



CHAPTER XVII—MURDER

The untrimmed laurels had spread their branches up to the top of the first-storey windows and beneath them it was almost dark. Christine picked her way close under the wall. There had been a path there once, but now the gravel was completely hidden by a carpet of leaf mould. She came to the back of the house and found a square space brick paved, with a row of dilapidated outbuildings at the back.

There was more light than in front for there were two uncurtained windows on the ground floor. Christine crept up to the nearest and looked through into a small, square kitchen lit by a paraffin lamp hanging from the ceiling. On the left fire glowed in a rusty range. In the centre of the room was a table covered with dirty dishes. There was a sink under the window and a pump. The whole place was so filthy it sent a shiver of repulsion through Christine.

Worse than the room itself was its presiding genius, a squat man who seemed to Christine almost as broad as he was long. He lay back in a dingy, old horsehair-covered armchair; his mouth was half open, showing yellow, jagged teeth, but his eyes were closed, and even here on the other side of the closed window, Christine could hear his snores. The evidence of the empty beer bottles on the table at his elbow was not necessary to show that he was deep in drunken sleep.

Peter's guardian! Christine shivered again, but the sight, instead of frightening her, only increased her determination to rescue Peter as soon as possible.

The back door, she saw, opened directly into the kitchen. She went forward and tried the handle. It was not locked. Christine paused and drew a quick breath. The idea of passing that drunken horror made her almost sick, yet it had to be done. The handle turned easily enough, but the hinges creaked as the door opened and Christine's heart was in her mouth as the sleeping man stirred. But it was evident that it would take much more than a creaking hinge to rouse him, and Christine passed him swiftly and gained the far door.

Here she found herself in a passage which led straight through to the front, but it was blocked half way by a swing door covered with tattered, green baize. There was no light here except what came through from the kitchen, and once the door was closed Christine was left in complete darkness. It made her shiver to think what would happen if anyone came through that swing door from the front. But it was equally scaring to leave the kitchen door open, with the sight of that dreadful drunken figure snoring just behind her. Then she noticed a door to the left in the passage wall. She tried this and found it gave into a pantry into which the last remains of daylight leaked through an incredibly grimy window.

Here at any rate was a refuge of a sort, so Christine softly closed the kitchen door and, leaving the pantry door ajar, tiptoed to the baize door. Pushing this a crack open, she could see

light which came from a lamp on the table close by the front door. To her left was the door of the lighted room which she had seen from the front, to her immediate right was a flight of steep stairs with a landing half-way up. Farther on was the door of another room, in point of fact the dining-room in which Peter had been hounded with drugged whisky. Christine gave barely a glance to these details for what at once seized her attention was a sound of voices in the lighted room to her left.

One of the speakers no doubt was the man she had been trailing all day over half England; but who was the other? Was it Peter himself? It did not seem likely that this was the case for surely his gaoler would hardly trust Peter on the ground floor—unless indeed he was very firmly tied up. Yet if it were not Peter it must be some accomplice of Peter's double, and Christine's brave heart nearly failed her at the prospect of having two of the gang against her. For a moment she had an intense desire to turn tail, slip out the way she had come, hurry back to the car, make for the nearest telephone and call up Bill. She would have given all she possessed to have beside her the big silent man on whom she had come to rely so greatly during the past few days.

It was at this moment that the low mutter of talk within the lighted room suddenly to a pitch so loud and angry that spoken words reached Christine's ears.

"Damn it, Lanyon, you don't want to murder the man?"

All her fears forgotten or—rather—flooded out by sheer horror, Christine hurried forward and stood with her ear against the panel of the door. A second voice spoke—spoke with a cruel, cold deliberation that was a thousand times worse than any passion.

"It is foolish to shout like that, Warden. You might almost be heard on the road. I repeat that this fellow Hastings is a danger to both of us, and that it is impossible to release him."

"And so you're calmly proposing to murder him?" retorted Warden.

"Murder is a nasty word," replied Lanyon, and Christine, though she had never seen his face, could picture the icy smile on it. "Let us say 'remove.' As you very well know, Hastings is the only man who can upset our plans, the one man who knows enough to do so and has the pluck to fight us. Even if we kept him here for a month—for three months—the moment he was free he would be on our tails. We are none of us safe until he is out of the way."

