

The Holladay Case

A Mystery Of Two Continents
By BURTON E. STEVENSON
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They fled out after him, and I heard them go singing up the street. Then I sank back into my chair and thought again of Godfrey's theory. It seems to fit the case precisely, point by point—even—and I started at the thought—that Miss Holladay's reticence as to her whereabouts the afternoon before. The whole mystery lay plain before me. In some way she had discovered the existence of her half sister, had secured her address; she had gone to visit her and had found her away from home—it was probable, even, that the half sister had written her, asking her to come—though, in that case, why had she not remained at home to receive her? At any rate, Miss Holladay had awaited her return, had noticed her agitation; had, perhaps, even seen certain marks of blood upon her. The news of her father's death had pointed all too clearly to what that agitation and those blood spots meant. She had remained silent that she might not be searched for her father's name, and also, perhaps, that she might protect the other woman. I felt that I held in my hand the key to the whole problem.

Point by point—but what a snarl it was! That there would be a vigorous search for the other woman I could not doubt, but she had a long start and should easily escape. Yet perhaps she had not started. She must have remained in town, else how could that note have been sent to us? She had remained, then—but why? That she should feel any affection for Frances Holladay seemed absurd, and yet how else explain the note?

I felt that I was getting tangled up in the snarl again. There seemed no limit to its intricacies; so, in very despair, I put the matter from me as completely as I could and went to bed.

The morning's Record attested the truth of Rankin's prophecy. I had grown famous in a night, for Godfrey had in a measure made me responsible for his theory, describing me with a wealth of adjectives which I blush to remember and which I have even yet not quite forgiven him. I smiled as I read the first lines:

A Record representative had the pleasure yesterday evening of dining with Mr. Warwick Lester, the brilliant young attorney who achieved such a remarkable victory before Governor Goldberg yesterday afternoon in the hearing of the Holladay case, and, of course, took occasion to discuss with him the latest developments of this extraordinary crime. Mr. Lester agreed with the Record in a theory which is the only one that fits the facts of the case and completely and satisfactorily explains all its ramifications.

The theory was then developed at great length, and the article concluded with the statement that the Record was assisting the police in a strenuous endeavor to find the guilty woman.

Now that the police knew in which quarter to spread their net, I had little doubt that she would soon be found, since she had tempted Providence by remaining in town.

Mr. Graham and Mr. Royce were looking through the Record article when I reached the office, and I explained to them how the alleged interview had been secured. They laughed together in appreciation of Godfrey's audacious enterprise.

"It seems a pretty strong theory," said our senior. "I'm inclined to believe it myself."

I pointed out how it explained Miss Holladay's reticence—her refusal to assist us in proving an alibi. Mr. Royce nodded.

"Precisely. As Godfrey said, the theory touches every point of the case. According to the old police axiom, that proves it's the right one."

CHAPTER VII.

THE body of Hiram Holladay was placed beside that of his wife in his granite mausoleum at Woodlawn on the Sunday following his death. Two days later his will, which had been drawn up by Mr. Graham and deposited in the office safe, was read and duly admitted to probate. As was expected, he had left all his property, without condition or reserve, to his daughter Frances. There were a few bequests to old servants, Rogers receiving a handsome legacy; about half a million was given to various charities in which he had been interested during his life, and the remainder was placed at the absolute disposal of his daughter.

and more than once I carefully reviewed its features to convince myself anew that our theory was the right one. Only one point occurred to me which would tend to prove it untrue—if there was an illegitimate daughter, the blow she had dealt her father had also deprived her of whatever income he had allowed her or of any hope of income from him; so she had acted in her own despite. Still, Godfrey's theory of sudden passion might explain this away. And then again Miss Holladay could probably be counted upon, her first grief past, to provide suitably for her sister. Granting this, the theory seemed to me quite impregnable.

One other thing puzzled me—how had this woman eluded the police? I knew that the French quarter had been ransacked for traces of her, wholly without success, and yet I felt that the search must have been misdirected, else some trace of her would surely have been discovered. Miss Holladay, of course, rigidly refused herself to all inquirers, and here again I found myself on the horns of a dilemma. Doubtless she was very far from wishing the discovery of the guilty woman, and yet I felt that she must be discovered, if only for Miss Holladay's sake, in order to clear away the last vestige of the cloud that shadowed her.

