The Green Cloak

By YORKE DAVIS

STORY FROM THE START

Dr. Ronald McAlister, famous in his special work,—applied psychology—employs his leisure time in the elucidation of crime mysteries. As the narrative opens he is interested with Assistant District Attorney Ashton in the murder, in the small town of Oak Ridge, of a recluse, Henry Morban. The murdered man, his papers reveal, had been in New Zealand, where Doctor McAlister had lived in his youth. Will Harvey has testified he saw a woman wearing a green cloak in the Morgan home the night of the murder, Doctor Reinhardt, friend of McAlister, telephones he has a queer case in his hospital and invites McAlister to see the patient.

CHAPTER II—Continued

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Her skin was very dark, a brownish-olive, her hair blue-black, very abundant and wavy, and the surrounding white of pillowcase, sheet and nightdress set off the richness and depth of her coloring to the greatest advantage.

Where the quality in her face lay that gave it that strange, weird, unearthly look, even now in quiet slumber, I could not decide. The features were bold, rather than fine; the brows and lashes very heavy, and the nose broad at the base, the lips full and rather wide, though not protruding, the cheek-bones high and prominent.

But this analysis left me no wiser than before; it failed utterly to account for that strange different look her face wore. There was no negro blood in her veins, even in a remote stage of dilution. The fact was as obvious as it was that she was not a Caucasian.

"There will be no trouble about identifying her," Doctor Reinhardt remarked, and I agreed with him, thinking that he referred to the strange quality of distinction I had noted about her face. But it was evident, the next moment, that he had some more definite mark in mind, for he took up one of the passive hands that lay upon the coverlid and started to strip back the sleeve of her nightdress. But the movement was arrested by an imperative gesture from Doctor McAlister.

Looking up at him, for the first time since we had stopped beside the girl's bed, I saw that his eyes were shining with an unaccountable excitement. He bent down over the pillow, his ear not six inches away from the half-parted lips. Then we saw that the lips were moving, and, in the suddenly enforced silence, caught the sound of a queer, droning chant. It only lasted a minute. Then, with the sudden, lazy motion of one deep asleep, she turned on her side, cuddled her cheek on her palm, and the chant died out in a sigh.

Doctor McAlister straightened up suddenly, walked away three or four paces, then wheeled and came back. Ashton and I watched him curiously.

"You started to show me her arm," he said to Doctor Reinhardt. "Is there a mark there?"

With a nod, he pulled up the sleeve and showed us, high on the forearm, a queer little bit of tattooing in red and blue. "I know something of tattooing," he said, "but that mark and the way it's executed puzzle me as much as her language does."

Doctor McAlister merely nodded. He had understood the language; I would almost have taken my oath to that, from the expression his face wore as he bent over her, listening. I wondered if he understood the mark, too.

"You say you've been trying to wake her, and haven't succeeded?"

"Yes, and I confess I'm puzzled, because there's nothing trancelike about her pulse or her respiration."

Doctor McAlister made an examination on his own account, but it was very swift, and I should have called it perfunctory, yet it was clear enough that this queer patient had, only a moment before, excited his keenest interest. But he did one thing which I think must have surprised Doctor Reinhardt as much as it did Ashton and me. He turned back the bed clothes and examined, rather minutely, the girl's feet.

"Well, I'm much obliged to you for bringing me out for a look at her," he said to Doctor Reinhardt, as he straightened up and prepared to leave the ward. "She's been that way, you say, ever since she was brought in?"

"Yes."

"She's in a hypnotic or subjective condition of some sort. I'd be very glad if you'd keep me informed, over the 'phone, concerning her condition. If there's any radical change, I'd like to come out and see her again.

"If you don't mind my suggesting it, I believe it would be a good thing to take her out of the ward and put her in a private room where she could be under constant supervision. If she says anything, in any intelligible language, it might be well to make a note of it."

With that and a brief word of good night, he strode away, and Ashton and I followed him, he looking completely mystified, and I feeling scarcely less so. We drove back to The Meredith with hardly a word, but as we crossed the lobby on our way to the elevators, Doctor McAlister paused.

"Ashton," he said, "I will be glad to help you all I can—I mean in the matter of tracing Morgan's New Zealand connections. But I'm going to ask a favor of you. Give Phelps and me here a chance to make a little investigation of this case on our own account."

