



SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—John Bartley, noted criminal investigator, recently returned from secret service work during the war, is asked by the governor of New York to investigate a mysterious attempted robbery of the Robert Slyke home at Circle Lake, near Saratoga. Peculiar circumstances of the case interest Bartley, and he accepts.

CHAPTER II.—With his friend Pelt, Bartley goes to Circle Lake, the pair becoming the guests of Bob Currie, an old friend. The three visit the Slyke home. Slyke apparently resents Bartley's coming, saying he is satisfied the two men in prison for the attempted robbery were guilty. Bartley is not. Next morning Slyke is found dead in bed, apparently having shot himself.

CHAPTER III.—Miss Potter, the dead man's sister-in-law, the village police chief, Roche, and the family physician, Doctor King, all agree Slyke killed himself, but Bartley insists he was murdered. Investigating, Bartley finds evidence that Slyke, after a card party he had given, was shot on the tower of the house, undressed, and placed in bed. During his absence from the room someone removed the revolver from Slyke's hand.

Whatever it meant to Bartley, the mass of zeros held no significance to me. He did not enlighten me, but placed the magazine in his pocket. Then I showed him the playing card and told him where I found it. He asked, "Are there no more?" I was answering, "No," when Roche interrupted, "Yes, there is one."

He pointed to the stairway that led to the top of the tower. There, lying under the bottom step, was a second playing card with the same design on the back as the one I had found. What were they doing in that room? Bartley smiled to himself as he examined the second card.

Roche asked, "What do they mean?" With a gesture that might have meant anything, it was so expressive, Bartley replied, "They had a card party downstairs last night."

Roche was excited in a moment. "I'll tell you what it means. Someone at that party killed Slyke, followed him up here and killed him."

It was not a half-bad theory, and even Bartley did not protest as much as I had thought he would. Instead he said, "There is something in what you say, Roche. We must look first for the person who had the chance to kill him. You assume that after the party the person who dropped these cards did what any absent-minded person might do. That is, he placed the cards of his last hand in his pocket. He may have followed Slyke up here, hidden behind the curtain, and as he killed him dropped some of his cards on the floor."

He paused, half frowning, as if the theory did not quite appeal to him, and added slowly, "Still, Roche, there are other things to be considered. Those two cards are in different parts of the room; not together as we might have expected if they had been dropped by accident. It looks to me as if they might have been placed where we found them by design. As if someone wished us to think just what you thought. Then there is that bottle of whisky and the three glasses. All three glasses have been drunk from. The glasses show that they were all used at about the same time. Evidently two of the men smoked; the third did not. What I wonder is, were these three persons in the room at one and the same time?"

Roche, who had long since lost his air of self-satisfaction, now offered to help us make a thorough examination of the room. When we had ended our unsuccessful search, Bartley stood silent, a puzzled expression on his face. "It's more mysterious than ever," he said at last. "I am sure he was



"There Must Be Blood Spots Somewhere, Yet Where? There Are None in This Room."

Not killed in the room below. I am also sure he was not killed here.

There must be blood spots somewhere, yet where? There are none in this room."

He went to the window and glanced out, then came back and glanced up at the steps that led to the roof. All at once his face brightened, and motioning us to follow him he bounded up the seven steps to the little door that opened onto the balcony. We followed more slowly.

We found ourselves on a balcony some four feet wide that ran around the tower. About eight or ten feet below its bronze-tipped top, an iron railing protected the edge of the balcony and was covered with ivy, as were also the sides of the tower itself. Bartley paused for a moment, standing with his hand on the rail, his face serious, his eyes thoughtful. But it was for a moment only; the next he was out of sight around the tower. Almost instantly we heard him call us, and when we reached his side he was on his knees examining the floor and the lower part of the wall.

Looking where he pointed, I saw at his feet a dark splotch on the floor of the balcony, and a little higher up several similar spots on the wall of the tower. I realized that, at last, he had found what he had been looking for. There was no doubt that the splotches we saw were blood, and that it had been shed within a few hours.

Had he expected to find them just where he did? I wondered.

