

Murder at High Tide

By CHARLES G. BOOTH

Chapter 14
"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN"
You did a good job with that bookkeeper," Samuels conceded. "I'll keep it, if you don't mind."

"I am the principal agent of la Surete," Plaque answered. "Let us proceed with our case. That blackness on the carpet there—"
"Crude oil," Kirk informed us. "Somebody tripped it in here."

"We'll check on that," Samuels granted. "And then there's the phoenix."

"It is another of the little mysteries," Plaque continued volubly. "And that price ticket for 35 cents in the dead hand of monsieur—that is yet another."

The little man beamed upon Samuels. "But we have our clues. Come, I shall be your inward eye and you shall be the outward eye."

"Fair enough," Samuels grinned. "You might begin by telling us what brought you to San Lucas."

Plaque chuckled. "You have met my friend, I have been at the house three times during the past four months. It is an old story—35 years old. I speak of the robbery of the Banque du Midi. You do not remember that robbery. And why should you? You have them every hour. But in my France c'est different. We have our artists of the crime. Such were those little ones, Jules Lacote, Ciceron Bec and le Balafre, The Scarred One."

"Bec and le Balafre," Samuels muttered. "Those names sound familiar."

"Ah, you think of those desperate ones who escaped from l'ile du Diable seven months ago. Those are the two. In June of 1904, those three robbed the Banque du Midi in Marseilles. A million francs was secured and a patron of the bank who attempted resistance was shot. That patron—a merchant of antiques, like M. Hunt—died the next day. I shall tell you about him. Well, those three got away. I was then attached to the Marseilles police and I was directed to secure their apprehension."

"Bec?" Samuels persisted. "You must have got something out of them."

Plaque smiled indulgently. "Monsieur does not understand. Le Balafre and Ciceron Bec are not given the sentence of death. Instead, they are to go to l'ile du Diable until life is finished. Perhaps they will escape. And if they do their fingers will itch for what is left of those million francs, and they will turn like ten suns for the throat of that Jules Lacote. Messieurs," Plaque's voice became a whisper, "not for all the francs on earth would I be the betrayer of le Balafre and Ciceron Bec now they have escaped! And now, M. le Deputy, do you perceive why those little ones did not describe to me that infamous Lacote?"

"I was glad I was not Jules Lacote."

"You've been chasing jade phoenixes ever since?" Samuels wanted to know.

"I have seen many of them, monsieur," Plaque beamed.

"What brought you here?" Plaque had been waiting for the question. He drew forth a wallet and extracted from it a sheet of paper which he presented to Samuels. A clipping from the classified columns of a French newspaper was pasted to the sheet.

"I can't read French," Samuels said irritably.

"M. l'Antiquaire will translate," Plaque murmured.

A typewritten legend indicated that the clipping had been cut from the Clarion du Matin, a Marseilles newspaper. I read the legend and then the clipping:

SCIENTISTS STUDY MEAT TENDERNESS

Washington (AP)—Scientists of the United States department of agriculture believe the tenderness of meat is hereditary.

A machine to test tenderness has been perfected and is now being used in a cooperative research program with 30 state experiment stations seeking to isolate and perpetuate factors of tenderness.

The simple testing apparatus consists of a blade so arranged that it may be drawn through small pieces of meat by exerting pressure with a hand crank.

A scale records the pressure required to cut through the meat.

The machine which has been used to test more than 2,000 samples of pork, beef and lamb is said to give remarkably high correlation with the opinion of judges who sample and score the meat after it has been machine tested.

Cambridge, England (AP)—William Spencer, master of Corpus Christi college of Cambridge university, schools to experiment with the thinks it is a mistake for American English house and tutorial system because they do not fit with American ideals and traditions.

Moscow (AP)—To train efficient business men with Marxian principles, the commissariat of trade has decided to open commercial academies in the chief cities giving courses in merchandising, credit and banking.

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

A Close Call

By Harold Gray



REG'LAR FELLERS

Culture

By Gene Byrnes



TAILSPIN TOMMY

Tommy Attracts Attention

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

TOMMY IS STUCK IN THE QUICK-SAND WHERE HE WAS THROWN BY "HYPO" CHARLEY'S THUGS--BUT HIS FEET ARE ON BOTTOM! HEARING A NOISE AND THINKING IT THE BANDITS RETURNING HE "DUCKED UNDER" THE SURFACE--



DUMB DORA

The Gentle Reminder

By Paul Fong



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



MUTT AND JEFF

He Gets Eight Cents For Twins

By Bud Fisher



ACROSS

1. North American mountains

6. Frank

11. Excite to action

12. Public speaker

13. Note of the scale

14. Penetrated

15. Symbol for tellurium

16. Public speaking a world condition

17. Acquire by labor

18. Honey Bee

19. Port

20. Goddess of discord

21. Greek letter

22. Precious metal

23. Type measure

24. Clashes

25. Time's mystic word

26. Exclamation

27. Roof with two slopes on all sides

28. Those in favor

29. Utile

30. Type measure

31. Clashes

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