The Skyscraper Murder

by SAMUEL SPEWACK

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Phillip Edison is host at a night-club party to his just-recently-divorced wife and Oliver Sewell, sportsman and Don Juan. Edison presumes that Sewell and the divorcee are to be married. When the party breaks up, Edison goes to Sewell's home and, while he is waiting his return, is informed Sewell has been found dead. Inspector Marx begins a police investigation. He questions Sewell's Russian valet. The elevator operator is also questioned. He did not see Sewell return. A young medical examiner, with a taste for detective work, assists Marx. Their search of the apartment reevals complete wardrobes for women in different colors. In a safe-deposit box they find a scrap of paper bearing the inscription, "Paid in Full." The following day a Major Preton, who has been a sporting associate of Sewell's, is interrogated. Then Sewell's widow visits the apartment.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER VII

"Now, Mrs. Sewell," interposed the Doctor, "what were the relations between your husband and the major, cordial?"

"Now, Mrs. Sewell," interposed the doctor, "what were the relations between your husband and the Major—cordial?"

"Cordial? They were like cat and dog. They trusted each other just as far as they could see."

"I want to ask you something." Marx waved the doctor aside. "Did you ever call your husband at his club and threaten him?"

"Yes, lots of times."

"Threaten to kill him?"

"Yes."

"Did you mean it?"

"At the time—yes. But I never had the courage. I'd go back to my medicine, and then—oh—I guess I'd brood some more, and—I guess I loved him as much as I hated him. You wouldn't understand that. I couldn't kill him. But I'm glad that he's dead! Glad!"

She looked about the room.

"They found me here. I was here only once. He threw me out. Ordered the servants down below never to let me up again."

She laughed shortly.

"By the way," intervened the doctor, "I forgot to ask you this morning if—I trust you'll pardon this question—if you were acquainted with any of your husband's feminine friends."

"I've seen them," Mrs. Sewell's lips were now a thing straight line.

"Remember a woman in blue?"

"A woman in blue. You mean Mrs. Edison?"

"Oh! Did you know anything of her relations with your husband?"

The widow laughed.

"I could guess."

"How about other women—a woman in silver?"

She shook her head.

"I gave up long ago keeping track of Mr. Sewell's girl friends. I did know about Mrs. Edison. I guess everyone did. She made no secret of it. She was wild about him. You know, Oliver was a ladies' man. Oh, yes. He had cute tricks. You know he made his big hit with them by never courting them openly. He would meet them at a party, and then enthuse over them to everyone. The news would get back to the girl he was interested in, and she'd be intrigued. He used to boast he invented this method. This was the sort of thing that occupied his mind."

"Now let me get this straight," interrupted Marx. "You haven't seen your husband in some time?"

"Three months."

"And outside of yourself, you don't know anyone who'd want to kill him?"

"No," she replied. "Unless it was the Major."

"You don't like the Major, do you?" demanded Marx.

The widow rose.

"I guess you know by this time how much I like him."

"Do you know this Major's handwriting? Have you ever seen it?"

"Yes. Often. He wrote me letters."

Marx showed her the reecipt from the safe.

"Do you recognize this handwriting?"

"I certainly do," she replied promptly. "That peculiar I—paid in full—that's the Major's. I'd swear to it!"

"Now, mind you," warned Marx "this is very serious. You know what you're saying?"

"Listen," the widow loomed harshly. "I know what I'm saying. That's Preston's handwriting. I ought to know. I'll get up in any court and swear to it."

"He says it isn't."

"Then he's a liar!"

"You know something like this may help send him to the chair? You realize that?"

A curious smile played in her shadowed eyes.

"Yes, I realize that. And I tell you it's his handwriting."

"All right," said Marx. "Now you're not leaving town? We can get you any time we want you?"

"The doctor has my address," the widow said, rising and adjusting her dowdy black hat. She walked to the door, and stopped. "You know," she confided, "I feel almost young again. I want to sing and I want to dance. Thank God, he's dead!"

And then a strange chuckle came from the figure in mourning as she swished into the corridor. Marx seemed dumbfounded and leaned back thoughtfully.

"Think there's any chance of her having done it in a crazy minute, and then forgetting it? Why's she so anxious to pin it on the Major? And then again—why's the Major so anxious to pin it on her? That's what gets me."

Sergeant Carraway bustled into the room.

"Boss," he addressed Marx, "we've been busier than hell. Now here's the lay-out——"

"Shoot," invited Marx.

"Mrs. Edison is the woman in blue. She was living at a hotel in the Sixties. We went there. And we found out she's disappeared."

"Blown?"