As if answering my thoughts, he said, "Yes, Slyke was murdered here."

Though I had been sure he would say that, it did not seem reasonable that any person should select the balcony of a tower, fifty or more feet in the air, as a place in which to commit a murder. It became still more puzzling when I remembered that Slyke had been carried down two flights of stairs, undressed, placed in bed and a revolver clasped in his hand. Roche, his fat face puzzled, gave me a bewildered glance. I could sympathize with his astonishment as I felt much the same way myself.

I expressed my surprise to Bartley and he responded, "I know, Pelt, all that you have said and all that you are thinking. It does seem out of all reason that anyone should pick the top of this tower for a murder. Yet here are the spots of blood, and there are none anywhere else. I am sure he was not killed downstairs; it must have been here, and—"

He paused, bending over, picked something up. At first I could not make out what it was; then I saw that it was a gold-plated collar-button such as a man wears in the front of his shirt. Roche needed only one look to identify it, "Slyke's!"

Bartley did not speak until he had walked entirely around the tower and was again beside us. "Chief," he said, "we may say there is no doubt that Slyke was killed up here. I do not know why such a strange place was chosen, but I do know that he was dragged down these stairs after his death and placed in his bed to make his death appear to be suicide. The odds were very much in favor of the criminal's being able to succeed in his design, too. But he slipped up—slipped up in the manner in which he put the gun in the hand and in the way in which he closed the eyes. But why he should have killed Slyke up here I cannot understand."

He paused for a moment, as if thinking, then continued, "Slyke gave a party last evening. The crime must have been committed after the party broke up. That was probably between one and two o'clock in the morning. One man, perhaps two, stayed behind to talk with Slyke. We can't say positively that they did, but they may have. Roche thinks that this man, or men, committed the murder. One man may have stayed and then gone away before the murder, or someone else may have come later. They may have come up here to see the view, and one of them shot him. After the crime the body, at any rate, was taken downstairs again and undressed, the nightshirt placed on it, and it laid in bed. As he wanted it to appear like suicide, the murderer placed the gun in the dead man's fingers, but he either did not remember, or perhaps did not know, how the eyes should look after a sudden death. The very things done to make us think it was suicide prove that it could not have possibly been one."

As Bartley was now ready to go downstairs again, we all returned to the room below. The first thing we saw when we entered, was a brown stocking, the mate to the one in the room below. We had not noticed it on our way to the balcony as it lay half under the rug, and the opened door hid it. Bartley picked it up, glanced at it, smiled, and was going to say something when a voice called to us from below.

In a second we were down the

stairs and in Slyke's bedroom. The door to the stairway was closed just as we had left it; Bartley opened it to find a young man with a big camera under his arm on the landing. He gave us an inquiring glance; then seeing Roche, whom he seemed to know, he announced, "Doctor King said you wanted me up here to take some pictures. What shall I take first?"

Bartley glanced at the bed and I thought gave a slight start. The bedclothes that had been drawn down around Slyke's waist when we were examining the revolver in his hand, had been replaced by Bartley, before we went to the floor above, in the position in which they were when we entered the room—that is, around Slyke's neck and half covering his chin.

"You had better take first a picture of the bed as it is now," Bartley suggested. "Then I will pull the bedclothes down and you can take a picture of his hand with the revolver in it."

The first picture took some time, for the young man could not seem to find the proper place for his camera, but at last it was done.

"Now for the other one," Bartley went to the side of the bed, reached down, and pulled back the bedclothes. As he drew them down he paused and a cry escaped him.

"Look!"

As my eyes fell on the hand of the dead man I, too, started. When we had gone upstairs the revolver was clasped in Slyke's still fingers. Now they were empty. Someone had removed the gun!

CHAPTER IV

The Dead Man's Eyes.

For several moments we were all so startled that none of us spoke. For myself, I could only look at the hand that had, so short a time before, held the revolver. I could not imagine who could have taken it, and what his purpose in doing so could be. I glanced at Bartley. His face was set, a white line showing around his tightly closed lips. He was angry, very angry.

