

# The Mazaroff Mystery

By J. S. FLETCHER  
W. N. U. Service

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS  
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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 Marrasdale moor. They meet, casually, Mrs. Elphinstone and Sheila Merchison. Mazaroff tells Holt they are his wife and daughter and that his real name is Merchison. That night Mazaroff fails to return to the inn and his disappearance is unexplained. Holt meets Sheila and tells her of Mazaroff's disappearance. Holt is questioned by Police Sergeant Manners and a reporter, Bowman. Mazaroff's murdered body is found. Crole, Mazaroff's lawyer, and Maythorne, private detective, arrive. Valuable diamonds that Mazaroff usually carried are missing. A gun, stolen from Muzgrave, is found at the scene of the murder. Evidence at the inquest proves Mazaroff was Merchison. His will leaves all to Holt. Herman Kloop, close friend of Mazaroff, is in London. From him it is learned that Mazaroff possessed two remarkable diamonds, which he had offered for sale to Lord and Lady Loeke. Loeke says Mazaroff had one of the stones and his agent, Armitrade, the other. Miss Merchison arrives at Holt's rooms with the missing will which she had stolen from her mother.

### CHAPTER VII—Continued

"Mervyn!" she whispered. "Parlavale! Gone in—there!"

"Parlavale!" I exclaimed. "The man missing from Marrasdale? Impossible!"

"I tell you Parlavale has just gone into that shop—the tobacco shop! Parlavale is in that shop! Come back!"

"You're certain?" I said.

"Dead certain! Parlavale is in there! Watch for him—let me stand in this shop door."

"He'll know you?"

"Of course! If he comes this way, I'll slip into this shop and buy something—anything. If he goes the other way—follow. Good heavens!—what is he doing here!—in London?"

It was a drapery establishment by which we were standing, with a deep doorway—Sheila slipped within its shelter; I, half-hidden, kept an eye on the tobaccoist's door. And presently out came a tall, wiry fellow, obviously a countryman, bronzed in cheek and neck; he turned along the pavement, away from us.

Sheila came out of the doorway and glanced down the street.

"That's Parlavale!" she said. "But I knew it was. What next?"

"We must follow him," I answered.

"No matter how he goes, I'm going to track him. Look here—I'll keep a little way behind him; you keep a little way behind me."

So we began our chase of this man who had disappeared from Birnside on the night of Mazaroff's murder, and for whom the police had already instituted a hue-and-cry.

Parlavale went slowly away in front, and just as slowly Sheila sauntered after me in the rear. He was an easy man to follow, and it needed little watchfulness on my part to see that he had not the ghost of an idea that he was being followed.

He turned to the right sharply, into Praed street, crossed the roadway, and a little further along the other side, turned again. Sauntering after him, at a considerable distance, I saw him enter the side door of a house—a rather big, more pretentious house than those that flanked it. Then he disappeared. I hastened my steps, walked swiftly past the house he had entered, and on the side door, on a dirty, uncleaned brass plate read, to my utter amazement:

"Dr. Eccleshare  
Surgery Hours 9:30 to 11 a. m. 7 to 8:30 p. m."

I hurried back to the top of the street, where Sheila was already hanging about.

"Got him?" she asked.

I touched her arm with one hand, pointing with the other to the house at the further end of the street.

"You see that house down there?—the one that stands out from the rest?"

"That's Eccleshare's! Eccleshare's, do you understand? Doctor Eccleshare, Eccleshare's—good Lord! And—Parlavale's in there!"

Then silence fell upon us. We stood, mutually questioning each other. Sheila spoke first.

"Eccleshare's house!—and Parlavale in it? Then here's some devilry at work. Mervyn—what's to be done? Of course, I see how things are. Eccleshare sent Parlavale here—to hide!"

But I had been thinking during that moment of silence—thinking fast.

"There's only one thing to be done," I said. "Look here—do you just what I tell you. Get a taxicab. Go straight to Maythorne's—103B Conduit street—got that?—and tell him exactly what's happened. Get him to come back here with you, and to bring his clerk, Cottingley. Meanwhile, I'll keep an eye on Parlavale and that house. Now—hurry!"

She went off on the instant, without as much as a word, and I turned to watch the house fifty yards away.

And I had not watched long before Parlavale came out again, and came my way, too. He was carrying a rush basket, such as servants use when they go shopping. I sauntered after him (on the opposite side). He went to a grocer's shop; he bought potatoes and a couple of fine cauliflowers. And, that little domestic mission fulfilled, he went leisurely back to Doctor Eccleshare's. I pictured him and some housekeeper woman in there—Parlavale would doubtless be peeling the potatoes, like any tame family man, and exchanging pleasant talk with the female presiding genius—and yonder in the Northumbrian wilds, three hundred miles away, the police were wanting him . . . on suspicion of murder!

