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The RED HOUSE MYSTERY

by A. MILNE



CHAPTER XVII.—(Cont'd.)

"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 Mark's 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 hands. "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-

-they call him  
"The man you can't rattle"




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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 XVIII.

The coroner, having made a few commonplace remarks as to the terrible nature of the 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 Birch had developed any new theories. If so, they would appear in the coroner's examination, for the coroner would certainly have been coached by the police as to the important facts to be extracted from each witness. Bill was the first to be put through it.

"Now, about this letter, Mr. Beverley?" he was asked when his chief evidence was over. "Did you see it at all?"

"I didn't see the actual writing. I saw the back of it. Mark was holding it up when he told us about his brother."

"You don't know what was in it, then?"

Bill had a sudden shock. He had read the letter only that morning. He knew quite well 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 knew 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, sir."

"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 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 y'rape 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 off 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.

"Farrars. 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 out of hearing. He had seen a gentleman arrive about five minutes after Mr. Robert.

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

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

"That's him," said Farrars, 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."

"Where you still in the hall?"

"Oh, no, sir. I was just outside Mrs. Stevens' room. The housekeeper, 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, 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, unemotionally—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's at all?"

"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.'"

"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 how he came to be staying at the "George" at Woodham, 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

Minard's Liniment for cuts and bruises

Mother: "I think you children had better give up playing bridge if it's always going to end up in a fight like this. Why can't you sit quietly like Peter there?" Peter: "Oh, I'm not allowed to join in, mother, I'm dummy."



He gave his evidence carefully.

## DO YOU STAMMER?

THE ABBOTT INSTITUTE  
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London.—The starting of the Air Mail service to India recalls that, exactly a hundred years ago, the first overland trip was undertaken by Lieut. Thomas Waghorn, R.N., which resulted in the establishment of the overland route to India as used today.

Although Lieut. Waghorn carried through successfully the first journey from London to Bombay and back, he received no aid or recognition from the Government or the East India Company, for he ran the service for 15 years as a private enterprise.

Waghorn, after leaving the Navy, enrolled himself in the service of the East India Company as a "Hooghly" pilot. He took part in the first Burmah war. During these campaigns he had his first experience of steamships, and when peace was signed he turned his attention to the question of steam navigation.

**RED SEA ROUTE.**

A short experience convinced him that, by the use of steamers, the Red Sea route could be made the fastest practical route for mails between England and India.

Five to six months had been the average time of transit previously.

In order to prove his theory that the Suez route was the quickest, Waghorn was appointed in October, 1829, by Lord Ellenborough as official messenger to convey dispatches from the court of directors of the East India Company to Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay.

He left the Eagle Tavern in Gracechurch-street on October 28. He took carriage from Dunkirk across the Continent through five kingdoms to Trieste, which he reached in six and a half days.

Thence he took boat to Alexandria, and from there he reached Rosetta on donkeyback.

Waghorn travelled to Cairo by boat, where he engaged an Arab dhow which took him to Koseer, and across the Red Sea to Jeddah, a journey of 649 miles without compasses on an uncharted sea, and with a mutinous Arab crew. He reached Jeddah after only six and a half days' sailing.

**VICTIM OF FEVER.**

Fever laid him low, and for six weeks he was in bed, when the ship, *Thefts*, of the East India Company, entered the roads and took him on board, and on March 21, 1830, after four months and 21 days of travelling, he landed in Bombay.

The return journey was accomplished in less than a third of the time of his outward trip.


Count Ferdinand de Lesseps acknowledged that it was after a conversation with Waghorn that he was convinced of the necessity of the construction of the Suez Canal. He erected a bust to Waghorn at the entrance of the canal, and himself wrote the inscription.

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