"Yep. Hasn't been back since the murder. Took her clothes, checked out and beat it."

Marx shook his head.

"Go on," he urged.

"Her ex-hubby's all right. Checked up on him. He was downstairs all the time, right up to the minute the guy was found. Got the taxi-driver who took him here from the club. Time checks. He was following them, and got here. You can talk to him if you want to. I don't know what he was following them for, but his alibi is good."

"Go on," Marx commanded, non-committal.

"We got the woman in silver, the woman in red and the woman in gold. This baby sure had a swell harem. We're trailing all of 'em. Here's the names—and the dope."

Carraway read quickly.

"Woman in silver—Mrs. Stanley Rashburton—thirty-eight, society, rich, old husband, no children, loves night clubs, goes in for sports, mixed up in a couple of scandals.

"Woman in red—Countess Nina Karasova—Russian,—ben in this country for ten years—well kept—changes 'em once a year. Crazy about Sewell. Terrific gambler. Has swell apartment.

"Woman in gold — nineteen, came to New York three months ago—good looking—sweet girl graduate—named Mary Pennell—good family."

Carraway snapped his notebook to.

"Well," asked the doctor, "what's the next step?"

"I'm going to get the D. A. to issue a warrant for the arrest of Mrs. Edison."

"Eh?"

"Material witness."

"Oh, I see," the doctor mused. "You are annoyed with her disappearance."

Marx was about to retort with heavy sarcasm, when the door opened. The Russian butler appeared and bowed slightly.

"Excuse me," he said, "but there is something bothering me. I must tell you."

"Oh! Go Ahead!" invited Marx.

"I was so excited when you talked to me I did not have a chance. But it is this—I have been here six months, and I have noticed that I have always made breakfast for two. But never have seen the lady."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean every day I made breakfast for two. And I never see anyone but Mr. Sewell. At first it was strange to me, but I have learned not to bother with other people's concerns, so I paid no attention, and it was a habit."

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Marx. You mean that there was a woman here every morning, and you made breakfast for two."

"Yes," said the butler. "But I never see the woman—if it was a woman. And it was maybe not a woman, because other women came here, but always there was breakfast for two."

(To be continued tomorrow)

GOOD-NIGHT STORIES

By Max Trell

The Chinese Plate Men Lose Their Dinner

Mij, Flor, Hanid, Yam and Knarf—the five little shadow-children with the turned-about names—were taking a stroll in the Chinese Plate one day. Being shadows, they had no trouble at all getting inside the plate.

Hardly had they crossed the bridge leading into the garden, when they saw Ting-a-Ling ahead of them. They hastened to catch up with the Chinaman, who, as it happened, was carryng a live goose by the leg.

"Hello!" greeted the shadow-children. "Where are you going with the goose?"

"I'm going home," said Ting-a-Ling. "Sing-Song and myself will eat it for dinner."

"Who is Sing-Song?" inquired Yam.

"Sing-Song is my neighbor. He always stays for dinner. Won't you join us, too? It's a very large goose. There will be more than enough for all."

He held the goose aloft to show them how large it was. At this the goose, imagining it was to be set free, flapped its wings wildly in Ting-a-Ling's face. He put it under his arm at once.

"What a silly goose," he remarked to the shadows.

By and by they reached his house, which was set back from the road. A stone wall ran around it.

"It's no use looking for the gate," he said, noticing that they were searching for it. "Gates always stay open when you want them shut and shut when you want them open so I've done away with them." Saying this, he bade the shadows follow him over the wall. This was by no means easy for Ting-a-Ling, as the goose started to flap its wings as wildly as before at the very moment when he least wanted it to.

"I've a good mind to wring your neck he said to it severely.

They found Sing-Song sitting at the table inside the house. His napkin was tucked under his chin and he held a knife and fork in his hands.

"Ah!" he exclaimed when he saw Ting-a-Ling. "You're having goose for dinner. I think I'll stay. I'm very fond of goose. Let's boil it. I'm particularly fond of boiled goose."

"I'm sorry," said Ting-a-Ling, "but I threw the pot at the cat last night and she forgot to return it. I'll stuff it with chestnuts and roast it.

Sing-Song sighed. "I'm particularly fond of roast goose stuffed with chestnuts, but where will you get chestnuts?"

"Why don't you fry it?" suggested Knarf. Both Chinamen gave an exclamation of delight.

"That's just it!" they cried.

Sing-Song busied about the stove and buttered the frying pan. Meanwhile Ting-a-Ling started to pluck the goose. No sooner did he touch its feathers, however, than it flapped its wings in the wildest manner imaginable.

