

The GOOSE WOMAN

by REX BEACH

THIRD INSTALMENT

"Oh, dozens, I dare say! But I guess they haven't made much actual progress. My belief is they don't want to discover who did the shooting."

"You mean on account of the—?"

"Secret order nothing!" Mrs. Holmes exclaimed. They didn't kill Amos Ethridge."

"Who did?"

"A woman."

"What makes you so positive?"

"Why, the circumstances; the evidence; the things I saw on the spot." The speaker seated herself and began to rock vigorously. As she bent her mind upon the task of visualizing the scene of the tragedy, her gaze became preoccupied. Her face changed. Her features were puffed and coarsened by drink, to be sure, but upon them now was stamped an expression indicative of more than ordinary mental power; it was as if a lamp had been lighted behind a dirty, cobwebbed window-pane. "To begin with, the number and the location of the bullet holes told a story. There were seven of them—he was shot to pieces. She shot him twice, so close that there were powder burns on his shirt; then she stood over him and emptied her automatic into his body. It must have been an automatic, from the number of shots. For that matter, we picked up the empty shells where they had been ejected. Another thing, she must have known this back road well, and that lane; she must have known he'd have to get out and open the gate. That proves she had often been to his house with him, doesn't it?"

"But why would he travel this road at all when the macadam leads right up to his gates? The papers ask that?"

"Politics! He was in the race for the Governorship and he had ene-

mies. Probably he knew they were watching him. No candidate for the highest political office in the state could afford to have it known that his private life was corrupt."

"Hm—m! Even yet I can't see what makes you so positive it was a woman."

"You're as stupid as the police! If there had been one bullet hole, or even two, it would have indicated a man's hand. But those other five shots were fired by somebody in a frenzy—somebody who was hysterical—completely out of his head. Or hers! It was the act of an insanely jealous woman—or a man like you."

"Mother!" Gerald protested, sharply. Don't talk like that, even in fun. The mere fact that a fellow can draw, as an eye for color, is no sign that he's effeminate."

"Oh, don't worry! This is just my own theory—"

"Pretty weak, I'm afraid."

"—and I don't intend to tell it to the detectives. There are a lot of people in Westland who would rather see Amos Ethridge where he is today than in the Governor's chair. And I'm one of them. Look at that cross over his heart and that letter in his pocket. D'you think a man would have stopped to make a cross out of twigs and lay it on his breast. No! More power to the woman, I say. The hand of God directed those bullets and the hand of God will protect her. If we had more women like her we'd have less unhappiness, fewer ruined lives and—blasted careers. He had the money and the looks to do anything. He was a whited sepulcher!"

"He had the money to send me to art school, too," Gerald countered, with some feeling. "And to pay my way for four years. Just because he saw one of my drawings on a paper bag—full of eggs! You never thanked him. You hated him for it, but—"

"Thank him? For making an artist out of you? An artist?" Mary Holmes uttered a scornful sound. "You were enough like your father without that."

Gerald sighed and shook his head in discouragement. His mother was indeed difficult—a queer woman. "Let's not talk about him or about father," he said. "What I came to see you about is the case itself. I—I wish to Heaven I'd been here, so I could have prevented those wretched newspapers—I'm afraid you'll be called as a witness next."

"Well, what if I am called?"

"Why—think! You must have been hurt by what they said. If

you go on the stand they'll want to know all about us, past history, everything. The lawyers will dig it out and the newspapers will make the most of it."

"Humph! Maybe they'll treat me differently when they know who I am."

Gerald stared at the shapeless figure in the rocking chair for a moment, then reluctantly he made up his mind to speak as gently as possible, but as plainly as necessary. "Mother, dear, you don't understand what it would mean, for you can't see how you—well, how you have changed! It hurts me to say it, but I'm afraid the papers wouldn't treat you as sympathetically as you imagine, or as you deserve. It is so much easier to ridicule than to sympathize or to condone."

"Oh, I see! Meanwhile, you're speaking more for yourself than for me."

"I'm speaking for both of us! Can't you understand that I'm having a hard battle to make something out of myself. Why handicap me more? Westland isn't a large city—"

"And of course you couldn't be known as the son of the 'goose woman!' Your friends would sneer at you!"

Gerald defended himself hotly: "I'm not a cad. I'm not ashamed of our poverty. But I do have pride, some decency, and I associate with the best people I can. It shocks me, it breaks my heart to see you steadily deteriorate. I've done what I could to stop it—"

"What have you ever done, except preach?" Mrs. Holmes broke out, angrily.

