

**More Marriages Over Nation, Report Shows**

NEW YORK (AP) — More people are getting married these days, and it's an indication of improved economical conditions.

This is a finding of the Metropolitan Life Insurance company's statistical bureau, after a survey in 21 states.

"It would appear," the bureau reported, "that a sizeable proportion of the two million young men and women who postponed marriage during the difficult days of the depression are plucking up courage and getting married, as young people should."

The marriage rate in the area sur-

veyed increased 4.3 per cent in 1933 over 1932. Indications were that this increase continued in the early months of 1934.

**Love Leaves Nest Of Tarzan Today**

LOS ANGELES, July 11 (AP) — Love fled Tarzan's nest today as dark-eyed Lupe Velez, Mexican peppercorn of the films, filed suit for divorce in superior court, charging her husband, Johnny Weissmuller, screen actor and Olympic swimming champion, with cruelty.

Irish Free State emigration is more than counterbalanced by the inflow of persons of Irish nationality, the balance during 1931-33 showing a population increase of 6,925 persons.

**Murder at MOCKING HOUSE**  
BY WALTER C. BROWN

**SYNOPSIS:** Apparently a policeman and a stranger have shot each other dead in the breakfast room of the Mocking House. Yet Sergeant Harper does not believe it is so, although the only evidence so far that he has is the fact that the victim, Mrs. Dufresne, was with the dead. With Detective Lafferty, Harper is carefully reconstructing the murder and stranger's actions on the fatal night.

Chapter 21  
**HELP AT LAST**

"THE man seemed to be quite familiar with the house," Harper continued, "for he disturbed nothing. He started a fire in that hearth, very likely as soon as he arrived, for it was chilly. The logs were pretty well burned when we arrived on the scene."

"Wouldn't some one have noticed the smoke from the chimney when he started it?" Lafferty questioned. "The Whitmores, for instance?"

"We can inquire, but I think the chances were against it. It was a gray, lowering sky, and with the snow coming down so thickly I doubt if it would have been noticed. Our man set out a decanter of whiskey and one of brandy, took a glass from the cabinet vandy, and sat down at the head of the table, as comfortable as you please. He lit a cigarette, threw the match in the fireplace, and relaxed. Doesn't that suggest that he was there to meet some one?"

"He smoked five cigarettes, for there are four stubs in the grate and five matchsticks. The fifth cigarette burned itself to ashes between his dead fingers. As he smoked, he carelessly flipped the ashes toward the fireplace. Some fell a little short. He is still sitting there when Officer Hamill enters the room and the shooting begins."

Lafferty made a wry face. "That brings us right back to the mystery of why they did it. What made them go for each other simultaneously?"

Harper said, "It's all very puzzling, if our unknown man had been trailing Dufresne, he must certainly have realized that Dufresne would guard himself in the Austerlitz, last night of all nights at least. What made him come up here and dress himself like Dufresne? The mystery of this man's clothing is going to give us plenty to think about. The outfit must be part of his masquerade, his own clothing must be hidden somewhere in this house."

Harper turned out the inner breast pocket of the jacket. An embossed silk label furnished the maker's name—Barr, Tompkins & Barr, one of the exclusive tailoring firms of the city.

"Look here, Jack, this fellow was no customer of that firm. There is too much discrepancy between the quality of his under and outer clothing. Nor did his hands exactly indicate the gentleman of leisure. These nose-glasses were put on, along with the false beard, to make his resemblance to Dufresne more striking. The pincers of the glasses made deep red marks on the sides of his nose."

"Was he so anxious to conceal his identity that he removed a ring worn so long that he had to skin his knuckle to get it off? There are some leading questions for you."

"Well, Barr, Tompkins & Barr should be able to give us some information about the dress suit."

"I think we can get the same information much nearer home," Harper replied, rising and pressing the service bell.

"STEVE," Lafferty began, "I've been mulling over what you said about that man having shaved here in the house. That suggests just one thing to me—he was going to meet some one—and that some one was a woman. You can't escape the deduction."

Harper nodded. "Yes, but you can't be so positive about a woman being mixed up in it. Every time you see a man shaving it doesn't mean that he's going to a rendezvous."

"Steve, you're certainly bent on throwing a screen around Mrs. Dufresne. Why are you so sure she had nothing to do with it?"

Harper answered patiently. "That inference will not be overlooked. I hold no brief for the lady, but I have an instinctive feeling that she is entirely innocent. Not, as Doyle suggested, because of her air of fragility or any chivalrous duty to beauty in distress."

"Mrs. Dufresne fainted when she saw the dead man unmasked," Lafferty continued doggedly. "Perhaps that was from shock or the sudden relief from strain—but I think she knew that man! And I'm going to take that as a working basis."

"That's quite all right," Harper answered good-naturedly. "Mrs. Dufresne's movements last night will be looked into thoroughly. Don't forget that this pow-wow began with

the idea that there may have been a third person in this room last night—even," he pronounced slowly, "that these killings did not take place as suggested by the evidence. A dozen watchers beyond the garden wall wouldn't alter that, if they didn't enter the house."

