

# A CASE FOR 3 DETECTIVES

By LEO BRUCE

CHAPTER 36

"BUT, PICON," I began, scarcely able to wait until we were out of earshot of the cottage, "how did you know that you would get your information there, of all places?"

"Mon ami, are you really so short-sighted? Could you not see that it is the only house near a point from which one would notice that the flag on the tower was at half-mast?"

"Picon! You're a genius!" I exclaimed, and did not grumble at the long walk home.

"And now," said Picon, "for a little I must think, and then, perhaps, all is complete. Voyons. Amer Picon will not be so far behind, after all. There is light now. Oh yes, my friend, plenty of light. A little thought, and I see all. A most ingenious crime. A most ingenious crime."

"Well, I wish I could see anything at all. If this visit of Fellowes and Enid's means so much, what was Fellowes doing with that other pair this morning? Perhaps it was a murder by a sort of committee, Picon?" I suggested, conscious that my guesses were getting wilder and wilder, as the evidence grew more confused. "Perhaps they were all in it?"

M. Picon smiled. "No. I do not think they were all in it," he said.

"Then . . . but hang it all, Picon, I don't believe you've solved it after all. You may have discovered who had the best motives, but what none of you seem to think about is that room. It was bolted, I tell you, and I never moved from the door while Williams searched it. How are you going to explain that? You may have proved that Fellowes was lying when he said he never took Enid that afternoon, but how will that help you? You've got to explain a miracle."

"No, mon ami. The miracle would be if Madame Thurston lived, not that she is dead. This scheme was irresistible, and it seemed undiscoverable. But it was worked out without remembering Amer Picon—the great Amer Picon. For your police—pah! It would never have been discovered. But tonight you shall see. I will tell you all you want to know. Everything shall be made plain to you. I promise."

"If you do that you're a wonder. Do you know sometimes lately I have almost begun to agree with Williams, that there was something sinister, something occult?"

"Sinister, yes. But there was no magic here," said M. Picon, as we reached the outskirts of our own village.

M. Picon left me in the village, where he was staying, and I hurried on towards the house alone. It was dusk now and in the autumn breeze, which had risen with the evening, the trees cracked and swayed. I was thinking how pleasant it would be to warm my hands over a fire and drink some hot tea, when I noticed something in the road before me which at first seemed too shapeless for a human being, as though a sack of coals had become animated and was moving forward between the hedges. As I came nearer I recognized Mgr. Smith.

I had noticed that people who had not the advantage of a long acquaintance with him, often expressed a wholly superfluous pity for the little man who had the trick of appearing vague and ineffectual. So I was determined not to sympathize with him over



I could see that Mgr. Smith was smiling.

the fact that both Lord Simon and M. Picon had got ahead of him, lest I should find myself looking foolish when he revealed that he had solved the problem long ago. Besides, Dr. Tate, the local G. P., was with him, and addressed me at once. "I have been telling our friend here," he said, "of a rather curious legend connected with this village. I thought it might be rather in his line."

I could see that Mgr. Smith was smiling at that, but he made no reply and Dr. Tate continued. "The archaeologists call it the story of the Angel of Death," he said, "but I don't know how that name was first used. It seems that the story itself had been handed down from medieval times, when the house that is now called Tipton Farm House was the only habitation of any size about here, and must have been something like a small castle. It was in ruins for centuries, and rebuilt in Georgian times. If you go there any time you can see that some of the walls are three feet thick. What those walls could tell!"

"Why?" asked Mgr. Smith innocently. "Does their thickness mean that they are the kind of walls which have ears?"

Dr. Tate continued. "I forget the name of the family," he admitted, "but they were, of course, Catholics, and had all the faith of people of your religion in bogeys, and what not."

"Bogeys?" asked Mgr. Smith. "Well, you know the sort of thing."

"I'm afraid I don't," said Mgr. Smith.

"Well, hang it, do you believe in devils?" challenged Dr. Tate.

"Do you believe in germs?" retorted Mgr. Smith.

Dr. Tate decided to leave this treacherous ground. "At all events, the members of this family were superstitious. And the head of it, Sir Giles something or other, was the most superstitious of all. For years before he finally died, he claimed to have visions of the death that awaited him. It was no ordinary death. . . ."

"What is an ordinary death?" asked Mgr. Smith.

"Well—death from some illness . . . death in bed."

"I see. An ordinary death is one in which the deceased was attended by a doctor, perhaps?"

"Yes. No. I mean . . . well, whatever an ordinary death may be, the death visualized for himself by Sir Giles was very far from ordinary. He said he could see him coming—the Angel of Death himself. He came through the air on great black wings. He was clad in black from head to foot, and he held a sword in his hand."

