

THE RED HOUSE MYSTERY

W. A. MILNE

(Continued From Our Last Issue)

"Was it the collar you were looking for in the cupboard?" said Bill eagerly.

"Of course. Why no collar?" I said. For some reason Cayley considered it necessary to hide all Marks' clothes; not just the suit, but everything which he was wearing, or supposed to be wearing, at the time of the murder. But he hadn't hidden the collar. Why? Had he left it out by mistake? So I looked in the cupboard. It wasn't there. Had he left it out on purpose? If so, why—and where was it? Naturally I began to say to myself, "Where have I seen a collar lately? A collar all by itself?" And I remembered—what, Bill?

Bill frowned heavily to himself, and shook his head.

"Don't ask me, Tony. I can't—By Jove!" He threw up his head. "In the basket in the office bedroom!"

"Exactly."

"But is that the one?"

"The one that goes with the rest of the clothes? I don't know. Where else can it be? But if so, why send the collar quite casually to the wash in the ordinary way, and take immense trouble to hide everything else? Why, why, why?"

Bill bit hard at his pipe, but could think of nothing to say.

"Anyhow," said Antony, getting up restlessly, "I'm certain of one thing—Mark knew on the Monday that Robert was coming here."

CHAPTER XVII

The coroner having made a few commonplace remarks as to the terrible tragedy which they had come to investigate that afternoon proceeded to outline the case to the jury.

Antony did not expect to learn much from the evidence—he knew the facts of the case so well by now—but he wondered if Inspector Gillingham had developed any new theories. If so, they would appear in the coroner's examination, for the coroner certainly had been in the police station as to the evidence which was the first to be extracted from the Red House.

Mr. Beverley asked when his brother was over. "Did you know what was in it?"

He actual writing. I said, "Mark was in it." But he told us about it. I know what was in it.

Mr. Beverley said, "He had a sudden shock. He had been in the office. But he didn't know what was in it. But it wouldn't do to admit this. And then just as he was about to perjure himself, he remembered. Antony had heard Cayley telling the inspector."

"I know afterwards," I was told. But Mark didn't read it out at breakfast.

"You gathered, however, that it was an unwelcome letter?"

"Oh, yes."

"Would you say that Mark was frightened by it?"

"Not frightened. Sort of bitter and resigned. Sort of 'Oh, Lord, here we are again!'"

There was a titter here and there. The coroner smiled, and tried to pretend that he hadn't.

"Thank you, Mr. Beverley."

The next witness was summoned by the name of Andrew Amos, and Antony looked up with interest, wondering who he was.

"He lives at the inner lodge," whispered Bill to him.

All that Amos had to say was that a stranger had passed by his lodge at a little before three that afternoon, and had spoken to him. He had seen the body and recognized it as the man.

"What did he say?"

"Is this right for the Red House?" or something like that.

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'This is the Red House. Who do you want to see?' He was a bit rough-looking, you know, sir, and I didn't know what he was doing there."

"Well, sir, he said, 'Is Mister Mark Ablett at home?' It doesn't

sound much put like that, sir, but I didn't care about the way he said it. So I got in front of him like, and said, 'What do you want, eh?' and he gave a sort of chuckle and said, 'I want to see my dear brother Mark.'

"Well, then I took a closer look at him, and I see that perhaps he might be his brother, so I said, 'If you'll follow the drive, sir, you'll come to the house. Of course I can't say if Mr. Ablett's at home.' And he gave a sort of nasty laugh again and said 'Fine place, Mister Mark. Ablett's got here. Plenty of money to spend, eh?' Well, then I had another look at him, but before I could make up my mind, he laughed and went on. That's all I can tell you, sir."

Andrew Amos stepped down and moved away to the back of the room, nor did Antony take his eyes of him until he was assured that Amos intended to remain there until the inquest was over.

"Who's Amos talking to now?" he whispered to Bill.

"Parsons. One of the gardeners. He's at the outside lodge on the Stanton road. They're all here today. Sort of holiday for 'em."

"I wonder if he's giving evidence, too?" thought Antony.

He was. He followed Amos. He had been at work on the lawn in front of the house, and had seen Robert Ablett arrive. He didn't hear the shot—not to notice. He was a little hard of hearing. He had seen a gentleman arrive about five minutes after Mr. Robert.

"Can you see him in court now?" asked the coroner.

Parsons looked round slowly. Antony caught his eye and smiled.

"That's him," said Parsons, pointing.

Everybody looked at Antony.

"That was about five minutes afterwards?"

"About that, sir."

"Did anybody come out of the

house before this gentleman's arrival?"

"No, sir. That is to say I didn't see 'em."

Stevens followed. She gave her evidence much as she had given it to the inspector. Nothing new was brought out by her examination. Then came Elsie. As the reporters scribbled down what she had overheard, they added in brackets "sensation" for the first time that afternoon.

"How soon after you had heard this did the shot come?" asked the coroner.

"Almost at once, sir."

"Were you still in the hall?"

"Oh, no, sir. I was just outside Mrs. Stevens' room. The house-keeper, sir."

"You didn't think of going back to the hall to see what had happened?"

"Oh, no, sir. I just went in to Mrs. Stevens, and she said, 'Oh, you didn't think of going back to the hall to see what had happened?'"

"Well," he hesitated, and then went on, "I can't think of a better word than 'peevishly'."

"You didn't hear any conversation between the brothers when they were in the office together?"

"No. I happened to go into the library just after Mark had gone in, and I was there all the time."

"Was the library door open?"

"Oh, yes."

"Did you see or hear the last witness at all?"

"No."

"Would you call Mark a hasty-tempered man?"

Cayley considered this carefully before answering.

"Hasty-tempered, yes," he said. "But not violent-tempered."

