THREE SHUTTERED HOUSES

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

SYNOPSIS

OVEL CHAPTER IV

Inspector Tope and Miss Moss had found in marriage the calm happiness of middle age. The Inspector had looked all his life on violence, yet with gentle, comprehending eyes. For a score of years or more he was at the head of the Homicide Bureau at Police Headquarters, and won for himself there a reputation not soon to be forgotten. Miss Moss was in a different fashion as shrewd

was in a different fashion as shrewd as he.

While they were away on their leisurely honeymoon, Clint had planned a surprise for them: There was among the properties of the Jervies Trust a one-story, six-room house sandwiched on a narrow lot in Longwood, hidden in a backwater away from the traffic arteries, with four trees on this lot, and room for if frees on this lot, and room for flower-garden. Dana Jervies, int's father, had taken his bride Climt's father, had taken his bride there thirty years ago; and he had kept it afterward for the sake of sentiment. Clara and Mat lodged in this house for a while after their marriage; and when Inspector Tope and Miss Moss came home from their honeymona, Climt met them at the station and drove them to this familiar doot.

Miss Moss, with tears of pleasure in her eyes, pretested; but Clint said strongly:

"Why, of course you'll come here. This is where all the Jervies family starts housekeeping, you know. Can't go against tradition." And when she argued she was not of the Jervies family, he insisted gently:

Jervies family, he insisted gently:

"You're the only mother I can remember, you know."

She yielded at last, said they would stay a little while; but Clint said they should lodge here till he wanted the house for his own bride. "And that will be a long time, by all the signs," he promised.

On the morning after Clint's ride over Kenesaw Hill, he rang the bell as they were about to sit down to the breakfast Miss Moss had prepared; and Tope, in an old blue dressing-gown and slippers, the morning ipaper crumpled in his hand, opened the door for him.

He greeted Clint; and he called over his shoulder:

down at the table.

"Almost ready," she promised. She watched these two for a second, a deep fundness in her eyes, before she disappeared into the kitchen again. When she presently returned, with the coffee in one hand and a platter of eggs and bacon in the other, Tope said:

"Wait, Clint. Start over now." And he said to Miss Moss: "Mrs. Tope, Clint's had a curious adventurs. See how it sounds to you."

And Clint told them how, driving back to town, he had overtaken a girl in her nightgown, running through the rain upon that lonely road. "Now what do you make of that?" he asked challenging them.

Miss Moss reflected. "I know a little about that place!" she told them. "I know there are three houses, side by side. Matthew Bowdon lives in one. He's a lawyer, trust law mostly. The firm is Bowdon and Taine. Mr. Bowdon must be an old man now. Two of his grandsons are in the firm with him, and Justus Tuine, his son-in-law."

Clint exclaimed: "Well, what I want to know is, who was this girl? What had frightened her?"

The Inspector got up and crossed to the telephone. "I wonder if Charley Harquall is downtown," he said. "He might know if anything has happened out there." Charley was a reporter, and he and the Inspector were old friends. Tope called the newspaper office, and Miss Moss and Clint listened to the one-sided conversation.

interest in his eyes; and Clint caught him by the arm, demanding:

"What is it, Inspector? What did Harquail say?"

Tope sat down at the breakfast-table again. "I need another cup of coffee, Mrs. Tope." he said. "To think this over." And while she poured it, he began to explain:

"You heard me ask Charley if Denman Hurder had any children." he reminded them; and he chuck-he reminded them; and he chuck-

poured it, he began to explain:

"You heard me ask Charley if Denman Hurder had any children," he reminded them; and he chuckled. "That surprised Charley," he said, with a certain gratified vanity in his tones. "Charley wanted to know how I got onto it, and I asked him what he was talking about."

