

### TODAY'S MYSTERY STORY

By PHILIP FRANCIS NOWLAN

#### Yesterday's Mystery Solution

HARVEY HUNT'S deduction in the case of "How Judge Faxon Was Killed" was a very simple one.

There was no murderer, because nobody could have deliberately killed Judge Faxon under those conditions. His death was an accident, one of those accidents which happen once in a million times. It was a stray bullet that killed him.

Harvey Hunt knew this because he knew it was impossible to aim a rifle accurately from such a distance that the bullet would drop into the courtroom at an angle of 60 degrees. A bullet dropping at such an angle is entirely spent, and its direction subject to change by the slightest wind and the vagaries of shape it has acquired in its flight. The shell of a cannon may be guided to a distant invisible target by mathematical calculation, but such a missile is heavy, and not so subject to the influence of crossing air currents. The man who really did fire the shot, two miles away, proved to be a visitor in the region for the purpose of hunting.

He had fired at what he thought was a bear in a tree.

LXIV

Can you solve this mystery of—

#### Unbroken Snow

"A LIGHT snow had fallen that night," quoted Harvey Hunt from the volume of detective stories he was reading. "Snow has a habit of falling just at the psychological moment to catch the footprints so necessary to the solution of the mystery—in fiction. In real life, however, it's not always so obliging."

"I take it that you have a specific instance in mind," said his friend DeKyne, quietly laying aside the magazine he had been thumbing, for he scented a story.

"I have," replied the criminologist with a smile, "and with a brief pause to compliment you, 'my dear Watson,' on the accuracy and rapidity of your deduction, I will proceed to relate it to you, which, I take it in my turn, is what you wish me to do."

"It is a story of a murder that occurred upon a night when the snow was actually obliging enough to fall. The

only trouble was that the murderer was not equally obliging. He refused to leave his footprints in it.

"The victim was George Flushing, a young farmer who had lived by himself since the death of his wife. His house stood back from the main road about a hundred feet, and through the large windows a clear view of the interior of his sitting room could be had from it.

"Early the evening before there had been a heavy fall of snow. It was a wet, soggy snow. Afterward we traced the faint impressions George had made that evening as he went from the barn to the house. They were faint because the subsequent snowfall had all but filled them up.

"It was about 8:30 the following morning when a couple of youngsters on their way to school passed by the house. They noticed first that one of the sitting-room windows was open, then that the lamp was still burning, although it was broad daylight, and then that something like the body of a man lay stretched on the floor.

"They found George dead, stretched face down upon the floor, an iron rod, the point of which had been sharpened sticking between his shoulder blades. But there were no footprints in the snow. How had the murderer left the house? If there had been enough snow to take George's footprints when he went into the house there must have been enough to take those of the murderer upon leaving.

"At first we were convinced that the murderer was still in the house. We

searched it from attic to cellar. We compared the outside and inside measurements of the walls even, just to make sure that there were no secret closets in which a man could hide, though we knew while we were doing it that the idea was ridiculous.

"Of course everybody's suspicions centered on Adam Hefelinger. Adam was a mean customer, and had always borne a grudge against George. They had courted the same girl. They had been rivals in nearly everything, and George always had won out. Lately there had been some controversy over the ownership of a few feet of ground where their lands joined. Adam knew we suspected him. He was pretty nervous. He denied having been anywhere near the place. Claimed he'd been calling on a girl, but said it was nobody's business who she was.

"I turned my attention to the iron bar. It was more or less rusty, and its surface was so pitted that it was hopeless to try to get a fingerprint from it. It was about a foot long and a half an inch or a little more in diameter. The point on it, as near as I could tell without washing off the blood, was not newly ground. It must have been sharpened a long time before; hence quite evidently not for the purpose of the murder.

"But the weapon puzzled me. I couldn't imagine a more unhandy weapon with which to stab a man, though as a rough sort of jimmy for prying open a window it would have been fine. My glance roved to the win-

dow—of the window that had been found open—and sure enough I saw a deep gouge, freshly made, in it. But here again I couldn't satisfy myself as to the fitness of things. The mark was a gouge, whereas it should have been merely an indentation. Besides it was several inches further in than it should have been had the bar been used as a lever, and in addition the bar was not bent as it should have been, for it was soft iron, nor was there any mark on the lower edge of the window sash itself, as must have resulted from upward pressure.

"Then in a flash the explanation came to me. I had Adam Hefelinger arrested. He broke down and confessed under the stiff 'third degree' the sheriff and I gave him."

"But what was the explanation?" demanded DeKyne.

"Do you know? The answer will appear tomorrow."

#### Speaks of Wrangel's Fight

The evacuation of the Crimea under General Wrangel was discussed yesterday by Thomas Whittemore, archaeologist and relief worker, at a meeting in the Emergency Aid assembly room, 221 South Eighteenth street. Mr. Whittemore, who was with General Wrangel before the evacuation, said: "General Wrangel knew that it would be impossible to overthrow the Bolsheviks, his whole idea was to preserve intellectual Russia." Mr. Whittemore urged that aid be sent to the suffering Russian refugees on the shores at Constantinople.



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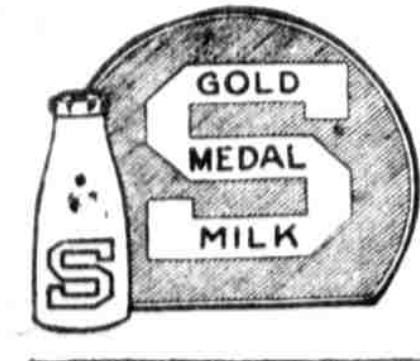
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