

The Secret of Lonesome Cove

By Samuel Hopkins Adams

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"There, gentlemen and ladies," Simon P. Groot was saying, "there in that place of vast silences and infolding shadows I met and addressed one who was soon to be no more."

"Not all of them, anyhow," said Bain. "The chore in this case is to find facts enough to work on."

"On the contrary," declared Kent, "facts in this case are as plentiful as blackberries. The trouble is that we have no pall to put them in."

"Maybe we could borrow Len Schlager's," suggested the lawyer dryly.

"We don't seem to be getting much of anywhere," complained Sedgwick. "Complicated cases don't clear their selves up in a day," remarked Kent.

"In this case we've got opponents who know more than we do," "Schlager?" asked the lawyer.

"And Dr. Breed. Also, I think, Gansett Jim. What do you think, Mr. Bain, is the mainspring of the sheriff's action?"

"Money," said the lawyer with conviction. "He's as crooked as a snake with the coil."

"Would it require much money to influence him?" "As much as he could get. If the case was in the line of blackmail, he'd hold out strong. He's shrewd."

"Dr. Breed must be getting some of it." "Oh, Tim Breed is Len's little dog. He takes orders. Of course he'll take money, too, if it comes his way. Like mister, like man."

"Those two," said Kent slowly, "know the identity of the body. For good and sufficient reasons, they are keeping that information to themselves. Those reasons we aren't likely to find out from them."

"Murderer has bribed 'em," opined Bain. "Possibly. But that presupposes that the sheriff found something on the body which led him to the murderer, which isn't likely. How improbable it is that a murderer—allowing for argument, that there has been murder—who would go as far as to cover his trail and the nature of the crime by binding the body on a grating, would overlook anything like a letter incriminating himself!"

"What did the sheriff find, then, in the dead woman's pocket?" "Perhaps a handkerchief with a distinctive mark."

"And that would lead him to the identity of the body?" "Presumably. Also to some one, we may assume, who was willing to pay roundly to have that identity concealed."

"That would naturally be the murderer, wouldn't it?" asked Sedgwick. "No, I don't think so."

"It looks to me so," said the lawyer. "He's the one naturally interested in concealment."

"I'm almost ready to dismiss the notion of a murderer at all." "Why so?" demanded both the others. "Because there was no murder probably."

"How do you make that out?" queried Bain. "From the nature of the wounds, that caused death."

"They look to me to be just such wounds as would be made by a blow with a heavy club."

broken right to the edge of the thick and the ground stamped down. One of both of 'em must have broken out into the open, and I lost the trail. But this is what I found on a hazel bush: Do I win the five on it?"

The car came to a stop. Digging into his pocket, Kent produced a bill, which he handed over and took possession of Simon P. Groot's "relic." It was an embroidered silver star, with a few torn wisps of cloth clinging to it.

CHAPTER VIII. Beckonings.

"FACTS that contradict each other are not facts," pronounced Chester Kent.

Fumes of tobacco were rising from three pipes hovered about the porch of the Nook where Kent, Sedgwick and Lawyer Bain were holding late council. A discouraged observation from the artist had elicited Kent's epigram.

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ried a heavy bundle. The manacles were, I infer, in that." "But what conceivable motive could the dead woman have in dressing herself up like a party, going to meet a man and chaining him to herself?"

"When you have a bizarre crime you must look for bizarre motives. Just at present I'm dealing with facts. The iron was on the left wrist of the body; therefore it was on the right wrist of the unknown companion. It is natural, to perform a quick, deft act like snapping on a handcuff with the right hand. Hence, presumably, your visitor was the one who clamped the cuffs."

"And the man broke off his?" "Yes. But only after a struggle, undoubtedly. If I could find a man with a badly bruised right wrist I should consider the trail's end in sight. You'll make inquiries, will you, Mr. Bain?"

"I will; and I will keep an eye on Len Schlager and the doc. Anything more now? If not I'll say good night." After the lawyer had made his way into the darkness Kent turned to his host. "This affair is really becoming a very pretty problem. Why didn't you tell me of your meeting with Simon P. Groot?"

"Who?" "The patriarch in the circus wagon." "Oh, I forgot. Why, when I was trying to trail the woman I chanced upon him and asked if he had seen her. He hadn't."

"He had. Also he heard a terrified cry shortly after. The cry, he thought, was in a man's voice. Simon P. Groot isn't wholly lacking in sense of observation."

