

THE GARDEN MURDER CASE

By S. S. Van Dine

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CHAPTER XV—Continued

"But why," asked Professor Garden, "didn't she fire the revolver upstairs in the first place—it would certainly have made the shot sound more realistic—and then hide it in the garden before coming down?"

"My dear sir! That would have been impossible, as you can readily see. How would she have got back downstairs? We were ascending the stairs a few seconds after we heard the shot, and would have met her coming down. She could, of course, have come down by the public stairs and re-entered the apartment at the front door without being seen; but in that event she could not have established her presence down here at the time the shot was fired—and this was of utmost importance to her. When we reached the foot of the stairs, she was standing in the doorway of Mrs. Garden's bedroom, and she made it clear that she had heard the shot. It was, of course, a perfect alibi, provided the technique of the crime had not been revealed by the evidence she left in the vault. . . . No. The shot could not have been fired upstairs. The only place she could have fired it and still have established her alibi, was out of the bedroom window."

"He turned to Zalia Graem. 'Now do you see why you felt so definitely that the shot did not sound as if it came from the garden? It was because, being in the den, you were the person nearest to the shot when it was fired and could more or less accurately gauge the direction from which it came. I'm sorry I could not explain that fact to you when you mentioned it, but Miss Beeton was in the room, and it was not then the time to reveal my knowledge to her.'

"There was another brief silence in the room. 'But, Mr. Vance,' put in Doctor Siefert, frowning, 'your theory of the case does not account for the attempt made on her own life.'

Vance smiled faintly. 'There was no attempt on her life, Doctor. When Miss Beeton left the study, a minute or so after Miss Graem, to take my message to you, she went instead into the vault, shut the door, making sure this time that the lock snapped, and gave herself a superficial blow on the back of the head. She had reason to believe, of course, that it would be but a short time before we looked for her; and she waited till she heard the key in the lock before she broke the vial of bromin. It is possible that when she went out of the study she had begun to fear that I might have some idea of the truth, and she enacted this little melodrama to throw me off the track.'

Siefert had leaned forward and was studying Vance closely. 'As a theory, that may be logical,' he said with skeptical gravity. 'But, after all, it is only a theory.'

Vance shook his head slowly. 'Oh, no, doctor. It's more than a theory. Miss Beeton herself—and in your presence—gave the whole thing away. Not only did she lie to us, but she contradicted herself when you and I were on the roof and she was recovering from the effects of the bromin gas—effects, incidentally, which she was able to exaggerate correctly as the result of her knowledge of medicine.'

"But I don't recall—" Vance checked him. "Surely, doctor, you remember the story she told us. According to her voluntary account of the episode, she was struck on the head and forced into the vault; and she fainted immediately as the result of the bromin gas; then the next thing she knew was that she was lying on the settee in the garden, and you and I were standing over her."

"That is quite correct," Siefert said, frowning at Vance. "And I am sure you also remember, doctor, that she looked up at me and thanked me for having brought her out into the garden and saved her, and also asked me how I came to find her so soon."

"That also is correct," Siefert admitted. "But I still don't understand wherein she gave herself away."

"Doctor," asked Vance, "if she had been unconscious, as she said, from the time she was forced into the vault to the time she spoke to us in the garden, how could she possibly have known who it was that had found her and rescued her from the vault? And how could she have known that I found her soon after she had entered the vault? . . . You see, doctor, she was never unconscious at all; she was taking no chances whatever of dying of bromin gas. As I have said, it was not until I had started to unlock the door that she broke the vial of

bromin; and she was perfectly aware who entered the vault and carried her out to the garden. Those remarks of hers to me were a fatal error on her part."

Siefert relaxed and leaned back in his chair with a faint wry smile. "You are perfectly right, Mr. Vance. That point escaped me entirely."

"But," Vance continued, "even had Miss Beeton not made the mistake of lying to us so obviously, there was other proof that she alone was concerned in that episode. Mr. Hammle here conclusively bore out my opinion. When she told us her story of being struck on the head and forced into the vault, she did not know that Mr. Hammle had been in the garden observing everyone who came and went in the passageway. And she was alone in the corridor at the time of the supposed attack. Miss Graem, to be sure, had just passed her and gone downstairs; and the nurse counted on that fact to make her story sound plausible, hoping, of course, that it would produce the effect she was striving for—that is, to make it appear that Miss Graem had attacked her."

