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TEA

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The RED HOUSE MYSTERY

by A. MILNE

CHAPTER XII—(Cont'd.)

Antony looked up at Bill in surprise.

"Didn't you hear what he said?"

"What, particularly?"

"That it was Cayley's idea to drag the pond."

"Oh! Oh, I say!" Bill was rather excited again. "You mean that he's hidden something there? Some false clue which he wants the police to find?"

"I hope so," said Antony earnestly, "but I'm afraid—" He stopped short.

"Well?"

"What's the safest place in which to hide anything very important?"

"Somewhere where nobody will look."

"There's a better place than that."


"What?"

"Somewhere where everybody has already looked."

"By jove! You mean that as soon as the pond has been dragged, Cayley will hide something there?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so."

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Bill should find him once more in the office.

As he went into the room, followed by Bill, he felt it almost as a shock that there was now no body of Robert lying there between the two doors. But there was a dark stain which showed where the dead man's head had been, and Antony knelt down over it, as he had knelt twenty-four hours before.

"I want to go through it again," he said. "You must be Cayley. Cayley said he would get some water. Now then, Bill, just pretend your Cayley. You've just said something about water, and you get up."

Feeling that it was all a little uncanny, Bill, who had been kneeling beside his friend, got up and walked out. Antony, as he had done on the previous day, looked up after him as he went. Bill turned into the room on the right, and came back.

"Well?" he said wonderingly.

Antony shook his head.

"It's all different," he said. "For one thing, you made a devil of a noise in there and Cayley didn't."

"Perhaps you weren't listening when Cayley went in?"

"I wasn't. But I should have heard him if I could have heard him, and I should have remembered afterward."

"Perhaps Cayley shut the door after him."

"Wait!"

He pressed his hand over his eyes and thought. It wasn't anything which he had heard, but something which he had seen. He tried desperately hard to see it again. . . . He saw Cayley getting up, opening the door from the office, leaving it open and walking into the passage, turning to the door on the right, opening it, going in, and then—What did his eyes see after that? If they would only tell him again!

Suddenly he jumped up, his face alight. "Bill, I've got it!" he cried.

"What?"

"The shadow on the wall! I was looking at the shadow on the wall. Oh, ass, and ten times ass!"

Bill looked uncomprehendingly at



He tried desperately hard to see it again.

Antony took his arm and pointed to the wall of the passage.

"Look at the sunlight on it," he said. "That's because you've left the door of that room open. The sun comes straight in through the windows. Now, I'm going to shut the door. Look! Do you see how the shadow moves across? That's what I saw—the shadow moving across as the door shut behind him. Bill, go in and shut the door behind you—quite naturally. Quick!"

Bill went out and Antony knelt, watching eagerly.

"I thought so!" he cried. "I knew it couldn't have been that."

"What happened?" said Bill, coming back.

"Just what you would expect. The sunlight came and the shadow moved back again—all in one movement."

"And what happened yesterday?"

"The sunlight stayed there; and then the shadow came very slowly back, and there was no noise of the door being shut."

Bill looked at him with startled eyes.

"By jove! You mean that Cayley closed the door afterward—as an afterthought—and very quietly, so that you couldn't hear?"

Antony nodded.

"Yes. That explains why I was surprised afterward when I went into the room to find the door open behind me. You know how those doors with springs on them close?"

"The sort which old gentlemen have to keep out draughts?"

"Yes. Just at first they hardly move at all, and then very slowly they swing to—well, that was the way the shadow moved, and subconsciously I must have associated it with the movement of that sort of door. By jove!" He got up, and dusted his knees. "Now, Bill, just to make sure, go in and close the door like that. As an afterthought, you know; and very quietly, so that I don't hear the click of it."

Bill did as he was told, and then put his head out eagerly to hear what had happened.

"That was it," said Antony, with absolute conviction. "That was just what I saw yesterday." He came out of the office, and joined Bill in the little room.

"And now," he said, "let's try and find out what it was that Mr. Cayley was doing in here, and why he had to be so very careful that his friend Mr. Gillingham didn't overhear him."

CHAPTER XII.

Antony's first thought was that Cayley had hidden something—but that was absurd. In the time at his disposal, he could have done no more than put it away in a drawer, where

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it would be much more open to discovery by Antony than if he had kept it in his pocket.

Bill pulled open a drawer in the chest and looked inside.

"Why did he keep clothes here at all?" Antony asked. "Did he ever change down here?"

"My dear Tony, he had more clothes than anybody in the world. He just kept them here in case they might be useful, I expect."

"I see. Yes." He was walking around the room as he answered, and he lifted the top of the linen basket which stood near the wash basin and glanced in. "He seems to have come in here for a collar lately."

Bill peered in. There was one collar at the bottom of the basket.