He hesitated, said soberly: "This is what he told me: Mr. Hurder had a daughter named Katherine. She eloped, twenty-odd years ago, with a man named Jerry Leaford. Leaford didn't amount to much, Charley said. He said there was a row at the time, and finally she and Leaford went home to live with



Under the pretext of inspecting the tires, Clint looked attentively at the three houses.

her folks; and then Leaford left her, and disappeared for good and all." He added, and his tones were somber now: "The reason Charley had all this stuff so pat, Mrs. Lea-ford died last night, and he'd been getting up an obit for her." "Died?" Clint cried. "She was

alive—"
"It wasn't her you saw," Tope reminded him. "She must have been past forty now."
"You asked something about children?" Miss Moss prompted.
"I asked Charley if she had any children," Tope explained. "He didn't know. They just got a flash about her death, from the district man out there; and they wanted to give her a good obit, because of

give her a good obit, because of course Hurder is a big advertiser. Charley said the district man was go-ing to get all the dope, children and so on."

The others sat thoughtful, watching him; and the Inspector was silent for a moment. He said at last with an apologetic glance at Miss Moss:

"You'll think I'm seeing things at "Mrs. Tope, there's Clint for night, but—there's something wrong

She appeared for a moment in the dining-room door to smile a welcome, and bade them both sit down at the table.

Out there!"

Miss Moss urged slowly: "Why do you think so? Mrs. Leaford was sick, and the telephone was out of order, and they sent someone for

a doctor. Isn't that all?"

Tope shook his head.

"No one runs for a doctor, no matter how big the hurry is, without putting some clothes on."

"What was the matter with Mrs.

"Charley said heart trouble," "Charley said heart trouble,"
Tope explained. "But that covers a
lot of ground. If a man gets shot,
or stabbed, he dies of heart-trouble, as far as that goes. Heart
failure will kill a person; yes. But
it takes something to make a heart
fail. Takes quite a lot, too. These
hearts of ours so on rumping prethearts of ours go on pumping pret-ty steadily, unless something hap-pens to them. I'd like to know what made her heart fail."

He took up the telephone, and Miss Moss moved to his side. "Inspec-tor," she urged, "it isn't our busi-ness."

He smiled at her. "Let me poke my nose in," he begged. "I can't keep out of a thing till I know."

keep out of a thing till I know."

He used the phone for a while, turned back to them again.

"That was Inspector Heale," he said. "At Headquarters out there. He hadn't even heard about Mrs. Leaford being dead. I guess it's nothing." He grinned at Clint. "Son," he demanded, "what do you mean, coming in here and stirring us up this way? Can't a girl go for a walk in her nightle along a country road in the rain without starting so much talk? I don't believe there was any girl, snyway. How much did you drink last night, young fellow?"

Clint chuckled. "Had one high ball," he confessed, "It bores me to see these kids lushing it up the

Clint laughed, and then the tele-phone rang. Tope went briskly across the room. He said:

"Hello! . . Yes, speaking . . . Oh, yes, Inspector."
A silence, while he listened. Then:
"Yes, thanks."

Another silence; and then Tope

said:
"Why, I'll come out and see you, and bring him along. Sure."
He put up the receiver and turned back to them; and Miss Moss saw that his eyes shone.
"What is it?" Clint demanded.

"What is it?" Clint demanded.
"Inspector Heale tells me he called up the Medical Examiner,"
Tope explained. "Doctor Derrie had had no report on the death, so Heale called the family doctor. Doctor named Cabler. He says Mrs. Leaford died from an overdose of some sleeping-powder." He added, after a moment: "Accidental."
"Accidental?" Miss Moss repeated in a flat tone.

ed, in a flat tone.

There was a moment's silence, and then he added:
"Inspector Heale wants to know how I knew about it. And he wants to talk to you, Clint. I think you'd better drive us out there."

Clint swung the car off the main thoroughfare. "This is the road," he said. "I'll show you."

And he drove more slowly, studying the way. Woodlands shut them in on either side before he stopped at last, where there was a path, and a house among the trees.

"This is where I let her out," he explained.