Vance smoked in silence for a moment. "As for the radio-active sodium, doctor, Miss Beeton had been administering it to Mrs. Garden, content with having her die slowly of its cumulative effects. But Mrs. Garden's threat to erase her son's name from her will necessitated immediate action, and the resourceful girl decided on an overdose of the barbital last night. She foresaw, of course, that this death could easily be construed as an accident or as another suicide. As it happened, however, things were even more propitious for her, for the events of last night merely cast further suspicion on Miss Graem."

"From the first I realized how difficult, if not impossible, it would be to prove the case against Miss Beeton; and during the entire investigation I was seeking some means of trapping her. With that end in view, I mounted the parapet last night in her presence, hoping that it might suggest to her shrewd and cruel mind a possible means of removing me from her path, if she became convinced that I had guessed too much. My plan to trap her was, after all, a simple one. I asked you all to come here this evening, not as suspects, but to fill the necessary roles in my grim drama."

Vance sighed deeply before continuing. "I arranged with Sergeant Heath to equip the post at the far end of the garden with a strong steel wire such as is used in theaters for flying and levitation acts. This wire was to be just long enough to reach as far as the height of the balcony on this floor. And to it was attached the usual spring catch which fastens to the leather equipment worn by the performer. This equipment consists of a heavy cowhide vest resembling in shape and cut the old Ferris waist worn by young girls in pre-Victorian days, and even later. This afternoon Sergeant Heath brought such a leather vest—or what is technically known in theatrical circles as a 'flying corset'—to my apartment, and I put it on before I came here. . . . You might be interested in seeing it. I took it off a little while ago, for it's frightfully uncomfortable. . . ."

He rose and went through the door into the adjoining bedroom. A few moments later he returned with the leather "corset." It was made of very heavy brown leather, with a soft velour finish, and was lined with canvas. The sides, instead of being seamed, were held together by strong leather thongs laced through brass eyelets. The closing down the middle was effected by a row of inch-wide leather straps and steel buckles by which the vest was

tightened to conform to the contour of the person who wore it. There were adjustable shoulder straps of leather, and thigh straps strongly made and cushioned with thick rolls of rubber.

Vance held up this strange garment.

"This waistcoat, or corset," he said, "is worn under the actor's costume; and in my case I put on a loose tweed suit today so that the slightly protruding rings in front would not be noticeable."

"When I took Miss Beeton upstairs with me, I led her out into the garden and confronted her with her guilt. While she was protesting, I mounted the parapet, standing there with my back to her, ostensibly looking over the city, as I had done last evening. In the semi-darkness I snapped the wire to the rings on the front of my leather vest without her seeing me do so. She came very close to me as she talked, but for a minute or so I was afraid she would not take advantage of the situation. Then, in the middle of one of her sentences, she lurched toward me with both hands outstretched, and the impact sent me over the parapet. It was a simple matter to swing myself over the balcony railing. I had arranged for the drawing-room door to be unlatched, and I merely disconnected the suspension wire, walked in, and appeared in the hallway. When Miss Beeton learned that I had witnessed her act, as well as a photograph of it, she realized that the game was up."

"I admit, however, that I had not foreseen that she would resort to suicide. But perhaps it is just as well. She was one of those women who through some twist of nature—some deep-rooted wickedness—personify evil. It was probably this perverted tendency which drew her into the profession of nursing, where she could see, and even take part in, human suffering."

Vance leaned back in his chair and smoked abstractedly. He seemed to be deeply affected, as were all of us.

Doctor Siefert was the first to take his departure. Shortly afterward the others rose restlessly.

I felt shaken from the sudden letting down of the tension through which I had been going, and walked into the drawing-room for a drink of brandy. The only light in the room came through the archway from the chandelier in the hall.

I heard someone enter the room and cross toward the balcony. I saw the dim form of Vance standing before the open door to the balcony, a solitary, meditative figure. I was about to speak to him when Zalia Graem came softly through the archway and approached him.

"Good-by, Philo Vance," she said. "I'm frightfully sorry," Vance murmured, taking her extended hand. "I was hoping you would forgive me when you understood everything."

"I do forgive you," she said. "That's what I came to tell you."

