

The Mazaroff Mystery

By J. S. FLETCHER

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

W. N. U. Service

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NR TO-NIGHT
TOMORROW ALRIGHT

Canaries of Many Colors

Many colors of canaries were shown at the recent grand national show of cage birds held in the Crystal Palace, London. Blue canaries were entered for the first time, and there were a number of white ones and hundreds of yellow singers. Roller canaries were tested for song in a remote, softly carpeted room. One feathered prima donna went from Metz, France, to sing. Another cock or novelty in the show was a white jackdaw. More than 500,000 worth of birds of many varieties were displayed.

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THE STORY

Mervyn Holt is engaged by a man calling himself Mazaroff as a traveling companion. After a short tour they put up at the Woodcock Inn on Mazaroff's moor. They meet, casually, Mrs. Elphinstone and Sheila Merchlison. Mazaroff tells Holt they are his wife and daughter and that his real name is Merchlison. That night Mazaroff fails to return to the inn and his disappearance is unexplained. Holt meets Sheila and tells her of Mazaroff's disappearance. They go to her cousin's (Verner Courthope) shooting box hoping to find some word of Mazaroff. There they meet Mr. Armitrade and Doctor Eccles-share. Holt is questioned by Police Sergeant Manners and a reporter, Downna. Mazaroff's murdered body is found. Crole, Mazaroff's lawyer, and Maythorne, private detective, arrive. Valuable diamonds that Mazaroff usually carried are missing. Mrs. Elphinstone scoffs at the idea that Mazaroff is Merchlison.

CHAPTER III—Continued

"Nothing absurd, ma'am, in my telling you that," retorted Crole, with the least touch of asperity. "Holt, turning to me, 'you will just tell me precisely what Mazaroff confided to you, the second night of your stay at the Woodcock. Tell the whole story.' I told the whole story, as we all stood there in that little room. But, though I watched Mrs. Elphinstone closely during my narrative, I saw no sign of any wavering on her part.

"The thing's absurd!" she declared in the end. "Utterly absurd! The man was probably some adventurer who had got hold of certain facts about Merchlison's past history, and wanted to make money out of his knowledge!"

"Um!" Crole said quietly. "Now that, ma'am, if you will pardon me for using plain speech to a lady, is indeed an utterly absurd suggestion! Mr. Mazaroff, or, as we should call him, Mr. Merchlison, so far from being a needy adventurer, was a wealthy man, a very wealthy man! And if you will pardon me still further, I will just put something before you. If this man was, as he asserted himself to be, and as we shall probably prove, Andrew Merchlison, who married you twenty-two or three years ago, your second marriage with Mr. Elphinstone is no marriage at all! You are still, in law, Mrs. Merchlison, and—"

"What is all this leading up to?" demanded Mrs. Elphinstone. "I—"

"To this, ma'am," continued Crole, lifting an admonitory finger, "and a very important point, too, as you will quickly see. Although I have had very little dealing with this unfortunate man, I have had some dealing, while he was in London, and it is my distinct impression that he has died intestate."

"Well—and what has that to do with me?" questioned Mrs. Elphinstone.

"Merely this, ma'am. If he was Merchlison, and you his wife, and this young lady your child, you and she come in, between you, for every penny he's left! And there will be a great many pennies, or I'm a Dutchman! My advice to you, ma'am, is this—before settling on an attitude of incredulity and denial, just step across to the Woodcock, and see if you cannot satisfy yourself that the man lying there, sadly disfigured, but identifiable, was not the man he claimed to be."

With this Crole made one of his old-fashioned bows and walked out, and I followed him, leaving mother and daughter standing looking at each other. As we passed the gates, Crole pulled out a snuffbox and took a hearty pinch.

"That's a d-d flint-like woman, Holt," he said, cynically. "Hard-hard—and obstinate!"

My own impressions of Mrs. Elphinstone were precisely those which Mr. Crole expressed so emphatically. But I was just then thinking of other matters.

"If the real Andrew Merchlison was drowned in Bombay bay," I said, "how could—"

Crole interrupted me with a sharp, sceptical laugh.

"Aye, but was he so drowned—there, or elsewhere, or anywhere?" he exclaimed. "My own belief is that he was never drowned at all! For all that Sinclair, the writer of that letter, knew, Merchlison had arranged for a boat to come off for him at a certain hour at night—it comes and he slips off into it and is clean gone. Easy! He could have sent money and things—especially money—aboard of him to wherever he was bound. Didn't you tell me he spoke of Durban?"

