

MURDER By An ARISTOCRAT

Mignon G. Eberhart

"Hilary— you and Bayard hadn't had any particular trouble about anything, had you?"

"No," he said explosively. "Good God, no! What do you mean, Adela?"

"I don't mean anything, Hilary. I only want to be sure you had had no trouble. You see, even if everyone does know you were not friendly, still, they can have nothing definite to say. No definite cause, I mean, for you—for you—"

"For me to have shot him, I suppose you mean, Adela," blurted Hilary disagreeably. Evelyn murmured warningly: "Now, Hilary—now, be careful," and Hilary went on, "Well, get this into your head, Adela. I didn't shoot him. I always hated him, and you know why. And he hated me. But I didn't shoot him."

"Look out, Hilary," said Adela coolly. "Your face is terribly red. Remember your blood pressure."

"Blood pressure, hell," said Hilary. "Do you think I'm going to sit here and let even you accuse me of murdering a man? There are limits, Adela—"

"Hilary!" said Evelyn sharply. "You are forgetting yourself. Adela's the best friend you've got, and you know it. And anyway— maybe there was a burglar. There are the diamonds, you know."

"The diamonds!" cried Hilary. "Yes, and where are they? That's another thing I don't understand about this. Dave says he knows nothing of them. They undoubtedly were gone from the safe when Adela opened it there right after the murder. Those diamonds are worth a lot. We've got to get hold of them."

"To my notion," said Evelyn bluntly, "the disappearance of the diamonds is the only hopeful aspect of the whole situation. I don't want to know what's happened to them. And the nurse was there and saw with her own eyes that they were actually gone. I think, like Adela, that it's worth the price."

"You women," said Hilary hopelessly, "are crazy. Sometimes I think I'm crazy too. You insist that there was a burglar and that he stole the diamonds and that you're glad of it. In the next breath you practically accuse me of killing Bayard, and then you—"

"Hilary!" It was Adela, her voice lower than usual and very quiet, and so stripped of its usual affectation that it seemed indecently bare and significant. "Hilary, what did you and Bayard talk of when you came here yesterday afternoon?"

"Why, I—that is, we—we talked of—I don't know exactly." He stopped, floundering, cleared his throat, and said, "Why do you want to know, Adela?"

"Because," said Adela slowly, "that's what people will want to know. Are you quite sure, Hilary, that you—" she paused, and it was very silent before she continued—"that you talked to him at all?"

I could hear him spring to his feet and his quick footsteps on the floor.

"What do you mean by that, Adela? I swear I didn't shoot him. I didn't kill him. I had no reason to kill him. You—you are driving me mad!" His voice was shaking with rage and a kind of fright.

"Are you sure," said Adela, "that you had no reason?"

"Adela, you are driving me out of my senses. You make it sound as if I'd sneaked into the house and shot him dead before he could even call for help or defend himself. And I didn't. I tell you, I didn't!" His voice had lifted as if he were approaching hysteria.

"Now then, Hilary, you

must learn to control yourself." It was Evelyn, speaking with the infuriating coolness of a long-married wife. "You'll have a stroke if you keep on like this. Look at your face there in the mirror. For heaven's sake, cool down a little. Adela hasn't accused you of anything. She only asked you to tell her what you talked about. That ought to be easy."

"What did he say over the phone to you, Adela?" asked Hilary.

"Scarcely a word," said Adela. "Just 'yes' and 'all right.' You didn't even speak to him, Evelyn, when you stopped for Hilary?"

"Not a word," said Evelyn steadily.

"Didn't he even hear you come to the door?"

"No," said Evelyn. "No. He didn't hear me. I saw Hilary had gone, so I didn't linger."

"Oh, Evelyn," cried Adela, suddenly losing her customary deliberation of manner and speaking with a sort of burst, "why don't you tell me the truth? There is something you and Hilary are keeping from me. I know it. I feel it. You must tell me. We can only save ourselves by knowing everything. If you saw anything—know anything—"

"Nothing, Adela. Nothing," said Evelyn. "You are nervous. You—"

"Nervous, nothing!" cried Adela with a sharp fury of which I shouldn't have believed her capable. "You treat me like an old woman. And it's my house. And my family. And I've got to know."

"Get her a drink of water, Evelyn," said Hilary. "Now—now, Adela—"

I lost the rest of his admonition. "Get her a drink of water." Evelyn would be at the bathroom door in another moment. A purely primitive terror gripped me. They had said I was a danger. They were implacable. What would they do to me if they discovered I had heard every damning word they'd said!

Then common sense returned, and I realized they couldn't do anything. And yet—couldn't they? There was Bayard.

