

The Creeping Man

by Frances Shelley Wees

YESTERDAY, after the study is broken into, Michael tells Tuck and Bunny about Murchison's disappearance, and the anonymous diamond note. In turn, Tuck tells him about the professor's pipe. Looking in the drawer where Tuck found the pipe, Michael finds a piece of paper with the print of a bloody hand.

Chapter Nine

Michael had crumpled that paper in his hand slowly, as if unconcerned; and neither of the girls had seen the telltale stain. That the rusty dark pattern was made by blood he had not the slightest doubt; and, as he lay awake in the early morning hours there had come to him a strange picture. The picture of a man, seated at the big desk, a shaded lamp throwing the light on the papers before him; of the open drawer holding the pencils at his right hand; of something coming out of the shadows there behind him... something... the pipe had dropped from nerveless fingers into the open drawer; the hand in agony had grasped and crushed the corner of the newspaper lying there.

But was it a true picture? If it was, if it had been Murchison's hand that had left bloody stains on the paper, where had the blood come from? And if... if a murderous hand had left the stains, how had it clutched and left the paper?

Michael's face when he came to the breakfast table next morning betrayed nothing but the quietest mind. Murder, he had decided, was not to lie within the consciousness of his wife—if he could help it. Not that she had not witnessed it before now; but, of course, she had not been his wife then, and he had not been responsible for her.

The little breakfast room was bright with sun. "It's queer," said Tuck, pouring out the coffee, "that Charlotte Jean didn't hear the commotion last night and come down, curl papers and all. She sleeps right above the kitchen. I don't see how she could have helped hearing it."

"Did you ask her?" Michael looked up from his toast. "No, I thought if she didn't hear it, it might be as well to leave her in ignorance, after what Gordon said about maids and burglars. Michael," Tuck demanded, "what did he mean? About burglars?"

Michael considered. "He doesn't know anything, Tuck. I imagine he's been reading mystery stories or listening to some ignorant maid." "He looks like a bright youngster," Bunny murmured.

Charlotte Jean, immaculate in blue and white, her sparse hair crinkly beneath her cap, came in with a tray. "It's the mail, Mrs. Forrester, ma'am," she explained, holding it out to Tuck. "Oh, thank you, Charlotte Jean," Tuck murmured, taking the envelopes absently. Michael buttered another piece of toast. "How do you like it out here in the country, Charlotte Jean?" he asked her.

Her broad face spread into an expansive smile. "It's just swell, Mr. Forrester," she replied. "I like it fine. It's so nice and quiet." "Don't you find it lonely?" "Oh, no, I was raised on a farm. There's a lot of people around here." She blushed under Michael's scrutiny. "I get awful tired of them fool girls in town, she went on hastily. "All they ever think about is shopping at the ten cent store and going to the movies." She made her exit. Michael cocked a reflective eye after her.

Uncanny Luck
"It's the gardener," Tuck said absently, her eyes still on the letter in her hand. "You might know it." "Tough. We'll probably lose her. Is he the only man around?" "Apparently. But don't worry—she'll find some more. It's a letter from Mrs. Deane." She went on without a pause. Bunny looked at her frowningly until she understood. Michael pulled one ear as he thought it over. Tuck went right on. "She wants us to go over and spend the evening."

"Tonight?" "Umhm." "Do we go?" She looked up at him and lowered her tone. "It's so lucky for us it's almost uncanny," she said. "I almost believe your father's had his finger in this pie, too. Listen to what she says..." "I hope you'll excuse the haste and informality of the invitation, but I thought it would be nice for you to meet your neighbors, and so I have asked three tables for tonight, just the people on the campus, and Duncan Murchison to make the twelfth. Please tell your husband it's only dinner jackets, quite informal, and I do hope you can come."

"Three tables?" Michael inquired blankly.

"Bridge," said Bunny laconically. "Such stupidity," said Tuck evenly. "I have rarely encountered. Bridge, as bridge, is never played at a mixed party. One talks. One listens. One gathers impressions."

