

FIND THE CORPSE

By R. H. WILKINSON
© Bell Syndicate.—WNU Service.

"IT REMAINS now," said Inspector Joe Warren, "but to find the corpse."

"That won't be so difficult," volunteered the young man in the tweed knickers, who was idly watching Warren.

"The river's not deep here, but the current's rather swift. Just below our property there is a sharp bend. Nine chances out of ten, Uncle Raymond's body is lodged there. And if not, the river empties into a small pond below the bend. If the pond is dragged—"

He ended with a significant shrug. Detective Jim Bradley, Warren's chief aide, who composed the third and last member of the group nodded approval.

"And that lets us out of a hard day's work, inspector. Let's go home."

He moved, as if to follow in the footsteps of the young man in the tweed knickers, who had already started off in the direction of the house.

But Warren remained standing under the tree.

"Wait a minute, Jim. There might be something to this."

As he spoke, Warren stooped and picked up something from among the grass and leaves.

Bradley turned in faint surprise and annoyance.

The day was hot, beastly hot. And yet, standing there on the river bank, in the dense shade of the great, thickly needled pine tree, the heat was bearable.

"Suicide," said Bradley shortly.

"Dead open and shut. Old Man Barnes came down ostensibly to take his usual morning dip. His dressing gown is here on the bank. And we have the note, saying he was going to end it all."

"The note was typewritten," Warren reminded.

"And besides, he gave no reasons for wanting to commit suicide."

Bradley shrugged, and there was the barest of a twinkle in his blue eyes.

He had seen his chief reach up and tug at the lobe of his left ear, a certain indication that the inspector had something serious on his mind.

"Suspect the kid?" Bradley asked bluntly.

"Maybe," said Warren.

Bradley gestured.

"Count him out. He wouldn't have been so serious to tell us how shallow the river was, if he didn't want us to drag it. And there's no place else around here to hide a corpse—at least for any length of time."

"Well, there's no one else to suspect right now. Look!" Warren suddenly held out his hand and exhibited the article that he had picked from among the dead grass and leaves.

It was a small wood screw.

Bradley became a trifle sarcastic.

"This wasn't getting them anywhere, and it was hot."

"My great powers of detection," he said, "inform me that the article in your hand is a screw. What of it?"

Warren shook his head impatiently.

"Why not say what's a screw doing her, under a pine tree, far from any building? And only one?"

"It's driving me screwy," said Bradley, still sarcastic.

"There's blood on it," said Warren.

"Blood?"

"Sure. Look!"

Bradley bent forward, and suddenly became alert. He knew Warren well enough to realize they were getting somewhere.

"Well?" he said.

"I wonder," mused Warren, deliberately changing the subject, "why young Barnes wanted us to drag the river?"

"So we'd find the body," Bradley offered.

Warren shook his head.

"Rather," he disagreed, "because he knew we wouldn't find the body. Why didn't he want us to find it? Why?"

"I'll bite," said Bradley with quickening interest.

"Why?"

Warren tugged at his ear-lobe and frowned.

Once more his eyes wandered to the waiting figure in the aspen grove.

Suddenly he started.

It was not enough of a start to attract the attention of young Barnes, a hundred yards away.

But Bradley saw and became curious.

"Well?" he asked for the second time.

"Jim, I've got it! Young Barnes wanted us to drag the river at once because he knew we wouldn't find the body and we'd give up. Then after we'd gone away, began looking elsewhere, possibly for the corpse, he'd remove his uncle's body from its present hiding place and dump it in the river. The river is the only logical place to dispose of a dead man. And Barnes knew that after we got through dragging, it would be the only safe place."

"Fine," Bradley agreed.

"Now, all we have to do, is look for the body, or drag the river and then lie in wait for young Barnes."

Warren began to grin.

"Use your head, Jim. Where would be the logical place for the young man to hide the body until he could dump it in the river?"

Bradley frowned.

Things were beginning to develop, and if possible he wanted a share of the credit for solving the mystery.

"Why," he said at length, "in view

of the fact that the old man weighed pretty close to 200 pounds, I'd say that the man who killed him would want to keep him near the river. It would lessen the work when it came to carrying him to the water."

"And to boil it down still further," Warren agreed, "the murderer would likewise spare himself the effort of removing the body far from the scene of the murder for the same reason. And if the scene of the murder was right here . . ."

Bradley turned completely around and let his eyes sweep the immediate vicinity.