Then came new developments with a startling rapidity. It was toward quitting time one afternoon that a clerk brought word into the inner office that there was a woman without who wished to see Mr. Royce at once. She had given no name, but our junior, who happened to be at leisure for the moment, directed that she be shown in. I recognized her in an instant, and so did he—it was Miss Holladay's maid. I saw, too, that her eyes were red with weeping, and as she sat down beside our junior's desk she began to cry afresh.

"Why, what's the matter?" he demanded. "Nothing wrong with your mistress?"

"She ain't my mistress any more," sobbed the girl. "She discharged me this afternoon."

"Discharged you?" echoed our junior. "Why, I thought she thought so much of you?"

"And so did I, sir, but she discharged me just the same."

"But what for?" persisted the other. "That's just what I don't know, sir. I begged and prayed her to tell me, but she wouldn't even see me. So I came down here. I thought maybe you could help me."

"Well, let me hear about it just as it happened," said Mr. Royce soothingly. "Perhaps I can help you."

"Oh, if you could, sir!" she cried. "You know, I thought the world and all of Miss Frances. I've been with her nearly eight years, and for her to go and treat me like this—why, it just breaks my heart, sir! I dressed her this afternoon about 2 o'clock, and she was as nice to me as ever—gave me a little brooch, sir, that she was tired of. Then she went out for a drive, and about an hour ago came back. I went right up to her room to undress her, and when I knocked, sir, a strange woman came to the door and said that Miss Frances had engaged her for her maid and wouldn't need me any more, and here was a month's wages. And while I stood there, sir, too dazed to move, she shut the door in my face. After I'd got over it a bit, I begged that I might see Miss Frances, if only to say goodbye, but she wouldn't see me. She sent word that she wasn't feeling well and wouldn't be disturbed."

Her sobs mastered her again and she stopped. I could see the look of amazement on our junior's face, and did not wonder at it. What sudden dislike could her mistress have conceived against this inoffensive and devoted creature?

"You say this other maid was a stranger?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; she'd never been in the house before, so far as I know. Miss Frances brought her back with her in the carriage."

"And what sort of looking woman is she?"

The girl hesitated. "She looked like a foreigner, sir," she said at last. "A Frenchwoman, maybe, by the way she rolls her eyes." I picked up my eye. The same thought occurred at that instant to both Mr. Royce and myself.

"Does she resemble Miss Holladay?" he asked anxiously.

"Miss Holladay? Oh, no, sir. She's much older—her hair's quite gray."

Well, certainly. Miss Frances had the right to choose any maid she pleased and to discharge any or all of her servants; and yet it seems strangely unlike her to show such seeming injustice to any one.

"You say she sent down word that she was ill?" said Mr. Royce at last. "Was she ill when you dressed her?"

"Yes, sir," she answered slowly. "I wouldn't exactly say she was ill, but she seemed troubled about something. I think she'd been crying. She'd been crying a good deal, off and on, since her father died, poor thing," she added. "That would explain it, certainly, and yet grief for her father might not be the only cause of Frances Holladay's tears."

"But she didn't seem vexed with you?"

"Oh, no, sir; she gave me a brooch, as I told you."

"I fear I can't promise you anything," said Mr. Royce slowly, after a moment's thought. "Of course it's none of my business, for Miss Holladay must arrange her household to suit herself; yet, if you don't get back with your old mistress, I may perhaps be able to find you a position somewhere else. Suppose you come back in three or four days, and I'll see what I can do."

"All right, sir, and thank you," she said, and left the office.

I had some work of my own to keep me busy that night, so devoted no thought to Frances Holladay and her affairs, but they were recalled to me with renewed force next morning.

"Did you get Miss Holladay's signature to that conveyance?" Mr. Graham chanced to ask his partner in the course of the morning.

"No, sir," answered Mr. Royce, with just a trace of embarrassment. "I called at the house last night, but she sent down word that she was too ill to see me or to transact any business."

"Nothing serious, I hope?" asked the other quickly.

"No, sir, I think not. Just a trace of nervousness, probably."

But when he called again at the house that evening he received a similar message, supplemented with the news imparted by the butler, a servant of many years' standing in the family, that Miss Holladay had suddenly decided to leave the city and open her country place on Long Island.