"If Durban, yes," I answered. "It was there he took the name of Mazaroff."

"Aye, well," continued Crole, "no doubt he'd some reason—other than the one he told you of—for leaving his old name behind him. He may have wished folk in both England and India to believe that Andrew Merchlison was dead. But letter or no letter,

cabin trunk or no cabin trunk, monument or no monument, I believe that Salim Mazaroff was Andrew Merchlison, and that he was murdered as Merchlison, and not as Mazaroff."

"As—Merchlison?" I exclaimed, pausing in sheer surprise. "But—who knew him, here, as Merchlison?"

"That's got to be found out, my lad!" he answered, with a knowing look.

We found Maythorne standing at the door of the inn, in company with Musgrave; Maythorne gave Crole a sort of informing smile as we came up to them.

"Mr. Musgrave has just made a discovery," he said. "His gun is missing."

"Not three months since I gave twenty pounds for it!" Musgrave muttered. "Very near brand new it was! Couldn't have believed it could have been taken from there, neither."

"And where was it taken from?" asked Crole.

"It was taken from the private sitting room that Mr. Holt there, and the dead gentleman had," replied the land-



lord, with a glance at me. "Hung on the wall, on two hooks it was, just inside the door—you may have noticed it, Mr. Holt?"

"Yes, I noticed a gun there, certainly," I replied. "But—I hadn't noticed that it had gone."

"Nor me—only I haven't been into that room this last two or three days," said Musgrave. "It was the missis that found it out—she came to me about it just now. Of course, some of them drover chaps poked their noses in there, and, seeing nobody about helped themselves to it—easy enough, that would be."

"Was the gun loaded?" asked Maythorne. "I suppose not?"

"Well, it was," admitted Musgrave. "I kept it loaded—you never know what you may want in a lonely place like this."

"Dangerous, though, to keep a loaded gun about, don't you think?" said Maythorne, good humoredly. "By the bye, what sort of cartridges were there in your gun?"

"Kynoch's, number twelves," replied Musgrave, promptly. "Always used those."

"That might help you in tracing the gun," remarked Maythorne. "You should tell the police that." He turned from the landlord towards the moor, motioning Crole and myself to follow him. "I'm going to have a look at this Reiver's den," he said. "Better come with me. Odd, isn't it, that Musgrave's gun, loaded with number twelves, should disappear on the very night on which Mazaroff is shot dead? Didn't you tell us, Mr. Holt,

When Armies Meet in Battle on Chessboard

The principles of chess are based on the struggle of every-day life. It is a battle between two armies of equal strength, fought on a field of 64 squares. Victory usually perches on the more proficient of the two generals in command. In a technical sense, the capture of the opposing king is not permitted, yet when the capture is inevitable, the game is ended. This fact seems to escape the recognition of many players, who direct their entire energies to the capture of pieces or pawns, when consistent play would indicate an easy road to victory through the medium of a checkmate. The temptation to proceed with the

that the doctor showed you some shot which he called number twelves?"

"He did," I assented.

"I suppose this doctor—what's his name—Ecclesshare?—knows number twelves from number tens?" he suggested.

"He's a shooting man, himself," I replied. "Staying at High Cap lodge with a shooting party."

"Ah, then he'd know what he was talking about," he remarked, and turned from me to Crole. "Well—and Mrs. Elphinstone?"

Crole told him all about our delings at Mazaroff's tower as we walked across the moor. He listened and said little. But I noticed that his eyes grew brighter and his whole air more alert when we came to Reiver's den—a black, gloomy, eerie; just the place for murderous deeds. There was a local policeman on guard there; he showed us the place where Mazaroff's body had lain and been discovered. This was amongst a mass of gorse and bramble at the foot of an almost perpendicular rock, some thirty to forty feet in height.

"My mate, what found him," the policeman said, in a confidential whisper, "he says as how when he first come across him, he thought as the gentleman had fallen over them crags in the darkness. But of course he hadn't—and 'cause why? If he'd ha' fallen from there, he'd ha' broken his neck and every bone in his body; big, heavy man like that he was. And there wasn't no bones broken. My impression, gentlemen, is as how he was murdered first, and carried here afterwards. Look how these here shrubs is trampled down!"