"A man's voice in a cry? What could that mean?" "Oh, any one of several hundred unthinkable things," said Kent patiently. "Wait! She must have attacked some other man as she did me. She was going to a rendezvous, wasn't she? Then she and the man she went to meeting her over the cliff."

"And the handcuffs?" Sedgwick's hands went to his head. "That, of course, is the inexplicable thing. But don't you think that was the way she met her death?"

"No." "Then what do you think?" "Never mind that at present. The point is that Simon P. Groot naturally supposed you to have been mixed up in whatever tragedy there was going on. You've an unfortunate knack of manufacturing evidence against yourself, Sedgwick. The redeeming feature is that the sheriff can't very well use it to arrest you."

"I don't see why." Kent chuckled. "Don't you see that the last thing the sheriff wants to do is arrest anybody?"

"No, I don't." "Why he has the body safely buried now. You'll remember that he was in a great hurry to get it buried. Identification is what he dreaded. Danger of identification is now over. If any one should be arrested the body would be exhumed and the danger would return in aggravated form. No; he wants you suspected, not arrested."

"He is certainly getting his wish." "For the present. Well, I'm off." "Why don't you move your things from the hotel and stay here with me?" suggested Sedgwick.

"Getting nervous?" inquired Kent. "It isn't that, but I think I could make you more comfortable."

"Kent shook his head. "Thank you, but I don't believe I'd better. When I'm at work on a case I need privacy. No house, not even a man's own, can possibly be so private as a strange hotel."

"Perhaps you're right," admitted the other with a laugh, then lapsing into pronounced gloom for the first time he said, "It seems pretty tough that I should be in all this coil and tangle because a crazy woman happened by mere chance to make a call on me."

"Kent's pipe glowed in the darkness and silence before he replied. Then he delivered himself as follows: "Sedgwick—puff—try—puff—to forget if you can—puff—puff—that stuff about the crazy woman—puff—puff—puff—forget it! How should I? Why should I?"

"Because—puff—you're absolutely on the—puff—puff—wrong track. Good night." Sundayman's Creek pond, turning aside just before it gains the tangle to the Elyrie hotel to evade a stretch of marsh, travels on wooden stilts across a deep, clear pool fed by a spring. The most rigorous constable could have found no basis for protest in the pace maintained across the bridge by a light electric car, carrying a short, slender, elderly man, who peered out with weary eyes into the glory of the July sunshine. At the end of the bridge the car stopped to allow its occupant a better view of a figure prostrate on the brink of the pool. Presently the figure came to the posture of all fours. The face turned upward, and the motorist caught the glint of a monocle. Then the face turned again to its quest.

"Are you looking for something lost?" asked the man in the car. "I'm hoping to discover the eggs of certain neuropterous insects."

"Ah! You are an entomologist, then." "To some extent." "So was I, once—when I had more time. Business has drawn my attention, though never my interest, away from it. I've entirely dropped my reading in the last year. By the way, were you here in time to witness the swarm of butterflies last month? Rather unusual, I think."

"No, I missed that. What was the feature, specially?" "The suddenness of the appearance. You know, Helmond says that—"

The stranger went on at some length. He appeared to be an interested rather than a learned student of the subject. As he talked, sitting on

the step of his car, from which he had descended, the other studied him, his quiet but forceful voice, his severely handsome face with its high brows, harsh nose and chiseled outlines, from which the eyes looked forth, thoughtful, alert, yet with the gaze of a man in pain. Presently he remarked very courteously:

"If you are going back to the hotel, may I take you along? I am Alexander Blair." "Thank you, I'll be glad of a lift. My name is Chester Kent."

"Not the Professor Kent of the Ramsay case?" "The same. You know, Mr. Blair, I've always believed that you had more of a hand in Ramsay's death than I. Now, if you wish to withdraw your offer of a lift?"

"Not at all. A man who has been so abused by the newspapers as I can stand a little plain speaking. For all that, on my word, Professor Kent, I had no hand in sending Ramsay on that dirty business of his."

"The scientist considered him thoughtfully. "Well, I believe you," said he shortly, and got into the machine."

CHAPTER IX. Chester Kent Declines a Job.

"THIS meeting is a fortunate chance for me," said Blair presently. "Chance?" murmured Kent interrogatively.

The car swerved sharply, but immediately resumed the middle of the road. "Certainly, chance," said the motorist. "What else should it be?"

"Of course," agreed Kent. "As you say." "I said fortunate," continued the other, "because you are, I believe, the very man I want. There is an affair which has been troubling me a good deal. I haven't been able to look into it personally because of the serious illness of my son, who is at my place on Sundayman's creek. But it is in your line, being entomological and perhaps criminal."