"Where does she get twelve?" "Well—apparently, two McBains, three Forresters, two Deans, one Lissey, two Devos and Mrs. Murchison and Duncan. That's twelve."

"I forgot Mrs. Devoe," Bunny murmured, helping herself to the marmalade. "Isn't it grand?" Tuck wriggled ecstatically. "Just think of all we'll be able to find out! There's simply no place like a bridge table for watching people's expressions and sizing them up without their suspecting it."

Michael frowned a little. "Don't let me hear you doing it, honey," he warned. "Tuck was insulted. 'You forget that I have an IQ, Michael,' she said bitterly."

"I apologize," he said handsomely. "I apologize abjectly." "You don't walk into that bunch of people and hint and ask questions, and—I'm ashamed of you. Don't you suppose I realize that this is about the trickiest case a person could possibly handle? We don't know anything, and we don't know that anybody else knows anything, and maybe nobody does, and yet we don't dare take our eyes off them for fear they do."

'Bloodthirsty'
"IUCID," Bunny congratulated her. Tuck put her tongue out. "And what's more, Michael Forrester," she went on, "I notice that you didn't tell us, last night, just what you'd been doing to find out about the Missing Professor?" "Not much. I've been hanging about at the University a bit, and asking questions here and there, but I've really been waiting for matters to take their course here in the house, my love. In other words, I've been depending on your little nose to smell things out and tell me."

"If you'd told me sooner I'd have smelled out a lot more things." "Undoubtedly. But you might have been heard sniffing."

Bunny put down her coffee cup and shouldered her way to the elegant mode of conversation for a breakfast table. "I don't believe in elegance," Tuck said firmly. "And what's more—if you're going to talk about murder, you've got to use bloody words."

"Murder?" said Michael with lifted brows. "Well, what else?" Tuck demanded. "He's gone, isn't he? He isn't anywhere around the country. He didn't walk anywhere, or ride anywhere, and if he did, he didn't get anywhere. This is like a tremendous big city, where he might be hiding in somebody's cellar. And if he committed suicide, what did he do with his body? Unless he fell in the river by accident."

"I'd like to see you down-stream if he did," Bunny said. "And he hasn't—has he, Michael?" "No."

"So, somebody must have murdered him. We're looking for a murderer and some stolen diamonds and a body. You can't hang anybody unless you produce a body, can you, Michael?" "Tuck, you sound positively bloodthirsty. You look like a two-year-old baby sitting there in that pink dress, and you talk about murders and bodies and hanging as calmly as an executioner. It's indecent. It isn't right."

"It's just too bad that you feel that way, Michael. It's very foolish of you. You ought to be glad that Bunny and I are hardened creatures. Some people would weep and wail and shudder and get afraid of the dark. I don't see any sense in it. What we've got to do is decide which of these people killed Professor Murchison and how they did it, and why, and get them arrested, and then move back to our own little bungalow. I can't say that I'm any too pleased with your father for putting us into it without consulting us, and I am certainly going to give him a piece of my mind; but now we are in it I wouldn't leave for ten million dollars until it's shuttered, and I am not going to get all shivery about it. All I'm scared about is that the people who are guilty are cleverer than we are."

"What is it De Quincey says about murder, Michael? Something about it being rude to murder a weak man," Bunny murmured. "The child's been reading him. She's got his attitude exactly."

Michael did not answer. He drew a deep breath. "I am relieved," he said after a moment. "I have a fear—I confess—that this thing may not turn out to be very pleasant. I was dreading telling you."

"There are aspects of it..." he began, and stopped. "Go on," Tuck urged.

Continued tomorrow

On the RADIO CHAINS

STATIONS
Where to Find Them on the Dial:
Kex, Portland, 1180; KFI, 640; Los Angeles; KGA, 1470; Spokane; KGO, 790; San Francisco; KGW, 620; Portland; KJH, 970; Seattle; KNN, 1050; Los Angeles; KOA, 830; Denver; KOIN, 940; Portland; KOMO, 926; Seattle; KPO, 630; San Francisco; KSL, 1180; Salt Lake.

