The Mazaroff Mystery

—By—

J. S. FLETCHER

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS

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W. N. U. Service

CHAPTER XI—Continued

—18—

"And you got out, how?" asked Maythorne.

"This evening, when we were about done up, for lack of fresh air—though to tell the truth, I'd long since broken the window!—" replied Sheila, "we suddenly heard sounds outside the door. Then we heard the bolt withdrawn, and the key turned, and somebody outside ran away—the hall door banged. We immediately went out—the place was all in darkness and silence. We left the house and hurried off to find a cab—"

The door of Mrs. Elphinstone's bedroom opened and the nurse looked in on us.

"Mrs. Elphinstone wishes to see Mr. Elphinstone and Miss Merchison," she said.

A moment later, Maythorne, I, and the two policemen were alone. Maythorne rose from his chair, put his hands in his pockets, and looked inquiringly at Corkerdale.

"Well?" he said.

Corkerdale smiled—inscrutably—and nodded at the door through which Mr. Elphinstone and Sheila had just vanished.

"Don't believe that yarn!" he said, almost contemptuously. "Romance!"

I was on my legs at that—I dare say I turned on the detective in a fury.

"What the devil do you mean!" I demanded. "Are you questioning Miss Merchison's word?"

"I mean that however true the young lady's story may be—and I ain't questioning it," said Corkerdale, "I don't believe that the old lady, in there, isn't in this! She and the woman, Murdoch—put-up job between 'em! The kidnaping! a piece of bluff—to enable the other woman to get away. Of course, the other woman—Bownas came across her, and she tricked him into that alley, and did him in! Obvious! But—Mrs. Elphinstone's in it, and I'm not going out of this hotel, nor Manners, either, till we've done a bit of questioning. That's that!—as they say nowadays."

I was still boiling with rage, but I looked at Maythorne, inwardly wondering that he was so calm. He had kept on nodding his head, while Corkerdale spoke, and he was evidently about to give him some meditated reply when a knock came at the outer door and a waiter looked in.

"Mr. Maythorne?" he inquired, glancing round the room. Then, as Maythorne moved towards him, he added: "Will you come to the telephone, sir?—name of Cottingley asking for you."

CHAPTER XII

The Boat Train

Maythorne hurried out of the room, leaving me, still indignant and glowering, alone with the policemen. Presently Corkerdale, who had been whispering to Manners, turned to me.

"It's all very well, and I've no doubt very natural, for you to be a bit huffish, Mr. Holt," he said, half protestingly, half apologetically. "You're sweet on the young lady, as anybody with half an eye can see, and—"

"Leave the young lady's name out of the question, if you please!" I exclaimed. "And mine, too!"

"Bit difficult to leave her out, isn't it?" he retorted, smiling. "After what we've just heard! I don't disbelieve her tale—not I!—though I'm more than a bit surprised that a young woman of her intelligence—clever girl!—should let herself be trapped in that fashion. Trapped she was, no doubt!—but I don't believe her mother was trapped!

"What?" I exclaimed. "Why, you've just heard—"

"I've just heard what we've all just heard," he interrupted. "My opinion is that it was all a put-up job between Mrs. Elphinstone and this woman Murdoch, and that Miss Merchison's been taken in by both. I think that Mrs. Elphinstone went willingly to that house and stood the detention there—she wanted for nothing. You heard!—so that her daughter, who was beginning to know too much and to get dangerous, should be kept safe and quiet while the Murdoch woman got right away! And I'll lay all I'm worth to a penny piece that Murdoch knocked that chap Bownas on the head in that back alley, and that by now she's—somewhere!"

"You don't think that Mrs. Elphinstone knew anything about Bownas!" I said. "Good Lord, according to you—"

"According to me, sir, Murdoch murdered Mazaroff, and Mrs. Elphinstone's well aware of it," he said, determinedly. "There's what the lawyers call prima facie evidence of that, anyhow, and Manners here agrees with me! And we're not going out of this hotel until that doctor comes back, and then we're going to see if Mrs. Elphinstone isn't fit to be questioned. And if she isn't—just yet—then we're going to stay on the premises till she is! So there!"

