## THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE 1-D

AMUSEMENTS

VOL. L-NO. 52.

OMAHA, SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 12, 1921.

TEN CENTS

## The THREE DEAD MEN **By EDEN PHILPOTTS**

## Wherein Michael Duveen, Inquiry Agent, Confronts a Sinister Mystery of the West Indian Cane Fields.

EDITORIAL

W HEN my chief, Michael Duveen, the inquiry agent, invited me to go to the West Indies on a special mission, I rejoiced exceedingly, for the time was late January, London suffered from abominable weather, and the prospect of even a few weeks in the tropics presented very real charm.

"They offered me 10,000 pounds to go," explained Duveen, "and if it, meant anything less than 10 days at sea, I should be pleased to do 50.

"I have told them, however, that I shall send one in whom I place absolute confidence; that I shall devote personal attention to the subject from this side; and that, if we solve the mystery for them, a fee of 5,000 will content me; while, if we fail to do so, I shall ask nothing but my representative's expenses. I hear today by cable that they are satisfied with these conditions, and I invite you, therefore, to sail in the Royal Mall steam packet Don from Southampton on Wednesday next." "Delighted, sir."

"It will be a considerable feather in your cap if you can make anything of the crime. The data are involved, and one cannot build the nost shadowy theory of what occurred upon them. Indeed I shall not trouble you with these voluminous but vague documents. You can go with an open and an empty mind, for if I hand you this screed, you'll be puzzling at it all the way to Barbados and, possibly, arrive with some cut and dried idea that will stand in your way and even cloud your judgment before you begin.

"It's a criminal case on the face of it, and involves three dead men, but, apparently, nobody who is alive. Quite interesting and, I should say, quite difficult; but that's only an impression. You may clear it up yourself without much trouble; or you may put me in a position to do so from England; or it may beat us both. See me again before you go; and book your passage today, otherwise you won't get a comfortable berth. There's a great rush among holiday people on the West Indies this year." "One question. Where am I to go?"

"Only with the home ship to Barbados. The case lies in that island alone, so far as I know. Should you have to go farther afield, of course you will do so. Good luck, my friend. I hope something that may prove useful to you, and I feel sanguine of your success."

I thanked the great man and withdrew well pleased, for Duveen's compliments were few and far betweer. He never praised, but his satisfaction took shape of work, and I knew very well that he had not chosen me for what sounded to be a fairly important investigation without assurance that I should do justice to his international name.

A fortnight later there came a morning when I lounged on the deserted deck of the Don and watched a glorious blending of moonlight and dawn.

Barbados had been for some time visible, lying like a huge sea monster between the flashing white light on Ragged Point and a crimsen beacon above a further promontory; but now the sun climbed up heaven, as only he imby in the tropics, and the island was every detail under his tremendous blaze. I saw low, undulating, cultivated lands, whereon the miles of sugar cane looked at first like fields of grass-green wheat or barley; I noted the windmills and dotted dwellings and brown, tilled earth; while beneath them, crowned with palms that clustered to the shore, spread Bridgetown, with its gleaming masses of white architecture beside the blue waters and sunbleached beaches. A fleet of lighters manned with men of every hue, from mahogany to brown, from yellow to putty-color, was soon about us, while dozens of smaller vessels crowded in as soon as the shore authorities were satisfied. The sun blazed; the steam winches groaned and chattered; people rushed hither and thither shaking hands and saying farewell, gathering luggage and tipping stewards ere they departed.

Then his voice dropped, and I doubted not that he was mentioning me. A moment later he introduced me. The girl

bowed, but did not speak; her mother shook hands and hoped that I should be successful. "All who loved my dear friend's brother

share his sorrow," she said quietly. "And there is nobody on earth who knew him that did not love him. But you are faced with the profoundest difficulties, for this shocking deed was without motive so far as any human being can see." She spoke clearly and with deep earnestness,

and added that she hoped I would come and see her if I found it desirable to do so.

