The MURDER at HAZELMOOR

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS.

A party of neighbors, gathered at the home of Mrs. Willett and her daughter Violet turned to table tipping for amusement. Seated around the table were Mrs. and Miss Willett, Mr. Duke, Mr. Rycroft who dabbled in the psychic, Ronald Garfield and Major Burnaby. For two months the Willetts had been occupying the house of Captain Joseph Trevelyan, who had been unable to resist an offer of 12 guineas a month rent and had taken a small house for himself at Exhampton, six miles distant. Major Burnaby, his friend for years, occupied one of the five cottages Trevlyan built on land near his house. All those seated at the table weres tartled when a "spirit" stated that Captain Trevelyan had been murdered. Burnaby, worried, leaves and finds his friend dead. A man named James Pearson of London had registered at an Exhampton hotel the afternoon of the murder, and taken the first train back to London early the following morning.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY.

INSTLLMENT V.

"Why shouldn't I say twenty-five past five that the Captain was murdered?" Major Burnaby demanded truculently, "or twenty-five to six—or twenty past four, for that matter?"

"Quite so, sir," said Inspector Narracott soothingly.

He did not wish to antagonize the major just at this moment. He promised himself that he would get to the bottom of the matter before the day was out.

"There's one thing that strikes me as curious, sir," he went on.

"Yes?"

"This business of the letting of Sittaford House. I don't know what you think about it, but it seems to me a curious thing to have happened."

"If you ask me," said Burnaby, "it's odd, very odd."

"That's your opinion?"

"It's everyone's opinion."

'In Sittaford?"

"In Sittaford and Exhampton, too. The woman must be mad."

"Well, I suppose there's no accounting for tastes," said the Inspector.

"Very odd taste for a woman of that kind."

"You know the lady?"

"I know her? Why I was at her house when——"

"When what?" asked Narracott as the major came to an abrupt halt.

"Nothing," said Burnaby.

Inspector Narracott looked at him keenly. There was something here he would have liked to get at. The major's obvious confusion and embarrassment did not escape him. He had been on the point of saying—what?

"All in good time," said Narracott to himself. "Now isn't the moment to rub him up the wrong way."

Aloud he said innocently. "You were at Sittaford House, you say sir. The lady has been there now—about how long?"

"A couple of months."

The major was eager to escape the result of his imprudent words. It made him more loquacious than usual.

"A widow lady with her daughter?'

'That's it."

"Does she give any reason for her choice of resident?"

"Well—"the major rubbed his nose dubiously, "she talks a lot, she's that kind of woman—beauties of nature—out of the world—that sort of thing. But—"

He paused rather helplessly. Inspector Narracott came to his rescue.

"It didn't strike you as natural on her part."

"Well, it's like this. She's a fashionable sort of woman. Dressed up to the nines—daughter's a smart, pretty girl. atural thing would be for them to be staying at the Ritz or Claridges, or some other big hotel somewhere. You know the sort."

Narracott nodded.

"They don't keep themselves to themselves, do they?" he asked. "You don't think they are—well—hiding?"

Major Burnaby shook his head positively.

"Oh! no, nothing of that kind. They're very sociable—a bit too sociable. I mean, in a little place like Sittaford, you can't have previous engagements, and when invitations are showered on you it's a bit awkward. They're exceedingly kind, hospitable people, but a bit too hospitable for English ideas."

"The colonial touch," said the Inspector.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"You've no reason to think they were previously acquainted with Captain Trevelyan?"

"Sure they weren't."

"You seem very positive?"

"Joe would have told me."

"And you don't think their motive could have been—well—to scrape acquaintance with the captain?"

This was clearly a new idea to the major. He pondered over it for some minutes.

"Well, I never thought of that. They were very gushing to him, certainly. Not that they got any change out of Joe. But no, I think it was just their usual manner. Over friendly, you know, like colonials are."

"I see. Now, as to the house itself. Captain Trevelyan built that, I understand?"

"Yes."

"And nobody else has ever lived in it? I mean, it's not been let before?"

"Never."

"Then it doesn't seem as though it could be anything in the house itself that was the attraction. It's a puzzle. Ten to one, it's got nothing to do with the case, but it just struck me as an odd coincidence. This house that Captain Trevelyan took, Hazelmoor, whose property was that?"

"Miss Larpent's. Middle-aged woman, she's gone to a boarding house at Cheltonham for the winter. Does every year. Usually shuts the house up, but lets it if she can, which isn't often."