My eyes were going frantically about the small room and discovering that a flea would have had difficulty hiding for long in the glittering expanse of porcelain and white walls, let alone a woman of not inconsiderable height and a weight that—well, never mind my weight. Even the shower was caged in shining glass. And the door began to open.

It opened several inches. I cannot describe my feeling as I watched it.

And in the very nick of time Hilary, from the bedroom, said:

"No, Evelyn, here's some sherry. That will be better. Here, Adela, drink this. You ought not to overtax your heart like that."

Evelyn moved away from the door; I could feel rather than hear her withdrawal. And the door, left to itself, swung gently and slowly to its original position. But my heart was pounding so heavily that for a moment or two I actually could not hear what they were saying in the next room.

"... all nervous and upset, and no wonder," Hilary was saying when I regained my senses. "We know damn well that somebody in the family killed him. And it's not a nice thing to know. Ours is not a big family. But all this talk's doing no good. We've got to arrange to get Dave away from here. Before the nurse gets onto things."

"What's your plan about the nurse?" asked Evelyn. "You do feel better, don't you, Adela?"

"What's your plan about the nurse?" asked Evelyn. "You do feel better, don't you, Adela?"

"I don't feel ill at all," said Adela crisply. "And I don't want Dave to leave just now. He's not well, and I think he's terribly depressed over Bayard's death. But about the nurse. I think I can manage her. You see, if I can prove to her that it must have been the burglar—as, of course, it was," she interpolated hurriedly—"that no one of the family killed him, then we'll be safe. No troublesome witness to bob up later against us. And I think I can."

"It won't be easy," said Hilary thoughtfully. "I wonder if Bayard told her anything before he died. Do you suppose he did? I wonder—" he paused and went on finally—"I wonder if she knows who shot him."

"I've wondered that, too," said Evelyn. "It seems to me she's got a sort of knowing look. You weren't too careful what you said at breakfast about the inquest."

"But we didn't mention him."

"I wasn't there," said Adela. "What was it?"

"Nothing at all," said Hilary in a blustering way, as if he had been called to account and felt guilty.

"Only enough to let her know that you were managing the inquest to suit yourself. The veriest child would have known you were trying to hide something. You and Mr. Dan. Where were you this morning, Adela? I thought you were asleep until I came up here after breakfast, and you had gone. Poor old Pansy looked like she'd lost her last friend."

"I had just gone for a little walk," said Adela blandly. "I needed some fresh air. I woke up feeling stuffy. What about Dave, now? I don't really like him to leave just now." "He's got to leave," said Hilary. "He'll give himself away."

"Hilary!" said Adela sharply. "You don't think Dave killed Bayard?"

There was a long silence. Then Hilary said with difficulty:

"No, Adela. No. But we all know he tried to kill him the other night. It wasn't his fault. Bayard dodged and the bullet caught him in the shoulder. Dave would have shot again and killed him then and there if you hadn't interfered. It's lucky you heard and got there in time to grab Dave's hand. Talk him out of it. I think Dave must have been out of his senses."

"But he didn't kill him that night," said Adela. She spoke with accentuated care and slowness, as if her mouth were stiff. "And yesterday, when Bayard was actually killed, Dave and Allen were together all afternoon. That proves it wasn't Dave, Hilary. That proves it. You dare not call your own brother a murderer. And I won't have him sent away."

There was a knock at the door, and without waiting for answer someone opened it.

"There are ways," Evelyn was saying. "People have been silenced—" when her voice broke off sharply. I could feel the sudden silence and restraint in the room beyond.

Then someone moved and Adela said with a sort of relief in her voice:

"Oh, it's you, Emmeline. What is it?"

"Some newspaper men from the city, ma'am. They want to take some pictures and ask you some questions."

"Send them away at once. Tell them I can't see them."

"Wait, Adela. You are making a mistake. We can't afford to antagonize the press," said Hilary heavily. "Tell the gentlemen, Emmeline, that we'll see them. Can you bear it, Adela?"

"You are quite right, Hilary," said Adela. "Just let me look at myself in the mirror. Do you want some powder, Evelyn? Your eyes are rather red. Better touch them with water."

"Hurry up," said Hilary impatiently. "But, for heaven's

sake, be careful what you say. Better let me do the talking." "My dear Hilary," said Adela somewhat waspishly. "Nothing would suit me better. Come, Evelyn."

I heard them leave. I heard the diminishing murmur of voices, the rustle of footsteps on rugs and of Adela's skirts. Even then it was a moment or two before I dared peer through the crack of the door. The room was empty.

I rose and did not draw a free breath until I was safe in my own room.

So it was Dave. Dave.

It had been in Dave's study that Bayard was killed. I felt certain of that. The blood on the rug in the study and no sound of the revolver shot—yes, I was sure Bayard had been killed in Dave's study. Dave's revolver with its two shots gone. Dave himself, silent, languid, morose—entirely perplexing.