They drove on, and Slanning trusted I had marked them carefully. "Nothing," he said, "connects them with my

brother's death, and yet, to my mind, there may exist some link. They are dear friends, and Lady Warrender's late husband, General Sir George Warrender, was also a dear friend to my brother and myself. But all unconsciously and innocently, the ladies may, none the less, be involved in some way hidden from themsalves and us. That will be for you to consider when you know all that I can tell you."

"The girl looks very ill," I said. "She is-with reason. But the illness is of the mind, not the body. She has had a sad shock."

We reached the public square, wherein the object of chief interest was a green bronze statue of Lord Nelson; and then arriving at Slanning's club, alighted and presently enjoyed a lunch of many delicacies.

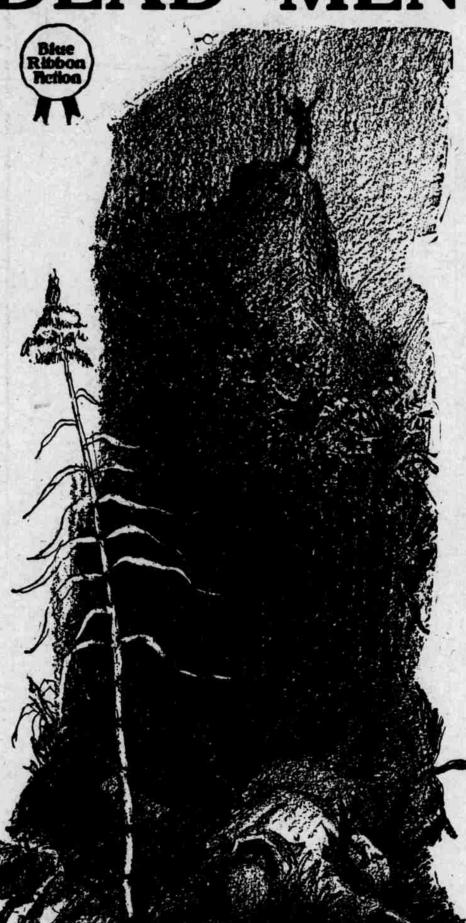
After the meal he led me into a small, private smoking-room where we should be alone. He offered a cigar, which I declined, since the business of my visit was now to begin. Nor did he smoke himself, but entered at once upon his narrative.

"Stop me and ask any questions that may occur to you," he said, and then proceeded.

"My mother died when Henry and I were boys ot 14 years old. We were in England at the time and had just gone from a preparatory school to Harrow. From there we proceeded together to Cambridge. During the winter vacation we used to come out to my father here, while in the summer he usually visited Europe and took us with him to France or Italy. We were just completing our years at the university when my father, Fitzherbert Slanning, passed away somewhat suddenly-he had always been a delicate man-and Henry and I were called to the estates. My father always held that absentee landlords were the ruin of the West Indies and, long before he died, made us promise to live and work here. We kept our word.

"It is, I believe, a rooted opinion that twins resemble each other closely in every particular of appearance and character and taste; and doubtless it often happens so: but I cannot flatter myself that I was half the man my brother He had better brains, better judgment, was. and a larger measure of self-control. We resembled each other superficially, but he had a more thoughtful countenance and a less impetuous disposition. I would not say that I was the optimist and Henry the possimist; but whereas my nature led me to be sanguine and trustful, he was more cautious and a far shrewder judge of character.

