North Topeka News

Items for this column may be left at Petro's drug store or telephone Eleanor Kimball, 3331 after 4 o'clock. Other hours, 3530.

Miss Madge Moore, principal of the Central Park school, will speak at the Second Presbyterian church Sunday morning at 10:30, on the early history of the Hawaiian Islands. Miss Moore spent some time there in research work.

Degree of Honor lodge No. 26 will hold its installation of officers tonight at their hall, 821 Kansas avenue. Grand Chief of Honor Sr. Ludeman will be present. Refreshments will be served.

Wm. M. Van Ness will act as choirmaster at the union meeting Sunday evening on the Presbyterian church lawn.

Blue Relief Corps No. 5 will hold their regular meeting next Tuesday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

The Life o' Wheat team will play the Piersen team at Garfield park Sunday afternoon.

Notes and Personals.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Whitehead of Los Angeles are the guests of Mr. Whitehead's brother, Will Whitehead and Mrs. Whitehead, at their home in Kansas avenue.

Miss Ida Hook of route 6 has gone to Tulsa, Okla., where she will be the guest of relatives for the remainder of the summer.

Mrs. L. P. Fraser, Mrs. Ed Bissell, Mrs. Kenneth Clark and children, Virginia and Larry, were the guests yesterday of Mrs. Tom Crosswhite at her country home, "Mound View," north of town.

Dr. M. R. Mitchell, a former resident of North Topeka, who has been visiting relatives and friends in Topeka for the past week, will leave for his home in Florida next Monday. He will stop in Chicago and visit his daughter, Mrs. Hahn, and his son, Porter Mitchell. Miss Stella Mitchell, who makes her home with her father, is also visiting her brother and sister in Chicago, but will return to Florida with her father.

Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Brownell of 843 Quincy street and Mrs. M. J. Guffy will go to Arkansas City to spend Sunday with relatives. Mr. and Mrs. Brownell will return Monday but Mrs. Guffy will go to Winfield to visit relatives before returning home.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Smith, of 1113 Jackson street, and Mr. and Mrs. S. S. Myers of 924 Kansas avenue, left today for a motor trip to Yale, Okla., where they will visit relatives.

Miss Mary Hahn, of Kansas City, Mo., will visit her aunt, Mrs. J. C. Snediker, and family of Jackson street, over Sunday.

Ed. Whitman of Elmont is sick at Christ hospital.

Mrs. G. R. Miller will go to Lawrence tonight to visit relatives and will go to Kansas City tomorrow to see her father, W. H. Robinson, who is sick in a Kansas City hospital.

S. R. Dexter, undertaker. Lady assistant. 823 Kansas ave.—Adv.

Mrs. George Dent will go to Kansas City to visit her parents over Sunday.

Glen Palmer and Miss Alma Gehrt were married Thursday afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Palmer will make their home for the present with Mrs. Palmer's parents, in West First street. Mr. Palmer is the son of Wilbur Palmer. He is employed at Morns & Myers.

The six year old daughter of Abe Enoch, of Silver Lake, who was seriously injured last week, is improving. The little girl was injured when a team, harnessed to a rake, became frightened and ran into her. She was caught in the rake and sustained a broken thigh and other injuries. She was brought to one of the city hospitals.

A. M. Petro & Son, Druggists.—Adv.

Mrs. George Turpin and daughter, Grace, have gone to Fairbury, Neb., where they will visit Mrs. Turpin's daughters, Mrs. Neely and Mrs. Mason.

The Willing Workers' class of the East Indianola Sunday school gave an allday picnic Thursday at the Industrial school grove and also held their regular meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wiseman across from the school.

A basket dinner was served and the class was shown thru the school buildings.

Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. F. Wiseman, Mrs. Burton, Mrs. E. W. Mendenhall, Mrs. Ed Kingman, Mrs. Geo. Hutton, Mrs. W. F. Denison, Mrs. L. R. Hutton, Mrs. J. W. Frye, Mrs. W. E. Farmer, Mrs. J. Klinefelter, Mrs. F. P. Rude, Mrs. Margaret Snyder, Mrs. M. A. Mendenhall, Mrs. E. Fletcher, Mrs. George Howard, Mrs. E. M. Cooper, Mrs. J. M. Sproul, Mrs. S. M. Wolford, Mrs. Weaver, Mrs. Fannie Nauman, Mrs. S. Manning, McFarland, Kan., Mrs. E. Gross, Marie Burton, Howard Kingman, Margaret Kingman, Paul Kingman, Walter Kingman, Thelma Cooper, Hazel Cooper, Lucille Cooper, Phyllis Gross, Charlesn Gross, Earl Mendenhall, Raymond Wolford, Dorothy Howard, Robert Hutton.