And Dave had made that first attempt to murder Bayard. He would have shot again, they said, if Adela had not stopped him. I had been convinced all along that when I knew who had shot Bayard that first time, when only his shoulder was wounded, I would know who had finally murdered him.

But Dave had been with Allen all that long afternoon. Allen had quarreled bitterly with Bayard. Dave had taken a revolver and shot Bayard. But both the men had alibis for that interval of time during which Bayard was actually murdered.

Who, then, could have killed him? It was curious that, as I thought of the Thatcher family, the only member of it who seemed psychologically capable of cold-blooded murder was Evelyn. Evelyn with her firm brown hands and her bluntness and her matter-of-fact way of looking at things. If, for some good reason, she had made up her mind that Bayard should be got out of the way she would kill him with as little compunction as she would step on a spider.

After it was over she would not harass herself with fears or doubts or regrets; she would act exactly as she had acted—write her notes, send her telegrams, meet and calmly dispose of callers, help with household matters. The only signs of weakness she had displayed about the whole ugly business were when she had said, there over Bayard's dead body in the library, "What will people say?" And that was not exactly a sign of weakness. The other was more significant; that was her reluctance to let her sons come home—come home to that grim and sordid tragedy of murder. Even an unimaginative woman would not want her sons entangled in the murder she had done.

And so far as material evidence went—which after all is rather conclusive, for there's no getting around it, if a man's killed with a bullet that bullet's got to come out of a gun, and guns don't fire themselves—so far as material evidence went she—or Janice—was the last one known to have seen Bayard alive.

Well, it had been a strange conversation I had heard; it seemed to me that the omissions were quite as significant as the hints and warnings and open admissions. There were many things they had quite definitely failed to talk of. Dave's reason for trying to kill Bayard, for instance. Or why Hilary so hated the dead man.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Desire for Silhouettes Cut Milk Consumption

Tulare, Cal. — (UP) — Because women believe that drinking milk will cause them to lose that slender silhouette, the dairy business can't expand as it should. So, at least, Pacific Coast dairymen believed today following a meeting here.

They said the belief was erroneous entirely.

Warren G. Harding stood on it when he was inaugurated in 1921. The Versailles Peace Treaty was signed on the rug in 1929.

Helped Along From Pathfinder.

Kjerulf: You say you came to this country from Moscow. Were your parents Russian?

Bjork: You bet they were rushing in. I guess you'd be rushing too if you had a squad of soldiers with fixed bayonets helping you out of the country.

In a cow, only the nose has sweat glands.

You Must Roll in Vogue



Going roller skating? Then should you desire to dress for the job, here's what the well-dressed roller-skater will wear this year. The outfits consist of divided white flannel skirts, bright double-breasted flannel jackets, with brass buttons, and white flannel berets. The ensembles were shown at a recent charity fashion show in New York.

YOUR CHILDREN

By Olive Roberts Barton

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BABY'S SUNBATH REQUIRES CAUTION

The sunbath of the baby should be directed by the doctor, that is to say, the time, place, duration and manner of giving should be professionally supervised.

Obviously it would be impossible to lay down rules that would apply to all babies. Some live in hot climates where the sun must be taken, *al fresco*, in homeopathic doses. Others in cooler regions where the length of the "bath" may be considerably increased.

The time of the year has something to do with it too. Also the age of the baby, and again, whether or not he is being newly initiated to the sun's rays on his bare body or is a veteran at the practice and can consequently stand more of it.

Danger Compels Caution

When I say that it should be supervised by the doctor, I don't mean that he should stand by each day, stop-watch in hand, and personally direct the operation. I merely mean that before giving any such airing to the new baby the mother should talk to the doctor about it.

Because, although direct sunlight on nude bodies is absolutely necessary to healthy growth, good bones, and tones muscles, there is danger in giving these baths unless every sort of precaution is taken.

These dangers are colds, and over-exposure, especially in the winter and early spring months. Too much sun for an infant is easily possible at any time of the year. Colds we need not be warn-

ed against. They are too easy to take.

At first only the hands and feet may be exposed for very short periods. Little by little the exposed surface may be increased until baby can have his daily sunbath as nature intended him to have it—al over.

It cannot be done behind glass. Very few houses have quartz glass nursery windows, the only kind that allow the strengthening violet rays of the sun to get through, therefore if the bath is had in the house, the windows must be open. The sun must shine right "on" the subject.

To accomplish this without danger of cold, a mother must use every bit of ingenuity she possesses. The room must be very warm, every other aperture must be closed. The window chosen must be away from the wind. Screens help. I used to pull down an upper window and roll the bassinet over so the 11 o'clock sun fell directly down on the little bed.

