

Unconfessed



CHAPTER XI—Continued

Even Mitchell didn't sit in on that. He walked out beside me, looking very grave.

"Tea, Leila?"

They were serving tea. The October afternoon had darkened swiftly; I saw the butlers drawing the curtains and lighting the lamps. It seemed strange to me that one of those butlers should be Elkins. Elkins, his face drawn, going about his tasks so unobtrusively. No time out for his private grief.

In a few moments he was serving tea.

Mitchell and I took it in silence; he was preoccupied, and I knew I felt inexpressibly forlorn. Oh, if I had only known what to say that morning to win the girl's confidence! I was haunted by the lost opportunity, by the vision of Anson as I had first seen her down the hall, so pretty in her black and white, her arms laden with those gay colored towels. I thought crazily, "Colors for each room, each room of death," for it was to the rose room and to the orchid room that death had come, and then something in my mind brought me up short.

If I could find out—if I were not too late—

I turned what must have been a very pale and excited face on the lawyer beside me. "Oh, wait a moment!" I said incoherently. "I want to find out something—"

I literally ran towards the stairs.

Ten minutes later I was in my room, feeling as stunned and bewildered as if I had just run, racing, full tilt against a wall. The thing that I had found out in those last ten minutes, the thing that my flash of inspiration had led me to, simply did not fit in. Sheer accident must have intervened.

Another maid . . .

I felt as if I were sinking in one of those morasses where everything you lay hold on slips out from under your clutching fingers.

The death of Anson had so filled my mind that I had been forgetting the menace of all that had gone before, but now it repossessed me very completely. I was not so frightened for myself as I ought to have been; I knew my own innocence so well that I was naively sure I could make it clear, but my forebodings deepened when I thought of Deck, high strung, defiant, confronting Donahay's hard, slow-focusing distrust, and Harriiden's outspoken hate.

I wondered if they had decided to arrest him. The finding of that diamond must have seemed to them conclusive. They might have arrested him at once, I thought, but for the finding of Anson's body. That death had bewildered and distracted them for a time, but now they must be all the keener for some decisive action.

I could see Deck held up before the public as an unscrupulous spendthrift making love to a rich woman, trying to trade on her affections, drunkenly threatening her when she refused some sum, then murdering her for the possession of the big diamond that might, more easily, escape a search.

It all fitted together. Now that the diamond was found Harriiden must be surer than ever that his suspicions had been right . . . He would make everybody else sure.

I was glad I had spoken to Donahay about Rancini and Anson. Perhaps I had roused enough suspicion in Donahay's mind to delay his action against Deck. If only my clue had not failed me—if only I had found what I expected to find . . . Well, I hadn't. All right then, I thought determinedly, I'd see what sort of case I could build up, anyway.

Nora Harriiden had been quarreling with a man in her room about seven-thirty. Rancini might have been the man for all his wife's testimony that he had been in his own room . . . Later, after Harriiden had gone down, he had stepped into Nora's room again. Nora had been stabbed. Rancini had a cane, with a stabbing knife concealed in one end. He had wiped it off with a handkerchief—

Not his own. His own did not match that blood-stained one. He had picked up one of Dan's to wipe off the blood. He had locked Nora in the closet, fled back to his room, washed out the handkerchief and spread it on the radiator to dry. Then, seized with the thought of making the murder appear a suicide, he had slipped back again, thrust her out the window, after stuffing the diamonds in his pocket, and hurried down to dinner.

During the search for Mrs. Harriiden, Anson had happened to notice the drying handkerchief. Per-

later, and stuffed it in his pocket with the diamonds. That night, he had torn up the initials and stolen up with the diamonds to my room.

He had chosen me, I thought, because if he were discovered there his fertile imagination would conceive the idea of saying that it was a rendezvous. If I, alone, discovered him, he would try to make love to me . . . It would be just what he would think of . . . As for the big diamond, he had hidden that, but after Anson's death—and my suspicion insisted that he had killed her—he had realized the danger he was in, with that body in his closet, and so he had hurried to get rid of the pendant and at the same time to throw more of the suspicion upon Deck.

Some things I could not explain to myself. Why had Letty Van Alstyne fainted at Harriiden's dreadful words? If she were guilty, then I could credit her with a moment's fainting weakness as she saw the fate she was bringing upon an innocent man, but if she were not guilty, if she had no reason to know Deck innocent—

I could hardly believe, after Mitchell's words about her, that she would faint out of sheer compassion.

And what about that crescent? Why had she wanted it back from Anson? And how had Anson come to have it again in her hand?

But these did not seem to me the essential questions. The thing was to establish my suspicions of Rancini.

