

# Unconfessed



## CHAPTER IX—Continued

It seemed ages before the return of that jury. They came at last, filing self-consciously across the stately hall.

The dining-room fell silent before their appearance, and even the turbulent hall was hushed as the foreman stepped forward and began reading from a paper. In a very formal voice he intoned, "We, the jury, find that the deceased, Nora Harriden, came to her death on the thirteenth of October, nineteen thirty-three, between eight and nine-thirty P. M. through shock and hemorrhage, caused by being hit on the head by a sharp instrument held in the hand of person or persons unknown."

That was all. No names. No recommendation of holding any one to the grand jury.

Then Donahy rose. The rustlings that had begun in the room ceased abruptly, so did the jubilation in my heart. For he said, "You have heard the finding of the coroner's jury. That jury is now dismissed. This case will remain in the hands of the inspector of police until further evidence warrants calling in the district attorney of Queen's county. Pending investigation no witnesses will be allowed, without permission to leave the premises."

## CHAPTER X

EVENTUALLY every one quieted down. The sharp outbreak of protests dropped to more considering undertones at that phrase, "without permission." I overheard the Watkins reminding each other that they had meant to stay till Monday, anyway, and presently Mrs. Crane's voice was audible to me, telling them that Dan was staying on, too, that he planned to take his wife's body to the cemetery on Monday morning. He wanted only the simplest ceremony at the grave. She said that she and the Kellers were going with him.

When the main hall had been cleared of all the outsiders the guests streamed out into it again. Behind us, in the dining room, swift-footed efficiency was setting out the paraphernalia of another buffet luncheon.

Every one reacted from the tensility; laughter kept breaking out, voices ran incautiously high, then, remembering, dropped to undertones that were still lively.

I never felt lonelier in my life. I wanted some one to talk to over with, and I hadn't anybody; Deck had vanished into the drawing room and Mitchell, too, was nowhere to be seen.

Then I heard Deck's voice, sharp as the crack of a whip. "Damn it all, Donahy, I told you myself that I can't never went through. . . . Am I to blame because the village telephone girl doesn't happen to remember that I asked for a New York number?"

I could see the back of Deck's head; he was confronting Donahy over that table of notes. I saw Letty Van Alstyn's brown head, tilted towards him, a little on one side. I saw Harriden standing behind her, caught a glimpse of his stony profile.

Donahy stared stolidly. "Bessie Amermann's got a very good memory, Mr. Deck. It seems queer to me that a man who goes away from a dinner table to put in a long distance call doesn't wait to get it—that he goes upstairs after a lost handkerchief."

I was watching Deck so closely that I saw Clancy the officer touch him, saying something, and Deck without looking around, drew out a cigarette case from his pocket, the soft brown leather one I had seen before, and passed it back. Then he said, "Come, Mr. Inspector, don't pretend you yourself never got tired waiting for a connection and went off after something else."

"Well—" mumbled Donahy.

"Well?" challenged Deck. "Are you going on with this indefinitely? I'm telling you that I've got to be back on the job tomorrow or my paper will want you fellows to say why."

I didn't notice what was happening until I saw the funny look on Clancy's face. He was holding the cigarette case in his hands and feeling it with slow, investigating fingers. Then he pushed up beside Deck in front of the table.

He was dumping out the contents of the case. I saw the cigarettes come out, one after the other, and then with another shake, something else came rolling out. Instantly the heads closed over it; I couldn't see what was there. I heard Donahy say, "By God," in an incredulous voice and Clancy, "Will you look at that?" then somebody

cried sharply, "It's the diamond!" and Harriden pushed forward. We were all pushing forward. Through the confusion Deck's voice came, sharp with anger. "I tell you I only picked the thing up again a few minutes ago—I left it about this morning."

I had reached Mitchell now. "Oh, that's true—don't you remember he asked you for a cigarette this morning?" I gasped. "Oh, do get in to them and tell them so!"

"Steady now," Mitchell was murmuring. He put his hand over mine as it gripped his arm.

