

# MURDER ARISTOCRAT

By An Mignon G. Eberhart

"If you accept Emmeline's statement that no one approached the house during the afternoon as exculpating Dave, you've got to accept it for me," said Allen coolly. "And if you accept it as conclusive proof that Dave's was not near the house that afternoon, then why all this talk of protecting Dave from suspicion? No matter how many times he tried to kill Bayard, if he wasn't near the house at the time when Bayard was actually murdered, then he couldn't have killed him."

Which was true enough, of course. That was one of their most trying inconsistencies; they accepted Emmeline's statement, which released Dave from suspicion, and at the same time in their hearts they firmly believed that he had murdered Bayard. They wanted it proved, and they didn't want it proved. They wanted, I thought somewhat shrewdly to myself, to establish Dave's guilt as a belief, for that released the rest of them from that grisly suspicion; yet it was not to be established as a fact so conclusively and formally proved that it made their brother a murderer, Janice's husband a murderer, A Thatcher can do no wrong: That was their standing ground. They would thrust the ugliness of the affair deep down into their consciousness and hide it; gradually they would begin to speak to Dave gently, with tenderness. Subtly the non-existent burglar would be re-instituted. Before many years had passed it would be an accepted family fiction that Bayard had been killed by a marauding burglar and that Dave had died of an illness. Most families maintain certain fictions: That would be one of the Thatchers'.

"You are trying to divert our interest, Allen," said Hilary. "Clever of you, but suppose you do some telling of the truth yourself. Didn't you threaten to kill Bayard? The very night Dave shot him in the shoulder?"

"So it was you walking so conveniently in the shadows of the shrubbery that night. Were you taking an after-dinner stroll?"

"Never mind what I was doing. I heard you tell Bayard you'd kill him. You didn't make any secret about it. You were telling the world. Emmeline in the kitchen above you could have heard it all if she wasn't deaf."

I resisted an impulse to say Florrie had heard them, and Evelyn said in a stricken way: "Allen, you didn't threaten to kill Bayard! You didn't!"

"Why, yes," said Allen calmly. "Yes, I threatened to kill him. He had taken a paper—that was mine. And I'm not sure I wouldn't have kept my word if someone else hadn't got him first."

I saw Adela's bleak blue eyes go swiftly to Allen as if she were thinking, "What is this? What does this mean? Does it threaten us? How shall we meet this?"

"Allen, Allen, you must not talk like that," Evelyn's brown face looked suddenly thin and sharp with anxiety, and her blue eyes were dark and full of fear. She went to her brother and put her hand on his arm. "You don't really mean that, Allen. It's just your hot temper. All of us disliked Bayard. It was his own fault; he was everything that is despicable. And there was scarcely one of us who did not have some reason to wish him out of the way. His very presence goaded us. But you didn't really mean that you would kill him."

It seemed to me that they were launching upon another mass of conversation that might get nowhere at all. I said dryly:

"The point is, are we to accept Emmeline's statement that no one entered the house from the back? If we do, that excludes Dave and Mr. Carick from suspicion, no matter what either of them felt for Bayard."

Hilary looked petulantly at me.

"The nurse is right," he said grudgingly. "We can't seem to talk of this matter without letting our own feelings and fears distract us from the logical trend of inquiry. It doesn't matter what we feel to be the solution of this trouble or who we feel to have murdered Bayard. We must stick to the plain facts of the matter. And just now the thing is to consider who could have come into the house and shot Bayard during those few moments after Janice left him and Adela found him dead. Could a burglar or some intruder have got into the house unobserved? Could Higby have killed him during that time? Could Emmeline have done so? And I think she could and possibly did—"

"Hilary," murmured Adela in an expostulatory way, and Hilary continued without looking at her:

"Or could Dave or Allen have returned to the house at that time unobserved? No, Allen, I'm not trying to blame you. But those are the facts of the matter."

I felt the first shade of approval for Hilary that I had yet experienced. At the same time, it seemed to me that there was a certain alacrity about his willingness to pursue the matter now that Adela's unexpected confession had automatically removed Hilary himself from possible suspicion.

"The farther we go the more difficult it becomes," Evelyn said in a hopeless way that was unusual with her. "None of those questions can be answered. It all depends upon whether or not Higby and Emmeline are telling the truth, and I don't know what infallible test we can make of that. Oh, why can't we just drop the whole thing? There isn't any proof. There never can be any proof. We have done everything we can do. If Dave somehow got past Emmeline into the house and killed Bayard, I, for one, don't want to know it. Don't want it proved."

