it yesterday. Come on, I'll show you."

The two men went to the sun parlor, and on its floor of red tiles, between two rugs, was certainly a faint, irregular footprint, made quite evidently by some one who wore new rubbers.

"Pooh!" said Dobbins, "that might have come there before or after the shooting time."

"Might have, yes, but isn't it up to you to prove it did or it didn't? Oughn't you to know who has been here wearing new rubbers? They are not commonly worn by ladies and gentlemen of a household like this."

"Some of the servants—"

"Nonsense; servants don't wear overshoes to clean floors!"

"A visitor—an errand boy—"

"Why surmise? Why not find out for certain?"

Dobbins began to look grave.

"Much obliged to you, Mr. Goddard, it certainly calls for investigation. And I'll accept your offer of help. If I tell you what I learn, you must tell me anything you discover."

"Agreed, though I doubt if I discover anything of importance. My forte is deduction rather than search."

By reason of further request on Goddard's part, Dobbins left the search of Nan's room until the next day, and then he declared his intentions.

"Certainly you may search my rooms, Dr. Dobbins," Nan said, quietly. "Shall I come with you?"

"No, Mrs. Raynor, but I want some one with me. Miss Turner?"

"No; I'll go," put in Meddlesome Mattie.

She accompanied the detective, and the two of them made a thorough search among Nancy Raynor's things.

It would be false to say Miss Mattie did not enjoy it—her feminine curiosity was gratified at this opportunity to see her sister-in-law's belongings and she poked into drawers and cupboards with enthusiasm.

Especially did the detective scrutinize the bottles in the medicine cabinet. There were a few vials of white tablets, which he confiscated, but which were labeled quinine or soda mints or some simple preparation.

They were about to call this search complete, when Miss Mattie's sharp eyes noticed a book set askew on the book shelf. She pulled it out and found there was a volume concealed behind it. This was a boog about poisons and their antidotes. A small book, evidently addressed to the layman and meant for family use.

Dobbins eagerly grabbed it from Miss Mattie's hands.

He ran over its pages and found that at arsenical poisoning the leaves were thumbed and worn as if by an interested student.

"I knew it," said Miss Mattie, with a horrified look at the page. "I knew Nan was poisoning him."

"He wasn't killed by the poison," Dobbins reminded her. "Do you think she shot him?"

"No," said Miss Mattie, decidedly. "Nan wouldn't do that. But I believe Mr. Finley did, and I can't see why you don't arrest him."

"He's watched continually ,Miss Raynor, as, in fact, are all the people of the house."

"My land! All of us?"

"Yes, of course.. There are several men detailed for that purpose. Well, Miss Raynor, I don't see that we can learn anything more here."

With the book on poisons, carefully wrapped to preserve possible finger print clews, he went downstairs, Miss Raynor accompanying him.

They found that in their absence a newcomer had appeared, who brought with him a new element of mystery.

In the living room, addressing himself to Nan, was a young man of perhaps thirty or so. He was tall, dark and lean, a man of fine face and figure, but with crafty black eyes that darted here and there, seeming to read the attitudes of the others.

Orville Kent, in attendance on his sister, was also listening to the announcements the stranger was making.

He was, he told Dobbins, Lionel Raynor, son of Douglas Raynor by his first marriage.

"Had you ever heard of this son before?" Dobbins asked of Nan.

"Yes," she said, "I knew of his existence, but I have never before met him."

"He was apprised of his father's death?"

"Oh, yes; the lawyer looked after all notifications of the family."

"You didn't get here for the funeral, Mr. Raynor?" said Dobbins.

"No, I came on from the west and couldn't make connections. But now that I am here, I wish to take possession at once. I have with me my father's will, which bequeaths to me everything he possessed. I want also to push the investigation of his death—his murder"—he looked straight at Nan—"and I want to see justice done."

"You are making any accusations?" asked the detective.

"Not that—I leave that to you and your assistants. But it can't be a difficult case, given the elements of an unloving wife and her former suitor."

"But my husband made a later will," Nan declared, her spirit roused by these continued blows of misfortune.

"Yes? Have you it?" Lionel Raynor's tone was insolent.

"It is in Mr. Raynor's desk," Nan said quietly.

"Produce it, then." This was said with a sneer, as if the new claimant to the property had no fear of the will being forthcoming.

Nor was it. Though the desk was ransacked by Dobbins, assisted by Goddard and Orville Kent, no trace of a will could be found.

"But it has always been there," said Nan, looking perplexed. "I mean ever since it was drawn up, a year or more ago."

"Who witnessed it?" asked Dobbins.

