

Death goes by bus

by Leslie Cargill



SYNOPSIS

Travelling from Colborough to Netherpton, a country bus develops engine trouble and back-fires several times. Under cover of one of these explosions a male passenger is shot with a pistol. Those on the bus at the time of the tragedy are:—
CARTER, the driver.
WITHERS, the conductor.
CALEB WAINWRIGHT, the man who was killed.
MORRISON SHARPE, a mildly eccentric little man whose dominating interest in life is solving puzzles—chess problems, crosswords and the like.
JERRY TUCKLEY, a schoolboy.
JOHN SMITH, who, when interrogated, admits to having been in golf. **GREGOR GARDOPOULOS**, a Levantine importer of dried fruits.
HUNTLEY YOUNG, a commercial traveller.
Mr. and Mrs. WYLLIE, a farmer and his wife.
AGATHA HANSON, a dour middle-aged spinster.

From the beginning, Sharpe takes a keen interest in the occurrence, and he has a vague impression that there was another passenger.

Sergeant **MATTHEWS**, patrolling the roads in a police car, comes upon the stationary bus and takes charge of the case. He is a traffic specialist, unfamiliar with serious crime. Impressed by Morrison Sharpe's grasp of the situation, he allows the puzzle solver to sit by him during the road-side interrogation of passengers, and to make suggestions. He permits Sharpe also to search the contents of the dead man's pockets. Among the contents is a fine diamond necklace.

Before the bus leaves the point at which the shooting occurs, Sharpe suggests a search in the coppie running alongside the road. He and Matthews and a police doctor who has arrived, have hardly begun to look for footprints when they come upon the body of a man. There is obvious evidence that he has died from cyanide poisoning. The doctor considers that the man committed suicide while Matthews was interrogating the passengers.

The inquest discloses that the suicide was **JOHN WINSLOW**, a defaulting bank clerk, wanted by the police. He was not connected with the murder. He, the mysterious "missing" passenger happened to be on the bus, and, realizing that he would be interrogated by the police, slipped away and committed suicide in a state of panic.

Inquiries now turn to Gardopoulos. Although discouraged by Superintendent **MATTHEWS**, who is now in charge of the case, Sharpe contrives to attach himself to the Levantine merchant. In the interview, Gardopoulos admits that he knew Wainwright, who was an Australian. His story is that Wainwright wanted to sell him stolen goods, but he would have nothing to do with the proposal. Consequently Wainwright followed him to Colborough and boarded the bus after him; but they did not speak.

The story told by Huntley Young, the commercial traveller, is tested and proves to be false, but the man cannot be found.

Suspicion, however, moves swiftly to Withers, the bus conductor. A revolver is found near the scene of the crime in circumstances suggesting that he is the owner. He admits that he is and that he threw away the weapon from motives of fear.

Withers' story cannot be shaken, and the police do not arrest him. Instead, they turn their attention to the convict who calls himself John Smith.

THE BIG SMITH FAMILY
Mr. Sharpe found out that Smith was staying at the Golden Lion in casual conversation.

Details of that talk recurred to him. "I shall make Colborough my headquarters until this case is settled."

Smith had remarked. "A convenient idea if your business engagements permit."
Smith had grinned. "They do." A little later the man had been talking earnestly with the bus conductor.

The little man tidily put away his papers, and proceeded to the hotel. "Yes," he was informed, "we have a Mr. Smith staying here. In fact, there are three guests of that name."

"Seems to be rather a favourite."
"It is, sir. Lots of quite innocent and well connected gentlemen are regarded with suspicion merely because their right name happens to be J. Smith. We make it a rule to require a deposit from anyone who registers in that name."

"How quaint. I should imagine that the, er, synthetic Smiths would choose some other name, in view of the free use that appears to be made with an honoured family possession."

"That isn't borne out by facts."
"So I have been given to understand, Mr.—"

"Smith," replied his informant smilingly. "Robert Smith, I am thankful to say. As for my namesake, you can take your choice of rooms 17, 24 and 38."

A page escorted him to the first apartment, where they drew blank. At the next door a familiar voice called out. "Who is it?" and the man with the slim fingers came forward to investigate for himself.

"Good evening," he said, recognizing the newcomer, "were you looking for me?"

"Just for a short chat, if you don't mind."

"I'm listening."

Mr. Sharpe looked significantly at the waiting boy, standing inquisitively beside him. "An entirely friendly visit, I may say," he observed.

