# THE BOSSIER BANNER.

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## Robbery Plot Went Astray

### Mystery of Postoffice Burglary Cleared by Amateur

By HOWARD FIELDING
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My visitor had an excellent counterfeit of a frank demeanor, yet I observed that he desired strict privacy for our interview and that he was interested in the question whether the sound of our voices would penerate the thin partition which separated my modest sanctum from the composing room of the newspaper. He drew a chair very close to mine and laid a clipping on the desk.

"Could you tell me," said he, "who wrote that article?"

It was a labored disquisition on the reading of cryptograms and had been printed in last week's Saturday supplement with small hope on my part that it would amuse anybody in our town.

"Certainly," said I. "It was written by David Graham, foreman of my composing room."

"Could I see Mr. Graham?" he asked.

"You may send him your card," said I, "the real one, not the one you sent to me."

He eyed me with mild surprise.

"What makes you think"— he began, but I cut in upon him.

"I don't think; I know. You are a postoffice detective, and your name is Charles Baxter. You are in this town to investigate the robbery here last week. I'm investigating it also as a part of my business, and that's how I happen to know you."

"Right," said he. "But as for the card"—

"We shall not need it now. I'll send for Mr. Graham."

My foreman was a tall, thin, long faced Scot with a hard mouth and a mild eye.

"I want you to help me in the matter of this postoffice robbery," said Baxter, coming right to the point. "The job was done by two men, and we know one of them, but it's the other who has the plunder. The fellow we've got our eyes on hasn't a cent of it, and he is keeping away from it and from his pal. He's as smooth an article as I've encountered in many a day. We could arrest him any minute; but, though we have a moral certainty that he's guilty, I couldn't bank so high on the legal evidence. And, anyhow, we should lose the pal and the swag, for it's a sure thing that our man wouldn't squeal. He hasn't been near this town since the night of the robbery. He's living in a boarding house in Stanhope, twenty miles west of us, and his patience seems to be about as long suffering as ours. His only mistake is that he writes letters, and we've trapped one

"COULD YOU TELL ME WHO WROTE THAT ARTICLE?"

of them. He started to mail it yesterday afternoon and dropped it on the street. One of my men, who was shadowing him, nabbed it in a holy second, and here it is."

Baxter laid an envelope on the leaf of my desk between Graham and me. We saw that it was addressed to Miss Annie Davenport, a young woman much admired in our town and of unblemished reputation. I was amazed and distressed that her name should be brought into such an affair.

"It's open," said the detective to Graham. "See what you can make of it."

"I am not so clear as to that," answered Graham. "It would appear to me that I might like the young lady's permission."

Upon this Baxter made quite a flowery argument, speaking of the interests of justice and other lofty considerations, but Graham and I were not impressed.

"Who wrote this?" I asked when the detective paused for breath.

"You'll know the name," said he—"Walter Allen."

I did indeed know the name and the man. Allen was the sole survivor of a family that had once been prominent in our town. He himself had been a wild youth, and his reputation had not improved with added years. He had inherited a small property from his father and was supposed to have squandered it. The homestead had been sold in foreclosure proceedings within a year, and little had been seen of Allen in Stockton since then. I knew, however, that he had once been very attentive to Annie Davenport, but had been supplanted in her affections, if, indeed, he ever had a share in them, by a much better man, to whom she was now said by the gossips to be engaged. This was Stuart Farnsworth, son of our postmaster and himself a new fledged lawyer not without clients.

"On the night of the robbery," said the detective, "Allen was seen and positively recognized within fifty yards of the postoffice just after the safe was blown, and he was running away. That's how sure we are of him. The man who saw him had sense enough to keep dark about it except to the postoffice authorities. He didn't even tell the police, for which we're much obliged."

It was a fact that Allen's name had not been whispered in connection with the affair.

"Now, here's a curious circumstance," continued Baxter. "The other robber was seen, too, but not recognized. He may have been disguised or he may be a stranger. At any rate we have his description, and we know that he carried a large black handbag. That bag doubtless contained $8,000 and more of Uncle Sam's money. He had sense enough not to run, and Billy Stern, the letter carrier, who was the man that saw him, had no idea that there was anything wrong with the fellow until after he heard that Allen had been seen running in the other direction empty handed. Then the meaning of the man with the big bag flashed upon Stern's mind, and he told me."

"Does the description fit anybody hereabouts?" asked Graham.

"Except for a beard, which might have been false, of course," said Baxter, "it would fit Stuart Farnsworth, the postmaster's son, fairly well. And there's a point: Young Farnsworth might have known of the unusual sum of money in the postoffice safe. But he seems to have a fair alibi. He was calling that evening on a young lady named Annie Davenport."

