

MURDER MYSTERY A DUPLICATE OF FAMOUS NOVEL



LIKE a repeat of "The Gilded Age," a novel by Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) and Charles Dudley Warner, is the real life "Mystery of Ocey Snead."

Fact and fiction meet on common ground. The novel and the newspaper accounts of the strange doings of the members of the proud southern families of the Wardlaws and the Sneads suggest the blight which came upon Silas Hawkins and his children through the wild schemes which brought them to poverty and ruin.

"The Gilded Age" begins with the Knobs of Tennessee; the mystery of Ocey Snead leads to the same region. The story has its Murfreesboro; the news narrative its Murfreesboro. The first is in Missouri; the second in Tennessee. The Wardlaws saw before them fortune in land speculation, in lumber schemes and finally it seemed to them that in the offices of the great insurance companies were they at last to find the age of gold. The race of Hawkins lived and worked, denied themselves and starved, for did they not see in the future the wealth which should come to them from their great estate of untilled southern land?

Education for the negro and for the poorer classes was the last card of the clan of Hawkins before the bill for the Knobs university met its fate; the Wardlaws in the north, a generation after "The Gilded Age" is printed, appeal to Mrs. Russell Sage and other philanthropists for the great university which they would call into being, says the New York Herald.

Impenetrable mystery has always veiled the existence of all who have come into public notice through the death of the young woman whose lifeless form was found in the ill-omened house at East Orange. About the characters of "The Gilded Age" the authors threw an atmosphere of secrecy and intrigue and baffling circumstance. Last of all, in both cases falls the tragedy—imprisonment in the Tombs in New York city comes in both instances, although that prison be indeed a far cry from Tennessee, and then a sensational murder trial, which fills the space in ten thousand newspapers.

Point after point, fact crowds upon the heels of fiction as though the authors in 1873 view with prophetic ken what would befall in 1909.

Prominent in South,
Known through all the southland are the Wardlaws and the Sneads. They were never wealthy, but in them was always the pride of race. The three women who are now under arrest in connection with the death of Mrs. Ocey W. Snead are the daughters of Rev. Dr. John B. Wardlaw, a Methodist minister, who eked out a slender living in the wire grass sections of southern Georgia. Silas Hawkins, dreamer of dreams, dwelt in Tennessee and spun his ideas of wealth to be while his numerous children sprawled in and out of their poor abode.

The dominating influence among the sons and daughters in the clan of Hawkins was Aunt Laura Van Brunt. A beautiful and brilliant young woman had she become, with aspirations which could not be pent up within the confines of a small southern town.

"Come, Laura," says "Squire Hawkins at the family council, "Let's hear from you, my girl."
"I will go to St. Louis, too," she said. "I will find a way to get there. I will make a way, and I will find a way to help myself along, and do what I can to help the rest, too."

Had Power of Fascination,
In the case of Miss Caroline B. Wardlaw, who later became Mrs. Martin, there was the same resolution, the same defiance of what others would

have called the impossible. At the age of 16 she left the parental roof and went to an uncle in Brooklyn, where, after many difficulties, having once been rejected in examination, she finally obtained a diploma and became a teacher in the public schools of New York city. She had a power of fascination, as did Laura Van Brunt of the novel, and her own family and all who knew her did her bidding. She rose by sheer force of will to the principalship of school No. 17. At the same time she was managing the affairs of her family.

She had to all appearances a strong influence over her sister, Miss Virginia O. Wardlaw, who, largely through the spur of the oldest daughter, went to Wellesley college. Another sister, Miss Mary Wardlaw, married Capt. Fletcher Snead, formerly of the Confederate army, by whom she had three sons, one of whom, Fletcher Wardlaw Snead, the husband of the victim of the bathtub mystery, was arrested in Canada, as a fugitive from justice. John R. Wardlaw, a brother, was an honor man at Princeton university.

Ambitious as a Child.
From her earliest years ambition and money were the guiding stars of the life of Caroline Wardlaw. There is a tradition in the old town of Oglethorpe, where the mansion of the Sneads and the Wardlaws still stands as yet another house of mystery, that as a child she prayed not for daily bread, but for cake. The pinch of poverty which she had experienced in her girlhood made her at first alert to the value of money and then the seeking for wealth became an obsession.

She invested money in later years in many schemes and at one time believed, as Squire Hawkins did, that there was a Golconda there for her and all her kin. She would see the family return to its pristine glory. Her ideas were not so different in that respect from those expressed in the creed of Hawkins. Perhaps she may have had some such visions for the future of her daughter Ocey as had the squire for his children when the authors make him say:
"Pine forests, wheat land, coal land, copper, coal; wait till the railroads come! We've got to toil along, drag along and eat crusts in toil and poverty—all hopeless and forlorn—but they will ride in coaches, Nancy. They'll live like princes of the earth; their names will be known from ocean to ocean."