"So I should hope. You haven't mentioned what it is about yet."

"Rather awkward in public."
"Come inside." He made way for the caller, though with bad grace.

"You seem suspicious," Mr. Sharpe said gently.

"Hm! I can't size you up. What's your game?"

"Game?"

"Racket, if you like. You can't kid me."

"Such is far from my intention."

"Then spill the beans. You're some kind of a copper's mark, aren't you?"

"Good gracious, no! Nothing of the sort, I do assure you."

"Maxley put you up to this!"

"He didn't. So far as I am aware, he has no notion that I am here."

"OK. Now that you are, let's hear your spiel."

Mr. Sharpe smiled. "What a cosmopolitan vocabulary you have. Fortunately I am fairly well acquainted with American slang. Your free use of it prompts me to believe you are familiar with the United States."

"I've lived over there, though it hasn't anything to do with you."

"Caleb Wainwright had also just crossed the Atlantic. He managed to smuggle into this country a valuable stolen necklet."

"You've got nerve! What the hell do you imagine I know about that?"

"The police are getting ideas. They're wondering what brought you into these parts."

"Let 'em! I came on business if you want to know."

"Ha! So I imagined. Some very crackable crabs in this country. Hope you don't mind my dropping into the verminarium?"

"I'd like to drop you into the river."

"That, my dear Mr. Smith, would be a serious offence. Murder is out of your line, unless I am greatly in error."

John Smith was bewildered. "Look here," he exclaimed, "I'm about tired of your suggestions. First you as good as tell me I had something to do with the Wainwright business and then you cut me out as a killer. Get down to

business, please."

That advice wasn't easy to follow, for Mr. Sharpe was groping blindly in the dark, a state of affairs that always annoyed him. When the cards were dealt he could play his hand against anybody, but this time he appeared to be concerned with a pack minus the court symbols. Luck came to his rescue while he was thinking out a suitable line of attack.

Unceremoniously the door was banged open and Jeremy Withers burst into the room. "They know about the gun," he snarled. "Maxley got it out of me this afternoon and— for the first time he noticed the presence of a third party. 'Gawd!' he muttered, 'that has torn it.'"

"Shut up!" snapped Smith.

Mr. Sharpe took up a strategic position with his back to the exit. "Don't be foolish," he advised. "Now the cat is out of the bag, it would be as well to explain how poor pass came to be in it."

"Come off it."

"To put it bluntly, my friends, you're both in queer street unless you can clear up that little matter of the revolver. One of you is putting his head into the noose."

Jeremy Withers cracked first. "I can't stand any more," he said brokenly. "This ain't in my line."

"Keep your mouth shut," menaced Smith.

"No, I won't. You got me into this with your promises of easy money. Before I met you I was straight—never did a wrong thing in my life."

Smith sneered. "Aren't you the white-headed boy?"

"Leave him alone," said Mr. Sharpe determinedly. "Honesty is going to be the best policy in the long run."

"This would never have happened to me if I hadn't met that snake in a pub," went on the youngster. "We had a bit to drink and got friendly. Then he suggested I should help him—"

"Go in for burglary! All right, you needn't bother about that part."

"Well, after a bit I said I would. He'd picked the first place, and I was supposed to keep watch while he did the dirty work. Scoundrel simple, but I must have been mad to have listened. I'd got a gun which I thought would do to frighten anybody if we looked like getting caught. But Mr. Smith wouldn't hear about using it. As soon as I told him he took it away, and didn't give me back for days."

"Go on, that's only an elaboration of what you told the police this afternoon."

"I couldn't confess I was planning to rob a house, and I didn't mean to spill on Mr. Smith having the gun."

"You told them that?" burst in the cook furiously.

"It couldn't be helped. I'm not used to this sort of thing. They had it out of me before I knew it."

"Righto, kid, forget it. Serves me right for coming off the lone game. What a tough break!"

"Sure," agreed Mr. Sharpe, finding this film-play atmosphere somewhat catching. "But you were wrong to keep it under your hat."

"Don't be comic, mister. Think I don't know a 33 when I see one, and that's the calibre they're after."

"Then you didn't know that Withers had the other gun as well?"

"What, the rod that did the job?"

"Exactly."

"Come out of the way, I'm getting out of here."

Mr. Sharpe did not budge. "Downstairs," he exclaimed, "you'll find a couple of policemen, told off to follow Withers. They're hardly likely to have lost sight of him in this short space of time."