There seemed nothing promising there. The inspector shook his head.

"Williamsons were the agents, I understand?" he said.

"Yes."

"Their office is in Exhampton?"

"Next door to Walters & Kirkwood."

"Ah! then, perhaps, if you don't mind, major, we might just drop in on our way."

The Major, who hah finished his breakfast some time ago, nodded assent and rose.

An alert looking young man rose to receive them in the office of Messrs. Williamson.

"This is Inspector Narracott," the major said.

"I want some information that I think you can give me," said the inspector. "I understand you put through this let of Sittaford House."

"To Mrs. Willett? Yes, we did."

"Can you give me full details, please, of how that came about. Did the lady apply personally, or by letter?"

"By letter. She wrote, let me see——" He opened a drawer and turn-up a file. "Yes, from the Carlton Hotel, London."

"Did she mention Sittaford House by name?"

"No, she merely said she wanted to rent a house for the winter, it must be right on Dartmoor, and have at least eight bedrooms. Being near a railway station or a town was of no consequence."

"Was Sittafford House on your books?"

"No, it was not. But as a matter of fact it was the only house in the neighborhood that at all fulfilled the requirements. The lady mentioned in her letter that she would be willing to go to twelve guineas, and in these circumstances I thought it worth while writing to Captain Trevelyan and asking whether he would consider letting. He replied in the affirmative, and we fixed the thing up."

Without Mrs. Willett seeing the house?"

"She agreed to take it without seeing it, and signed the agreement. Then she came down her for one day, drove up to Sittaford, saw Captain Trevelyan, arranged with him about plate and linen, etc., and saw over the house."

"She was quite satisfied?"

'She came in and said she was delighted with it."

"And what did you think?" asked Inspector Narracott, eyeing him keenly.

The young man shrugged his shoulders.

"You learn never to be surprised at anything in the house business," he said, as they left.

On reaching the offices of Messrs. Walters & Kirkwood, they were told that Mr. Kirkwood had just arrived and they were shown into his room.

Mr. Kirkwood was an elderly man with a benign expression. He was a native of Exhampton and has succeeded his father and grandfather in the firm.

He rose, put on his mourning face, and shook hands with the major.

"Good morning, Major Burnaby," he said. "This in a very shocking affair. Very shocking indeed. Poor Trevelyan."

He looked inquiringly at Narracott and Major Burnaby explained his presence in a few succinct words.

"You are in charge of the case, Inspector Narracott?"

"Yes, Mr. Kirkwood. In pursuance of my investigations, I have come to ask you for certain information."

"I shall be happy to give you any information if it is proper for me to do so," said the lawyer.

"It concerns the late Captain Trevelyan's will," said Narracott. "I understand the will is here in your office."

"That is so."

"It was made some time ago?"

"Five or six years ago, I cannot be sure of the exact date at the moment."

"I am anxious, Mr. Kirkwood, to know the contents of that will as soon as possible. It may have an important bearing on the case."

"Indeed?" said the lawyer. "Indeed! I should not have thought that, but naturally you know your own business best, Inspector. Well——" he glanced across at the other man. "Major Burnaby and myself are joint executors of the will. If he has no objection——"

"None."

"Then I see no reason why I should not accede to your request, Inspector."

Taking up a speaking tube, he spoke a few words down it. In two or three minutes a clerk entered the room and laid a sealed envelope in front of the lawyer. Mr. Kirkwood drew out a large and important looking document, cleared his throat and began to read——

"I Joseph Arthur Trevelyan, of Sittaford House, Sittaford, in the County of Devon, declare this to be my last will and testament which I make this thirteenth day of August nineteen hundred and twenty-six.

"(1) I appoint John Edward Burnaby of 1 The Cottages, Sittaford, and Frederick Kirkwood of Exhampton, to be the executors and trustees of this my will.

"(2) I give to Robert Henry Evans, who has served me long and faithfully, the sum of £100 (one hundred pounds) free of legacy duty for his own benefit absolutely, provided that he is in my service at the time of my death and not under notice to leave whether given or received.

"(3) I give the said John Edward Burnaby, as a token of our friendship and of my affection and regard for him, all my trophies of sport, including my collection of heads and pelts of big game, as well as any challenge cups and prizes awarded to me in any department of sport and any spoils of the chase in my possession.

(To Be Continued.)

