

Oliver October

By George Barr McCutcheon

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(Continued from last week.)

"I'll have 'em put some planks over those holes," said the detective. "That reminds me. Now that they've stopped work under the porch, you might call off your watchdog. Give the old boy a little much-needed rest."

Oliver walked to the corner. Joseph Sikes was sitting on the back steps, his coat collar turned up about his throat, his aged back bent almost double, his chin resting on the mittened hands that gripped the head of his cane, his wrinkled face screwed up into a dogged scowl.

"Better step into the kitchen, Uncle Joe, and ask Lizzie for a cup of hot coffee. Work's over for today."

"The h—! it is," growled Mr. Sikes without changing his position.

"Let him alone," said Malone, good-naturedly. "He's hatching out some new trouble for me. As for Fink, he's down there in the swamp from morning till night, supervising the whole blamed job."

"They are the best friends I've got in the world, Malone," said Oliver earnestly.

"Well, we'll clear you so's you can have your committee meeting in peace," said the detective.

"I have put it up to county headquarters, Malone," said Oliver, in an emotionless tone, "as to whether I should stay in the race or withdraw."

"What do you mean, withdraw?" asked the detective sharply.

"Well, it's only fair to give them a chance to put someone else on the ticket in my place if they feel—"

"Come off! You've got old Gooch licked to a standstill, so what the devil's got into you? We're not going to find your father's body, my boy."

"How do you know you are not going to find it?" was Oliver's surprising question.

Malone started. "What has caused you to change your tone like this, Baxter?"

"It's getting on my nerves, Malone—I don't mind saying so," said the younger man, frowning.

"I get you," said Malone, sympathetically. "It does give a fellow the shivers. But now about this getting off the ticket. Don't you do anything of the sort, Baxter."

"Malone, I can feel it in the air that a great many people believe I know what became of my father."

Mr. Sikes, who had shuffled around the corner, overheard the remark. He fairly barked:

"I don't make a particle of difference what they believe provided nobody is able to find the corpus delicti. They've got to dig up your father's corpus delicti before—What in thunder are you laughing at, sir?"

Malone, to whom this question was addressed in Mr. Sikes' most aggressive manner, put his hand to his mouth and succeeded in replying with as straight a face as possible:

"I've been reading an awfully funny book, Mr. Sikes. It's about detectives."

There is no telling what Mr. Sikes would have said to Mr. Malone about detectives in general if the delegation from headquarters had not arrived a minute or two later.

CHAPTER X

The Corpus Delicti

The automobile came swinging up the drive on the tall of Mr. Malone's defensive explanation. Oliver hurried off to greet the occupants of the car, Mr. Sikes hobbling along in his wake. Malone refilled his pipe as he strode across the stable yard. In the lee of the barn he scroched his fingers. His gaze was fixed on the swamp. Far out in the "danger zone" a number of men were compactly grouped. A solitary figure was running toward the Baxter house, while from the main highway to the right of the slough a dozen or more scattered people were picking their way gingerly across the intervening space. The detective dropped the charred match and started briskly down to meet the runner. He was no longer bored. He was an alert, vital, keen-sensed hunter of men.

Mrs. Grimes stood on the front porch as the three committeemen entered the house. Mr. Sikes ambled up as they disappeared through the door. He stopped short in the gravel walk just below where Mrs. Grimes was standing. He felt that it was necessary to lower his voice.

"We've only six more days to go, Serepty," he said. "This is the nineteenth."

"Yes. He will be thirty on the twenty-fifth. I hope you'll be satisfied, Joe Sikes."

He pondered gloomily. "Setting back there on the kitchen steps I got to thinking about the last time I was up here before old Ollie disappeared. I wonder if you remember what he

said to me and Silas, setting right here on this porch."

"I remember the poor old thing saying he couldn't go to sleep nights because he was afraid a mob would come up to the house and take Oliver October out and hang him for something he'd never done."