Before I could say anything the outer door opened and Maythorne stuck half his face inside the room.

"Holt!" he said.

I went to him; he drew me into the corridor and closed the door.

"Message from Cottingley," he said in a whisper. "He's been carrying on a close investigation of steamship offices this last forty-eight hours, working like a nigger. And at last he's hit on something! This afternoon a woman, closely answering to the description I gave him of Alison Murdoch, booked two passages for New Zealand at the New Zealand Shipping company offices in Cockspur street, by their ship the Rimertaka, which leaves Southampton early tomorrow morning. The boat train is the ten o'clock tonight from Waterloo. Cottingley's down there—he's got a couple of detectives with him from the Yard: to save time he went there and told what he'd discovered. We'll get down there at once—the immediate question is—shall we tell those fellows inside? What do you think?"

"Corkerdale's just declared that he won't leave this hotel till he's questioned Mrs. Elphinstone," I replied. "He's going to wait for the doctor's return."

"Then come on!" he said. "It's now about nine-twenty—we shall be at Waterloo in plenty of time. Gad!—I shouldn't wonder if Cottingley's struck the trail at last!—I told you what a sharp chap he is."

We ran down to the entrance hall; outside there were two or three taxi-cabs standing about: Maythorne made for the first.

"We'd better pull up a little short of Waterloo," he remarked as we got in. "Stop in York road—by the hotel there," he added to the driver. "You see, Holt," he went on as we moved off southward, "if this woman is Murdoch, she'll know you, from having seen you at the Woodcock: she may know me, though I don't remember her. So we must move warily: if she's attempting a total clear-out, the least thing will put her off. But—she booked two passages, this woman of whom Cottingley's heard; Now, for whom can the other be?"

"Can she have had an accomplice?—if this woman really is Murdoch?" I suggested.

"She's had accomplices here in London, in that Harrow road affair, without doubt," he answered. "May be the brother she spoke of to Mrs. Elphinstone and Miss Merchison. But as to an accomplice in the Mazaroff business—now! If she had—"

He paused there and remained silent so long that at last I asked him what he was thinking about.

"I was thinking this," he answered slowly. "This!—that if this woman Murdoch really murdered Mazaroff and had an accomplice, and if Murdoch is the woman who booked two passages for New Zealand this afternoon, and if—it's all if, you see!—if the second passage is for the accomplice, why, then, we're probably going to have a very astounding surprise and revelation! But as I say, it's all ifs."

We got out of the cab at the corner of York road and walked quickly toward the big station. Before we were half way up the incline we met Cottingley. He was lounging along with his hands in his trousers pockets and a cigarette hanging loosely from the corner of his queer mouth, and he looked as phlegmatic and unconcerned as ever.

"Thought you'd come this way," he said as we passed. "You're in good time—twenty-five minutes yet. I should say she—they, I mean—'ll not turn up till the last thing. And all's ready. The only thing is, if this woman is the woman we think—Murdoch—who can recognize her, positively?"

"Mr. Holt can," answered Maythorne.

Cottingley regarded me with speculative eyes—I fear I was not of any great account in his opinion.

"Knows her?" he asked.

"I know her!" I answered.

Without another word he turned on his heel toward the front of the station.

"What'll be done is this," he said, walking between us. "The Southampton train leaves Number Four platform ten o'clock precisely. I've got two thoroughly dependable men from the Yard—had to go there and tell 'em everything, of course, if I meant to do any good—and they and I'll be on the platform. She'll not know us. Now then, is there any fear of her knowing either of you?"

"The strong presumption," replied Maythorne, "is that she'll know us both."