Harriden's voice dominated the confusion. He stood over Deck like a madman; he looked as if it was all he could do to keep his hands off him.

"Nora's diamond!" he hurled at him. "The big pendant that was worth the lot. . . . So you hid it out, eh? You dirty thief! You dirty killer! By God, we've got you—we've got you now!"

And then Donahy, trying to make himself heard, "Mr. Harriden, please—"

There was no stopping Harriden. All the hatred that had been working in the man, all the festering suspicion seething in him since Elkins' report of Deck's threatening words came out now, like pent-up gall.

"You hound! You skunk! Chasing after my wife, making her life miserable with your importunities. Entreating her to be 'compassionate'—to take pity on your 'love-sick-soul!' Soul!" He spat out a vile word. "Begging to drown yourself in her eyes! . . . You'll be drowned in quicklime before I'm through with you!"

And Deck, very straight and stiff. "You're crazy, Harriden. A man can't resent insults from one in your condition."

"Your condition is what will worry you—when they put you in handcuffs and lead you to the death cell—when they drag you, whining and pulling, to the electric chair!"

And then Letty Van Alstyn fainted.

She dropped like a stone at Harriden's feet, and he stood there, his fury checked, looking blankly down at her. The faint did not last long; the women kneeling by her were still asking for more air, for water, for cushions, when I heard her voice saying, rather weakly, but with complete control, "How—silly! But I didn't eat—much breakfast. I've been feeling—faint."

She got up very quickly; I saw Harriden go to her side and say something; she gave him a quick upward glance, then moved away. As if he had forgotten Deck he went heavily after.

I stood there, shaken through and through. I turned to Mitchell but he had left me; he was standing beside the table picking up the abandoned cigarettes.

The inspector was saying, his voice unemotional again, "This will take some disproving, you know, Mr. Deck." And the words sent the quick thought to me that the only way to prove something else about some one else.

I thought of Anson. If that handkerchief I was sure had seen had been in Letty Van Alstyn's room!

Letty had fainted. Perhaps she hadn't realized, until that moment, the consequences of throwing that suspicion upon Deck.

Now, when she was still shaken, was the time to confront her with that handkerchief evidence. . . . If only Anson could be found. . . . She must have come out of hiding by now. . . .

I ran up the stairs; I took the left-hand branch, so as to pass along the main hall, looking for some maid to question.

The door into the prince's room was open and looking in, I saw the maid who did my own room, busied about it.

"Have you seen Anson yet?" I said breathlessly.

She stopped on her way to the closet with a pair of slippers in her hand.

"We haven't seen her, Miss Seton. Not since that time you were talking with her this morning."

I moved away, thinking I had better get hold of Mitchell. Then I heard the maid scream. I had never heard such blood-curdling shrieks in my life. Shriek after shriek. My legs stumbled under me as I ran back to her.

She was backing hysterically away from the closet, her apron over her head.

"What is it? What?"

She moaned, "Oh, in there—in there!" and began shrieking again. I dashed to the closet; the door was wide and the light from the

room fell into it. Fell upon a pair of shoes, limp, black, low-heeled shoes, lying on their sides out from under a man's heavy, fur-lined overcoat.

Anson was in the closet. Slumped in a little heap. She was cold to my touch.

I did not scream. It seemed to me as if I could never make any sound again, but I did, over my shoulder, to the people crowding now in back of me.

"She's dead," I got out huskily. "Anson's dead."

CHAPTER XI

ANSON was dead. . . . Choked to death and thrust behind one of the prince's overcoats. Her pretty face was dark and terrible in congestion. She was rigid in death. She had been dead five or six hours they said.

The police were already with us; very soon the medical examiner made his appearance, together with Doctor Olliphant.

A dazed horror hung over the house. Anson—dead. The second murder. The thing was inexplicable.

"There's a maniac hiding in this house!" the princess declared in excitement. "I have felt it! Ecco—Miss Seton heard him in the night—in her room! A miracle she was not murdered in her very bed!"