"I guess maybe that was it. And another thing: Didn't he say he wouldn't blame Oliver if he up and beat his brains out for letting that gipsy queen lift the veil and cause all this worry?"

"What are you trying to get at, Joe Sikes?"

"Oh—nothin' particular. I just thought I'd warn you not to say anything about our talk that night, 'specially what he said about Oliver beatin' his brains out. I mean," he added sternly, "that you and me and Silas never heard him say anything like that—then or any other time."

"What's got into you, Joe?"

"I'm just giving you a few instructions, Serepty, in case anything does happen. You're so darned good and conscientious, as the saying is, that I've worried myself sick over you. I mean about swearing to a lie."

"I would swear to a million of them," she cried, "if it would be any help to Oliver October."

"Birds of a feather," said Mr. Sikes, rather proudly.

"Come in and have a cup of coffee, Joe," said she.

She came down from the porch and together they started for the rear of the house.

"Look out yonder, Joe—in the swamp," she cried suddenly, pointing through the fringe of trees. "There's a crowd—"

"Serepty!" he moaned. "They—they have found something out yonder. I feel it in my bones. The corpus delicti. I guess I won't have any coffee. I'll just mosey out there and see what's happened."

"Wait a minute. Isn't that Silas Link coming across the swamp?"

They stood and waited. In due time Silas panted his way up the incline and came shuffling toward them. Mr. Sikes stalked forward, followed by Mrs. Grimes.

"Well?" demanded the former.

"They—fished—up—a—carcass," puffed Mr. Link.

Absolute silence—except for the painful wheezing of the last speaker.

"Ollie's?" asked Mr. Sikes at last.

"No telling. Unrecognizable."

"It must have had clothes on," put in Mrs. Grimes stoutly. "Wouldn't you know Ollie Baxter's clothes if you—"

"Hasn't got any clothes on."

"No clothes on?" demanded Mr. Sikes. "Then it can't be Ollie. He had his new suit on."

Mr. Link hesitated. "That detective says the chances are that whoever did the killing stripped the body and burnt the clothes," he said slowly, wearily.

A longer silence than before. Mr. Link's listeners seemed turned to stone. Finally Mr. Sikes moistened his stiff lips.

"What do you mean, Silas, by—by killing?"

"If you feel sort of squeamish, Serepty," began Mr. Link considerably, "maybe you'd better—"

"I'm not squeamish," retorted the redoubtable little woman. "Go on."

"The top of the skull is smashed in—split wide open," announced the newsbearer, in a hushed, sepulchral voice. Then, apparently eager to get it over with, he hurried on: "Couldn't have died a natural death. Couldn't have committed suicide. Somebody hit him over the head with a heavy instrument. Most likely an ax or a hatchet. Buried six or eight feet deep in a mudhole. They pulled up a hand first with one of them poles with a hook on it. Then they set to work scooping out the hole with shovels. Wasn't long before they got down where they could—"

"Don't tell any more—don't tell any more!" quaked Mrs. Grimes.

"Lean on me, Serepty," said Mr. Sikes, who, if anything, was weaker than she.

"They've sent for the police and for my men," went on Mr. Link. "And they're telephoning for the sheriff and coroner and everybody else. Look at the automobiles rushing down that way—and people running on foot—and—oh, my Lord, Joe! If it should turn out to be Ollie it will—it will look mighty bad for Oliver October!"

The news spread like wildfire. Before nightfall everyone in Rumley knew that the body of Oliver Baxter had been found and that he had been foully murdered.

And then came the startling rumor that old man Baxter had gone to his safety deposit box in the vaults of the bank three days before his disappearance and had removed five \$100 Liberty bonds! Rumor, pure and simple, yet accepted as fact by those who roamed the streets. A grave, unanswered question, too, had to do with the money so lavishly spent by young Oliver—several thousand dollars in cash. Where had it come from? Simple as rolling off a log! There wasn't much doubt as to where and how Oliver got his ready cash! But to split his own father's head open with a spade, and throw him into a supposedly bottomless pit, and burn his clothes!