It was only the end of March, and so a full two months and more ahead of the season. But she was feeling very ill, and was not able to leave her room, indeed, and believed the fresh air and quiet of the country would do more than anything else to restore her shattered nerves. So the whole household, with the exception of her maid, a cook, house girl and underbutler, were to leave the city next day in order to get the country house ready at once.

"I don't wonder she needs a little toning up," remarked our chief sympathetically. "She has gone through a nerve trying ordeal, especially for a girl reared as she has been. Two or three months of quiet will do her good. When does she expect to leave?"

"In about a week, I think. The time hasn't been definitely set. It will depend upon how the arrangements go forward. It won't be necessary, will it, to bother her with any details of business? That conveyance, for instance?"

"Can wait till she gets back. No, we won't bother her at all."

But it seemed that she had either improved or changed her mind, for two days later a note, which her maid had written for her, came to Mr. Graham asking him to call upon her in the course of the next twenty-four hours, as she wished to talk over some matters of business with him. It struck me as singular that she should ask for Mr. Graham, but our senior called a cab and started off at once without comment. An hour later the door opened and he entered the office with a most peculiar expression of countenance.

"Well, that beats me!" he exclaimed as he dropped into his chair. "Our junior wheeled around toward him without speaking, but his anxiety was plain enough."

"To think that a girl as level-headed as Frances Holladay has always been should suddenly develop such whimsicalities. Yet I couldn't but admire her grasp of things. Here have I been thinking she didn't know anything about her business and didn't care, but she seems to have kept her eyes open."

"Well?" asked Mr. Royce as the other paused.

"Well, she started out by reminding me that her property had been left to her absolutely, to do as she pleased with, a point which I, of course, conceded. She then went on to say that she knew of a number of bequests her father had intended to make before his death, and which he would have made if he had not been cut off so suddenly; that the bequests were of such a nature that he did not wish his name to appear in them, and that she was going to undertake to carry them out anonymously."

"Well?" asked our junior again.

"Well," said Mr. Graham slowly, "she asked me to dispose of once of such of her securities as I thought best in order that I might place in her hands by tomorrow night \$100,000 in cash—a cool hundred thousand!"

CHAPTER VIII.

"A HUNDRED thousand dollars!" ejaculated Mr. Royce, and sat staring at his chief.

"A hundred thousand dollars! That's a good deal for a girl to give away in a lump, but she can afford it. Of course we've nothing to do but carry out her instructions. I think both of us can guess what she intends doing with the money."

The other nodded, I believed that I could guess too. The money, of course, was intended for the other woman. She was not to suffer for her crime after all. Miss Holladay seemed to me in no little danger of becoming an accessory after the fact.

"She seems really ill," continued our senior. "She looks thinner and quite careworn. I commended her resolution to seek rest and quiet and change of scene."

"When does she go, sir?" asked Mr. Royce in a subdued voice.

"He wheeled around to his desk and then suddenly back again."

"By the way," he said, "I saw the new maid. I can't say I wholly approve of her."

He paused a minute, weighing his words.

"She seems careful and devoted," he went on at last, "but I don't like her eyes. They're too intense. I caught her two or three times watching me strangely. I can't imagine where Miss Holladay picked her up, or why she should have picked her up at all. She's French, of course. She speaks with a decided accent. About the money, I suppose we'd better sell a block of U. P. bonds. They're the least productive of her securities."

"Yes, I suppose so," agreed Mr. Royce, and the chief called up a broker and gave the necessary orders. Then he turned to other work, and the day passed without any further reference to Miss Holladay or her affairs.

The proceeds of the sale were brought to the office early the next afternoon, a small packet neatly sealed and docketed—100 thousand dollar bills. Mr. Graham turned it over in his hand thoughtfully.

"You'll take it to the house, of course, John," he said to his partner. "Lester'd better go with you."

So Mr. Royce placed the package in his pocket, a cab was summoned, and we were off. The trip was made without incident, and at the end of half an hour we drew up before the Holladay mansion.

