



STORIES OF THE SECRET SERVICE

BY Capt. Patrick D. Tyrrell

STORY No. 2

The Bothamley Murder Mystery

Being an Account of the Efforts Made by This Government to Bring to Justice the Murderer of Clement L. Bothamley, an Englishman Killed in Kansas.

By CAPTAIN PATRICK D. TYRRELL

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There is an old country proverb to the effect that "Tombstones never lie." In an obscure spot in an old cemetery at Newton, Kan., is a grave at the head of which stands a small marble slab bearing these words:

In memory of BERTHA L. BOTHAMLEY, Beloved wife of Clement L. Bothamley.

Contrary to the old saying, this tombstone lies, but it is a lie that will be forgiven its author because it was engraved in marble to cover the sin of a woman. The rearing of this modest marble slab marked the close of one chapter in a tragedy that had its scenes laid in two continents, ran the whole scale of human emotions and ended in murder.

It is seldom that an operative in the secret service of the United States is selected to unravel crimes other than those against the currency of the country. My connection with the Bothamley case came about through a request made by James J. Brooks, at that time chief of the secret service for the federal department of justice. John W. Carr, secretary of the British Association of Kansas, had written to the British ambassador at Washington, asking that he solicit the aid of this government in clearing up the murder of a countryman and securing the conviction of the murderer or murderers. Chief Brooks assigned me to the work because the crime had been committed in territory with which I had become familiar in the constant search for counterfeiters.

It often happens that the man who makes the unraveling of crimes a profession is called upon to take a case long after the commission of the crime he is detailed to solve. Such tasks are the most difficult in the detective's calling. Time is the criminal's strongest protector. This is illustrated almost daily in our criminal courts, in prosecutions which fail to result in convictions at the first trial. Before a second trial can be held some witnesses die or disappear, the recollection of others loses its clearness and various considerations in favor of the accused appear. These same considerations work to the advantage of a criminal before the case gets into the courts. This digression applies to the strange case I am about to relate. Had the same efforts been made in the early part of a certain October as were started the latter part of the following January I am convinced that the closing scene of this story would have been laid at the scaffold. Had certain significant incidents in the domestic history of a man and his wife in a small Dakota hamlet been carefully investigated several months before I was called upon to go over them, I am certain they would have led to startling revelations that would have proved one murder and prevented another.

Briefly stated, the mystery before me was the murder of Clement L. Bothamley, a good-looking, middle-aged Englishman, wealthy as riches were computed in the west at that time, and while on his way over the Arbuckle trail from Kansas to Texas, with 2,300 sheep. The Arbuckle trail was one of those great highways of the plains that then served the nomadic cowboy, sheepherder and immigrant as wagon road and railroad combined. Its winding course from Caldwell, Kan., to Fort Reno, Indian Territory, was dotted on either side with lonely graves, unmarked, and in most instances spelling "finis" to one of life's tragedies. In such a grave the body of Bothamley had been buried the same day he was found dead, his final resting place being near a small post known by the growsome appellation of "Skeleton ranch."

This border country was plagued by murderous Indians and white desperadoes, one as much to be feared by

the peaceful settlers as the other, and each willing to cut a throat or use the deadly six-shooter at the slightest prospect of gain.

Three months or more had elapsed between the murder of the Englishman and the time I was assigned to the clearing up of the case, and this made it necessary for me to secure all the data concerning the finding of the body and the incidents attending it at second hand. Fortunately, a 17-year-old boy, Wesley Vetter by name, who had been in the employ of the murdered man, was in Wichita and disposed to tell an unvarnished tale of the circumstances surrounding the death of his employer. With this lad I visited the scene of the murder, 70 miles from Caldwell. This visit resulted in nothing except the fixing in my mind of the events as related by Vetter.

To reduce the statements of his Kansas friends to a connected history, Clement L. Bothamley had arrived in Florence, Kan., some months before the murder in company with a stately, handsome woman, whom he introduced as his wife. While the appearance of two personages of such evident distinction and wealth at the frontier town would naturally excite unusual interest at any time, the advent of the Bothamleys was an uncommonly memorable event, owing to the fact that their luggage consisted of 31 trunks, to say nothing of innumerable boxes and portmanteaux. Bothamley's manner was that of a lord, and his companion indicated plainly by her hauteur of manner that her new environment was far different from that to which she had been accustomed. In his talks with Florence people Bothamley was a native of London, who, with his wife, was seeking a home in frontier America. He talked of cattle and sheep raising as his intended vocation. Attempts to learn more of him than he told in a business way were futile. After two weeks he moved from Florence to Newton, soon after moving to a ranch of 640 acres several miles from the town.

