

MURDER By An ARISTOCRAT

Mignon G. Eberhart

Even if I did not know what I knew, I would have guessed something of it from the sudden bleakness of her blue eyes, the way her face set itself again.

"Oh, certainly, Miss Keate," she said. "Certainly, I didn't realize that I was keeping you here when there was something else you were anxious to do. Is there a case waiting for you?"

"No," I said honestly. "But I must go."

"Oh, then," she said affably. "If there's no case waiting for you, you won't mind staying with me a few days longer. Surely you don't feel that we expect too much of you? I haven't had a chance, really, to tell you how grateful we all are for the way you've helped us. I don't know what we should have done without you. But I'm sorry we have worked you too hard."

"Oh, no," I said helplessly. "Not too hard. But you don't need my nursing care, you know, and—"

"My dear, you are too conscientious," said Adela pleasantly. "I see what's wrong. You like to be busy, and you feel you aren't doing enough. Well, then, I must tell you that we—we depend upon you. Of course, if you don't like it with us, if you don't try to keep you. But I—I'm not in very good health, as you surely have seen. And you can't possibly realize what a help you've been to me. But don't let me persuade you. I can probably get along. It's only that it's been such a shock. Such a dreadful shock—"

Her voice broke. That much was true, and I knew it; I even wondered how long she could endure the dreadful strain put upon her. Afterward I reflected that she had very cleverly used the only weapon that would touch me; opposition I could have resisted, defenselessness weakened my resolution. And at the time I felt no definite, physical fear of any one member of the Thatcher family; it was only a kind of grim uneasiness, a feeling of uncertainty that clutched rather coldly at my heart now and then and was immediately dispelled at the sound of Adela's calm, deliberate elegant voice.

"Never mind, now," I said. "You must get some sleep. I'll not leave for a day or two, at any rate. Now then, I'll just give you something. Dr. Boulligny left to make you sleep. You must have a good night's rest."

Wisely she left the matter of my departure rest. Adela was always wise. But she refused the sedative.

"I don't like drugs," she said sharply. "I never feel well the morning after I take a sedative. And besides, I—well, I don't like them. I hate drugs. Dr. Boulligny is too free with them. I'll do better not to take any tonight, Miss Keate. Just hand me those turquoise beads, will you? I like to—Thank you. I've had these many years. It always calms me a little to feel them in my hands. But you might read aloud to me a little, if you will, Miss Keate. Reading aloud is very soothing, I think. There are some books on that shelf back of you. Choose what you like."

There wasn't much choice; from a history of the Thatcher Family, a volume of Drummond's sermons, and The Last of the Mohicans. I chose the latter as being livelier and reflected inwardly that whoever of the Thatchers had collected that splendid library downstairs it was not, in all probability, Adela.

But the green and savage forest failed to charm, and though I read steadily and stubbornly onward I found my thoughts holding to the

Thatcher problem to such a degree that once I read Janice instead of Alice and another time found I had skipped an entire page—and an important page, which left Cora at the river's brim in very equivocal circumstances indeed. But Adela did not note my slight lapses; she lay there staring at the ceiling, pulling her turquoise beads through her fingers, thinking, I felt, rather desperately while I tried to retrieve my errors by reading with increased expression and feeling.

Finally she said to me: "I've been thinking about Florrie, Miss Keate. You may stop reading; yes, thank you, that was very nice, I'm sure. Very soothing," she said with a politeness which, I must say, left me a bit dashed; I have always felt that I read aloud rather well—particularly the more dramatic portions. "You see, there's no telling what Florrie is apt to think about—that about that hat. Janice's hat, you know. And Florrie is a very stupid girl and a talkative one. If she gets some silly notion in her head, it will go straight to her mother, and the whole town will know it in half a day. I think I'd better speak to Florrie at once. Tell her—something; anything to hold her tongue. I shall rest better when I've done so. Would you call her, Miss Keate? I daresay everyone else has gone to bed. It's been very quiet in the house for some time. Florrie is probably asleep by this time. But I think you'd better wake her."

"Very well," I replaced the book on the shelf. It had grown very quiet as I read; the moonlight was white and still on the lawns outside the windows and the great trees hushed and black. "Where is her room?" "On the third floor. At the back of the hall is a stairway leading to the third floor. Her room is on the east side of the third-floor hall; the gable room. You can find it without any difficulty. Don't be long, Miss Keate. I feel—a little nervous, somehow, uneasy. I'm sure I'll feel better after I've talked to Florrie."