Smith turned a yellowish green, and the bus conductor subsided into a pitiful heap.

"Struth!" he whispered through his dry lips. "What am I going to do?"

"Come and face the music," advised the little man. He opened the door and led the way to where Maxley and his companions were waiting.

CHAPTER XIII
MAXLEY MAKES AN ARREST

Splashed right across the front page of Morrison Sharpe's breakfast-time newspaper was a revelation that surprised him exceedingly. This was nothing less than the report of an arrest in the "Motor Bus Murder." So unexpected was it after the events of the previous night that he bestirred himself to such effect that he was able to board the 847 train for Netherpton.

Refusing to take "no" for an answer, he positively thrust his way into the presence of Superintendent Maxley, who was, however, in such a good humour that he found the visit not entirely to his distaste.

"Come to congratulate us?" he inquired facetiously.

"On the contrary. Your action is a grave miscarriage of justice and I feel it my duty to warn you so while there is still time."

"We've had enough confirmation," said Maxley. "And as you've become sort of unofficially attached to the investigations I'll tell you why we acted.

Quite late last night a cablegram was received from America. Here is a copy."
Morrison Sharpe took the paper which was handed to him, his face very grave as he read the brief message.

"Smith, John, as described, believed wanted New York, suspected concern Bradham jewel robbery; posting further."

"Well?" he queried as he came to the end.

"The necklet found on Caleb Wainwright was part of the Bradham loot," Maxley explained. Furthermore we found that the two men came over together on the Turbania. On the voyage and for a time in London they were inseparable. Then they parted—or it seems more probable Wainwright cleared off with the swag. Smith followed, intent on getting back his share, or having revenge."

Mr. Sharpe wagged his head in agitation. "Afraid it doesn't hang together," he argued. "I built up that framework before and toppled it down again."

"Come and listen to the case in half an hour. It will not go beyond formal evidence of arrest."

"Wouldn't miss it for worlds."

As they talked the little man had been scribbling on an official pad. Maxley noticed that this paper had been left behind and he wondered if it gave any indication of what the puzzle expert thought of the latest move.

Examining it curiously the Superintendent found a childish scribble consisting of two vertical lines intersected by two equally spaced horizontal lines—nothing more than the fret of a game of "Noughts and Crosses." Three cyphers were neatly drawn in, forming a dexter bend. Strangely enough, the player had not bothered to fill in any of the crosses.

The mind of Mr. Sharpe had been running on threees. He had set down the markings as a rough guide, pleasantly aware that the positioning signified the winning moves. Top left for Wainwright, centre for Smith, bottom left for Gardopoulos. Had Maxley left him out of account?

TWO PISTOLS: ONE MURDERER

Sir Ellington Ellerslie, chairman of the bench, was a local land owner. Supporting him were Mr. J. T. Greenly, Mrs. Standish and Councillor Joseph Greedy. It was a stuffy little court, built more in keeping with an atmosphere of scorching cyclists, speeding motorists and licenceless dog-winders than of murder.

John Smith was brought into the dock with a uniformed officer on each side. He hung his head as the charge was read over to him. The jaunty air of bravado had gone overnight.

Superintendent Maxley gave proof of arrest. He related, at length, facts and assumptions arising out of the ownership and borrowing of the revolver. Often the magistrates interjected. Clearly they had difficulty in following all the suggestions.

"I understand," Sir Ellington remarked, "that the crime was committed with exhibit 'a'?"

"That is so, your worship. Exhibit 'b,' you will notice, is a similar type of weapon belonging to a witness I propose calling at a later stage. This man, a bus conductor named Withers, will tell us that he handed exhibit 'b' to the prisoner a few days before the crime. The police contention is that exhibit 'a' was already in the possession of Smith, but that he intended to make use of the other weapon for the perpetration of his plan."

"It is rather complicated, superintendent. Why not use the weapon he had—that is exhibit 'a'?"

"Because it could be traced to him. By a stroke of luck suspicion might be thrown on to another party."

"Very ingenious! Why, after all that planning, fall back on his own revolver?"

"That," Maxley remarked, "was due to an entirely unforeseen circumstance. Exhibit 'b' turns out to be nothing more or less than a toy. There is a gas escape near the explosion chamber and the barrel is almost solid. This might pass unnoticed for a time. I can assure your worships that this exhibit could never have fired a 33 bullet. After the adjournment, which I propose to apply for, the solicitor for the Public Prosecutor will deal with these facts at greater length."

