The Affair at Flower Acres

by CAROLYN WELLS

BEGIN HERE TODAY

Douglas Raynor is found shot through the heart in the early evening on the floor of the sun room of Flower Acres, his Long Island home. 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 light switch. Then Nancy; her brother, Orville Kent; Edra Goddard, friend of Finley; Miss Mattie, Raynor's sister and others, enter the room. Lionel Raynor, son of Douglas Raynor by first marriage, comes to claim his father's estate. Nurse Turner finally confesses to attempting to poison Raynor out of revenge. Pennington Wise, a celebrated detective, with his girl assistant, Zizi, are called to take the case out o the hands of Detective Dobbins. Miss Mattie testifies to seeing the print of overshoes on the floor of the sun room after the murder.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

"Oh, yes, they are nowadays. I can see it"—she closed her eyes—"I can see how it curves around—yes, the right foot—the right side of the foot."

"And the footprint was pointed toward or away from Mr. Raynor?"

"Toward him."

"Miss Raynor, your testimony is valuable, indeed. You have unusual powers of observation and of description. The footprint has been washed away?"

"No," Miss Mattie shook her head. "It has not, but so many people have looked at it, and measured it, and fussed over it, that it is partly obliterated."

"Does that mean somebody came in—in from outside—and—and shot my husband?" Nan asked.

"Not necessarily, Mrs. Raynor," Wise said. "It may be it was a footprint made in the afternoon—had it been raining?"

"No," Miss Raynor said—"but the gardens are often damp, and a footprint would be possible."

"Was the footprint mud?" asked Zizi sharply.

"I'm not sure," Miss Mattie said, thoughtfully. "It may have been merely the impress of the rubber sole on the stone floor of the room. It was dust rather than mud, anyway."

"Probably the footprint of a servant," Wise said, as he rose from his chair and strolled about. "You see, if there had been an intruder from outside, he would have left more than one footprint."

"No," Orville Kent remarked, "there was no floor space just there except between the rugs. Other footprints would have been on the rugs and so unobservable."

"You incline to the outsider theory, Mr. Kent?" the detective inquired.

"Yes," Orry said. "I realize now that such a man might easily have escaped my observation."

Orry was nervous as usual, twisting up a bit of paper he was holding.

"I think," he went on, throwing the paper aside, and picking up a burnt match, which he proceeded to worry—"if you will turn your attention to some one outside this household, Mr. Wise, ou will get on the right track sooner."

"Perhaps so," and Wise nodded acquiescently. "Tell me what you saw when you arrived, Mr. Kent. The room was lighted then?"

"Oh, yes. They all stood in the doors—as you've already heard described. My sister—"

"Did you notice her first?"

"Yes—I think I did. I saw her white scared face, and I sprang toward her, fearing she was going to faint. Then I saw the body of my brother-in-law on the floor—"

"Why do you say the body—did you then know Mr. Raynor was dead?"

Kent stared.

"Of course not. I only saw that he lay on the floor. But, in view of all we have learned since, it seems natural that I should refer to that stricken form as the body. No, at the noment, I had a confused notion that he had had a stroke—or something like that."

Orry's voice as even, but his fingers were nervously working. The family were used to these nervous manifestations, but the detective looked at him curiosuly.

"You are agitated, Mr. Kent."

"Nothing—nothing—" said Orry. "A nervous affection habitual to me. I can't help it—I've always been so—and a trifle of shell shock in the war helped it along."

He jumped up and began pacing the terrace.

CHAPTER XV.

GRIM GANNON.

"Well, Zizi," Pennington Wise said to his funny little assistant, "we've a case on our hands."

"Me have, for fair," the girl replied.

The two were strolling through the great gardens of Flower Acres.

"Want me to delay the case, that you may see more of the gardens!"

"Delay the case! You'll be lucky if you ever get this case finished. Why, I never saw one with such a lot of side issues and contradictory clews!"

"Let's straighten it out then. What's our problem?"

"Who killed Mr. Raynor, and why?"

"His wife."

"Oh, Penny, no!"

"Don't let your sympathy run away with you. Just because Mrs. Raynor is beautiful, soft-eyed, pathetic—"

"Oh, Penny, you don't read her right at all!"