It was the first expression of belief in my story I had heard from the haughty princess.

One of the strangest, most puzzling things about it to me was that out of Anson's stiff, clenched hand the medical examiner had pried a bright, brown crescent, set with glittering stones.

Letty Van Alstyn's hair ornament. The broken thing she had thrown away and permitted Anson to carry off—and then demanded back from her.

It didn't make sense. She couldn't have been murdered for its possession, or the murderer would have taken it away. And why had she got it back from Miss Van Alstyn?

We were a dreadfully shaken group of people.

With drawn revolvers the police tramped through room after room, peering behind doors, beneath beds, investigating the basement, the storerooms, the laundries, the wine

cellar. And there was not a trace of an invader to be found in that great house. There was not a clue except the brown crescent, and not a mark on the closet door except the prints of the maid who found the body. No one had seen Anson alive since the time that I had talked with her in the hall.

Donahy had us herded all together again in the drawing room, and he barked his questions at us with the manner of a thoroughly belligerent and bewildered man.

"And just what time was that, Miss Seton?" he snapped.

I hurried to give an approximation of the time. He summed up. "Well, you'd say it was a little before nine when you saw her? And you were the last person that saw her alive."

"I think the Prince Rancini was the last person," I said quickly, remembering. "She left me to go back to his room."

Donahy shot one of his gimlet glances up at Rancini. "How about that, prince?"

The prince was most self-possessed, most affable in his reply. "Miss Seton is mistaken—I left before the poor girl re-entered. I passed through the apartment of my wife and when I came out they were still talking in the hall."

"How about that, Miss Seton? He says you were still talking together when he left the premises."

"Well, I didn't see him," was all I could say.

"They were very busy talking," said the prince with satisfaction.

Donahy looked curiously at me. "What were you talking about?"

"I was waiting to ask her about whether she had seen any handkerchief drying on Friday evening. I had noticed that she didn't volunteer things directly unless she was asked, and I hadn't heard that asked."

"Couldn't you wait for the inquest?"

"After all the things said about me here I think I had a right to investigate as much as I could to find the real murderer!"

"All right, all right. You were waiting to investigate. Then what were her exact words that passed between you?"

I don't know why his overbearing manner should have been so infuriating, but my nerves crisped and I said a good deal more than I had meant to say in public.

"I was waiting to ask her about the handkerchief. She came out of the room, smoothing down her hair. She said, 'Those foreigners!' and then, 'He can keep his hands off me.'"

Slowly the inspector's gaze shifted towards Rancini.

"Been making passes at her, prince?"

Rancini smiled boldly back. "A pretty maid—" He shrugged.

"Anything else?" said Donahy shortly to me.

"I asked her why she didn't complain to the princess, and she said that the maid was always wrong. Then she said she'd have to go back for the towels she had forgotten. I asked her to wait, and we had the talk about the handkerchief."

"What'd she tell you?"

"Not a thing. But I had the very definite impression that she had something on her mind. She said she'd tell all she knew downstairs at the inquest, but she didn't like to make trouble—any one might have washed out a handkerchief. Then she went back into the room. And I don't think she thought that Prince Rancini had come out of it while we were talking." I fung out, "for she looked awfully bothered at having to go in again."

My eyes encountered Donahy's cynically thoughtful face. I wondered if he was thinking the same thing as I was. Suppose Rancini had been in the room when Anson returned—suppose he had grabbed her and she had started to scream? In his anger and panic he might have choked her and choked harder than he meant. He was a big fellow.

But ticking away, deep down in my mind, was the insistent thought that Anson had known something. Something about a handkerchief drying on a radiator. Something that was silenced now forever.

The prince had muttered, half angry, half soothing, "That is nonsense! There was nothing. . . ."

"All right, prince," Donahy agreed. "The girl goes back to your room but you aren't there—that's your story, and you stick to it. But now sometime after that, any time in the next hour or so, somebody in that room got hold of her and choked her to death. Now where was everybody for that next hour?"