As he turned to Roche, who stood with eyes bulging, his voice shook a little. "Roche, go and get Miss Potter at once. Tell her to call all the servants and have them assemble in the living room. I will be down in a moment."

Roche hurried out without speaking. Immediately Bartley bent again over the bed, studying the position of the hand that had held the revolver. When he straightened up he told the photographer that he would not need him any longer. As soon as the young man had left the room, Bartley turned to me with a rueful little smile.

"Well, Pelt, I certainly slipped up this morning. We left this room without locking the door. True, there

was no key, but I should have left either Roche or you on guard. Instead of that we have given someone a chance to slip in here and remove the revolver. He thought he was removing a valuable piece of evidence. The joke is that the removal of the revolver does not make much difference. We all saw the gun, and we all heard Miss Potter say that it had belonged to Slyke."

"But," I asked, "who could have known about it—I mean that it was murder? You were the only one who suggested it. Every one else who knew about the crime thought it was suicide."

"That's the queer thing about it, Pelt. Only those that were in the room with us are presumed to know it is murder. That is, unless Miss Potter told others when she left here. The strange thing is that it was first made to appear to be suicide by placing the gun in Slyke's hand. Now that evidence is removed I hardly know what we are expected to believe. I had an idea, even before we came into this room, that Miss Potter knew that her brother-in-law had been murdered."

What more he might have said I do not know, for at that moment Roche returned. He looked sheepish and rather ill at ease. He told us that Miss Potter had refused to call the servants, saying that Bartley had no authority to compel her to do so, and he paused a moment, his red face flushing a deeper red, as he added that she could not have been the only one who had any authority to give orders here. For herself, she was convinced that Slyke had committed suicide, and that Bartley did not know what he was talking about when he said that he had been murdered.

Bartley gave a low whistle. "Does that satisfy you, Roche?" he asked.

"No, it doesn't," Roche replied, shaking his head vigorously. "It doesn't, not by one little bit. I am frank enough to say, Mr. Bartley, that though I don't see any light in this at all, I know you can. Your experience and reputation are both greater than mine. I am, of course, the head of the local police and shall have to put up some kind of a bluff, but I wish you would take charge of the case."

"You say Miss Potter doesn't wish to give us any aid at all?"

Roche nodded.

"Well, then, Roche, we will have to go down and see what we can do with her together. You tell her I am your assistant. You might also add that if she refuses to give us the information we need, we can arrest her on the charge of obstructing an officer in the discharge of his duty."

(To be continued)

To watch the want ads is to make you next move pay you.

Of Interest to Farmers

WHAT COW THAT BROKE ALL WORLD RECORDS ATE

Five Tons of Silage Only One Item in May Walker Ollie Homestead's Yearly Menu.

A little matter of five tons of silage was only one item in the menu of the Minnesota Holstein which recently broke all records in butter fat production for all ages and all breeds, the dairy workers at the State College of Agriculture report.

May Walker Ollie Homestead, 200,043, owned by the Minnesota Holstein Company of Austin, Minn., during a period of 365 days, ending on Dec. 18, 1922, produced 21,610.5 pounds of milk and 1218.59 of butter-fat.

To make this record, May Walker Ollie Homestead ate an enormous quantity of feed during the year.

She ate an average of from 22 to 27 pounds of grain mixture every day, or a total of 9,327 pounds for the year. Fifteen pounds of alfalfa hay daily, or 5,475 pounds for the year, made up another item in her diet. She disposed of 730 pounds of molasses during the year, averaging 2 lbs daily. The exact figure on corn silage was 10,950 pounds, or 30 pounds daily. Dried beet pulp added 4,880 pounds more to her menu, or 12 pounds daily. The last six months May consumed 8,100 pounds of beets, or a daily average of 45 pounds.

The grain mixture she ate consisted of 300 pounds wheat bran, 200 pounds ground oats, 100 pounds hominy feed, 100 pounds distillers dried grains, 100 pounds oil meal, 50 pounds cottonseed meal, and 50 pounds gluten feed. Salt and a limited amount of minerals were added to it.

May Walker Ollie Homestead ate one pound of this mixture for every 3.4 pounds of milk produced daily.