For now all those who thronged the streets were saying that Oliver October had murdered his father.

The street leading to the Baxter residence was alive with people—curious, silent, awestruck men and women who stared intently at the windows.

The sheriff had returned to the county seat after cautioning Oliver to keep his head and await developments.

"It looks pretty bad for you, Baxter," he had said at the end of a long interview, "but there's only one thing for you to do. People don't want to believe you killed your father, and that's a big advantage. So it is up to you to stand your ground and face whatever comes. Don't talk. Keep your trap closed. I called your uncle up on the telephone just before I came here this evening. He is coming over tomorrow morning to see if he can identify the body. Of course he can't. You seem to be dead sure that it isn't your father. So is Mr. Sikes and Undertaker Link. You all claim that your father was shorter by several inches and had lost several of his teeth. But your lawyer will look after all these points. Don't sit tight, Baxter, and keep cool. Just sit tight. Understand?"

The company in Oliver's sitting-room included the redoubtable and venerable Messrs. Sikes and Link, Judge Shortridge, Mr. and Mrs. Sage and Jane, Doctor Lansing and Mrs. Grimes. Sammy Parr was expected.

He was to bring in the news of the streets.

Oliver, a trifle pale, but with a stubborn frown on his brow, listened calmly to the animated conversation that went on about him. He sat beside Jane on the sofa in the corner of the room.

"I don't see how you can be so unmoved, so calm, Oliver, dear," whispered Jane in her lover's ear. "Just think what they are talking about—and as if you were not here at all."

He stroked her hand. "I've been thinking of something else, Jane."

"Of me, I suppose, and the silly no-



He Stroked Her Hand. "I've Been Thinking of Something Else, Jane."

CHAPTER XI

Oliver in Danger

The front door opened suddenly and in walked Sammy Parr.

"Excuse haste," he said, tossing his hat and gloves on a chair. "I'm back, say, gee whiz, everybody in town is out on Clay street. Lots of them down this way, strolling past—"

"What are the people saying, Sammy?" Judge Shortridge broke in grasping his arm.

"Well, I hate to tell you, but as far as I can make out, judge, there seems to be a general feeling that—that Oliver did it," said Sammy, wiping his moist forehead with the back of a hand that shook slightly.

"Snap judgment," said the lawyer, after silence had reigned for a few seconds. "That is always the way with the ignorant and uninformed. Nothing to worry about, Oliver. They will be on your side tomorrow when they understand a little better. It's always the way with a crowd."

Josephine Sage spread her hands in a gesture of contempt. "What fools these mortals be," she declaimed theatrically.

It was after eleven o'clock when Oliver's friends departed. He stood on the porch and watched them drive off in the two automobiles. A few persons had stopped at the bottom of the drive to see who were in the cars. The glaring headlights fell upon white, indistinct faces and then almost instantly left them in pitch darkness.

"I wish you had let Mr. Sage marry you and Jane tonight, Oliver," said Mrs. Grimes, at his side on the top step. "You have the license and everything, and it could all have been over in a few minutes. And Jane begged you so hard."

"I couldn't do it, Aunt Serepty," he said dejectedly. "I don't know what is ahead of me. I may be in jail before I'm a day older. He gave her a wry, bitter smile as he put his arm over her shoulder and walked beside her into the house. "Pleasant thought, isn't it, old dear?"—as the celebrated Josephine would say."

Clay street was almost deserted as

Lansing and Sammy Parr drove through it after leaving the Baxter place. The Sages were in the former's car. In front of the hotel Sammy, who was some distance ahead and who had dropped the two old men at Silas Link's home, slowed down and waited for Lansing to draw alongside.

"I don't mind saying to you that there was a lot of ugly talk earlier in the evening," said Sammy uneasily. "A lot of nasty talk. I didn't tell Oliver, but I heard more than one man say he ought to be strung up."