Maythorne was closely examining the surroundings; I noticed that he, too, was apparently struck by the evident trampling of the gorse and bramble. Once or twice he stopped, as if to look closer at his objects—once I saw him pick something from the ground and thrust it into his waistcoat pocket. Presently he came back to where Crole and I stood with the policeman.

"If a gun were fired in this ravine, those rocks would give back a fine reverberation," he observed. Then he looked at the policeman. "You didn't hear anything that night?" he asked with a smile.

"I heard nothing," agreed the policeman. "Don't know nobody as did, neither. There's a cottage by here—just back o' that clump o' beech—the folks there, they didn't hear nothing. Not—nothing whatsoever!"

"Oh, there's a cottage there, is there?" said Maythorne. "And who lives in it?"

"Old shepherd and his missis—Jim Cowie, his name is," replied the policeman. "I was talking to him about this affair just now—they heard nothing."

Maythorne turned away, toward the clump of beech. We followed him, along a narrow track that ran at the foot of the rocks under the lower branches of the trees, and went up a flagged path to the cottage door; Maythorne knocked; a woman's voice bade us enter.

Inside, at a round table drawn up in front of a turf fire, an old man and an old woman sat. At sight of us, the old woman rose, politely, but the old man stuck to his seat, eyeing us with no friendly glance. He got in the first word, too, surly, before Maythorne could address him.

"Don't know nothing about that there affair in the den yonder!" he growled. "Told'd the policeman just now we neither heard nor see'd anything, and don't want no bother about it."

"My good friend!" said Maythorne, soothingly. "We only wanted to ask you where this footpath, that crosses Reiver's den, and goes outside your garden, leads to? We're strangers."

"There now, master!" remarked the old woman, glancing reprovingly at the old man. "You see now!—this gentleman's only asking his way. The

attack before all the pawns are in the field is a great one, but such premature attacks are usually abortive and frequently result in disaster. Chess literature abounds in examples of games in which disaster and defeat were a direct consequence of the failure to develop properly one or another of the pieces.—Exchange.

Birds Named Themselves

The peewee named itself by its call, and bob white wrote its name into his greeting. By his call, the cuckoo, has made himself an international character, while the chickadee has individualized itself in its utterance. When asked what's in a name, the birds might reply: "We have put most of ourselves into them, and they have been most excellent advertising."

Don't Be a Wabblers

Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work in hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus.—Alexander Graham Bell.

Daughter Is Healthy Now

"My thirteen-year-old daughter Maxine was troubled with backache and pain when she came into womanhood. I knew Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound would help her because I used to take it myself at her age. Now she does not have to stay home from school and her color is good, she eats well and does not complain of being tired. We are recommending the Vegetable Compound to other school girls who need it. You may publish this letter."—Mrs. Floyd Bucher, R. #2, Gridley, Kansas.

Our Worldly Infants

Mother—Where do bad little girls go?
Betty—Most everywhere.— Exchange.

As Youth Understands It

Sunday School Teacher—Now, Nettie, what does it mean to bear false witness against one's neighbor?
Nettie (aged seven)—It's when nobody ain't doin' nothin' and somebody goes and tells it.

path, sir?—it leads across the moor to High Cap lodge, sir; Mr. Courthope's place."

"Then it makes a short cut to—where, now?" asked Maythorne.

"Well, sir, it's a short cut from Mr. Courthope's to Birnsdale, and to the Woodcock," replied the old woman. "But it's little used, sir—it's little better than a sheep track."

"And we didn't see nobody along it that night, neither one way nor 'other," growled the old man. "Don't know nothing—ain't got nothing to tell—nothing!"

We backed out, closed the door, and went away. Maythorne smiled—inscrutably.

"All the same, Mazaroff followed this path," he said. "Why? Did he want to go to High Cap lodge?—Mr. Courthope's place? Or—had he been there and was coming away from it? Who knows? However, I want to go up to the top of those rocks."

He turned off the path, and began to make his way to the head of the ravine through the scrub and undergrowth. Crole and I followed. We came out on a sort of plateau, overlooking the black depths in which Mazaroff's body had been found. And there, a solitary figure, stood another old man, older, it seemed, than the crusty and ancient fellow we had just left; grayer, more gaunt and wrinkled, but erect and alert, and evidently quick of hearing as a boy, for at the first sound of our approach he turned sharply upon us.

"The place already attracts the curious," he observed, half-ironically.

"We have something more than idle curiosity to bring us here, sir," retorted Crole, almost sharply. "We are the dead gentleman's friends! May I in my turn ask—as you seem interested in the matter—if you can tell us anything to help us?"