"What is it?" asked Kent. "An inexplicable destruction of our stored woollens by the clothes moth. You may perhaps know that I am president of the Kinsella mills. We've been having a great deal of trouble this spring, and our superintendent believes that some enemy is introducing the pest into our warehouses. Will you take the case?"

"When?" "Start tonight for Connecticut." Chester Kent's long fingers went to the lobe on his ear. "Give me until 3 o'clock this afternoon to consider. Can I reach you by telephone?"

"Yes, at Hedgerow house, my place." "That is how far from here?" "Fourteen miles. But you need not come there. I could return to the hotel to conclude arrangements. And I think," he added significantly, "that you would find the project a profitable one."

"Doubtless. Are you well acquainted with this part of the country, Mr. Blair?" "Yes; I've been coming here for years."

"Is there an army post near by?" "Not within a hundred miles." "Nor any officers on special detail about?"

"None so far as I know." Kent produced from his pocket the silver star with the shred of cloth

hanging to it. "This may or may not be an important clue to the curious death that occurred here three days ago."

"It looks like the star from the collar of an officer. I should say positively that it was from an army or navy uniform."

"Are you yourself an expert in woolen fabrics, Mr. Blair?" "I have been."

"Could you tell from that tiny fragment whether or not the whole cloth is all wool?"

Without replying Blair gave the steering handle a quick sweep, and the car drew up before a drug store. He took the star and was gone a few minutes.

"Not all wool," he announced on his return. "Exit the army or navy officer," remarked Kent.

"Why so?" "Because regulations require all wool garments—and get them. What is the fabric?"

"A fairly good mixture, from the very elementary chemical test I made." "Thank you, Mr. Blair. You've eliminated one troublesome hypothesis for me. I'll telephone you before 3 o'clock. Good day."

From the woolen manufacturer Chester Kent went direct to the Martindale Center library, where he interviewed the librarian.

"Do you get the agriculture department publications?" "Yes."

"Have you a pamphlet issued by the bureau of entomology, Helmond on 'The Swarm Phenomenon in Lepidoptera'?"

"Yes, sir. It was inquired for only yesterday by Mr. Blair." "Ah, yes! He's quite interested in the subject, I believe."

"It must be quite recent, then," said the librarian. "We haven't seen him here for a long time until two days ago, when he came and put in a morning reading on insects."

"So, Mr. Alexander Blair," said Kent, addressing the last fence post on the outskirts of the town after a thoughtful walk, "that was a fatal break on your part, that mention of Helmond. Anyone who has wholly dropped a subject since years back don't usually know publications issued only within three months. That casual meeting with me was well carried out, and you called it chance. A very palpably manufactured chance! But why am I worth so much trouble to know? And why does Alexander Blair leave a desperately ill son to arrange an errand for me at this particular time? And is Hedgerow House, fourteen miles distant and possessing just such an electric car as a woman would use in driving round the country, perhaps the place whence came Sedgwick's sweet lady of mystery? Finally, what connection has all this with the body lying in Annalaka burying ground?"

Eluding no reply from the fence post, Kent returned to the Elyrie, called up Hedgerow house and declined Blair's proposition.

Early that evening Francis Sedgwick came to the hotel. "Mr. Kent? I'm afraid you can't see him, sir. He isn't in his room," said the clerk.

"Isn't he about the hotel?" The clerk hesitated. "I ought not to tell you, sir, for it's Mr. Kent's strict orders not to be disturbed, but he's in his special room. Is it anything very important? Any new evidence or something of that sort?"

"That is what I want Mr. Kent to decide." "In that case I might take the responsibility. But I think I had better take you to him myself."

After the elevator had carried them to the top of its run, they mounted a flight of stairs and walked to a far corner of the building. "Nobody's been in here since he took it," explained the clerk as they walked. "Turned all the furniture out. Special lock on the door. Some kind of scientific experiments, I suppose. He's very quiet about it."

Having reached the door, he discreetly tapped. No answer came. Somewhat less timidly characterized his next effort. A growl of surpassing savagery from within was his reward.

"You see, Mr. Sedgwick," said the clerk, raising his voice he called. "Kent, I've brought—" "Get away and go to the devil!" cried a voice from inside in fury.

"What do you mean by—" "It's I, Kent, Sedgwick. I've got to see you."

"There was a silence of some seconds. "What do you want?" asked Kent at length.

"You told me to come at once if anything turned up." "So I did," sighed Kent. "Well, chase that infernal bellboy to the stairs, and I'll let you in."

