

**TODAY'S MYSTERY STORY**  
By PHILIP FRANCIS NOWLAN

**Yesterday's Mystery Solution**

"It's the hardest thing," said Harvey Hunt to Sheriff Maguire, in explaining the puzzle of the "Vanishing Footprints." "to keep our perfectly good brains from getting that paralyzed feeling when we run up against a mystery that snatches of the supernatural, like that of the things I had to fight against when I was new at this work. If you go at a problem like this with the possibility of the supernatural in your thoughts you're half beaten before you begin."

"Here we read in the dust that apparently Sim Gilson walked out into the middle of this stretch of ground, that he was overtaken by something, that he struggled and was dragged for some distance. Then the marks vanish from the soft alkali dust. The thing that throws our reason out of gear and that brings us that sense of the supernatural is the fact that there are no hoof marks nor any other kinds of marks about, except what looks to be the work of a bear or roppo."

"But suppose we forget, Sheriff, that there are no hoof marks. Suppose we assume that such marks were there, how would you explain the fact that Gilson's footprints disappeared?"

"Easy," laughed Maguire. "They'd disappear because Gilson had been lifted off the ground."

"That's precisely what happened then," Hunt continued. "And the only thing that can lift a man off the ground without itself touching the earth is an airplane or a balloon. Hence the rope-mark. Since airplanes and dirigibles are

likely to fly over apparently deserted ground in the dark to kidnap people, I would say that Gilson had an appointment with the pilot, which establishes his guilt rather than foul play. Finally, I think it must have been a dirigible, and not a plane. The latter would have alighted to take on the passenger."

XX  
**Can you solve this mystery of—**

The Second Key  
THE express company put in a modern safe immediately, but that didn't help Billy Meath, the agent at

Round Hill, who was under arrest on a charge of abstracting a package containing \$18,000 in currency from the old safe.

It looked mighty bad for Meath. The safe hadn't been broken into. It had just been unlocked. Furthermore, even though the lock was one of those old-style affairs, like an ordinary door lock, there hadn't been an opportunity, at the time Meath testified the robbery had taken place, for any one to have picked the lock.

There was only one key to the safe. Meath kept this on his own key ring, and wasn't supposed to allow it out of his possession. Meath was on duty from 8:30 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon, from the time the express office opened until it closed. He had one assistant, a new man, but he had left him alone in the office only a few seconds.

The robbery occurred in broad daylight, about 10 o'clock, in the morning, according to Meath's story. The package of currency had been there for two days, waiting for the addressee to come and claim it. Meath and Gross (that was the assistant's name) had receipts for it and registered it, and Meath had placed it on the second shelf of the safe.

"It was just about 9:58," said Meath, "when I opened the safe to get a little jewelry parcel a Mr. Everett Jones called for. The money was there then. I locked the safe afterward and put the key in my pocket. Then I noticed my watch had run down, and I told Gross I was going to step outside and set it by the station clock. I had to go about thirty feet down the platform to see the clock, but I wasn't gone half a minute. When I came back Gross was at his desk as usual. He

went to lunch at 12. About 12:30 I had occasion to open the safe again and discovered the money was missing."

"Did you ever let Gross have the key?" asked Harvey Hunt, who was investigating the theft for the company.

"Only once," declared Meath, "and then I felt I'd made a mistake. Never liked the fellow's looks. I was afraid he might take a wax impression of the key, so I watched him close. But he didn't have anything in his hand but a piece of paper, and he brought the key right back to me. I even examined the key to see if there were any particles of wax sticking to it, but there weren't. That was about 3 days before the theft."

"Well, Meath," Hunt said, "it's clearly between you and Gross. It looks bad for you, but you've got a long spotless record with the company, and this Gross chap hasn't any record

at all. I'm betting on your honesty and his guilt."

"But how could he manage it, Mr. Hunt? He wasn't alone long enough to pick the lock, and he couldn't have gotten an impression of the key—"

"Yes, he could," interrupted the criminal investigator.

"But how?" queried the astonished express agent.

"Can you explain how he could have gotten it?"

The answer will appear tomorrow.

**BOTTLING PLANT RAIDED**

Large Quantity of Whisky Seized by Agents in Newark  
Newark, N. J., Dec. 7.—Prohibition enforcement agents yesterday made a raid on an alleged bottling plant at 31 Lewis street, seized a large quantity of liquor and captured Louis Rich after a chase, during which the agents fired several shots. Other men who were in

the place made their escape, but one of the agents said that one of them was shot in the shoulder and another in the hand when they refused to halt.

