

THE CULPRIT?

By SALLY MENDUM.

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All Petersburg was ringing with the murder of Tim Meagher, an old man who lived alone in his cottage on the outskirts of the town. Miller, the head of a detective firm in the city, twenty miles distant, was called for by the town authorities. He went up, looked the matter over, came to an agreement with the mayor and promised to put some one on the case immediately. He was taking his supper in a private room in a restaurant when the door opened and a man of rather seedy appearance entered.

"Mr. Miller, I believe," said the newcomer.

"I am. What can I do for you?"

"I was in the detective business once, and I'm trying to get into it again. I'd like to take hold of this Meagher case."

"I'm going to send a man up to attend to it."

The seedy individual pulled a letter from his pocket and handed it to the detective to read. It was a certificate from a detective firm that Joel Zimmerman had worked for it and done good service.

Miller's bargain with the mayor had been largely contingent upon tracking and capturing the murderer, a not very profitable way to do business. It occurred to him that if he could get this person cheap he would let him work for awhile—at least long enough to make some development. Besides, the man told him that he suspected a certain person and would look for a clew in that direction. He felt so confident in the matter that he offered to work without pay unless he made a valuable discovery, but stipulated that he should have the field to himself. No other detective should be put on the case. On these terms Mr. Miller engaged him and went back to the city to attend to other matters that promised more certain results.

Joe Avery, a nephew of the murdered man, lived in Petersburg, a much respected young man, with a very nice wife and two very pretty children. One day while walking on the street he picked up a ten dollar bill. He was in hard luck at the time and very much delighted at his find. The bill was partly spent for meat at a butcher shop. The same afternoon Avery was arrested for the murder of his uncle on information furnished by Zimmerman. The detective produced a list of bills, giving their numbers, that he said he had found in an unused chimney in the murdered man's house. The list was supposed to refer to \$7,000 that the old man kept there. The theory was that the money had been taken by the murderer, who had unwittingly left the list.

Everybody in the town was surprised at Avery's arrest, and no one at first believed him guilty. It was not supposed that his uncle had any money, and if he had the murderer was the only one who could have known of it.

There was a strong case of circumstantial evidence against Avery, but it was weakened by Zimmerman himself, who under cross examination contradicted himself as to how, where and when he had found the list. Experts disagreed whether it was or was not in the handwriting of Meagher. By throwing doubt upon this evidence the prisoner's attorney saved his client from a verdict of guilty. The jury disagreed, but in order to avoid the expense of another trial brought in a verdict of not guilty.

Avery had no doubt that he had been made the victim of a plot and as soon as he gained his liberty set about a bit of detective work to discover the author. The first fact he noticed was that with his acquittal the case was dropped. The authorities believed that the murderer had been discovered, but that his acquittal was a case of "not proved" rather than "not guilty." The detective who worked up the case against him had dropped the matter and was now working for the Miller detective agency that had employed him. Indeed, every one seemed satisfied to let the matter rest except the man who had narrowly escaped the gallows and was in consequence living under the ban of being a murderer. These were the reasons that induced Avery to take up the case on his own account.

Avery made up his mind that his uncle had been a hoarder. Indeed, he remembered certain incidents to indicate that such was the case. Some one had discovered that the old man had money in his possession and had robbed and murdered him to get possession of it. If his uncle had saved money possibly he might have had something to do with some bank. He sent out a circular letter to all the banks in the state asking if Timothy Meagher had any deposits there. Seven savings banks replied that bank books to the aggregate amount of \$200,000 had been issued to one Timothy J. Meagher. Avery did not suppose that his uncle had a middle name, but searched the family records and found that he had. It was John.

Avery was astounded. He was also delighted—delighted for two reasons. First, he was his uncle's legal heir and would be rich; second, his uncle had undoubtedly had some money in his house and had been robbed as well as murdered. Could he find this robber he would be exonerated and rich.

He first took steps to secure his uncle's fortune, then offered \$25,000 reward for the murderer.

The reward brought a letter from the murderer's accomplice stating that he would give up his principal if not prosecuted himself. His terms were accepted, and he sent in the name. It was Joel Zimmerman.

Eight months later Zimmerman was executed.