The old man smiled, and looked from one to the other.

"Well, I could tell you of something, but whether it will help you or not I don't know. Yet—it might. I heard a gun discharged—hereabouts—on the night this man was missed."

"And about what time would that be?" inquired Crole.

"About what is usually my bedtime," replied the old fellow. "Ten o'clock."

Crole looked at Maythorne. "That must have been the shot," he said, musingly.

Just then the policeman at the foot of the rocks, who had been pottering about the bushes, looked up, and waved his hand excitedly.

"Come down here!" he shouted. "I've found something. A gun!"

We began to descend the rocks to the dense undergrowth amidst which the policeman stood. He was gingerly handling a sporting gun, and as we drew up to him, he nodded toward a clump of overgrown gorse.

"Shoved in beneath that!" he exclaimed. "That's where it was."

Maythorne opened the breech—there were two cartridges in the barrels; one, in the choke-bore barrel, had been discharged. He glanced at Crole.

"Odd!" he said. "Why didn't he use the right-hand barrel?"

The old gentleman, who seemed to be fascinated by the sight of a weapon that had doubtless been used by a murderer, laughed a little.

"If that's the gun that was used to shoot this young gentleman's elderly companion," he remarked, "as I, personally, have no doubt it was, there's a good reason why the murderer used the left-hand barrel. Perhaps you're not a shooting man, sir?—if not, I may tell you that the left-hand barrel of a fowling piece is always narrowed in the bore as it approaches the muzzle; the notion, of course, is that the shot, or discharge, is concentrated rather than diffused. If a man wanted to shoot another man dead, at close quarters, as in this case, he'd naturally use the choke-bore barrel in preference to the other."

Then, with a polite nod, he turned and went off. Maythorne watched him for a minute or so; then glanced at the policeman.

"Who is that old gentleman?" he asked.

"That's Mr. Hassendene, of Birnsdale house, sir," replied the policeman.

Maythorne drew Crole's attention and mine to a name and address engraved on a plate let into the stock—J. Musgrave, Woodcock Inn, Mazaroff's. "This is the landlord's missing property, sure enough," he remarked.

We left Reiver's den, and went back across the moor. Maythorne, as soon as we reached the Woodcock, sought out Musgrave and told him of the discovery of his missing gun. He hurried over his lunch, and as soon as I had finished mine, addressed me.

"The police are sure to come along here after the finding of that gun," he remarked. "And I want to be beforehand with them. I want to examine Mazaroff's belongings."

"Just so!" murmured Crole. "That, of course, must be done."

We went up to the dead man's room. Maythorne did the searching while Crole and I looked on. In the waistcoat pockets of a well-worn tweed suit Maythorne found a number of loose diamonds, large and small.

"What did I tell you?" exclaimed Crole as the diamonds came to light. "He did carry diamonds, loose, on him! Look at those, now—must be a dozen or so stones there, loose in his pocket! Do you suppose those are worth a lot, Maythorne?—You know more about it than I do."

"Can't say," replied Maythorne, differently. He was more deeply interested in a crumpled scrap of the paper which he found in an inner pocket and smoothed out before us.

"Look at this!" he said, presenting something, at any rate.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Daddy's Evening Fairy Tale

MARY GRAHAM BONNER

YANGTZE

It was along the eastern coast of China that David first saw the Yangtze river. Yangtze spoke to him at once and said:

"I've heard from Geo. David, that you've talked to other rivers, and I hope you're not so weary of river ramblings and talk but what I can tell you my story too."

"Yes," said David, with a certain amount of pride, "I've become quite well acquainted with rivers, but I should love to hear your story, Yangtze. It will be wonderful when I get back home to say I've talked to the Yangtze river way over in China."

Yangtze smiled a jolly, happy smile.

"If I talk too much," he said, "you may stop me, but you can't stop me from flowing in a river way. I've a river brother who is important around here too, named the Yellow river or Hwang Ho. Between us we've built up a great plain and they've helped us with canals so as to enable people to get from one rice field to another. We're all mighty fond of rice. Most of the big ports such as Canton and Shanghai and Tientsin are near our mouths."

David really didn't mind how much Yangtze talked. He loved hearing the Chinese names. To him they had always been names he had never expected to know familiarly.

"To be sure," Yangtze was continuing, "we care about corn, too, and grain and silk."