A Lesson in War

Parisians are now instructed in the use of gas mask at the Invalides. Young and old are shown how to combat poison fumes.

"Put Africa to Work," French Colonial Slogan

Paris.—"Put Africa to work." This is the slogan of French colonial policy as the economic crisis becomes more severe.

The trade deficit of France proper recently reached 1,000,000,000 francs a month. Officials now look to the colonial empire—the world's second largest—for increased business to wipe out the deficit.

Trade with the colonies has slumped less than has trade with foreign countries. Thirty per cent. of all French exports were bought by the empire in 1932, while the mother country made 19 per cent. of all her purchases in possessions.

These percentages have mounted since the depression set in. In 1929 France sold her colonies only 19 per cent. of her exports, instead of 30 per cent., and she bought from them only 11 per cent. of her purchases instead of 19 per cent.

Three tariffs systems prevail between France and her vast empire which extends to all continents and includes 61,615,000 persons. One group is consolidated in the French tariff scheme, another is on preferential basis and a third has tariff autonomy.

Japan's "Suicide" Crater Explored

Lowered 1,250 feet into Miharayama "suicide" volcano, Tokuzo Iwata, Japanese scientist, found the bones of a suicide—one of 270 since January. Iwata's descent is the most sensational of its kind.

Pithy Anecdotes Of the Famous

George Bernard Shaw Incidents—An Ex-Archduke—Etc.

One of the best stories about George Bernard Shaw—because it shows, as Miss Ishbel MacDonald put it, that "you mustn't take him too seriously"—has to do with a lecture he once gave in London on "Socialism After the War." At its conclusion, G.B.S. invited questions from the audience. A man arose and said:

"Mr. Shaw, what is your thought about these huge incomes that are being accumulated by individuals all over the world. Don't you agree that no man should be allowed to retain more than one thousand pounds (then $5,000) for himself?"

"Certainly not," promptly responded Shaw. "Besides, my income is more than a thousand pounds."

I'll say it is.

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When G.B.S. was a little shaver—and going to school, his father remarked to him one day, more in sorrow than in anger:

"Your teacher says that you are the laziest boy in the school. Is that so"?

"No, father," replied Georgie. "The teacher is the laziest. Whenever we have to work and write, he sits in his chair, doing nothing."

* * *

On another occasion young G.B.S. said to his father:

"Dad, you always tell people I am lazy. But you should have heard how teacher praised me this morning."

"Ah! that's right, my boy," beamed father. "What did he say?"

"He said there might be boys still lazier than I," replied the young hopeful, triumphantly.

Shavian, even then, you see. So you mustn't take him too seriously.

* * *

Speaking of the budding geniuses recalls a story about Anatole France, the French writer, who when seven years of age, was listening to some of his school mates telling about their birthdays. Joining the con ersation he said:

"I know when I was born."

"When?" piped several voices.

"At 8.35 in the morning," proudly asserted little Francois Thibault — which was Anatole France's real name.

"That isn't true," retorted one of them.

* * *

Since the end of the World War, many are the ex-royal personages, especially when hailing from Central Europe and Russia, who, in the effort to earn an honest penny, have had to turn their hands to all kinds of menial jobs. The recent marriage of Leopold Walfing, ex-archduke of Tuscany and former cousin of the old Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, recalls the fact that in his reminiscences, "My Life Story: From Archduke to Grocer," he says, not without pride, "so far as I know, no other reduced royal big-wig except myself has ever been a grocer.

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"My little shop was in Vienna," he adds, "and my customers were mostly working class folk who knew me for the archduke I once was. This fact that an archduke had turned grocer seemed to amuse them, and they always addressed me by my title, each in his own special style. Their orders given to me over the counter still ring in my ears:

"'Imperial Highness, give me two pints of milk,' or 'Archduke, be sure to keep me some fresh butter,' or 'Your Serene Highness, can you introduce me to a good sausage?'"

* * *

But, sighs the former archduke, to be a successful grocer one must have brains and "brains are a commodity which few royal personages possess."

"I, myself, don't possess them," he frankly confesses, "and I was never more conscious of my lack than recently when, after I had slaved away as a small grocer in Vienna for nearly a year, my creditors swooped down on me and I had to shut up the shop."

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From "Histories Marseillaises," by Edouard Ramond:

Over a game of cards in a cafe, Banaste had a furious quarrel with his opponent. In his rage he threw off his coat and rolled up his shirt sleeves while the other man did likewise.