"And do you think we should be any safer if we killed him?" Warden's voice was bitter. "What do you suppose his friend, Norman, would be doing—or the police? Just remember we're not in Malaya."

"I'm under no false impressions about Norman or the police or the fact that this is England," replied Lanyon in the same deliberate tone that he had used before. "And I admit that there are always risks in getting rid of one's enemies. Yet here the risk is reduced to a minimum. No one but you and

myself and Bates knows that Hastings is here, and it's about the last place anyone would look for him. But that isn't our main safeguard. That lies in your likeness to him and the ease with which you have impersonated him. You have told me yourself that the butler at Cranham had no suspicion that you were anyone else but Peter Hastings. Why, even your handwriting is the same.

"In a day or two, when you have cleaned up and cashed those cheques, you will be on your way to the East. Before you leave you send a note to Miss Vidal, saying that you have fallen in love with Miss Christine Grant, and that you feel you must break your engagement. So you are going to the Malay on a big game shooting expedition, and won't be back in England for a year. It's all as natural as can be, and long before any suspicion is aroused—even supposing there ever was any—Peter Hastings' body will have ceased to exist."

"In any case," Lanyon went on, "you're not implicated, Warden. You can leave the whole business to me. I shouldn't even tell you what I mean to do with the body." He gave a low laugh, and for the first time in her life Christine understood what is meant by the phrase "the blood freezing in your veins." All the natural warmth seemed to go out of her body, and she had to use every ounce of her will-power to fight the horrible feeling of weakness that came over her.

"Well," continued Lanyon, "do you agree?" To Christine it seemed that he spoke as coolly as if it had been no more than a chicken whose fate was in the balance, and his tone made her so intensely angry that the blood raced again in her veins. Then Warden spoke, and so plainly that Christine could hear every word almost as well as if she were in the room.

"I may be all kinds of a swine, Lanyon, but I never killed another man and I'm not going to start now. Is that plain enough for you?"

"Too plain, Warden," Lanyon's voice was suddenly harsh. "Too plain for your own good. I have already made up my mind that Hastings is to die, and I am certainly not going to allow you to upset my plans. Stand out of my way." There came a queer gasp from Warden, a sound between extreme surprise and anger.

"What—you'd threaten me! Put that pistol away, you fool."

"You'd better stand out of my way, Warden," Lanyon's tone was deadly. "If you don't—"

By the sound Warden sprang at Lanyon. Christine heard a quick shuffle of feet on the carpet, then immediately came the loud bang of a pistol shot followed by a crash so heavy that the whole floor shook, and Christine felt the vibration in the hall outside. There was a deadly silence which lasted for perhaps ten seconds, then Lanyon's voice.

"The damned fool! He asked for it. Perhaps it's just as well. I could never have trusted him to keep his mouth shut." Again a pause, then: "Now for the other," Lanyon ended with a snarl.

He was going after Peter, he was going to murder him as he had already murdered Warden. Sheer desperation gave Christine fresh strength and wit to deal with the emergency. If she stood where she was in the hall this brute would shoot her down. Of that she was certain. It would make little difference to Lanyon whether he had three bodies to dispose of or only two.

Quick as a flash Christine darted across the hall into the room opposite. She had barely closed the door behind her before she heard the other door open and Lanyon come out. His steps turned down the passage towards the staircase. He did not hurry.

Christine realized two things—first, that Peter was imprisoned somewhere up at the top of the house; secondly, that she, and she alone stood between this murderer and his victim. Warden was dead. Bates was dead drunk, there was no help anywhere within reach. Whatever was to be done to prevent Lanyon shooting down Peter in cold blood had to be done by herself.

On the face of it, the case was hopeless, for what could an unarmed girl do against a ruthless brute carrying a loaded pistol and ready to use it? In the very soul of her, Christine felt it was hopeless, yet this feeling, instead of leaving her paralyzed by terror, actually braced her. She loved Peter. If he had to die, she would die, too—but not before she had made her best effort to save him.

There was no time to look for a weapon, such as a poker. In any case, the room was pitch dark. Christine slipped out into the hall just in time to see Lanyon's tall figure disappearing around the angle of the staircase. He had not taken the small lamp which still burned smokily on the hatstand. Either there was a light upstairs or Lanyon was carrying a torch.