Among the Churches.

The union service of the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churches will be held Sunday evening at 8 o'clock on the Presbyterian church lawn. Special music by the choirs of the three churches.

The Central Avenue Christian church, the Rev. S. H. Hern in charge. Morning service at 11 o'clock. Evening service at 8 o'clock. Christian Endeavor at 7 o'clock. Bible school at 9:45.

The Kansas Avenue Methodist church, the Rev. R. E. Gordon, pastor. Morning service at 11 o'clock. Subject of sermon, "Dreams That Live." Epworth League at 6:45. Sunday school at 9:45 a. m.

The North Topeka Baptist church, the Rev. O. L. Weir, pastor. Morning service at 11 o'clock. Subject of sermon, "A Tribute of Graceful Love." Junior meeting at 3 o'clock. Intermediate and B. Y. P. U. at 7 o'clock. Sunday school 9:30 a. m. Prayer meeting Thursday evening at 8 o'clock.

The Second Presbyterian church, the Rev. R. Jackman, minister. Morning service at 11 o'clock. Subject of sermon, "The Seventh Epoch in the Life of Abraham, or His Obedience." Christian Endeavor 7 p. m. Sunday school 9:30 a. m.

New York Produce Market.

New York, July 10.—BUTTER—Market steady. Creamery higher than extras, 58½@59c.

EGGS—Market firm. Fresh gathered extra firsts, 49@51c.

CHEESE—Market irregular. State whole milk flats, current make, white and colored specials, 27½@28½c.

New Orleans Cotton Market.

New Orleans, July 10.—COTTON—Spot, quiet and unchanged; middling, 39.00.

Chicago Grain and Provision Market.

Chicago, July 10.—CORN—Close: July, $1.61; September, $1.59⅝@1.59¾; December, $1.42⅝@1.42¾.

OATS—July, 97¾c; September, 80½@81c; December, 78½@78⅝c.

RYE—July, $2.31½; September, $2.00.

PORK—July, $28.30; September, $30.20.

LARD—July, $19.10; September, $19.85.

RIBS—July, $16.85; September, $17.77.

Chicago Produce Market.

Chicago, July 10.—POTATOES—Market strong. Virginia Cobblers, $13.75@14.00; North Carolina, ditto, $12.75@13.00; Southern Triumphs and Early Ohios, $7.00@7.25.

FROM THE MAELSTROM

By L. J. BEESTON

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VI.—The Branderwine Case

From the Savage Tribes of Borneo Comes a Strange Poison, and Though It Is a Far Cry from Malaya to London There the Poison Did Its Deadly Work.

WHEN my friend, Hogg Tredways, that distinguished specialist in ways that are dark, turned down the case of Oswald Street, his opinion, that it was hollow of interest, that it was not a case at all, in fact, and that one does not angle for big fish in clear shallow waters, was sincere and final.

That was why he sent away Margaret Wildrave, who had come, at my suggestion, on behalf of Street, who had loved her before the clang of a flung-to prison door shut him out from her life.

It was merely the call of impulse, therefore, which, a fortnight later, as Tredways and I were passing Miss Wildrave's house, which is within five minutes' walk of the Marble Arch, spurred him to say, "Suppose we see if the lady is in?"

Two minutes later we were with her.

"This is very kind of you," she said wistfully, "but you have come too late."

I experienced a shock of horror. Street had ended his life?

The great convict prison called Chains had opened to him for egress its gates three weeks ago. I was Chaplain there: the Reverend Horace Francie. Men sometimes pass through the Gehenna of prison erroneously condemned. When I suspected as much I brought such cases to Hogg Tredways, who took them up on the expiration of sentence. For some years I had watched Street. I could not think his conduct that of a man who had committed a terrible crime. His sentence had been reduced because of his self-sacrificing bravery in a fire which had raged through one of the prison galleries. I wished to take him to Tredways, but he refused. He went straight off and buried himself in his sunless day. Persistent, I sought Miss Margaret Wildrave, who went to my friend with Street's story. As I said, it was bald, without a flicker of suggestion that Street had not killed Auguste Branderwine.