"Oh, Sammy, do you think—?" began Jane, in a sudden agony of alarm.

"Nonsense!" cried the minister, instantly sensing her fear. "Such things don't happen in these days and in this part of the country. The people will let the law take its course. Have no fear on that score."

"Well, anyway, it looks mighty queer to me," said Sammy tactlessly shaking his head. "I don't like this awful stillness. It isn't like this even on ordinary nights."

Jane clutched Lansing's arm and shook it violently.

(To be Continued.)

Foolishness of Fear

Set Forth by Writer

"I'm afraid—I'm afraid—I'm afraid!" A million times a day we say it—"I'm afraid!" And then we wonder why we have so little Success and so little Happiness!

If you spend your whole life looking for Safety, then you'll get Safety, perhaps, and you'll find out how little it amounts to.

Safety isn't Success and it isn't Happiness. Safety is a negative thing. It isn't worth a bean by itself. It's not getting hurt—that's all. Yet millions of people waste their whole lives trying to be safe.

The world of business is filled with fears. It is filled with people who are hiding—dodging—running for dear life.

In business life, as well as on the battlefield, men have shellshock and spasms of fear—blind, mad, unreasoning fear.

Most business men have these spasms of fear in times of depression. Then they cancel orders and sack employees, and stop advertising and dis themselves in.

Generally it is not what does happen that frightens men, but what might happen. Most men squeal before they are hurt.

The truth is that no man can escape either criticism or risk. You can never be blameless and you can never be safe, so why worry about it.

Face your fears. Walk toward them. And you'll be surprised to see how small and weak they are.

Do what you're afraid to do. Be brave enough to buy in a slump. Be brave enough to sell in a boom. And you'll have to hire a taxi to take your profits home.

If you are in trouble, always ask, "What is the worst that can happen?" You'll usually find that the worst is not so terrible.

Courage! It is the rarest and most precious of all our real possessions. It is not taught in schools nor in churches. Every man must learn it for himself.

Danger is a tonic. It is a necessity of the inner life. You can never learn to be a good loser until you lose.

So here are unanswerable reasons why you should adopt this tip as one of the rules of your life—get rid of fear. No one can hurt you if you are true to yourself.—Herbert N. Casson in Forbes Magazine.

The Adult

We adults forget. Food and drink and sleep are the realities to us. To us there is a yesterday; there will be a tomorrow. I try to go back into the dim and vast past, but I do not find myself there. I am an adult. I have discovered philosophies that never burdened the sweet conscious honesty of childhood. I have discovered obstacles intervening between me and my God. The road to Paradise is no longer short and straight and shining; it winds among the shadows and may not lead to Paradise after all.

Complexities have entered into that gentle relationship between life and myself that had no existence in the days of babyhood. A hundred hands, atavistic and primitive, pull me in a hundred different directions; mocking voices, stilled in childhood, harking repeated questions in my puzzled ears. Along that road to babyhood I do not find the child I was; I find only my present self. Knowledge of things I may have gained, but only a great bewilderment as to life itself.—Arthur Somers Roche, in Heart's International-Cosmopolitan.

Where God Is

Eddie, age four, is a veritable question mark.

After attending Sunday school he was at home, seated on the floor playing with his sister, Virginia.

He looked up suddenly and asked: "Mamma, where is God?"

"God is everywhere," I answered.

Eddie held out his hand about twelve inches above the floor.

"Is God here, mamma?" he questioned.

I replied in the affirmative.

Then again from Eddie, still holding out his hand, "Come here, Virginia, and put your hand on God."

Those Dear Girls

Madge—Beauty is but skin deep, my love.

Marie—Then don't despair, dear, yours may come to the surface in course of time.

List of Requisites Needed for Success

It is possible to codify the qualities that surely lead to success. Success has often been termed luck, chance, hard work, effort, application, etc., but we are now told that success is a science as truly as the science of health or the science of natural phenomena. And in line with this trend of modern thought to reduce success to certain rules fifty of the cardinal principles or laws are tabulated, obedience to which, it is held, are as necessary to attain any degree of success in life as it is for us to obey the laws of nature to keep our bodies healthy.

