

THE MIDDLE TEMPLE MURDER

A Detective Story by J. S. Fletcher

An Old Newspaper
AS SOON as Spargo unfolded the paper he saw what he wanted on the middle page, headed in two lines of big capitals. He lighted a cigar and settled down to read.

Market Milcaster Quarter Sessions
The Recorder in charging the grand jury, said he regretted that the very pleasant and gratifying experience which had been his upon the occasion of his last two official visits to Market Milcaster—

John Maitland, aged forty-two, bank manager, of the Bank House, High street, Market Milcaster, was charged with embezzling, on April 25, 1891, the sum of £4875 10s 6d., the moneys of his employers, the Market Milcaster Banking Company Ltd., and converting the same to his own use.

Mr. Stephens, K. C., addressing the Recorder, said that without any desire to unduly press upon the prisoner, who he ventured to think, had taken a very wise course in pleading guilty to that particular count in the indictment with which he stood charged, he felt bound in the interests of justice to set forth to the court some particulars of the defalcations which had arisen through the prisoner's much lamented dishonesty.

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under the circumstances, to know that the loss would fall upon the directors, in as much as they themselves held nearly the whole of the shares. But he had to speak of the shares—of the serious defalcations which Maitland had committed. The prisoner had wisely pleaded guilty to the first count of the indictment. But there were no less than seventeen counts in the indictment. He had pleaded guilty to embezzling a sum of £4875 odd. But the total amount of the embezzlement was £221,575 8s 6d. There was the fact that the banking company had been robbed of over two hundred thousand pounds by the prisoner in the dock before a mere accident, the most trifling change had revealed to the astounded directors that he was robbing them at all. And the most serious feature of the whole case was that not one penny of this money had been, or ever could be, recovered. He believed that the prisoner's learned counsel was about to urge upon the Court that the prisoner himself had been tricked and deceived by another man, unfortunately not before the court—a man, he understood, also well known in Market Milcaster, who was now dead, and therefore could not be called, and whether he was so tricked or deceived was no excuse for his clever and wholesale robbing of his employers.

He had thought it necessary to put these facts—which would not be denied—before the court, in order that it might be known how heavy the defalcations really had been, and that they should be considered in dealing with the prisoner.

The Recorder asked if there was no possibility of recovering any part of the vast sum concerned. Mr. Stephens replied that they were informed that there was not the remotest chance—the money, it was said by prisoner and those acting on his behalf, had utterly vanished with the death of the man to whom he had just made reference.

Mr. Doolittle, on behalf of the prisoner, craved to address a few words to the court in mitigation of sentence. He thanked Mr. Stephens for the considerate and eminently dispassionate manner in which he had outlined the main facts of the case. He had no desire to minimize the prisoner's guilt. But, on prisoner's behalf, he desired to tell the true story as to how these things came to be. Until as recently as three years previous the prisoner had never made the slightest deviation from the straight path of integrity. Unfortunately for him, and he believed, for some others in Market Milcaster, there came to the town three years before the present proceedings, a man named Chamberlayne, who commenced business in the High street as a stock-and-share broker, man of good address and the most plausible manners. Chamberlayne attracted a good many people—amongst them his unfortunate client.

It was matter of common knowledge that Chamberlayne had induced numerous persons in Market Milcaster to enter into financial transactions with him; it was matter of common repute that those transactions had not always turned out well for Chamberlayne's clients. Unhappily for himself, Maitland had great faith in Chamberlayne. He had begun to have transactions with him in a large way; they had gone on and on in a large way until he was involved to vast amounts. Believing thoroughly in Chamberlayne and his methods, he had entrusted him with very large sums of money.

The Recorder interrupted Mr. Doolittle at this point to ask if he was to understand that Mr. Doolittle was referring to the prisoner's own money. Mr. Doolittle replied that he was afraid the large sums he referred to were the property of other people. But the prisoner had such belief in Chamberlayne that he firmly anticipated that all would be well, and that these sums would be repaid, and that a vast profit would result from their use.

The Recorder remarked that he supposed the prisoner intended to put the profit into his own pockets. Mr. Doolittle said at any rate the prisoner assured him that of the two hundred and twenty thousand pounds which was in question, Chamberlayne had had the immediate handling of at least ten years. His directors, had the prisoner, had not the ghost of a notion as to what Chamberlayne had done with it.

Unfortunately for everybody, for the bank for some other people, and especially for his unhappy client, Chamberlayne died, very suddenly, just as these proceedings were instituted, and so far it had been absolutely impossible to trace anything of the moneys concerned. He had died under mysterious circumstances, and there was just as much mystery about his affairs.