"Dave didn't kill Bayard before 3 o'clock," said Allen definitely. "He was with me until then. And—" he fumbled in his pocket and drew out the paper on which he had made a sort of chart the previous afternoon. "According to Miss Keate it was exactly 3 o'clock when Adela left the house after having found Bayard dead and made her hurried efforts to make it look like robbery. What Adela has told us has upset all our previous calculations. We shall have to rearrange everything to discover the time of Bayard's death. Florrie left the house at 2:30; Janice possibly 10 minutes later. Two-forty, then. Adela left at 3. What time was it, Adela, when you found Bayard dead?"

"I don't know exactly. But it would have taken at least 15 minutes to do what I had to do. One thinks rapidly in an emergency; still, it takes a few moments to recover from the shock and outline a sort of plan. But Janice had been out of the house and gone at least 5 or 10 minutes before I came downstairs. And five minutes would be long enough for anyone to kill Bayard."

"But, Adela," said Allen more gently, "don't you see that while five minutes might be long enough for some member of the family who knew his way about the place

5 minutes the vital organ was "ticking" lustily once more.

### Soviet Faces Trouble In Donetz Coal Basin

Moscow (UP)—"Punish those who even smell of sabotage," is the message Stalin, Russia's iron dictator, has sent to a special commission, which had been trying to create better working conditions and raise production in the Donetz basin, the Soviet's largest coal mining district.

to take the gun from Janice's desk and shoot Bayard and escape, it couldn't possibly give time enough for an intruder. And we all know it was Dave's revolver."

I need have felt no sympathy for Adela. She was more than a match for Allen. She said with unruffled dignity and a sincerity that was inescapable, so that I did not in the least doubt her story:

"My dear Allen, I have told you the exact truth. You may make of it what you will. If anyone wishes to believe that I committed a murder he may do so. But I shall be glad that I have been the means of clearing Dave's name. Of proving that he did not kill Bayard."

"You've proved nothing," said Hilary rather cruelly. "Dave is dead. Don't look at me like that, Adela. That margin of time is too small. Five minutes more or less is not enough. Our watches might not have coincided. Allen might have been mistaken about the time when he and Dave separated."

"Hilary, I refuse to listen. You are determined to make it appear that Dave killed Bayard and then killed himself."

"Now, Adela, wait. The thing I'm trying to show is that this inquiry is hopeless. We can't prove anything conclusively. But if we don't settle on something we'll spend the rest of our lives wondering. Suspecting each other. Not sure. And since Dave was obviously a suicide and we know he had tried once to kill Bayard, why not—"

"But you aren't at all sure he was a suicide," I said wearily, wishing I had never seen these baffling, inconsistent, illogical Thatchers with their pride and their selfishness and their undeniable courage. "You aren't even sure he was not murdered, too. Where did he get the veronal that killed him?"

### CHAPTER XIX

It was just at that moment that Dr. Bouigny opened the door to the long room and entered, pausing in a worried fashion, for I suppose our very attitudes gave him some warning of the suspense the moment held. Then he advanced toward Adela. His face looked old and very tired, there were pouches under his eyes, and his cheeks and heavy chin were flabby.

"Good morning, good morning," he said with an obvious and not very successful attempt at a professional cheery greeting. "How are you this morning, Adela?"

Almost visibly she thrust aside any hidden reference to her grief over Dave's death; it was as if she were reserving her sorrow.

"You are in good time, Daniel," she said. "The nurse has just hinted that Dave, too, was murdered."

Dr. Bouigny gave a sharp look from under his bushy eyebrows.

"Dave murdered!" he said in surprise. "Oh, no, Miss Keate. There is no question of that. Dave was a veronal addict. I have proved that beyond a doubt. Adela and Janice have known it for some time. I don't know whether or not he took an overdose intentionally but I do know that no one could have given it to him without his knowledge. Florrie's mistake came from ignorance; she knew nothing of veronal, and besides, was under the firm conviction that she was taking some kind of aspirin. It was an entirely different matter with Dave, as you can readily understand. The dose he took yesterday was his own doing. There's no doubt of that. But, of course, I can't say that it was with suicidal intent. I wish you had told me of Dave's illness."

"I wish I had, Daniel," said Adela sadly, but she returned resolutely to me. "Does that answer your question, Miss Keate?"

Well, it did in a measure;

The situation there admittedly has gone from bad to worse. The Soviet press reports that thousands of workers and technicians have left for other places. After more than half of the engineers and technical men had gone, the commissariat for labor issued orders to all organizations to return to the Donbas all specialists formerly employed in mines, or who had attended a mining technical school. The men affected by this order showed great ingenu-

ity in evading it and few were mobilized.

"In part," I said with dignity. "But where did he get the veronal?"

Adela looked blankly at me, and Janice said slowly:

"I suppose he must have got it from Bayard."