Suddenly Christine saw her weapon. There was a walking stick in the stand on which the lamp stood—a stout ash stick with a crooked handle. Christine picked it out with a perfectly steady hand, then in a flash she slipped off her shoes and soundlessly hurried after Lanyon.

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Facts on Mine Taxes and Mining Payrolls

Total Taxes, Not Including Sales Tax, Duties, etc., Over \$13,000,000 Last Year. Increased Nearly \$5,000,000 in a Year.

Figures supplied by the Ontario Mining Association and unquestioned by the authorities detail rather startling facts in regard to the taxation of the mining industry. The attitude of approach in regard to taxation seems to have been "all the traffic will stand." It is doubtful if this attitude has not over-reached itself and seriously hampered the mining industry.

In considering the facts in regard to mine taxation, probably the outstanding fact is that total taxes, not including duties, sales tax, etc., payable by Northern Ontario mines in 1935 amounted to \$13,101,373. The figure compares with \$8,341,573 in 1934. In a single year the total imposts increased \$4,759,787.

Of these heavy taxes the Dominion secured the lion's share, taking \$10,278,640, while the province had \$2,464,946 and the municipalities \$377,787.

Another tabulation prepared by Mr. Bateman, the secretary of the Association, covers the five-year period 1931 to 1935 and details the tax experience of Ontario gold mines that were subject to the bullion tax. They paid \$8,481,106 in 1935, as against \$1,740,344 in 1931.

Taxes per ton in the period rose from 43½ cents to \$1.71, while taxes per ounce of gold produced vaulted from 88½ cents to \$4.88. This enormous increase in taxation cost per ounce is probably the most significant fact revealed in the study and establishes beyond a question the validity of the protest made by the gold mines over the bullion tax.

When taxation per ton of ore milled reaches \$1.71 it should be clear to the layman that a dangerous point has been reached. Such an impost represents, in many gold mines throughout the world the actual margin of profit.

Another useful tabulation, illustrative of the value of the industry to the country and the province shows the mining payroll for the years 1930 to 1935 inclusive. In that time gross wage

bill rose from \$27,635,000 to \$34,433,000. The gold mines in the group increased payroll in the period from \$12,910,000 to \$21,023,000. From 1930 to 1932 the total for all mines declined sharply but it has more quickly risen to its present level.

The rapid advance in gold mining operations is shown in another table, indicating that without one exception, each year has shown a greater number of mines engaged. In 1930 there were 105 mines which were paying assessments to the Compensation Board and in 1935 there were 301. The fact that these firms were paying assessments indicates that their operations were of considerable magnitude, as small syndicate and prospecting operations do not so contribute.

The following tables constitute a handy record of these well authenticated facts concerning the Ontario mining industry:

Growth of Taxation		
Total taxes, not including duties, sales tax, etc., payable by the principal Northern Ontario mines:	1934	1935
Dominion—	1934	1935
Income and bullion tax*	\$5,104,563	\$9,173,150
Divd. tax (non-residents)	831,578	1,095,490
Province—		
Mines profit tax	1,669,487	1,936,532
Corporation tax	373,358	528,414
Municipal taxes	362,587	377,787
	\$8,341,573	\$13,101,373

Some Comparisons
In 1931 the Ontario gold mines paid to Dominion, province and municipalities a total of \$1,740,346, or at the rate of 43 1-2 cents per ton; in 1931, the total taxes were \$2,657,160, or 59 cents per ton; in 1934, the figure was \$5,320,113, or \$1.07 per ton; while for 1935, the total taxation by Dominion, province and municipalities reached the amount of \$8,481,106, or \$1.71 per ton, or \$4.88 per ounce of gold produced.

*Bullion tax applies only for years 1934 and 1935.

Payroll for Ontario Mining Industry		
Year	All Mines	Gold Mining Operations Only
1930	\$27,635,000	\$12,910,000
1931	21,703,000	12,394,000
1932	20,195,000	14,879,000
1933	21,215,000	14,678,000
1934	31,534,000	18,286,000
1935	34,433,000	21,023,000

Ladies' Auxiliary Holding St. Patrick's Social Tonight

Those who enjoy a happy evening in a good cause should remember the social evening being given this (Monday) evening in the Legion hall under the auspices of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Legion. It is a St. Patrick's Day social, and the programme is to have a very distinct Irish flavour. During the evening a 25-cent collection is to be taken up, the proceeds to be turned over to a very worthy cause in which the ladies have taken interest.