A knock came on my door. One of the butlers, Graft, it was, stood there with a note on the house note-paper.

I came back into my room, pressed on the lights and tore open the stiff paper. Scrawled across the sheet was a single line, written in Italian!

"Please be in the picture gallery in ten minutes."

Some of those minutes I spent in brightening up that scared looking girl I saw in the glass. "You're not afraid," I told her. "He isn't going to choke you to death."

Before I left the room I wrote in English, below that scrawl on the letter, "I have gone to the gallery to meet Rancini," and signed my name with the time. Then I went to the picture gallery.

CHAPTER XII

DARKNESS and emptiness greeted me; the curtains hung closed against the light, their heavy folds forming black oblongs along the shadowy reaches of the walls. The darkness played on my nerves, and I reached hastily for the electric switch.

The opening of a door at the far end of the gallery made me straighten and whirl about and started my heart to hammering. I told myself to be wise and wary . . . I told myself that this was my chance to learn something. It was not Rancini who came in that door. It was Alan Deck. He was the apparition of the first night I had seen him there, his handsome face marked with tormented bitterness.

Impulsively I started toward him; we met in the middle of that vast room. He murmured, a wry smile on his lips, "I was afraid you might not come in answer to my note." I stammered my surprise. "Oh, did you—did you send that note?" "Who else?"

"But—in Italian?" "Did you think it was Rancini?" he grinned. "I wrote in Italian because I knew you knew it, and I didn't want the servants to read it . . . However, that police fellow tagged me. He's just outside."

I said in a low tone, "Well, he knows we are here together. That can't be helped . . . But he can't hear what we say if we stay away from that door."

So we began to walk up and down that huge gallery.

I expect it isn't very helpful for you to be seen with me—but I had to see you somehow.

"They've linked us so in suspicion that it would be only natural for us to talk things over," I said stoutly.

"Not that the suspicion can do you any real harm," he declared. "They can't do anything to you simply because the diamonds were found pinned in your dress. They'll have to believe your story. The publicity may be deceedingly annoying for you, but that's all."

I hoped he was right.

"They may end by proving that I donned them there!" His laugh was ragged. He groaned out, "It's this circumstantial stuff that gets me."

son seeing me outside Nora's door—coming out of it, as a matter of fact, but she can't tell that now—then the diamond hidden in my cigarette case, and now Anson's being choked off, in an empty room, while I was conveniently at hand, around the corner. God, I almost believe in my guilt, myself!"

"But who did it?" I demanded desperately.

"How do I know? I don't give a damn who killed either of them," he said, his voice roughening. "Just so Harriiden stops riding me. . . . He came downstairs again when I was with Donahay. . . . Those letters have driven him crazy."

"Letters?"

"My letters," he said with indescribable bitterness. "The fool love letters that I wrote—oh, months and months ago. The letters that she threatened to show him."

I was stupid with surprise. "To show him—? Why—what for—?"

"She wanted to play hell with me! That was what for." He remembered to lower his voice to a hard undertone. "To make me marry her. To make Dan divorce her. I was through, but she wasn't going to let me off."

Well, I knew then. I had always known, but I had been fully trying to hold truth away from me, to imagine a hopeless, romantic infatuation. . . . But it was a curious sort of shock that he had been "through."

In a more guarded voice he went on. "She'd made a scene that afternoon—what was that Elkins overheard. Swore she'd get a divorce and make me marry her. Said Dan would divorce her like a shot if he found out, and she was going to tell him. I told her I'd give her the life, and she said she'd show my letters, and that was the first time I knew she hadn't burned them, as she had said."

"She showed them to him all right," Deck muttered. "He was quoting from them downstairs when

from using it. He'd hate the world to know I chucked his wife."

"I like him for that."

Something in my tone must have stung him, for he said quickly, "Don't think any worse of me than you have to. I saw him first as a jealous brute and she as a lovely martyr. I thought we were entitled to our love. . . . I didn't know her."

He went on talking in his tense undertone, the pent-up emotion seething out in him. "I was mad with worry that first night I met you here. I'd come up to try and cool off—to plan a way out . . . I was wondering how to get hold of those letters. . . . Wondering if I could play a game with her. . . . Then I saw you and I thought, 'Damn it, there's a girl that's real—a girl I want to know,' and I knew if I made a move to you that Nora would rip the roof off. I felt tied hand and foot. That made me hotter than ever."

"But you asked me to go up to her—"

"I know. There was something about you—" He broke off and added, "It would have been all right—coming with that message. And I was desperate."