"But if Bayard was withholding a supply of veronal when they quarreled, and Dave needed it so badly that he was ready to kill Bayard for tantalizing him by not giving him the drug, why, Dave must have had none then. And I am sure Bayard and Dave were together only once, from the time I arrived until Bayard was found dead. And that one time was at the lunch table the afternoon Bayard was killed."

Allen said immediately, "But you were not with Bayard ever moment of the time, Miss Keate."

"His door was locked when I left him alone."

Hilary made an impatient gesture.

"We are running up against something else we can't possibly prove. But what became of the veronal in the box Florrie had?"

"Evelyn took it," said Dr. Bouigny. "Where is it, Evelyn?"

"I don't know," said Evelyn. "I didn't like to speak of it after Dave had died of veronal. You see, I don't know what happened to it."

"What do you mean?" said Adela crisply. "Do try to speak plainly, Evelyn. I don't understand you. Do you mean you had in your possession the remaining veronal tablets from the box Florrie had?"

"Why, yes," said Evelyn. "I saw the box lying there on the table by Florrie's bed, I thought that was a poor place for it. So I took it and left it on the dressing table in my room. But it—"

she seemed to speak with an effort and avoided Hilary's look—"it disappeared that night. Sunday night. And I don't know who took it. I suppose it must have been Dave."

"Why on earth didn't you tell me about that, Evelyn!" exploded Hilary.

"Well," said Evelyn, glancing at Allen as if for support. "I didn't think it was the thing to do. I guessed, of course, that someone must take the drug habitually or it wouldn't have been in the house. But I thought it would only make matters worse to try to discover who had taken it from my room and why. Things are bad enough," said Evelyn rather miserably, "as they were."

"Now we'll never know," said Hilary impatiently. "You should have told me about it sooner, Evelyn. We'll just have to suppose that Dave found the veronal and took it. That's as near as we can come to it, and it must be the truth. I don't think anyone will accuse Evelyn of inducing Dave to swallow the overdose of veronal—"

He paused, rather in the fashion, half threatening, half suggestive, that a minister pauses when he says if anyone has a just objection to a marriage will he "speak now or forever hold his peace."

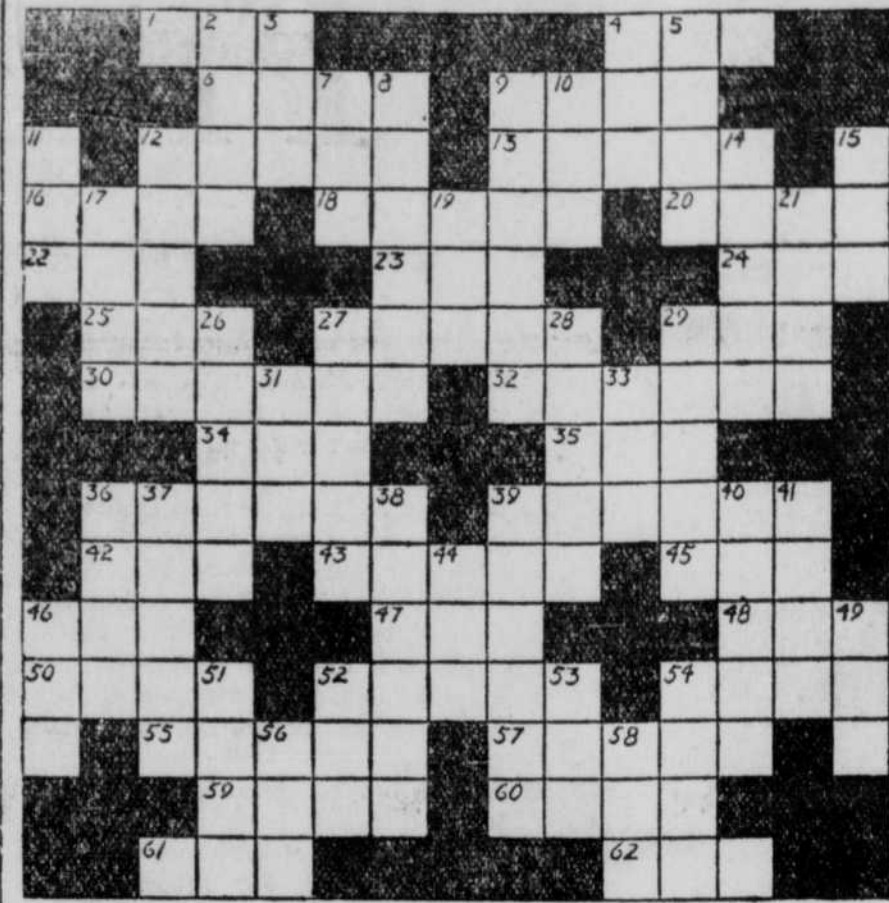
Then he continued, "As Dan says, Dave must have taken the overdose himself. By his own hand. Couldn't be any other way. We know he must have been out of the drug when he shot Bayard the first time, and that he certainly had it when he died. And that a rather large supply of veronal disappeared from Evelyn's dressing table last Sunday. And that we have scarcely seen Dave during these four days. Those facts, put together, seem to me conclusive. I'm in favor of letting the whole thing drop. Now. Let Miss Keate go," concluded Hilary, forgetting discretion just for an instant, "and drop the whole matter."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