"Any thing you like," said Ashton heartily. "Go out to Oak Ridge and hunt about all you like. I'll even turn my impressionable Mr. Harvey over to you after I've finished with him tomorrow morning, though I can't guarantee there'll be much left of him."

We went up in the elevator together, and my chief, with a nod, indicated that he wanted me to come to his sitting room.

When the door was closed behind us, he filled his pipe and began striding, slowly, up and down the room. But

He Bent Down Over the Pillow, His Ear Not Six Inches Away From the Half-Parted Lips.

he stopped before me at last, and with a preliminary "Hump," and a grasp of a muscular hand upon my shoulder he said:

"I suppose some people would call that a coincidence."

"Some connection, you mean, between the woman Will Harvey testified he saw and the one we saw lying there in the hospital?"

"Morgan lived in New Zealand, didn't he? And Ashton says he had maps, vast numbers of maps of the southern Pacific—large scale maps of the groups of islands that are scattered all through it. It's fair to suppose, then, that he had some reason for interest in those far-off South Sea islands."

"The girl!" I exclaimed. "The girl in the hospital!—Did you mean that she comes from that part of the world? From one of those islands in the South seas?"

"The mark on her arm is enough to prove that," he answered.

He paused there, but I knew that was not all.

"That queer mumbled song of hers?" I hazarded.

He took another turn across the room before he answered that question. "Yes, I understood it," he said at last. "That song, as you call it, was an old Maori death chant."

Doctor McAlister had resumed his thoughtful patrol of the room. "Of course," he said half under his breath, "it may be a coincidence, just that and nothing more."

"No," said I. "No, I can't believe that. There must be some stronger connection than mere chance, between the murdered body of that man in the house out at Oak Ridge and the death chant of that girl at whose bedside we stood tonight. It must be more than chance."

But my chief turned upon me sharply. "Don't make the mistake of thinking that," he said. "There is no greater source of error in the world than the belief that unlikely things can't happen. They happen every day, coincidences, against which the chances are a thousand to one. Still," he paused in his stride and plowed his hands through his thick gray hair—"still, to put it conservatively, it's vastly more likely than not that there is a connection; that this girl has some place in that unknown past of his, which he thought he had sponged out so completely."

"Well," said I, "if she was any place at all, isn't it altogether likely that she is the person who committed the murder? And if that's so—well, what are we going to do about it? Tell Ashton?"

He wheeled round at that and smote a near-by door panel with his great fist. "No, by thunder, no! Not that. Not, at least, until we've solved this mystery for ourselves; until we are sure we understand it. And I mean by that," he went on, looking at me fixedly, "I mean a good deal more than merely proving she was the woman whom Will Harvey swore he saw in silhouette upon the shade; until we've proved more than that it was her hands that pulled taut the catgut string around the old man's neck."

"What more than that," I asked unsteadily, "can you hope to prove, or want to prove?"

"This," he said, stopping before me and looking straight into my face; "this. That it was her will which directed the hands, and not her soul that was responsible for the crime."

"You mean," I gasped with sudden half-perception of his meaning, "that there may be another will concerned in the business?"

"Exactly that," he answered. "I mean that judging from that girl's condition tonight, it may very well be that the real murderer of that old man was no nearer to the house in Oak Ridge the night the murder was committed than we are now."

CHAPTER III

The next day Doctor McAlister and I each packed a handbag with enough to keep us going for two or three days, and about noon set out for Oak Ridge. The weather had been fine and rather mild for November, but shortly after our return from the hospital the night before, the wind had whipped round into the north. By morning it had developed into a lusty gale, which drove the fine stinging rain and sleet slantwise, down from a leaden sky. By the time we were ready to start, the rain was already turning to snow.

We rode in the half-filled smoking car, and hardly exchanged a word, until after we had pulled out from a tiny suburban station and the brakeman, opening the door amid a hail of cinders, had cried out: "Oak Ridge next." Then Doctor McAlister, who sat facing me, leaned forward.

