

# Murder at MOCKING HOUSE

BY WALTER C. BROWN.

## RECONCILIATION

HARPER put Aline Croymen's ring away in the pocket that held the little key to Richard Croymen's piano. The artist's renunciation of his beloved instrument had been a poignant gesture. Indeed, justly or unjustly, the dead ride hard! Harper meditated sourly to himself as he mounted the stairs to spread his thankless news through the house. He tapped on the door of Mrs. Dufresne's room, deciding that she was entitled to be told first.

After that painful interview he sought out the master of the house and found him in the upstairs library, the scene of his mocking challenge of the evening before. Pierre Dufresne was staring moodily out the window when the detective entered. His face, too, proclaimed the stress and strain of restless hours that should have been devoted to sleep.

In plain, unadorned phrases Sergeant Harper told the story of the murders. As he talked, Pierre Dufresne paced up and down, exclaiming, interrupting with questions, struggling over details with a brain frayed from its own unjust but hard-sprung woe. At times he could hardly credit the tale.

"Wait! Wait!" he cried, poured himself a drink and downed it at a gulp. Then he resumed his nervous pacing, firing questions again and again at the detective.

When he had finished his story, Harper said, "Now, Mr. Dufresne, perhaps you will explain your own movements after you got out of the Austerlitz? I know you had every intention of murdering the man whom you suspected was meeting your wife in this house. What happened?"

Dufresne flung himself into a chair. "You were right, Harper. I got out of the Austerlitz as you described. Between the time I had prepared and the letters I had written myself I felt quite certain that I would never be suspected, no matter what happened.

"I took a taxi and got out some distance from here. I had been keeping watch on that sand-urn and I knew a meeting had been arranged for that night. I walked past the house. There was no light, no sign of life, and there were no footprints leading up to the door. I hid behind a wall, watching. It was quite dark.

"I waited, but nothing happened. I was furious because I had been outwitted again. Then I saw a policeman coming along the street. He was the first person I had seen in the street at all. To my astonishment, he turned in at the gate as though he had business here.

"He went up the steps and entered the house, although I couldn't see who had opened the door. I was greatly puzzled. I watched and waited, but the policeman didn't come out. I don't know how long I hid behind the wall, but it must have been quite a while, for I began to get stiff with cold.

"Suddenly, the front door began to bang in the wind. When that kept up I grew frightened at the prospect. I knew that something unusual must have happened and I wanted to keep clear of it. How would I have explained my absence from the hotel? So I left my hiding place and walked until I caught a taxi that brought me back to the winter of the city. I had not been juvarey long before you arrived.

"When you brought me up here to view the bodies I couldn't understand half of what I saw and heard and I've been trying ever since to figure out what really took place in that room."

HARPER nodded. "That shows what totally different meanings can be drawn from the simplest things. The notes left in that urn were construed in a different manner by every one who found out about them.

"Only Mrs. Croymen and your wife knew the real truth about them. At any time a frank discussion would have cleared it all up. Instead, it was allowed to fester in secrecy. Richard Croymen, the real victim of the whole intrigue, didn't know of their existence until much later."

The detective looked Pierre Dufresne squarely in the eyes. "I am going to say aside my role as police officer for a few seconds," he stated, "and take the liberty of talking to you as man to man. You may resent what I am going to say but I shall not apologize for my presumption.

THE END

"You know a devil of a lot of things, don't you, Harper?" Dufresne asked in a surly voice, reaching for the decanter and glass.

"Forty-eight hours have revealed more to me about what was really happening in this house than any of you could discover in months of suspicion, quarrels, and jealous accusation," Harper answered quietly. "And if you were half a man you would not be sitting there now brooding, trying to drug your conscience with liquor."

The glass stood poised, halfway to Dufresne's lips. "Do you really think so?" he queriedardonally. "What would you suggest?"

"I'd suggest that you go immediately and make your peace with your wife. She'll probably be generous enough to forgive and forget everything and kill the fatted calf over the prodigal's return to sanity. That's all I have to say, Mr. Dufresne. I shall not step out of character again."

Pierre Dufresne frowned, then he laughed, and the smile that Harper had seen, but rarely transformed his face. He put down the glass untasted and rose from his chair with ill-concealed resolution.

"Will you wait here for a few minutes, Harper? I want to go down town with you, to arrange things for Richard and give him what help I can."

"I'll wait for you," Harper promised.

Although the "few minutes" lengthened considerably and the master of the house had not returned, the detective was not impatient. The delay, he mused, was in a good cause.

He browsed along the bookshelves and taking out one of the volumes, sat down on the broad window-seat. The morning sun began to edge its way through the leaded glass panes as he idly turned the pages.

Harper looked up at the sound of footsteps, but it was old Andrews, and not Dufresne, who entered the room. The gray-haired butler had a message for him. "Mr. Dufresne said he would be ready in a minute, sir."

Andrews hovered over the tray by the armchair, where Dufresne's last drink stood untouched. "Shall I remove this, sir?"

"Yes, Andrews—and I think it will be quite all right to take the decanter along with it."

They smiled at each other in sudden understanding. Then the old man bowed to Sergeant Stephen Harper and it was not the stiff nod by which he drew the line between his master's world and everything that lay outside.