These fifty cardinal principles are as follows:

Self-control, finding one's self, morality, health, will power, love or charity, knowledge of human nature, perseverance, ambition, development of inward richness and self-employment, understanding, co-operation, optimism, self-reliance, rationality, common sense, honesty, loyalty, dependability, sincerity, love of the beautiful, naturalness, patience, right attitude toward life and work, altruism, industriousness, reverence for God and elders, ability to see ahead, contentment with nothing short of the best, economy, ability to think clearly and speak forcefully, discretion, ability to execute plans, fair play, broad-mindedness, courage, imagination, mind, initiative, thoroughness, punctuality, personality, training, self-inventory, memory accuracy, truth to one's self, courtesy, determination.

No attempt is made to place these in the order of their relative importance with probably the exception of the first one, self-control.

Recalls Big Theft

The arrest of Romain Durignac in Paris recently for the theft of a pair of slippers worth perhaps half a dollar recalled the swindle he perpetrated with his sister, Therese Humbert, 23 years ago. On the strength of an alleged fabulous fortune left them in a locked safe, which was not to be opened until a certain date, the pair borrowed millions on millions of francs. They numbered among their victims politicians, diplomats and many of the leading figures of French society. Finally, the finger of suspicion pointed to them, and the authorities insisted that they open the safe, which was found to be empty. The brother and sister had fled, but they were captured in Spain, and the proceedings of their trial in Paris filled the French and foreign newspapers of the day.

Tunnies Worry Fishermen

Mediterranean tunnies have become common along the Norwegian coast, and are being exported by the thrifty Norwegian fishermen. The "mackerel giant," as it is called in Norway, is one of the strongest and swiftest fish known, and it may run to 1,000 pounds in weight. A comparatively small one recently netted off Grimsby, England, weighed 400 pounds. At Esbjerg, Denmark, a 600-pounder has been brought in. Attributing their presence to the warm summer, English fishermen say that large schools are roaming about the North sea, creating terror among other fish. Some think that the absence of herring shoals from their customary haunts is due to the presence of these hungry Mediterranean marauders.

Worth Borrowing

Here is a story about Dr. William Norman Guthrie, the well-known New York minister.

At a dinner party a minister from the West enthusiastically described the success of a charity sermon he had preached. Three and four figure subscriptions, he said, came in galore at the sermon's end. The collection plate was massed high with banknotes of large denomination and some ladies even went so far as to turn in jeweled bracelets, rings and watches.

The silence was impressive when Doctor Guthrie leaned across the table toward him and said:

"My dear sir, could you lend me that sermon?"

Boost for Johnson's

The story about a certain pill manufacturer working the name of his product into the hymn, "Hark the herald angels sing," may or may not be true; but the following actually appeared in a church paper:

"Why I attend prayer meeting. To me the prayer meeting is an excellent carbon remover for the heart, and as Johnson's Carbon Remover is for our machines, so is Glendale Presbyterian Prayer Meeting for me.—Mary R. Milton."

Planes Find Runaways

Army planes from Crissey field, California, lent help recently to the authorities of San Quentin prison when six trustees escaped in a launch. The planes scanned every launch in the bay until at last they sighted the fugitives. Then they signaled their discovery to the officers on shore and the prisoners were recaptured.

Rail Office Court

At Wolf Point, Mont., a railroad office has, for the first time in America probably, become the county courthouse. The Great Northern Railroad company moved its division headquarters to Havre, and Roosevelt county, while it is erecting a suitable county building, has moved in on a three years' lease.

FARM NOTES.

—Feeding and milking regularly increase dairy profits.

—Dahlia bulbs should be examined to see that they are keeping well. If they are shriveling cover them with sand; if they show signs of starting growth they should be kept in a cooler place.