Vance bowed his head and raised her fingers to his lips. The girl then withdrew her hand slowly and, turning, went from the room.

Vance watched her till she had passed through the archway. Then he moved to the open door and stepped out on the balcony. When Zalia Graem had gone, I went into the den where Markham sat talking with Professor Garden and his son. He looked up at me as I entered, and glanced at his watch.

"I think we'd better be going, Van," he said. "Where's Vance?" I went reluctantly back into the drawing-room to fetch him. He was still standing on the balcony, gazing out over the city with its gaudy spectral structures and its glittering lights.

THE END

Science Advances in Telepathy Tests; University Man Gives Much Information

Is telepathy, mongrelized by years of vaudeville trickery, at the threshold of becoming a science? Astonishing experiments have progressed to a point where private home tests are invited. With them goes the candid warning that, despite the fun of using the mind as a messenger boy, there is hazard, perhaps tragedy, as a possible reward for psychic tinkering.

The man who took telepathy out of the laboratory is slim, youthful, impetuous and mop-haired, a rapt believer in the theory that the human mind is, to more or less degree, a sensitive broadcasting station with messages for those with minds capable of tuning in the right wavelength, says the Literary Digest.

He is Dr. Joseph Banks Rhine, whose experiments at Duke university keep people awake nightly from North Carolina to California. Mainly, success depends, he says, on possession of the "gift" to some extent, favorable mental conditions to a large extent. Then: "First, a genuine interest is required. Preferably a fresh spontaneous curiosity to see if you can do it."

In more than 100,000 trials, conducted since 1927, he has obtained results that seem billions to one against the operations of pure chance. Mathematically, at least, he has shown that, in some persons, perception without use of the ordinary sense does in fact exist. Support for Dr. Rhine's faith can

be found in "Man, the Unknown," the recent book by Dr. Alexis Carrel, who wrote: "Those endowed with this power grasp the secret thought of other individuals without using their sense organs. They also perceive events more or less remote in space and time. This quality is exceptional. It develops in only a small number of human beings. . . . Clairvoyance appears quite commonplace to those who have it. It brings them knowledge which is more certain than that gained through the sense organs."

Dr. Rhine experimented with children, then college students. The results were dismaying. Then he tried hypnotized subjects, and finally the key to science, specially gifted students. Results followed impressively.

He is careful to distinguish between clairvoyance and telepathy. Clairvoyance, he says, is perception, such as symbols on the cards. Telepathy is "mind-reading." Persons gifted with one ordinarily possess the other.

Distance, he holds, makes no difference. Indeed, better results are obtained when test objects are separated by rooms. High scores obtain when several miles intervene. Remarkable results were obtained at a distance of 100 miles.

"With all its dangers it is, I believe, the greatest field for intellectual adventure that the student has before him today," says Dr. Rhine. "The perils add to the zest, and the size of the game is unequalled."

The Spirit of Easter



Posed by Loretta Young.

In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it.

His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women: "Fear ye not; for I know ye seek Jesus, which was crucified."

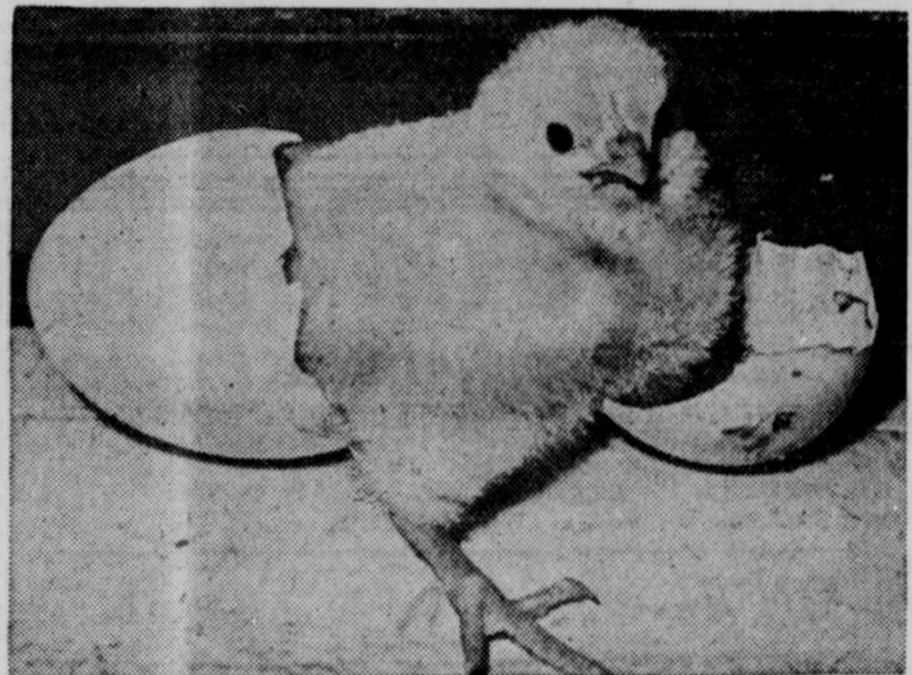
"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."—St. Matthew 28:1-6.