Two months after his arrival at Newton his companion died in child-

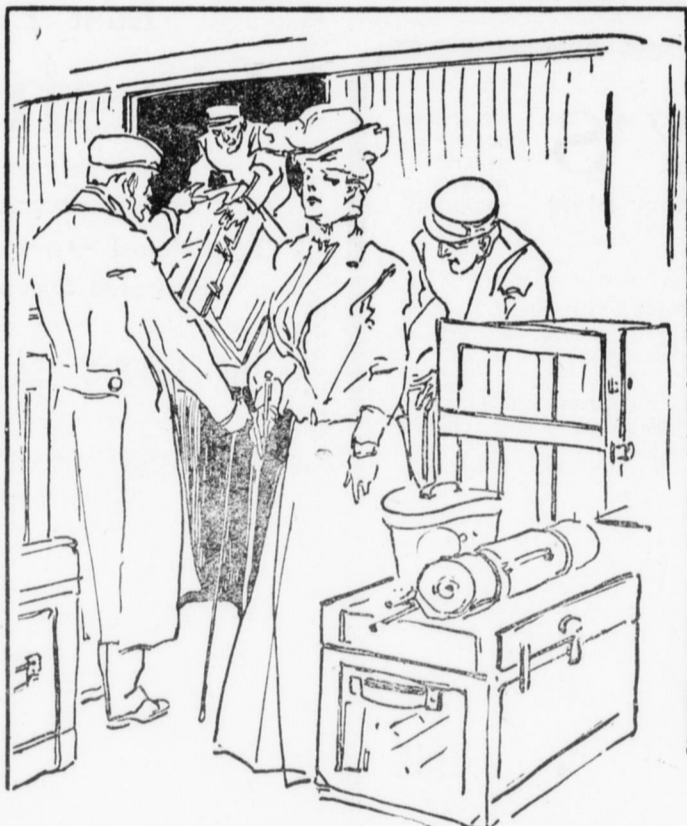
wet weather, as he suffered from rheumatism. The start was made the latter part of August, with Vetter and another man, William Dodson, to help care for the sheep. Little progress was made at first, as Bothamley was attacked with rheumatism and had to be taken back for treatment. October found the outfit at Hackberry creek, on the Arbuckle trail, the scene of the murder.

Vetter and Dodson seldom slept more than 125 feet from the car, the woman sleeping on a raised couch in the car and Bothamley on a "shake-down" on the floor, or in the covered buggy close by. Early in the morning of October 7 Dodson and Vetter, who, contrary to their custom, had gone to sleep some distance from the car, were aroused by cries from the woman, who was rushing toward them.

"Something awful has happened at the car," she cried. She was much excited and dazed, complaining that "something ailed her head." Vetter immediately went back to the car, found the door shut and returned to the others without attempting to investigate. The woman urged Dodson to go to the car. He opened the door and saw Bothamley lying on the blankets on the floor, dead. A bullet hole under the right eye told the manner of his death.

When Dodson informed the woman that Bothamley was dead she became hysterical and wept violently. Dodson saddled a horse and rode several miles to the camp of a man named Collins. Bothamley's body was prepared for burial, the funeral taking place the same day at Skeleton ranch, with the woman, Dodson, Vetter and Collins in attendance. The next morning Dodson and the woman washed the blood stains from the bedclothes. After three days, during which Bothamley's supposed sister said she had written to England concerning the death of her brother, preparations were made to continue the journey to Texas.

Meanwhile, however, news of the finding of Bothamley's body had traveled over the thinly settled country



THEIR LUGGAGE CONSISTED OF THIRTY-ONE TRUNKS.

birth and was buried there. As there was no reason to doubt the truth of his claim that the woman was his wife, she was buried as such, and he assumed custody of her personal effects, including a \$3,000 pair of diamond bracelets and other jewelry and wearing apparel, amounting to much more in value. Despite the distance at which Bothamley had always kept his neighbors and the reticence he practiced in regard to his personal affairs, there was a wave of sympathy for him at the death of his wife. He retired to his ranch, went in for the raising of sheep, and in a measure, dropped from view. Throughout that section of Kansas there were several of Bothamley's countrymen engaged in the same occupation he had taken up. One of these was William H. Phillips, who was made the administrator of Bothamley's estate after the murder, and who told me that Bothamley's connections in his native country were high. Later, among his effects we found a uniform of an officer in the yeoman cavalry, which had been his, together with other evidences of his former prominent position in England.

According to the story of Vetter, who was employed at the Bothamley ranch, his master announced one day in the summer that he was going to Newton to meet his sister, who was coming out from England. On his return he was accompanied by a petite, brown-haired, blue-eyed young woman of about 25, whom he introduced to the men at the ranch as his sister, Bertha Bothamley. The pair lived at the ranchhouse as brother and sister, and the current of affairs ran smoothly until Bothamley decided to move to Texas, where, he claimed, he had a brother. Arrangements were quickly made for the trip. The "outfit" consisted of 2,300 head of sheep, four yoke of oxen, some horses, a buggy and a wagon boxed in with ceiling. This wagon had been used by an itinerant daguerrotypist. The house part was seven feet high and wide and ten feet long. It was supposed to furnish shelter for Bothamley's sister and to protect the owner of the outfit from

and reached the cars of the Indian police, the regularly constituted constabulary of the Indian Territory. Just as the outfit was about to move on the woman and the two men were taken into custody by the Indian police and sent to the Wichita jail pending an investigation of the murder. All three stoutly protested innocence. There was no general belief that either of the men had any guilty knowledge of the crime, but many thought the woman had committed the murder. This remained to be proved or disproved.