"At least you'll agree that she is in love with Mr. Finley."

"Of course—who wouldn't be?"

"And the pair are glad to be relieved of the presence of Mr. Raynor?"

"Y—yes—I suppose they are."

"Well, then, in the absence of any other suspect, why balk at one or both of those two?"

"Let's try for another suspect."

"Just to leave those turtle doves in peace?"

"No, Penny"—the big black eyes were very earnest now—"but because, if they should be innocent—how dreadful to suspect them."

"Go ahead, then—who's your suspect?"

"Let's check 'em off. Miss Mattie is out of it."

"Of course. She adored her brother—but now she seems to cotton to his widow. Were they always friendly?"

"Pretty much so. I've sounded the servants, and I find that Miss Mattie and Mrs. Raynor managed to hit it oc fairly well. But the old maid is variable, blows hot and blows cold—and so Mrs. Raynor was now in favor and now out. However, there's no question of Miss Mattie. What about the son?"

"He's a rotter, but he never killed his father. He's frank and outspoken—I don't think he's honest, though. But, you're hunting suspects for the crime now—arent's you?"

"Yes; leave the Lionel thing till later. Now, who are left?"

"Mrs. Raynor and her—er—admirer—her brother, and the nurse."

"The brother is out of it—a poor nervous wreck—shell shock—though the servants say he always was a delicate chap. The nurse, I should say, is out of it, for she had admitted the poisoning—and I don't believe she shot him too."

"Then we have left the two I suggested at the start, Mrs. Raynor and Mr. Finley. I don't suppose you suspect Ezra Goddard?"

"I don't—no. But I'd think of him before I would of those two darling people!"

"Ziz, you're hopeless. Those lovers have turned your sentimental head—and I foresee you'll be no good on this case at all—you may as well go home."

"Oh, you think so—do you? Well, suppose you turn your attention in a direction that evidently hasn't as yet occurred to your blind old eyes."

"An intruder? An outsider? It well may be, Zizi." And Wise looked thoughtful.

"It may be, yes—but I don't mean that. I mean—Grimshawe Gannon."

"As the murderer?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"He had a hold over Mr. Raynor—or Mr. Raynor had a hold over him—"

"Which?"

"I can't make out yet—but I think it was a sort of mutual thing. I got around a parlor maid—who is of the curious, prying type, and though she hasn't much interest in it, she did say that Mr. Raynor and old Gannon had interviews sometimes late at night—secretly—"

"She imagined the secrecy. Why should they be secret about it. Gannon lives on the place—he is a sort of pensioner on Raynor's bounty—"

"Of course he is—but why?"

"I gathered that they were old friends or acqaintances—that Gannon was less fortunate than Raynor—that he cared only for his Natural History studies, and that Raynor gave him a home and a place to carry on his butterfly hunting—or whatever he does."

"You gathered most of the crop of Gannon information—but not all. That old codger has a—had a hold on the great man—on Douglas Raynor, that made Raynor afraid of him. On the other hand, he was in some way afraid of Raynor. So—I got all this from the maid—they used to argue over something and they spoke in low voices and behind closed doors. She listened. But all she could get was the sound of quarreling voices and after each interview a sort of patching up of the matter until it broke out the next time."

(To be continued.)

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ISSUE No. 39—'29

9-Foot Devilfish Washed Ashore, Feeds Bahamans

Sea Monster Believed to Have Been Wounced by Rifle Shots of a Hunter

Yields 3 Kinds of Meat

Natives Declare it is Steak, Fish and Pork, all in One

Nassau, Bahamas.—A monster devilfish, eight feet in width, which has terrorized the fishermen along the western shore for several weeks, has been washed ashore between Long Bay Cay and Little Cay. Struck by bullets from the rifle of Kingsbury Moore a few days ago, while he was hunting for the devilfish, the monster evidently succumbed to his wounds.

Linus Munroe, a carpenter, discovered it on the beach. The fish still showed signs of life, so Munroe and two companions managed to chop its head off.

The fish was nine feet long, eight feet wide and three feet thick. Its outer skin was a thin film, almost as thin as paper. Under the outer skin was the main skin, a quarter of an inch thick, very black, which looked like patent leather. Its head was blunt like a shark's, but its mouth was small compared to that of a shark.