"What was the sword for?" asked Mgr. Smith.

"To strike with."

"I see. I thought its use might be to perform an operation."

"Sir Giles saw this a number of times—always the same. The Angel of Death came winging through the air from a great distance, and came to await himself on the unfortunate Sir Giles."

"To avenge himself? What had Sir Giles done to him, then?" asked Mgr. Smith.

"He was a very loose-living old fellow. And these visions were a good deal a source of repentance. He seemed to think that the Angel of Death would strike him for his sins. Mind you, I'm only telling you the local story."

"I know. I hope it has a happy ending."

"At last, it seemed, the Angel of Death struck. The old man had been behaving outrageously, even according to the standards of those days. And he seemed to expect that he would suffer for it. He said that he had seen the black wings beating their way nearer several times. And at last one evening he went up into a tower of his castle alone, and did not reappear for some hours. The household grew anxious, and presently one of his sons went up to look for him. He found the old man lying in his own blood on the floor of the topmost room, not quite dead, but on the point of expiry."

(To Be Continued)

## WILL PLACE 5,830 JAP BEETLE TRAPS

100 To Be Placed in Henderson Under Present Plans of Inspector

Daily Dispatch Bureau, in the Sir Walter Hotel. Raleigh, Feb. 24.—Plans are now being made to place 5,830 traps for Japanese beetles—enemies of 200 plants—in 23 cities and towns in North Carolina this summer. C. H. Brannon, chief entomologist of the State Department of Agriculture, said today.

At the same time, the entomologist announced that Charlotte has been placed under the beetle quarantine, which means that no plant shipments can be made from the city without a special permit issued by the State Department of Agriculture. Other cities now under quarantine include: Winston-Salem, Greensboro, East Spencer, Salisbury, and Spencer.

Brannon said traps would be placed as follows: 100 in Washington, 15 in Asheville, 200 in Concord, 200 in New Bern, 200 in Fayetteville, 200 in Thomasville, 200 in Lexington, 800 in Durham, 400 in Rocky Mount, 800 in Gastonia, 15 in Oxford, 800 in High Point, 200 in Elizabeth City, 200 in Greenville, 100 in Hamlet, 100 in Reidsville, 100 in Henderson, 600 in Raleigh and 200 in Wilson. Traps will remain in the cities for 30 days.

"Cities now under quarantine will not be 'trapped' this year in view that the department has already obtained sufficient information in the respective areas to warrant quarantine procedure," Brannon added.

The traps—green buckets containing a chemical solution to attract the beetles—are not being scattered throughout the state as a control measure, but are being used to determine the abundance and spread of the insects," he explained. "When ten or more beetles are found in one vicinity it is highly probable that the section will be placed under quarantine."

C. J. Hansel is Japanese beetle inspector for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture which is cooperating with the federal government in the control program.

## Capital Gossip

BY HENRY AVERILL

Raleigh, Feb. 24.—Next week's Supreme Court calendar will be one of the shortest in recent history of the court, with only 11 appeals regularly due for oral argument and a twelfth cause specially set for hearing.

Of the dozen cases, ten are from the eighteenth district, one from the third and the specially set action from the eleventh.

The fact that only one case comes up from the third speaks volumes for the ability of Judge J. Paul Frizzelle, who presided over courts of that district during the 1937 Fall term.

The specially set case is the appeal of William Mosley, Forsyth Negro under sentence of death for killing an older Negro whom he accused of being intimate with his wife. This case came up for argument during the Fall term, but was sent back for a finding of fact as to the sentence, when some question of the jury's verdict arose during argument.

In the case of State vs. John C. Livingston, Jr., set for argument next week, it will be decided whether a superior court judge can accept a plea of guilty from a prisoner who is at the time of trial an inmate of the insane asylum.

Defendant's brief recites that Livingston was brought from the Morganton hospital for the insane to stand trial on a charge of breaking and entering; and that Judge Felix Alley accepted a plea of guilty from him and passed sentence of from seven to ten years in prison.

His counsel contends that the judge could not accept a guilty plea from an insane person, but was bound to enter a not guilty plea and give defendant a jury trial as to his sanity.

Major Arthur Fuik, commanding the State Highway Patrol, points out that one-third of all accidents which occurred in the State during January were within the limits of cities and incorporated towns—territory which is patrolled and policed by local authorities and not by his forces.

One of the State Grange's principal planks call for greater interest in and but in the opinion of State Grange appropriations for research work; of State Grange Master H. B. Caldwell all the research in the world is useless unless followed by an intensive campaign in educating farmers to the benefit of knowledge obtained.

1930—Charles Evans Hughes sworn in as Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court.

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