Indeed, he admitted it.

More, Branderwine himself lived long enough to scrawl a message, a dying message, blurred, feeble, but legible; "Oswald Street the man who murdered me."

And now we were in the house of the late Auguste Branderwine who had been a traveller and keen naturalist in his hour.

Miss Wildrave, his niece, whom he had brought up from babyhood, had been left his property.

"Too late?" Tredways echoed sharply. "What has happened?"

The lady flushed. She was obviously embarrassed. "Time is so precious; we have lost another fortnight," she stammered.

Tredways took the chair offered to him.

"Come," he demurred, pleasantly, "that is not so serious when we remember that Street was eight years in Chains. I propose, very tersely, to recapitulate the facts—" he stopped. A picture on the wall had gripped his attention.

"That is almost horrible," said he.

"I am of your opinion," answered Miss Wildrave, turning round. "Professor Branderwine brought it home with him from one of his journeys into the Malay Peninsula. It is a native painting done on some fibrous material. I do not know what those characters underneath mean."

"Is it the face of a corpse?" I asked.

"At any rate it is a ghoulish fancy not without merit," remarked Tredways. He jerked his chair round and faced our hostess. "I understand, Miss Wildrave, that a mutual attachment was between you and Oswald Street, and that it was not regarded favorably by Professor Branderwine, chiefly on account of Street's comparative poverty. The latter, however, persisted until he was ordered to keep away altogether. This was the motive for the crime put forward by the prosecution. It lacks originality, certainly, but is not without strength, the power of a hopeless passion on an uncontrolled will.

"On the night of the crime your lover had determined to see you again. He climbed to a balcony, helped in the feat by his sailor's life, he being then first mate on a cargo boat. His idea was to traverse this balcony until he reached your room. Unluckily, as he climbed over the iron parapet he was stopped by Branderwine himself, who was in his room, the blinds being up, and the glass door open. Street stated that the professor was sitting in an armchair, that he beckoned to him to enter, that he asked him to fetch him a certain phial from a shelf of a cupboard in the room and to pour him out a few drops immediately. He complained of faintness, he said. Street obeyed. No sooner had Branderwine swallowed the liquid than he sank back—a dead man. Horrified, Street turned a hasty attenton to the contents of the phial. Too late, he recognized in it a powerful poison. Either he had fetched the wrong bottle, or the professor had asked for the wrong one. At any rate, he had inadvertently killed Branderwine.

"At that moment he heard a knocking at the door. Every instinct warned him that to be caught there, in the circumstances, would be fatal to him. He fled by the way he had come.

"He was arrested on the following day, trying to get back to his ship. The imprints of his fingers, soiled by his climb, were plain on the label of the phial. Then he admitted his stealthy ingress to the house. His story was proved to be false, because the professor had not at once expired. He had had time and strength sufficient to write one line condemning Oswald Street in the most effectual manner. Beyond doubt he had been overcome by his assailant. Branderwine was a man of poor physique, your lover a man of the most powerful stature. To force a few drops down the throat of an old, weak man was an act involving little difficulty for a young, strapping giant.

"Then, if Street was not guilty, who was? It was shown that the professor locked himself in his study every evening for two hours' work. This rule was never broken. His man-servant who had been with him for thirty years never admitted any one. Indeed, that night the door had to be forced before Branderwine was found lifeless. Had some one else climbed to the balcony? Most improbable. Besides, there had been a slight fall of snow, and it held the impression of but one set of footmarks—Street's. Suicide? Not to be imagined. The professor enjoyed his life. Finally, he had himself written the truth down in his last moments.

"Now, what could be plainer than this? How, in heaven's name, am I or any intellect more acute than mine, in a position to clear the man who loved you? What is there to catch hold of? Where is there a mystery in all this or a suspicion of mystery? You affirm that Oswald Street was never capable of so atrocious a crime. Your faith compels admiration. It is sublime."

