

THE CHRONICLES OF MARTIN HEWITT BY GEORGE MORRISON

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CHAPTER II. Hewitt and I had of course at this time never heard of Mr. Sneathy, and the colonel told us what little he knew. He had never spoken to the man, he said--nobody in the place outside Ranworth would have anything to do with him--"He's certainly been an unbold scoundrel over those poor people's banks," said my uncle, "and if what they say's true he's been about as bad as possible to his wretched wife. He must have been pretty miserable, too, with all his soundings, for he was a completely rained man, without a chance of retrieving his position, and detested by everybody. Indeed, some of his recent doings, if what I have heard is to be relied on, have been very much those of a madman. So that on the whole I'm not much surprised. Suleide's about the only crime I suppose that he never experimented with till now, and, indeed, it's rather a service to the world at large--his only service, I expect."



He Found the Body Hanging.

uncle's and a fellow J. P. He had had the case reported to him, it seemed, as soon as the body had been found and had at once gone to the spot. He found the body hanging--and with the right hand cut off.

"It's a murder, Brett," he said, "without doubt a most horrible case of murder and mutilation. The hand is cut off and taken away, but whether the atrocity was committed before or after the hanging, of course, I can't say. But the missing hand makes it plainly a case of murder, and not suicide. I've come to conclude, without issuing a warrant, for I think there's no doubt as to the identity of the murderer."

"That's a good job," said the colonel, "else we should have had some work for Mr. Martin Hewitt here, which wouldn't be fair, as he's taking a rest. Who do you think of having arrested?"

"The two young Fosters. It's as plain as it can be--and a most revolting crime, too, had as Sneathy may have been. They came down from London today and went out deliberately to do it. It's clear. They were heard talking of it, asked as to the direction in which he had gone and followed him--and with a rope."

"Isn't that rather an unusual form of murder--hanging?" Hewitt remarked. "Perhaps it is," Mr. Hardwick replied, "but it's the case here, plain enough. It seems, in fact, that they had a way of threatening to hang him and even to cut off his hand if he used it to strike their mother. So that they appear to have carried out what might have seemed mere idle threats in a diabolically savage way. Of course they may have strangled him first and hanged him after, by way of carrying out their threat and venting their spite on the mutilated body. But that they did it is plain enough to me. I've spent an hour or two over it and feel I am certainly more than justified in ordering their apprehension. Indeed they were with him at the time, as I've found by their tracks on the footpath through the woods."

tion there can be no room for doubt. The thing is plain." With many promises no to be late for dinner we left my uncle and walked with Mr. Hardwick in the direction of Katherby wood. It was an unfrequented path, he told us, and by particular care he managed, he hoped, to prevent the rumor spreading to the village yet, so that we might hope to find the tracks not yet overlaid. It was a man of his own, he said, who, making a short cut through the wood, had come upon the body hanging, and had run immediately to inform him. With this man he had gone back, cut down the body and made his observations. He had followed the trail backwards to Ranworth and there had found the new coachman, who had been in his own service. From him he had learned the doings of the brothers Foster as they left the place, and from him he had ascertained that they had not yet returned. Then leaving his man by the body he had come straight to my uncle's.

Presently we came on the footpath leading to Katherby wood. It was a mere trail of bare earth worn by successive feet amid the grass. It was damp, and we all stooped and examined the footmarks that were to be seen on it. They all pointed one way--toward the wood in the distance. "Fortunately it's not a greatly frequented path," Mr. Hardwick said. "You see, there are the marks of three pairs of feet only, and as first Sneathy and then both of the brothers came this way the footmarks must be theirs. Which are Sneathy's is plain--they are these large, flat ones. If you notice, they are all distinctly visible in the center of the track, showing plainly that they belong to the man who walked alone, which was Sneathy. Of the others, the marks of the outside feet--the left on the left side and the right on the right--are often not visible. Clearly they belong to the two men walking side by side, and more often than not, treading with their outer feet on the grass at the side. And where these happen to drop on the same spot as the marks in the middle, they cover them. Plainly, they are the footmarks of Henry and Robert Foster, made as they followed Sneathy. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Hewitt?"

"Oh, yes, that's very plain. You have a better pair of eyes than most people, Mr. Hardwick, and a good idea of using them. We will go on to the wood now. As a matter of fact, I can pretty clearly distinguish most of the other footmarks--those on the grass, but that's a matter of much training."

We followed the footpath, keeping on the grass at its side, in case it should be desirable to refer again to the footmarks. For some little distance into the wood the tracks continued as before, those of the brothers overlaying those of Sneathy. Then there was a difference. The path here was broader, and muddy, because of the proximity of trees, and suddenly the outer footprints separated, and the two men overlay the longer ones in the center, but proceeded at an equal distance on either side of them.

"See there," cried Mr. Hardwick, pointing triumphantly to the spot, "this is where they overtook him, and walked on either side. The body was found only a little further on--you could zig-zag about so."

Hewitt said nothing, but stooped and examined the tracks at the sides with great care and evident thought, spanning the distances between them comparatively with his arms. Then he rose and stepped lightly from one mark to another, taking care not to tread on the marks itself. "Very good," he said, shortly, on finishing his examination. "We'll go on."