"This is where I let her out," he explained.

Tope nodded, looking toward the house. "Probably Doctor Cabler lives there," he suggested. "How far had she ridden with you?"

"I was coming down this hill," Clint explained, and he drove on, said presently: "It must have been along here somewhere that I overtook her."

Tore commented: "No houses I

took her."

Tope commented: "No houses anywhere near."

"They're on top of the hill," Clint replied. He put the car swiftly up the grade and the three houses came into view.

Tope said, in a low tone as though he might be overheard. "Drive

Tope said, in a low tone as though he might be overheard: "Drive slowly, Clint."
"I'll stop," Clint amended. He pulled up the car beside the road, and got out, under pretext of inspecting the tires; but at the same time, under the brim of his hat, he looked attentively at these three houses by the road. So did Tope and Miss Moss too.

dark and still.

When Clint presently drove on, he looked at Tope to see what impression the older man had received.

"Well, there they are," he said.

"What do you think?".

"The girl was afraid," Clint agreed. "But what would they be afraid of?"

"Well," Tope reminded him, his tone suddenly grim, "A woman died of poison in there last night. If she'd known it was going to happen, she'd have had a right to be afraid."

So Clint was silenced; and they came on into the suburban town that was their destination, and found Police Headquarters. Miss Moss elected to stay in the car while they went

Inspector Heale came to meet He was lean and gray, and his brows were extravagantly bushy. He shook Tope's hand, and spoke some hearty word.

"Might have known you'd be around," he said humorously. "You old buzzard! How do you hear about these things so soon? I didn't even know Mrs. Leaford was dead till you called me up."
"Done anything?" Tope asked se-

riously.

Inspector Heale bade them come into his office and closed the door, and he shook his head. "No," he confessed. "Doctor Derrie's gone to look her over, of course. Doctor Cabler hadn't notified him. Cabler was called in late last night, slept late this morning. That's why he hadn't phoned Doc Derrie. He said

And he explained: "Mrs. Leaford had been taking this dope for years. She took an overdose once before, and came near passing out. This time it was nearer than that."

"Dead when Doctor Cabler got there?" Tope inquired.
"Before that, I guess," Heale ex-plained; and he looked at Tope and then at Clint inquiringly. "But I want to know how you heard about it," he reminded them, and Tope bade Clint tell the tale of his ad-venture the night before. enture the night before.

So Clint repeated his story; and Inspector Heale listened without interruption till he was done.

terruption till he was done.

"The girl was Miss Leaford," he explained then, "Mrs. Leaford's daughter. She found her mother dead, and the tetephone was out of order on account of the shower, so she ran to get the doctor." He grinned. "I didn't know she made the trip in her nightie," he admitted. "They're a queer lot up there, and she's as queer as the rest of them."

"They're that way about every-thing," Inspector Heale insisted. "You take electric lights. Hurder put them in his house, here a few years back; and then the others years back; and then the others hooked his meter, to save meter deposits. The light company kicked, but those folks on the Hill, they mostly get their own way when they want it. Old Mrs. Bowdon—she's seventy if she's a day—you can argue with her till you're blind and she don't give an inch.

"And Mrs. Taine's as bad." Heale

"And Mrs. Taine's as bad," Heale continued. "She's one of these thin, stringy women in a black dress; and she talks in a kind of Miss Moss too.

There was an undertaker's garland attached to the door of the house in the middle; and a car with a doctor's tag stood beside the road. The day was warm and fine after the shower; yet nowhere did Clint see a window open. Some of the shutters were closed and at other windows thick curtains hung. Behind the houses, the woods were dark and still. a cent, the way she works all the time."

"What do you think?"

Tope answered with a slow smile:
"Why, I get notions. Fool notions, maybe, Clint; but I've got in the habit of believing them. It feels to me as if the people that lived in those houses were afraid."