He broke out now, "If Dan thought that letter would send me to the electric chair, he'd sink his pride and use it. He'd show me up, first as the seducer of his wife, then as the abandoner. If that last letter got to a jury I wouldn't have a Chinaman's chance."

He turned on me his bitter, desperate eyes. "I must get those letters. That's my only way. . . . He can't be carrying them about with him, they're too bulky. They must be somewhere in the room."

I suggested that they were probably still in the hiding place in the case.

"That's right. . . . Look here—can you think of any way of getting hold of them for me?" He stopped short, gripping hold of my arm. "The funeral is tomorrow—he'll leave in the morning and take all the stuff with him. My only chance is now. . . . Do you think you could work on your maid?"

"To do what? To steal them?"

"I'd pay anything I could."

I knew it was folly to imagine bribing that sensible maid of mine. . . . But there must be some way. I could see that his very life might depend upon getting hold of them.

I said again that the thing to do was to find out who really had done it, then the letter wouldn't matter.

At the look in my face he flung out, not unreasonably, "How can I find out—overnight?" And then, "I don't give a damn who did it, I tell you, so I get out from under. Once I've got that letter—I've got to get that letter! If I thought I could knock him out and get away—"

CHAPTER XIII

IT WAS a thoroughly shaken Leila Seton who went back to her room, to the tray of dinner waiting on a little table drawn close to her rose cushioned chair. The soup had chilled, the food cooled, but the coffee in the thermos pot was hot, and I drank it gratefully. My mind was just a sounding board for the words and phrases of that past hour.

"I've flung myself into your hands. . . . I thought her Aphrodite herself. . . . I was sick of her. . . . I don't give a damn who killed either of them. . . . I told her I'd give her the life. . . . It was more pique than passion. . . . To play hell with me. . . ."

And I thought that Nora Harriiden, dead, had continued to play hell very thoroughly with the living man.

I wanted to see Monty Mitchell. He, at any rate, was concerned with the problem of finding the real killer, and I hoped he had made some discoveries that would bolster my suspicions against Rancini. Down the stairs I started, pausing on the second floor, to glance along the main hall to that closed door behind which Nora Harriiden lay. Tomorrow the door would open and her body would be carried to its last resting place. Harriiden had decided against having it moved to their home. He wanted no ceremony except at the grave. There she would be left, under her mound of costly flowers. Flies for Nora Harriiden.

Flies, too, for Sonya Anson. There would be an inquest for her tomorrow, and afterwards a simple funeral service in some undertaker's chapel, probably. Fewer flowers on her grave—fewer headlines in the press. Elkins for chief mourner.

I went on downstairs. The house there was a blaze of lights. In a few minutes Monty Mitchell came down.

The very sight of him was reassuring; he looked so competent, so unintimidated.

"I wanted to see you," I confessed. "I've been hoping that you'd found out something."

He put his hand through my arm, leading me over to the deep divan where we had first talked it over.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Westminster Abbey's Flag
In 1931 Westminster Abbey adopted its own flag as the official ensign of the dean. It incorporates the red and white roses of the Tudors, the cross and five gold martlets of St. Edward the Confessor, and the royal arms.

Hate Campaign Is Spreading

Vengeful Feeling Prevails in High Social Circles; Slander First Lady

By EARL GODWIN

WASHINGTON.—I am going to tell you this week of a single episode of the spreading campaign to hate Roosevelt out of office.

This hatred campaign is something new in American politics. It appears to me to be the royalist type of distrust of an administration which tries to slice a little off the top and hand it out on the bottom—to do something for the less fortunate. I find this hatred being breathed with a venomous and vengeful feeling in the high social circles; among the Duponts of the munitions trust and their friends this anti-Roosevelt hatred is as thick as a London fog.

The bitterest of these haters have reached the low point where they do not hesitate to slander Mrs. Roosevelt, first lady of the land, who has been active in the matter of pointing out bad social conditions and suggesting a way to improve them. But there is a certain area of high social activity in which it is looked upon as some sort of a crime to make wide plans for underprivileged folks—if it costs anything to the country. The Liberty league and all of its allies feel that way. Personally, the Duponts and all their kind are fine, pleasant people who do a great deal of charity work; who make life pleasant and profitable for many others in a grand seigniorial manner. As long as they can control the thing they are strong for doing something for the underdog—but they've got to boss the job. Just let a beneficent government take over the idea of improving the entire national family and then these royalists exhibit the symptoms of having swallowed the season's output of Mexican jumping-beans.

The episode of which I speak of was the startling discourtesy offered Mrs. Roosevelt by Senator Daniel Hastings of Delaware, who has been a great Dupont spokesman and who is about to retire from public life. I cannot understand how the senate permitted Hastings' words to go without some sharp action. Time was when such things would have been met with something more effective than words.