A great crowd soon gathered, and it was not long before a feast was held. A few timid natives placed salt on their portion before eating it. In a few hours every pound of the sea visitor had been consumed. One man chopped up the backbone and carried it home to make a "stewing."

River Nile Higher Than For 50 Years

Alexandria.—The Nile is higher than for many years and is still rising, causing apprehensions of disastrous floods.

Ibrahim Fuhmy Bey, Minister of Publi Works, assisted by officials of the Ministry of the Interior, is working unceasingly to prevent breakages in the river banks. Despite his efforts, the Nile has overflower the broken banks in several places, flooding large areas of growing cotton and maize, ruining the crops.

The cellars of houses in Gezireh, the British and American residential quarter of Cairo, near the river, are flooded. The Sudan reports the river already out of bounds, in many places transforming the low-lying land into large lakes.

London.—Incessant rains on the Abyssinian plateau are the cause of the Nile flood, which is reported 58 inches above the normal crest this year. The flood started three weeks earlier than usual, and the volume of water passing down is estimated at 25 per ent. greater than at any similar period in the past 50 years.

Work on new irrigation drainage projects is stopped and gangs of laborers in 30 sections under the direction of engineers are now striving to strengthen banks which have been weakened by insufficient saturation in the past 12 years of low Nile.

British Factories for Canada

Saint John Telegraph-Journal: A number of acute British observers have lately expressed the view that British investors and manufacturers have not realized their opportunities in Canada, not merely in relation to the sale of British goods, but establishing branch factories in the Dominion. Such action would be of immense benefit to Canada, and therefore to the Empire. This country is steadily enlarging its export of manufactured goods. It is no longer concerned merely with the export of natural products. British capital invested in Canadian factories for export trade should find a good field, and by expansion of our foreign trade strengthen the position of the Empire in an economic sense.

Labor and the Empire

Toronto Star (Ind.): The mandate given to the MacDonald Government by the British people has greatly altered the standing of Britain in the eyes of the world. Nations that felt that Britain was not fulfilling her mission as the leader of civilization and the promoter of everything tending to human betterment have had their confidence restored. The cause of peace, which was at a standstill because of the suspicions and ill-will aroused by Chamberlain tactics, is again in a position to make progress. British subjects everywhere can take pleasure in the added prestige of the Empire.

Travellers

The road has been so broadly trodden by the hosts that have travelled along it, that the main rules of the journey are clear enough, and we all know that the secret of breakdown, and wreck is seldom so much an insufficient knowledge of the route as imperfect discipline of the will.—John Morley in "Aphorisms."

Minard's Liniment—Used for 50 years

Some Palestine Live Side Issues

Ibn Saud, King of the Hedjaz—The Dead Sea and Its Potential Wealth—The Canaanites, the Zionists and the Arabs

"On the main question there can be no going back on our word. In the hearing of all the world we promised this home to the Jews. With tact at all times, with economy if possible, with firmness when men are brutalized by passion ,we must labor to deserve the mandate that we claimed."—Mr. H. N. Brailsford, in the News Leader.

'In the text of the British Mandate approved y the League of Nations, the character of the British undertaking is seen to be twofold:—

"'His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object,' and it goes on to qualify this with the proviso:—

"'It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.'

"The obligation to carry out these undertakings is acepted by and imposed upon Great Britain in the Mandate; and it ought to be clearly reaffirmed forthwith that she stands upon the Mandate. . . . She undertakes to safeguard the free exercise of all forms of worship; but equally to 'exercise such supervision over religious bodies . . . as may be required for the maintenance of public order.'"

—Daily Chronicle.

There are naturally many influences at work in Palestine ,and the public is slowly becoming aware of their significance. On the point of the immediate situation, the general view held is that expressed by the Times:

Firmness First

"Apart from considerations of justice and of our responsibilities as a mandatory ,there is a plain reason of the political kind why firmness and decision are in this case indispensable. Everybody who has any acquaintance with the East knows how concessions made apparently to violence affect the Oriental mind.