Her live weight at beginning of the test was 1,765 pounds, and she finished at the same weight. She also carried a calf 174 days of this period.

PUBLISHERS TO GATHER TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS

The Andover News is invited to send a Representative and to Enter Exhibit at Farmers' Week at Cornell.

The Andover News received an invitation this week from the State College of Agriculture at Ithaca to send a representative to the fourth annual Cornell newspaper conference to be held on Feb. 12th and 13th, the first two days of Farmers' Week at Cornell. The publisher of this paper was also asked to enter some phase of community welfare or betterment, and best farm department.

The present newspaper conference had its birth four years ago in an attempt to bring before the people of the state at the annual Farmers' Week gathering at Cornell the value and importance of the country newspaper. At the first few conferences not many newspapers were represented; the chief effort was made to bring home to residents of small towns and farms the duty which they owe to the local papers in return for the loyal support the publishers give all home and community enterprises. The work which was begun in New York State has now spread to many other and similar conferences and exhibits of newspapers are held at the state college and universities.

Last year for the first an effort was made to bring the publishers themselves to Ithaca so that they might discuss their own problems among themselves. The interest of those who attended was so great that a more comprehensive program has been arranged for this year which will bring speakers from several other states besides New York.

Be a man of your word, even if you never say anything.

Homespun Yarn

Home, in one form or another, is the great object of life. — J. G. Holland.

Rosewater and witch-hazel, half-and-half, will sometimes prevent chapped skin.

If you can't "come out of the kitchen," make it a place you want to stay in.

It saves the housekeeper time to have a set of durable, carefully chosen tools for cleaning the floors and floor coverings.

Little brother won't mind his bath so much if he is allowed to splash around all he wants. Lincicum on the floor will make that a harmless pleasure.

Did you ever want to go out to a meeting, but couldn't because you had to watch the roast in the oven? Why not with the responsibility on the fireman's back?

All the interests of women and the home find a place on the program of the homemakers' conference, which is a part of Farmers' Week at Cornell, Feb. 12-17.

The wife who takes fifteen minutes from her work to rest before her husband comes home, may find her a lot more pleased than he would have been with an elaborate dinner.

Agrigraphs

Your county field tests of last summer ought to have cash-in-value for you in your spring plantings.

Uncle Ab says: "The fellow who has always been honest in little things seldom goes wrong when a big crooked deal is put up to him."

Nobody ever expects to pick good apples from a scrubby tree; then why try to force the daughter of a 100-egg hen to a 300-egg production?

God Almighty first planted a garden; and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man. — Bacon.

With some 400 different features on the program, it's no wonder that every year sees increased interest in Farmers' Week at Cornell. The dates are Feb. 12-17.

Thirty-five million pounds of medium red clover seed came to America from Europe last year. But if you're wise you won't buy. Native Northern-grown seed of known origin is worth the difference in cost.

A successful farmer, more than anyone else, first knows and then applies his knowledge; many are getting knowledge, and applying it too, thru the six free correspondence courses from the State College at Ithaca.

Boy's Rubber Boots

Buy now, your boys' Rubber Boots. We will sell all sizes at cost and less.

Boys' gum Short Boots, sizes 12 to 2 at \$2.15 a pair; sizes 3 to 2 at \$2.98.

Where you can buy Better Shoes for Less Money.

Endicott-Johnson Shoe Store

110 North Main St., Wellsville, N. Y.

FINAL CLEARANCE Suits and Overcoats

\$9.95 \$15 \$22

Men, the opportunity of the year is before you! Not so much because of the reduction, but of the high quality of the clothes offered. And among the many Suits you will find weights and patterns excellent for Spring wear. At their original prices these Clothes were values, but at their reduced prices they are super-values.

SHIRTS

Madras Shirts of the highest quality are offered in this great sale at a value-giving price of \$1.48
Good Work Shirts 50c

HOSIERY

The man who looks to present as well as future needs will do well to buy his supply now. Silk and Wool Hose 65c
Cotton 19c

STAR CLOTHING HOUSE

MAIN AT CHURCH

HORNELL, N. Y.