A Shot That Made Trouble.

An odd incident happened in the then Danish West Indies in the last century that nearly caused serious international complications. An American marksman, paying a visit to Charlotte Amalie, amused the governor by an exhibition of his skill with the rifle. Sitting on the veranda of the government house, he said that he could cut with a bullet the signal balloons on the flagstaff of the fort and lower the Danish standard to the ground. As the lines were almost invisible in the distance the governor was willing to bet that he could not do it. The shot rang out, and the flag fell. Presently a horseman dashed up, informing the governor that some one had fired on the flag. There was great excitement. The governor, none too popular, it seems, with the military, ruined his political future by admitting that the affair was a joke in which he had connived. Report being sent to Copenhagen, highly colored, of course, by the commandant, his excellency was summarily removed.

Cultivating Ginger.

Ginger is made a matter of scientific culture in Jamaica. It is propagated by cutting up small pieces of the root, and, if possible, rich, cool soil from recently cleared woods is selected for it. It is a great impoverisher of the soil and grows so luxuriantly that in a short time a little piece of root will spread so as to produce nearly a pound of new roots. The sets are planted in March or April and get to their full growth about September. The roots are dug usually in Jamaica in January or February. They are washed, exposed to the sun until thoroughly dried and packed in parcels of about a hundred pounds each. In order to dry them more rapidly they are first scalded in a little copper pot in order to destroy life, of which the roots are very tenacious. White ginger and black ginger are from the same roots, the difference arising from methods of curing. Roots for sugar preserving are dug while quite young, before the stems are more than five or six inches high.

A Luckless Word.

Superstition dies hard, at least in the north of England. On Tyneside it is reckoned highly unlucky to hear or mention the word "pig," and evil consequences can only be averted by touching cold iron. If that material is not at hand its name must be uttered aloud as the next best thing.

It is no uncommon thing to see a group of sailors or workmen suddenly scatter to lay hold of iron railings, lampposts, etc., when by chance "pig" has slipped into their conversation.

A stranger to the district was not long ago puzzled to see four little shoeblacks, squatted at a game of cards on their blacking box, suddenly scramble to their feet, run to some iron posts several yards away, touch them and then return and resume their game quite unconcernedly. When he obtained an explanation his amusement equaled his astonishment. The origin of the superstition seems to be unknown.—London Scraps.

Uses Animals Make of Their Tails.

Horses, cows and other creatures use their tails as fly swappers. Cats, squirrels and many more twist them around their necks for comforters. The rat has raised the use of the tail to a fine art, for by its means it guides the blind and steals jelly, oil and cream out of jars and bottles. The marmoset plays as merrily with its tail as a kitten does, and the marmoset while it sleeps uses its tail as a sort of blanket. The raccoon catches crabs with its tail. Every one knows how the monkeys journey through pathless forests by swinging from tree to tree, while the fishes steer their way through the water by their tail fins. The ant eater puts up its big bushy tail for an umbrella. The vanity of the peacock is fed by the beauty of its tail.—Dumb Animals.

A Chemist's Happy Thought.

The guests at a ball given at the Tuilleries, Paris, were once distressed by something in the air which irritated everybody. The most famous chemist of the day was consulted as to the mysterious cause. His son-in-law, Dumas, had the happy thought that perhaps the irritating particles in the air came from the wax candles. He found on analysis that these candles had been bleached by chlorine. Immediately they were lighted a compound was added to the air that irritated throats and noses. This chance discovery led Dumas to study the whole effect of chlorine, with far-reaching results in chemistry.

Exact Information.

A census enumerator was questioning a woman of indubitable Celtic extraction and had come to the division of sexes.

"How many moles have you in your family?" he asked.

"Three a day, sorr, an' I git 'um me-self," she replied emphatically.

Forethought.

"You are probably not aware, sir," said the angry father, "that last year my daughter spent \$1,500 on her dress."

"Yes, I am," said the young man firmly. "I advised her to do it over a year ago, when we first became engaged."

A Hard Lot.

Boream—I suffer most awfully from insomnia, don't you know. The Gf—Did you ever try talking to yourself?—Illustrated Bits.