Sir Ellington signified his approval. "The bench have no doubt grasped the meaning of your evidence," he stated. "Do you expect to have your case fully prepared by a week from to-day?"

The Chief Constable here rose to say that they should be able to submit a prima facie case on that day.

"Very well. Then I suggest anything further be withheld until then."

Thus concluded the opening session, with the police firmly convinced they had solved one of the most baffling crimes of the age—and Morrison Sharpe muttering angrily under his breath about making fiction stranger than fact.

It was this observation that Sergeant Matthews overheard, and he stopped, with a murmured greeting.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" Mr. Sharpe snapped, very different from his usual dreamy tone. "Such stuff and nonsense I've never heard. Your department will be the laughing stock of the country."

"Mr. Maxley says . . ."

"Damn Mr. Maxley and what he says. That two gun work of his is balderdash. Withers had a revolver which he was going to use on a burgling expedition. He gave that to Smith and afterwards had it back. Nobody could have fired it on account of the semi-solid barrel and gas-escape orifice. And that's all, except for the jiggery pokery about getting rid of the incriminating evidence which was found in the bus ticket box."

"Then where did the second gun come from?"

Mr. Sharpe waved his hand airily. "That," he retorted, "belonged to the murderer."

"Smith?"

"Smith wouldn't kill a fly. I've got my own theory which I'll keep to myself so long as you superior beings wander about with your noses in the air and your brains in your pockets."

Drivers of Dog Team Greeted at Renfrew

Denham and Harvey Greer Guests of Rotary Club Last Week.

Denham and Harvey Greer were given a hearty greeting when they reached Renfrew last week with their dog team on their way to Ottawa to deliver an invitation to Premier King to visit Timmins this year at the time of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the town. One item in The Renfrew Mercury last week reads:—"Renfrew people were afforded a good view of the sleigh dogs from Timmins on Tuesday afternoon. The Greer brothers, their drivers, took eight of the nine out and drove around town, one point visited being the Woollen Mills where the whole staff had a close-up look at the dogs, sleighs and drivers. In front of the cenotaph on Low Square, Photographer Handford set his camera in motion and before nightfall there was a new adornment for his window. At an early hour on Wednesday morning a start was made for Ottawa, the last lap of the 500-mile journey. One dog was left behind, it not having fully recovered from a sore which had developed in one of its feet and which had caused its coming in advance to Renfrew by express from a point up the line."

In another column The Mercury refers to a reception given the Greer brothers by the Renfrew Rotary Club. In reference to this The Mercury says:—"Messrs. Denham and Harvey Greer of Timmins and their father, Chief of Police Greer, were guests of Renfrew Rotary Club at the club's luncheon at Hotel Renfrew last week on Monday."

This was the club's reception to the "mushers" from New Ontario, who reached Renfrew early Sunday evening on their way from Timmins to Ottawa, having travelled during the day from Pembroke. Hauling the sleigh were five dogs, the rest having come earlier by express in order that accidental troubles might be attended to. Several cars went out from Renfrew to extend a greeting, going as far as Halesy, Reaching here the dogs were at once placed in stables on the premises of Dr. Foster, who as a veterinary surgeon attended to their physical needs. It was resolved to take a rest here until Wednesday, so that the dogs could enter the Federal Capital in the best of condition. The dogs are half husky, half wolf, and are a friendly lot but sometimes fight among themselves, fighting viciously.

"At the luncheon at Hotel Renfrew on Monday the plaque which the mushers are carrying to Premier King was shown. It is an invitation to him to attend the Timmins Old Home week next summer. The plaque is in the form of New Ontario gold and seems destined to become a family heirloom."

"President Thacker extended a welcome to the mushers and referred to the trouble which they had on the way from bad weather and other uncontrollable conditions. He hoped that the Greer brothers if returning this way with the dogs would again be guests at a club luncheon. He asked Rotarians Wade and Southern, members of the town council, to express a word of welcome to the travellers. They extended good wishes and hoped for the travellers a successful finish; also praised the tenacity of the men."