It was one of the old style brown stone fronts which lined both sides of the avenue twenty years ago. It was no longer in the ultra fashionable quarter, which had moved up toward Central park, and shops of various kinds were beginning to encroach upon the neighborhood, but it had been Hiram Holladay's home for forty years, and he had never been willing to part with it. At this moment all the blinds were down and the house had a deserted look. We mounted the steps to the door, which was opened at once to our ring by a woman whom I knew instinctively to be the new maid, though she looked much less like a maid than like an elderly working woman of the middle class.

"We've brought the money Miss Holladay asked Mr. Graham for yesterday," said Mr. Royce. "I'm John Royce, his partner." And without answering the woman motioned us in.

"Of course we must have a receipt for it," he added. "I have it ready here, and she need only attach her signature."

"Miss Holladay is too ill to see you, sir," said the maid, with careful enunciation. "I will myself the paper take to her and get her signature."

Mr. Royce hesitated a moment in perplexity. As for me, I was ransacking my memory. Where had I heard that voice before? Somewhere, I was certain—a voice low, vibrant, repressed, full of color. Then, with a start, I remembered. It was Miss Holladay's voice as she had risen to welcome our junior that morning at the coroner's court. I shook myself together, for that was nonsense.

"I fear that won't do," said Mr. Royce at last. "The sun is a considerable one and must be given to Miss Holladay by me personally in the presence of this witness."

It was the maid's turn to hesitate. I saw her lips tighten ominously.

"Very well, sir," she said. "But I warn you she's most nervous, and it has been forbidden her to talk."

"She will not be called upon to talk," retorted Mr. Royce curtly, and without answering the woman turned and led the way up the stair and to her mistress's room.

Miss Holladay was lying back in a great chair with a bandage about her head, and even in the half light I could see how changed she was. She seemed much thinner and older and coughed occasionally in a way that frightened me. Not grief alone, I told myself, could have caused this breakdown; it was the secret weighing upon her. My

represent men, women, goats and other animals, beautiful flowers, immense chrysanthemums, giant roses and peonies, lovely dahlias, mums, monks in full costume and graceful musical instruments. Each figure contains an empty jar or penata of pottery, which is hidden by the decorations or costumes of colored tissue paper, most skillfully applied. The jars are filled with goodies and unbreakable toys.

When friends have been invited to a posada the house is decorated with evergreens and mosses, flowers and tinsel in all the rooms and corridors. In one room is the scene in the stable of Bethlehem—the stable yard and servants, the animals, trees and plants, groups of Biblical characters, little toy fountains. All that money can do to beautify the beginning of the "old, old story" is done according to the taste and means of the host and hostess. The little manger, amid soft lights and draperies, stands ready for the Nino Santo.

A procession of the guests and family forms in another part of the house, and the pilgrims, or peregrinos, march two and two, led by one who carries the lanterns, they go through the house, winding in and out of the rooms and galleries.

At last the wanderers stop at the door of the room in which is the manger. Two voices, representing Mary and Joseph, in a wailing hymn beg to be admitted. Voices within chant a denial. Finally a voice announces who they are that plead for shelter; then the door is thrown open, and the peregrinos are allowed to enter. The Babe is placed in the manger, often by a priest, and songs of rejoicing burst forth.

The penatas are next on the programme, the details varying with the fancy of the host.

In a convenient place the penata is suspended, and the little folk, and big ones who choose to take part in the merriment, are blindfolded one at a time, turned around a time or two, then given a stick with which to break the jar if possible. So many trials, then another tries. When one succeeds the contents fall to the floor and a scramble follows to see who gets the most. In some old families there are evenings when the numerous servants partake of the joys of the posada and share in the souvenirs and refreshments provided.—Collier's Weekly.

Continued

Mexico's Christmas Posadas

TO one who has been away from the United States for a term of years the Christmas holidays there seem like a feverish rush, and the simple pleasures indulged in during the nine days of posadas in Mexico are returned to with a certain measure of relief.

A posada is an inn, and the idea pervading these festivities is that story, known to all the world, of Caesar Augustus, who, in the height of his power, wished to know the number of people who bowed beneath his scepter. In order to determine the fact he decreed that a census should be taken of all the nations composing the great Roman empire. To effect this Augustus sent twenty-four commissioners to the different parts of his world. The edict commanded that every person, rich or poor, weak or strong, should go to the place of his birth or to the original place of his family to have his or her name inscribed in the Roman registry.