"Mr. Gannon, for one," Nan said, "and the butler, for another. But not the butler we have now. It was Peters, the one we had last year."

"Grimshawe Gannon? Then he is easily available, and will know where the will is," Goddard said. "This matter should have been looked into sooner."

"I know," Nan said, "the lawyer, Mr. Stratton, said so. But I begged him to wait till today. He is coming this afternoon to read the will."

"How can he read it, if there isn't any to read?" asked Lionel Raynor, flippantly. "I fear, Mrs. Stepmother, you won't be able to find that will."

Nancy Raynor gave him one scornful glance but said nothing. As a matter of fact she knew all about the will her husband had made in her favor, knew how little he had left to Lionel and knew of its other bequests.

"It must be that Mr. Gannon has the will in his possession," she said, "or, more likely, Mr. Stratton has it. At any rate, I know that it exists, and that its provision for myself is entirely satisfactory."

Lionel Raynor threw her a quizzical glance, but his eyes rested for a moment on her beautiful face.

For Nancy Raynor, in her black gown and tiny white crepe collar, was very fair and sweet to look at.

(To be continued.)

MISS MATTIE'S SHARP EYES NOTICED A BOOK SET ASKEW ON THE SHELF. SHE PULLED IT OUT.

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HOW TIMES DO CHANGE

"Talking about Christmas reminds me that my better half gave me a book last year entitled "A Perfect Gentleman." This year she agve me another one, entitled "Wild Animals I Have Known."

Tom: "Has your amateur gardening taught you anything?" Dick: "Yes; I'll never again believe that we reap what we sow."

Fasting for Health

How and When to Give Your System a Rest

By DR. FISHER

We are unmerciful nigger-drivers of our own organs. We work our stomachs, livers and kidneys from morning till night, in a most ungallant manner, and the wonder is that they put up with it at all.

Most of us, I think, would consider ourselves under-fed and ill-done by, if we had less than three meals a day. There are people who are always taking "snacks," who believe that if they are not eating something at every possible moment, they will waste away.

Did they but know it, they are heading for disaster and an early grave. Our digestive organs can only absorb a certain quantity of food at one time. Each individual's powers of absorption varies. Put in more—and it is merely wasted.

This excess only imposes additional strain upon our secretory and excretory systems. The glands, which secrete digestive juices, and the liver, work overtime—for nothing. And our kidneys find themselves faced with a formidable quantity of waste products to dispose of.

Day by day this goes on. Is it any cause for surprise that our organs wear out before their time?

The Overfeeding Danger

More people are in danger of overfeeding than of underfeeding. Those accustomed to live freely would benefit immeasurably from an occasional day's fast.

Choose one day every fortnight when you will make a point of studying your own internal economy. That day will be your organs' period of rest. On that da eat nothing except, perhaps, some buttered toast. The more non-alcoholic fluid you drink the better.

It is surprising how much fitter everybody feels the next day, after the harmful excretions of overwork have been expelled, and the blood has been cleansed.

Apart from the hygienic importance of a fast, there is a psychological value; the more we feel we want our food—and we shall feel we want it badly the day after—the better will be our digestion and absorption.

A fast not only purifies our blood and organs, but muscular growth is benefited. It is Nature's own cure for fever. What better method is there of treating a severe cold or influenza than by strict starvation for a day or two, in conjunction with the liberal drinking of warm water.

It was Mark Twain, I believe, who said that "no cold in the head could survive 24 hours un. odified starvation."

Many diseases respond favorably to short periods of fasting. Acute pneumonia, acute nephritis, diabetes, gout, indigestion, high blood pressure, rheumatic affections, skin disorders are examples. For severe obesity strict dieting is essential.

But fasting, while an excellent practice if indulged in with care and judgment, can be very dangerous. Long periods of starvation do more harm than good.

When food is withheld the body feeds on its own store of fat and carbohydrates. At the start, the weight falls rapidly; then it settles down to a steady loss of a pound a day. Excepting the fat stores of th ebody and the glycogen in the liver and muscles, the loss falls first on the glands.

Then the liver, spleen, and pancreas suffer; and, in their turn, the muscles. Finally, a call is made on those vital organs—the heart and brain.

War!

Major K. A. Bratt in the Review of Reviews (London): The advance of dictatorships at the present time affords a premonitory hint of what is to come. They spring up like mushrooms, not only in the earth's bloor-drenched swamps and fever-stricken areas, but in the chill shadow of the new warfare. The reaction to this development and the psychological changes which it implies will result in a reversal of the social progress of the last fifty years. Such progress is the child of democracy. If that fails, they fall together. There can be no doubt but that this progress towards a warlike and dictator-ridden community must end in war. It can certainly not lead to peace. It will plunge into warfare the whole of the Western world, or more probably the whole earth, with its present tendency towards unification, and precipitate world revolution.