The wide hall was quite deserted. The night light only illuminated its dim length. The rest of the household had apparently gone to sleep, for there was no sound of voices or motion in the whole house. The silence was so deep that, when I passed the stair well, I could actually hear the great clock ticking slowly and deliberately downstairs. I walked rather quickly down the hall, past all those closed doors. Sure enough, at its end, running up a few steps to a sharp landing at right angles to the hall, I found the stairway leading to the third floor. At the same angle were other stairs leading down to, presumably, the back part of the house; at the time the house was built a back stairway was almost of itself an evidence of gentility.

Something about the sleeping house and the quiet shadowy hall made me, too, feel uneasy. And an unkind trick of memory brought me suddenly a mental vision of Bayard Thatcher—Bayard Thatcher, shattered and dead on the library rug. The silent house knew and held the secret of his death.

I settled my cap and went up the stairs, feeling my way along by clinging to the railing until I emerged upon a narrow passage at the top along which white fingers of moonlight stretched ghostly.

I had no difficulty following Adela's directions. The door that must be Florrie's was closed, and I knocked and knocked again.

There was no answer. The

moonlight was white on the floor. The whole place was silent. There was not a breath of sound anywhere.

I knocked once more; louder this time, and wishing myself back in Adela's softly lit room. Or, better, my own room, with the door locked. With the door locked! Hadn't Florrie said she always locked her door? She'd said other things, too. Silly things. Absurd things.

"Florrie," I called. My voice was not steady. I said more clearly, "Florrie. Miss Thatcher wants you."

There was still no reply. I think it was the complete deathlike silence that frightened me, rather than the memory of her stolid, foolish voice saying, "murdered in my sleep—murdered in my sleep." But whatever it was I was suddenly in a panic. She ought to answer. She ought to come to open the door. My last knock resounded in the still passage.

All at once I was trembling. My hands were shaking as I tried the door, pushed against it, and rattled the doorknob. It was locked, and there was still no sound from the girl inside.

Then, quite as if my body were acting of itself, involuntarily, without my consent or council, I was flying down that narrow stairway, groping for the railing, stumbling, whirling around the turn and down the long hall. I'm sure I didn't cry out, but perhaps my footsteps roused the uneasy house. From some desire to save Adela I found myself at Janice's door rather than at Adela's, knocking and sobbing out something.

She flung open the door, her face as white as her nightdress.

"What is it? Miss Keate—" "The keys," I said. "Florrie. Something's wrong. We'll need the key to her room." She did not stop to question me. She snatched a negligee from a chair.

"Adela's got the keys. I'll go—"

We were in Adela's room, meeting her shocked eyes, grasping the keys. We were running along the hall again. Hilary, in purple-striped pajamas, bounced out of a door as we passed, panted something I didn't hear, and followed. I was vaguely conscious that Evelyn was there, too, for I remember her long yellow braids swinging beside me as Janice fitted the key in the lock. We had some trouble getting it to turn. Florrie's key had been left in the other side, and it was Hilary who finally managed it. By that time Emmeline was in the hall, too; a bizarre figure in a bright Japanese crepe kimono and her hair in curlers.

But we did get the door unlocked. I was the first one through it.

The moonlight streamed whitely into the room. It was so radiant and bright that the figure of the girl on the bed was very clear.

There was a sort of hush back of me. Then Hilary said in a high, squeaky voice:

"Oh, my God! Oh, my God! The girl's dead!"

Well, she wasn't dead. She was and is still, so far as I know, alive. But she was as near death as are few people in this world who yet live. She was already in that vast shadowy borderland whence there are so few returns.

We were barely in time. I did not intentionally, play a heroic part in bringing Florrie back to life. But I was trained. I knew what to do. I knew what, after hunting for that feeble flicker that was her pulse, to look for. And I found it on the table beside her. The box of aspirin tablets I had given her stood there. It was open. But the tablets were not aspirin. I looked, tasted.

"Make some strong black coffee as quick as you can. Call the doctor. Help me get her out of bed. On her feet, turn of beer and threatened repeal of the 18th Amendment are bringing back the veterans to the fight. One of the oldest of Carrie Nation's friends in the former battles is Mrs. B. J. Flinn, who is 95. But despite her age, Mrs. Flinn has started making speeches against dry law repeal.

Woman Was Injured

In Unusual Accident

Indianapolis, Ind. — (UP) — An unusual accident occurred here

The girl's nearly dead with veronal."

