The Leading Lady

(Continued from Page Three)

the throbbing beat of an engine came through the silence, a low spark of light was advancing from the opposite shore.

When he heard the boat grinding against the wharf he waked Bassett.

"Rawson's coming. And it's nearly nine."

Rawson came in by the window, his eyes blinking in the room's brightness. He tried to look stern but satisfaction shone in his eyes and lit his long lantern-jawed face. He was like the bearer of good tidings who could have worn the high smile of triumph if a smile were fitting.

"Well," said Williams, "where the devil have you been?"

"Down the coast, twenty-five miles, on roads that would have put anything but a flivver out of commission."

"You got something?"

"I did—this time. We're on the right track now if I'm not much mistaken."

Williams gave an incredulous grunt. He did not believe in new material, and in advance placed himself in stubborn opposition.

"What did you go down the coast for?"

"To find a man called Gabriel Harvey."

Bassett, about to sit down, stopped in surprise.

"Gabriel Harvey? That's our launchman."

"Exactly. And I had a devil of a time to find him. Down in a place called White Beach, hidden away with friends in a shack without a telephone."

"But why—"

"I'll tell you. I went over there to look into Joe Tracy's movements. I couldn't find any one who'd seen him come ashore, and learned that the man Gabriel, who took him over, had gone to this place, White Beach, for deep-sea fishing. Not being able to get hold of him, I went to the station to see if I could gather up anything. And I did. The baggage man told me Gabriel had been there before he left for White Beach, leaving a suitcase and fishing rod to be held till Tracy called for them. They're there now. I saw them."

Williams said nothing, not ready with argument till more was divulged. Bassett, in blank amazement, ejaculated:

"Why, that's the most extraordinary thing—"

"Wait, Mr. Bassett." Rawson sed a long commanding hand. hung round till the evening train ne in; that's the train Tracy was take. I saw the conductor—it's a small branch road and travel is light at that hour—and he remembered his passengers, two women and a child. Those were the only people who left Hayworth on the seven-fifteen, the last evening train. I went back to the village and made inquiries. Tracy had hired no vehicle at the garage or livery stable, nor had he been seen anywhere about the place. Then I got a car and went to White Beach. I was some time locating the old chap, but I finally ran him down. He said he had not taken Tracy across to the mainland last night."

Rawson dropped back in his chair. In answer to Bassett's expression he nodded soberly.

"Yes, it's a pretty queer business. Gabriel said he'd told the boy to be on time; made it clear to him that he wouldn't wait. When Tracy was not on the wharf he went to the house to look for him, saw his bag and fishing rod in the doorway and took them. No one was about and he left—not sorry, I inferred from what he said, to give 'the young cub,' as he called him, a lesson."

Bassett got up.

"But it's incomprehensible," he exclaimed. "I can't make head nor tail of it. No one ever questioned that he'd gone."

"No one said they'd seen him go but his sister," came from Williams.

Bassett wheeled on him.

"Yes, you asked her. Didn't she say she'd seen him?"

"No." Rawson's voice was dryly quiet. "I've thought of that. What she said was that he went. In all fairness to her she probably thought so—took it for granted, as you all did—that's he'd gone."

"But why? What's the meaning of it? If he'd missed the boat he'd have turned up, he'd be here now."

"Oh, he didn't miss the boat," said Rawson.

"Well, then, what was he doing? What made him stay?" In the turmoil of his amazement, this sudden precipitation of a new mystery, Bassett had not yet grasped the sinister trend of the other's thoughts.

"Why," said Rawson slowly, "he might have been staying for a purpose."

"What purpose?"

"Can't you imagine a purpose, Mr. Bassett?"

"Good God, you don't mean to say you think he did it?"

"I'm not saying anything yet. But I'd like you to tell me how you explain it. He says he's going, leads every one to think he's going, makes all the preparations for his departure, then secretly, without divulging any change of plans, doesn't go. Aren't these actions—well, to put it mildly—questionable? And note this: He had cause for anger against Miss Saunders—she'd given him away to you—and you yourself have told us that he had an ungovernable temper."

"He had a devilish temper and a d—d mean disposition and I make no doubt he was blazing mad with her. But that he'd go to work and kill her in cold blood, lay in wait for her—no—you can't make me think that."

"Same here," said Williams. "You ain't got enough provocation. With Mrs. Stokes you have—a woman jealous of her husband."

"And you've got a man," retorted Rawson, "moved by one of the passions that lead oftenest to murder—revenge."

"Revenge?" echoed Williams.

"Miss Saunders' accusation, if true—and I think it was—would ruin him in his profession. He learned what she'd done to him just before he was due to leave."

A chill passed through Bassett—revenge was a word that fitted Joe. But he cast the thought out, moving away from the desk and exclaiming with angry repudiation:

"Oh, it's unthinkable, preposterous."

"What but an evil intention could have made him act as he did?"

"Any number of things. It may be a prank—a practical joke we'll get an explanation of later. He may have invented the story of his fishing trip and gone off with a girl."

"Had he a girl?"

