



SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

CHAPTERS I TO III—Jimmy Ashcroft and Tony Baring—who is known as "Tubby"—are travelling by train to North Devon and become interested in a girl who is in the company of a man of the "boulder" type. Tubby learns that her name is Phyllis Laleham, and that of her companion, George Cartwright. At the station, Jimmy and Tubby are met by Marjorie Ogilvie at whose uncle's house at Roma Cleft they are to stay.

CHAPTERS IV TO VI—Jimmy waits by the body whilst Tubby hurries back to Roma Cleft to inform the policeman there. Phyllis asserts that she did not dive, but was struck on the head by someone who must have been hiding on the wreck just as she was about to do so. Jimmy and Tubby accompany her to the Manor House, which they have almost reached when they hear the squeals of a dog and the thud of blows.

CHAPTERS VII TO VIII—Phyllis Laleham's guardian, Terrivale Wake, a solicitor, receives a visit from a mysterious woman, Elise Harrison, who appears to have a hold upon him. She asks for money and he gives her 100 pounds. Whilst he is out of the office she opens a drawer and reads a letter which she finds there. She goes, and Alfred Jennings, Wake's clerk, also reads the letter. In the meantime, Phyllis is finding Cartwright much too attentive to her, although he treats his wife with almost open contempt. He apologizes to Phyllis for his display of temper. After lunch, Detective-Inspector Mearcroft is announced.

CHAPTER IX

By a fortunate chance—usually the reverse is the case, and the man wanted is very far away—Detective Inspector Mearcroft and a police surgeon from the county headquarters at Exeter happened to be at Bideford when Dodson's message came through. Their business there had ended, and they were just leaving for Exeter, when the possibility of a fresh case diverted them to Roma Cleft.

Mearcroft, a spare, thin man of middle height, had a reputation extending far beyond the confines of his own country. It was rumoured, indeed, with some truth, that Scotland Yard would not have disdained his services, but that devotion to a country life, and particularly the wonderful west country in which his activities were centred, kept him where he was, much to the satisfaction of his superiors, who were wont to admit openly that Scotland Yard's loss was Devon's gain. P. C. Dodson's eyes goggled when he saw who stepped from the car at his gate.

His chagrin was great, however, when Mearcroft at once proceeded to fall foul of him.

"You shouldn't have moved the body," he snapped. "It should have stayed where it was until I saw it."

"Well, you see, zur, being as I am alone, and once the news got about, the whole village would 'a' trapped down there, I thought it better to move him here. One thing I've done, zur—I went back with Ted and Tom Lamley an' we roped the place in, and I left them two on guard with orders not to let anyone inside the rope, an' not to go inside themselves. You won't find it trodden about down there, zur."

"Ah," said Mearcroft, mollified, "that is something at any rate, Dodson. Well,

I don't suppose there's much harm done."

With the doctor, he went in to view the body. A glance told him that it was no one with whom he was acquainted, but he stared at the pallid features long and fixedly as if to imprint them on his memory.

"Shot through the heart at close quarters," the doctor said, when the joint examination was finished. "Might have been suicide, of course, if a weapon had been found. There being no weapon, apparently, I should say—murder. Wonder if anyone heard the shot?"

"No one ain't said so," Dodson answered, "but there's one thing been reported as may have something to do with it. Old Joe Belton was along here in a proper tear just now—someone's pinched his boat, he says."

"Yes; that may be important," Mearcroft nodded. "Better phone to the coastguard stations along the coast to detain any man coming ashore."

"I took upon myself to do that, zur, just before you came."

"Good man!" said Mearcroft frankly. His estimation of Dodson was going up. "Well, there's no more to be gathered here," he added, "not a shred of paper to prove his identity. Let's go down to the shore."

He had brought a sergeant and a constable with him from Bideford, and leaving the former at the police station he took the constable and the surgeon, under Dodson's guidance, with him to the scene of the murder—as all of them were convinced it was. There he found the derelict boat roped off with string, rather like a cricket pitch is roped off during the interval at a county cricket ground to prevent the crowd encroaching on it. Already about a dozen loaves had gathered there, being sternly kept at a distance by the two Lamleys who evidently regarded themselves as duly accredited minions of the law.