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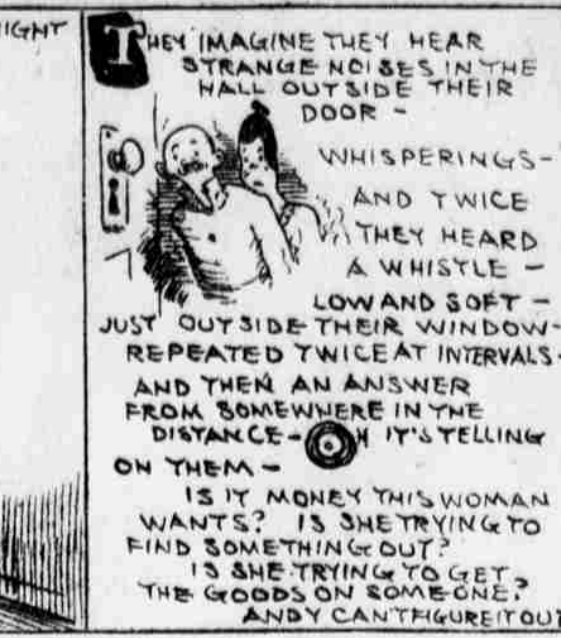
THE GUMPS—Who Can Put Andy Wise?



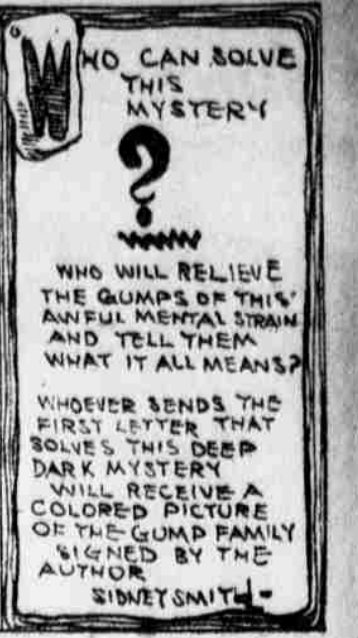
MORNING CANT COME TOO SOON NOW FOR ANDY GUMP. HE CAN ONLY SLEEP DAY TIMES SINCE THAT WOMAN IN BLACK STARTED SNOOPING AROUND.



SOME DAY THAT POOR NEB IS GOING TO STICK HER FACE AGAINST ONE OF THESE WINDOWS AND SHE'S GOING TO FINDERHERSELF PEEKIN' RIGHT IN A WELL—SHE'S GOIN TO BE LOOKIN DOWN A DEEP HOLE AND IF SHE SQUINTS ONE EYEF AND HER SIGHT IS GOOD—SHE'LL SEE A CARTRIDGE IN THE OTHER END OF THAT HOLE AND IT'S NO GOIN' TO BE LOADED WITH BIRD SHOT EITHER.



THEY IMAGINE THEY HEAR STRANGE NOISES IN THE HALL OUTSIDE THEIR DOOR—WHISPERINGS—AND TWICE THEY HEARD A WHISTLE—LOW AND SOFT—REPEATED TWICE AT INTERVALS—AND THEN AN ANSWER FROM SOMEWHERE IN THE DISTANCE—OH IT'S TELLING ON THEM—IS IT MONEY THIS WOMAN WANTS? IS SHE TRYING TO FIND SOMETHING OUT? IS SHE TRYING TO GET THE GOODS ON SOMEONE? ANDY CANT FIGURE IT OUT.

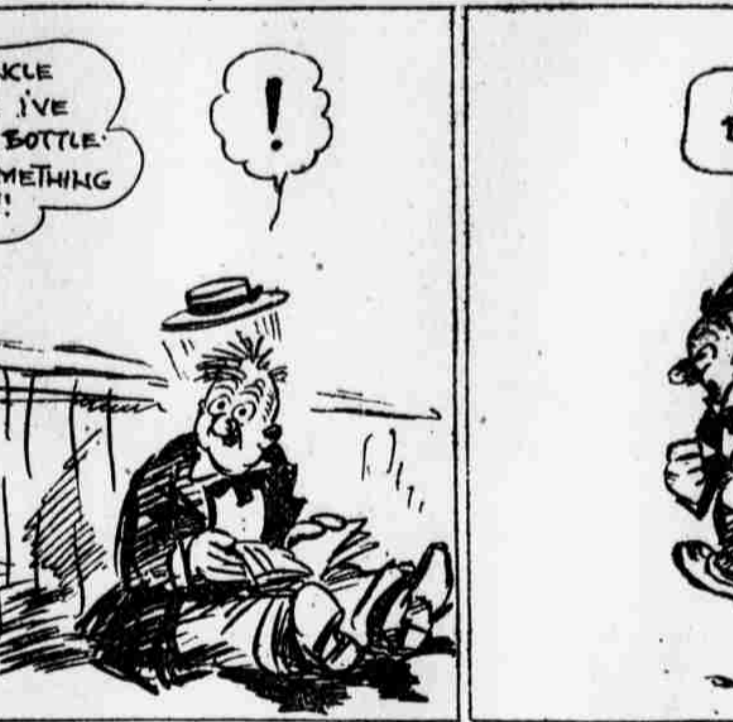


WHO CAN SOLVE THIS MYSTERY? WHO WILL RELIEVE THE GUMPS OF THIS ANGUISHFUL MENTAL STRAIN AND TELL THEM WHAT IT ALL MEANS? WHOEVER SENDS THE FIRST LETTER THAT SOLVES THIS DEEP DARK MYSTERY WILL RECEIVE A COLORED PICTURE OF THE GUMP FAMILY SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR SIDNEY SMITH.