"Hold me back," roared Banaste to the onlookers, "or I shall do something terrible to him."

Nobody moved to interfere. Nonplussed, Banaste glared indignantly at the crowd. "What," he said, "you don't hold people back in this cafe, then?"

* * *

George Horton, for over thirty years in the American Consular service, tells some amusing stories about his experiences abroad in his book, "Recollections Grave and Gay." Mr. Horton's first post was Athens, where in 1893, he got to know King George of Greece—a rather decent sort of chap, one gathers.

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The great social event at Athens in those days was the King's Ball. A Greek lady, wife of a prosperous merchant, made up her mind to get into society. She gave her money and support to the Greek industry. In due course an invitation to the royal ball was the reward. There, King George commended her silk efforts.

"Your Majesty," she said, "the society ladies of Athens should set the fashion of wearing local silk. Every stitch I have on is Greek silk."

She patted her skirt and murmured "Greek silk!"

She lifted it, disclosing petticoat, "Greek silk!"

She lifted that, and revealed another, "Greek silk!"

How far the demonstration would have gone (speculates Mr. Horton), I do not know, for the King, evidently convinced, fled.

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"I was once at an international dinner at a legation," reminisces Mr. Horton, "at which the guest of honor was an American Congressman, a famous raconteur. He told, with much detail, a story of a farmer who had two sons, one good and prudent, the other a spendthrift. On his death he left the farm to the good young man, and the other brought legal action to break the will. The suit lasted for years, the lawyers' fees eating up the property, until the fences, house and barns became dilapidated.

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"One evening, the owner of the farm, sitting on his porch and looking out over his mortgaged fields, murmured:

"'When I think of it all, I'm sometimes sorry that Pa died.'

"The titter that broke out among the few Americans present was quickly suppressed by the look of horror on the faces of others, and the remark of a serious-minded Frenchman:

"'"I have always understood,' he said, 'that respect for parents was not so thoroughly inculcated in the minds of children in America, as in other countries.'"

* * *

Ernest Rhys recalls in his reminiscences how when Oscar Wilde once met Oliver Schreiner—author of "The Story of An African Farm" — who was living in the Whitechapel district of London, he asked her why in the world she went to live in the East End.

"I live in the East End," she said, "because the people don't wear masks.'

"And I," rejoined Oscar, "live in the West End because they do."

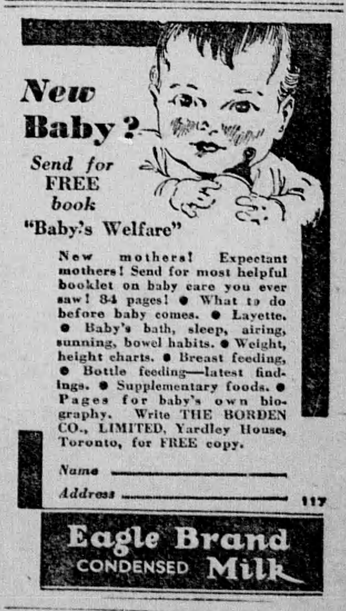
Leprosy Germ Isolated; Cure Now a Step Nearer

Washington.—Another step toward the conquest of leprosy has been announced by the Leonard Wood Memorial for Eradication of Leprosy. It is the isolation and cultivation of the germ outside the body.

Dr. Earle B. McKinley, dean of George Washington University Medical School, and Dr. Malcolm H. Soule, of the University of Michigan, are the scientists who have succeeded in isolating what they believe gives every evidence of being the true leprosy organism.

Dr. McKinley and Dr. Elizabeth Verder, an associate, in experiments still in progress at George Washington also have developed a method by which fresh strains of the organism can be started at any time from leprosy tissue.

Not since the discovery of the Chaulmoogra oil treatment, ten years ago, has a development in the field of leprosy been regarded by physicians as of such importance as the isolation of the germ after sixty years of effort. In 1872 a Norwegian bacteriologist discovered the germ believed to be responsible for leprosy, closely resembling that of tuberculosis. But the mere establishment of the fact that leprosy was a germ disease was of little value in its conquest until the germ could be taken into the laboratory and studied.

TRUTH.

In proportion as we love truth more and victory less, we shall become anxious to know what it is which leads our opponents to think as they do. We shall begin to suspect that the pertinacity of belief exhibited by them must result from a perception of something we have not perceived. And we shall aim to supplement the portion of truth we have found with the portion found by them.