—When it is inconvenient and often impossible for the farm family to make frequent visits to local markets during the winter months, the vegetables needed should come from the supply furnished by the farm garden.

—Poultrymen planning to buy day-old chicks should place their orders without delay. Practically all of the reliable hatcheries will be booked by February 1 with all the orders they can possibly handle for the entire season.

—Succulent feeds, such as silage, roots, soaked beet pulp, or similar feeds, are important in maintaining high winter milk production. They stimulate the appetite and aid in keeping the digestive system in good condition.

—Have you chosen your exhibits for the State Farm Products Show in Harrisburg, January 18 to 22? There will be classes for all kinds of farm products. You may have the best in the State but no one will know it if it is not shown.

—Many evergreens are damaged every winter by allowing a wet heavy snow to accumulate on their branches, thus breaking them down. Take a wooden rake and shake the trees gently to remove the snow after every heavy storm.

—Have you saved the soil you will need for plant growing early in the spring? It is a mighty hard job to dig frozen clods for this purpose during the winter. This fall, before the ground freezes too hard, take into the shed a few bushels of soil to use in the plant flats when seeding time rolls around.

—With the crops in the barn, or marketed, this is the season to look to the woods for their annual returns. Probably there are one or two mature trees there that would make enough lumber or timbers, if saved, to repair the barn or sheds. This is the time to get these logs out and to the saw-mill.

—In what condition are the garden implements? Were they discarded at the close of the outdoor season and allowed to deteriorate from rust and dirt, or have they been thoroughly cleaned, the metal parts well oiled with crank case drainings, and perhaps those worn wooden parts given a coat of paint?

—During the next few weeks many nursery catalogs will come to the farm and city gardener. Placing orders early for the seeds needed means prompt service and less danger of errors in filling orders. "Do it now" applies to ordering seeds as much as to mailing Christmas presents early in December.

—Artificial lights are now being used quite extensively to increase winter egg production. They give the hen a longer working day. This enables her to eat more feed which leaves a larger surplus from which to make eggs. Lights give good results if handled properly. The birds should be made to work about twelve or thirteen hours a day.

—At the State Farm Products Show in January, 290 cow testing association members will be honored for having herds which averaged 300 or more pounds per cow during 1925. Twenty-three herds averaged 400 or more pounds per cow, 82 herds between 350 and 400 pounds, and 185 were in the 300-350 pound class. How many more will there be next year?

—These poultry truths were stated by Prof. A. G. Phillips, nationally known poultry expert, head of the poultry department of Purdue University.

The first consideration in poultry is the purpose for which the birds are to be kept, according to Prof. Phillips. "If you want white eggs and not a great deal of meat, choose the Leghorn or Ancona," he said. "These are nervous, active birds that grow quickly and consume a small amount of food, but you must be prepared to house them so that their combs will not be frozen. On the other hand, if you prefer brown eggs and like chickens that will dress out well for the table, then you had better get the Plymouth Rock, Rhode Island Red, Wyandotte or Orpington. They cost more to raise and maintain, but as hens they will probably not freeze their combs. They also can be hatched and raise their own chicks. Balance the pros and cons of these two groups of birds and choose the one that suits you best."

—Fertilizer left over from the fall seeding in Centre county may be used profitably on pasture lands. Where there is a fair sod, pasture land will nearly always pay for the application of fertilizer and there is little loss on such land from fall or even winter application.

If the fertilizer is put on this fall it will be well washed into the soil by spring and ready to give the grass a good send-off. Where the soil is very sour an application of lime may be necessary before the best results can be obtained from fertilizer. A few hundred pounds of phosphate or phosphate and potash will thicken and increase the productive power of pasture sod to a surprising degree. It is also surprising how long the beneficial results of such an application will last.

It is better to use the left over fertilizer for this purpose than to attempt to keep it because unless it is exceedingly dry and is kept in a dry place it is likely to become hard and lumpy by spring. This will make the fertilizer almost useless without grinding.