"We had a valuable overseer, faithful to my father and trained in "a school to whom the Slannings were a tradition. He helped to seat us in the saddle, and since we were both workers and well educated, we carried on the great sugar industry that our ancestors had founded with success and created respect and confidence. We were singularly alone, for it happened that my father was the last of his line. and new no other Slanning than myself has any direct interest the Pelican estates. They were ours absolutely, and now they are mine, together with the great revenues they furnish and responsibilities they embrace. "Life passed for us uneventfully and prosperously. We were everything on earth to each other, and had not, as I believed, an idea unshared or an ambition not held in common. I stuck to the business entirely; Henry developed wider activities, joined the administration and did useful public work. "He was a man of extraordinary generosity: he loved to advance the welfare of the island and the humblest upon it. If it can be said of any man that he had not an enemy, that can be said of my brother. He was the soul of justice, and displayed an enthusiasm for humanity that won the respect of the rich and worship of the poor. Yet this man has been deliberatly destroyed by a fellow man under circumstances of the profoundest mystery; and when he perished another died also-one who would have laid down his life for Henry or myself a thousand times. This was John Diggle, a full-blooded negro, whose forbears have worked for generations at the Pelican. He was a watchman, and his business required that he should guard the plantations at night. The looser sort of negro will always pilfer, and none is immune from that annoyance. At the time of cane-cutting, therefore, we look after our boundaries; and if the blackguards who come thieving about know that they may get a bul-let about their ears, they think twice before committing depredations.



while those chiefly interested in all the dead men were in the same predicament. Nobody could fit the facts together and make a rational story out of them; indeed, the very material seemed doubtful, for the body of opinion separated the death of the young half-caste, Solly Lawson, from that of the others, and held it only as a coincidence that he had lost his life at the same time.

After his recital Mr. Slanning took me for a long ride about the island, and we stopped at the scenes of the incidents in his story. Mile after mile of sugar cane extended upon every side of us. Great jungles of it fringed the road with their drooping, polished steps, tawny tangles of dried leaves below and bright green crowns above.

Beside a little, neat house surrounded by a hedge of prickly pear, a big calabash tree grew, and its green, polished fruit hung from jagged, almost leafless boughs.

"That's where poor Diggle's widow lives," said Slanning, "and we are now within a mile of the scene of the tragedy. Now you can see the general outline of the Pelican estates, sweeping in an arc to north and south and ranging almost to the coral cliffs near the Crane hotel. If you won't come to me, you might take quarters there to be on the scene of your work."

But knowing not where that work would be, I determined for the present to remain in Bridgetown, and after standing in a cane clearing on the scene of his brother's death and visiting the stately home of the last of the Barbados Slannings, I returned to town and presently took a couple of rooms in a secluded square not far from the club.

My object was to work unknown, as far as possible, and in this ambition Amos Slanning assisted me. My business was not specified, though I soon found that most people were aware of it. I wanted, of course, to learn much that the dead man's brother could tell me, and since the matter still remained a nine days' wonder, all men were glad enough to talk about it, and the conversation in the club smoking-room often drifted round to it.

I had been elected a temporary member of this institution, and spent a few days almost entirely within its walls. I found Amos Slanning immensely popular; indeed, even more so than Henry had been; for while men spoke of the brother with respect, and deplored his sudden end, it seemed that he had not awakened enthusiasm. Indeed, the rest of mankind saw him with different eyes from his twin. A Creole lawyer at the club knew both well, and gave me a friendly but independent description of them.

"Henry Slanning was a man of affairs," he said. "He had ambition, and little liked to be contradicted. But few ever contradicted him, for he was a very sane man, a sound democrat, and knew the trend of contemporary thought. You can form no complete opinion of him through his brother. He had none of the sanguine spirit and natural cheerfulness that marks Amos. He was, in fact, of a melancholy cast of mind-even morbid sometimes."

"Have you any theory of events?" I asked. for the sake of conversation, and the other answered that he had none.

'Had Henry been faced with any great and crushing disappointment," he said, "or had he found himself up against some stroke of fate beyond the power of his money, or brains, to withstand, I can imagine he might have destroyed himself. His brother, of course, says that under no conceivable circumstances would he have done such a thing; others, however,

"Did he ever do anything that Mr. Henry didn't approve of?"

"No, sar-nebber." "Did Mr. Henry ever do anything your husband din't approve?"

"No, sar; Marse Henry a good man. Butbut-"

"They always agreed?"