"Was he fairly athletic? Active and quick?"

"Active and quick, yes. Not particularly strong."

"Yes. One question more. Was Mark in the habit of carrying any considerable sum of money about with him?"

"Yes. He always had one \$100 note on him and perhaps ten or twenty pounds as well."

"Thank you, Mr. Cayley."

Cayley went back heavily to his seat. "Damn it," said Antony to himself, "why do I like the fellow?"

Antony Gillingham.

Again the eager interest of the room could be felt. Who was this stranger who had got mixed up in the business so mysteriously? Antony smiled at Bill and stepped up to give his evidence.

He explained to him he came to the staying at the "George" at Wood-



HE GAVE HIS EVIDENCE CAREFULLY.

what was that? frightened-like. And I said, 'That was in the house, Mrs. Stevens, that was.' Just like something going off, it was."

"Thank you," said the coroner.

There was another emotional disturbance in the room as Cayley went into the witness-box; not "sensation" this time, but an eager and, as it seemed to Antony, sympathetic interest. Now they were getting to grips with the drama.

He gave his evidence carefully.

emotionally—the lies with the same slow deliberation as the truth. Antony watched him intently, wondering what it was about him which had this odd sort of attractiveness. For Antony who knew that he was lying, and lying (as he believed) not for Mark's sake but his own, yet could not help sharing some of that general sympathy with him.

"Was Mark ever in possession of a revolver?" asked the coroner.

"Not to my knowledge. I think I should have known if he had been."

"You were alone with him all that morning, did he talk about this visit of Robert?"

"I didn't see very much of him in the morning. I was at work in my room, and outside, and so on. We lunched together and he talked of it then a little."

"In what terms?"

"Well," he hesitated, and then went on, "I can't think of a better word than 'peevishly'."

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He explained to him he came to the staying at the "George" at Wood-

ham, how he had heard that the Red House was in the neighborhood how he had walked over to see his friend Beverley, and had arrived just after the tragedy. Thinking it over afterwards he was fairly certain that he had heard the shot, but it had not made any impression on him at the time.

"You and the last witness reached the french windows together and found them shut?"

"Yes."

"You pushed them in and came to the body. Of course you had no idea whose body it was?"

"No."

"Did Mr. Cayley say anything?"

"He turned the body over, just so as to see the face, and when he saw it he said, 'Thank God.'"

Again the reporters wrote "Sensation."

"Did you understand what he meant by that?"

"I asked him who it was, and he said that it was Robert Ablett. Then he explained that he was afraid at first it was the cousin with whom he lived—Mark."

"Yes. Did he seem upset?"

"Very much so at first. Less when he found that it wasn't Mark."

(Continued in Our Next Issue)

WEST PENN SYSTEM BUYS OAKLAND FIRM

Announcement has just been made that the West Penn electrical interests, which controlled the Monongahela Power & Railway Co., here, have acquired the Municipal electrical lighting plant at Oakland, Md. The purchaser is the West Maryland Power Co., the operating company of the West Penn System in the state of Maryland. The new purchase relieves the town of an electric lighting plant which did not meet the needs of the community, as the service provided was restricted to lighting at night only.

Under the West Penn ownership the town will receive power on a twenty-four hour basis in adequate quantities, thus permitting this district to offer the inducement of low-priced, reliable electric service to new industries. From all indications it would seem that Oakland will have an immediate opportunity to locate one or more new industries within a short time as a result of this deal.

The West Penn Co. is preparing plans for the construction of a high-tension transmission line to supply Oakland as well as the large coal-producing area in the upper Potomac and Garrett County coal fields with adequate and dependable central station power service.

About 40 per cent of all the peas grown in America are raised in Wisconsin. One year's production from 3,000 acres reached 43,566 tons.

Beethoven composed some of his greatest works when he was deaf.

The oldest known bank notes were issued in China 2,537 years before the Christian era.

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WILL PROBATED

The will of the late Charles Davis was filed at the office of County Clerk Lee N. Satterfield yesterday. The will leaves \$2,500 to a daughter, Mrs. Lillie C. Hugus and to a son, J. Brooks Davis, all the real estate in Lincoln District. All other property is divided equally between the daughter and son, J. Brooks Davis and J. Walter Hugus are named executors.

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This weekly event with us is proving more and more popular with our customers. Each week sees more and more new people taking advantage of the wonderful special we offer. Look around—make comparisons and you'll see for yourself the savings we are giving.

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- Ladies Gingham Petticoats—A good selection in striped gingham to choose from. At this special price you should buy 2 for 98c
- Children's Aprons—These handsome little aprons are just what the kiddies like.—and you get your choice, 2 of them for 98c

- Men's Handsome Silk Knit Ties—The best looking Silk Knit Ties you ever load eyes on, and you get your choice, two of them for 98c
- Men's, Ladies, Boys' and Girl's Bathing Suits—A beautiful assortment of patterns and colors—and we're closing them out at 98c
- Ladies Pink Silk Camisoles—A beautiful assortment with lace and embroidery trimmings. Regular \$1.50 values and you take your choice for 98c
- Women's \$1.50 Corsets—The famous Thompson Glove Fitting Corsets in white and pink colors. Choice for 98c
- Ladies Silk Hose—\$1.25 and \$1.50 Values. Colors are black, white, brown and other desirable shades. Regular \$1.25 and \$1.50 values. Per Pair 98c
- Boys' School Caps—in an assortment of colors—all sizes. Choice 2 for 98c
- Boys' Overalls—with blue and white stripes—Regular 65c values. Sizes up to 14. 2 For 98c
- Boys Khaki Trousers—will stand the hard knocks boys give trousers. 2 For 98c
- Men's Blue Denhim Overalls—sizes to 44. Regular \$1.25 values. Choice Per Suit 98c

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