"Then why have you come to me now?" said Miss Wildrave.

Tredways got up and walked to the window. He really had no answer ready. We watched him, and waited. He drummed on the pane with impatient fingers.

"Is this the room where the thing happened?" he asked.

"Yes."

The wrought-iron balcony was built the width of the house. Outside was a quiet, rather private road, with a railed-in strip of garden filled with azaleas whose somewhat sickly perfume was wafted through the open window. Beyond was a narrow road used only by tradesmen's carts, and the view was ended by the backs of the opposite houses.

"Why am I here?" echoed my friend at last, returning. "It is a mistake. I should not have troubled you. One cannot make bricks without straw. Regard this affair from every point of view and one glimpses no shred of a shadow of mystery. I cannot invent it, you will admit. It is as simple a matter as that of the case of a man who shoots another in broad daylight, in a crowd. Your lover was the cause of Professor Branderwine's death. Whether he was the indirect cause matters not to me. Can you really believe, in your heart of hearts, this story of his about Branderwine asking him to hand him a poisonous draught?"

"That means that you yourself discredit it?" asked the girl.

"Yes, indeed," was the blunt response.

"In that case, I will relieve your doubts altogether and complete your scepticism," said Miss Wildrave with sudden resolve.

"I will tell you of an incident which will ease you of any embarrassment in abandoning the matter. I had been in the habit of meeting Oswald once or twice a week in a certain part of Hyde Park, after dusk, in a glade which we loved for its beautiful sycamore and its comparative privacy. After I was forbidden to see him, I kept away; but one evening I turned in that direction just for old time's sake, with no thought of finding him. The light of a full moon was descending through the tops of the trees, and by it I saw Oswald standing motionless, as if waiting for me. His back was toward me, but I knew it was Oswald, for he was wearing his naval uniform. I stopped, undecided. I had given my word not to yield to any request for an interview. At that instant he turned round and I saw his face. It—it——"

The girl paused. She wiped her moist palms on her handkerchief.

"Well?" questioned Tredways, encouragingly.

"I received a shock for which I cannot account," was the strange answer. "He had changed. He looked frightfully ill. His white, his bloodless face was that of a spectre, and—smile at me if you like—it caused a strange thrill of fear that made my heart tremble. I was standing in thick shadow so that he did not see me. But I fancy he had heard my approach, for he took a step forward, lowering his head and peering from side to side. I simply cannot account for the sensation almost of terror which I experienced; but I will confess the absurd dread which at that time chilled my blood; it was that Oswald was dead, and that the pallid, frozen countenance which I saw was that of his phantom. I edged away out of sight and returned home feeling ill, well-nigh hysterical."

Miss Wildrave was so moved by the recollection that Tredways directed his eyes elsewhere. They rested upon the bizarre painting which I have mentioned, and remained there, steadily regarding it. This also seemed the face of a man without life. Was it possible that he was connecting the two? I think so, for he was on the point of raising himself from his chair when Miss Wildrave continued.

"My nerves were so unstrung that night at dinner," she went on, "that my uncle noticed it. He asked bluntly if I had seen Oswald. Not knowing just what answer to make I stammered something unintelligible. He reddened, looked exceedingly angry, and I guessed from the sudden snap of his jaws that he meant to take action. The next evening, after dusk, he went out in the direction of the park. He was aware of our former trysting place, and I was certain that he was going to meet Oswald. I stayed in the house a prey to a sensation of extraordinary uneasiness. He came back an hour later, and I saw that something had happened.

"He was in a condition of extreme agitation which he tried to hide from me; but what he could conceal still less was the livid mark of a welt right across his forehead. He said no word. I longed—oh, so much—to ask him what had happened. But I dared not. The glitter in his eyes warned me to keep silent. That is what I set out to tell you, Mr. Tredways. Put upon it what construction you like."

Tredways bent his gaze to the carpet. For a long time he was silent. Presently he got up and the action brought him face to face with that forbidding piece of savage art upon the wall. He paused to regard it in an absent, mechanical fashion, but he appeared to become gradually interested.

"Have you a magnifying lens handy?" he inquired, as we watched him wonderingly.

Miss Wildrave produced one from a drawer. With it he minutely examined the painting. Then he crossed over to the window and stood for a long time looking down at the balcony, during which we said no word. Then back he returned, pulling a small pocketknife from his vest pocket.