It was hard to discover where every one had been during that hour for they had moved about so much. Rancini said he had gone downstairs for a time, then up to the Kellers' sitting-room on the second floor where he and his wife had waited with the Kellers and Mrs. Crane for the summons to the inquest. The only ones who declared they had stayed definitely in their own rooms during the entire time were Alan Deck, Harriden and myself.

Harriden stated he had been either in his own room or in his wife's room the entire morning, and that he had heard no disturbance of any kind in the Rancini apartment.

"And if I had, I wouldn't have cared!" Deck said he had been in his room, but that he had no proof of it. I could offer no proof, either, that I had stayed in my room, after the time the maid had gone to deliver my two notes.

I had a bad time over those notes. The one to Mitchell was easily explained, but when I admitted that I had written to Alan Deck asking him to come to see me I saw a gleam in Donahy's eyes.

"Well, now, Miss Seton, why did you want to see him?"

"It was pretty lonely, waiting for that inquest. And since Mr. Harriden had linked us in his accusations, I felt we had a lot to talk over."

Then he said to Deck, "You didn't come up this morning, though?"

"Didn't get the letter till too late. The maid had left it for me on the table, and I didn't see it in time."

"Left it lying—I thought you were in your room all that time?" Deck hesitated. Then he said lightly, "Practically all. There were a few minutes when I popped into Mitchell's room, next mine, to get some cigarettes—you may remember my case was mislaid. And I hadn't any supplies left. I waited a bit for Mitchell, then came back."

So it all went on. There was nothing else brought out that seemed to matter. At the last the inspector concentrated on the subject of Deck's cigarette case, when he thought he had lost it, when he first found it again—in the hall, Deck said, on one of the tables, he couldn't remember exactly where—and then, very suddenly, as if his mind were making itself up, Donahy told the rest of us we were excused and retained Deck for a more private investigation.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Your Pajamas Are Indian

When we go to bed in pajamas, we are wearing the sort of clothing that is worn as ordinary daily dress by vast numbers of the natives of India. "Pejama" is the name in that country, and long ago British people in India found that this native style of clothing was best for night wear in hot climates. So they started to wear "pejamas," and when they came home to England they introduced the sleeping suits here, with the name slightly altered.—Pearson's Weekly.



The Prince Was Most Self-Possessed.

## People Demand Real Security

### Active Interest of Religious Bodies Seen as Solution of Our Troubles

By EARL GODWIN

WASHINGTON.—Beneath the uproar of a political campaign the great thing the people want is security. This craving is the reason for the growing support for old age pensions, farm loan betterments and well-managed relief. It is the reason for the appearance of a deeply religious feeling on the part of millions of devoted American church folks that it is high time to let a little of the kingdom of heaven into the affairs of state.

Security in old age is so greatly to be desired that four million people are still supporting the Townsend old age plan, despite exposures of its unworkable premises. The Townsend people gain the first page, but as my friend Congressman Maury Maverick of Texas says, "You can't eat the front page." National security can come only by well laid foundations, such as that now guaranteed in the social security law which starts off slowly providing now at least \$30 monthly for 600,000 old folks in 32 states. More people in more states will get aboard in time; more money is surely to be provided in time; but it will be real money, not the inflated and useless money of the Townsend plan.

These things run through the mass mind of America along with the rumblings of discontent over relief; and no one is more discontented over relief than Roosevelt, whose all embracing plan includes a nation of people working in an economic plan where federal relief is unnecessary. Meantime I am going to be bold enough to say that the real solution of our troubles begins to appear in the active interests of many religious bodies. Man-made economies, based on too great a love of business and not enough love of the individual, may never work again. At the same time the simple and strong tenets of the sermon on the mount and the Golden Rule are coming more and more to the front. These precepts contain the depths of wisdom and are at the bottom of the liberal and progressive policies. They were founded with creation at a time when corporations were yet to be devised.