"It lies in my mind that the robbery was past 12," said Graham, "and the young man would not be staying at Miss Davenport's so late."

"We learn that he left about 11," responded Baxter, "but the thieves were at work in the postoffice by 10 at the latest. It was better than a two hours' job on that safe. And now, Mr. Graham," he continued, "will you help me read this letter? It is in cipher, and we can't make anything of it. We have reason to assume that Allen has sent several to Miss Davenport since the robbery, and we think that we are justified in trying to get at the bottom of this puzzle. The young lady may be entirely innocent, of course. It's probable that she knows nothing of Allen's connection with the robbery or that he is suspected. There's doubtless some trick by which she is made to hand on these letters to the right party."

"I'd say the same to her if I was you," said Graham. "Then you'll be in the way of learning the insides of all this."

Baxter balked at this suggestion, but we succeeded in persuading him, and he set out for the house where Miss Davenport lived with her widowed mother. I gave him a note of introduction to the young lady and some rather severe admonitions as to his behavior, for I could see that he vaguely suspected her of some (perhaps unconscious) complicity in this affair. He was gone about two hours and returned both pleased and puzzled.

"This is a queer business," said he. "I'll be hanged if I understand it. But here's the story: A few days after the robbery Miss Davenport got a note from Allen. He told her some sort of a faked up story about being bothered by his debts and the noble resolve that he had made to pay them all. It was necessary, he wrote, that he should communicate secretly with a friend in this town. Would Miss Davenport receive the letters and simply hold them until the friend should come and claim them? She need not answer; he would take it for granted that she would do this small service for one whom she had once been gracious enough to count among her friends. Since then she has received five letters and has held them unopened on the theory that they were not for her. The friend has not appeared. I made her understand mighty clearly that this was a part of the postoffice robbery, and naturally she didn't like the idea. Here are the letters and her written permission for Mr. Graham to read them if he can."

"Give me the one that your gillie found on the street," said Graham. And Baxter laid it before him. It was a brief typewritten note consisting of a single string of jumbled letters and figures, as follows:

3 1 2 f q p y l e b s f 2 v q 3 p d n h 4 e 2 o q x g l z f u 2 m g g r 1 r v j f u 2 q w t 1 u j n f 2 y k n n 3 f r p h.

"You didn't show anything like that in your article," said Baxter, grinning.

"I was writing for grown folk," rejoined Graham. "This is child's play. It's a mere shift of the alphabet. The figures divide off the words and also show the extent of the shift, which is different for each word. How simple! '3 f—l is the third letter after i; '2 f q p y'—f is the second letter after d, q is the second after o. The whole reads this way: 'I don't dare to make a move yet. Keep quiet. Our time will come.'"

"That doesn't give us much light," said Baxter, "but we have the other letters, and there's no doubt they were intended for Allen's pal. If the same cipher is used we've got"—

He paused as if stricken with paralysis. One of Miss Davenport's letters was open in his hand. The contents were blank paper!

It was the same with all of them; not a scrap of writing.

"Well, this knocks my eye out!" said Baxter. And then, with sudden energy: "These envelopes have been opened. I see the whole game. Stuart Farnsworth is the man. These letters were not kept under lock and key; they were scarcely out of plain sight—in a drawer of a writing desk in the Davenports' sitting room. Farnsworth could get at them without the girl's knowledge."

Now, this looked reasonable enough, except that a partnership in burglary between two bitter rivals in love would be somewhat of a novelty, especially with the young woman an unconscious assistant in the nefarious schemes. My credulity was hardly equal to the de-

WITHOUT WARNING GRAHAM SPRANG UPON STERN.

mand upon it, and when I thought of what I knew about young Farnsworth's character I rebelled utterly.

"There is one point," Graham was saying. "Allen wrote this letter and lost it. Of course he would write another. Has it been received?"

"Not yet," said Baxter.

Graham glanced at the clock.

"There's one more delivery today," he said. "It'll be due in a few minutes at Miss Davenport's house. Suppose we go up there."

Baxter accepted the suggestion, and we set out at once, reaching the house precisely in the nick of time. Billy Stern was in the very act of delivering a letter to Miss Davenport at the gate.

Baxter, out of breath with walking, merely extended his hand for the letter, and Miss Davenport gave it to him. The detective tore open the envelope and drew forth a sheet of blank paper.

"This is too much for me," said he. "I'll be hanged if I understand"—

He was interrupted by a sudden and surprising occurrence. Without the slightest warning Graham sprang upon Stern, the carrier, and the two men came heavily to the ground. Graham was much the stronger. He seized Stern's right wrist and wrenched his hand open. A crumpled paper was disclosed. Baxter stooped and seized it, and I saw as he held it up that it bore a letter written in Allen's cipher.