It was an unpromising locality, as Mearcroft immediately recognized. The pebbles there were thick and large, ruling out at once the existence of possibly revealing footprints. There was absolutely no sign of any struggle, and after half an hour's intensive search, the only evidence of anything untoward having happened was the ominous stain of blood on the woodwork of the upturned boat—and that had been visible at first glance.

Beardsley, the doctor, who was fond of pulling his confrere's leg, glanced at him slyly.

"You'll never make a detective of fiction, Mearcroft. D'you mean to say that after all this time you haven't discovered a button, a piece of cloth or a hank of hair?"

The inspector merely smiled placidly and turned to Dodson.

"Where was this missing boat of Belton's lying?" he asked.

"Close by here, zur. By the edge of the pebbles, not a dozen yards away. Mearcroft regarded the retreating tide.

"At the time of the—shot," he murmured, "the water would have been up to the pebbles—so no footprints in the sand. Could one man have launched that boat?"

"Oh, yes, zur. She were only a little craft, light and flat-bottomed. Anyone could 'a' pushed her off."

Mearcroft fell silent. Then he suddenly turned to the doctor.

"What did you make of the dead man?" he asked.

"Eh, I? Oh, a chap in the prime of life—sound inside as well as out. I should say, judging by externals, would probably have lived for years if he hadn't met that bullet. Make any more of him yourself?"

Mearcroft's smile was provoking.

"Yes—lots."

events—not, however, including the aforesaid fracas which they concluded was not relevant to the matter.

One thing that Jimmy saw no reason to conceal, however, was the attack on Phyllis on the wreck, and to this, Mearcroft listened intently.

"Do you think there's any connection between that and the shooting?" Jimmy asked.

"May or may not be," was the cautious reply. "In any case I think I'd better have a word with Miss Laleham."

"But she can't give you any more information than I have," Jimmy told him. "She's as much in the dark as any of us."

"Sometimes," Mearcroft rejoined, "people give one information without realizing it."

Half an hour later he was at the Manor House, having first obtained some details of that manage from Dodson. He sent in his official card to Cartwright deliberately. None knew better than he the gossipping powers of servants, and more than once amongst the chaff of such gossip he had picked up a valuable grain of truth. The unknown criminal he was after was already most certainly on his guard, so no harm was being done in that way.

When Cartwright entered the room the two men regarded one another with interest. Cartwright's impression was of a slight, dark-haired man in the forties, with regular features, and keen, very keen greyish-blue eyes, a man, he told himself, not easy to hoodwink.

The inspector, on his part, summed up the other in a single glance, taking in the round, fleshy face, the small deep-set eyes, the almost brutal mouth and jaw.

"Bully," he thought involuntarily. "Not quite at ease either although he is trying to appear so. I wonder what exactly's at the back of his mind?"

"Good afternoon, sir," he said quietly. "I'm sorry to trouble you, but you may or may not know that a man's body has been found up the shore."

"I know, inspector; I've just been told. But what's it got to do with me?"

"Well, sir, primarily I've not come to see you," he paused. "He is right in detecting something like relief in Cartwright's tiny eyes?"

"You're a young lady staying here, sir, a Miss Laleham. It's her I've really come to see."

"Miss Laleham! Good heavens!" This time Cartwright's astonishment was genuine enough, the inspector thought.

"What's it got to do with her?"

"Probably nothing," Mearcroft admitted. "Nevertheless, with your permission—"

"I'll fetch her at once," Cartwright said.

"One moment," the inspector interrupted as he moved towards the door. "I'd like you, later on, to take a glance at the body if you will."

Cartwright paused, his distaste at the prospect very obvious. "Can't see what good that'll do," he grunted. "Don't suppose I'll know him from Adam. However, if you wish—"

He went out, and in five minutes' time came back with Phyllis, and this time when the girl entered the room it was Mearcroft's turn to suppress something as near a start as he ever permitted himself. As usual, his first keen glance took in a great deal. Frank, he decided, a little pale—not to be wondered at, considering her experience that morning—but with nothing to conceal. He was also aware of—something else.

Once again Phyllis found herself telling her story, and this time it took some unobtrusive questioning from Mearcroft to bring it out in full, for she was by now heartily tired of the whole affair. When she had finished he turned to Cartwright.

