

The Cases of Alice Clement

Stories of the World's Greatest Woman Sleuth
Told by Herself to Courtney Riley Cooper

The Dulcimer

(Copyright by W. G. Chapman.)

HAD met the boat at the dock, and watching the thronging mass of men, women and children as they poured from the palatial prison in which they had crossed the Atlantic, there came to me the sight of a sparkling pair of brown eyes and a smile.

A moment later Alice Clement came home again from many thousands of miles spent in tracking criminals in the foreign countries of Europe, and she was at my side.

"How are you going to tell me what you see across the ocean?" I asked.

"I smiled that sphinx-like little smile of hers and nodded in the negative. We had taken a taxi-cab for up-town."

"Once before," she said, "I told you that I was on a secret mission, but I must remain a secret."

"I played me a bit that she could tell me what had sent her on her trip or what the result had been. For some time she remained in silence. Then as we left the cab and turned up Thirty-fourth street for a telephone office, before going to my room, she looked up at me with a light in her eyes.

"Do all stories have to be the ones that just happen?" she asked.

"Why do you ask that?" I returned.

"Because I saw 'something back there' in a music store window which interested me."

"She took me by the arm and led me to a musical display. Before us was a dulcimer, a stringed instrument used in foreign countries, but little in America. I gazed at it for a moment in surprise. Alice Clement was smiling to herself and she continued to smile as we turned again toward my room. Twenty minutes later our conversation I learned toward Miss Clement and fashioned a question which I had resolved not to ask.

"Well," I said, "since you won't tell me the story of what took you to Europe, would you mind telling me the one behind the dulcimer?"

"I wouldn't have mentioned it if I hadn't been ready to tell you the story," she answered in that rough way which nettles one and yet makes the little woman who has tracked so many criminals, so likable.

"The captain and I were sitting one evening in detective headquarters in Chicago talking of nothing in particular when a station orderly entered.

"There's a death reported from over here on Clark street," he said. "Wanting to it in the way of a case, but the whole place is so destitute that I thought maybe you might want to just look things over."

"The captain pressed a button. 'I'll send Williams,' he said. 'Want to go along, Miss Clement?' he said. 'You're always musing around in this slum area.'"

"A little time after that Williams of the Central office and myself were ascending the steps of a rickety building on lower Clark street. The gaunt inhabitants stared at us as we passed floor after floor of the building, dodging in and out of doors like rabbits in a warren. It was a place of misery and heartbreak. Finally, arriving on the top floor, we came to a room where a face stared upwards with unseeing eyes toward the ceiling. An embarrassed janitor stood awaiting us.

"It's just a case of typhoid," he said, moving toward Williams. "This little girl came here about six weeks ago looking for work. She didn't find it. About two weeks ago she got sick. We did everything we could for her but there wasn't much money and we couldn't find out where her folks were, and that's about all I guess."

"Williams looked casually around the room and started to leave. 'I can't see where the police department has anything to do with this,' he said. 'Going back, Miss Clement?'

"I had stopped to regard an object which I had found partly concealed behind a trunk in a corner of the room. I brought it forth. It was a dulcimer.

"Who does this belong to?" I asked of the janitor.

"Little Miss Perry, I guess," he answered.

"The dead girl?" I remarked.

"Yesum. I never noticed it before but I guess it belonged to her because I used to hear music from up here once in awhile."

"I had picked the instrument up and was running my fingers up and down the strings. Suddenly I stopped and looked on the roughness of them. No rust was apparent. I looked closer. Then I took my magnifying glass from my handbag and made a most minute examination.

"A moment later I handed the instrument to Williams.

"Take this to the microscopist," I ordered, "and then find out the name of the city physician who has been treating this little girl."

"Williams stared at me.

"Now what have you got up your sleeve?" he questioned.

"A murder case and a good one," was my answer. "Hurry up and get that stuff to headquarters."

"As I spoke the janitor uttered a little cry and started down the hall. I called him back.

"You've got a good deal of talking to do," I told him, "and you might as well do it right in here while we are waiting for the coroner. I want to know where that dulcimer came from."

"The eyes of the weazen faced man became wide and staring at my determined question, and he started forward.

"Why, you don't think—" he began.

questions. Where did that dulcimer come from?"

"That musical thing?" he asked and scratched his head as he thought. "I don't know where it came from. She didn't have it with her when she came here."

"Did you ever see her bring it in?"

"No."

"Did you ever see anyone come to visit her?"

"Lord, she didn't have any friends that I know of. There is so many people going in and out of this building all the time anyway, that I wouldn't be able to tell. Some of them settlement workers might have brought it to her for all I know. Come to think of it, I did used to hear her picking on that thing, but she never played it much after about a week before she took sick. I don't guess she was able."