Graham rose, pulled Stern up after him; then he faced Baxter.

"Why, man," he cried, "how could ye doubt who was at the bottom of this business? Did ye really believe that these letters were opened after Miss Davenport received them?"

"Do you mean that this fellow Stern has opened them," demanded Baxter, "that they were intended for his eyes, that the whole plot was between Stern and Allen?"

"Beyond a doubt," answered Graham. "Stern's description of the second robber was an obvious lie intended to throw dust in your eyes and cast suspicion upon an innocent man—young Farnsworth. Stern saw no robber but Allen until he came to a looking glass and saw himself. He's a trusted man in the office. He'd have a far better chance than the postmaster's son to know of the large sum in the safe. Did ye not think of that?"

Baxter slowly shook his head.

"I guess you're right," he said. "I remember trying to find Stern on the evening of the fourth day after the robbery, and on that same evening Allen got away from my watchers for a couple of hours. But I never thought that there was any connection between the two occurrences. They must have met."

"And on the next day Miss Davenport got the note from Allen asking her to receive the letters," said Graham. "It was a clever trick. Allen knew that he was watched. He dared not mail letters to Stern or even to a bogus name, for he knew you would trace them—in short, they had to be delivered to somebody. If they had been destroyed or held in the postoffice you'd have known that the other thief must be there."

He turned suddenly and seized the pale and trembling postman by the arm with a grip that made him wince.

"You'd just opened this last letter, eh?" said he. "And you had the inclosure in your pocket? Of course. And when you saw Mr. Baxter open the envelope you were afraid and tried to crumple the slip in your hand and toss it over the fence, but I nabbed you in time. Am I right?"

Stern tried to answer, but his throat was too dry. His face was a picture of guilt.

"Well, I guess he's the man, sure enough," said Baxter.

The rest was easy. Before the evening was over the two thieves were in custody and their plunder unearthed from the hiding place where Stern had bestowed it.


## One Rule For All

¶ The publisher of a country newspaper to be successful must have but one rule for all, and particularly is this true as regards his relations with his subscribers. This has been the Banner's policy for many years, and we recognize that any other course would be ruinous to the best interests of the paper. That's one reason why we remain firm in this stand—one reason why we treat all just alike. In fact, there's no other equitable course to pursue.

¶ If you are a subscriber to the Banner you may expect a statement to come to you a little prior to the time your subscription expires. Should you fail to make prompt remittance, you need not be surprised if your paper is discontinued, for that is what will follow. In other words, let us assume that your date is November 1, 1917. Then a statement will be mailed you about October 15th to 20th, and if you then fail to remit your name will be dropped from the Banner's mailing list November 1st. That's the way the rule works here in this office. When not carried out to the letter you may depend upon it being for reasons that the office force has been too busy with other duties to get around to that of subscription accounts.

**One rule for all—all the time—with the Banner**


## ANTIQUITY OF CHEESE.

**The Bible Mentions It, as Do Homer and Other Early Writers.**

Cheese and curdling of the milk are mentioned in the book of Job. David was sent by his father, Jesse, to carry ten cheeses to the camp and to look how his brother fared. "Cheese of kine" formed part of the supplies of David's army at Mahanaim during the rebellion of Absalom.

Homer says that cheese formed part of the ample stores found by Ulysses in the cave of the Cyclop Polyphemus. Euripides, Theocritus and other early poets mention cheese. Ludolphus says that excellent cheese and butter were made by the ancient Ethiopians, and Strabo states that some of the ancient Britons were so ignorant that, though they had abundance of milk, they did not understand the art of making cheese.

There is no evidence that any of these ancient nations had discovered the use of rennet in making cheese. They appear to have merely allowed the milk to sour and subsequently to have formed the cheese from the caseous part of the milk after expelling the serum or whey.

As David when too young to carry arms was able to run to the camp with ten cheeses, ten loaves and an ephah of parched corn, the cheeses must have been very small.

### Wonderful Earrings.

The earrings of Biote, the daughter of Aristotle, which were found in Chalcis, where the young woman was buried, represented doves swinging in golden hoops. The miniature birds were marvelously wrought, the feathers of granulated gold, the wings and breasts enriched with bands of color supplied by inserted gems. Precious stones gleamed like tiny sparks for the eyes. Daintiest device of all, the tail feathers were so finely made and curiously adjusted as to move at the slightest motion of the pendent hoop, so that whenever the proud wearer should toss or shake her head her two attendant doves would seem to balance themselves upon their perches, as live birds do in swinging on a bough. They were found by exploring archaeologists.