I was laughing softly over this when a hand was laid on my arm. I looked sharply round—to see Maythorne's queer clerk, Cottingley. He jerked a thumb over his left shoulder, silently, and following the gesture I saw, a few yards away, Sheila, Maythorne, and a strange man, somebody or other got up for the part of the confirmed loafer, the type that just hangs about, and hangs about.

"Guv'nor!" said Cottingley, as if introducing Maythorne. "Here!"

I went up to Maythorne and Sheila, Cottingley at my heels. The loafer person made a slinking movement to



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the rear, and began to study the contents of a shop window. Maythorne gave me a glance that meant more things than I could realize.

"Now then, Holt," he said, plunging straight into business, "Miss Merchison's given us a description of this man Parlavale—just you give us another, so that Cottingley and this other man of mine will know him to the last detail. Here—Johnson!"

The loafer individual slid close to us, like a shadow sifted by a moving light, and he kept his eyes on me without blinking while I rapidly but thoroughly detailed a description of Parlavale.

Cottingley nodded at Maythorne, nudged the loafer, and they turned away, with seeming utter indifference. Sheila stared after them in obvious wonder.

Maythorne laughed and motioned us toward the end of Praed street.

"You two young people can go off duty now," he said. "Parlavale is as safe as if we'd got him inside the Jewel case at the Tower! Take my advice—go somewhere and have the day to yourselves. Leave all this to me—the only thing is that I want you, Holt, to look in at my office at six o'clock sharp this evening. Now—I'm off! Business!"

### Minimum of Waste in Sardine-Canning Plant

In a Down East sardine canning factory the only thing that is wasted is the odor. That may not be a dead loss, for there are persons who assert they like the smell of a sardine factory. The scales are sold to the manufacturers of artificial pearls. The fish meal is in demand in Germany and in this country. The waste oil is collected and utilized in the production of paints and varnishes. Even the tin cuttings from the cans are baled and shipped to England for reprocessing into new sheets of the metal.

Down East sardines are sent to 95 different countries. In Java, when

### Not Included

The librarian had missed some of her regular visitors in the children's room. One day a little girl came in who was a cousin to the missing ones. On being questioned as to where her cousins had been so long, she told the librarian they had had the scarlet fever. "but," she added, "the rest of the family are not 'guaranteed.'"

He was in the taxicab which he had kept waiting and was being driven away before we could say anything. We both looked at each other and laughed.

"That's good advice of Maythorne's, anyhow," I said. "Let's follow it. Let's go somewhere where we can talk about—"

"What?" she said as I hesitated.

"Ourselves!" said I. "We've had enough of other people."

We had a delightful lunch in a delightful, old-fashioned inn; we spent the afternoon amongst the autumn-tinted lanes, and . . .

But that, after all, has nothing to do with this story, though it has all to do with Sheila and myself. At half past five I took her back to her friend's flat, and then went on to Conduit street and Maythorne. He immediately waved a telegram at me.

"Here you are, Holt," he said. "More developments. A wire from your man, Webster."

There was no great amount of wording in Webster's telegram, but such words as were there conveyed a good deal of highly important information. This is what Webster said:

"Courthope, Armitrade, Eccleshare, Mr. and Mrs. Elphinstone all left here for Carlisle by eight o'clock train this morning."

I handed back the telegram without comment.

"Carlisle, of course, means London," Maythorne said. "The scene of operation's shifted, Holt—we've got some of the chief actors close at hand."

"Mrs. Elphinstone, of course, has come after her daughter," I suggested.

"And the will," he answered. "Or to find out what her daughter's done with the will. Well—there are two men we'll have to have a pretty straight talk with tomorrow. We're going to have it out with Armitrade. After that, we're going to interview Eccleshare—and Parlavale, if need be. But tonight you and I are going to see Mrs. Elphinstone. We know where she's to be found—and we'll go now and find her."

"Where?" I asked, wondering if he had some further information.

"Can you doubt?" he answered with a laugh. "She'll be found at Ashington mansions—where, I suppose, you've just left her daughter. I want to ask Mrs. Elphinstone a question or two. And I may as well tell you, Holt—she won't answer 'em! Tonight, at any rate."

"That I quite expect," said I.

"Just so! But she'll answer 'em tomorrow—or next day—or the day after that," he said, with a significant glance. "The thing is, first, to put them to her."

We rode up to Maida Vale and got out of our cab some twenty or thirty yards short of Ashington mansions. Maythorne immediately nudged my elbow.