"Now you say dat, I mind a queer fing, sar, One day-one, two, free days before him die, my John came in sad to him breakfus, an' I say, 'What de matter, John?' An' him say, 'Nuffin.' But I say, 'Dar somefin, 'cause yo' head wrinkle up an' yo' puff fro' your nose.' An' him say, 'You dam' silly ole woman, Jane.' Den, 'fore he go out in de pigeon peas to work, he say, 'Blast dem wicked folk dat steal de cane -dey make trouble an' it fall on me.""

"Was much cane being stolen?"

"No, sar. Dar always a little gwine by night; an' John he cotch a man sometimes; but it am nuffin' much, an' I nebber heard him worry 'bout it. So I say, 'Yo' no worry, John, 'bout a silly fing like dat,' an' he say, 'I got to worry. 'cause Marse Henry, him worry. 'An Marse Henry, him tell me I no' sharp enough an' no' do my duty to de tiefs an' forget how to treat de rogues.' I terrible surprised to hear my husband say dat, an' John, he run on, an' he say he do what he told in future, whatebber happens. an' no question orders; an' I say, 'You always do what you told, John.""

"Did he explain any more about it?"

"No. Him go 'way growling, but him soon get happy again. He said no' mo' 'bout it till John sone killed an' Marse Henry gone killed; an' den I wish I knew mo' 'bout it; but too late den. Po' John-him shot in de side an' him heart blown to pieces."

"I suppose Mr. Slanning couldn't have shot your husband ?"

"Me Gard! Marse Henry shoot John? To' might as well fink John shoot Marse Henry. Marse Henry a gemman dat hated killing anyfing. Him nebber fired a gun in him life. Him nebber squashed a scorpion. He love John, for him told me so, when John ill once. An' John -him have died a hundred times for Marse Henry, or Marse Amos. He berry faithful man an' live for his masters."

"Have you any idea in your mind, Mrs. Diggle, what happened? If John has sometimes arrested men for stealing sugar cane, he may have had enemies."

"No, de man or two dat went to prison no fink bad ob John. It all in de day's work for had man to be cotch some time. And Johnhim shot wid him own gun-'member dat. John carry him gun himself. He nebber put it out of him hand."

"It would have been impossible, you think, for anybody to get his gun away from John?"

"Only Marse Henry do dat. If Marse Henry come by night an' say, 'Lend me yo' gun, John,' den John lend him. But Marse Henry no want gun. Him hate guns."

"Did your husband ever say he had met Mr. Slanning on his rounds by night?"

"Nebber, sar. He sure tell me if such a funny fing as dat happen, 'cause Marse Henry and Marse Amos, dey never go near de plantations by night."

"Have any of your friends any idea what may have happened?"

"Only silly folk. Dey fink de debble tell Marse Henry to go out in de night an' put it in John's head to shoot him; an' den de debble shoot John; but what Gard A'mighty doin' all de time? Marse Henry an' John berry good men, an' dey in hebben now wid golden crowns on der heads an' golden wings an' golden harps. sar; but dat de will ob Gard. An' it no better for de wicked murderer dat dey happy now. He go to hell all de same, whar him belong." "You don't think Solly Lawson had anything to do with it?" "I doan' know nuffin 'bout dat. He killed dead, too, so nobody nebber know if him dar or not." "He was a sort of chap who might steal cane?" "Him tief plenty cane, I dare say, Massa; but him nebber do nuffin' 'gainst Marse Henry -Marse Henry stand up for him plenty times. De niggers tief cane 'cause dey terrible ig'rant fellows an' no fink how wicked dey are; but dey no fall out wid udder gemmen 'bout it. Dat po' Solly-if him see anybody treatin' John bad. or treatin' Marse Henry bad, he run to help dem: I'se sure."

Then came a message for me, and presently my trunk and kit-bags were lowered into a white boat with crimson cushions.

