

# Murder at MOCKING HOUSE

BY WALTER C. BROWN

**SYNOPSIS:** Although Sergeant Harper has proved that the stronger and the policeman found dead in Pierre Dufresne's house did not shoot each other, but were murdered, he cannot pin the crime on anyone until he can show how the murderer escaped, and who the stranger is. He is questioning Mrs. Croyden, and has learned that she and her husband have an apparently airtight alibi. He notices particularly a handsome diamond ring she wears.

Chapter 25  
DUFRESNE AGAIN

HARPER leaned forward. "Now, Mrs. Croyden, I would like to know more about the servants in this house. Has there been trouble with any of them in the past, or any trouble between themselves? I don't mean petty squabbles."

For the first time Alene Croyden hesitated, and Harper felt the lowering of an imperceptible veil of aloofness. With her hands lying motionless in her lap she studied the detective's face with cool gravity. In all the house there was not a sound at that moment.

"I am afraid there is nothing I can tell you that would be relevant to the ideas you hold," she answered at last, quietly.

"What about Andrews? I gather that he is greatly in Mr. Dufresne's confidence."

"Andrews has spent his whole adult life in the service of the Dufresne family, starting with Mr. Dufresne's father. Naturally, he is treated almost as a member of the family."

Harper thought that over. "How long have the Whitmores been employed?"

"It must be about ten years. We wish we could find some one half so efficient and conscientious for our own house."

"What about Donaghy, the chauffeur?"

Mrs. Croyden shot him a quick, penetrating look, which the detective did not miss, and as she thought over her reply, she kept turning that unusual ring around and around on her finger.

"Joseph is considerably younger than any of the others," she answered at last, "less settled in his habits and no doubt he has more outside interests. But he is courteous, prompt, and obliging, and I believe there has been no question at all as to his conduct either on or off duty."

"Then there has been nothing in the nature of friction or bad feeling between Andrews, or between the Whitmores? As, between Donaghy and Andrews?"

"No, indeed."

"What of the housemaid who was here last year, Ellen Becker? She left rather suddenly, I believe. Was there an unexplained reason for her departure?"

"I think not. Ellen never fitted in very well here. She was a reserved, rather melancholy girl, from what I know of her. I'm sure she left of her own accord. My sister would have said something to me had it been otherwise."

"How old was this girl?"

"Thirty, or perhaps a year or two older. Not an attractive girl at all," she added, "and a rather sullen demeanor that did not improve her any."

Harper rubbed his chin reflectively. "In spite of what you say," he remarked, "all has not been as tranquil as the surface seems to indicate. That much is obvious, for, aside from the murders, Mrs. Croyden, we know there have been repeated secret meetings held in this room, a thing extremely unlikely without the help and connivance of some one in this house. I value your opinion and judgment, Mrs. Croyden, but last night's occurrences will not let me accept them at face value in this particular matter."

"YOU must do as you think best," Alene Croyden answered, in a non-committal tone. She looked down at her relaxed hands and noticed Harper's eyes following the flashing glitter of the twin gems.

"I see that my hairloom has been attracting your attention," she said, extending her hand in a graceful gesture. "It came from Mr. Croyden's mother, and I can't bring myself to separate the stones or modernize the old setting."

"Gems are fascinating things," Harper replied. "I certainly would not diminish their sentimental value for the sake of a modernized setting."

They were interrupted by the appearance of Richard Croyden and Pierre Dufresne. The dapper master of the house had donned a perfectly tailored double-breasted suit, closely buttoned, so that his erectness and swagger gave him more than ever an air of aggressive vigor. Croyden looked somewhat tired and distraught and was smoking a cigarette with nervous haste.

"Richard, I have just been telling Mr. Harper about your concert last night!" Alene greeted him.

Croyden laughed. "The police are going in for subtlety, Alene. What Harper really wanted was our alibi. Are you quite satisfied, Sergeant?" Harper smiled. "It's one of the best alibis I ever heard. I don't see how we can do a thing with it," he jested in return.

Pierre Dufresne faced the detective suddenly, and asked bitterly, "Harper, how long are you going to keep up this business? You have brought a very serious charge against my household and I'm waiting for you to back it up with proof, sound, legal evidence. If it turns out that you can't I warn you that it's likely to cost you your stripes."

"Pierre, you mustn't talk like that!" Alene Croyden tried to soothe the ruffled waters. "Mr. Harper is only doing his duty."

Without the slightest warning came the sudden crack of a revolver. The report seemed to come from beneath their very feet, sharp and unusually loud in that silent house. They exchanged startled glances.

"Don't be alarmed," Harper urged. "Detective Lafferty is testing the real murder gun. Fortunately we have found it, hidden in the gutter of the roof. That answers your question, Mr. Dufresne. We now have 'sound, legal evidence' that there was a double murder here. We'll be finished when we find out whose finger pulled the trigger last night!"

Richard Croyden's hands had jerked so nervously at the sound of the shot that he had to recapture his cigarette in midair. He stared at the detective with growing intensity. Alene Croyden leaped up in her fright, her hands clasping each other and her ring still flashing its multicolored sparks.

But Pierre Dufresne went on quietly tapping his cigarette against the platinum case. There was mockery and defiance in his glittering look, and Harper caught a faint reek of brandy on his breath.

"Don't let us stop you!" he sneered, "but I'll be damned if we wish you any luck!"

LAFFERTY looked through the pocket lens at the crystal body of the goblet and then again at the sheet of yellow letter paper Harper held out for his inspection. "It's a smeary print," he stated, "but there's no doubt about it—that's Andrews' thumbmark in both places. Well, let's have another round with the model bust. We'll see if he can think fast enough to get out of this one."