"Denham Greer said he would outline a few of the hardships met with and proceeded to do so, telling of experiences which became press despatches along the way. He thanked the Rotary Club for the welcome and hoped for an equally good reception when reaching Ottawa. At one point on the road they snowshoed 26 miles, neither of the mushers riding in the sleigh. Harvey had the experience of a frozen cheek. Another experience was nothing to eat from early morning until seven in the evening—nothing but chocolate bars. At some points along the way fine hospitality was shown them. In The Reserve there was the experience of a rain-storm, to meet which they were not well equipped and they and the dogs suffered. A deer was seen which wolves had killed; part of the carcass had been eaten. A day was spent at North Bay, also at Mattawa, where the people were very kind. At Pembroke they were asked to spend a day and the people expressed regret that they had been unaware as to when they were to arrive. Mr. Greer stated that the dogs were his own and were of a good class, the breeding of dogs being a hobby of his. Incidentally he stated that the Humane Society kept a check on them all the way, in a vain fear that the dogs might be abused."

"Coming Around the Mountain" was sung as a compliment to the two guests from the North; also "For They Are Jolly Good Fellows."

New Plane at Hudson to be Used for Training Now

Youths in Hudson and Sioux Lookout who are anxious to learn to fly will be given an opportunity with the arrival at Hudson of a new Taylor Cub plane, purchased by F. W. Bowman, of that town. The new machine is exceedingly light, weighing in all but 563 pounds, and having capacity of a passenger and pilot. It will be used for training as well as for private flying purposes.

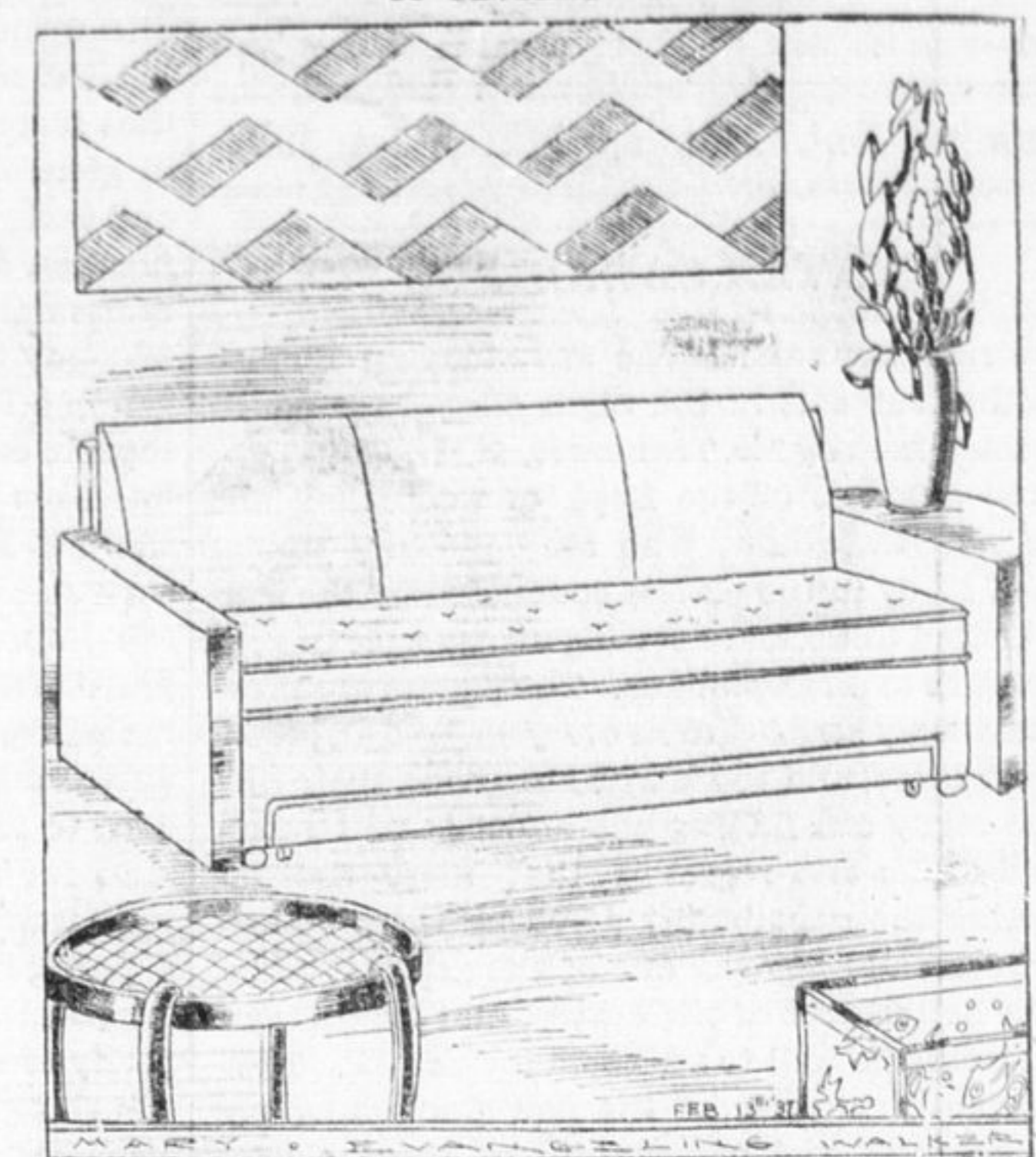
With that he stalked off, leaving the sergeant hesitating between indignation and amusement. The latter came uppermost, but possibly the former emotion would have triumphed had Matthews known from that moment the little solver of puzzles had set his mind on operating as a detective in direct opposition to the force.