A good-looking, sun-tanned individual sat in R and greeted me pleasantly, while two negroes pulled the boat ashore. He was browned by the tropic sun, but his gray eyes and fair hair and can-cut cast of features proclaimed him an Englishman. He was tall, well built, and dressed in black clothes, which somewhat concealed his size and muscular development. He might have been 45, but life in Barbados had tended to age him, and I learned presently that he was but 5 and 30 years of age.

Amos Slanning, owner of the famous Pelican plantations and sugar factories, chatted as we rowed ashore; but he spoke with an object, and save me various items of information that served as preliminary to the story he was to tell.

"Barbados," he said, "unlike most of the West Indies, has had a fairly peaceful history. An English ship took possession of it in 1605, and it has never changed hands since. There's no more loyal corner of the empire than Birmhire, as we call this island.

'You see before you the last of the West Indian Slannings, and, I suppose, the wealthiest man ir Barbados. Time and chance have reduced us to one, since my twin brother, Harry, was murdered recently; and though nothing can bring him back from the grave, I shall not go to my own in peace if the profound mystery of his death is left unexplained."

He asked me questions concerning Duvsen, while I explained that, though my chief could not come personally to explore the problem, he had sent me, that I might gather every possible particular at first hand and report to him. I brought letters from headquarters for Mr. Slanning, and presently we went together to the Ice House and sat for half an hour at that famous restaurant while he perused them.

"Now I understand," he said, "and heartily I hope you are not here in vain. We'll go to the club now and lunch. Then I'll tell you the story, as far as I know it; and then we'll go home. You'll put up with me, I trust?"

This, however, I declined to do, and explained that it was my purpose to be entirely free during the coming weeks.

"To stop with you might handicap me in many ways," I said, and he raised no question. We were soon on our way to the club. But

an incident broke the brief journey. There passed us a little victoria in which

sat two ladies, and the car was stopped while Amos Slanning dismounted and spoke with them. One, a handsome, middle-aged woman, he addressed, while the other listened. She was a very pretty young creature-an exotic here, as it seemed to me, for she was pale and her blue eyes lacked luster. One had pictured her at home with roses in her cheeks; here she challenged one's sympathy as a hardy flower then in a hothouse.

"Tell me you are better," said Slanning to the elder, and she shook hands warmly and assured him that she was.

'Poor May is not, however. I'm going to take her to America for the summer, "she said. 'You are wise," he answered, gently regarding the girl. "Let her have distractions, the dear child-she needs them.

"It was an old custom that niggers found by our estate police in the cane by night were challenged and, if they did not respond, fired upon. It is a very ancient enactment-of course not followed newadays.

"The manner of Henry's death I will how describe. After a night of full moon he did not join me at breakfast according to his custor and sending a servant to seek him, I found he was neither in his bedroom nor study.

"Puzzled, I looked round myself, but could see nothing of him. Then came the evil news from the cane-fields, and I mounted my horse and rode out to a spot a mile from home, lying in a clearing on the outskirts of the plantations not very far from the Crane hotel, on the south coast of the island. My brother was lying dead, shot through the breast, and actually upon him John Diggle also lay, a corpse. His gun, with barrels discharged, appeared nearly 20 both yards from the bodies; and that it was Diggle's gun which had destroyed both my dear brother and himself there could be no question, for the cartridges were of a peculiar bore and the heavy swan shot unlike anything else of this sort in Barbados.

"Another weapon was discovered- a revolver, brand new, and with all its chambers empty. It had evidently never been fired, and I had not seen it or heard of it; but subsequent investigation showed that my brother had bought it in England with a box of 100 cartridges, which was never even opened. The revolver is one of Forrest's make, and why Henry bought it, seeing his curious hatred and dread of firearms, is surely a part of this mystery.

"Medical examination proved that neither man had been shot at close range-a fact that disposed of an obvious theory. For the local police-colored people-suspected that poor Diggle had murdered Henry and then shot himself; but this is impossible. First, he worshiped Henry as something more than a man, and would have suffered any imaginable torture rather than hurt a hair of his head, and, second. he himself was shot from some distance off. From the nature of the wounds it was calculated that the gun must have been fired at a range of 20 yards-the distance it was found lying from 'the bodies.