Like the Book's Characters.
The daughters of the house of Wardlaw were much like those of the family of Hawkins, and much of the feeling of that time is summed up in the concluding paragraph of "The Gilded Age."

"The girls," the authors write, "would not have been permitted to work under any circumstances whatever. It was a southern family, and of good blood, and for any person except Laura, either within or without the household, to have suggested such an idea would have brought upon the suggester the suspicion of being a lunatic."
It was at the deathbed of Silas Hawkins, it will be remembered, that his children were so impressed with the family delusion.

"I am leaving you in cruel poverty," is his valedictory to earth. "I have been so foolish, so short-sighted. But courage! A better day is coming. Never lose sight of the Tennessee land. Be wary. There is wealth stored up there, wealth that is boundless. The children shall hold up their heads with the best of the land yet. Where are the papers? Have you got the papers safe? Show them to me!"
The money madness which was transmitted to the children follows them through mystery and tragedy. In the same way the Wardlaws dedicated themselves to misery and to poverty



MRS. CAROLINE MARTIN MRS. OCEY WYNNE SNEAD

to all appearances for the sake of realizing their ideals of wealth.

Counterpart in Penury.
The penury of the clans of Sellers and of Hawkins had its counterpart in the lives of the Wardlaws and the Sneads. Here were houses with only a few sticks and broken-down chairs for furniture. The House of Mystery, in East Orange where Mrs. Ocey W. M. Snead met her yet unexplained death, had one broken-down chair, a stool made from a packing case, a dining room table composed of a plank laid across an orange box. There was no heat from the furnace in that dwelling, and the store of food was very scant. Compare the House of Mystery then with the abode of Col. Sellers warmed by a candle flickering behind the mica panes of a rickety stove:

"A dreary old haircloth sofa against the wall," runs the Clemens-Warner description; "a few damaged chairs, the small table the lamp stood on, the crippled stove—these constituted the furniture of the room. There was no carpet on the floor, on the wall were occasional square-shaped interruptions of the general tint of the plaster which betrayed that there used to be pictures in the house, but there were none now."

For many years back in the history of the Wardlaws and the Sneads as they lived in New York they lived amid the most dismal and poverty-stricken surroundings. Mrs. Martin, while receiving a salary of \$2,000 a year from the city was dispossessed from her rooms for not paying seven months' rent, and she was constantly pursued by tradesmen who had bills to collect. She had meanwhile, as did her sister, married a former officer of the confederate army, and her daughter Ocey had come into the world to live a life devoid of sweetness and light and to go to a tragic death.

Laura Van Brunt's Creed.
The creed of Laura Van Brunt, as expressed in "The Gilded Age," was this: "She wanted to be rich, she wanted luxury, she wanted men at her feet, she wanted slaves. She was impatient; she wished that she were a man to take hold of the business."
The cult of "The Gilded Age" pursues the Wardlaws and the Sneads. We find them living in dreary furnished-room houses, busied over strange land schemes. And in the course of time come the sons of Mrs. Snead, who fit into the order of things. First comes John B. Wardlaw Snead, with his mother, to New York, engaged in the exploitation of wide acres in Virginia, a scheme which came to naught. He it was who committed suicide by igniting kerosene which he had poured over himself.

It is under the influence of Mrs. Martin that another son, Fletcher W. Snead, a dreamer of financial dreams, also comes to the fore. He is content to wait until fortune comes—a mild-mannered, inoffensive man, compliant to the will of his mother and sisters. He had been engaged in the lumber business in Tennessee in an enterprise in which his aunt, Miss Virginia O. Wardlaw, had invested, and when the ruin of their hopes came he was seriously involved. His counterpart in the novel may be found in Washington Hawkins, the son of the old "Squire," who is introduced as follows:
"He was the inventor of no one knew how many worthless contrivances and his years had been passed in dreaming and planning to no purpose, until he was now a man of about thirty, without a profession or a permanent occupation, a tall, brown-haired, dreamy person of the best intentions and the faintest resolutions."

The description applies fairly well to Fletcher W. Snead, who at the time of his marriage to his cousin said that he had no occupation and who had failed in his employment as a bookkeeper for a Brooklyn lumber company.

There has ever been more or less of a mystery concerning Mrs. Ocey Snead, who as a girl lived as much with her Aunt Virginia as she did with Mrs. Martin. Her possibilities as an insurance risk developed in 1900, when the first policy was taken out, and eight policies in all, amounting to \$29,500, were obtained upon her life. The reasons for the taking out of this large insurance has been given by the Sneads and the Wardlaws as their de-

sire to see her established comfortably in her middle age, when her endowment policies would come due, or to give her the opportunity of establishing a school for the better education of the young women of the south.