"Very well," said Cottingley. "Then, this is what we do. I've already, with the detectives, given the tip to the railway authorities—that there may be an important arrest, d'ye see? Now, I'm going to post you two just within the barrier, where you can't be seen. You'll keep there till the passengers begin coming through for the train. I shall be close by—the detectives'll be a yard of two further on, in touch with me; there'll also be two or three railway police about, in case there's any bother. Now if Mr. Holt there recognizes this Murdoch woman, he'll signal to me by lifting his hat the instant she passes him—and you can leave the rest. The only other thing is that if we make the arrest, I've arranged with the station people that the detectives are to hurry her off to a little office on the platform—you follow."

"All clear!" said Maythorne. "We've got you, Cottingley."

We passed into the big brilliantly lighted station. Even at that late hour of the evening it was crowded. Cottingley moved swiftly ahead of us through the groups, passed us through a barrier with a whispered word to the man in charge, and, suddenly twisting to his left, ushered us behind a high wooden partition, a few yards away from the gate whereat tickets were punched. There was a dark cavernous recess there; he signed to us to step in.

"Remember!" he said. "If it's the woman we want—up with your hat! But—be sure!"

He swung on his heel, moved off into the light of the big lamps above the platform, and, pulling out his cigarette case, began to smoke, loafing idly about. A few yards away two solidly built men, who, from their outward appearance might have been highly respectable citizens going home late to their suburban residences after a day's business in the city, stood; loafing, too. But as they chatted together, I saw that their eyes were not long away from Cottingley, nor from the barrier, nor from the gloomy recess in which Maythorne and I waited.

That waiting was about as big a trial of my nerves as I had gone through—since I heard the last shots fired in Flanders. Folk came streaming in upon the platform; porters went by with piles of luggage; there were all the scenes and sounds, hurryings and bustlings, incidental to the departure of a big express bound for a great shipping center. But what we waited for—I with straining eyes and throbbing nerves—was long in coming. Across the broad expanse of station,

A Woman Was Just Coming Through the Barrier—A Tall, Slim Woman, of Erect, Easy Carriage.

above some far-distant platform, hung a clock—I could not avoid an occasional glance at it. Never, surely, had the hands of a clock moved more slowly! Twenty minutes to ten. Fifteen minutes to ten. Ten minutes to ten. Five—four—three . . .

"Holt!" whispered Maythorne. "Sharp, now! Is this she?"

A woman was just coming through the barrier—a tall, slim woman, of erect, easy carriage. By her side was another woman, slighter in height, of fuller figure, and heavily veiled. I could not see her face, but the face of the taller woman was that which I had seen two or three times in the big kitchen at the Woodcock. A second later she and her companion, each carrying a substantial-sized valise, had passed the ticket puncher and come full into the light. I had no doubt then, and my hand went up to the brim of my hat as if a machine had moved it.

"Come on!" said Maythorne. "Now for it! But—who's the other?"

The two women were being hurried into a third-class compartment by an already impatient guard as the two detectives, some railway policemen, Cottingley, and Maythorne and I closed round them. One of the detectives laid a hand on the taller woman's arm . . .

It was the first time in my life that I had ever seen an arrest, and I was amazed at the quickness, the dexterity, the absence of fun, in it. We had the two women into the little office close by, and the door locked, and the blinds drawn, before I had realized what was happening—as the key turned in the door I heard the whistle of the guard and the shriek of the engine as the ten o'clock sped out to time. And then I turned . . . to answer a question.

"That's Alison Murdoch—yes!" I said. "Yes—without doubt."

The senior detective turned to the other woman. She was leaning against a table; her breath was coming in short, sharp gasps; her whole frame trembled.

"Take off that veil!" snapped the detective. "Come on, now!"

We stood staring intently as the woman lifted a hand and diverted herself of the thick veiling that had completely obscured her features. It fell aside—and it was from Maythorne, usually so cool and collected, that the first excited exclamation broke:

"Good G—d! Mrs. Musgrave!"

Mrs. Musgrave burst into tears and turned on Alison Murdoch, who stood close by, grim and defiant.