Ten yards from the spot where my brother fell, hidden in the plantation, we came upon a while in the case of Solly, as I say, we may feel

"My brother was lying dead, shot through the breast, and actually upon him John Diggle also lay a corpse."

used for cutting it. This would not have been there under normal circumstances, and pointed to the fact of a thief. He had apparently been busy when disturbed. But of him no trace is forthcoming, though a handsome reward has been offered to the rascal if he will come forward and tell us anything he knows.

"Why my brother was out that night is, of course, part of this problem; for there existed no shadow of reason that he should have been. He never did such a thing to my knowledge before, and though he often took solitary rides and walks, being of a meditative spirit, it was not, of course, his rule to rise after retiring. Yet on the night of his death he must have awakened from sleep, drawn on his boots, flung a black alpaca coat over his pajamas, and sauntered out a mile or more into the plantations, to the beat where he knew that Diggle. would be doing his work and keeping his rounds.

"I now come to the third man who appears to have lost his life on this fatal night. Personally I do not associate him in any way with the story I have told you. I see no shadow of connection between the two crimes, and I am tolerably confident-indeed we all are-that the poor wretch known as Solly Lawson got his throat cut by an enemy.

"He was a half-caste employed at the Pelican who lived with an old, black mother in a cabin near the cliffs. He was a worthless, hottempered beggar, with a dog-like affection for my brother and myself; but he quarreled with his fellows and always gave himself great airs on the strength of his white blood. Solly had a way with the ladies also, and made a good deal of trouble in his own circle of society. He has fought various battles and figured in more than one paternity case; but though the poor fellow thus earned some reprobation, we, weakly enough, forgave him a great many of his sins, for he was a mirth-provoking spirit with ready wit: and as much for his old mother and his dead father's sake as his own, we kept him on and forgave him his stupid sons.

"He had been locked up twice, and knew that one more serious offense would be the last so far as the Pelican was concerned; but it seemed of late that he had reformed and was becoming a useful member of the community. So, at least, old Mrs. Lawson declared.

"Well, on the day that was black with this double murder came news of Solly Lawson's end. The debonair creature, so witty and full of life-such a secret joy to us and such a source of endless exasperation to his fellowswas found dead with his throat cut from ear to ear.

"An accident revealed the murder, for the body lay on a shelf under the cliffs, midway between the summit and the deep sea that rolled eneath. It was evident that those responsible for his destruction had flung him over, after murdering him, and that, instead of falling into the water 200 feet below, as they intended, the unseen ledge had received him. From this, when found, he was subsequently lowered into a boat and brought ashore. The fall had broken several bones, but the fatal wound was in his throat.

"In his case, also, no motive whatever for his murder has appeared; and though I doubt not it was over another woman that he finally came to grief, nothing throws light on the subject, and no man, or men, in Barbados can be fairly suspected of the business.

which, on the face of it, are motiveless; and pile of cut cane and one of the common axes very sure that he awakened some secret ma-

agree with me so far. But this is no suicide obviously. He was deliberately shot from some distance-15 to 20 yards, the doctors say. Besides, no circumstances efist, to my knowledge, which had caused Henry any sort of unhappiness."

So he spoke and revealed that he was not familiar with the fact that the dead man had proposed marriage and been rejected. Indeed, so I found it invariably among the numerous men who had something to say about the matter. Nearly all could furnish some item of information, or some experiences throwing light on character. All helped to complete the picture of Henry Slanning; but none, from his brother to the billiard-marker at the Club, could give a complete portrait, and I perceived the picture might never be completed unless Duveen himself proved equal to that task.

Almost my first visit was to Lady Warrender, and her description of the murdered man differed slightly from the rest. She said he was of a religious temperament, but unorthodox and not devoted to any particular form of faith.

"Did you know that he desired to marry Miss Warrender?"