Hastings, unmindful of the miseries of women in America under the depression, unleashed that bitter tongue of his in ridicule of relief money spent for "women's projects." These are something to uplift women; give them work to do and restore their morale. Hastings' argument against these projects was worthy of the madcap Zion-check. He spoke slightly of Mrs. Roosevelt in her efforts to improve the social conditions of America; then he argued that a woman's project must be something that comes from a woman's mind—that if it did not, it came from her husband's mind first—and that in such a case it should not be within the law. If the woman happened to be Mrs. Roosevelt, belittled Mr. Hastings, it would be a dangerous socialistic experiment and ought to be thrown out. The whole relief program of the administration is unconstitutional, he roared, and should be discarded. If it is constitutional, he said, "We ought to tear up the Constitution."

There you have it. Hastings adequately expresses the feeling of the Bourbons of the Liberty league and the Anti-Roosevelt hatred cult. If we can't do it our way let's destroy the government. Never, since the days of the rule or ruin dynasty of pre-revolutionary France has there been a more telling expression of the aristocracy of big business.

"THE QUODDY" PROJECT

Passamaquoddy dam, a long, mouth-filling phrase which is shortened into the blunt term "Quoddy," stands, an incomplete project in the far northeast corner of the United States of America, while politicians and engineers engage in an ear-splitting contest of noise to see who can yell the loudest in an effort either to stop or continue this dam—depending upon whether or hot they are on the side of the power trust. Down in the southeastern corner of the United States a similar loud-mouthed screeching is going on over the merits and demerits of the Florida ship canal—a proposed \$20,000,000 ship carrying ditch from the Atlantic to the gulf across Florida. In the Northwest the engineers are building on Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams which will, it is alleged, produce more power than the entire Northwest—an use in years to come; while the southwest corner is marked by the enormous Boulder dam which will turn that desolate green farms, ship water hither and you over an area of empire size. I have not mentioned the Tennessee valley project, which is another empire in itself, and for his week's letter I will try to clarify the situation sur-

rounding these northeast and southeast projects in Maine and Florida, which can have either important or tragic results. A great deal depends upon the right decision in the case of these two tremendous dams—for either one or both may be a nightmare or a vision of a much greater day.

"Quoddy" is the result of the determined effort of an engineer named Cooper, who says the tremendous rise and fall of the tides in the Bay of Fundy can be made to turn wheels that will generate enough power to fill the state of Maine and some of the rest of New England with new enterprises. These tides rush in and out of narrow gorges, and there is a 27-foot rise and fall; certainly enough power for great purposes if it can be harnessed. The problem lies in the engineering difficulties to be overcome. All sorts of things have to be considered. One is the fact that ordinary dams have to withstand pressure from one side, whereas the "Quoddy" dam would have to take it going and coming. Ebb and flood tides will hammer the dam ceaselessly. Then, there is a question of the action of salt water on a lot of the metal work and fine machinery, also the possible effect of freezing salt water in the long, cold northeasterly winters. There are engineers who say the thing just will not work—that power generated by these tides will be too expensive to be practicable.

Roosevelt, forward-looking, made relief projects out of both Quoddy and the Florida ship canal. To me, the idea that we can turn the action of the ocean's waves and tides into power is fascinating, and I believe it will be accomplished some time. However, there was so much fuss about it that Roosevelt put it up to congress, and that eccentric body turned down the long step ahead possible by the Quoddy enterprise, thus stopping the work. But congress OK'd the Florida ship canal. Meanwhile there is a large faction in Florida bitterly opposed to the canal, though everybody in Maine (excepting the power trust crowd and its friends whose motive is easily understandable) is for Quoddy.

The Florida anti-canal crowd says the salt water will kill the fruit and that there is every danger that the artesian well system of that state will be completely ruined by cutting through the rock.

WAR FOR FARM VOTE

There will be a desperate battle for the farm vote. In the glamorous presentation of the G. O. P. bid for support I fear that many farmers will lose sight of the facts; and one of the main facts is that the much-vaunted foreign market for American farm produce is still in the glimmering distance. It was ruined, devastated—knocked flat as a pancake by the Smoot-Hawley tariff.

The Democrats, I take it, will again proffer strong federal control of agricultural products, with benefit checks for complying farm owners; an artificial and temporary measure, but it seems to be the only present plan which guarantees anything to rural America.