"I'd now like a word or two with Miss Laleham alone," he informed the latter.

Cartwright looked surprised and not very pleased, but he could not well do anything but retire. When he had gone Mearcroft turned again to Phyllis.

"You live in this neighbourhood, Miss Laleham?"

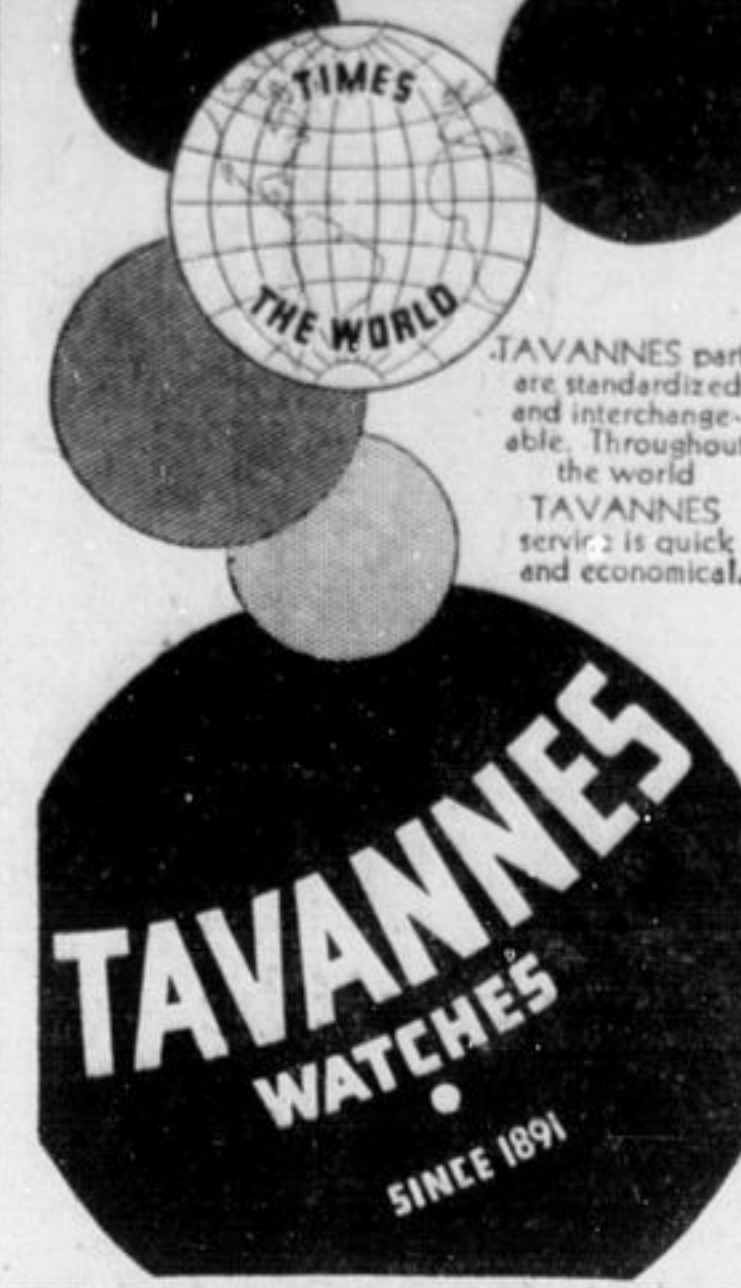
"No," she smiled, "I live in London, or have done up to the present, with my guardian, Mr. Terrivale Wake. You see, my mother died when I was born, and this turned my father, who was devoted to her, against me—he seemed to consider me the cause of her death. Anyway, he went abroad, leaving me in Mr. Wake's care, and we haven't seen him from that day to this. Lately, I considered it was time I earned my own living and Mr. Wake got me this job—companion to Mrs. Cartwright."

Mearcroft stroked his chin.

"I see," he said, and somewhat to the girl's surprise, for she had been wondering why he had asked to see her alone, he made no further comment.

"I'm afraid," he concluded, "there's one disagreeable duty I must ask you to perform. I've requested Mr. Cartwright to view this poor fellow's body in case, by an unlikely chance, he can identify it. Will you do the same? Just a glance at the face will be sufficient—it is not disfigured."