Monday
5:00—Quaker Party, KPO, KFI, KGW; Frank and Archie, KEX, KJR; Sunset Shadows, KGO.
5:30—Time and Tempo, KGW, KFI; Kelsey's Orch., KGO, KJR; True or False, KPO.

Tuesday
5:00—The Aldrich Family, KPO, KFI, KGW; Frank and Archie, KEX, KJR; Sunset Shadows, KGO.
5:30—Adventures, KGO, KEX, KJR; Quiz Program, KPO, KGW, KFI.
6:00—String Quartet, KGO, KEX; Concert Orch., KPO, KGW, KFI.
6:30—Fibber McGee, KPO, KFI, KGW; Crosby's Orch., KEX, KSL, KOIN; Human Side of Literature, KGO, News, KJR.
7:00—Shield Revue, KGO, KEX; Bob Hope, KPO, KGW, KFI; Calling All Cars, KEX, News, KOIN.
7:30—Sports, KEX, KOIN; Fun with the Famous, KGO, KJR; Dog House, KPO, KFI, KGW; News, KSL.
8:00—Fred Waring, KPO, KFI, KGW; Amos and Andy, KEX, KOIN; KSL; Information Please, KGO, KEX, KJR.

Wednesday
5:00—Amos and Andy, KEX, KOIN; KSL; Aloha Land, KGO; Dog's Music, KEX; Fred Waring, KPO, KGW, KFI.
8:15—I Love a Mystery, KPO, KFI, KGW; Lum and Abner, KEX, KSL, KOIN.
8:30—Richard Crooks, KPO, KFI, KGW; Lyman's Orch., KEX; Potato

Bug Band, KGO; Model Minstrels, KEX, KSL, KOIN.
9:00—Sherlock Holmes, KPO, KFI, KGW; Tunes Up Time, KEX, KOIN, KSL; True or False, KGO, KJR.
9:30—Hawthorne House, KPO, KGW, KFI; Crosby's Orch., KEX, KOIN; News, KJR.
10:00—News Reporter, KPO, KFI, KGW; Paul Sullivan, KSL, KEX, News, KOIN.
10:30—Music by Woodbury, KGW; Concert Hall, KPO; Roland's Orch., KOIN, KSL, KEX; Foeter's Orch., KGO, KJR, KEX, KFI.
11:00—Ravazza's Orch., KPO, KFI; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; Organist, KOIN, KSL, News, KGO, KEX, KGW.

8:15—Jimmie Fidler, KSL, KEX, KOIN; I Love a Mystery, KPO, KFI, KGW.
8:30—Aldrich Family, KGO, KEX, KJR; Johnny Presents, KPO, KFI, KGW; Big Town, KOIN, KEX.
9:00—Tuesday Night Party, KOIN, KEX; Good Morning Tonight, KPO, KFI, KGW; Dance Hour, KGO.
9:30—Messner's Orch., KEX; Battle of the Sexes, KPO, KGW, KFI; We the People, KEX, KOIN; News, KJR.
10:00—News Reporter, KPO, KFI, KGW; News, KEX, KSL; Madriguera's Orch., KGO, KJR, KEX; News, KOIN.
10:30—Poster's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW; Saunders' Orch., KGO, KEX, KJR.
11:00—Ravazza's Orch., KPO, KFI; This Moving World, KEX; Gray's Orch., KSL, KOIN; News, KGO, KEX, KGW.

\$3 Bill of 1809

Montgomery, Ala. (U.P.)—Mrs. Dora Bell Parker of Evergreen owns what is believed to be the oldest \$3 bill in Alabama. The note was issued in 1809 by the Central Bank of Montgomery, a private banking institution on which all records have vanished.

Fourth Graders

Kent, O. (U.P.)—College freshmen are fourth graders in English and punctuation, Dr. W. L. Garnett, professor of English at Kent State university, announced after a survey of three mid-western teachers' colleges.