"I'll carry on in my own way and make them a present of the real culprit," he promised himself.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Household by Lydia LeBaron Walker

TRUNDLE BEDS OF TO-DAY AND THEIR LIKENESS TO THOSE OF YESTERYEAR



A smart version of the old trundle bed as seen in many modern homes.

The trundle bed, although in a new guise, is still a article of household furniture. It is in even more demand today than it used to be in early times. Then the trundle bed was used for little children of the parents who occupied the high bed, under which, in daytime, the low bed was pushed, and where it was hidden by the valance of the large bed. As will be seen the trundle bed occupied no visible nor wanted space during the day. In a chamber of generous proportions usual in those days there was ample area for such a bed without disarranging the room, when at the children's bedtime it was trundled out from its hiding place.

There were two reasons why these old-time trundle beds were desirable pieces of furniture. For one thing families were large, and the solution was thus made of where to put the littlest folk who, very likely, would need soothing or care at night. The other reason was that, in the absence of central heating then unknown, the only chamber in which the temperature was warm and congenial to the little tots was that of the parents who saw to it that a stove was going night and day. For the elder folk, it certainly was preferable to get up in a warm chamber and tend the children, than to trudge through chilly halls and see to the youngsters in cold rooms.

Modern trundle beds of the type described were abandoned. However the need of sufficient sleeping accommodations in houses of smaller size, and in apartments especially, has been constantly on the increase.

To fill this need "double-decker" beds similar to upper and lower berths, on ships and in sleeping cars are now to be found. As with the trundle bed of old, the floor space the two beds occupy is equal to that of one only. The two beds are visible all the time to be sure, but sleeping quarters for two, each in his own bed, are supplied and are possible in small single bedrooms. This is one adaptation of the trundle bed.

The studio couch, and the day bed, when they can be made into double beds, or two single beds each, are perfect examples of modern trundle beds. One bed pushes or trundles under the other when such a piece of furniture is in daytime arrangement. At need, to provide double sleeping accommodations, one bed is trundled out into the room, for night time arrangement.

It is not large families that make modern day beds and studio couches in demand, but cramped housing conditions, whether these are in the poorer quarters of a city or in fashionable rooms where one, two and three-roomed apartments bring high prices. Moreover both the day bed and the studio couch when of fine design and workmanship, belong with other handsome furniture appointments. The convenience of these modern trundle beds is as much appreciated to-day, as were the old-time ones of yesteryear.