Phyllis shivered slightly. It was not an alluring prospect, but if it could help matters she did not mean to shirk it, and she expressed as much to Mearcroft, who nodded in approval.



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"Thank you," he said, "I thought you would."

It was Cartwright he conducted first to where the dead man lay, his face calm and peaceful as if he slept. Cartwright stared down at him, and then turned away.

"Told you it would be a waste of time," he grumbled. "Never seen him in my life before."

And, watching him, Mearcroft formed the opinion that though he could probably be glibly enough upon occasion, this time he was speaking the truth.

Phyllis too shook her head.

"No," she said, "I do not know him."

"You're sure?" Mearcroft persisted. "Quite," she rejoined, puzzled that he should query her statement.

The inspector made a vague motion with his hand that might have expressed either disappointment or resignation.

"That then is that," was all he said. (TO BE CONTINUED)

Scow for Aeroplane Landing to be Provided by Dominion

In the House of Commons last week one item—Hudson—construction of scow for aeroplane landing, \$710,—was passed in committee.

Suggests Holding Good Men in North for Roads

The North Bay Nugget in an editorial article in regard to the expected visit to the North of Hon. Mr. McQuesten, minister of highway in the Hepburn government, the man who has assumed control over the affairs and activities of the now-defunct Department of Northern Development. At the most, Mr. McQuesten will spend a week in the North, and what portion of the vast area of Northern Ontario is it humanly possible to cover within that short space of time? To thoroughly acquaint oneself with conditions peculiar to even the T. & N. O. region of Northern Ontario would require longer than that, and then there are the vast areas to the west, each district with its own peculiar needs and problems. Beyond a doubt Mr. McQuesten is undertaking his new duties with utmost sincerity, and will give them the best of his knowledge and experience. But Mr. McQuesten is a man used to the ways and problems of Southern Ontario, and these are distinctly different from those of Northern Ontario. Things are bigger up here, distances are greater, weather conditions are more severe, the country is more rugged, and to top it all the spirit and outlook of the North is entirely different from that of the South. There were many capable men in the Department of Northern Development under Hon. Peter Heenan and his predecessors in that office. They were Northerners in spirit, if not in fact, and had an appreciation of the North which aided them immeasurably in their work. It would be an ill thing for the North were Mr. McQuesten to decide to disperse with the services of these men. He needs men who know the North as his advisors, and he has those men right at his fingertips. It has been reliably reported that Mr. McQuesten intends to reduce Northern Development staffs in many places. No doubt it can be done, but if buried too deep in the ranks of public servants the axe of economy kills efficiency. Northern Ontario cannot be without the efficiency and services of the Department of Northern Development, whether it be known by that name or as the Department of Public Highways."

Hints on How to Improve the Grounds Around Home

Practically every household in the country or an urban centre has a desire to have attractive surroundings and nothing will do so much in this way at so small a cost as the planting of trees, shrubs, plants and vines. Within the next few weeks is the best time for planting, but such work should be done on some definite plan in order to get the most pleasing results.

Then there is the question of just what to plant. This and a wide range of other questions is answered in the handbook, "Beautifying the Home Grounds of Canada," issued by the Horticultural Council of Canada, 114 Victoria Street, Ottawa. The opening chapter is on Landscape Architecture—Arranging and Planting the Home Grounds, written so that the most junior tyro in gardening can readily understand. There are plans to illustrate the arrangements of lawns, gardens and plantings for the average small house with pictures of what engaging results can be attained. There is also a special chapter dealing with Planting the Farm Home Ground.

How to Establish and Maintain a Rock Garden is also fully described and plans are given to indicate how to get the most effective layout. Every conceivable detail about arranging lawns, gardens and plantings is given in the book, which concludes with a complete list of trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and annuals that are suitable for planting in each province prepared by Provincial Horticulturists.

Editor and Publisher (New York):—The chief danger to the free press of the English-speaking world lies within, says Sir Willmott Lewis, but it is not imminent so long as editors and publishers discuss issues with such open candor and public spirit as characterized the New York and Washington conventions.

Huntingdon Gleaner:—The claim of Big Prairie, O., having a population between 200 and 300, that it has only one person on relief and he too lazy to work, is met by Kenedy county, Tex., with a better record still. This Texas county, having a population of 701, has never had anyone on relief.