"Don't bother," advised Sing-Song. "Fry it with the feathers on. That will teach it a lesson." With that he placed the goose in the frying pan.

"Now sit still, he cautioned, "or you'll never be done." He stepped back to watch it fry. The moment he did so, up rose the goose from the hot pan and flew out the window.

Ting-a-Ling looked at Sing-Song and Sing-Song gazed back at Ting-a-Ling.

"What a silly goose!" they both exclaimed at the same moment.

But whether they meant the goose or each other the shadow-children couldn't tell.

Home-Making Helps

By ELEANOR ROSS

Applying Safety First Methods in the Home

There's no place like home. It even seems the favorite place for accidents.

In fact, compared with most vocations, housework might be regarded as among the most hazardous of occupations. Only one or two dangers beset the miner, the steeplejack, the mill-hand, the deep-sea diver and other industrial workers. But it's appalling to contemplate the great number of more or less serious mishaps that may befall the woman working peacefully in the seclusion of the home!

She is surrounded by modern tools, not all of which she knows how to use properly. The industrial worker is given some definite instructions in how to use machinery, what to be cautious about, and in the better-banaged plants is protected with safety devices.

But curiously enough, there's been little done to make the home safe for the worker, and considering how little instinct the average woman has for handling tools, it's amazing that there are not more catastrophes. You can see otherwise intelligent women lighting a match within a few feet of an open can or bottle of inflammable fluid. Or overloading electric currents and doing weird things with the wiring. Or lighting a gas heater and not noticing that the draught from a nearby window might blow out the flame but let the gas continue to flow. Or perched at a perilous angle on the outside of a window-sill. Or tiptoed on rickety chairs to reach a high shelf.

There's no end to the risks taken in the run of an ordinary day's housework. Some result disastrously, but most, fortunately, leave us unscathed.

However, no one need take risks, nor remain in ignorance of precautions. The local gas and electric companies supply details of proper handling of equipment. So do the sellers of electrical devices. And by this time, most people know that one shouldn't touch a water faucet and switch on an an electric current at the same time, even in all the wiring is in good order. A complete circuit may be established, resulting in a violent shock, if not indeed in a fatality.

Care in hanging and stowing away individual pieces of equipment prevents accidents. Every kitchen needs a ladder and there are many good looking ones that may serve as chairs when not needed for climbing. But a sturdy ladder will make it unnecessary to take the risk of climbing on awkward supports and slipping.

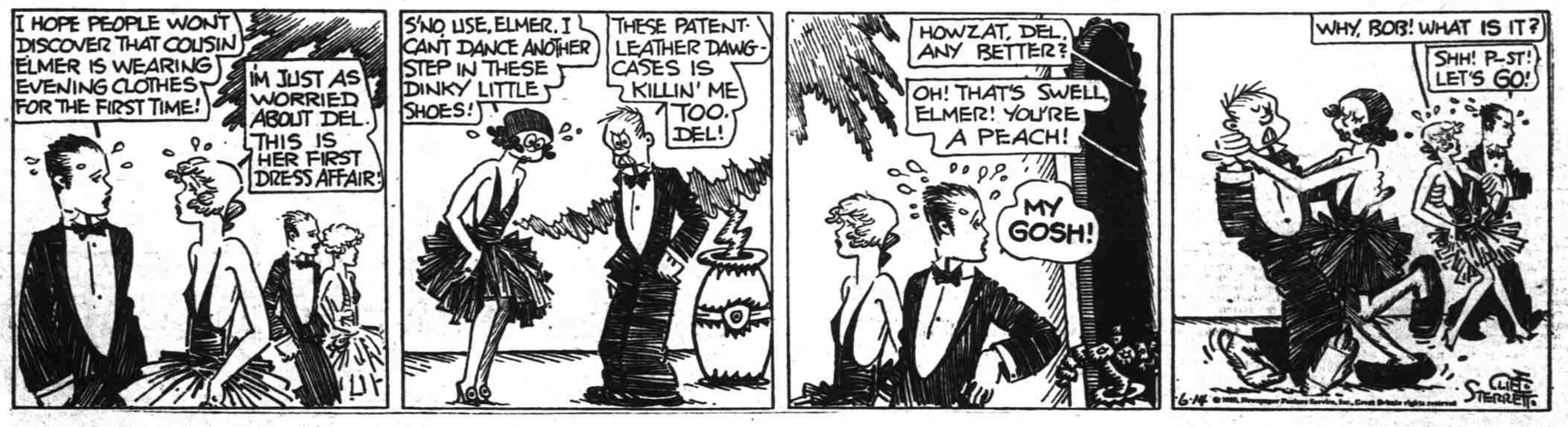
It is strange to see that even experienced housekeepers very often bear marks and scars of housework. A knife carelessly handled, because its blade looked duller than it was. Can-openers probably have more casualties to their credit than any other single kitchen tool, because very often tuey are used with force with one hand while the other grasps the can loosely. The blade slips—result, a sharp cut. There are now many improved can-opening devices on the market, making the job easy, and, almost a hundred per cent safe.