Significant, therefore, is the decision of the Church of Latter Day Saints to take care of its own 80,000 people on relief, going back to the Old Testament practice of tithing on the part of the more fortunate members. This is a good example of taking care of the unfortunate on the basis of genuine love for one's neighbor. It takes away the professional charity worker, than whom there is no greater blight. Those who deal in the depths of religious philosophy are convinced that a return to first principles is the one way out of chaos. I think Roosevelt is basing his statecraft on these principles.

FACTS ABOUT NRA

The Dupont boys and the Liberty league had a grand celebration the other day on the anniversary of the death of NRA, which went down under a court opinion. To harmonize with their views the Wall Street Journal's first page carried a pontifical announcement by some mannikin of industry proclaiming that industry had kept the faith and that without NRA everything was lovely in industry; that wages are high and hours short and everybody satisfied. The impression the Big Business boys would like to generate is that NRA was a crazy socialist bit of bunk; that nothing but ill came of it; and that the only reason we are progressing at all is because NRA and the Blue Eagle are no more.

The facts are that working hours have increased while in many instances wage cutting has been apace, particularly among industries with rates at so much per hour. One thing that NRA fostered was the five-day week in industry which put many more men to work. That has practically disappeared. Child labor has increased whereas NRA was certainly keeping the kids out of factories and giving the jobs to men. The family budget of industrial employees had more money for food and clothes; and that boosted the farmers' income. Now the Big Boys of Industry point to increased production and better profits and all that—but they apparently are taking it out of the hides of their employees.

I know department stores where the girls are working longer for less money. . . . And purchasing power is lagging behind.

NRA helped smooth out labor troubles; and on the day Liberty leaguers were celebrating the death of NRA there were 50,000 men on strike in this country, whereas their disputes could have been settled under the NRA codes.

## STOPS RELIEF FOR CITIES

Not only individuals went broke in the post war depression; our

chief mendicants were cities and other minor governmental units, about two thousand of them. Tattered and ragged in a financial sense was the proud city of Detroit; and it was because of Detroit's plight that Senator Couzens of that city helped put through the law giving these busted communities a chance to recoup themselves by a sort of bankruptcy process. It was a practical scheme to let the busted towns scale down their bonded debts, borrow some money from the Reconstruction Finance corporation and thus keep the creditors from taking the municipal shirts right off the cities' backs. Congress was doing for large aggregations of individuals in cities just what it was doing for the single individual who was in trouble with the mortgage holder.

But in the case of one district down in Texas a small group of bondholders kicked; they wanted all or nothing and went to court and eventually the Supreme court knocked out this law in a highly legalistic and extremely unrealistic opinion. It is an opinion that stops about 2,000 cities from getting the financial relief they should get (although in some instances their financial condition has improved). It was a decision in which five judges voted the law was unconstitutional and four believed it was O. K.; and strange to say, Chief Justice Hughes voted with the minority.

The majority of conservatives based their opinion on something that Chief Justice Chase said nearly a hundred years ago. The old dead hand of pre-Civil war states' rights dictated this opinion through the legalistic minds of the five conservatives on a court of nine. Yet the states themselves wanted this law for the benefit of their poverty stricken cities; just as the states want to waive any and all state rights if rich old Uncle Sam will take care of the poor and jobless men and women where the states can't. But states' rights are greater than the solution of any national problem in the eyes of the court's majority. And so we are once again tied to what some one said a hundred years ago. . . . It is much like China.

CHILD LABOR AMENDMENT

Mention of child labor reminds me there is considerable talk about a drive to put over the constitutional amendment against child labor. Twenty-four states have ratified the amendment; twenty-two have rejected it. Those which have rejected it are permitted to change their action to ratification but those ratifying must stick to their decision. There is a strong tide against a child labor amendment on the part of the rural districts. Cities and industrial centers, where child labor abuses are bad, strongly support child labor prohibitions and they are the spots whence come the present demand for an end to the abuses.