"I never preached! Please, please don't let's quarrel, or at any rate let me say what I have to say first. You resent my profession because my talent—what little I have—came from my father. You actually hate me at times, because when I was born your voice went. As if that were my fault! I can understand that, after a fashion, but other things I can't understand. For instance, why have you always tried to strangle whatever there was in me? Oh, you have! When I used to sing or play, it threw you into a rage and you whipped me. Why, just think, I might have inherited your musical talent! When I tried to draw pictures you slapped my hands. Thank God, Mr. Ethridge saw something in my drawings and encouraged me to defy you and—and make something of myself! You yielded finally because you felt sure I'd fail. When I made good you refused to let me come home; threw me out; said you never wanted to see me again."

"When you're like this I certainly do hate you," Mrs. Holmes admitted in a voice totally without feeling. "You are your father all over again."

"I know! And you blame all this—"

Gerald indicated the ugly, squalid, disorderly kitchen—"on him. But I don't. He isn't to blame. It's the liquor, mother. And the terrible part of it all is that—you're getting worse. Nothing I say seems to have any effect and of course you don't care what I think. But it makes you mad when the newspapers say it. Well, they'll say it again, and a lot more if you become a witness in this Ethridge case. Your story will be published from one end of the country to the other. That would end me—my career, I mean."

"Your career! What do you know about a career?"

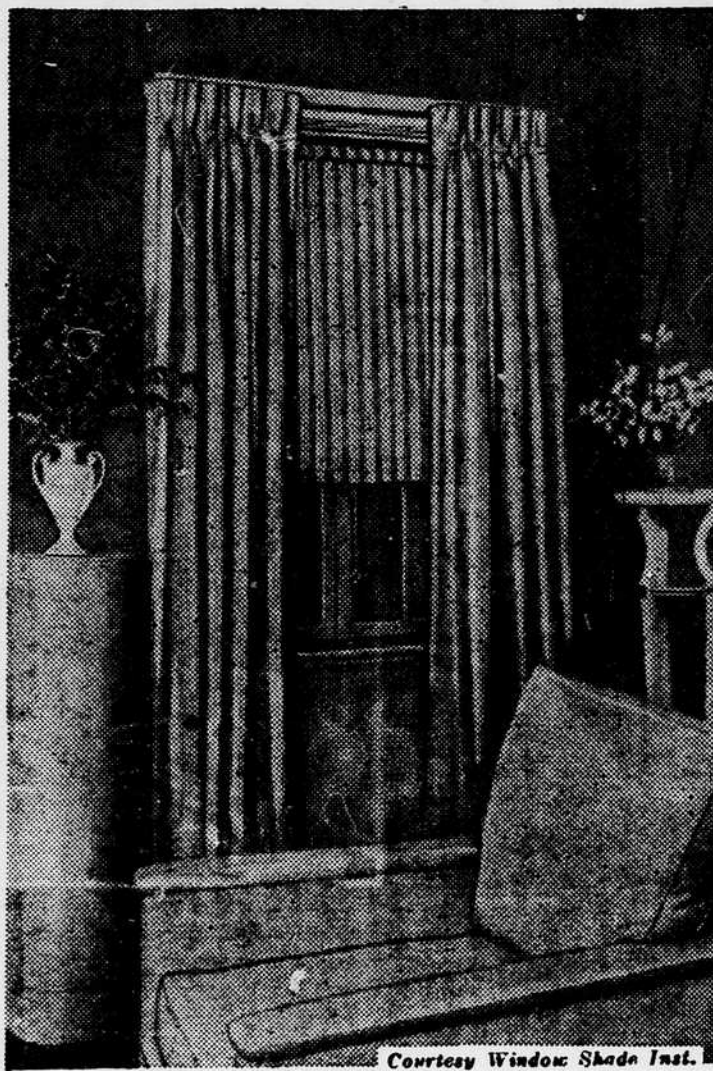
"Not—not as much as you know, of course. But, mother, you must have some pride left in that career of yours, in your name. Surely drink hasn't entirely killed your self-respect. Even though my feelings and my future are matters of indifference to you, do you want the whole world to know that you were deserted by your husband and became a—well, a drunkard and a woman of ill repute, as the papers had it? Do you want them to know that the notorious 'goose woman' in the Ethridge case is really the once glorious Maria di Nardi?"

The object of this appeal rose and tramped about the room. In spite of the fact that she was not very sure of her movements, in spite of her untidy appearance, heightened by the drab, stringy hair that drooped carelessly upon her neck and forehead and the slipshod manner in which she wore her garments, there was nevertheless an air or importance about her and a dignity to her carriage.

"So! I'm a drunkard, a common woman, a low character—all those rotten scandal sheets said! And my own son agrees—tells me so with his own lips!" The speaker's voice was hoarse with passion, vibrant with dislike. "You dare to say such things to my face! . . . You want to know what ails me, what has become of my pride, what

Fashions In Pictures

Window Shades Add Charm to Room



Harmonizing your window shades with your room setting this spring! The smart, new idea in interior decoration. Hung at the window of this cool beige and white room is one of the smart self-striped window shades that are fashioned of first quality cloth. An important note to housewives—these shades can be kept sparkling and clean all summer long for they're washable.