White House Lawn Becomes Playground



This is a rare picture—and a hard one to get. It shows some of the thousands of youngsters gathered on the White House lawn last Easter for their traditional egg-rolling festival. The custom started shortly after the Civil war.

"Paint My Egg?—Never!"



This young chick stepped out of the shell just in time to spoil some child's Easter fun. But thousands of eggs will be colored this year as American children participate in their annual Easter custom.

Lambs in Berlin



Spring lambs provide an Easter feast in Berlin. Here a street vender is parading his wares for prospective customers.

Easter Rivals Christmas Easter rivals Christmas as the big feast day of the year in Poland.

Dietitian Offers Choice Menu for Easter Banquet

Aside from its religious significance, Easter Sunday has always marked actually as well as figuratively the end of a period of self-denial and fasting. Easter dinner, therefore, should usher back to the table some favorite foods that have been given up during lent.

One dietitian's idea of a perfect Easter Sunday dinner follows: Chicken bouillon with sliced mushrooms, melba toast Celery Olives Radish roses

Half quart of spring lamb Potato balls Broccoli with wine, butter sauce Fresh lima beans, hot rolls

Molded cucumber salad Toasted crackers Fresh strawberry ice, served with or without whipped cream Nut cake, demitasse

HOW ARE YOU TODAY

DR. JAMES W. BARTON Talks About

Operations and the Heart. ALTHOUGH deaths whilst under an anaesthetic are now very rare, every anaesthetist, surgeon and physician is alert and very watchful before, during, and after an operation.

It is to prevent accidents during the taking of an anaesthetic that the patient is usually admitted to hospital the previous day so that an examination of heart, blood pressure and urine can be made.

One of the dangers that is always in mind is that a patient may have heart disease which has always been considered a serious risk during the anaesthetic.

It is interesting therefore to read in Archives of Surgery, Chicago, of the study made by Drs. J. Hickman, H. L. Livingstone and M. E. Davies, Chicago. They followed during a period of two years the history of 336 patients with heart disease who had undergone operations.

Fair Surgical Risks. Since there were only six deaths due to heart disease and two to lung disease that could be linked up in any way with the operation and anaesthetic in the 336 patients who underwent 345 operations (a death rate of about 2 per cent), it shows that, as a group, patients with heart disease are fairly good surgical risks.

Angina pectoris (the severe pain under the breast bone due to it is thought to lack of oxygen in the blood going to the heart), coronary occlusion (when the blood vessel or vessels helping to bring blood to the heart muscle gets blocked), decompensation (when the heart muscle has not the power to pump the blood properly), hardening of the arteries, and thyroid poisoning (poisoning of the heart muscles by the excess amount of thyroid juice from the thyroid gland in the neck), are, in the order named, the most serious diseases of heart and blood-vessels with which physicians have to deal.

These physicians state further: "Contrary to the belief of many medical writers, inhaling the anaesthetic, particularly ethylene—oxygen anaesthesia, is safe when a high percentage of oxygen is used and asphyxia (suffocating) or struggling is avoided. Ethylene-oxygen and local anaesthesia gave the most satisfactory results in the 336 cases above mentioned."

"The use of spinal ether or nitrous-oxygen anaesthesia increased the amount of complications which occurred after the operation."

Causes of Eczema. Just why some individuals are bothered by eczema, asthma, hay fever, and others eating the same food, doing the same work, and living in the same climate are free from these ailments may seem hard to understand.