Tragedies Alike.
The stories move on to the final tragedy. Laura Hawkins is arrested, accused of the murder of Col. Selby. Mrs. Martin is taken into custody by the police on the charge of the wilful murder of her daughter, as is also Miss Virginia Wardlaw. Mrs. Snead is detained as a witness.

"Is it true that you are so poor?" asks a reporter of Mrs. Martin.
"I am not," is her reply. "I have my pension from the city as a teacher and I have property in Tennessee."
"And this is the day," she remarked on her arrival in the Tombs, "that the interest falls due on my Tennessee land."
Laura shot the colonel to death in the Southern hotel in New York, the papers are represented as setting forth in flaming headlines, just as they do now when the authorities are endeavoring to ascertain how it was left left the body which was found in the bathtub in the desolate house at East Orange.
"The morning papers," to quote from "The Gilded Age," "blazed with big type and overflowed with details of the murder. Accounts in the evening papers were only the preliminary drops in the mighty shower. The scene was dramatically worked up in column after column. There were sketches biographical and historical. One journal had a long dispatch from Hawkeye reporting the excitement in that quiet village and the reception of the awful intelligence."
"During the night subtle electricity had carried the tale over all the wires of the continent and under the sea; and in all villages and towns of the union from the Atlantic to the territories, and away up and down the Pacific slope, and as far as London and Paris and Berlin, that morning the name of Laura Hawkins was spoken by millions and millions of people, while the owner of it, the sweet child of years ago, the beautiful queen of Washington drawing rooms, sat shivering on her cot bed in the darkness of a damp cell in the Tombs."
Events follow swiftly in the pages of the novel. The heroine is calm and collected, she denies all knowledge of the crime, she devotes the months that intervene before her trial to the study of the law of the state and is acquitted.
The great university scheme was defeated in the national legislature through the exposure of a bribery scheme, and at the last the children of Silas Hawkins shake themselves loose from the entanglements by permitting the acres to be sold for taxes and so they escape the curse which hung over them from their earliest years. Thus ended the dreams of wealth of the family which went from the Knobs of Tennessee.
The close of the book in which is written the destiny of the Wardlaws and the Sneads in "The Gilded Age" of today may not come for months to come, and many a tale of southern pride and of the pursuit of the unattainable is yet to be told.

The Babcock Millions

By CLARISSA MACKIE

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"So you want to marry my secretary?" asked John Babcock with smoldering fire in his little eyes.

"Yes, sir," replied his son, quietly. "Are you aware that you are depriving me of the services of a most capable young woman?" snapped the elder man.

"I had not thought of that, dad," admitted Allan with an amused smile. "I forgot that Grace was—"

"Who?" interrupted Mr. Babcock, fiercely.

"Grace—Miss Richmond, sir. As I was saying, I have forgotten that Grace was your secretary and necessary to your comfort. I just fell in love with her and now I find that she is necessary to my happiness!" He smiled affectionately at the father who had never yet denied him any reasonable wish.

"Stuff and nonsense! You can fall out of love just as fast as you fell in, young man! Don't pester me with any more fool-de-ree about marrying Miss Richmond. I can't spare her."

Allan Babcock flushed redly and dropped his tone of respectful attention. A look very much like that of his father settled about his firm mouth and hardened it.

"Do you really mean, father, that you will estrange yourself from me— if I marry Grace Richmond?"

"It has always been my belief," evaded John Babcock, sternly, "that the possession of money begets a certain wisdom in the care of it. A person who has been poor all his life, suddenly becomes rich beyond his wildest dreams—what is the result? Ignorant of the true value of money, he becomes a spendthrift and the sequel is ruin. Miss Richmond always has been poor—she will squander every cent you earn on frills and furbelows! Marry a girl in your own set—one who has been accustomed to luxury, even if she is a pauper now and I'll warrant—"

"Then you refuse to sanction my engagement?" interrupted Allan, coldly.

John Babcock's eyes glistened like points of flame. "Marry her," he cried wrathfully, "and you will never receive a penny of my money!"

"It isn't a question of money between Grace and me," returned Allan, proudly.

"Perhaps it's a question of money on her side, young man," retorted his father, as he whirled about in his chair and turned his back on his son.

When the door had closed behind Allan, Mr. Babcock pressed a button on his desk.

Presently the door opened to admit his private secretary. She was tall and slender, with grave gray eyes and a crown of softly plaited brown hair above the white brow. John Babcock had always liked the quiet dignity of her dress and manner and her unquestioned refinement had always commanded the respect of her irascible employer.