Joseph and Mary, who were both of the royal house of David, went to the town of Bethlehem. They found it so full of people on the same mission that they wandered about the town for nine days seeking shelter. On the ninth day they were allowed to stay in the stable of a posada, and there the Nino Santo, or Holy Child, was born. The posadas are held for nine evenings in commemoration of those weary days.

Of course there are miserable homes where no sign of a posada is held, but Mexicans, rich and poor, are generous. No matter how dirty and ragged, every one is welcome in the churches, beautifully decorated, and at the nightly posadas held in them, though there the penatas are omitted, as the celebrations are entirely of a religious nature. To the children the penatas are very important features of the season. They

represent men, women, goats and other animals, beautiful flowers, immense chrysanthemums, giant roses and peonies, lovely dahlias, mums, monks in full costume and graceful musical instruments. Each figure contains an empty jar or penata of pottery, which is hidden by the decorations or costumes of colored tissue paper, most skillfully applied. The jars are filled with goodies and unbreakable toys.

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Notable Women

One of the World's Famous Women Astronomers.

Three women have been noted as astronomers. They are Caroline Herschel, English; Maria Mitchell, American, and Mrs. Williamina Fleming, the lady at present in charge of the star photographing department at Harvard university. Mrs. Fleming was born and educated in Dundee, Scotland, but came to America early in life. She began her career as a teacher. She was especially attracted



MRS. W. P. FLEMING.

to mathematics, however, and in 1871 was appointed to the observatory staff at Harvard. There she has been since.

Caroline Herschel and Maria Mitchell were star gazers, sweeping the night sky with the telescope. Mrs. Fleming is an expert in star photography.

Mr. Herschel's branch of astronomy unknown in the days of Caroline Herschel. It is not possible to photograph stars through a telescope that, of course, enlarges them and brings them within range of the astronomer's vision. Many a time stars invisible to the naked eye have thus been discovered. Mrs. Fleming and her assistants examine star photographic plates and find and locate unknown dwellers in the firmament.

Mrs. Fleming has discovered more than 100 new stars. Eight of them have belonged to the class known as variable stars—those that suddenly appear at points where none were before, grow brighter and brighter for a time, then wane and finally disappear into the darkness whence they emerged. Eleven such strange stars have been noted since 1848. The last one was that found by Mrs. Fleming in August. She makes a special study of the photographic plates made at Cambridge and at Arequipa, Peru.

Edith King, Detective.

The crowd at a New York city fern not long ago witnessed a strange sight. It was a slender, refined, well-dressed young woman making her way south toward the Battery with a staid, young man chained to her wrist by two other equally staid young men who were handcuffed together, walking quietly along with her.

The young woman was Miss Edith King, a girl belonging to the staff of Philadelphia detective agency. The young men were soldiers who had deserted from the United States army and the girl detective had traced them arrested them and herself brought them over to the headquarters of the eastern department at Governor's Island. The agency employing Miss King makes a specialty of finding deserters from the army. Miss King is frequently placed on their trail—naturally, perhaps. She gains their confidence, and their capture follows. One of the three men whom she took to Governor's Island offered her \$1,000 to let him slip but she refused. She received \$500 piece reward for her captives.

Miss Bernice Gallagher.

There is one woman in the photographing department of the National museum in Washington, and her name is L. Bernice Gallagher.

She is the assistant government photographer, one of her specialties being the taking of microscopic pictures, a task extremely difficult and trying to the eyes. In this department Miss Gallagher has few equals. Not long ago she made some pictures of beautiful sensibleness so small they were barely visible to the unaided eye. She has also a rare skill in making lantern slides for use in stereoscopic views.

The government sent its head photographer, Professor S. M. Smith, to Washington, N. C., to take pictures of the eclipse of the sun. Eight negatives were obtained, each almost three feet in diameter, and these Miss Gallagher printed. They are said to be the best of any of the eclipse photographs.

MARCIA WILLIS CAMPBELL.

Hotels For Women.

It is certain that there is at present no better priced investment than moderate priced hotels and restaurants for women in all the large cities. Such hotels, likewise residence clubs for girls who earn their living, are rapidly increasing in London. They always yield a good dividend, are always crowded and have a long waiting list besides.