"I looked up and down the hall in the hope of seeing someone who could give me more information. There was none. The rooms were unoccupied, their doors standing open, showing the wretched interiors where paper hung from the wall and plaster whitened the floor. I turned again to the janitor.

"Did the settlement workers visit her when she became ill?" I asked.

"Yes, there were two that did. One was a man that I didn't like at all. He was always grumpy and just stood around and talked about how much charity patients cost the city, and every time he left the poor little kid seemed just that much worse."

"His name?" I questioned.

"I think it was Mr. Grimes," he answered, "or some name like that."

"He is the head of something or other in the society."

"And who was the other?" I queried.

"I don't know her name," was the reply. "She is a mighty nice little woman though. Always pleasant and all that."

"Did they come together, Mr. Grimes and the woman?"

"No, always separate. I don't think either one of them ever talked to the other."

"For an hour longer I questioned the janitor and gained nothing further than the fact that Miss Perry, the dead girl, had been visited during her illness by three persons—the physician, Mr. Grimes, and the little woman whose name the janitor did not know. But none of them ever had seen or talked to each other.

"At last I left the dingy building just as the black wagon of the coroner arrived, and hurried to the station. Williams was awaiting me there.

"Well?" I asked.

"Typhoid germs," was his answer. "Strung along the strings of the instrument so that if a person were playing and happened to touch one of their fingers to the lips, the inoculation would be complete."

"Just as I thought," was my reply. "What does the city physician say?"

"All he knows is that he was called up to see the girl and took care of her. He wanted to take her to a hospital, of course, but it seemed that the girl objected so strenuously that he obeyed her wishes, and allowed her to remain where she was. She was just one of these little country girls who was born with a terrible fear of hospitals, and the doctor was afraid that the mental excitement of taking her there would make her condition worse, so he allowed her to remain. I don't believe he knows any more about the case than what he has told me. To tell the truth, Miss Clement, I don't believe that this is a murder case at all. You have no motive in the first place. Here is a little girl, seventeen or eighteen years old, who has come to the city from a small country town, who appears to have had no particular enemies, who was simply here seeking work as many thousands of girls are, and possessed of neither good looks nor money. From what I have learned, and from what the doctor found out about her, she was never visited by men nor went

out with them. If you want a plain, ordinary detective's theory, it is this: the little girl wanted some amusement, and she saw this dulcimer in a second hand shop somewhere, and bought it. The germs may have been on there for six months, for all you know. For what purpose they were placed there in the beginning, I don't know. Certainly I fail to see the motive that would make a person design so scientific a murder to accomplish so little."

"All very true," I answered. "But, just the same, I have my theory. What it is I don't believe I shall tell you right now, but if you want to help me in what you think is a wild goose chase, find out where that dulcimer is while I do a little running around on my own hook."

I had in mind the trunk which I had seen in the room, and while Williams began his rounds of the pawnshops, I went to the corner's office. In the little trunk I found clothing, a few post card pictures of the city, some addresses of business men, and the like, but nothing that would aid me in discovering the girl's home place, or the name of any relative.

I did not see Williams for two days, and when I did the information he gave me took me farther from the solution of the mystery than I had been in the beginning. Shadows had been placed on Grimes. They reported that he had been to the morgue, to look at the dead body of the girl, and that he seemed rather nervous and excited at the sight of her. More than that, he had seemed strangely interested in endeavoring to find out just what action the police had taken to locate the parents of the girl, and if they had any success.

This to me a few hours sooner would have been gratifying information, but as it was the news that Williams had brought me was rather depressing.

For he had come to me with the fact that little Miss Perry had bought the dulcimer at a pawnshop on Wabash avenue. It had been left there several months before by some traveling musician, and it seemed for a moment that the theory which Williams had given might be the real one. But there was this to combat it: to place germs on the strings of an instrument one does not necessarily

light of morning break over the city. She was struggling with temptation, a temptation of an ordinarily good woman who had allowed greed to enter her heart and stifle all else.

"She began to visit the little room, and to work around the various charitable institutions in order that she might cover her action. One day in the laboratory at the city hall where she had gone on some charitable quest there came the opportunity to steal a culture tube containing typhoid fever germs. In an instant it was in her handbag, the decision was made, and she was hastening to Eileen's room.

"The girl was playing, or was attempting to play, on the dulcimer, when her aunt arrived. The instrument had been one much loved by her father, and lonely days spent in the city had reminded the little girl many times of when her fortunes were better and when she had listened to the strains of the instrument as played by her father.

"This was a sentiment in which Mrs. Brent had indulged her, and she had given her the money wherewith to buy the playing.

"Eileen looked up with a smile of happiness on her face as the woman she believed to be only a charity worker entered the room.

"I am thirsty," the aunt said, after the first greeting. "Could you get me a glass of water?"