Eliminating the possible guilt of the murdered man's supposed sister, the most tenable theory of the affair was suicide. This was the belief held by those who did not think the little, mild-mannered woman guilty. Steps were immediately taken to learn Bothamley's history, and this investigation was not without results. Through different agencies it was found first that Bothamley had deserted his wife and two children in London, and, second, that the woman with whom he first came to Kansas was not his wife, but a Mrs. Harriet Miller, an English woman of wealth and position, who had deserted her husband in London in order to flee with Bothamley to a country where they could continue their guilty love affair without the ostracism and punishment with which they would have met in their native land. They burned all their bridges behind them, and started their new life in a spot where it was not customary to pry too deeply into the affairs of one's neighbors. Then death took a hand. Thousands of miles from the home she had deserted for love of another woman's husband Mrs. Miller died and was buried under the name of the man for whom she had sacrificed all.

[To Be Continued.]

Japs Take Honors. Five American youths in the University of California flunked an examination, but the Japanese who waited on their table passed the course with high honors. The Japs must go.

POPULAR SCENIC ROUTE.

Buffalo & Susquehanna Railroad Company.

Condensed Time Table in Effect June 4, 1905.

Table with columns for Week Days, Daily, and Week Days, listing stations and times for Buffalo & Susquehanna Railroad Company.

Additional trains leave Galeton at 8:45 a. m. and 6:25 p. m., arriving at Ansonia at 9:21 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Returning leave Ansonia at 9:35 a. m., at 1:30 p. m., arriving at Galeton at 13:00 a. m., and 9:55 p. m.

TIME TABLE No. 27.

COUDERSPORT & PORT ALLEGANY R. R.

Taking effect May 27th, 1901.

Table with columns for STATIONS, 10, 8, 4, 2, listing times for Coudersport & Port Allegany R. R.

Table with columns for STATIONS, 1, 8, 4, 2, listing times for Coudersport & Port Allegany R. R.

Additional trains leave Galeton at 8:45 a. m. and 6:25 p. m., arriving at Ansonia at 9:21 a. m. and 7:30 p. m.

Advertisement for Kinloch Paint, featuring the text 'NOW IS THE TIME TO PAINT' and 'Above all, USE GOOD PAINT!'.

Advertisement for C. G. Schmidt's Bakery, featuring the text 'C. G. SCHMIDT'S BAKERY' and 'FRESH BREAD, PIES, FANCY CAKES, ICE CREAM'.

Advertisement for Serrine Oil, featuring the text 'STRONG AGAIN! Serrine Oil' and 'When in Doubt, Try Serrine Oil'.

Advertisement for Windsor Hotel, featuring the text 'THE Windsor Hotel' and 'Between 12th and 13th Sts., on Filbert St. Philadelphia, Pa.'

Advertisement for Patents and Gasnow, featuring the text 'PATENTS' and 'GASNOW & CO.'.

Advertisement for Madam French's Female Pills, featuring the text 'Madam French's Female Pills'.

Advertisement for J. F. Parsons, featuring the text 'The Place to Buy Cheap' and 'J. F. PARSONS'.

Advertisement for Foley's Kidney Cure, featuring the text 'Foley's Kidney Cure makes kidneys and bladder right'.

Advertisement for Ladies Dr. Lafranco's Compound, featuring the text 'LADIES DR. LaFRANCO'S COMPOUND'.

Advertisement for R. Seger & Co., featuring the text 'Who is Your Clothier?' and 'If it's R. SEGER & CO., you are getting the right kind of merchandise.'

Advertisement for R. Seger & Co. clothing, featuring the text 'NEW AND UP-TO-DATE CLOTHING AT POPULAR PRICES' and 'R. SEGER & CO.'

Advertisement for Piles, featuring the text 'PILES RUDD'S Suppository'.

Advertisement for Pennyroyal Pills, featuring the text 'EVERY WOMAN Sometimes needs a reliable monthly regulating medicine. DR. PEAL'S PENNYROYAL PILLS'.

Advertisement for Kodol Dyspepsia Cure, featuring the text 'Kodol Dyspepsia Cure Digests what you eat.'

Advertisement for Foleys Kidney Cure, featuring the text 'Foley's Kidney Cure makes kidneys and bladder right.'

Advertisement for Banner Salve, featuring the text 'BANNER SALVE the most healing salve in the world.'

Large advertisement for Kodol Dyspepsia Cure, featuring the text 'Kodol DYSPEPSIA CURE DIGESTS WHAT YOU EAT' and 'The \$1.00 bottle contains 24 times the trial size, which sells for 50 cents.'