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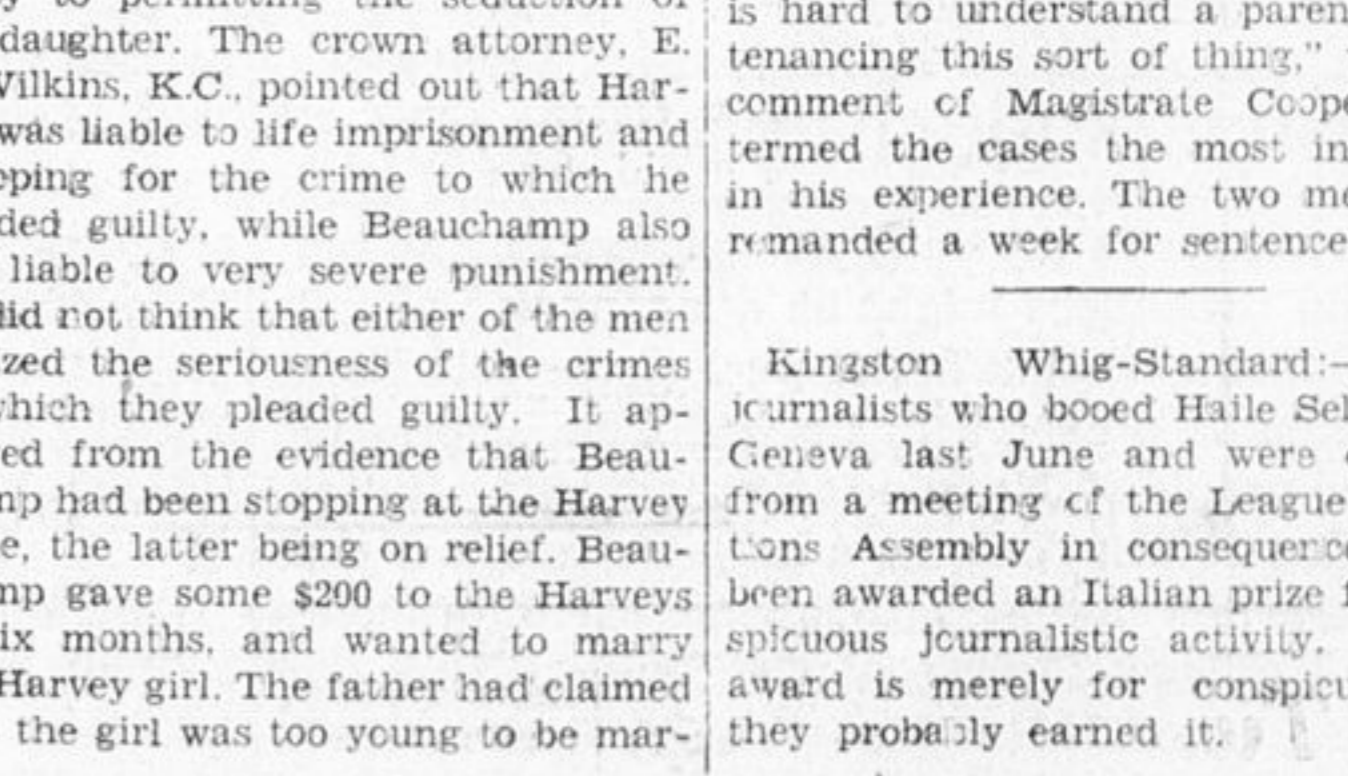
Sudbury Crown Attorney Against Tennessee Tactics

At Sudbury last week Henry Beauchamp, 26 years of age, pleaded guilty to having carnal knowledge of a girl 13 years of age while the girl's father, Archie Harvey, 32 years old, pleaded guilty to permitting the seduction of his daughter. The crown attorney, E. D. Wilkins, K.C., pointed out that Harvey was liable to life imprisonment and whipping for the crime to which he pleaded guilty, while Beauchamp also was liable to very severe punishment. He did not think that either of the men realized the seriousness of the crimes to which they pleaded guilty. It appeared from the evidence that Beauchamp had been stopping at the Harvey home, the latter being on relief. Beauchamp gave some \$200 to the Harveys in six months, and wanted to marry the Harvey girl. The father had claimed that the girl was too young to be married, but he had allowed Beauchamp to sleep in the same bed with the child.

The crown attorney was opposed to any suggestion that Beauchamp be allowed to marry the girl now and so in some measure legalize the crimes committed. "We don't want any Tennessee situation here," he said, objecting to the idea of small girls being married. "It is hard to understand a parent countenancing this sort of thing," was the comment of Magistrate Cooper, who termed the cases the most incredible in his experience. The two men were remanded a week for sentence.

Kingston Whig-Standard:—Italian journalists who booed Haile Selassie at Geneva last June and were expelled from a meeting of the League of Nations Assembly in consequence have been awarded an Italian prize for conspicuous journalistic activity. If the award is merely for conspicuousness they probably earned it.

THE DEVIL "HOVERS" OVER BISHOP



Judging from the expression on the face of the Devil he apparently has evil designs upon Dr. Blunt, Bishop of Bradford, seen above having a cup of tea with the principals in the pantomime "Mother Goose" at Bradford. It was Bishop Blunt's speech last December which is reported to have started the British press to publish the startling news which eventually led to the abdication of King Edward VIII.



What's he beating that tom-tom for? Is it a call to war?
No—he's advertising tooth-paste—it's the latest idea
Il Traverso delle Idee, Rome.