"Allow me to make a small operation here," said he. "I shall not injure the painting itself."

With the point of the blade he probed into the fibrous material, using the utmost care. Quite five minutes elapsed before he gave us his attention.

"These queer characters inscribed below this repulsive drawing, what do they convey?" he asked.

Miss Wildrave shook her head. "I have no idea."

"It is a sample of Malyan painting, I think you said?"

"Yes; so that the inscription is probably in some dialect of that language."

"It scarcely matters," said Tredways, thoughtfully.

"But if you care to know," added the other with a touch of hesitation, "there is a student of medicine, a protege of my poor uncle, who might enlighten you. His English name is Edwardes. Professor Branderwine brought him from, I believe, the interior of the Peninsula when a boy. He is not a full-blooded native. He was devotedly attached to my uncle, his benefactor, who had great faith in his gifts. Would you care for his address?"

"No, it is not material," answered Tredways, thoughtfully. He meant what he said, I was sure, but as he spoke he kept a curious sideways glance upon Miss Wildrave. She showed relief at his reply, I thought, a certain relaxing of tension in her mobile face and troubled eyes.

"Still, I might take a note of it," added Tredways carelessly.

"Very good. It is number 16 Treeward street, only five minutes from here," was the immediate response.

"Take a note of it, Francie," said he. "Treeward street, number!" he stopped, and I saw his eyes flash as some astonishing thought flashed into his mind. He began to count on his fingers, "Two—four—six—eight——" and so on to sixteen. Then, after a dramatic pause, "I find, my dear young lady, that I shall not be able to take up this matter for two or three weeks. I shall be very busy over another affair."

"Two weeks?" she echoed, visibly agitated. "Ah, that will be too late! I mean—," she broke off, so distressed that a wave of crimson mounted to her forehead.

"Never mind," said Tredways, in a tone of great gentleness, taking her hand. "I will not press for a reason. I know perfectly well that it must be quite unconnected with this business——"

"It is, it is," she interrupted fervently.

"—or you would not withhold it," he concluded. "Goodbye, my dear Miss Wildrave."

When we were out in the street he turned upon me with the remark, "That is the faith which is stronger than death. That girl simply cannot bring herself to see Street's guilt. Yet if there ever existed more clear, more absolutely damning evidence against a man I should be glad to hear of it."

"So you have abandoned the case, Tredways?"

"Oh, but I am delighted that we called," he answered, taking my arm. "I will tell you something, Francie. I suspect—and that in spite of my earnest efforts to repress the element of sensational imagining—that we are grappling with one of the most insidious mysteries, with one of the most terrible crimes, I have ever encountered. Great as it is, I fear it will be but the prelude to one more frightful unless—unless——"

"Unless what?" I gasped.

"Come," said he genially, "let us call on Mr. Edwardes and learn the meaning of that hieroglyphic on that abominable picture."

* * * * *

After all, there was nothing in it, being simply the painting of some local deity possessed of unusual terrific powers, and taken from a mountain temple. Our informant was a vivacious little fellow, with an agreeable manner. We could scarcely have made so slender a subject an excuse for the visit. I had expected that Tredways would introduce the matter of Professor Branderwine's dark finish; indeed, his name announced as much. It was barely touched upon, however.

"My debt to that true friend is deeper than I express," said his protege. "He brought me to this country when I was little more than an infant, and my education and prospects are his gifts."

The ensuing hour was far from being empty of instruction, however. The room was filled with a great number of objects of native interest. There were fetishes in wood and iron, uncouth idols from the Peninsula, once brightly painted in vermilion; leg and arms rings; the terrible Malayan knives which make one shudder to handle; the long blow-pipe made of palm stems; ivory war-horns, moneyskins; wonderful necklaces. The assortment was made fascinating by the explanations of our interesting informant.

It was mid-day when we left. My companion proposed an adjournment to his favorite restaurant for lunch. After the soup I ventured upon the subject which had absorbed our morning.

"What was your object, Tredways, in wanting to put aside the matter for two or three weeks?" I asked.

"That is almost horrible' said he."

"My dear Francie," he answered, with no trace of gravity in his expression, "will you mind speaking in rather less than half the power of your usual voice—soft as that generally is?"