"You said it would be all right!" she wailed reproachfully. "You swore to me that we were safe, this way! You said and said again that there wasn't the least chance of 'em catching us—"

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" snapped Alison Murdoch.

I stood by, sick, wondering, while Cottingley, under the detectives' supervision, unlocked the women's valises and turned out their contents. There was money there in a surprising quantity—bank notes that had been Mazaroff's, of course—and there were diamonds, and Mazaroff's personal properties. And in Alison Murdock's valise there was a gold hunter watch, within which was an inscription to the effect that it was a present to James Bownas from his colleagues . . .

"There's always something that these people forget," remarked Maythorne, when, a quarter of an hour later, he and I were driving back to Short's hotel. "Or, rather, always some absolutely idiotic mistake they make. If Alison Murdoch hadn't thrown that will into the Elphinstones' library, it would have been hard to get at the real truth about Mazaroff, and if she hadn't been so covetous and grasping that she couldn't refrain from carrying off that poor chap Bownas' presentation watch, we should probably never have convicted her of murdering him. However—there they both are! But . . . Mrs. Musgrave!"

"Which of them shot Mazaroff?" I asked.

"Ah!" he replied, knowingly. "That's a stiff 'un, Holt! But—Mrs. Musgrave knows, and Mrs. Musgrave will tell! She'll not face it out like the other."

We hurried upstairs as soon as we reached Short's hotel—to find Corkerdale and Manners talking to the doctor and Sheila in an alcove that opened off the corridor. Corkerdale was evidently still indiscreet; the doctor looked somewhat annoyed and Sheila was obviously angry.

"—you must see, doctor, that it's a question of duty," Corkerdale was saying as we came upon them. "I want some explanation from Mrs. Elphinstone—"

"There's no need now, Corkerdale," interrupted Maythorne, laying his hand on the detective's shoulder. "It's all over! We've got 'em!—they're safe under lock and key."

Sheila uttered a sharp cry of surprise, and Corkerdale turned quickly on Maythorne.

"Got 'em?" he exclaimed. "Who's got 'em?"

"Well, if you want to know, my clerk, Cottingley—smartest man in Europe at your game!—he got 'em. With the help of your own people, to be sure. But the kudos is Cottingley's," replied Maythorne. "Top-hole capture!"

"And who'd he capture?" demanded Corkerdale, almost incredulously. "Who?"

Maythorne glanced at Sheila.

"Well," he replied, "there's no secret about it now. Two women! Alison Murdoch and Mrs. Musgrave. And there's no doubt about it, either—they had property belonging to Mazaroff and property belonging to Bownas on them—actually on them!"

Corkerdale turned to Manners, who, at the mention of Mrs. Musgrave's name, had opened his mouth and his eyes to their widest extent.

"Oh, well!" said Corkerdale. "In that case, of course, I think we needn't wait to see Mrs. Elphinstone!"

It was some days before I myself saw Mrs. Elphinstone. At last I was admitted to see her. We exchanged a few conventional remarks about her state of health. Then she sat for some time in silence, steadily staring at me—staring so steadily that I began to feel desperately uncomfortable. Suddenly she spoke.

"I suppose," she said, "I suppose that you and Sheila will became engaged—eventually?"

I thought, then, that I had better speak.

"The fact is, ma'am," I replied, "the fact—er—is—that Sheila and I are engaged already!"

[THE END.]

Criticism of Feminine Dress a Generation Ago

"Dress," said a health article in a woman's magazine of 1901, "is a stumbling block in the way of a healthy existence for the society woman. My lady must assist by long hours of standing to be fitted. The weight of the dress often drags one down so that only the strongest can carry about the heavy materials.

"The low bodices which have become more common are a greater menace to health than almost anything. Women who wear low-necked gowns in the evening should not wear heavy, high-necked undergarments, for the contrast between their protection in the day and that of the evening is very great and they more readily take cold. The neck and shoulders should be bathed freely with cold water and with alcohol and water. . . .