"She wanted time in which to make her plans. The girl laid down the dulcimer and left the room. In a flash it came to the aunt. The girl loved to play the instrument, and to turn the pages of the music as she practiced. She must now and then touch her fingers to her lips to moisten them. Hastily Mrs. Brent drew forth the culture tube and applied some of the germs to the strings. Ten minutes later she was chatting with the girl over her chances of obtaining employment, and two weeks later she was sitting by the bedside of a fever ridden patient watching the first effects of her work.

"Eileen was out of the way now, typhoid was doing its work. Soon the eyes which gleamed with fever would be glaring in the stillness of death. That gold bearing land in the west was hers. Hers at the cost of a human life.

"Mrs. Brent had finished the story,

and Williams and I standing there by the bed, wondering at the insatiable greed which could drive a woman to take the life of a child that she might gloat over the money which would come to her through her death.

"The woman had sunk back on her pillow. She seemed unconscious. Williams strode a few feet away and stood looking at the floor.

"Tell me how you guessed all this," she said feebly.

"I didn't guess it," was my answer. "It simply worked out. I knew that Grimes had nothing to do with it. For I learned that he acted in that way with every case. The physician was out of the question. Then was left by the simple system of elimination, one person. This woman who had seemed to have taken so much of an interest in this little girl, who could be nothing to her.

"There are hundreds of such cases in the city. Why should this one be singled out for such marked attention? I determined to learn the reason. I obtained her description from the janitor and in the guise of a book agent I sought among the charity workers until I found her. I went to her house as a book agent, but I talked to her of many other things. And of two in particular—money and death.

"I noticed her eyes gleam at the mention of one subject, then her lips paled at the other. In my brain was fashioned the conviction that there was some connection between this woman and the girl, and that Mrs. Brent had killed Eileen for money. That is all I knew, Williams, and that was all I knew this afternoon when you and I came—"

"A wild scream interrupted, and we whirled toward the bed, just in time to see the woman who had murdered her niece plunge forward, the blood streaming from her throat, where she had pierced it with a penknife. No further explanation ever came from her, for ten minutes later a physician looked upward with a queer little expression and uttered the one little word which has caused so many sorrows in this world and ended so much suffering—"Dead."

A blatant orchestra was sounding a strain of a late Broadway ragtime as Miss Clement concluded her story. For a moment she sat there in meditation, then reached for the carte de jour nearby.

"Charity covers a multitude of sins," she said, simply.

She staggered towards the door and sank swooning.

He is the head of something or other in the society."

"And who was the other?" I queried.

"I don't know her name," was the reply. "She is a mighty nice little woman though. Always pleasant and all that."

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Children to Study Movies.

Closely following the German police ordinance barring children from the ordinary cinematograph theaters, comes the organization, by prominent representatives of art, science, officialdom and commerce, of an association for cinematographic study.

The association's purpose is twofold: it will endeavor to raise the standard of the ordinary films, and also to further the production of films of an instructive and scientific nature. If the producers feel that film of the nature desired will not be profitable, the association will itself bring about their production. It is also to further the establishment of a cinematographic museum and archives for the preservation of especially valuable films

ESSENTIALS IN HARVESTING POTATO CROP



Potato Digger in Operation.

Whether the potatoes are of the early or the later varieties, one of the essentials in digging is letting them dry for a few hours after they are taken from the ground. Six hours is none too long for them to dry if the ground is at all wet when they are dug, says a Michigan writer in the Farm Progress. The dirt hardens in the sun and under exposure to the air.

I have spoiled a wagon load or two of potatoes at odd times by leaving them lying too long in the burning sun. It will turn them green in color, and the greenness will sometimes extend for an eighth of an inch into the flesh of the tuber. When this happens they might as well be cooked and fed to the stock. They will be too bitter for eating.

Letting the potatoes dry makes them far less liable to bruises and injury in handling. The drying-out process should be carried out still further along when the potatoes are carried out of the fields.

I have a long, low shed used for various purposes at different times in the year, but when potatoes are being harvested it is used as a drying and sorting shed. The cull, runts, sun-burned potatoes, rotten tubers, and all that are not marketable are sorted out under this shed and fed to the hogs. I usually boil them before feeding, as this develops more starch, more actual foodstuff than they have in the uncooked state. The shed gives the potatoes a chance to cool out thoroughly before they are piled in storehouse or cellar bins.

They should be dug when the vines die. As long as there is green in the vines the plant is growing, and frost will spoil the potatoes, even if they are underground. I try to have the potatoes out of the ground before the frost can have a chance to do them any injury.

Although you may have but half an acre of potatoes it will pay to handle them carefully during the digging. Throwing them into wagons and shoveling them out with scoops, will bruise bushels of them, and they are very tender and easily injured at the time of digging. A cut or bruised potato rots easily, and the worst of it is that it spreads decay germs among all the others near it.