Incidentally, the habit of wearing thick cotton gloves whenever any heavy manual job is performed helps a great deal toward reducing the sum total of home accidents.

It is impossible to give details of prevention and cure within the space of this short article, but every housekeeper should keep in the kitchen a copy of the very excellent bulletin published by the Bureau of Standards in Washington, D. C., which gives complete and authoritative information on all the ways of preventing home accidents and making equipment of all kinds perfectly safe.

POLLY AND HER PALS

By CLIFF STERRETT



TILLIE, THE TOILER

By RUSS WESTOVER

LITTLE ANNIE ROONEY

By VERD

TOOTS AND CASPER

By JIMMY MURPHY

PROMPT CARE IS AN AID IN PERITONITIS

Fortunately This Ailment Is Not Common, But in Acute Form It Is a Serious Disturbance, Says Dr. Copeland, Advising Expert Treatment

By ROYAL S. COPELAND, M. D.
United States Senator from New York.
Former Commissioner of Health, New York City.

I AM not sure that I ever told you anything about peritonitis. Fortunately it is not a common ailment. But it is too important to overlook. To be frank about it, acute peritonitis is always a serious disturbance.

All the cavities of the body are lined with a delicate membrane. The abdominal cavity is no exception. In this region the lining membrane is called the peritoneum.

This delicate structure covers the inner side of the abdominal wall. Likewise, it is reflected upon the intestines and all the organs in the abdomen. There is enough moisture to lubricate the surface of the peritoneum so that all the movements of the organs within the abdomen are made without friction. They move freely one upon another.

The peritoneum is normally a thin, glistening membrane. It "may aptly be compared to a coat of varnish applied to the inner aspect of the abdominal walls and to the surface of the contained viscera."

DR COPELAND

Like every other part of the body, the peritoneum may become inflamed. This is the condition which may be general or it may be confined to limited portions of the peritoneum.

In peritonitis, no matter what its cause, severe pain in the abdomen and tenderness to the lightest touch, are prominent symptoms. Instinctively the victim lies on his back with his legs drawn up. He takes this position in order to relieve the pulling of the muscles upon the sensitive abdomen.

For the same reason the breathing is shallow. Every effort is made to keep from moving the abdominal muscles and aggravating the pain.

These are the signs of a general peritonitis. If the inflammation is definitely localized, the pain and tenderness and tenseness of the muscles are not so prominent.

The patient has fever. The pulse is rapid. In every way the symptoms indicate illness.

There are a good many causes for peritonitis. Needless to say, a perforating wound of the abdominal wall is very likely to cause inflammation. It follows rupture of the pus-filled appendix or of the gall bladder. Certain female ailments may have peritonitis as an accompaniment.

Once in a while this disease may accompany some of the infectious or contagious diseases. Blood-poisoning has it as a symptom.

If there is a pus-forming inflammation of the stomach, bowels, gall bladder or womb, peritonitis may follow. An ulcer of the stomach or intestines which results in perforation, produce peritonitis.

Usually there is great swelling of the abdomen. It becomes quite like a small balloon. Likewise there is a drum-like rigidity of the abdominal muscles.

If you have any reason to suspect that a member of your household has peritonitis, you should call the physician at once. The patient should be kept propped up in bed with the legs drawn up and the shoulders raised. Perfect quiet should be maintained until the doctor comes.

Answers to Health Queries

M. A. T. Q.—Will frequent use of a fine comb injure the scalp?
2.—What will cure dandruff?

A.—No.
2.—Brush the hair daily and use a good tonic.

• • •

SUBSCRIBER. Q.—What causes dark circles under the eyes?

A.—This may be due to a number of causes, such as worry, constipation, lack of rest, low blood pressure, anaemia.

• • •

MARY R. Q.—What causes a pain in my right arm? It feels lame and I can hardly hold anything with it.

A.—This may be due to neuritis. The cause must first be removed before the trouble can be cleared up.

• • •

L. D. Q.—I am a young man of 20 troubled with falling hair—what do you advise?

A.—The condition of the scalp and hair depends upon the state of the health in general. Careful shampooing and rinsing and the use of a good hair tonic should be helpful if the health is good.

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