### Saddle Horses Stage Comeback in Missouri

Macon, Mo. (UP)—Saddle horses are coming back into their own, according to an old-time auctioneer, Col. P. M. Gross of Kansas City. "Not so long ago I had a sale with the horses averaging \$400 a head," he said. "They are regaining their popularity

## CROSSWORD "TEASER"



(© by Western Newspaper Union.)

- 1—Marsh
2—Young goat
3—Deeply expressed
4—Organs of head
5—Dull, spiritless person
6—Purchasable
7—Exclamation of regret
8—Pastimes
9—A quick pull
10—Having been victorious
11—Small room
12—Fish eggs
13—Turf
14—Girl's nickname
15—Long period of time
16—One who follows up
17—Boy's first name
18—Old horse
19—To pull with force
20—Hit
21—University official
22—Prevaricate
23—Becomes fatigued
24—Boy's name
25—Distress signal
26—Mixture of earth and water
27—Uncloned (poetic)
28—Shoemaker's tool (pl.)
29—Yellow
30—Belonging to a person
31—To run off
32—Acquires by labor
33—Impressed
34—Flesh
35—Nickname of martyred President
36—A weight
37—Parted with
38—Came face to face with
39—Christmas carol
40—Prefix meaning by means of or through
41—Author of "The Inferno"
42—Acquire
43—Belonging to an eastern university
44—A drill
45—Domestic animal
46—Cup
47—Foreble stroke
48—Passageway
49—Darkened
50—To make amends
51—Middays
52—Metal stamp
53—Chafe with friction
54—Carpenter's tool
55—Latin or French for "is"
56—Thick slice of anything
57—To initiate
58—Girl's name
59—Upon
60—To be in debt
61—Rodent

The solution will appear in next issue.

Solution of Last Week's Puzzle: AZAN F LARD VAN VIA BOA OX HARRY TR W HAS EEL E METE AWAY SEA SET WRAP CESS F SLY LOO Z IT TRIOS LA JAG ERG MEN IRON E QUAY

### Mirage That Heralded Coming of Rescue Ship

Mirage has more than once played a striking part in human affairs—as, for example, when it caused the suspension of battle on the plains of Mesopotamia during the World war, but surely it has never staged a more dramatic performance than it did in February, 1913, off the shore of McMurdo sound, in the Antarctic, where the surviving members of Scott's expedition were anxiously awaiting the return of their ship, the Terra Nova, that was to take them back to civilization.

"About noon of January 17," writes H. G. Ponting, the expedition photographer, "I was sweeping the north with the glass, when suddenly the masts of a ship came into the field of view. For a moment I could scarcely believe my eyes; but there could be no doubt about it. They

were the masts of a barque; but presenting an extraordinary appearance, for they towered unnaturally high above the skyline.

"Then I saw that what I was looking at was but a mirage. The real ship was hull-down below the horizon, and only the masts were visible. Above them a mirage of the entire vessel, hull and all, appeared inverted; and over this first reflection there was a second image of the ship, upright. It was the upper image that I had seen first.

"It was a remarkable illusion; but the Terra Nova was undoubtedly there—about thirty miles away."—Calvin Frazer in Taylor-Tycos, Rochester.

### Churches' Good Work

All the churches have myriad institutions for doing good. Investigate and you will find that they do it.



"My husband is a steam fitter and I am sure you know what that means when it comes to laundry work. Besides, I have two youngsters. My clothes aren't soiled—but dirty! And I believe I would throw up both my hands and quit if it weren't for Fels-Naptha. I've been using it for years now, and I always will!"

EASIER washdays—cleaner, whiter clothes—that's what Fels-Naptha Soap can mean to you, too. It brings you extra help—good golden soap and plenty of naphtha working together to speed away dirt in jig time.

change to FELS-NAPTHA

### Dead Turtle's Heart Responded to Adrenalin

Appomattox, Va. (UP)—People in Appomattox are watching the heartbeats of a dead turtle.

The turtle was a monster caught on the James river near Gladstone. The heart was removed and placed in a store window after the head had been severed. After 12 hours, the heart action decreased perceptibly. A physician made a direct injection of adrenalin, and within