(Copyright, 1934, by Walter C. Brown)

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The flight from Montevideo, in Uruguay, across to Arica, Chile, which is in the extreme northwest of the country, is 1800 miles, and the journey takes two days, he stated. United States mail and passengers are carried on the planes.

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# TAX LIMITATION AMENDMENT TO ADORN BALLOTS

PORTLAND, July 3.—(AP)—Carl H. Cover, field manager of the Tax Limitation League of Oregon, announced here today that a tax limitation amendment, signed by 40,000 petitioners, will be presented to the electorate at the November election.

Started first by the Portland Realty Board, the move to limit property taxes in Oregon resulted in organization of the tax league, Cover said. He stated every county in the state turned in a long list of names in the petitions.

The working of the amendment, as it will be carried on the November general election ballot, follows: "Limitation of taxes on taxable property—limiting taxable property assessment to half its cash value; limiting total taxes by state, county, school district and city or town excepting for payment of existing indebtedness, and taxes for any year upon two-thirds vote of people, to the following number of mills each year per dollar of assessed valuation: due, 1935, 20 mills; 1937, 19 mills; 1938, 18 mills; 1939, 17 mills; 1940, 16 mills; any year thereafter, 15 mills; respective levies not to exceed the following proportions of state tax: state, 10 per cent; county, 25 per cent; school district, 25 per cent; city or town, 40 per cent."

PORTLAND, July 3.—(AP)—Projects to cost more than \$57,000 were approved by the state emergency relief administration here yesterday.

Recreational work at Salem, Albany and Oregon City was authorized; CCC educational work at the West Timber camp and Oregon camp was approved, and school repair in some districts was undertaken.

The largest enterprise approved was for enlargement of the Powellhurst school near Portland.

# BOY IS DROWNED IN WATERS OF UMPQUA

ROSEBURG, Ore., July 3.—(AP)—Roy Edwin Harris, 8, son of Mr. and Mrs. Foxxy Floyd Harris, residents of the Tye district, 35 miles west of Roseburg, was drowned Sunday night while swimming with members of his family in the Umpqua river. He is survived by his parents, four sisters and a brother.

# FORD ACCEPTANCE REMAINS LACKING

WASHINGTON, July 3.—(AP)—NRA still had not received a signed letter of blue eagle compliance from Henry Ford today, though a local dealer indicated his intention to bid on approximately \$2,000,000 of war department contracts.

R. P. Sabine, of the Northwest Motor company, a Ford dealer, and his attorney, F. Hunter Greesh, conferred at NRA headquarters with L. D. Everett in the automotive section.

It was thought Sabine's bid might be submitted conditionally subject to possible receipt of the signed letter of compliance.

NRA officials said they had no in-

# DANGER OF FIRE HALTS LOGGING IN WASHINGTON

SEATTLE, July 3.—(AP)—All logging operations in western Washington were under orders today to shut down today and tomorrow as a fire protection measure, under authority given in the NRA lumber code.

The order was given last night by C. S. Cowen, chief fire warden for the Washington Forest Fire association. It was believed to be the first such action ever taken in the west.

SALEM, Ore., July 3.—(AP)—Lynn Crommiller, state forester, said today that although no lumber mill in Oregon is closed because of the forest fire hazard, some may have to be closed down if present conditions continue after July 4.

Three weeks ago all mills in the Clackamas and Marion county forest association were ordered closed for several days. The order later was revoked.

Underwear Was His Bank.

DOVER, O.—(UP)—County officials investigating the sudden death of

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# ROSS EXHIBITING WOOD NOVELTIES

John T. Ross, who resides on route one, 3½ miles from Medford, has placed an attractive display in the Chamber of Commerce window, of numerous articles he has made from madrona or laurel wood, red oak, and white oak.

The candlesticks, bowls, stands and boxes are fashioned from wood found in this section of the country. Although highly polished, all are finished in their natural colorings, and are quite attractive.

Articles made from the white oak.

# CCC MEMBER KILLED IN FALL OUT WINDOW

PORTLAND, Ore., July 3.—(AP)—Dave Gregory, 26, an Indian from the Warm Springs CCC camp, was fatally injured here last night when he fell from a second floor fire escape in a rooming house. His neck was broken and his skull fractured. Police and witnesses said he was intoxicated.

Beekkeepers say the queen cells should be cut at regular intervals or seven days to prevent the hive from swarming.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

# DIFFICULT DECISIONS



# WONDERING WHAT TO DO WITH NINE CONES WHICH YOU HAVE BOUGHT AS A TREAT FOR THE BALL TEAM WHICH AT THE MOMENT IS DISAPPEARING AROUND THE CORNER IN PURSUIT OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

7-3 (Copyright, 1934, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

# GIVE IT A WHIRL



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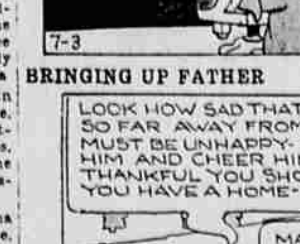
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# TAILSPIN TOMMY—"Midnight Patrol" in Danger!



# THE NEBBS—Mebbe



# BRINGING UP FATHER



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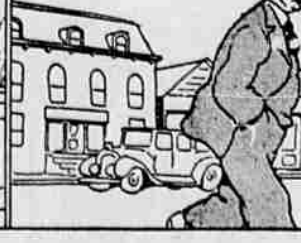
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