Clint began: "Miss Leaford—"
The Inspector said guardedly: "Why, she might be all right, for all I know. She's always slipping around through the woods, alone, like a wild animal; and she never speaks to you. Passes you right by—"

Tibetans Depend on Species of Worms To Provide the Necessary 'Pick-Me-Up'

me-up," has attracted the attention of missionaries.

Locally known as "grassworms," they make their habitat in lofty mountain ranges of the Tibetan border, near the Tatsienlu leper home conducted by the Friars Minor of the Hankow Vicariate.

Natives eat them dead or alive for medical purposes. In either form they bring fancy prices. They are in great demand for the mentally depressed and for sufferers of stomach trouble.

When dead they are mixed with boiled chicken. In this concoction they are said to react wonderfully as "pick-me-ups." When live worms without cocoons are dug up they are mixed with a strong liquor, distilled from maire. Taken in this form they are considered a potent remedy against stomach ills.

So valuable is the "grass-worm" considered that hundreds of hunters make a living by gathering them. The hunters swarm the mountain alopes to search for these worms. They easily find eager buyers, anx-

A curious little worm, which is lous to purchase all they can dig up. used by Tibetan natives as a "pick-me-up," has attracted the attention is covered with these insects. More often they are found in the cocoon, less often without. In either form

less often without. In either form they find a ready market.

Though somewhat smaller, they resemble silk-worms in appearance. The head is covered by a bright-red crust. As winter approaches they burrow head-first straight down into the ground. Here they spin thin cocoons in which they wrap themselves. When the snow melts, their heads begin a sprouting process. Thin hairs, resembling grass, spring from the soil.

The people of the district believe that the sprouting blades open like flowers and scatter spores which in due time develop into other worms.

Who's Afraid of Pilate's Ghost Who's Afraid of Pilate's Ghost
Tourists and botanists who climb
the slopes of Mount Pilatus in Switzerland to collect some of the 500
different wild flowers that grow
there, have long forgotten that it
was not till the Sixteenth century
that anyone approached it. Pilate's
ghost was supposed to hover there.

Mining Town Is Ghost at Last by L. L. STEVENSON

Only Shacks Are Reminder Of Old Boom Days in Wyoming City.

SOUTH PASS CITY, WYO .- Wyoming's newest ghost town, South Pass City, has only a few weather-beaten frame shacks to remind visi-tors of the days when it boasted of a population of 5,000 gold-hunters, pl-oneers and gamblars

a population of 5,000 gold-hunters, pioneers and gamblers.

Abandoned more than 30 years after the rest of the state's famous early-time mining camps were deserted by their nomadic settlers, South Pass City is surrounded by several booming modern mining camps. It lies near the crest of the Continental Divide on the old Oregon Trail, 60 miles northeast of Rock Springs.

Springs.

In 1860 when the gold rush began,
Easterners and Mid-Westerners
flocked to the almost-virgin wilderness of Wyoming. Ore was found in
large quantities, and the rapid influx of gold-seekers continued.

Wind All That Remains.

Gamblers, bartenders and dance hall girls followed so that by 1865 South Pass City was one of a score of rip-roaring mining towns, echo-ing to the clink of picks and shovels on rock, the blaring music of hon-keytonk dance halls, the bark of sixshooters and the whine of the wind. The wind is all that remains to disturb the quiet of the hastily-con-

structed boom town.

In 1878, with the decline of metal markets, the rest of the roaring frontier communities became ghost towns. The miners, gamblers and entertainers moved on to more lucrative fields.

South Pass City, however, survived, although most of its residents departed. When modern methods were introduced in the 1920s, several large mining firms established them-selves near the once-famous town to extract an estimated \$500,000 in gold-ore from the surrounding hillsides.

Hung On for Time. The little town retained its post office and place on the map while other communities of its kind were remembered only in name.

Other ghost towns of the state, some marked by a few staggering frame shacks, still others torn down by the elements and settlers, include Cambria, in northeastern Wyoming near Newcastle; Battle, south of South Pass City in the Medicine Bow National forest; Rambler, two miles south of Battle; Eadsville, atop scenic Casper mountain, and Lavoye, in the Salt Creek field in Natrona county.