But now he glared at her defiantly and it inwardly pleased him to note that she returned the glare with her customary glance of level indifference.

"I will dictate," he said briefly.

She sat down on the other side of the great oaken desk and drew pencil and notebook toward her. Mr. Babcock wheeled about in his chair as if to avoid her eyes, then he as quickly spun around and faced her, belligerently. Every separate hair of his snowy white whiskers seemed to bristle with aggressiveness. Under his hard stare her gaze fell to the book in her hand.

marry me—disinherited as I am, Grace?" he asked almost incredulously. "If you do, of course you do—you are the pluckiest darling—how can I ever make it up to you?"

Grace smiled. "By forgetting all about those horrible Babcock millions, Allan! What is your happiness and mine beside your father's money? Look at him—so unhappy and so rich! If you get that position in San Francisco and we—and we are—"

She paused, flushing under his ardent gaze.

"And we are married—" added Allan, triumphantly.

"Why, I can take a position until we get on our feet. Who knows but we shall some day be rich enough to endow a home for Imbecile Young Women, Allan!"

"Who knows?" echoed Allan, happily. "But you shall not work, sweetheart, not unless I am sick or something comes up in the way of trouble. Blake promised to let me know about the job tomorrow and if I have a favorable answer will you marry me Wednesday noon and go away with me at once?"

Grace hesitated and the corners of her mouth drooped. "There is no reason why I cannot, Allan—I am all alone in the world now and there is not a friend in New York to come to my wedding."

"Two are nough at any wedding," said Allan, stoutly.

"I will see you again—you will be at the office?" he asked as he left her at the entrance to the Babcock building.

"I shall leave your father's employ to-night," she said, calmly.

It lacked 10 minutes of the noon hour on the following Wednesday, when Allan Babcock and Grace Richmond entered the quiet brownstone church to be married. The rector stood waiting in his white robes and scattered among the pews were two or three persons drawn thither by the indications of a wedding.

Drawn up at the curb outside was a taxicab piled with luggage and close behind it was another one from which a very excited old gentleman emerged and hurriedly entered the church.

When the ceremony was over and Allan Babcock and his wife had passed down the aisle and entered the vestibule they were confronted with the astonishing vision of Mr. John Babcock.

"Best thing you ever did, my boy," he said, huskily, as he wrung Allan's hand and then kissed the reluctant bride. "Don't be offended, my dear Grace—the fact is, we've been without women folk so many years that I forgot what splendid creatures they were! I positively envy you, Allan—I was in the restaurant that noon, sat right behind your table and you were so absorbed that you didn't see the old man. I heard what you said about 'horrible millions,' my dear—and I guess you're right. Go west and have a good time—but come home to me—both of you!"

Somehow the three found themselves in a triangular embrace that ended in a sudden descent upon the taxicabs and a wedding breakfast at a nearby hotel, with Mr. John Babcock as the host.

"I wish I were going along, too," said the old man, wistfully, as they stood in the station three hours later. "I'd almost forgotten how to be happy."

"Come along with us," said Allan, heartily.

"Do," urged Grace.

"I believe I will," said John Babcock.

What He Was After.
George Washington Henry Clay Lincoln Carter, one of Georgia's younger dusky citizens, was suddenly called upon not long ago to explain his presence at 1 a. m. in the henhouse of a white neighbor.

"Stealing my chickens, are you, you black rascal?" the owner demanded.

George W. H. C. L. C. rolled his eyes until they were all whites.

"Now, now, lookyeh, Mars George," he protested; "dat ain't no way ter ac'—an' please don' pint dat gun at me dat er way. Cunnel, sah!" he hastily added, holding up his battered hat as a shield. "Ah 'clar Ah warn't gwine steal no chickens; no, sah! Ah 'dear writin' er dialec' story—an Ah des' come moseyin' roun' hyah ter git local color—yas, sah, dat's all Ah was after. Ah 'clar to de Lawd hit was!"

Mottl's Opinion of Strauss.
Felix Mottl, recently asked his opinion of Johann Strauss, wrote: "I find his rhythms delightful, his melodies enchanting. I prefer a thousand times a single Strauss waltz to the heavy, pedantic works of our modern classic composers, since music is to me an art that speaks to my emotions and has no relation to my intellect or to any mathematical calculations. Great contrapuntal skill cannot supply the place of ideas. And Strauss has ideas; and in the poverty-stricken period that followed Wagner's death this stamps him as a master touched by the magic wand of genius."

Hurt on the Gridiron.
"What's the matter with young Bigley?" "His throat was badly injured at a football game." "I didn't know he was a player." "He isn't. He's a rooster."