Spring In Bermuda



Fun in Bermuda—As Katharine Gibbs School girls frolic on the coral sands of that pleasure island. Playing leap frog are Miss Dorthea Robinson (leaping) of Weehawken, N. J. and Miss Emily Brady, of Scarsdale, New York.

Brazil Nut Salad



Timely Spring Salads—(use these ingredients)—1 teaspoon onion juice, 1 teaspoon worcestershire sauce, 1 cup sliced Brazil Nuts, 2 cups cottage cheese, 1 bunch romaine, 1 bunch lettuce, 1 bunch watercress, radishes, french dressing. Directions—Stir onion juice, worcestershire sauce and one-half cup of sliced Brazil Nuts into cheese, pile into the center of a shallow salad bowl or platter. Surround with green and garnish with radishes. Sprinkle remaining nuts over cheese. Pour french dressing over greens just before serving.

Floors Dress Up In Latest Plaids



It's smart to be Scotch these days—and now even floors can wear Scotch tartans. Here is the Royal Stewart, most noble of all the clan plaids, decoratively made into a rug for dining room. The soft reds and blues blend perfectly with maple furniture while the white over-plaid picks up other white accents in the china and wall treatment. If you favor the Clan Mackintosh, you can build your room around the tans, browns and greens contained in that tartan. Four other authentic Scotch clan plaids complete the Series. Their trim, tailored patterns are equally at home in rooms of provincial or modern feeling.

STAR LAUNDRY
"The Good One"
Launderers and Dry Cleaners
Phone 24 114 West Bank St.
ONE DAY SERVICE

DR. N. C. LITTLE
Optometrist
Eyes examined and glasses fitted
Telephone 1571-W.
107 1/2 S. Main Street
Next to Ketchie Barber Shop

BENT FENDERS
Straightened and refinished to look like new
BAUKNIGHT
DUCCO PAINTER
129 S. Church Phone 1416

E. Carr Choate
DENTIST
Office Over Purcell Drug Store No. 2
Phone 141
Office in Mocksville is Closed

LOANS
Make use of
Our confidential service
Negotiating loans for salaried people
Easy re-payment plan
You are invited to call and investigate our proposition.
C. E. Allen & Co.
SECOND FLOOR, WASHINGTON BUILDING
120 North Main Street Phone No. 7
SALISBURY, N. C.

How Cardui Helps Women To Build Up
Cardui stimulates the appetite and improves digestion, helping women to get more strength from the food they eat. As nourishment is improved, strength is built up, certain functional pains go away and women praise Cardui for helping them back to good health. . . . Mrs. C. E. Ratliff, of Hinton, W. Va., writes: "After the birth of my last baby, I did not seem to get my strength back. I took Cardui again and was soon sound and well. I have given it to my daughters and recommend it to other ladies. . . . Thousands of women testify Cardui benefited them. If it does not benefit YOU, consult a physician."

LOANS
Make use of
Our confidential service
Negotiating loans for salaried people
Easy re-payment plan
You are invited to call and investigate our proposition.
C. E. Allen & Co.
SECOND FLOOR, WASHINGTON BUILDING
120 North Main Street Phone No. 7
SALISBURY, N. C.

has driven me down into the mud and keeps me there. Well, it isn't the liburo. It's you!"

"Mother!"

"Oh, I mean it! D'you think I drink because I like the stuff? I



"Mother, you don't understand. . . . drink to kill what's in me here!" Mrs. Holmes clutched fiercely at her bosom. "It stupefies me so I can't think, so I can't remember. I'd have died, otherwise. You took my voice—"

Again Gerald uttered a cry of protest, but the speaker ran on, "You robbed me of my one great talent, my glory. Yes, I was glori-

ous! Everybody said so. Kings and queens were at my feet, the world worshiped me. 'Career!' I had a career—but you killed it. You! When you were born you changed me from a nightingale into a frog. Where would I live if not in the mud? D'you wonder I detest you when I think of what you did? . . . You're beginning to understand what a career means and it frightens you to think of losing it. You're beginning to understand that it means more than money, more than friends, more than love, more than anything in this whole world. That it's bigger than all of them. Well, it ought to make you feel like an assassin, for when you killed my voice you did more than ruin Mary Holmes, your mother; you murdered Maria di Nardi, the opera singer, the artist, the greatest contralto in Europe. In Heaven's name, haven't you done enough, taken enough, without robbing me of what little comfort is left? A chicken farmer. Me! A—'goose woman!' Mrs. Holmes threw back her head and laughed wildly. "What a joke!" She sank heavily into her rocker and swayed her body from side to side. "Oh, my God! What a joke!"