"What did I tell you?" he said.

"They're here, now!"

In front of the main entrance to the flats a taxicab stood. And within it sat a woman—a tall, angular, elderly woman, dressed in somewhat rusty black, who stared straight in front of her until, attracted by our momentary halt and seeing our eyes turn in her direction, she gave us a quick side glance only to withdraw it sharply and to look ahead again, still more steadily. We passed on and entered the door.

"I've seen that woman before, remarked Maythorne, as we crossed the hall to the elevator. "At Marrasdale."

"So have I," I answered. "I saw her about the Woodcock—in fact, I took her for the cook. What can she be doing—here?"

"Mrs. Elphinstone will know," he said. "But—I shan't ask her that, now. Well—what's this Miss Apperley's number?" he went on, as we were whirled upwards. "Twenty-seven? Right! Now then, Holt—we

walk straight in! We'll excuse ourselves to Miss Apperley afterward."

I did as he bade me. Without ceremony as much as a tap, I opened the door of Miss Apperley's sitting room, and Maythorne and I entered, abreast. We plunged into the middle of things. An acrimonious debate was already at its full height. Sheila stood, indignant and defiant, by the center table. Mrs. Elphinstone was enthroned, obviously in a fine temper, in an elbow chair by the hearth. Mr. Elphinstone was perched on the edge of a chair in another corner, nursing the handle of his umbrella and apparently as uncomfortable as a nervous and peaceable man can be.

"—not one word, good mother, till you tell me how you came into possession of that will!" Sheila was saying, and saying with emphasis, as we strode in. "It's up to you to speak first—you're . . ."

She broke off there, or, rather, Maythorne broke things off for her. He strode forward and took the words out of Sheila's mouth.

"Your daughter's in the right, Mrs. Elphinstone," he said in cool, even accents. "It's up to you to give explanations. Now, come, Mrs. Elphinstone—how did you obtain possession of Mazaroff's will—which is now safe, let me tell you, safe—in Mr. Crole's strong room. Come?"

Mr. Elphinstone groaned—wearily. But Mrs. Elphinstone showed temper—and fight.

"How dare you speak to me—me!—like that?" she demanded. "What right—?"

"My dear lady!" interrupted, Maythorne. "Be calm, and don't be foolish. Think a little. Here is a very wealthy man murdered under most suspicious circumstances. He has his will in his pocket, with other papers, and with valuables, and with money. He is not only murdered, but he is robbed of everything he has on him. Nothing can be discovered about his missing property. Then a few nights later, your daughter accidentally finds out that the will is in—your hands! What do you suppose the police authorities will say to that, Mrs. Elphinstone? I'm asking you."

Mrs. Elphinstone looked at him half-wonderingly, as though to estimate and slightly stupid people will look at a questioner: I could see quite well that she was wondering how he dared to be so plain-spoken and unceremonious.

Mr. Elphinstone groaned once more—audibly. "Most distressing!" he murmured. "Most—unpleasant. Really—I—I think, Marion, that—er—you know—if I were you—I—I think I should say how you got this—er document—I should—really."

"Mrs. Elphinstone will have to say how she got it, and from whom," observed Maythorne. "That will was from our doubt abstracted—stolen—from Mazaroff's pocket by the man who murdered him. And, Mr. Elphinstone, it is later discovered in Mrs. Elphinstone's keeping. How came it there?"

Mrs. Elphinstone suddenly gathered up her wraps and her umbrella and rose from her chair.

"What right have you to ask me questions?" she demanded, facing Maythorne. "You're not a policeman, as far as I'm aware, and I don't know that you've any authority. I am going, and whoever wishes to see me will find me at Short's hotel. You'll find me there, Sheila—I shall not run after you again."

"That's a useful thing to know, Mrs. Elphinstone," said Maythorne, still perturbed. "You will no doubt be called upon at Short's. This is a matter of murder! And whether you like it or not, Mrs. Elphinstone—or, as it should be, Merchison—I am going to know who murdered Mazaroff. If you know, you're already an accessory after the crime."

Mrs. Elphinstone was at the door by this time, and her eyes were as hard as ever as she swept us all with a cold contemptuous glance. "Are you coming, Malcolm? As for you, Sheila, if you want me again, you'll have to come to me. Otherwise—"

She made a gesture which seemed to indicate that she washed her hands of her daughter and of everybody present, and without waiting for Mr. Elphinstone, she marched off down the corridor.

Mr. Elphinstone shook his head—wearily and despondently. He looked round at all of us as if he wanted to speak, but no words came, and he presently turned and went after his wife. Maythorne closed the door, and glanced at us.