Don't blow yourself out because you are only a candle. Your poor, weak candlelight may be the light of another's life.—Zion's Herald.

Too Cold For the Candle.

It is a cold climate in which a flame cannot keep itself warm. One of the scientists attached to the Peary expedition has personally told of the effect of intense cold on a wax candle that he tried to burn. The temperature was 35 degrees below zero, and its effects were felt not only by the members of the expedition, but even by the candle in question. It gave forth no cheery light such as might have been expected from it in other circumstances, and when it came to be examined it was found that the flame had all it could do to keep itself warm. The air was so cold that the flame was not powerful enough to melt all the wax of the candle, but was compelled to eat its way down, leaving a skeleton structure of wax in the form of a hollow cylinder. Inside this cylinder the wick burned with a tongue of yellow fire, and here and there the heat was sufficient to perforate the outer covering and leave holes of odd shapes which turned the cylinder into a tube of lacelike wax, through the holes in which the light shone with a strange, weird beauty.—St. Louis Republic.

Directions in London.

In London and throughout the tight little island the words "up" and "down" have a peculiar significance. In going to London from any part of England you go "up." In traveling in any direction from the capital you go "down." So in London itself everything goes "up" if it goes in the direction of the bank—that is, the Bank of England—and going from that center toward any of the points of the compass is to go "down."

The word bank, which is not only always spelled with a capital "B," but is always uttered with an impressiveness that suggests an initial letter of the largest type, may be said to be in a sense interchangeable with city, a term of equal dignity and value in the eyes of Englishmen and likewise invariably adorned with a capital "C."

The city does not mean London by any means. It means a certain limited section of London, the part where business is mainly carried on and where the great financial institutions stand.

A Poor Fit.

George Graham Vest once won a case for his client by a neat retort. To testify against Vest's client there was brought into court a certain witness whose ill favored countenance matched his unsavory reputation in the community. The man's testimony was most unfavorable to the defendant, and so, of course, Vest proceeded to discredit his story. As the witness was unkempt and poorly clad, his clothes hanging about him in innumerable folds and wrinkles, the counsel for the opposing side endeavored in their turn to make it appear that Vest was making capital of the poor appearance of the man. Mr. Vest, of course, denied this allegation in the course of his closing remarks, adding: "Gentlemen of the jury, if that man's face fit him as well as his coat he would be a good looking man."

The jury returned a verdict for the defendant.

Close Range Duels.

During the first fifty years of the old American navy, 1798-1848, the mortality of naval officers resulting from duels was two-thirds that resulting from naval wars. In the eighty-two duels listed by a recent writer thirty six men were killed, all naval officers except three civilians. The per cent of mortality was 22, or five times the mortality of the federal army in the civil war. One-half of those not killed in these duels were wounded. The large number of casualties was undoubtedly due to the short distance between the combatants, which customarily was only ten paces, or thirty feet. In a few duels the distance was even less. In the Barron-Decatur duel it was twenty-four feet and only twelve in the Bainbridge-Cochran duel.

Led by the Nose.

An analytical chemist was retained as a skilled witness some years ago where there were questions of analytical chemistry. There was one case where a farmer had bought some artificial manure, and he was being sued for the price of it. He resisted payment on the ground that the material had none of the qualities of manure at all. The expert chemist was one of the witnesses and had stated that, although the substance had the smell, it had none of the chemical qualities of manure. Under cross examination he was asked, if that was so, how did he account for hundreds of the best farmers having taken the manure for many years. "They must have been led by the nose," returned the witness.—Dundee Advertiser.

Advantages of Matrimony.

Friend—Did you lose anything in the Bustall bank?
Depositor—Not a cent.
"Well, well! If you knew the thing was going up, wouldn't you say so?"
"I didn't know. I had to go off on business."
"So I left my wife some blank checks."
"She went shopping."

Accustomed to Luxuries.

Mr. Courting (exhibiting penknife)—"This handle is pure silver. What do you think of that? Little Girl—Huh! That's nothing. Slater's teeth is on a plate of pure gold."

Undaunted.

Nervous Employer—Thomas, I wish you wouldn't whistle at your work.
Office Boy—I ain't working, sir; I'm only just whistling.

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