How we worked, Evelyn and Janice and I, with Hilary hurrying to the telephone, and Emmeline to the kitchen for coffee, and Adela panting upstairs to get us cold towels and watch us with blank blue eyes while we walked that inert burden up and down, up and down, holding her sliding weight somehow between us. Hilary was back soon, puffing from the climb, telling us to do what we were already doing and that Dr. Boulligny was on the way. And I remember how haggard and old he looked, huddled in a shabby old dressing gown, his hair rumpled and untidy; Hilary, whose finical tidiness often reminded me of a sleek cat.

We worked furiously; well-nigh frantically. The night was warm and our faces glistened. It took supreme physical exertion to keep the girl moving. It was dreadfully difficult to force the coffee down her throat, and for a long time after that the aroma of strong black coffee made me feel ill and faint. I was only barely conscious of Dr. Boulligny's arrival, and of the hidden horror back of Adela's bleak blue eyes when she told him as far as she could what had happened.

But we did save the girl. Although I suppose only I and the doctor knew how narrowly we had saved her.

It was approaching dawn when Dr. Boulligny said, "She'll do now," and sent Janice and Evelyn away to get some rest. Adela he had sent back to bed long ago, and Hilary had dropped dully into a chair in the corner of the room from which he watched us with weary, troubled eyes.

"Miss Keate has worked harder than anybody," said Janice. "I'm not tired. Let her go and get some sleep, and I'll stay with Florrie."

"You'll have to go to the funeral," said Dr. Boulligny brusquely. "Miss Keate can rest later in the day. Go along, child, and try to sleep some. You look as if you're about to drop. Now then, Miss Keate—you'd better stay a moment, Hilary—how did you happen to give this girl veronal?"

"But I didn't," I said. "I didn't have any veronal."

"This is the box you gave Florrie, isn't it? Adela said it was. And it's your handwriting on the label. It says aspirin, but—"

"Oh, that's the box I gave her," I said sharply. "Of course it is. I always carry aspirin in a flat box like that. And there was aspirin in the box. I could not make such a mistake. There are a hundred ways I can prove it."

"But there are veronal tablets in it now," persisted Dr. Boulligny. "Come, Miss Keate. If you made a mistake, I know it was an accident, and no one regrets it more than you. I also know that you don't as a rule—in fact, I feel confident that you almost never make a mistake. And since we have saved the girl, there's no irreparable harm done."

"But I tell you I did not put veronal tablets in that box!"

"Now, Miss Keate," said Hilary anxiously, "don't get all upset about this. Nobody's blaming you. But don't you see the tablets—the veronal tablets, I mean—are in it now? When did you last open that pill box?"

"The day before I came here. I filled it with aspirin tablets, labeled it and put it in my instrument bag. Nobody could ever confuse aspirin tablets and veronal tablets. And I didn't touch it again until Florrie asked for aspirin last night and I took the box out and handed it to her. If veronal is there now instead of aspirin, as it is, somebody in this house put it there."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

when Mrs. George S. Kinney, Greenfield hurried from a safety zone behind an automobile, to discover that it was towing another car.

She suffered a fractured hip when she tripped on the tow-bar connecting the two vehicles and fell beneath the wheels of the rear machine. Another woman with her managed to jump over the tow-bar and escaped.

Chinese universities buy an average of 50,000 volumes annually from a London bookstore, which has customers in every country.

Hoppy Days Are Here Again



After many years of drought, during which the historic beer suits of Princeton University students evoked only memories of the "good old days," sons of Old Nassau are once more enabled to wear the suits in the environment for which they were intended. Here is a trio of Tiger men, attired in the glad garments, as they tip elbows with the new 3.2.

Hen's Characteristics

Don't Affect Its Eggs

Nampa, Idaho — (UP) — The size and shape of a hen does not affect its eggs, U. S. D. A. poultry department investigators proved, J. P. Quinn announced.

Quinn, in charge of the bureau of animal industry, said measurements and tests were made of the dressed carcasses and bones of about 400 trap-nested white leghorn and Rhode Island red hens. No relationship could be determined between the size and color of the hen and the egg, he said.

U. S. C. of C. Plans

Fire Prevention Prizes

Washington — (UP) — Awards promoting fire prevention activities will be made to various cities

Delegate From Japan



Viscount Kikujiro Ishii, veteran Japanese statesman, who has been selected to represent his country at the forthcoming series of parleys at Washington, D. C., suggested by President Roosevelt as a prelude to the world economic conference. He will sail for the U. S. on May 4. It is thought that the Ishii-Lansing agreement of 1917, whereby the United States recognizes that "Japan has special interests in China," will be revived.