"The hips should not measure over twelve inches more than the waist or five inches more than the chest without corsets. The chest expansion of the society woman will probably be one inch; it should be nearly three."—Brenda Ueland in the Saturday Evening Post.

No Identical Chapters

No two chapters of the Bible are exactly alike, as so many people suppose. There is very little difference, however, between the thirty-seventh chapter of Isaiah and the nineteenth chapter of II Kings. Other portions of the Bible are duplicated also, but there are no two entire chapters that are the same.—Pathfinder Magazine.

Moles dig swiftly with their spade-like feet; one has been known to tunnel more than 200 feet in a night.

OREGON STATE NEWS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Principal Events of the Week Assembled for Information of Our Readers.

The Grants Pass city council has agreed to purchase from a group of Denver, Col., capitalists the water system for $65,000.

E. E. Wescott of the Dever neighborhood has brought into Albany for exhibition vetch measuring 9 feet and 10 inches in length.

Fire destroyed the Horton Lumber company plant near Junction City. Officials of the plant estimated the loss at more than $100,000.

Six carloads of Douglas county cherries will be shipped out this season as the first consignments of the new Hurst-Root plant at Roseburg.

The annual reunion and picnic for the former students of Mineral Springs college, once a flourishing institution at Sodaville, will be held July 27.

Clatsop county farmers are harvesting one of the largest hay crops in recent years. Due to intermittent rains pasture throughout the county is in good condition.

Indian fishermen near The Dalles report the beginning of the summer run of steelheads. Many fish are being caught with dip nets below Celilo on the Columbia river.

Four hundred tons of sulphur, property of the Sitka Spruce Pulp & Paper company, was dropped into the bay near Empire when a dock on which it was stored collapsed.

A total of $63,732.99 was spent in the fiscal year ending July 1, 1930, on road and trails construction in the Cascade national forest, according to Perry Thompson, supervisor.

Picking, packing and shipping of the Union county cherry crop, which will amount to several hundred tons, began recently at Cove and Union, the two centers of the local cherry belt.

The plant of the Mill Creek Lumber company, operated 11 miles south of The Dalles by O. A. Wallmark, has been destroyed by fire. Officials estimated the loss to be about $15,000.

Repairs have been completed at the Gold Hill plant of the Beaver Portland Cement company and the company's limestone quarry at Marble mountain, and both are ready to resume operations.

A rock crusher has been set up on the A. Christensen farm four miles east of Harrisburg for crushing rock to be used in surfacing the Blue Stickey market road in that neighborhood.

The rainfall of Astoria is short approximately 20 inches since last September. Despite the fact that 1.74 inches fell in June the total was still shy of the normal rain of 3.06 inches for June.

Fire destroyed the Eugene Box company plant at Eugene, causing damage estimated at $15,000. The spread of flames to adjoining lumber yards was prevented by firemen after an eight-hour fight.

Waller high school children of Chicago, through an air mail letter which arrived in Salem recently, invited Governor Norblad to attend the national air races to be held there August 25 to September 1.

THE MARKETS

Portland

Wheat—Big Bend bluestem, $1.05½; soft white, western white, 81½c; hard winter, northern spring, western red, 89½c.

Hay—Alfalfa, new crop, $17.50; valley timothy, $20.50@21; eastern Oregon timothy, $22.50@23; clover, new crop, $14; oat hay, new crop, $14; oats and vetch, new crop, $14.

Butterfat—27@30c.

Eggs—Ranch, 20@23c.

Cattle—Steers, good, $9.50@10.25.

Hogs—Good to choice, $10@11.25.

Lambs—Good to choice, $6.50@7.50.

Seattle

Wheat—Soft white, western white, hard winter, western red and northern spring, 92c; Big Bend bluestem, $1.05.

Eggs—Ranch 20@26c.

Butterfat—33c.

Cattle—Choice steers, $9@10.

Hogs—Prime light, $11.25@11.50.

