## THE PARADISE MYSTERY

By J. S. Fletcher

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THIS STARTS THE STORY THIS STARTS THE STORY

The little English cathedral town of Wrychester with its peaceful closs is the scene of mystory and intrigue. Mary Sewery, nineteen years old, and her brother Dick, seventeen, are wards of Doctor Ransford. A strange man of Doctor Ransford and a few minutes later is found deed at the foot of Saint Wrytha's Stair. Varner, a stememuson, says he saw the man thrown from a balcony. Later a group of men discuss the matter. The theory of men discuss the man slipped and fell. This is objected to on the ground that Varner insisted that he had seen that Varner insisted that he had seen that the man shown to fasten the guilt on any one person. The Duke of Saxonsteade is called to the witness stand and gryce, hearing his name, becomes intensely aftentive. "Might he have had an appointment and business with him?"

AND HERE IT CONTINUES BUT his Grace knew nothing. He had never heard the name of John Braden n his life-so far as he remembered. He had just seen the body of the unformate man and had looked carefully at features. He was not a man of them he had any knowledge whateveris could not recollect ever having seen him anywhere at any time. He knew litrally nothing of him-could not think f any reason at all why this Mr. John graden should wish to see him.

"Your Crace has, no doubt, had busiss dealings with a good many people t one time or another," suggested the "Some of them, perhaps, with m whom your Grace only saw for a ef space of time—a few minutes, sably. You don't remember ever see-

brief space of time—a few minutes, possibly. You don't remember ever seeing this man in that way?"

"I'm credited with having an untsually good memory for faces," answed the duke. "And—if I may say go—rightly. But I don't remember this man at all—in fact, I'd go as far as to say that I'm positive I've never—knowingly—set eyes on him in my life."

"Can your Grace suggest any reason at all why he should wish to call on you?" asked the coroner.

"None! But then," replied the duke, there might be many reasons—unknown to me, but at which I can make a guess. If he was an antiquary, there are lots of old things at Saxonsteade which he might wish to see. Or he might be a lover of pictures—our collection is a bit famous, you know. Perhaps he was a bookman—we have some rare editions, I could go on multiplying reasons—but to what purpose?"

"The fact is, your Grace doesn't know him and knows nothing about him," observed the coroner.

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"Just no—nothing!" agreed the duke, and stepped down again. It was at this stage that the coroner for the jurymen away in charge of his efficer to make a careful personal inspection of the galiery in the clerestory. And walle they were gone there was some commotion caused in the court by the satrance of a police official who conducted to the coroner a middle-aged, well-dressed man whom Bryce at once set down as a London commercial magnate of some quality. Between the new strival and the coroner an interchange of remarks was at once made, shared in remarks was at once made, shared in

And when the jury came back the stranger was at once ushered into the witness box, and the coroner turned to

witness box, and the coroner turned to the jury and the court.

"We are unexpectedly able to get some evidence of identity, gentlemen." he observed. "The gentleman who has been seen to be the condon and Colonies Bank, in Threadneedle street. Mr. Chilstone saw particulars of this matter in the newspapers this morning, and he at once set off to Wrychester to tell us what he knows of the dead man. We are very much obliged to Mr. Chilstone—and when he has been sworn he will perhaps kindly tell us what he can."

In the midst of the murmur of sensation, which ran round the court. Bryce indulged himself with a covert

oner and witness.

But the witness had no more to say, except to suggest that the bank's Mel-beurne agents should be cabled to for information, since it was unlikely that much more could be got in England. And with that the middle stage of the incoesdings ended; and the last one came, watched by Bryce with increasing ensiety. For it was soon evident, from certain remarks made by the coroner, that the theory which Archdale had put forward at the club in Bryce's nearing the previous dny bad gained favor with the authorities and that the visit of the lurymen to the scene of the disaster had been intended by the coroner to predispose them in behalf of it. And now Archdale, himself, as representing the sconnection with held a retaining fee in dispose them in behalf of it. And now Archdele, himself, as representing the Archdele, himself, as representing the Archtects, who held a retaining fee in conjection with the cathedral, was called to give his opinion; and he gave it in almost the same words which Bryce had heard him use twenty-four hours previously. After him came the master viction—that the real truth was that the pavement of the gallery had at that barticular place become so smooth and was inclined toward the open doorway at such a sharp angle that the unfand before he could recover it had been shot out of the arch and over the broken

head of St. Wrytha's Stair. And though, at a juryman's wish. Varner was recalled, and stuck stoutly to his original story of having seen a hand which, he protested, was certainly not that of the dead man, it soon became plain that the jury shared the coroner's belief that Varner in his fright and excitement had been mistaken; and no one was surprised when the foreman, after a very brief consultation with his fellows, announced a verdict of death by misadventure.