The nearest hiding place, it seemed, was the grove of aspens, where now sat young Barnes.

He made as if to start in that direction, but Warren halted him.

"Let's just suppose," said the inspector, "for the sake of argument, that young Barnes is the murderer. Look at him. He can't weigh over 130 pounds, and he looks pretty weak to me. Frankly, I don't suppose he could carry a 200-pound dead man 10 feet."

"So what?" said Bradley.

Warren's eye dropped to his hand, which still held the screw with its splotch of blood.

"Jim," he said quietly, "the most logical and convenient place for young Barnes to hide the body of his uncle is right over our heads, amid the thick branches of this tree. He used a block and tackle to hoist the body up there. A screw must have been loose, and dropped out. I guess we'd better climb this tree and take a look-see. I have a hunch we'll not only find old man Barnes up there, but a complete block and tackle, which the youngster intends using to lower the corpse into the river after we've dragged it. But first . . ."

Warren paused, and his eyes went up and out toward the grove of aspens. Bradley nodded gravely, and the two men set out toward the figure in tweed knickers that waited there, idly switching at the tall grass.

And This Happened In a Free Country

By R. M. Hofer

The other day I was in a country grocery store on the Oregon Coast. Some travelers were getting soft drinks.

I asked the lady proprietress, whom I knew, if she couldn't make me a ham sandwich. She motioned me to one side and said that the law prohibited her from selling sandwiches unless she took out "another" license.

She pointed to the wall of the store which was covered with licenses, federal and state, which were required for the sale of different products.

"But," she said, "there is no law yet that prevents me from giving you a sandwich," which she did.

What a picture! A free country, a little country grocery store, a hungry man—and the law prohibits him from buying a sandwich.

From Marshfield, Oregon, comes the astonishing press dispatch that two dairymen were fined, not for selling impure milk but for the high crime of selling milk that was too rich, too pure—just as it came from a good cow.

I could hardly believe my eyes. There was no false labeling, no adulteration—the crime seemed to be that they failed to "water" their milk sufficiently to bring the butter fat content down to the legal requirements for the grade of milk sold. The court, handling the case gave the offenders a suspended sentence and placed them on parole for a year.

And this happened in the land of the free! Men hailed into court and sentenced for serving their customers too well.

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Poet's Corner....

(Local Poets are invited to make contributions for this Column.)

God is With Thee

Do not fear nor be discouraged
Should this journey dark appear;
Travel on by faith directed,
God is with thee, O what cheer.

He will lift the heavy burden,
Make thy pathway grow less drear;
Ever trust His precious promise,
God is with thee, O what cheer.

EDITH SEELEY,
Tigard, Oregon

Symphony

Let me play
In God's great Symphony of Life. . .
Let me put a smile or two
Where there were only tears,
A little faith and hope and joy
Where there were doubts and fears

If I could take one life and say
I've made it happier today,
Then, even thru the storm and strife
I'd know I played
In God's great Symphony of Life.

ROSA M. HALEMBA
Aloha, Oregon

A Home

What is a home?
It is a place
Where a mother's sweet, kind face
Holds the clue to love and rest;
Hold belief for what is best,
Holds a hope for all the race.

What is a home?
It is a spot
Where a house and garden plot
Tell the essence of our dreams
And our outer burden seems
Far away and half forgot

What is a home?
It is a dream
Of the wanderer on life's stream,
Tell the treasure rare to be
Again beneath the old roof-tree
Where all of peace and comfort seem.

No man whose feet have led to roam
But dreams some time of that dear home.

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Effects of Salt

If your ancestors ate salt you probably are fair skinned, according to a theory discussed by Dr. Thomas G. Orr, professor of surgery at the University of Kansas. Blond races, says the theory's sponsors, invariably come from the north where salt has been available for centuries. Darker and black skins, on the contrary, are asserted to be derived from ancestors native to intermediate countries such as China, Korea and India, where salt formerly wasn't so plentiful.

Southern Lights

Aurora polaris is the name given to these atmospheric displays. When seen in the northern hemisphere they are known as the aurora borealis; if in the southern, aurora australis. It is believed that they are caused by electric discharges originating with or induced by the sun.—Pathfinder Magazine.

In this day of unrest and uncertainty, too many of our citizens prefer to accept as gospel the words of demagogues and unscrupulous politicians rather than sit down and sanely and carefully think things out for themselves. Common Sense.

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