"Our friend Ashton has a considerable power of vivid description," he said. "Unless I'm altogether mistaken the young man who is setting three seats behind you, on the other side of the aisle, is the witness of whom he told us yesterday. I felt tolerably sure of it when my eye first lighted on him. He's going to get off at Oak Ridge, and I think that settles it. One small town could hardly boast another like him."

"How do you know he's going to get off at Oak Ridge?" I asked.

"He straightened up a little in his seat and began to readjust his necktie when the brakeman called the name of the town."

When I had made a pretext for changing over and sitting with the doctor, I quite agreed with his identification. There, to the life, was the young man whom Ashton had described to us. I thought I could see traces upon him of the grilling to which Ashton must have subjected him this morning. His eyes were sullen, his color unstable and his hands fidgety. I was half-inclined to think there might be something in the theory of Mallory, the detective, after all.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

President in Power in Troublous Times

James Buchanan, as fifteenth President of the United States, occupied the White House when the questions of slavery and states rights were dangerously fermenting. His administration, from 1857 to 1861, saw the prelude to the Civil war.

Buchanan was born April 23, 1791. As a Pennsylvanian he disapproved of slavery, but being a strict constitutionalist and a Democrat, he held to official convictions. He publicly denied the right of secession, and refused to treat South Carolina representatives as foreign delegates.

His chief difficulty was an unsympathetic congress.

The Dred Scott decision and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry so stirred the nation during his administration that those events somewhat submerged his diplomatic accomplishments of settling the question of British dominion in Central America and by stopping Great Britain's "right of search" on American ships. The first Atlantic cable was laid in Buchanan's administration.

Before he died, June 1, 1868, Buchanan wrote his own vindication of his administrative policies.—Exchange.

So That's What It Was

A German biologist says the orang-outang can sing, and we fancy we must have heard it over the radio recently.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

POULTRY

FLESHING MASH AIDS CONDITION

The high egg production obtained during the past year on the demonstration farms throughout New Jersey, and at the Bergen and Vineland egg-laying contests, is attributed by F. C. Clickner, of the agricultural experiment station, primarily to the use of a fleshing mash during the fall and winter season. The effect of the mash has been to keep the birds up to proper body weight, so that they were able to resist winter complaints and keep on a steady egg production basis.

The fleshing mash used was made up of the following ingredients: 1 pound corn meal, 1 pound ground rolled oats; 1 pound semi-solid buttermilk, and 1 pint codliver oil, when codliver oil had not already been incorporated in any other part of the ration.

"This mixture," says Mr. Clickner, "moistened with water so as to form a crumbly mash, is sufficient for 100 birds at one feeding. It is best fed sometime near the noon hour, preferably early in the afternoon, so that the birds will have sufficient time to empty their crops and take on a good supply of the scratch feed before perching. The real value in the fleshing mash is that sometimes we find difficulty in keeping the birds up to fourteen pounds of scratch, and they are less likely to drop on this account when the fleshing mash is fed. There is no danger of forcing with the use of the fleshing mash since it is not a wet mash for stimulating production."

Laying Birds Require Dry Air in Henhouse

Laying birds need dry, live air in the poultry house, with no drafts. This means a sufficient supply of oxygen, which in combination with proper feeding and exercise will keep the birds naturally warm. Dampness is death to egg production and poultry houses become damp readily for the reason that the birds breathe off practically 75 per cent of all the moisture taken into their systems; a hen's coat of feathers is an almost perfect non-conductor of heat when dry and will retain the body heat, but immediately the feathers become damp the body heat escapes and the bird is cold, resulting in a debilitated condition predisposing the birds to dangerous colds and making them susceptible to any disease that may lurk unseen in their environment.

Drinking Vessels for Ducks Should Be Deep

Unless the duck has a chance to thoroughly rinse its nostrils, and at the same time dash its head in water, injury may come from clogging the nostrils or getting sore eyes, writes M. K. Boyer in the Farm and Ranch. The drinking vessels should be deep enough for this purpose.

Annually a large number of yarded ducks are lost by having sore eyes and going blind. This is caused by dirt lodging in the eyes. Where ducks have access to a stream of water, or have drinking vessels deep enough so they may be able to get their heads under water, they can readily wash out this dirt. When they do not have that opportunity, the eyes fester and loss of sight is the consequence.