"You may think I was too explicit—perhaps brutal—with Mrs. Elphinstone," he said, "but I don't believe any of you understand. Knowing what I do—and Crole, of course, knows it now—I cannot keep this information from the police! It's impossible! We know—the police know—that Mazaroff was robbed as well as murdered. That will was on him! How did Mrs. Elphinstone get it? She is shielding somebody. That's the truth! Now, then—who is it? Then, without waiting for any reply or remark, he tapped my shoulder and set off. I lingered a moment, to exchange a word or two with Sheila, and then followed him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



### GREAT BANQUETS

The button bush flowers aren't like the big buttons one sees in a work box.

So, really, there is no special reason for such a name. Each button bush plant has a great, great many flowers upon it and each one of these flowers is filled with the most delicious honey.

There was going to be a banquet that day, and the banquet table was to be the bush.

It was being held in the swamp where the bush grew. Perhaps you could say that the many, many flowers on the button bush looked a little bit like very small buttons, but any way each of these flowers was filled with the most delicious honey.

"When is the banquet to begin?" asked one little flower.

"In a very short time," said the Button Bush.

"Patience, though, little flowers. The guests will come soon."

"Who are the guests to be?" asked the flowers.

"All the little insects of the swamp," said the Button Bush.

"Oh, goodie!" they said. "It will be a great and magnificent banquet, a great and gay banquet."

And they all looked very happy. At last the guests began to arrive, and once they had started to come it seemed as though they would never stop.

Of course, they held banquets every day in the swamp, and many times a day, but this was a very special banquet.

One little insect was seated upon the edge of a tiny button bush flower.

"Will you tell me a secret?" asked the insect.

"What is it?" asked the flower.

"Ah, it's a secret you all have; but if you will tell me I will promise to



Guests Began to Arrive.

tell only my friends and companions, the insects.

"You don't mind if I know. We're all such friends."

"What secret have we that you want to know?" asked the little flower.

"Ah, sly one, sly one, you know," said the insect.

The flower moved a little in the breeze. "Have another good sip of honey and I will tell you," said the flower.

"That's an easy command to obey," said the insect.

"We are very, very shy," said the flower. "Yes, all the flowers on each of the button bush flowers are so shy that they want to keep away from people."

"We have been told we would make lovely garden flowers and that people would admire us."

"They say we are so fragrant and sweet and that we are pretty to look at."

"All of which is true," said the insect, making a low bow, and taking another little sip of honey.

"But somehow we love the swamps best. They are so quiet. People don't come to the swamps so much, and we are so shy. People are nice, we haven't a doubt, but we like to be off by ourselves and so we always grow in the swamps where there are no houses, but where there are lots of insects."

"We like insects. They enjoy our delicious honey—for we can't help boasting a little of our honey, which every tiny flower has, and we like to give our honey to the insects."

"We help them and they help us. We all love each other. The insects come to us because they hear of our rare honey and because we are so fragrant that they are drawn to us."

"But, little insects, do not feel sad if the world doesn't see us, and because the world can't share with you our fragrance."

"We are shy, we have always been shy, and we will always be shy."

"But the people in the world outside the swamps have many beautiful things to look at and enjoy and we want to help along the swamps which aren't always so nice."

"And we love to give banquets. Yes, little insect, the button bush and the insect family are great friends when they meet in a good old out-of-the-way swamp!"

Contrast

Mother—Your neck is blacker than usual today.

Little Son—No, mamma. It is only because I have got a clean collar on—

Pearson's.

### Reach Man Through Ego.

Says Expert on Matter

The adage that "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach" is old and honored, but it is not exactly true, protests Elinor Bailey Ward, adviser to girls in Smart Set Magazine.

Before we have a man to cook for we must reach him through his ego.

Ego is not conceit. A small boy's ego is shown in his boasts of his physical prowess, of how his dad can beat up all other dads, of how his mother can bake the best pies, and so on.

Ego carries over from the small boy into the man. It changes its outward expression, but it is the same ego. You must encourage it in him. Wasn't it wonderful that he was so rapidly promoted! Isn't he kind to take care of his invalid mother! You do wish he'd explain baseball to you. Dear girls, there are a thousand ways of feeding this ego. Sympathize with him, and, if you can, let him help you. He likes that.

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Pearson's.



### Mother of Four Babies

"Although I am only 22 years old, I have four babies to care for. Before my first baby was born my mother urged me to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound because I was so terribly weak. I had to lie down four or five times a day. After three bottles I could feel a great improvement. I still take the Vegetable Compound whenever I need it for it gives me strength to be a good mother to my family."—Mrs. Vern L. Dennings, 510 Johnson Street, Saginaw, Michigan.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound



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