"I had no idea of it. Sometimes I chaffed him and his brother about finding wives and not letting the famous Barbados Slannings die out with them; but Henry always said that Amos was the marrying man. May would have kept his proposal a secret, as he begged her to do, had it not been for his death. Then she felt it was only right to confide in me, and I told his brother. One never knows what may bear upon a question,"

"You noticed no change in him laterly?" "None. It was about six weeks after his re-

jection that he died." "Should you have objected to such a mar-

riage ?" "Far from it. He was a distinguished and honourable man-a gentleman in the highest acceptation of the term. My daughter liked him, and it hurt her much to make him sad; but she did not love him. Though only 15 years older than May, he seemed far more to her, for he was old for his age and a staid, quiet man, averse from society, fond of reading, and with no pleasures in which the average girl could share. He would have made a splendid husband, but not for May."

Gradually I built up the picture of Henry Slanning, yet I cannot say that I ever saw the man very clearly. He came and went, sometimes grew clear, then receded again. Some, I found, held him a cynic, with the warm heart a dynic often conceals; others, of a religious frame of mind, doubted him as one not orthodox. None denied that much good could be credited to him, and in only one quarter, and that very unexpected, did I find a doubt or a suggestion that he had ever committed an act open to question.

I visited the widow of John Diggle, who proved a talker. But she was intelligent, her memory seemed trustworthy, and her honesty obvious. She was gathering washing from the thorny hedge outside her little home, and she chatted mournfully of her husband, the night watchman, and his virtues.

"Him not an enemy, sar-de kindest man and do best husband. Him work for Marse Henry an' Marse Amos for years an' years, an' nebber a hard word from dem all de time. Des fink de world ob him, an' my po' John, he fink de world ob dem."

"Let me come into your house and sit down, Mrs. Diggle, out of the sun. I'm sure everybody has been very sad for you. Mr. Diggle was greatly respected."

"A most respectable man, sar, an' only wicked legues that tief de cane ebber quarrel wid him."

"Had he any quarrel with Solly Lawson, the poor nigger who had his throat cut?"

"Nebber. He knew dat Solly was a wild nigger; but John 'markable gentle wid young men and he said Solly mend some day. He a most Christian person, my John." "Tell me about him. I am very interested

to hear about him."

She rambled on for a while, and gradually I The local police had no theory and no clue: brought her to her last memories of the man,

She whined on-a shrewd, sensible creature enough, and one's heart bled for her grief, for she often stopped talking to weep. It was personal sorrow at her loss and no fear for the future that troubled her, for Amos Slanning had provided for her and her children.

And elsewhere, a few days later, my inquirles took me to see another sad, black woman, the mother of the murdered Solly Lawson,

Mrs. Mary Lawson's cabin stood near the place of her son's death. She was a little, withered negress who had married an Englishmanan old sailor who found work at the Pelican when he left the coasting trade in the Antilles. Mary could add little to my knowledge; but she confirmed what others had said of Solly.

"Him no vice, sar-only berry fond ob de gals an' berry good lookin'-my dear boy was, He lost him head and did silly fings an' fell out wid de neighbors; but him no wicked deep down, an' him always terrible sorry after. Him so much full ob life dat it ran away with himberry 'scitable boy, sar, an' dash at fings an' often get in a mess, but ebb'rybody forgib him after sorry. An' Marse Henry-he never rough wid Solly 'cause Solly so quick wid his tongue, he always get round Marse Henry an' Marse Amos. too, an' make dem laugh."

"He was fond of them?"

"He lub dem-nuffin too good for demhe tell me dat a fousand times. All de world lub dem-dar nobody on de earf dat would hurt dem. An' if Solly him see anybody do harm or Marse Henry or Marse Diggle-he so fierce him be-dat he fight dem an' no care if he kill dem."

"He was friendly to John Diggle, too?"

"Yes, sar-he friendly to Marse Diggle. Marse Diggle a berry nice gemman, an' kind to my son when odder folks cross wid him."

"But suppose Marse Diggle had seen your son stealing sugar-cane?"