CULTURE OF TOBACCO

Best Results Obtained When Crop Grows Off Promptly.

Plants Should Be Cultivated After Showers to Destroy All Grass and to Prevent Unnecessary Evaporation of Moisture.

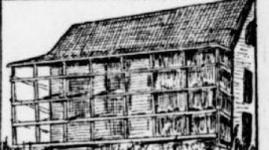
By W. W. GREEN.

The best results are obtained with tobacco when the crop grows off promptly, with no subsequent checking of the growth. A careful hand-hoeing as soon as the plants take root—a week or ten days after transplanting—will encourage a quick start. The crop should be carefully cultivated after showers as soon as the soil is dry enough to work freely, not so deeply as to break the roots, but thoroughly, about two inches deep, in order to destroy all grass and keep the soil well mulched to prevent the escape of moisture. Throwing dirt to the row of tobacco with a turning plow should be abandoned, except for an exceptionally cold, damp soil, which is not usually adapted to tobacco, anyhow. This method break the roots and exposes too much soil to be dried out by the sun and air, especially in case of a drought. Cultivation should continue until the crop is well under way, even after the leaves have met across the rows and a large per cent of the plants have been topped. This can be done without injury by rubbing a little oil or grease of some kind on the horse's legs and also on the traces and whiffletrees.

Curing tobacco is a delicate operation requiring great skill. It is not merely a drying process, as is often thought, but a process in which there must be certain chemical changes in

ferable, but where the country is flat and heavy fogs occur, a plank floor is to be recommended, especially where early harvesting is practiced. When tobacco is cured early over a dirt floor there is danger of mould during the damp weather, after it is cured, before cool weather comes.

The common method of harvesting and curing tobacco in the sun-cured districts is to cut and haul the tobacco to the barn immediately and hang it there to cure by air. But in some sections it is customary to scaffold in the field or at the barn for a few days. This is the better plan, as the sun kills the stalks and starts the



A Good Curing Shed.

curing quickly, which helps to make a sweet tobacco. Formerly when labor was plentiful and cheap, this was the universal custom, and in case of a sudden rain, hands were available to put the tobacco quickly into the barn. In many sections this method of sundering is now impracticable on account of the high price and scarcity of labor.

When the labor can be had and the building so arranged as to permit, the best method is to scaffold the tobacco a few days in the open air, then hang in a shed open to the south to finish curing, after which it should be carried to a dry barn and hung until it is taken down to strip. The surest method is to build a shed with doors covering one entire end, then build trucks in sections that will just pass in and out of the shed. These trucks can be hung full of tobacco and rolled in and out of the shed on a track built for the purpose, according to the weather. When the truckful is cured it can be raised into the barn and refilled with green tobacco. It would not be practicable, of course, to cure the whole crop this way.

The Neglected Artichoke.

This plant which can be grown in almost any garden, makes a delicious change in the vegetables for table use. The plant is perennial, but declines rapidly, and should be reset every three years.

It is propagated from seed, and the suckers are set out, producing edible heads the second year. The heads are from three to four inches in diameter, and are ready to cut for the table just before they open.

For pickling, the heads are often taken when about half grown. The leaves are sometimes blanched and eaten, and these form the salad plants which are seen on the market.

Hurdles Are Handy.

Hurdles can be employed to move the pigs from one part of the patch to another, so that the peas need not be eaten too closely.

Method of Scaffolding Tobacco in the Field.

order to get the desired color and texture. These changes take place most freely at a temperature ranging in humidity of about 85 per cent. In from 80 degrees to 80 degrees F., and an extremely dry or cold season the tobacco does not pass through this curing process, but will be mottled with spots of green or yellow through the leaf. In such weather it is well to leave the barn open at night to let the damp air in, and close it in the day to keep out the dry air.

On the other hand, in a wet, warm season, there probably will be damage from pole-sweat or house-burn, which may be corrected to some extent by opening the barn on dry days and closing it on damp days and nights. If the tobacco becomes thoroughly limp under these methods then it is best to open the barn in any weather, as damp air circulating is not as bad as damp air stagnant in the barn.

In most sections a dirt floor is pre-

Exercise for Brood Sows.

See that the brood sows take exercise and that they get succulent food. It is doubtful if any other factor in hog raising has brought about quite as much injury as the practice of placing brood sows in little pens, preventing them from getting juicy roots or green foods and cutting off their opportunity for exercise entirely. The portion of the pasture field, or in the run of the pasture field, or in the winter of rye or wheat lots, or in fall or harvesting peanuts, artichokes, cow

Too Rich Food.

If the supply of rich, green pasture should cause the ewes to give milk too rich for the young lambs, using digestive troubles, the ewes and lambs affected should be taken from the pasture and given dry feed for a few