CHINA STILL IN TUNGSTEN LEAD

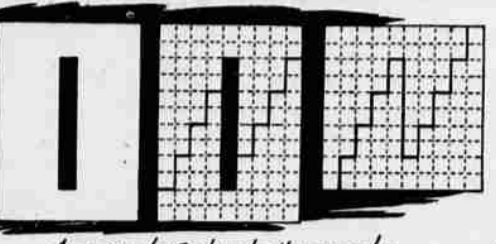
Chungking—(U.P.) The foreign trade commission has announced that despite the war, China

maintained her position in 1938 as one of the world's leading producers of tungsten. Estimates for 1939 are not yet available, but it is believed that they are commensurate. Tungsten exports from China for the year amounted to 13,357,700 kilograms valued at \$50,492,082. Although exports declined 3-

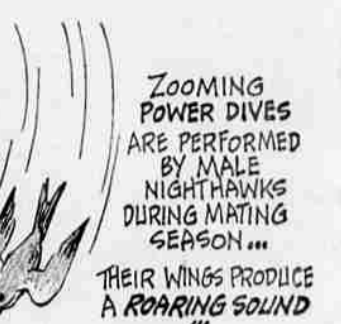
160,100 kilograms as compared with 1937, the cash value of 1938 exports increased by \$9,743,490, bringing the highest return since 1929. West Gouldsboro, Me. (U.P.)—Police are puzzled by a robbery at the Tracey and Barhydt mink farm. Thieves killed three mink and stole their pelts, valued at \$18. A living mink is worth \$60.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



Answer to Saturday's puzzle: CUTTING THE FIGURE ON THE LEFT INTO TWO PIECES TO FORM A PERFECT SQUARE



VILLAGE ON STILTS!
MANILLA VILLAGE, Louisiana fishing colony, IS BUILT OVER THE BAY OF BARATARIA...



LOUIS DAGUERRE—French painter, DISCOVERED HIS SECRET OF QUICK PHOTOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT BY ACCIDENT!

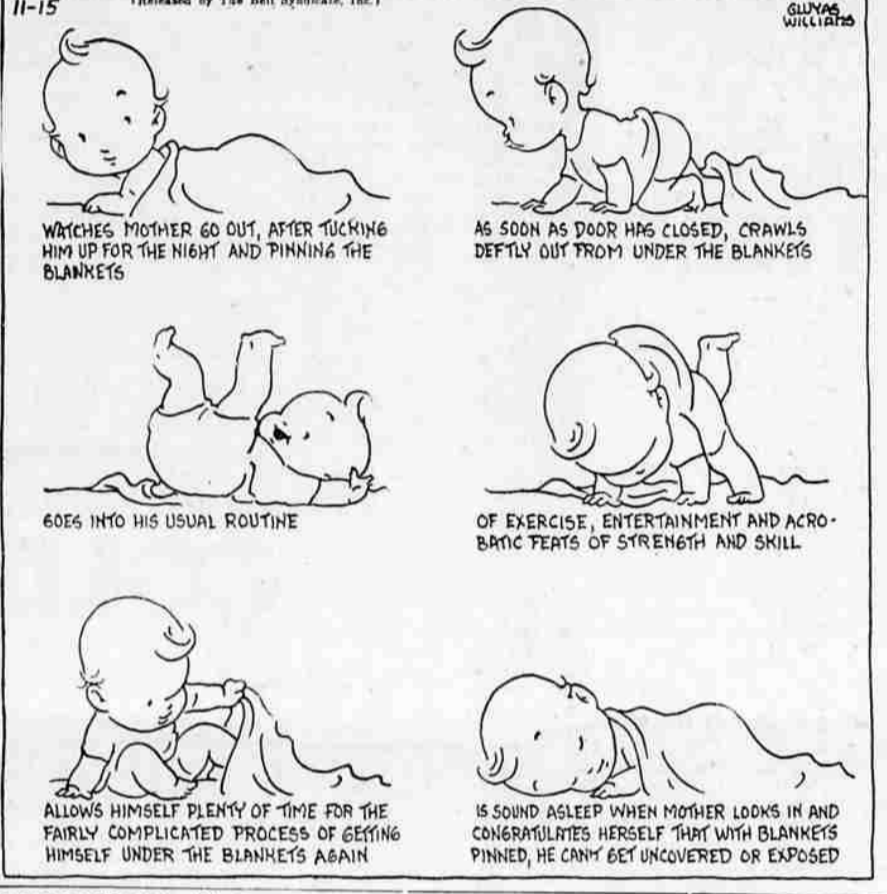
HE LEFT AN EXPOSED PLATE OVERNIGHT IN A CABINET CONTAINING AN OPEN DISH OF MERCURY... THE VAPOR DEVELOPED THE PICTURE... —1839—