Physical Rest Needed by Persons Over Sixty

EXERCISES SHOULD BE GENTLE, AND MENTAL WORRY AVOIDED; RETIRING FROM ACTIVE LIFE SHOULD BE GRADUAL, SMOKING PERMISSIBLE

BY DR. MORRIS FISHBEN
Editor, Journal of the American Medical Association, and of Hygeia, the Health Magazine

The hygiene of old age, as Dr. Barker describes it, is relatively simple. People over 60 should avoid overexertion, either bodily or mental. They must have more physical rest and fewer hours of mental worry. All exercise should be gentle and new forms of exercise must be taken up very gradually.

Gardening is especially a fine form of exercise for elderly people. Retiring from an active life should also be gradual rather than sudden. It is the experience of years that an abrupt retirement from business or professional life may be disastrous.

Dr. Barker feels that the use of tobacco in reasonable amounts is permissible to those who have used it throughout life but there are some diseases, such as high blood pressure, angina pectoris, or endarteritis obliterans (also called Burger's disease, in which it is probably best to abandon smoking entirely.

His views regarding alcohol

at the annual meeting of the United States Chamber of Commerce to be held here.

Philadelphia will be the recipient of the first prize, as having made the best record of any of the 332 cities participating in the contest. Cincinnati, Grand Rapids, Lakewood, Ohio; Elyria, Ohio; and Albany, Ga., also will be presented with awards as having the best records in their respective divisions.

Second Four Year

Domino Game Starts

Canyon, Tex. — (UP) — The second four-year inning of a domino game has started here.

Deputy United States Marshal J. D. Gamble and Alfred Smith, real estate man, immediately began defending their recently won title against their vanquished fellow townsmen Roy Wright and Bill Black, both bankers.

During the four-years just closed Gamble and Smith won 620 of 1,152 games played.

There'll Be Trouble

From Hummel, Hamburg.

"You have my sympathy, old man."

"Why?"

"My wife's got a new hat and she's calling on your wife tomorrow."

Call Again

From Answers.

"What happened when the police searched your house?"

"It was fine! They found the front door key which my wife had hidden, a penny stamp I lost weeks ago, and four collar buttons."

It Thrills Him

From Passing Show.

Fireman (to rescued person who is crawling back up ladder): Hey! What are you doing that for?

Rescued Person: I just love jumping into the net.

That Lean Look

From Tit-Bits.

"I live by my wits."

"Now I know why you look so hungry."

None of 'Em Does

From Answers.

Son: Do you know, Dad, that in some parts of Africa a man doesn't know his wife until he marries her?

Father: Why single out Africa?

Brewery Union Plans To Add New Members

Cincinnati, Ohio — (UP) — The executive board of The International Union of Brewery Workers, in session here to consider problems arising from the rehabilitation of the brewing industry, plans to enroll 50,000 new members in the next year.

The International, an organization composed mostly of Germans and Irishmen, began on the first day of prohibition to campaign

for modification. Joe Oberfell, secretary-treasurer of the brewers, has spent considerable time lobbying in Washington.

The International once had 84,000 members.

Carrie Nation Followers

Prepare to Fight Repeal

Holton, Kan. — (UP) — Carrie Nation has been dead for many years, but a few of that band of hers, which made life miserable for the saloonkeepers of early Kansas, still survive. And the re-

turn of beer and threatened repeal of the 18th Amendment are bringing back the veterans to the fight.

One of the oldest of Carrie Nation's friends in the former battles is Mrs. B. J. Flinn, who is 95. But despite her age, Mrs. Flinn has started making speeches against dry law repeal.

Woman Was Injured

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Pennsylvania Cuts

State Fire Loss

Harrisburg, Pa. — (UP) — Pennsylvania's fire loss is receding.

An analysis of fire reports received by the bureau of fire protection, State Police, since January 1, indicates a 10 per cent reduction over the same period of 1923.

As the winter months generally show the heaviest fire toll, it is the belief of bureau officials that the coming of spring and summer

months will continue to reflect a still further decrease.

Bureau officials feel this condition is due to the increasing heed, by the public, of the periodical and general warnings issued for fire and control activity.

Slow Worker

From Hummel, Hamburg.

Jean: What sort of a chap is Fred?

Jill: Well, when we were together last night the lights went out, and he spent the rest of the evening repairing the switch