Will Supercharger Change the Trend?

Graham Success with Supercharged Power Makes History in Motor-dom.

For two years now Graham has successfully applied the supercharger to an automobile engine. Previous to this, only special cars, aeroplanes, speedboats and racers used this means of increasing horsepower while at the same time reducing engine weight. That modern cars need great power to give lively acceleration and smoothness at cruising speeds is admitted, but owners want economy too. In the past increased horsepower meant increased operating costs. With supercharger increased power is obtained at a definite reduction in gasoline consumption.

Records kept by owners of supercharged cars show that from 25 to 30 miles to the gallon can be obtained. In view of the fact that the Graham Supercharged Six develops 112 horsepower these records are amazing. Graham says that a six cylinder supercharged engine not only does the work of an eight cylinder car but that it reduces engine weight by three hundred pounds. In view of increasing taxation on gasoline a car like the supercharger offsets these added costs without resorting to extremely light and low-powered cars.

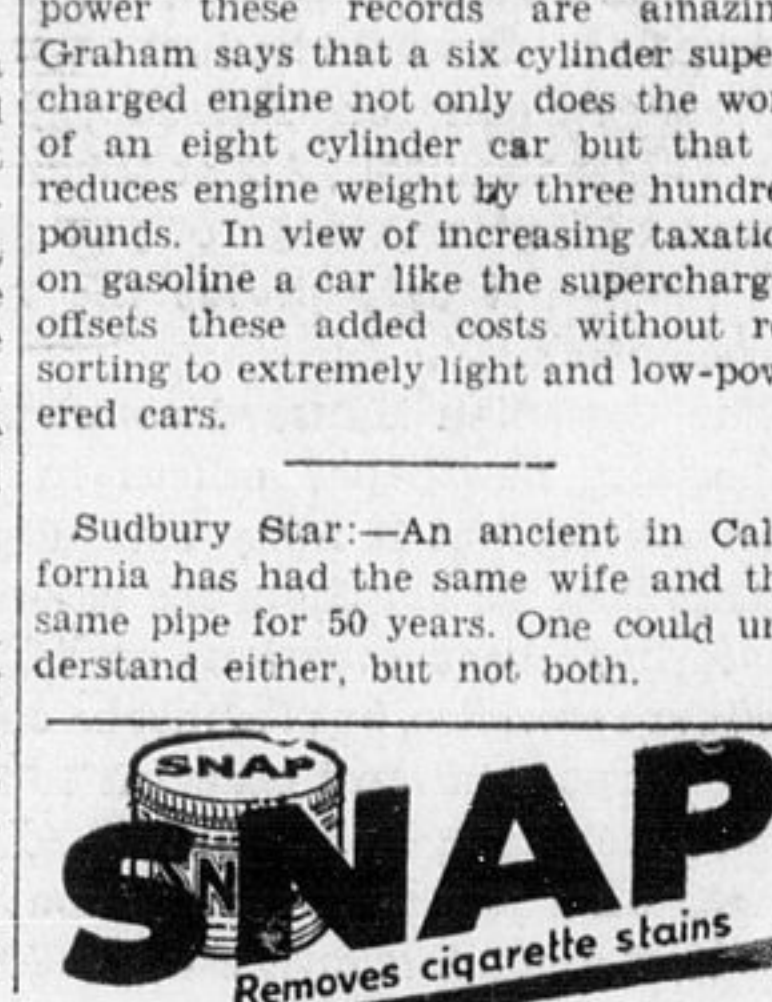
Sudbury Star:—An ancient in California has had the same wife and the same pipe for 50 years. One could understand either, but not both.

Who Wouldn't Welcome a Range Like This?

ONE of the Golden Jubilee models of Westinghouse dual-automatic ranges will make your kitchen a cooler, more pleasant place this summer. But, more than that, it will cut down, to a mere fraction, the length of time you'll have to spend there.

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Patented construction provides greater speed, longer life, freedom from trouble and replacement. Unaffected by spill-overs. Practically indestructible. A high temperature to sear the roast... a lower maintained temperature to complete the cooking... automatically provided by exclusive Dual-automatic control. The only range that provides three methods of automatic cooking... Dual-automatic method, Dutch oven method, maintained heat method.

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