We went on, and presently came to the place where the body lay. Here Hewitt bowed and laughingly expressed a fear lest Mr. Hardwick should come to London and supplant him altogether. "This seems a curious case," he added. "If you don't mind I think I should like to take a glance at the tracks and whatever other traces there may be, just by way of keeping my hand in."

"Certainly," Mr. Hardwick replied, brightening. "I should of all things like to have Mr. Hewitt's opinion on the observations I have made--just for my own gratification. As to his opinion--"

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tree stump, probably the relic of a tree that had been cut down long before, and then addressed himself to the body. "When you cut it down," he said, "did it fall in a heap?" "No, my man caught it down to some extent." "Not on its face?" "Oh, no. On its back, just as it is now." Mr. Hardwick saw that Hewitt was looking at muddy marks on each of the corpse's knees, to one of which a small leaf hung, and to one or two other marks of the same sort on the fore part of the dress. "That seems to show pretty plainly," he said, "that he must have struggled with them and was thrown forward, doesn't it?" Hewitt did not reply, but gingerly lifted the corpse just here than on the other side of the brothers Foster left-handed," he asked.

No, I think not. Here, Barrett, you have seen plenty of their doings--cricket, shooting and so on--do you remember if either of the brothers was left-handed? "No, my man caught it down to some extent." "Not on its face?" "Oh, no. On its back, just as it is now." Mr. Hardwick saw that Hewitt was looking at muddy marks on each of the corpse's knees, to one of which a small leaf hung, and to one or two other marks of the same sort on the fore part of the dress. "That seems to show pretty plainly," he said, "that he must have struggled with them and was thrown forward, doesn't it?" Hewitt did not reply, but gingerly lifted the corpse just here than on the other side of the brothers Foster left-handed," he asked.

Presently, however, he spoke, "There is very little to be learned from the body, is there?" he said. "I think I'm quite justified in ordering their arrest, oh? Indeed I've wasted too much time already."

Hewitt was groping about among some bushes behind the tree from which the corpse had been taken. When he answered he said: "I don't think I should do anything of the sort just now, Mr. Hardwick. As a matter of fact, I fancy, this word with an emphasis--"that the brothers Foster may not have seen this man Sneathy at all today."

[To Be Continued.]

A Trying Moment. He--At last we are alone, and I have an opportunity to speak. I have been seeking this moment for days and days, for I have something to say to you. She--Go on, Mr. Hewitt. He--I will, Miss Hopeful, you perhaps have not noticed that at times I have been constrained, uneasy, even awkward, in your presence, and that something on my mind that I must say to you? She (softly)--Yes. He--That constraint, that awkwardness, Miss Hopeful, was due to--due to-- She--To what, Mr. Hewitt? He--Was due to the fact that I feared you were not aware that I was engaged to your sister.

Oldest and Youngest Presidents. William Henry Harrison was the oldest, being 68 when inaugurated. General Grant was the youngest, being 47. Cleveland was 48 and Garfield and Pierce each 49 at the date of their inauguration.

HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS. From St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Combs are found in the earliest known graves. Brooms were used in Egypt 2,600 years before Christ. Buttons were used in Troy, Schliemann found 1800 of gold. Needles antedated history. They were found over 1,800 of gold. Lamps were used before written history. Thousands of ancient lamps have been found.

Goblets with stem and stand like those we use to-day were employed in Troy 2600 B. C. Paper matches were patented in 1821, while friction matches preceded them by thirteen years.

Chairs were in use in Egypt as long ago as 2300 B. C. The Chinese employed them from about 1200 B. C. Curtains were employed for bedsteads in the eleventh century; they were afterwards transferred to windows.

Tenpins were the invention of either the Indians or the Chinese, and are of uncertain antiquity. They came to Europe with tea in 1610.

Dishes of gold and silver used in table service in 900 B. C. were found at Troy by Schliemann. One of these was about the size now employed.

Outer blinds for windows were unknown until the fourteenth century. The Venetian or interior blinds are so called because they were first used in Venice.

Pepper castors were first used by the Athenians, pepper being a common condiment. They were placed on the table with the salt in England in the sixteenth century.

The first patent for a sewing machine was first issued in England in 1790. This early invention was not successful, and other patents were issued in 1801, 1818 and several times since.

Rocking cradles for babies were used by the Egyptians many centuries before Christ. Among the pictures copied by Belzoni in one of his Egyptian mother at work with her foot on the cradle.

Tumblers of nearly the same shape and dimensions as those employed to-day have been found in great numbers in Pompeii. They were of gold, silver, glass, agate, marble and other semi-precious precious stone.

Rocking chairs are mentioned by Venerable Bede. "The women now are so luxurious that they do have chairs with wooden circles on the legs and which way back and forth in such sort that it maketh one sick to behold them."

Coffee pots are an Oriental invention, and are supposed to have come from Arabia in A. D. 1400. About the same time they were used in Persia, but they did not come to France until 1622, and made their appearance in England with coffee in 1650.

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