I turned my attention to my soup, but I did not enjoy it. At last I murmured, over the edge of my spoon——

"What is in the wind, Tredways?"

"Edwardes is behind us, in an alcove just to the left, half-hidden by a palm."

"You think he followed us?"

"I know it."

"What for?"

"Possibly he thought I was going to the police."

The wildest ideas hummed through my head. I could find no ready question, but regarded my companion, astonished.

"Shall I tell you who murdered Professor Branderwine?" he went on, his voice just reaching me. "The man is just behind us, in an alcove just to the left, half-hidden by a palm. Pray finish your soup, Francie. And let us change the talk." He leaned back in his chair. "A serene spring day," said he aloud. "Shall we put in an hour at Ranglagh this afternoon? The polo will be good, I am told."

He had been told rightly. Before the hour was up Tredways said he must be off. "You stay where you are," he ordered. "I have got to give our friend Edwardes the slip. There are only two sure ways of dodging a clever shadow, and a man must be by himself to work either."

"You don't mean to say he is here?" I queried incredulously. For I had kept a careful if furtive look-out.

"Certainly he is. So long, Francie," he answered briskly.

I did not hear from Tredways any more that day, but he 'phoned me while I was breakfasting the next morning.

"Whatever you are doing, drop it and come to me instantly," he begged. It was a tone of anxiety most unusual with him.

I was at his rooms in Half Moon street within twenty minutes. He was dressed to go out, and he fairly ran at me.

"You know where Oswald Street is to be found?" he flashed.

"Yes. He is——"

"Don't care where he is. I only want you, my dear fellow, to get to him without a second's loss of time. Our poor friend Miss Wildrave is menaced by a peril which sickens me to contemplate. Give this letter to Street. He will write down an answer which you will bring to me as fast as your taxi can spin you back. Pardon my making a mere messenger of you; but I believe he will reply to my questions in this note more readily if covered under the privacy of a sealed envelope. Quick, Francie! Do not let anything or any one stop you."

I took the stairs in a series of leaps. Something terrible had happened. Rarely had I seen my friend so agitated. I was hurrying to the end of the street for a cab when who should pass me but the man Edwardes. He smiled agreeably. I looked round and saw, with no little discomposure, that he was calling on Tredways.

Apple Tree Court, which is west of the Grays Inn Road, offers no golden spherlods for the sun to ripen. It is a very mean alley, a slum. Here I found my man. I had visited Street there once before; he knew that I was half-convinced of his innocence, but that did not prevent a deep flush of shame from rising to his wasted cheeks. I handed him the note, with the simple observation. "You know I have interested Hogg Tredways in you, Street. He wants an answer to this—and quickly."

He ripped open the envelope and read. His brows met in perplexity. He turned the letter over and looked at the bare side of it.

"He asks me two questions, sir," said Street after a silence. "He wants me to write an answer alongside each of them. But that answer is a plain 'No' to both."

"Good enough," I interrupted as he looked about for writing material which wasn't there. "Keep up heart, my good fellow. One can never tell what may happen." And out I went again and jumped into my waiting taxi.

I was all eagerness to get back to Half Moon street, for a sense of calamity galled my nerves. As I mounted the stone front steps I almost collided with Edwardes who was just leaving. He apologised very politely for a fault that was mine, still smiling, with a hard sort of glitter in his black eyes. I bounded up the carpeted staircase and burst into Tredway's room. A cry of horror rose to my lips.

He had tumbled across the sofa, inert, huddled, his face buried in a cushion, the fingers of his hanging left hand stretched out stiff like the hand of an epileptic.

As I rushed forward, uttering I know not what exclamation, he roused himself and turned his face toward me. To my astonishment it was crossed by a broad smile!

"That you, Francie?" he remarked tranquilly, getting up. "I thought it was Edwardes, returned. My reason for feigning all the chief symptoms of impending death by cerebral paralysis was a pressing one, I do assure you. You look scared. Take a cigarette."