National Parks to Offer More Camping Facilities

SAN FRANCISCO. — Americans are rapidly becoming camping conscious, according to Julian H. Salomon, national park service camping specialist of Washington.

On a tour of the California camping sites, Salomon explained this phiase of the national park service's work as follows:

work as follows: "It was assumed," he said, "that there were numerous agencies in the country interested in camp operations if they could be assisted in obtaining suitable sites and facili-

"It was also thought that smaller agencies operating camps would be able to pool their efforts if offered improved facilities to encourage better service.

"As a result, through consultation with local agencies, camp development was studied thoroughly from the viewpoint of the committee's needs. Out of these consultations came organized camping for family boys, girls, educational and other boys, girls, educational and other groups utilizing facilities carefully planned to provide the greatest use at a minimum cost." Salomon said that in 1936 there

were only nine camps in operation in the United States with a total of 37,310 camper days. For 1938 these figures were in-

creased to 49 camps with a total of 376,173 camper days.

The service expects to have at least 60 camps in operation with a probable total of 60,000 camper days

for 1939.

Matrimonial Agency Is Operated From Prison

COLUMBUS, OHIO .- The opera-

COLUMBUS, OHIO.—The operation of a matrimonial agency known as the "Idealist club," from Ohio penitentiary, was disclosed today with suspension of S. M. Current, a Bertillon officer.

Current, whose job it was to take photograph, fingerprints and measurements of prisoners, had been engaging in the matrimonial enterprise on his employers' time, Acting Warden William F. Amrine said. He was suspended 30 days.

One of Current's matrimonial circulars read:

One of Current's matrimonial cir-culars read:

"Our sole aim is to help you find your ideal and we do not cease in our efforts until the desired goal is reached. Send in the enclosed membership application today and let us start working for your happl-ness at once."

Double Play BELLINGHAM, WASH.—Outfield or Ed Stewart, of Vancouver, swung so hard at a fast one that he knocked himself out Tuesday night. He missed the ball, hit himself in the head.

Lights of New York

Not so long ago, Arthur French played before 50,000 persons. Now he often watches 50,000 persons at play. Back in 1923 he was captain of the Harvard football team and just about single-handed defeated Yale in the traditional game. Two days after his graduation, he had a job. Punching tickets at Manhattan beach. Since then, he has done just about every chore, except chef in the kitchen about the resort. Now he is general manager and holds the rank of vice president of the Joseph P. Day Enterprises. He married Mr. Day's daughter and lives a happy home life over in Short Hills, N. J. He still keeps up with athletics to a certain extent. Manhattan beach is two miles long. At least 10 times a day, he travels the entire length. Then, too, in his spare time, he invented a football and basketball, one-third regulation size, to train youngsters for those

size, to train youngsters for those games when they grow up.

Instead of being stranded, vaude-ville is now sanded. At least it is out at Manhattan beach. To house the week-end performances, which the week-end performances, which read like the bills of the old Palace Mr. French has constructed a mod-ern amphitheater with a seating capacity of 10,000. The stage re-sembles the Hollywood Bowl but is of original design. It has private offices and dressing rooms for the stars and a private sun porch where the artists can enjoy a day at the beach out of reach of autograph hounds. John Philip Sousa III, grandson of the great bandsman, who opened the old Manhattan beach bandstand, is the band leader and he swings the marches of his famous grandsire. Recently he an-nounced his engagement to Miss Jean MacDonald of Hazleton, Pa.

Getting back to General Manager French, the Harvard star of other days. He has still another connec-tion with athletics. Under his supervision are 82 handball courts, 22 tennis courts, 15 basketball courts, several championship swimming pools and numerous other activi-ties, including bridge classes.