PETEY—Such a Life at Palm Beach



UNCLE PETEY!



OH, UNCLE PETEY—I'VE FOUND A BOTTLE WITH SOMETHING IN IT!!



OH BOY!!



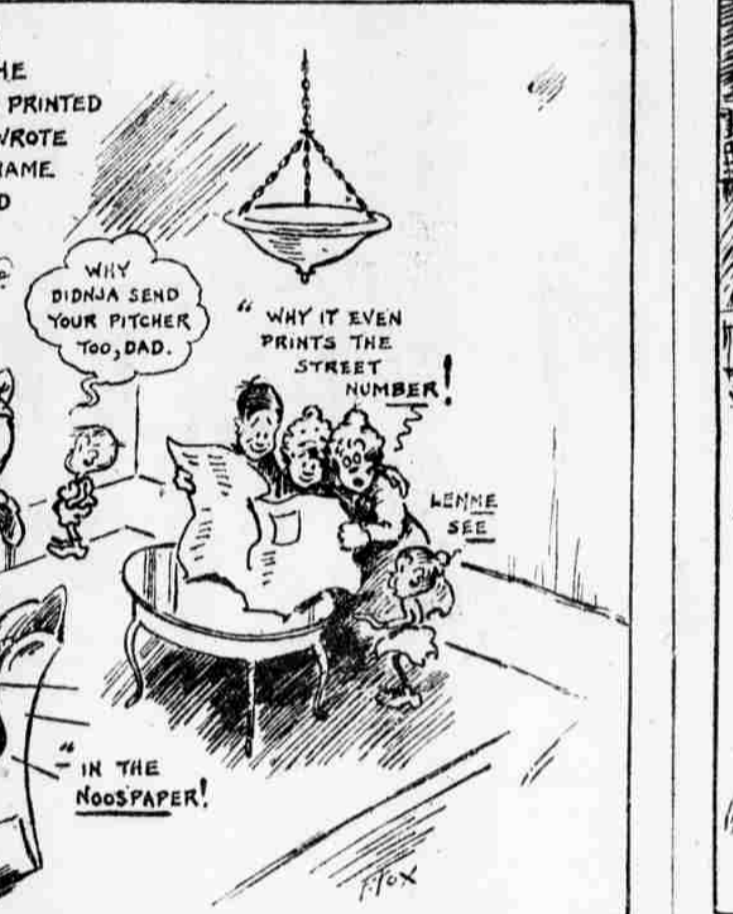
THERE'S A MESSAGE OF SOME KIND IN IT—HOW THRILLING!!

The Young Lady Across the Way



The young lady across the way says much of the wool sold now is fully half shoddy and the farmers ought to turn their attention to raising a better kind of sheep.

The Family Became Almost Respectful in Their Manner Toward Dad—By Fontaine Fox



THE EVENING HE BROUGHT HOME THE PAPER THAT HAD PRINTED THE LETTER HE WROTE THEM WITH HIS NAME SIGNED TO IT AND EVERYTHING.

SCHOOL DAYS



What? You would take this here kleeskoobe for that dinky little ole horse shoe magnet? You must be crazy! Why, the only reason that I'm offerin' it to you is just because I'm kinda tired of it—on I thought you'd enjoy havin' it, an' might feel consulted if I offered it to you for nothing. You big dinky!

By DWIG



I wouldn't think of it! I couldn't do it, Ed. Is like to accommodate you on trade you the magnet but you'll hafta show me something else—The kleeskoobe don't interest me.—Let's see what else you got. The magnet's changed'n ever—picks up a horse shoe nail, now.

DREAMLAND ADVENTURES

JUDITH, THE FAIR DAMSEL

CHAPTER II The Riding Match

CROOKED NOSE wrinkled his brow as he read the first test he must pass before Farmer Strongarm would consent to give him Judith, the fair damsel, for his bride.

Never fear, whispered Billy back. You will not have to ride him. I have an idea that will help you win the test.

SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Venus Is in Love—Oh, Boy, Who Is He?



BOSS! WHAT DO YOU THINK!



I'VE DISCOVERED 'VENUS' IS IN LOVE!



WAIT TIL WE FIND HER! I BET SHE'S SHOOTIN' POETRY OR LOOKIN' AT THE SKY!



HE LOVES ME, HE LOVES ME NOT HE LOVES ME NOT HE LOVES ME NOT HE LOVES ME—

DOROTHY DARNIT—She'll Make a Bolshevik of Mother



NORA, A PACKAGE WILL COME WHILE I'M OUT—TAKE CARE OF IT



I GOT A BUNDLE HERE FOR MISSUS DARNIT THAT'S FOR MY MOTHER I'LL TAKE IT



THAT GUY LOOKS TO ME LIKE A BOLSHIEVIK



MY DRESS—RUINED