And yet if we just think for a moment we can readily see that as the cause of the irritation (pollen from plants, feathers, furs, foods, chemical substances), is always the same, the trouble must be in the individual, not in the substances.

Thus it is now agreed that there is something about the individual, something he has had handed down to him by his parents or something that he has acquired himself, that has so changed the cells or tissues of his body that they are sensitive to or can be changed somewhat, by any of the above irritants.

And it would seem that when the sensitiveness is not inherited some infection in the system from teeth, tonsils, or other parts, can develop or bring on this sensitiveness in an individual who has hitherto been free from eczema, asthma, and hay fever.

Dr. A. M. Memmesheimer, Berlin, reports that of 98 patients with eczema who were carefully observed and examined for the presence of focal infection (infection starting at some particular point as at teeth or tonsils), 82 had focal infections. The infection from bad teeth was found to be the most frequent, then in order came tonsils, the sinuses adjoining the nose, then the intestine and gall bladder and other parts.

This research worker states that of 76 cured patients in whom the infection had been found and removed, only ten had a relapse within a year, while 15 in whom no focal infection had been found, six had a relapse. Of course the infection may have been present and not found by the examining physician.

The business of trying to find some point of infection in a patient afflicted with eczema may be very "wearisome" to both patient and physician. However, eczema is a persistent and distressing ailment, and getting rid of it is worth weeks or months of effort.

Remember, it is the cells of the skin or other parts of the body that are at fault, not the irritant, and if something (infection) is making these cells "sensitive" it is really common sense to try to find and remove it.

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Ask Me Another

A General Quiz

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1. Is a spider an insect?
2. In what country were peasants called "serfs"?
3. What do stage people mean by a "prop"?
4. What is a catamaran?
5. Who was Samuel Johnson?
6. Near what sea was Jericho?
7. What is a more common name for a trefoil?
8. What famous English poet helped the Greeks against the Turks?
9. What is an isobar?
10. In what mythology was Isis a goddess?
11. Of what system is the highest mountain in the world a part?
12. What is sarsenet?

Answers

1. The spider is not an insect but a member of the class Arachnida which includes also mites, scorpions etc. Insects have three body divisions and four wings, while spiders have two body divisions and no wings. Insects have three pairs of walking legs; spiders four.
2. Russia.
3. An article used in a play.
4. A long narrow raft.
5. An English lexicographer (1709-1784).
6. The Dead Sea.
7. The clover.
8. Lord Byron.
9. A line connecting points having the same barometric pressure.
10. The Egyptian.
11. The Himalaya (Mount Everest).
12. A thin fine silk.

Uncle Phil Says:

Your Work at Hand

Look to tomorrow and plan for tomorrow—but don't forget to work today.

Grouchy folks are sincere in this: They do not try to hide their bad temper. But that makes them no more likable.

Happiest housewife is one who has just made a noble pudding when her husband has unexpectedly brought a friend home to dinner.

Scandal is the devil's merry-go-round.

Future grandpas will tell more about the hard times of this era than about the "good old days."

YOUNG WOMANHOOD

Mrs. Frank Mather of 201 No. Bluff St., Beatrice, Neb., said: "Sometimes ago I was in a weakened condition. I had to force myself to eat, had lost weight and felt very tired and worn out. Headache associated with feminine pains was another complaint. I took Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription as a tonic and I regained my usual weight and strength and was relieved of the headaches due to functional disturbances." Buy now at drug store.

Great Truths and Men

The greatest truths are the simplest: so are the greatest men.



The Greedy Slave Who covets more is evermore a slave—Herrick.

HELP KIDNEYS

To Get Rid of Acid and Poisonous Waste

Your kidneys help to keep you well by constantly filtering waste matter from the blood. If your kidneys get functionally disordered and fail to remove excess impurities, there may be poisoning of the whole system and body-wide distress. Burning, scanty or too frequent urination may be a warning of some kidney or bladder disturbance. You may suffer nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eye—feet weak, nervous, all played out.

In such cases it is better to rely on a medicine that has won country-wide acclaim than on something less favorably known. Use Doan's Pills. A multitude of grateful people recommend Doan's. Ask your neighbor!

DOAN'S PILLS

THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

I look ahead with longing To when there's peace again— My job of being cheerful Will be so easy then.