Farmers' representatives here say that farmers look to their children for help at planting and harvest times; and they feel that while the government is seeking to wipe out real abuses that such legislation might also prohibit a farm boy and girl from doing the necessary chores.

This child labor amendment may become a political issue. The younger Americans who have been suffering under the depression and who are taking an interest in government are all for this limitation on youngsters going into industry while the old folks are thrown out of jobs. If the matter comes to a vote you would find about 70 per cent of Democrats for it; about half the Republicans, most all of labor and only a small section of the votes in the farm belt.

## THEY DO NOT PAY

Now is the time of year when the European governments should pay this government an installment on their war debt; but they will let it go without even an apology. They owe, all told, \$13,670,087,391; and they are now over a billion dollars behind in their half-yearly installments to pay off this huge debt. Finland, which owes a small amount, pays regularly at the rate of \$167,000 every six months; and that's the only money Uncle Sam is getting back for the billions loaned for war purposes. If Europe would pay, our taxes would be much lower.

Officials here keep a straight face about these debts and refuse to discuss them; but privately they admit they never expect to see Europe pay a nickel—outside of Finland, France, Germany, England and Italy are now using money they owe us—and they are using it to build up new war machines; more armies, more navies and new devices to wipe each other out by the cityful in the next European war.

Of course Europe needs more money; needs it from us and can't get more credit while she owes us anything. That is fixed by the Johnson law. So Europe now and then makes guarded suggestions hinting a full payment to us—but that would merely be like paying off a debt of five dollars in order to be able to borrow about twenty.

However, I don't look to any further financial dealings with Europe in any event; our national spirit now is against monkeying with a European war in any way—and certainly with our present neutral feeling we are not going to countenance the financing of another war over there.

## News Oddities

A recent survey of some 8,000 dahila names indicates that a man's chance of having a new flower named after him is about half as good as a woman's. And a woman is about six times more likely to be so honored if she is married.

If a meager dozen of plants ceased to grow in America, our commercial beekeepers would have to go out of business. Most flowers yield little or no nectar, from which bees make honey. About three fourths of the supply is furnished by the clovers.

There are 1,200 natural lakes in the state of Nebraska.

Food as well as drink for crops now flows in some irrigation ditches in southern California. A little ammonia gas is mixed with the water, and extensive tests have shown that plants thrive better on this liquid diet than on solid fertilizer.

Recent tests have shown that flies are attracted by light colors, especially white and cream. They have no real color sense, but a luminous surface suggests the brightness and warmth which they seek.

More than 30,000,000 tin cans are used in the United States each year. Farm crops in every can.

There is no truth in the old belief that cucumbers contain a poisonous juice which can be counteracted by soaking them in salt water. The soaking merely wilts and toughens them.

Soviet Russia is reported to have more than 1,000 scientists working on problems of plant improvement.

"Some like it hot, some like it cold," the old nursery rhyme, seems to hold for plants as well as for humans. In Yellowstone park plants have been found growing in the water of hot springs just 27 degrees below the boiling point; and in the polar regions other plants grow in water at freezing temperatures.

There is no foundation for the notion that sour cream contains more butterfat than sweet cream. The fact is that only butter of inferior quality can be made from it.—Country Home Magazine.

Romans Knew

Near Mikulov, in Czechoslovakia, a two-thousand-year-old Roman camp has been found, with evidence that the Romans had a system of central heating. The finds reveal that heat was circulated through hollow spaces in the walls.

Black-Draught's Reputation

The confidence people have in Black-Draught, built up from satisfactory use so many years, is shown in its being handed on from one generation to another. It must be good to have such a strong following.

"We have used Black-Draught for twenty years," writes Mr. Fred Richardson, of Harrison, Okla. "My mother has used it for fifty years. It is the best medicine I know anything about. I take it for sour stomach and constipation, or when I feel sluggish and bad. Black-Draught is splendid to regulate the bowels, cleansing them of waste matter, ridding them of constipation. I expect to use it twenty-five years more if I live and it gives satisfaction as it has always given."

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