### Overpowered.

"Are you sure you are strong enough to carry this trunk up three flights of stairs?" asked the maiden lady of the roustabout she had summoned.

"Sure, mum," he responded heartily "How much do I get out of it?"

"Why, if you don't break anything or spoil the walls I'll give you 10 cents."

"Sorry, mum, but I couldn't git away wid dat heavy trunk."

"Why, a minute ago you were sure you were strong enough."

"I was, but yer generosity has made me weak."—Cleveland Plain Dealer

### The Ancient Memory.

In the ancient time men's memories were much more powerful than they are today. The invention of printing necessarily weakened the memory. We can scarcely form an idea of what the memory must have been when it was exercised and cultivated as a thing of sole dependence.—New York American.

### Conquering the Cobra.

It has been known thousands of years that the dreaded deadly cobra, whose bite invariably and almost instantly causes death, may be easily paralyzed and tranced by a very slight finger squeeze around the back of its fearful neck.

### Frank.

"Ernest is awfully frank."

"Do you love him because he is frank?"

"No; because he is Ernest."

Gold weighs nearly twenty times as much as its own bulk in water.

### Obituary Notice.

Passed to her eternal rest August 27, 1917, Mrs. George Mallett, of Marthaville.

Etta, as she was known to her intimates, was born September 6, 1893, in Claiborne Parish. She was the second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Will Lowe, now residents of Plain Dealing. She was married to Mr. Mallett March 8, 1917. She was a member of the Christian Church.

To mourn her untimely departure she leaves her husband, father, mother, one sister and two brothers.

We cannot understand why they are taken so early in life, but we can live so as to meet them in heaven. And we must bow in humble submission to God's will, realizing that our Father is all-knowing and powerful.

The funeral service was conducted by Rev. C. B. Powell, of Plain Dealing, assisted by the pastor of the Christian Church. Her body was laid to rest in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

To the bereaved family their friends extend sympathy, and pray that the Comforter may relieve their burdened hearts.

The family expresses gratitude to their friends for the many kindnesses shown them during their hour of grief.

—A FRIEND.

### Must Organize in Parishes.

Mr. John Marshall, Secretary for the Council of State Defense, has written the Banner, urging its help in furthering the organization in the several parishes of the state of auxiliary branches of the state organization. We wish to assure him of our full and willing co-operation in the work and will be pleased to publish the further contributions he refers to. In his letter, written in Baton Rouge on the 25th ult., he says:

"Governor Pleasant, who is *ex-officio* Chairman of the Council of State Defense, has set Saturday, September 15th, as Organization Day in Louisiana. On this day parish councils in every parish in the state will be organized.

"The Governor will shortly issue his proclamation for Organization Day and the purpose of this letter is to ask that you help us in getting it before the people of your section.

"The Council of State Defense has a great and important work ahead of it, and your assistance in this matter will prove of much value. Nothing is needed more at present than publicity."

### Card of Thanks.

We wish to express sincere thanks to our many friends who so loyally and faithfully administered to our needs of the hour in any way during the serious illness, and following death, of our son and brother. Especially do we thank the good doctors and kind nurses. We shall try in our feeble way to return the kindnesses shown us, and pray God's blessings on each of you.

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. ONEAL.
MAMIE GIBSON.
Mr. and Mrs. CHARLES HORTON.
Mr. and Mrs. HUGH KING.
Mr. and Mrs. J. C. ONEAL.
Mr. and Mrs. MURFF ONEAL.

Haughton, La., Sept. 3, 1917.

### Stockholders Meeting.

A meeting of the stockholders in the Farmers' Co-operative Union Warehouse Company will be held in Plain Dealing on Saturday, September 15th, at ten o'clock a.m. All are requested to be in attendance.

A. HOFFPAUIR, Secretary.

Hughes' Spur, La., Sept. 5, 1917.

The Banner is again late this week in going to press, but a little later on we expect to have some help in the office, and then everything should run smoothly, and you may expect to see your paper promptly on publication day. And we are going to give you a good paper—chock full of local news.

| 1917 | | SEPTEMBER | | | | 1917 |
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**Phases of the Moon.**
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Last quarter.....8th First quarter....24th


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**Notice!**
With a shortening in the days, a change in the hours for selling ice becomes necessary. During the forenoon please call between ten and twelve o'clock, and from three to six during the afternoon. Only during these hours will I be on hand to serve you, and those who do not wish to be disappointed will do well to call then. As heretofore, stock at the Benton Drug Store. J. W. HOSIER.

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