"So the city's cleared of the stain of murder," said a man who sat next to Bryce. "That's a good job, anyway. Nasty thing, doctor, to think of a murder being committed by a cathedral. There'd be a question of sacrilege, of course, and all sorts of complications."

Bryce made no answer. He was watching Ransford, who was talking to the coroner. And he was not mistaken now—Ransford's face bore all the signs of infinite relief. From what? Bryce turned to leave the stuffy, rapid'y emptying court. And as he passed the center table he saw old Simpson Harker, who, after sitting in attentive silence for three hours, had come up to it, picked up the "History of Barthorpe" which had been found in Braden's suitcase and was inquisitively peering at its titlepage.

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for three hours, had come up to it, picked up the "History of Barthorpe" which had been found in Braden's suit-case and was inquisitively peering at its titlepage.

Femberton Bryce was not the only person in Wrychester who was watching Ransford with keen attention during these events. Mary Bewery, a young woman of more than usual powers of observation and penetration, had been quick to see that her guardian's distress over the affair-in Paradise was something out of the common. She knew Ransford for an exceedingly tender-hearted man, with a considerable spice of sentiment in his composition; he was noted for his more than professional interest in the poorer sort of his patients and had gained a deserved reputation in the town for his care or them. But it was somewhat surprising even to Mary, that he should be so much upset by the death of a total stranger as to lose his appetite, and, for at any rate a couple of days, be so restless that his conduct could not fall to be noticed by herself and her brother. His remarks on the tragedy were conventional enough—a most distressing affair—a sad fate for the poor fellow—most unexplainable and mysterious, and so on—but his concern obviously went beyond that. He was ill at ease when she questioned him about the facts; almost irritable when Dick Bewery, schoolboy-like, asked him concerning professional details; she was sure, from the lines shout his eyes and a worn look on his face, that he had passed a restless night when he came down to breakfast on the morning of the inquest she noticed a change—it was evident, to her ready wits, that Ransford had experienced a great relief. He spoke of relief, indeed, that night at dinner, observing that the verdict which the jury had returned him cleared the air of a foul suspicion; it would have been no pleasant matter, he said all along. Varner says—said this afternoon, after the inquest was over—that he's absolutely certain of what he saw, and that he not only saw a hand in e white cuff and black coat sleeve, but that he saw the s

med when the jury came back the stranger was at once unhered into the wines but, and the cortion trunch to the stranger was at once unhered into the wines but, and the cortion of the stranger was at once unhered the the stranger of dentity, against the stranger of the s

Bryce, whenever he met her—which was fairly often—was invariably suave and polite.

"Most mysterious thing, this, Doctor Bryce," remarked Mrs. Folliot in her deepest tones, encountering Bryce, the day after the funeral, at the corner of a back street down which she was about to sail on one of her charitable missions, to the terror of any of the women who happened to be caught gossiping. "What, now, should make Doctor Ransford cause flowers to be laid on the grave of a total stranger? A sentimental feeling? Fiddle-de-dee! There must be some reason."

some reason."

"I'm afraid I don't know what you're talking about, Mrs. Folliot." answered Bryce, whose ears had already length-cned. "Has Doctor Ransford been laying flowers on a grave?—I didn't know of it. My engagement with Doctor Ransford terminated two days ago—so I've seen nothing of him."

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

## THE GUMPS—Nothing but Atmosphere and Turf By Sidney Smith GAME - I'VE GOT THAT PARTY ON JACK CROAK SAYS - COME BACK SLOWLY-GIVE IT A PERFECT PENDULUM SWING AND KEEP YOUR EVE ON THE BALL - FOLLOW THROUGH-FOR THE 13TH- THIS IS MY ENTRANCE, TO GOLF- IT'S MY PARTY AND I DONT WANT TO BE HIT YOU SO HARD -THE PRIZE BOOB REMEMBER -I AINT MAD AT YOU BUT I DON'T EVER EXPECT TO SEE YOU AGAIN