There was a box of them upon the table, with a loose one on top. As I placed it between my lips Tredways said calmly:

"Three or four whiffs of that, Francie, and you will not assume the unpleasant symptoms to which I alluded; you will get them in serious earnest. That is the identical cigarette handed to me by our friend Edwardes. He came to do me a mischief; the intent was quite evident in his bearing. He produced his cigarette case and covered all with his fingers, in a seemingly absent-minded way, except that one. I took it, but managed to replace it with one of my own. I noted his manner when lighting up. His eyes became sparks of fire. All the savage, the bestial, the primitive murder-lust of his forbears glowed in his watching eyes. I saw that I must act a part or that he would let the life out of me in a more open fashion. Hell alone knows the kind of poison that is in that tube of rice-paper. But we shall find it out in good time and so complete the case against him. Now, Francie, what have you to tell me?"

"That the answer is 'no' to both questions."

"So I anticipated. We will now look in upon Miss Wildrave."

On the way I remarked to my companion "Of course, the impending crime to which you referred was this attack upon yourself?"

"You think I should have made so much fuss about my own skin?" he laughed. At that moment a servant opened the door to us.

"Miss Wildrave went out ten minutes ago, sir," we were told.

"Alone?" snapped my companion.

"Mr. Edwardes was with her, sir."

I heard Tredways mutter "Good God!" under his breath. He fairly pulled me away. "A cab, Francie!" he ejaculated in the tone of one mortally afraid. "My soul, if that hound beats us!"

"What is the matter, Tredways?" I demanded openly, as he fidgetted and chafed and fretted and muttered.

"Matter?" he echoed. "Only that while we sit here Miss Wildrave may actually be marrying Edwardes at a registrar's office!"

It was touch and go, with a vengeance. When we arrived on the scene that sweet girl was on the very edge of putting her signature to the all-important document. Edwardes saw the game was up and made a dash for it. He got past Tredways, but I tackled him low. He went clean over my shoulder and a wall knocked the senses out of him.

"My dear Tredways," I accosted my friend that evening, as we sat in his room and regarded each other over the top of a cigar, "this thing has wound itself out so quickly that I most believe you have worked at it—not since yesterday morning, but from the first hour of my introducing you to it, a couple of weeks ago."

"Wrong, Francie, wrong. I own that we unravelled the thread with unusual speed, but once I made my preliminary discovery the rest, from the nature of the case, was bound to happen smartly. Was I acting when I said there was nothing in the affair? I was quite sincere. I got my first hint of the profound when, examining that Malayan painting merely as a work of barbarous art, I found something imbedded very deeply in the woody fibre used as a native canvas. It looked like a tuft of silk, of yellow silk, and was well-nigh indiscernible on the background of color. I extracted it with my pocket-knife. It was precisely what I thought it was: a small dart tufted with silk, very much like the well-known darts we used to discharge from air-guns, when we were boys.

"It was interesting, but scarcely suggestive. A true suspicion was created when Miss Wildrave spoke so hesitatingly of poor Branderwine's protege as a man of Malay blood who could translate the hieroglyp——. Now, I was looking about for some party who had been kept dark from us. You will remember that on our arrival when I wished to reopen the case, Miss Wildrave told me, with no small agitation, that I had too long delayed. This statement she confirmed when I said, with intent, that I could do nothing for some weeks. What could her distress mean? How was I to interpret her flushes, her alternating pallor? I translated it all by assuming that she was about to give herself away in marrriage. I guessed the presence of an ardent, a long-patient suitor in the background. I felt that she still loved Oswald Street, whom, of course, she could not marry branded as he was; and that she was soon to yield to this waiting this pressing, this unknown third person. But could he be Edwardes? It seemed most likely. He had been dear to her uncle, they had been near to each other since childhood. All the same, there was a certain amount of dark blood in his veins. For that reason she would keep his offer a secret, aware of strong opposition which would be brought to bear on the part of friends.

"All this I considered. I wanted to know more about Edwardes. I requested his address. It was that which first suggested to me the first glimmer of the terrible truth.

"I know Treeward street. I have a friend at number five. I reckoned up the houses as far as sixteen and perceived that the back of that particular house was very nearly opposite to the front of the house in which we then were.

"We paid Edwardes an immediate visit. He was probably suspicious of me from the first. My name cannot be unknown to him. But he felt sure; it seemed impossible that his guilt could ever be dragged into the light. He was chatty; he showed us his curios; and amongst them he even displayed the very weapon with which he murdered Branderwine.