"They are invariably attributed to weakness or to fear. The Moslems of Palestine are already appealing to the Moslems of India; the Jews of Palestine are appealing to the Jews in the United States. Their friends and co-religionists beyond the oceans are watching narrowly for signs of vacillation on the part of the Mandatory Power.

"If she were to flinch from doing her duty in Palestine, fresh attempts to wrest new concessions from her would quickly follow. And they would not be confined to Palestine. The example Palestine had set with success would be studied and followed in other lands by all the fomenters of disorder. Palestine is a test case; if we were to hesitate or to change our accepted policy there we should soon have greater dangers to confront elsewhere."

"There is a difference between making Palestine the national home of the Jews and establishing a national home for the Jews in Palestine," asserts the Scotsman. "The first interpretation was not accepted in 1922. It was then said that what was meant was not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the further development of the existing Jewish community.

"It is clearly the duty of Britain to show no favors to the Jews or to the Arabs—an admittedly difficult task, which is not made easier by the clamour of the Jews in this country and throughout the world.

"In the interests of British rule in India and other parts of the East, it is important that the Moslems should be treated fairly, and that whatever is done should be done impartially, and should not be thought to be the result of Jewish influence. The contract with Jewry must be fulfilled, but there are also obligations to the Arabs population in Palestine which cannot be ignored."

To Ignore These Signs

"There is great excitement in many parts of the Arab world," points out the Daily News, "expressing itself in vehement demonstrations and calls for 'unity in the Arab countries under the kingship of Ibn Saud.'

"To ignore these signs would be to blind ourselves to the combustible elements of the Arab nature and the possibility of a senseless Holy War emerging from the sudden racial flare-up in Palestine.

"It is of the utmost importance that the British Government should possess itself of vital information upon all Arab movements outside Palestine. It is, above all, important that it should get into friendly touch, if it has not already done so, with Ibn Saud, King of the Hedjaz.

"The attitude of that great Arabian monarch will give the clue to the riddle. It is within his power to keep the peace or to break it. He exercises an immense influence over a wide expanse of Arab territory.

"He is a religious enthusiast, with a magnetic personality; and the few Englishmen who have made his acquaintance have been impressed with his courage, his administrative skill and his honesty.

"To come to a proper understanding with Ibn Saud would be to reduce our task in Palestine and to remove a far-reaching menace."

"While most of us were under the impression that racial and religious differences lay at the root of the present trouble, it is interesting to read of another cause," comments the Sheffield Daily Telegraph. "The President of the National League, the body which claims to voice Arab opinion on Palestine affairs, propounds a new theory.

The Dead Sea Problem

"All the bother, he asserts, centres in the Dead Sea and its illimitable potential wealth. The grievance consists in the fact that the development of this has been entrusted to a Zionist; and the suggestion is made that Britain should keep a firm hand on the control of the future of the Sea, sharing out the proceeds of development equally between Jew and Arab.

"This seems rather a belated stand to take up. The Dead Sea for centuries has been in Arab hands, but it has been permitted to remain just what its name implies. No sooner do outsiders come upon the scene and exploit its wealth than in steps the Arab with his claim to participate in a wealth he ignored in the past and does nothing to develop to-day. We must look further afield for an explanation of the recent disturbances. Not Dead Seas but living hatreds and jealousies are at the bottom of them all."

The Sunday Times calls attention to still another factor in the difficult situation. It says:—

"The religious differences between Jews, Moslems, and Christians in Palestine ,which has always been a storm-centre of controversy through the ages, are not the sole cause of the unrest that the Mandatory Power has seemed to minimize or ignore.

"It should be remembered that the native peasantry—the Canaanites, as they may be called—are a primitive folk, mostly very poor and shiftless, whereas the Zionist immigrants are for the most part educated people from Western Europe and America, who work hard and are building up modern industries.

"Two widely different types of civilization have been suddenly brought into contact in a small country, and the adjustment of the relations between them constitutes a very serious and delicate problem. It may easily be imagined that the cultured Jew looks down with contempt on these ignorant peasants and nomads, and that they in turn regard him with envy and fear.

"When education has spread through the native masses and the full meaning of impartial British justice is realized, the two races will learn to dwell together in harmony and to respect each other. But this will take time, and meanwhile order must be preserved at all costs."

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'Fresh from the gardens'

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