In the opinion of Earl Robinson and Alex North, composers for the Federal theater production, "The Life and Death of an American," it Life and Death of an American," it is easier to compose a new song than to find an old one, especially if the latter happened to be a national hit. Among the recordings called for by the script are "Yes, We Have No Bananas," "Missouri Waltz," and "Turkey Trot." In the first music shop visited, Robinson and North encountered a girl of about 18. She had never heard of "Yes, We Have No Bananas," but thought it was a swell title. The composers went out feeling like Rip Van Winkles.

The Columbia university library finally yielded "Yes, We Have No Bananas," but could do nothing about "Turkey Trot" or "Missouri Waltz." From the New York Public library came the sheet music of "Turkey Trot" and when the play opened, a pit orchestra had to be substituted for a gramaphone. The grandmother of a member of the cast donated the "Missouri Waltz" record. Then it was learned that there was no "Over There" record. A long search disclosed one at the bottom of a pile of old records in a Ninth avenue second-hand furniture

In the old days, it used to be the cellar. Then it was the basement. Now, according to what I was told at the Court of Flame at the World's at the Court of Flame at the World's fair, it is the "Rumpus Room." It seems that the "Rumpus Room" is a place where you can have a lot of fun and make a lot of noise. The one at the fair has just about everything in the way of athletic apparatus except a bowling alley. And there's an easy chair and book table, too. Curiously enough, it's heated with a gas furnace. And there was a time when I was punished by being sent down to the cellar. That wasn't all there was to it, however. When I got down there I had to sort potatoes.

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

Asleep 25 Years
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.—Anna Swanepoel, a South
African woman who has been almost continually asleep for more
than 25 years, has been moved from
her bed in the chronic sick home,
Rietfontein, to the Johannesburg
general hospital. She had occupied
the bed for 19 years.

Old School Photograph Reflects Judge's Regret

Reflects Judge's Regret
MONTEREY, CALIF.—After
imposing a fine of \$25 on Raiph
Small, of Stockton, for reckless
driving, Police Judge Monte Hellam drew a mangled grammar
school picture from his wallet,
and beckoned the prisoner to his
side. Pointing to a small boy in
the first row, he said:
"Isn't that you?"
"Yes—that's me, all right," the
prisoner repiled.

risa-that's me, all right," the prisoner replied.

Then, pointing to a tall lad in the back row, Judge Hellam said: "And that's me. Sorry I had to do it, but it's the law."

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PHOTOGRAPHY

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Soon Settled A stage-struck youth had per tered a manager for a hearing, and at last got one. "Tell me," began the manager,

"do you aspire to comedy or trag-

"Tragedy," bleated the youth.
"Well, let me hear you recite Striking an exaggerated pose,

the aspirant began: "To be not to be-" "Not to be, undoubtedly," said the manager, showing him out.

An income tax repayment claim had been made for \$20, but the taxpayer had miscalculated the amount, for actually \$30 was due

was sent, and this is how he ac-knowledged it:
"Dear Sir,—I am now 70 years of age. At last I believe in Santa Claus."



"You and Jack are fast friends, aren't you?' "Yes, but he's faster than I

Misplaced Punctuality
Counsel—How fast were you going at the time of this accident?
Motorist—I can't remember exactly, but I was just in time for it.

Long and Short of It
The well-meaning old lady
looked pityingly round the cell and
then addressed the convict.
"How did the police manage to
catch you, my poor fellow?"
"I was too short-legged, mum."
"Dear me—and what was your
crime?"

"I was too long-fingered."

The schoolboy who wrote, "In some states people are put to death by elocution," should have received something for it. Orators sometimes bore us to death.

Not So Fast The doctor rushed out of his study. 'shouted. "Get my bag at once!" he

"Why, dad," asked his daughter, "what's the matter?"
"Some fellow just phoned he can't live without me!" gasped the doctor, reaching for his hat.

His daughter breathed a sigh of "Just a moment," she said qui-

"I think that call was for

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