Pay Day Specials

Butter, Sweet	25c	Egg-O Baking Powder, 1 lb. tin	23c
Clover, lb.	79c	Fry's Cocoa ½ lb. each	19c
Golden West	79c	Smith's Tomato Ketchup, 2 bots.	25c
Flour, 24 lb. bag	25c	Glacier Sardines 2 tins for	19c
Aylmer Choice Tomatoes, 3 sqt. tins	25c	Classic Cleanser per tin	5c
Tip-Top Pumpkin 2 tins for	19c	Assorted Biscuits 2 lbs. for	27c
Cooking Onions, 6 lbs. for	19c	Mixed Candies 2 lbs. for	25c
Potatoes, small size, per bag	99c	Kisses 2 lbs. for	25c
Carrots 10 lbs. for	29c	Golden Bar Cheese 2 ½-lb. pkgs.	25c
Turnips 10 lbs. for	19c	Bulk Tea per lb.	45c
Blue Goose Oranges, doz.	27c		
Jelly Powders 6 pkgs. for	25c		

SALT STRIPPED CODFISH, per lb. 17c
SALMON, whole or half, per lb. 14c
HALIBUT, whole or half, per lb. 17c
HAMBURG STEAK, nice lean, 3 lbs. 29c
PORK CHOPS, per lb. 19c
SHOULDER PORK, per lb. 22c
PORK FLANKS, per lb. 19c

WOOD FOR SALE

FRANK FELDMAN

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Visitor a Good Prophet in Foretelling Timmins

It is very interesting to read the following from "Grab Samples" in The Northern Miner last week:—

"In 1911 a visitor to Porcupine camp sent back the following account of what he had witnessed in a traverse of the area. 'Less than two years ago George Bannerman built the first house in the Porcupine district. In the spring of 1910 three townsites had sprung up on Porcupine Lake—Pottsville to the west of Porcupine River and Golden City, east of the river, both at the north end of Porcupine Lake, and South Porcupine at the south end. From the first there has been intense rivalry between these three towns. Porcupine City has the best hotel, the post office, banks and the most important stores. At Golden City was located the Recorder's office and at South Porcupine there were a number of stores and lodging houses. Although a number of additional townsites have recently been surveyed, Golden City and South Porcupine are the chief rivals. The first named has the largest population at the moment. Lake View is another townsite. On the south shore of Pearl Lake a local settlement has sprung up and a number of stores and hotels have been built. It seems probable that a town will be built near Timmins Landing on the Mattagami River, about six miles west of Porcupine Lake. (The town of Timmins vindicated this prophecy). It is generally predicted that a city of ten to 20 thou-

sand will be built somewhere in the district.' (This was hitting the ball.) At Porcupine at this time there were five banks, The Canadian Bank of Commerce, with W. G. Whiteside as manager; Imperial Bank of Canada, with W. Bourke; Bank of Ottawa, with H. St. C. Clayton; Bank of Toronto, H. R. Warren; and Traders Bank of Canada, G. G. Bullard.

New Salvation Army Hall Official Opening, March 22

As noted in The Advance last Thursday, the official opening of the new Salvation Army Citadel in Timmins will be held on Sunday of next week, March 22nd, commencing at 3 p.m. His Worship Mayor Bartleman will preside at the afternoon event. Col. McAmmond, of Toronto, well known in Timmins, and now Field Secretary for the Salvation Army in Canada, will be present for the occasion, as will also Major Usarki, Divisional Commander from North Bay. Prominent citizens of the town and district have also been invited for the event. There will be a musical and literary programme in connection with the opening of the handsome new hall.

JUNIOR HOCKEY CLUB TO HOLD EASTER MONDAY DANCE EVENT

A special event for Easter Monday evening is the dance to be given by the Timmins Junior Hockey Club, funds from the occasion to go for junior hockey purposes in town.

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(To Be Continued)

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