The lanky detective took the letter and read it over. It was the third of the eight crank letters Dufresne had turned over to the police when he had first placed the matter in their hands, about a week before. The thumbmark appeared about midway of the left margin.

"It was just a fluke," Harper explained. "I was showing Mrs. Croyden how a fingerprint is brought out for photographing and I happened to pick up this glass for the experiment."

"It would have come out long ago," Lafferty grumbled. "If Dufresne hadn't opposed the fingerprinting of the staff. Come on, let's put the screws to the old boy. I'm going to enjoy this."

"Not so fast, Jack, not so fast. There's no profit in going off half-cocked. Nobody's going to run away while we figure things out. It might be a help if some one did," he added as an afterthought.

Lafferty threw his superior a sardonic look. "You're hard to convince," he protested. "What are you holding out for now, a hand-written confession from the murderer?"

"No, but we're not a couple of rookies out after big game for the first time. If we made an arrest every time we struck a clue we'd have Mrs. Dufresne locked up because she went out last night and Dufresne because the gun disappeared from his room this morning. Before we tackle Andrews let's have a good look at these letters. We've been so busy with other matters they haven't had the attention they deserve."

"The first thing that is apparent," he went on, "is that each was mailed downtown. That gives us no help with everybody at the Austerlitz except the Whitmores. The first four were exactly one week apart, then came a gap of eleven days with the last four somewhat irregular. Dufresne placed them before Director Connors on the 4th of January. On the morning of the 7th came the last letter, at least up to the present."

"At least? Do you think there are going to be any more of them?" Lafferty questioned.

"Tomorrow, the situation nears a crisis."

# LIVER HOLDS CURE FOR LUKEMIA IS PHYSICIANS CLAIM

CLEVELAND, June 13.—(UP)—A blood disease so vicious that its ravages on man to date always have been fatal, took a bloody nose itself today.

A cure for the mysterious disease, leukemia, or agranulocytosis, was announced by Dr. William P. Murphy, of Boston, at sessions of the American Medical Association.

Dr. Murphy, world famous already for his discovery that pernicious anemia, another blood disease, can be cured by a diet of liver, said the same simple cure could now be used for leukemia.

Patients stricken with the peculiar malady recovered as soon as six hours after treatment, Dr. Murphy said tests made at Peter Bent Brigham hospital in Boston, showed. The disease strikes by causing the red blood cells to disappear from the blood stream.

New hope for cancer patients was offered by Dr. Arthur C. Christie, Washington, D. C., who spoke on "radiation in cancer."

He said improvements had been made in the use of radium and X-rays so that many cases would now be treated which previously were not amenable to them.

Dr. Christie told of platinum and gold "needles" which could be inserted directly into the tissue.

In treatment of cancer by radiation, the medical man must consider the effect of the radium or X-rays on both the cancer and surrounding tissue, so that fractional

doses are now considered more useful than one large dose except in the case of superficial skin cancers. He said the technique had been so developed that radiation was now a useful adjunct to operative procedure and in some cases more important.

# SERIES OF HEAVY QUAKE CAUSE FEAR IN GENOA

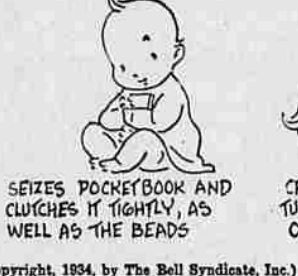
GENOA, Italy, June 13.—(AP)—Strong earth tremors shook Genoa for a brief period this morning. Inhabitants were badly frightened, but there were no casualties or damage.

# Tide Table Given For Gold Beach

Time at Mouth of Rogue River.	HIGH WATER		LOW WATER	
	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.
14 Thurs.	1:06	8.1	2:44	6.8
15 Fri.	1:43	7.9	3:21	6.6
16 Sat.	2:24	7.7	3:55	6.8
17 Sun.	3:05	7.4	4:32	7.0
14 Thurs.	8:09	-0.5	8:06	3.5
15 Fri.	8:42	-0.3	8:45	3.1
16 Sat.	9:16	-0.1	9:20	3.2
17 Sun.	9:51	0.2	10:18	3.0



# POSSESSION



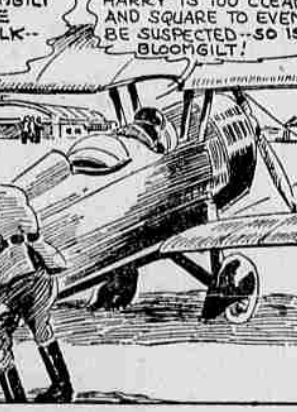
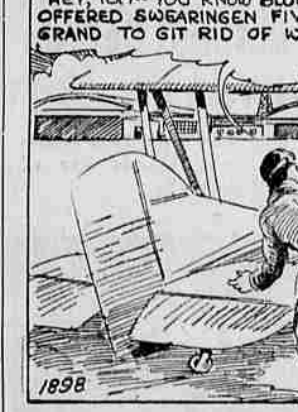
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# S'MATTER POP



By C. M. Payne

# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Who "Switched" the Cartridge Belt?



By Hal Forrest

# BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—What About It?



By Edwin Alger

# THE NEBBS—You Tell Him, Fanny



By Sol Hess

# EVANGELIST SHELLEY AT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

J. Michael Shelley, evangelist from Southern California, will speak tonight at First Christian church. He has spoken recently in Grants Pass, Klamath Falls and Ashland and comes highly recommended. Mr. Shelley and his wife are soon to leave for Korea where they will open a new missionary station.

The evangelist's subject for tonight will be "The Path to Glory." The service will begin at 7:45. The public is most cordially invited.

# BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

**QUALITY GUM**

**WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT**

**THE PERFECT GUM**

**AIDS DIGESTION**