Gerald rose and laid a hand upon her drab, uncombed hair. He could remember dimly, as if in some childhood dream, when that hair had been shiny and fragrant and almost golden in color and when it had been proudly worn. That memory left him low in mind and sick in body. "Is it altogether fair

to hold me responsible for the loss of your voice?" he inquired.

Mrs. Holmes shook off his hand, crying: "Don't paw me! Fair? Is anything fair? Has life been fair to me?"

Perhaps I shouldn't have spoken as I did. But don't misunderstand me. I've lived long enough to learn that there are forces outside of ourselves that are too big, too resistless, to be overcome, so I don't blame you for the way you feel, mother, for what you've done or for the dreadful change that has come over you. I don't even reproach you. I only pity—"

"I don't want pity!" the woman cried, furiously. "The gin she had drunk earlier in the evening had failed this time to stupefy; it had merely deadened what was gentle in her and roused what was savage and hateful. Emotionally she was in turmoil. The truth of Gerald's accusations had engendered blind resentment and a fierce impulse to defend herself, to fight back, to hurt him as he had hurt her. A rat will bite when crushed."

"I had something in mind to tell you the last time I came out," the boy was saying, "but you were in no mood to listen. I must tell you now, in view of what has happened this week. I've been working hard and getting ahead slowly. It won't be long, I hope, until I can make a home for both of us—for all three of us. I'm going to—get married."

Mary Holmes stared at him dully. Here was another shock—to think of Jerry as no longer a boy, but as a man old enough to consider mar-

rying. "You can't get married. Who'd marry you, the 'goose woman's son?" she inquired.

"That's what I'm getting at. I don't propose to be known as the 'goose woman's son. I propose to take you out of this if you'll let me. I propose to have you come and live with us and leave all this behind, if—"

"Then you've picked out the girl?"

Gerald nodded. He flushed, and his sensitive, eager face was slowly illuminated, glorified by an expression his mother had never seen it wear. It was an expression, by the way that caused the years to roll back and remembrance to smite her. He was, for the moment, the living image of his father.

(CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE)

Stork Derby Mothers Sign Pact To Share

Toronto—With \$500,000 at stake, there is at least one mother in this city who is fervently praying that Mrs. Arthur Timleck does not have a multiple "blessed event"—twins, triplets, etc.—this month.

She is Mrs. Matthew Kenny, mother of thirteen in less than ten years and leader in Toronto's ten-year maternity marathon ending in October of this year and carrying as its prize money the Millar fortune.

The half million dollars were bequeathed in a will to the Toronto mother who gave birth to the largest number of babies in the ten years following the death of Charles Vance Miller, eccentric lawyer and sportsman, October 16, 1926.

As the leading contestants come into the stretch, Mrs. Timleck has borne ten children in the period and is tied with Mrs. Steffano Darrigo for third place. But—and that word daily looms larger—triplets would tie her for first place and a Dionne "act" would clinch the for tune for the Timlecks.

And while Mrs. Kenny is hoping against the multiple birth, there are three other leading contenders who are praying for Timleck triplets—or more.

They are Mrs. Darrigo, Mrs. Ambrose Harrison and Mrs. Gus Graziano, who, with Mrs. Timleck, have signed an agreement to share "on a sliding scale" the \$500,000 offered should any one of them be the winner.

The agreement guarantees all four contenders an annual income for the fifty children now constituting their families, if one of them should win the prize.

Confident her three-baby lead will be enough to cinch the fortune in October, Mrs. Kenny has refused to become a party to the agreement, declaring:

"I'll have my children and the half-million dollars, too."

If those European nations keep on standing on the brink of war, some one or more of them will get dizzy and fall in. Then there'll be war and carnage most terrific.

JAPANESE OIL
Made in U. S. A.
FOR HAIR AND SCALP
Different from Ordinary Hair Tonics
IT'S A SCALP MEDICINE!
60c & \$1. FEEL IT WORK! At All Druggists
Write for FREE Booklet "The Truth About The Hair." National Remedy Co., New York

FREE! about STOMACH TROUBLE
Explains the mysterious "stomach troubles" which are bringing untold misery. Sold on a money-back guarantee.
PRECISE INFORMATION
—for those suffering from STOMACH OR DIGESTIVE TROUBLE, ACID DYSPEPSIA, ULCERS, POOR DIGESTION, ACID DYSPEPSIA, SOUR STOMACH GASTRITIS, HEADACHE, CONSTIPATION, BAD BREATH, SLEEPLESSNESS OR HEADACHE, DUE TO EXCESS ACID.
Ask for a Free copy of "The Truth About Stomach Trouble."
CARTER & TROTTER, Inc.

FOR BETTER RADIATOR SERVICE USE
We clean flush and repair all makes of radiators.
We have received a shipment of new radiators & our prices are right.
We sell or trade. Call to see us before you buy.
EAST SPENCER MOTOR CO.
Phone 1198-J N. Long St.
EAST SPENCER