"Den Marse Diggle would hab got Solly lock up. God forgib my Solly, dat happened one or two times; but John forgib Solly after him punished, an' Solly no angry wid Marse Diggle after.

When a fing done, it done, sar." "You wouldn't say that Solly might not have been stealing cane that night?"

"No, sar, I wouldn't say dat. He might; but I no fink him dar. I no fink him far from him home. I fink some bad men quarrel wid Solly ober a gal, an' lie hid for him an' pounce on my po' boy while him come home, an' kill

"More men than one?"

"Yes, 'cause Solly berry quick an' strong, Dar no nigger in dese parts strong 'nough to kill my Solly single-handed wid a knife an' den fro him ober de cliff. It take six, sebben men to do dat."

She dwelt on her son's great strength with mournful satisfaction.

"You cannot give a name to anybody who might have had a grudge against him?"

"No, sar-nobody. Him been berry good boy for long time now. An' I ask all de niggers if dey know anybody what hab a down on Solly, an' nobody know. But dar must be somebody done it. I fink sailormen, who sail away de next day, might hab done it."

"You know of no girl who cared for your son, or quarreled with him?"

"Plenty gais, sar; but he only friends wid

shadow of reason for their destruction can be found on the island, or in the world. "Of my brother I have spoken; while Diggle, in his humble capacity, similarly enjoyed the respect and regard of all men. We had not a more popular servant on the plantation, or in the factories. He leaves a wife and three

youngsters, and my brother was godfather to the eldest, while to the second I stood in the same relation. "That is the dreadful outline you will have

to fill in, young man; and now please ask me what questions may occur to you, unless you would rather leave them to a later occasion "I shall have many questions to ask, Mr. Slanning," I answered; "but at this point perhaps you will tell me a little about Lady Warrender and her daughter."

"Gladly. The incident which connects them with my brother's name lies outside those I have narrated, in my opinion; nor can I link it with Henry's death. But you will approach this matter with an open mind, and in any case must hear it and regard it as a confidence. This was one of the few experiences that my dear brother kept from me entirely; nor should I have ever known but for the ladies themselves. "A year ago now Henry told me I ought to marry, and I retorted that it was quite as much his business as mine. He admitted it, and we chaffed one another; but I regarded him as an incurable bachelor and believed myself to be one. In truth, however, Henry desired to marry and, with what looks now like extraordinary secrecy, cultivated little May Warrender, Her mother did not know it until afterwards; but

when Henry died, the girl revealed to her mother that he had much desired to marry her and proposed twice." "You have no reason to doubt her?"

"None, for she is not the sort to invent any such story. Perhaps, if I had heard such a thing from anybody but those people, I might have disbelieved; but it is impossible to doubt them. Henry evidently loved her and strove hard to win her; but he was old for his age and doubtless seemed much older than he was to a girl not 20. Whether he was deeply disappointed or not can never be known. He was such a philosopher that I do not suppose he allowed the matter to trouble him more than was inevitable. May liked him immensely, and when he died, she was quite ill for a time, but when she told her mother, she also declared that marriage with him would have been im-

possible. "Probably, as I say, his reverse did not cast

Henry down unduly, for he was a very quickminded and intelligent man and a great student of human nature. Moreover, had it made any very poignant impression upon him, I cannot think it would have been hidden from me, even though he had tried to hide it. We knew each other too well, and he certainly did not depart at that time from his customary, steadfas

frame of mind-not before me, at any rate. He was level-headed and well-balanced as usual." So Amos Slanning's statement ended, and what chiefly struck me was the innumerable permutations and combinations that might be drawn from it. That the speaker had told me the truth, as he saw it, I could not doubt. He was a simple-minded, ingenuous man and evidently very deeply moved by his loss. For the

inquiries to the best advantage.

rest, it became a question how to pursue my

Thus we have three capital crimes, all of

lignity and brought his punishment upon himself, while there probably are those among us who know the secret of his death, so far as my brother and John Diggle are concerned no