A search of the place resulted in the seizure of eleven barrels of alcohol, 174 cases, the contents of which were labeled whisky; one barrel of whisky, one of sherry; fifty gallons of gin, twenty-five gallons of coloring matter and ten gallons of glycerin. Thousands of counterfeit revenue stamps were found.

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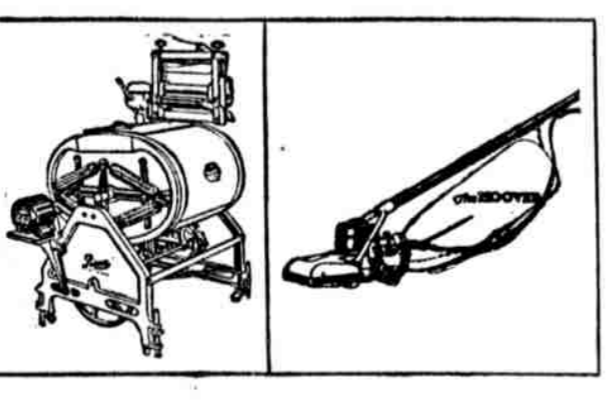


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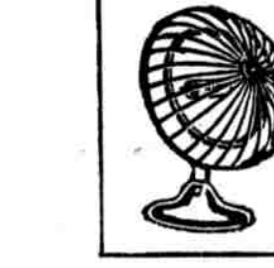


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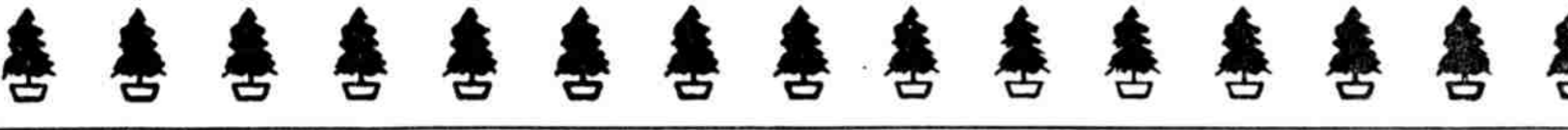
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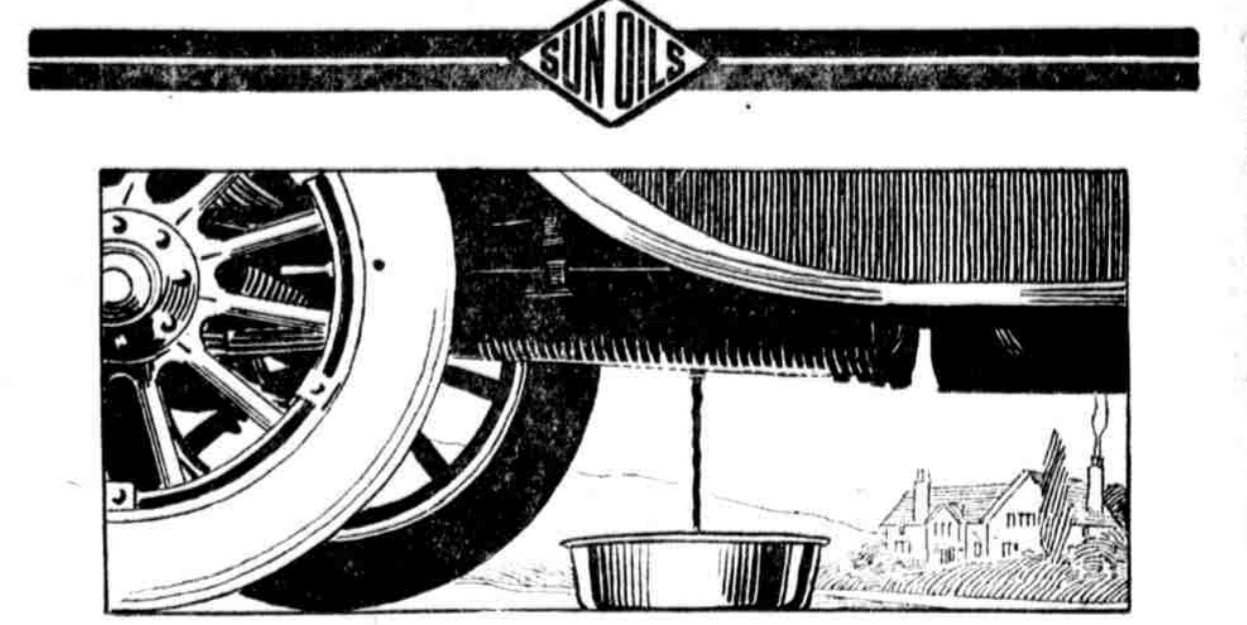
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