"It was the reed of a small palm; that long, straight tube which we call a blow-pipe. From it the savage discharges an arrow with a poisoned tip. In his hands it is a most deadly weapon. Edwardes made use of it. I have not the least doubt. But he did not use an arrow; he chose a much smaller, yellow-tufted dart. That dart, I found, I had it examined by an analyst in rare poisons. He found a trace of a poison which is made by crushing certain deadly black ants, a formidable production of tropical forests.

"Edwardes committed this crime one night, the very night when Oswald Street so unwisely made his stealthy visit to the house. Edwardes knew Branderwine's habits, of course; that he spent a few hours each evening in his study. He knew that the inmate frequently passed out on the balcony as he read. Edwardes, in a room in one of the houses opposite, separated merely by a narrow strip of pavement and the enclosed azalea beds, loaded his weapon and waited. His chance came. His first attempt failed. We found that dart embedded in the painting. It must have whistled past the head of its intended victim, through the open window, and lodged where I luckily discovered it. The second proved fatal. I am inclined to think that it struck its victim on the scalp, inflicting perhaps a merely slight scratch which was concealed by his long white hair.

"Branderwine stepped back into his study. He knew that his moments of remaining life might be numbered on the fingers of his hands. The attack, as you will soon see, was not unsuspected by him. Already he felt the searing agony of the poison. And it was at that moment Oswald Street entered.

"What followed must be clear to your intelligence. Branderwine was determined not to endure the unspeakable anguish which was beginning to burn in his veins. He asked his visitor, forcing a calmness worthy of him, to hand him a certain phial. He had no power to say more. He drank. It was his last act in life.

"And the motive of this somewhat uncanny crime? It is staring us in the face. It was the passion which Edwardes had conceived for Margaret Wildrave. He must have mentioned it to Branderwine, or the latter suspected it. Now, though the professor was very proud of his protege he, very rightly, was sternly inimical to any idea of marrying his niece to him. There was not much dark blood in the other's veins, but there was some. Indeed, there was enough, as we have seen, to rise in rebellion against refusal, and to create the altogether savagely conceived idea of putting the obstacle to his passion entirely out of the way.

"Yet that was not his first notion. Recall the sinister figure under the trees in the park. I am convinced that was Edwardes, whose jealousy had informed him of the trysting-place where Miss Wildrave used to meet her lover. God knows what dreadful intent had occurred to his ferocity. It is evident that he was impersonating Street; that he even went so far as to conceal his swarthy features by a facial mask. Such disguises are today works of art, composed from a photograph of the original. His sparkling black eyes, quick with passion, made the rest seem rigid lifeless, something sinister. On the succeeding night he found himself face to face, not with Miss Wildrave, but with Branderwine. There must have been a struggle. And from that moment Branderwine felt that his life would probably be menaced by this young tiger whom he had brought up.

"That is all, my dear Francie. I think the evidence we have will hang Edwardes and make a happy couple of Margaret and Oswald Street. To that evidence is added his attempt to kill me. That was a bad move. He should not have followed us from his house to the restaurant. That confirmed my suspicions."

"But how did you know of his impending marriage?" I asked, as Tredways paused to light his cigar which had gone out.

"The lady's mysterious conduct by suggesting marriage to me, sent me to the office of the superintendent-registrar. Edwardes had got the license all right. That he would use it instantly and get out of the country with his wife was sure. That was why I would not los sight of him even for twenty minutes by going myself to Street. The situation was too critical. The questions I asked Street were if he had met Margaret Wildrave in the glade of the park that night; and if it was he who had encountered Branderwine on the following one and struck him. You see I wanted to know for certain before putting my case in the police hands."

Suddenly I jumped clean out of my chair. "Good heavens, Tredways! You are wrong after all!" I exclaimed.

"Calm yourself, Francis. Well, what now?"

"You have forgotten the scrawled last words by Professor Branderwine. He said that Street had murdered him!"

"Pardon, he did not. He started to write to him. Knowing he was doomed he wanted to make friends with him who had killed him. But his brain was reeling; his hand unsteady. He omitted a comma. Branderwine meant to write, 'Oswald Street, the man who killed me was——' You follow? Push me the bottle, Francis. I am husky with talking."