Chicken Paralysis Is Causing Heavy Losses

According to Dr. L. P. Doyle of Purdue university, chicken paralysis is now recognized as a distinct disease which is widely distributed and is causing heavy losses. He maintains that worms do not cause paralysis in chickens.

Birds affected with this disease continue to have good appetites and die in an emaciated condition because they cannot reach a food supply. When this disease is present in a flock, there are nearly always mature fowls showing a peculiar type of blindness in which the colored part of the eye turns almost white. No cure has been found. Avoid hatching eggs from flocks so afflicted.

Comb of Laying Hens

It is comparatively easy to tell which hens in the flock are laying. Probably the first point to observe would be the comb, which in a laying hen is usually of good size and bright red, while in a hen not laying the comb will be pale, small, dry and covered with a white scurf.

The next point to observe would be the vent, which in a laying hen is moist, soft and expanded, while in a non-laying hen the vent is dry, hard, and puckered.

Why Hens Roost Out

Sometimes people complain that the hens do not like to roost in a poultry house, but when one examines the house it is easy to see why they prefer to stay out of doors. Too often the house is dark, dirty, poorly ventilated and infested with mites which suck the very life from any fowl that dares to seek shelter in the place. Oil drained from the crank case of an engine or automobile will kill mites. Save it for the poultry house.

Horticultural News

FRUIT TREES ARE HARMED BY PESTS

Not a year goes by that there are not numerous complaints of heavy loss of fruit trees due to the ravages of mice and rabbits. Injury from mice is comparatively easy to control. The succulent bark of the young tree is particularly tasty to them in the lean months of winter, but as they are under the snow and do not climb the trees, some means of protection will prevent their damage. Ordinary building paper does very well, not the tarred, but the plain gray building paper. Cut this in strips 6 inches or 8 inches wide and tie around the trunk of the young trees, banking up around the bottom with a little earth. A better and more permanent way is to use wire protectors made from either galvanized wire of a fine mesh or from expanded metal lath. Cut this material into strips about 18 inches high and 18 inches or so wide to allow for expansion of the tree, and fasten with small pieces of wire. This material will last several years without replacing, and insures adequate protection against mice and against rabbits as far as the material reaches, but rabbits have the faculty of getting on top of the snow and chewing the branches above the snow line. This makes protection a rather difficult matter. There is not any really good treatment for rabbits, but the following poison has met with some success and is worth trying: White arsenic, 1 part; corn meal, 3 parts. Mix thoroughly and spread about the area to be protected. A repellant which has also been used with varying success is as follows: Unslaked lime, 20 pounds; flowers of sulphur, 15 pounds; water, 40 pounds. Apply this to the trunks with a brush. —M. B. Davis, Division of Horticulture, Central Indiana Experimental Farm.

Strawberries Protected by Covering With Straw

Everyone interested in growing strawberries in any way, will find it a valuable thing to mulch the vines well before the beginning of severe winter weather. The best material and generally the handiest is to employ straw. When the ground is frozen, apply the straw. Some four inches deep as the straw lies loose, is a good depth for the covering.

Allow the straw to so remain until early spring, or at the period when vegetation starts a growth. Then with the fork remove from directly over the hills or the matted rows of plants, about three-fourths of the straw, but leave it in the spaces between the rows. Allow it to remain in that position until the berries are all picked.

There are several advantages of the use of straw as winter protection of the plants. First, the plants do not become drawn out of the soil, if the winter season is one of much hard freezing. Second, by leaving it in the spaces, no grass or weeds can come up and much hard work is saved. Third, the straw so placed conserves the moisture, and fourth, the ripening fruit is kept free from sand or soil. This is mighty important, for unclean berries are hard to sell and fail to bring remunerative prices.

The whole process as described is not expensive, makes strawberry growing a pleasure and fully rewards anyone for the time and labor expended.

Low-Headed Trees Find Favor in Many Sections

The introduction of the San Jose scale a little more than twenty-five years ago created an immediate demand for low-headed trees. This extended to a point where many apple trees were headed as low as 18 inches. Now, the open center type framework is popular for apples as well as peaches in New Jersey and many other fruit districts.

In the attempt to secure a low, open center apple tree, very little attention in practice has been given during the last 20 years to obtaining an adequate spacing of the framework branches upon the trunk.