Avoid Mid-day Sun

Later in the spring there will be better opportunities for giving baby his sunbath outdoors. Never in the heat of mid-day or early afternoon. Either before or after 11, or after 3, is a safe general rule. Daylight saving time makes the corresponding change in this schedule.

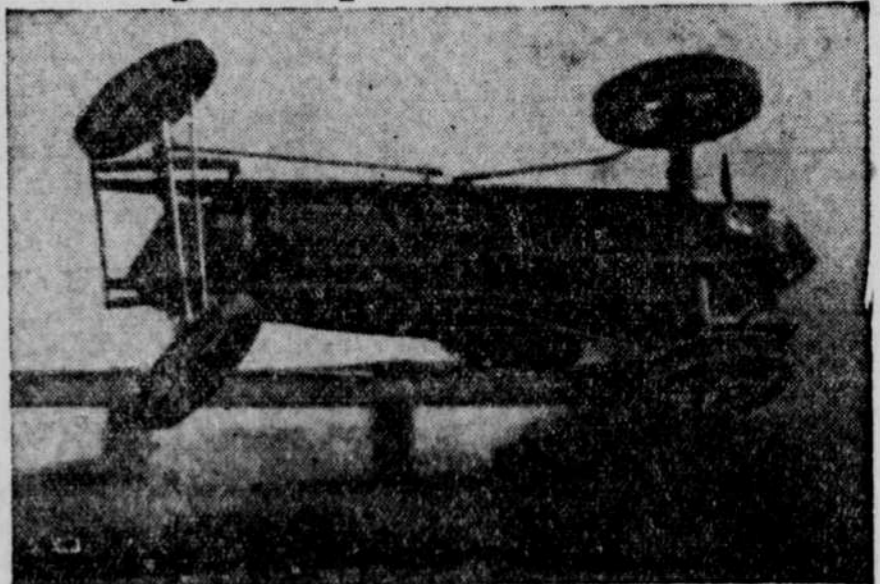
All children under six need a complete sunbath each day, and all weak or sick children. As they get toughened to the sun they can stand more of it.

But they do need sun. I like to see a child's body as brown as a butternut.

BUSSES REPLACE TROLLEYS

San Antonio, Tex. — (UP) — San Antonio held a municipal celebration when the first street cars were run in 1890 from the heart of town to the International Fair grounds. Now the city is announcing the abandonment of its entire street car system. Busses are being substituted.

Graphic Speedway Crackup



This spectacular picture shows Wilbur Shaw's racing car in mid-air as it somersaulted over a fence during a speed run at the Los Angeles Speedway. Shaw was in the car when the picture was made. An instant later he was tossed fifty feet when the car turned over. He escaped with a bruised knee and elbow.

New Oat Cleaning Process Increases Yield

Madison, Wis. — (UP) — Dry cleaning of seed oats is in fashion now.

After four years of experimentation, James G. Dickson and B. D. Lieth of the agricultural staff of the University of Wisconsin have found that the use of dust fungicides in treating oats for smut results in higher yields than does the formaldehyde dip treatment.

Dipping the seeds in formalde-

hyde solution, unless done with extreme care, may result in damage to the seed, these investigators reported. They found that formaldehyde dust containing seven per cent or more formaldehyde, mixed with the oats in dust tight containers or cement mixers, is better than the dip treatment and can be made several days in advance of sowing.

Not Much Promise.

From Answers. "When your son has completed his studies what will he be?" "A very old man."

Detective Once Ran

Brewery Relief Billet

Spokane, Wash. — (UP) — From operating the relief billet at the old Schade brewery to passing on the ballet of local burlesque shows is the gamut run by Art Aigman, city detective. When taking over this new duties he said:

"This seems to be an age of liberalism, with beer, boxing and burlesque heading the new era. I'm broad minded, but stripping is a new art under that name. However, I have seen hootchie

kootchie shows over wide areas and believe I am qualified to judge what's what, and why shouldn't it be."

Famous Oriental Rug

Brought to Buffalo

Buffalo, N. Y. — (UP) — A rug valued at \$150,000, probably the most famous and most historical rug in the world, has been brought to Buffalo by its owner, T. H. Kullujian, of San Francisco.

A rare example of Oriental

handicraft, the rug, is known as the Liberty Bell rug, because in 1915, during the Panama-Pacific Exposition, the bell rested on this rug for more than five months.

The rug has been pressed by the feet of universally renowned persons. Theodore Roosevelt stood on the rug when he made a speech at the exposition. Governor Leman stood on it when he was inaugurated as New York State's Chief Executive. The rug was used in the Electoral College when the election of President Roosevelt was formally ratified.