"But what a good time I have! Great ships from the sea come sailing up along my river. I let them go as much as a thousand miles and how I



The Yangtze River.

do enjoy them. Beyond that distance there are rocky gorges and rapids. Only smaller boats can go further. Come along and wander with me."

So David went wandering along the Yangtze river. He saw pagodas and slender bamboo trees. Yangtze told him that the bamboo trees were used to help make roofs and walls to the houses and pipes too through which water could be carried. And chairs made from bamboo trees too, as well as beds and buckets, baskets and matting, and the frame work of umbrellas, lanterns and fans, rakes, combs, storks. From the leaves raincoats were made, so that David did not wonder that Yangtze admired them for their usefulness, but he admired them mostly because they were so lovely to see.

There were willows growing along the river's banks too, and the soil along the river was really fat looking and quite yellow.

"Good rich soil," Yangtze said, "and yellow is our favorite and most important color over here. It's what we call the imperial color."

There were islands along the river. Now and again there was a mist and then the sun would quickly come out and there were rainbows and the dampness of the dirt didn't get David wet at all.

They passed tea fields and Yangtze said:

"Sometimes they call me the river of the Fragrant Tea Fields. Isn't that a nice name?"

David agreed that it was. "Then," continued Yangtze, "Hong Kong, down along the coast, means Fragrant Streams as in the olden days vessels used to put in there to get fresh and sweet water."

David saw sheds decked with orange blossom wreaths and perfumed flowers and he saw silk worms being hatched under blankets, spinning their silken cocoons. He saw Yangtze at times looking as thick as though made of pea soup and Yangtze laughed when David spoke of it.

"I even make part of the Pacific yellow too!"

On they passed by farms and little settlements where Map children played and where banners waved in the breeze or where lanterns shook and almost seemed to be merrily laughing.

"Now and again," said Yangtze, "typhoons sweep in from the Yellow sea. That's when your friend Wind gets excited. Oh, but it gets excited."

Britain's Richest City

If the proportion of well-to-do citizens may be gauged by the number of private motor cars licensed in a city, then Bradford is the richest city in Great Britain. In ratio to its population, Bradford has the largest number of private motor cars; London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and Birmingham being far behind. With 5,700 private cars, Bradford has one for every fifty of its inhabitants.

Men Becoming Weaker Sex

Prof. A. M. Low, the famous Scotch electrical inventor, claims that, at the pace we are traveling, within 50 years women will be as strong as men, and within 100 years man will be considered the weaker sex.

Daughter Is Healthy Now

"My thirteen-year-old daughter Maxine was troubled with backache and pain when she came into womanhood. I knew Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound would help her because I used to take it myself at her age. Now she does not have to stay home from school and her color is good, she eats well and does not complain of being tired. We are recommending the Vegetable Compound to other school girls who need it. You may publish this letter."—Mrs. Floyd Bucher, R. #2, Gridley, Kansas.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Summer COLDS

Almost everybody knows how Bayer Aspirin breaks up a cold—but why not prevent it? Take a tablet or two when you first feel the cold coming on. Spare yourself the discomfort of a summer cold. Read the proven directions in every package for headaches, pain, etc.

For Sale or Trade—1,400-acre sheep and dairy farm (free water) on highway and R. 2, Pittspatrick & Thorp, Walla Walla, Wash.

For Galled Horses

Hanford's Balsam of Myrrh

All dealers are authorized to refund your money for the first bottle if not suited.

Diet for Zoo Captives

Two tons of dried grasshoppers were ordered from South Africa recently for animals at the national zoological park at Washington, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. They were for the diet of some of the rare African birds and also for mixing with the food of some of the mammals, according to the zoo director, Dr. William M. Mann. Valuable elements are combined in the proper amounts in the insects, experts have found, and few satisfactory substitutes for them have been discovered.

Get poisons out of system . . .

Doctors know that this modern scientific laxative works efficiently in smaller doses because you chew it. Safe and mild for old and young.

Feen-a-mint FOR CONSTIPATION

THE ONLY LAXATIVE That Chews Like Gum

Daughter Is Healthy Now

"My thirteen-year-old daughter Maxine was troubled with backache and pain when she came into womanhood. I knew Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound would help her because I used to take it myself at her age. Now she does not have to stay home from school and her color is good, she eats well and does not complain of being tired. We are recommending the Vegetable Compound to other school girls who need it. You may publish this letter."—Mrs. Floyd Bucher, R. #2, Gridley, Kansas.

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