Harper broke off short as the door opened and Andrews entered.

"Andrews, can you tell us the name of Mr. Dufresne's tailor?"

The butler showed no sign of surprise at the seemingly irrelevant question. "Barr, Tompkins & Barr."

Harper picked up the coat, trousers, and waistcoat. "I want you to examine these carefully, Andrews, and tell us if these are part of Mr. Dufresne's wardrobe."

Andrews looked closely at the various articles, fingering the seams, examining the linings, turning out the inner pocket for the label. "Yes, sir, I am quite sure this is one of Mr. Dufresne's suits."

Harper handed over the nose-glasses, with their black silk cord. "How about these?"

"I think they are his, Mr. Dufresne has all his glasses made up in duplicate pairs."

"Can you identify any others of these clothes?"

Andrews obediently picked over the shoes, socks, underwear, shirt, collar and tie. He put the last three articles aside. "I believe these came from upstairs, sir. I am sure the others did not."

"Has Mr. Dufresne awakened yet, Andrews?"

"Oh, yes, sir. He is having breakfast now."

"Have you been in Mr. Dufresne's rooms since you came up from the Austerlitz last night?"

"Naturally, sir, several times. Both last night and this morning."

"Did you notice any sign of disturbance, anything to indicate that this man had been in those rooms? Or did Mr. Dufresne mention anything of that nature?"

"No, sir. So far as I could see nothing had been disturbed. I cannot answer for Mr. Dufresne, but doubtless he would have mentioned it to me."

Harper put the clothing back on a chair. "If this man changed into some of Mr. Dufresne's clothes he'd do it right there in the room, Andrews, take Lafferty here up to the dressing-room and help him look through the closets."

LAFFERTY went out in the wake of the butler, and Harper, left alone, began to walk up and down the room, his eyes turning again and again to that armchair in which the baffling intruder had met his death.

He came to a stop before the wainscoting at the vertical panel that bore the bullet mark. The bullet had not wedged itself into the wood, but had been found on the floor, whence it had dropped after the impact. The detective used his magnifying lens on the scarred place.

Carlin's puzzled suggestion that the bullet wound bore all the markings of a heavy caliber steel-jacket had stuck in his mind. The lens afforded a much clearer view of the jagged dent in the wood, from which tiny particles had fallen to the floor.

This enlarged scope of the eye gave the detective a sudden and startling insight into the matter. He fitted the bullet into the rough-edged cavity. It matched very badly. He tried the bullet from various angles but with no better success.

Harper squatted back on his heels, the light of discovery dawning on him. The center depth of the bullet mark in the wainscoting was undoubtedly deeper than Officer Hamill's bullet could account for. Furthermore, the mark in the wood ran to a distinct conical pit, while the nose of the policeman's bullet was distinctly blunt! Here was the first tangible bit of evidence to give color to his suspicions.

It looked as if the sharp-eyed Carlin's hesitancy over acceptance of the caliber of the fatal bullet as a .38 was going to be justified. If this unidentified masquerader had not died by this particular .38 bullet then Officer Hamill had not killed him. The attendant corollaries of this thought leaped into Harper's grasp, full-armed and clamoring for attention.

It meant that the bullet which had really killed the man in the chair was definitely missing! It had been carried away. Some phantom third presence had dislodged it from the wall and substituted a bullet fired from the policeman's gun.

Officer Hamill had not killed the unknown man. Then the dead man in the armchair could not have killed Hamill!

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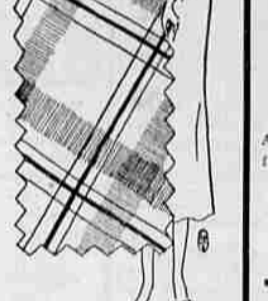
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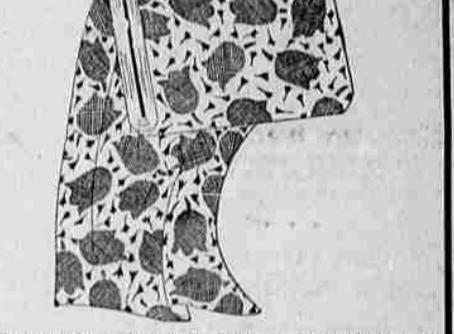
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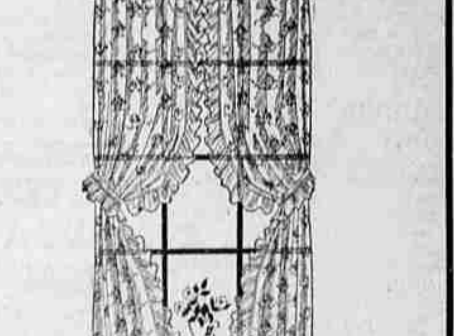
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