This fortunately has not resulted in any serious percentage of breakage of tops in New Jersey. Stayman, however, and to a less degree, Delicious, have proved to be varieties that tend to form weak main crotches if the main branches are too closely bunched.

All apple districts are, therefore, urging a better spacing of the main branches of apple trees. The open center type of tree is still the most popular in New Jersey. Because of this, a slight extension or distribution of the head is the corrective pruning recommended.—J. A. Blake, Horticulturist, New Jersey Agricultural College.

Earliest Berry Bushes

Currants and gooseberries are among the earliest of our berry bushes to leaf out in the spring. For this reason the plants should be set in the ground where they are to remain permanently just as soon as possible. The plants will grow even though in full leaf before being transplanted. But they will not respond and make the strong growth the first year that they would if the plants were still in a dormant condition when they were first set out.

DAIRY FACTS

PROVED BULL IS MOST VALUABLE

One can never be absolutely sure of the breeding value of a bull until his daughters come into milk. It frequently happens, however, that a good registered bull can be bought from a neighbor who can no longer retain him on account of having too many of his daughters in the herd. Such bulls, when their daughters have proved to be good producers, if they are free from disease, may often be purchased for less than their actual breeding value. A man runs no risk in buying a healthy, proved bull, says the Iowa Homestead. Many a bull has been sent to the shambles before his breeding value was discovered in his offspring. Don't let a good bull of this sort go to the butcher if you can use him. Always bear in mind that the real value of a dairy bull is determined by his daughters.

The dairyman, intent upon building a high-producing herd, must constantly select the best females as well as males for breeding purposes and weed out the poorer individuals. There is only one way to do this intelligently. He must keep production records of his cows. He must weigh and test the milk of each cow at least once a month. He can do that himself if he wants to. The time required to do the work is small. Such a test can be easily made once a month in two hours, and the operator will find it a mighty interesting task as well as a very profitable one.

Another way to accomplish the same end is to join a cow testing association. Where that is practicable we strongly recommend that plan. We wish to emphasize, however, that where there is no cow testing association, and no prospect of getting one established, do not neglect the testing and record keeping on that account. Do it yourself. Work of this sort pays big dividends. It brings results.

Economy and Efficiency of Machines in Milking

An extensive study as to the economy and efficiency of milking machines is being made by the dairy husbandry department of Iowa State college, Ames, Iowa. While the work is not completed, the most recent results indicate that:

1. The use of the machine does not affect the milk flow.

2. With a herd of approximately 25 cows, time saving amounts to about 48.5 per cent. One man with a machine can replace two men hand milking.

3. One man operating two units is more efficient than if he attempts to operate three units.

4. Unless great care is exercised in cleaning the machine and in operating it, the bacterial count will be higher than with hand milking.

5. The sediment content of machine-drawn milk is lower than that of hand-drawn milk.

Buttermilk for Calves Favored by Two Experts

E. V. Ellington and J. C. Knott of the Washington experiment station have just reported their results on substituting dried buttermilk and semi-solid buttermilk for skim milk in the calf ration. Twenty-four calves were divided into three groups of eight each. One group was fed skimmed milk, another dried buttermilk at the rate of eight parts water to one part of dried buttermilk. A third group was fed semi-solid buttermilk at the rate of eight parts water to three parts of semi-solid buttermilk. The results showed these buttermilk feeds to be satisfactory substitutes for skim milk where skim milk is not available.

Dairy Facts

Rye and corn silage will help dairy farmers to overcome hay shortage.

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Keeping records will show the dairy farmer how to make ten cows do the work of fifteen.

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Dry pastures mean low milk production unless sows are fed both a concentrate ration and good legume hay.

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Much butter manufactured in the late summer and fall has objectionable flavors, not only because of the difficulty of keeping cream sweet and untainted in the hot summer weather, but also because of the poor feeds in the dry pastures.

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Cattle kept in a warm shed will do better every time than those left out in the wind.

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Chasing cows with dogs or driving them on the run with horses will decrease the flow of milk. Rough handling or loud speaking by the attendant will also have this effect.

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Even in summer the silo competes successfully with soiling crops, for it supplies a uniform green feed independent of weather conditions and with economy of time and labor.