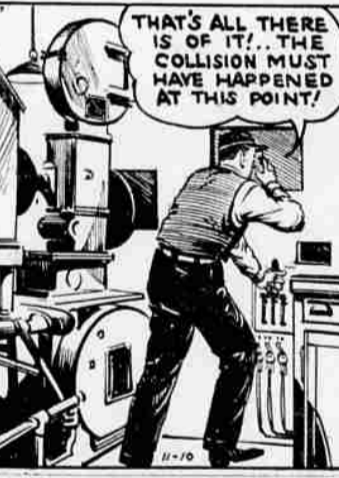
DISCOVERY BY ACCIDENT
Strange as it seems, eight hours' exposure was necessary to take a photograph in 1830, so slow was the developing process then in use. Through an accident, Louis Daguerre, French painter and chemist, reduced this time to minutes. Working with another chemist named Niepee, Daguerre found that faint images formed on iodized silver plates within two or three hours. One day Daguerre laid an "underexposed" plate of this kind in a dark cabinet, intending to clean and re-use it. Next morning he was amazed to find a fine image on the plate. He soon realized the faster development had come when vapor from an open dish of mercury settled upon the iodized silver in proportion to the intensity of light by which each part of the plate had been affected. Tomorrow: The Man Who Slept With a Depth Bomb!

UNDERCOVER

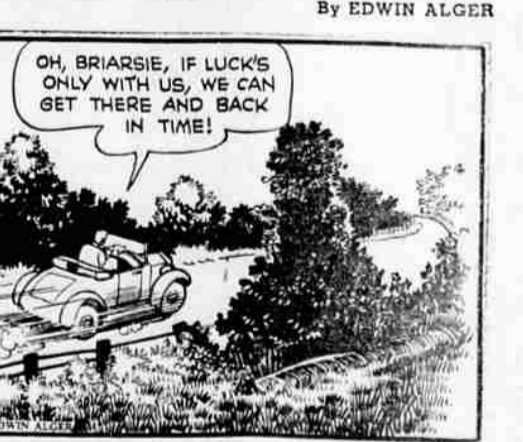
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—"The Camera Never Lies!"



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Lotsa Developments!



THE NEBBS—The Casualty



OREGON OUT FRONT IN AUTO INCREASE

Salem—(U.P.)—Oregon led the nation in the percentage of increase in passenger car registrations for the ten-year period from 1929 to 1939. Earl Snell, secretary of state, reported here upon receipt of a national survey of automobile registrations made by a finance company. Oregon's gain of 33 per cent was far above the national increase of 11 per cent. The greatest increase, Snell said, was on the Pacific coast where, in addition to Oregon's report,

California showed an increase of 27 per cent and Washington reported a gain of 18 per cent. In the south and southwest large increases were also reported. Passenger car registration in Oregon for the first nine months of this year showed an increase of 2.65 per cent, Snell added.

Hunters Welcome.
Billings, Mont.—(U.P.)—R. E. Bateman, district agent for the Biological Survey, has sent out an SOS for more hunters. Predatory animals—some of them big game—are overrunning his district. During the past three months bear killed 487 sheep, 7 calves, 2 cows and one pig. Coyotes killed 746 sheep, 2 calves, 792 turkeys, 280 sheep, 13 deer, 19 geese, and one quail. A mountain lion killed a deer.