That is all there is to it. By every test agriculture has come back and is still coming back. Gross farm income has increased from that low point in 1932 when farming was as flat as the prairies to more than eight billion dollars . . . It has stepped up more than five billions in four years. The farm real estate market improves all the time. This administration's friendly policies with respect to farm finance have helped a lot. The increase in farm commodity prices has stepped along with a reduction of interest rates on farm mortgage loans. Not only has the farm price of corn tripled since 1932, but interest rates on federal land bank loans are at all time low point. It is impossible in a brief space to review the whole work of the Farm Credit administration. It would take us into contact with 2,300,000 mortgaged farm homes . . . and three years ago half of them were in danger of foreclosure.

That was a desperate situation. Farmers were losing their homes, their farms, their morale. But in the main the country was saved from the debacle of millions of farm families working like peasants on land they no longer owned. In money and in figures the story is told by the fact that the Farm Credit administration received applications from half the mortgaged farms in the country, and as a result loaned two millions dollars to 750,000 farmers.

SPEAKERS WORK TOO HARD

The sudden death of Joseph W. Byrns of Tennessee, speaker of the house, is further evidence that speakers work too hard. The job is a man killer. Twelve speakers died—three recently—and Byrns was the only one to die during a session of congress.

Byrns made the speakership of the house of representatives a constructive party job. He had more to do than sit there and keep the house in order with a gavel. With his two party aides, Bankhead of Alabama, floor leader (elected speaker immediately after Byrns' death), and O'Connor of New York, rules committee chairman, Byrns drove through the administration's program in this session of congress, and it was no easy task with every other interest pulling and tugging in opposite directions. He worked night and day.

TEA TOWELS BRING GAYETY TO KITCHEN



PATTERN 5547

No "afternoons off" for this colored Mammy, for she must "wash the cups and saucers up, and put the clothes away." But you can take an afternoon off and embroider yourself a set of tea towels with these amusing Mammies, for the work goes very quickly, it's cross stitch, outline, running and single stitch. Her gay bandana and checkboard apron suggest themselves for the brightest floss you can find. A set's nice to donate when Fair time comes around.

In pattern 5547 you will find a transfer pattern of seven motifs—one for each day of the week—averaging 6 by 8 inches; material requirements and color suggestions; illustrations of all stitches needed.

Send 15 cents in coins or stamps (coins preferred) to The Sewing Circle, Household Arts Dept., 250 West Fourteenth St., New York, N. Y. Write plainly pattern number, your name and address.

105 Years' Difference in Ages of Bride and Groom

An Egyptian man of one hundred and thirty has recently married again—for the nineteenth time. His bride is twenty-five. His other wives are dead, but his 23 children objected to his marrying again because of the one hundred and five years between him and the girl.—London Answers.

Quick Relief For Eye Pain
By Exposure to Sun
and Dust
MURINE FOR YOUR EYES

Love Gives All
Love stops not to think how much must be given and what must be kept; it gives all.—H. W. Webb-Peplot.

STOP PAIN QUICK WITH CAPUDINE

Headache, neuralgic, and periodic pains and other nerve pains yield almost instantly to Capudine. This is because Capudine is liquid, and its ingredients are already dissolved—all ready to act. Capudine relieves pain by soothing the tense muscles and nerves. That is why it is so gentle and effective. It is approved by physicians and druggists. Capudine contains no opiates. At all drug stores; 60c, 30c, 10c sizes. (Adv.)

So We've Noticed
None of the pleasant episodes in life seem to be called "experience."

CARDUI

Cardui is a purely vegetable medicine for the relief of functional periodic pain, nervousness and weakness due to poor nourishment. "I have used Cardui and had good results from its use," writes Mrs. W. E. Barnett, of Taylors, S. C. "I suffered with cramping and headaches and would have a chilly feeling. Sometimes I would feel miserable and have pain more than a day, and I would be nervous. After taking six bottles of Cardui, I had less pain and was regulated. I feel much better." Of course, if Cardui does not seem to relieve your trouble, consult a physician.

Blemishes Made Her Old Looking

Face Clear Again with Cuticura Soap and Ointment

Here is a letter every skin sufferer should read. Its message is vital. "There were blemishes on my face, of external origin, and they made me look old and haggard. They were red, hard and large. They would hurt, and when I scratched them the skin would become irritated, and I would lie awake at night and start digging at my face. "But after using two cakes of Cuticura Soap and one tin of Cuticura Ointment my face was clear again." (Signed) Mrs. L. W. White, 2nd St., Florence, Pa., June 15, 1935. Physicians can understand your letters. The Cuticura formula proved their effectiveness over half a century. Remember, Cuticura Soap and Ointment are also for eczema, psoriasis, ringworm, burn, scalds and other external skin blemishes. All druggists.