Lambs—Choice, $7@8.

Spokane

Cattle—Steers, good, $9@10.

Hogs—Good to choice, $10.75.

Lambs—Medium to good, $6.50@7

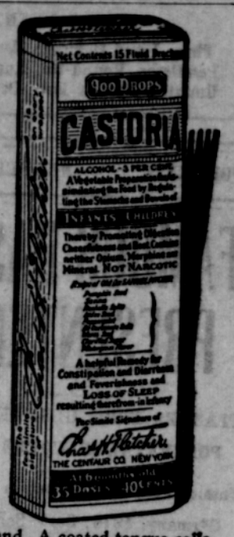
A decade is that period between censuses in which the average settled girl ages three years.

And it remained for a Frenchman to advance the opinion that New York does not represent America.

Milking a cow in an airplane, as was done a mile above St. Louis, may do away with the problem of flies.

With no churches and no golf, Russia can have no excuse for not cleaning up the basement on Sunday.

Restless Children



Children will fret, often for no apparent reason. But there's always one sure way to comfort a restless, fretful child. Castoria! Harmless as the recipe on the wrapper; mild and bland as it tastes. But its gentle action soothes a youngster more surely than some powerful medicine that is meant for the stronger systems of adults.

That's the beauty of this special children's remedy! It may be given the tiniest infant—as often as there is any need. In cases of colic, diarrhea, or similar disturbance, it is invaluable. But it has everyday uses all mothers should understand. A coated tongue calls for a few drops to ward off constipation; so does any suggestion of bad breath. Whenever children don't eat well, don't rest well, or have any little upset—this pure vegetable preparation is usually all that's needed to set everything to rights. Genuine Castoria has Chas. H. Fletcher's signature on the wrapper. Doctors prescribe it.

Old-Timer Takes Fling at Feminine Reasoning

With the announcement of a woman senator nominated in Illinois, a worried look spread over the countenance of Senator Moses of New Hampshire. "I guess the Old Guard is about licked," he grinned, "because in debate, either domestic or political, you can't beat a woman.

"A constituent of mine has a wife who would make a great congresswoman. She had tackled her husban for a new fur coat.

"'But, my gracious,' he cried, 'I just bought you an elegant, brand-new fox coat last year!'

"'New!' shrieked his wife, 'John Jones, how dare you say it was new? You know very well that the fox had been wearing it for at least six years!'"—Los Angeles Times.

Britishers Well Fed

Specifications as to supplies brought to this country for the British army in the Revolution required sound "beef, pork, bread, flour, rice, salt, pease, oatmeal." To these were added cheese, bacon, suet, fish, raisins and molasses. Don Seitz, in writing on the subject, adds: "Potatoes, parsnips, carrots, turnips and cabbages were provided when possible. Nor was there lack of liquid refreshment. Port, claret and spruce beer were forwarded in quantities."

Snow Quickly Melted

Calcium chloride, for the removal of snow, was first applied about three years ago. During last winter experiments were conducted in Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan, N. Y., as well as in Philadelphia, Pa., and Hartford, Conn. The pavements were sprayed with a treated solution of calcium chloride made non-corrosive. It was found that when the mixture was applied, before or at the beginning of a storm, the snow did not stay but melted almost immediately.

Real Long Distance Talk

Prince Purachatra, Siamese minister for trade and communications, by using the telephone on his desk in Bangkok, Siam, recently, spoke for an hour and a half with his son in Hamburg, Germany, and with friends in Berlin, a distance of 5,750 miles. The German Telefunken company has a short-wave station in Bangkok.

Civil War Necessity

Shinplasters, or fractional currency, were issued during the Civil war because of the disappearance of coin from circulation and the shortage of small coin. The first issue of fractional money was made on August 1, 1862. The last and fifth issue was made from February 26, 1874, to February 15, 1876.

Important European River

The Danube river with its more than 300 tributaries, drains one-tenth of the area of Europe in its course of 1,750 miles.

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