"Not Made in Canada"

Toronto Mail and Empire (Cons.): It is apparently the determination of the government that no tariff aid shall be given to any new industry. What is not already made in Canada will stand little change of being made here, so far as Government policy is concerned. If not made in Canada now a given article will continue to be admitted free of duty, so that the setting up of works to make the article will be hampered by unrestricted competition from outside countries.

NURSES WANTED

The Toronto Hospital for Incurables in affiliation with Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, offers a three years' Course of Training to young women, having the required education and desirous of becoming nurses. This Hospital has adopted the eight-hour system. The pupils receive uniforms of the School, a monthly allowance and traveling expenses to and from New York. For further information write the Superintendent.

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Untold Riches Lie in the Depths of the Sea

Treasure has been accumulating on the sea bed since the ancient Carthagenians sailed out to scour the then known world. Day in and day out men sail over treasure trove that would make them rich for life, and the treasure may only be a matter of thirty,forty, or fifty fathoms beneath their keel.

It seems incredible that science should not yet have found a way o this treasure chamber. Armed with the newest and latest diving apparatus, men periodically attempt to salvage the bullion of some famous wreck, but, more often than not, they return ,broken in heart and pocket.

Once in a while, perhaps, one succeeds in wresting a treasure from the caverns of the deep, and, inspired by the news, others come forward to fill the gaps in the treasure seekers ranks left by those who have fought and failed.

A Forlorn Hope

In 1911, a British salvage company attempted the salving of the Lutine treasure, held since 1799 in the grip of the treacherous Vlieland shoals.

For nine months they labored, and in that time sucked millions of tons of sand from the wreck, and built it into a barrier to divert the sea currents; finally, they uncovered the wreck.

A mass of cannon ball, rusted together, then barred their way. They smashed through this, and found one ball that had been in actual contact with the gold. Then a storm drove them off—and buried, irretrievably, the wreck. The gold off the canon ball weighed six grains.

Not always is it the storm, however, that sets at naught the salvor's efforts. The bullion lying in the Lusitania is a case in point. This great liner lies at a depth of forty fathoms, off the Old Head of Kinsalo.

Eleven years of tide rip and corrosion, to say nothing of the tremendous pressure of the water at that depth, will have reducer the once fine ship to a mass of tangled girders and grotesqeuly twisted platework.

What staterooms are still whole will be the haunt of gigantic conger eels, and the breeding ground of the loathsome octopus.

But shattered steelwork and danger from deep sea denizens would deter no diver worthy of the name. Dynamite can remove the stoutest ironwork, and there are means for the discouragement of the stoutest hearted of finney foes.

The trouble is that men dare not go down because of the pressure. At half the depth at which the Lusitania lies, a man in ordinary diving dress would be called upon to bear the tremendous pressure of about 172,000 lbs. Under such stress no man could go down and live, let alone work.

All-Steel Diving Suits

To cope with the pressure, special all-steel suits were constructed, and in these, because of the tremendous weight, divers were lowered over the side of the salvage ship by means of a crane, a special non-twisting cable being attached to the helmet.

But the sea had still a trump card to play. At forty fathoms the darkness was so intense that the most powerful of artificial lights failed entirely to penetrate the gloom. And without light it would be madness to attempt the exploration of a mass of shattered plates, many of them rusted to such an extent that their edges were razor-like in sharpness.

But, despite the terrible risk and losses involved, the lure of the world's strong box still continues to draw men away from their comfortable and secure businesses on land.

A Georgraphical Inexactitude

London Free Press Cons.): (The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix received a letter from the assistant editor of the National Geographic Magazine, Washington, D.C., in which reference was made throughout to "Saskatoon, British Columbia.") If all the other information published in National Geographic is equally as accurate as the above, it is no cause for wonder that the Americans picture Canada only as a land of igloos and England and a country of beer mugs and plus-fours.

For sunburn, apply Minard's Liniment

The Prosperous Indian

Victoria Times (Lib.): Our Indian population is fairly stable at about 100,000. Among the less civilized tribes, according to the Department of Indian Affairs, the high birth rate balances the high death rate, but in the civilized tribes who have met and withstood the first shock of contact with civilization there is an appreciable gain, not only in numbers, but in physical standards. These latter people have long ago proved their worth and only need to develop and mature under protection until they reach their destined goal—full British citizenship.

It is recalled that Mr. Bernard Shaw was once in the Salvation Army. No doubt that is where he learned to beat the big drum.—London Star.

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