With a wry face the clerk retired. Kent opened the door and his friend squeezed through into a bare room. The walls were hung and the floor was carpeted with white sheets. There was no furniture of any kind unless a narrow mattress in one corner could be so reckoned.

"It's happened!" announced Sedgwick. "Has it?" said Kent. "Lean up against the wall and make yourself at home. Man, you're shaking!"

"You'd shake, too," retorted the artist, his voice trembling. "No, anger doesn't affect me that way. Wait! Now, don't tell me yet. If I'm to have a report it must be from a sane man, not from one in a blind fury. Take time and cool down. What do you think of my room?"

"What's the game?" asked Sedgwick, interested in spite of himself. "It dates back to our college days. Do you remember that queer freshman, Bergwind?"

"The mind reader? Yes. The poor chap went insane afterward." "Yes. It was a weak mind, but a singularly receptive one. You know we used to force numbers or playing cards upon his consciousness by merely thinking of them."

"I recollect. His method was to stand gazing at a blank wall. He said the object we were thinking of would rise before him visually against the blankness. Did you ever figure out how he managed to do it?"

"She didn't mention Jupiter." "No, of course not. Not by name. But what was it she said about the planet that she pointed out over the sea?"

"Oh, was that Jupiter? How did you know?" "Looked last night, of course," said Kent impatiently. "There's no other planet conspicuous over the sea at that hour from where you stood. That's not important, at least not now. What did she say?"

"Oh, some sort about daring to follow her star and find happiness and that perhaps it might lead me to glory or something."

"A kind of snort came from Kent. "Where have my brains been?" he cried. He thrust the bit of embroidery back into his pocket. Then with an abrupt change of tone:

"Well, is your temper in hand?" "For the present." "Tell me about it, then."

"You remember the picture of the face?" said Sedgwick with an effort. "Nobody would easily forget it."

"I've been doing another portrait from the sketches. It was on opaque glass, an experimental medium that I've worked on some. Late this afternoon I went out, leaving the glass sheet, backed against a light board, on my easel. The door was locked with a heavy spring. There's no possible access by the window. Yet somebody came in and smashed my picture to fragments. If I can find that man, Kent, I'll kill him!"

Kent glanced at the artist's long, strong hands. They were clenched on his knees. The fingers were bloodless. "I believe you would," said the scientist with conviction. "You mustn't, you know. No luxuries at present. Anything else in your place damaged?"

"Not that I noticed. But I didn't pay much attention to anything else. I came here direct to find you."

"That's right. Well, I'm with you for the Nook." "Locking his curious room after him, Kent led the way to the hotel lobby, where he stopped only long enough to send some telegrams. The sun was still a few minutes short of its setting when he and his companion emerged from the hotel. Kent at once broke into a trot.

(To be Continued)

FIGURES THAT AGREE AS TO WAR'S END

The great question as to when the war will end has at last been solved, this time by an unknown "seer" who has sent a letter to Assistant Paymaster J. D. Doyle, of the Great Lakes Naval Training Station enclosing a table of figures based on the date of birth, first year of leadership, present age and length of office of eight leaders of the principal allies.

The informant is positive the war will end this year. He points out that the total for each leader is 3836, which, divided by 2, gives 1918.

Here are the uncanny figures as published by the Great Lakes Bulletin:

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. President Wilson born 1856, Was elected 1912, Years ruling 6, Years old 62.

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. President of France born 1804, Was elected 1913, Years ruling 5, Years old 58.

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. King of Italy born 1807, Started to rule 1900, Years ruling 18, Years old 51.

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. King of Serbia born 1844, Started to rule 1903, Years of ruling 15, Years old 74.

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. King of England born 1865, Started to rule 1910, Years ruling 8, Years old 53.

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. King of Belgium born 1875, Started to rule 1900, Years ruling 18, Years old 43.

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. Tsar of Russia born 1868, Started to rule 1894, Years ruling 24, Years old 50.

Table with 2 columns: Name, Years. Emperor of Japan born 1879, Started to rule 1912, Years ruling 6, Years old 39.

Total 3836. Divide 3836 by 2 and the result is 1918, when the war will end.—From Baltimore Sun.

NORWEGIANS VESSEL LOST

London, Sept. 1.—Norway lost 13 vessels, aggregating 22,976 tons, through war causes in the month of August, according to an announcement made to-day at the Norwegian legation here. Two Norwegian sailors lost their lives.

Minard's Liniment Relieves Neuralgia.

Adv. in the Beacon

A For Results

Stages on shore Good ply to E. N. B.