"Yes. I daresay he would," he agreed. "If he suddenly found that the one he was wearing was uncomfortable or a little bit dirty, or something. He was very finicking."

Antony leaned over and picked it out.

"It must have been uncomfortable this time," he said, after examining it carefully. "It couldn't very well be cleaner." He dropped it back again. But what did Cayley come in for so secretly?"

"What did he want to shut the door for?" said Bill. "You couldn't have seen him, anyhow."

"No. So it follows he was going to do something which he didn't want me to hear."

"By jove, that's it!" said Bill eagerly.

"Yes; but what?"

Bill frowned hopefully to himself, but no inspiration came.

"Well, let's have some air, anyway," he said at last, exhausted by the effort, and he went to the window, opened it, and looked out. Then, struck by an idea, he turned back to Antony and said, "Do you think I had better go up to the pond to make sure that they're still at it? Because—" He broke off suddenly at the sight of Antony's face.

"Oh, idiot, idiot!" Antony cried. "Oh, most super-excellent of Watsons! Oh, you lamb, you blessing! Oh, Gillingham, you incomparable ass!"

"What on earth—"

"The window, the window!" cried Antony, pointing to it.

Bill turned back to the window, expecting it to say something. As it said nothing, he looked at Antony again.

"He was opening the window," cried Antony.

"Who?"

"Cayley, of course." Very gravely and slowly he expounded. "He came in here in order to open the window. He shut the door so that I shouldn't hear him open the window. He opened the window. I came in here and found the window open. I said 'This window is open. My amazing powers of analysis tell me that the murderer must have escaped by this window.' Oh," said Cayley, raising his eyebrows. "Well," said he, "I suppose you must be right." Said I proudly, "I am. For the window is open," I said. Oh, you incomparable ass!"

(To be continued.)

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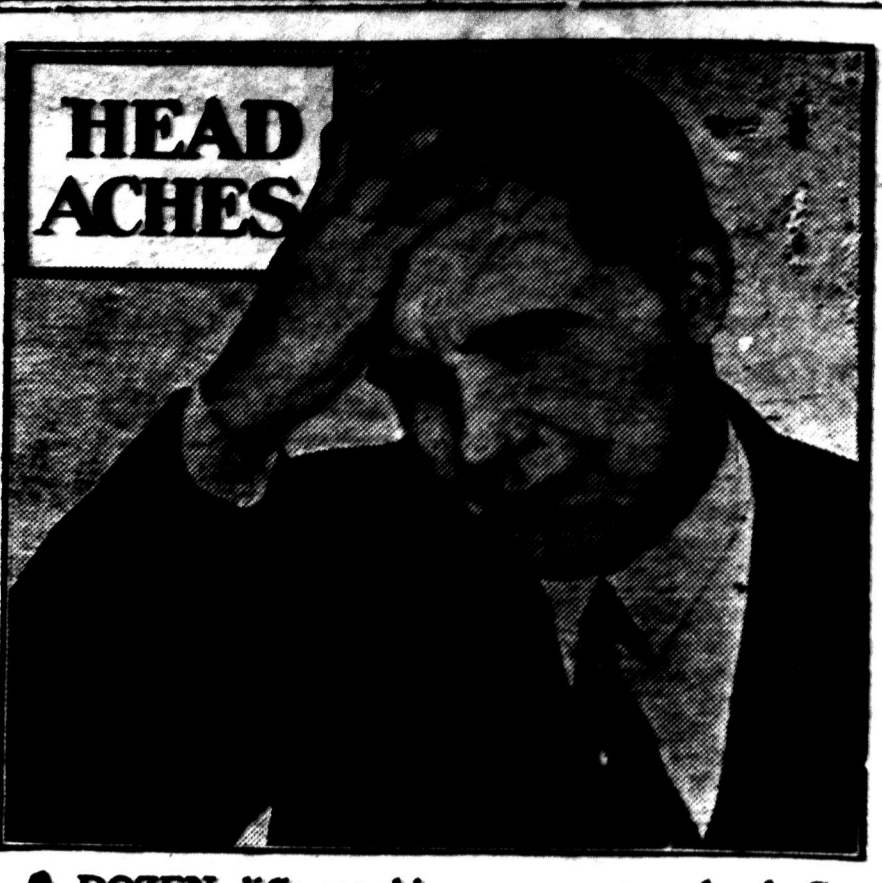
William E. Borah in Current History (New York): The term "command of the seas" has become obsolete or, if not obsolete, obsolescent. No nation is going to be permitted to enjoy the "command of the seas." The United States will not consent to its commerce being subject to the whim of some other power; and Great Britain herself will soon be able to see that the old theory of the "command of the seas" will work to her detriment quite as much as that of any other nation.

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ISSUE No. 12-29



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