"I don't know—also he may have done something dishonest, got in wrong some way—he was capable of it, I'm not defending him—and been frightened and lit out."

"How did he get off?"

Bassett's voice was raised in his exasperation:

"Good Lord, Rawson, we weren't jailed here then. He could have had a boat hidden in one of the coves. This place wasn't escape-proof till you turned up. He could have rowed ashore and landed anywhere, and that's what he's done."

"Unless he's here."

"Here on the island?" Williams spoke with an air of patient reminder. "Ain't we gone over it with a fine-tooth comb?"

Rawson pointed to the ceiling.

"How about that top story? A person—we won't say who—could have killed the woman, entered the house while the rest of you were on the beach, put back the pistol, and gone upstairs."

Williams made a motion to heave himself up from his chair.

"Well, if that's how you feel about it let's go up and have a look for the person."

"We needn't do that just now. They're as safe as if they were behind bars. There is something I want to do down here first—have a talk with Miss Tracy. She may be able to give us a little light."

"She can't help you," said Bassett. "They weren't on confidential terms. She'd be the last person he'd tell anything to."

He believed what he said, but his heart sank. Anne to be dragged through another interrogation, an interrogation with a hideous suspicion behind it!

Ramson rose.

"Perhaps so, but it's worth trying. She may know more than you think; sisters sometimes do. And she certainly must have more knowledge of him than any of us. We'll soon see."

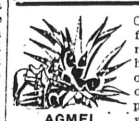
"I'll go up and get her now."

He moved toward the door.

(To Be Continued)

High Blood Pressure

Nature's Warning



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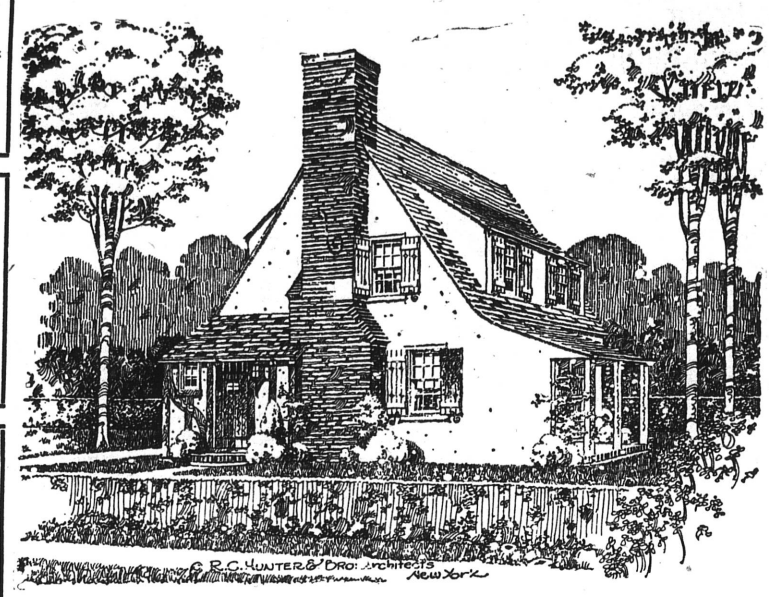

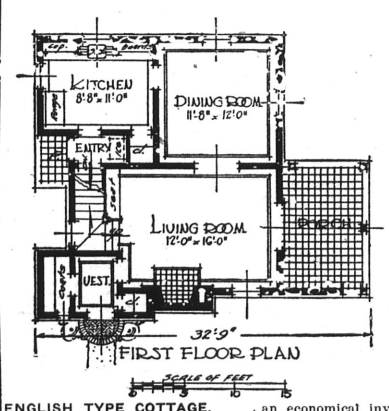

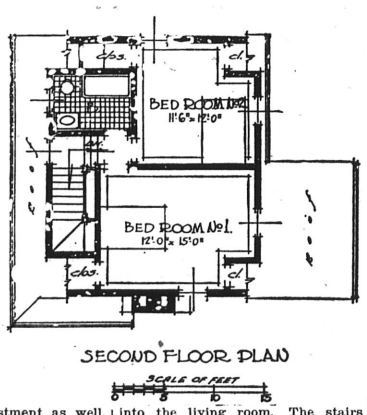

ENGLISH TYPE COTTAGE, SMALL AND ECONOMICAL

By R. C. HUNTER & BRO.
Architects, New York City

For the small family that seeks a home of distinction, this little English cottage should receive consideration. Not only will it give a home of character, but will prove an economical investment as well, for it is designed to be built at low cost.

The sketch of the exterior gives one a good idea as to how the house will appear when built, while the floor plans show the compact, economical layout that is to be desired.

The walls are frame construction with stucco finish, the chimney is red brick, the roof is slate, and the timber work, etc., is stained.

One enters the house through a vestibule, on either side of which are provided generous coat closets.

From the vestibule one passes into the living room. The stairs start up from the living room and land in the center of the house at the second floor, thus requiring but small hall space.

A single service entry serves the kitchen, refrigerator and cellar.

The kitchen is well arranged. The sink is located directly beneath a window and has large cupboards on either side.

Two good bedrooms, a bath, and plenty of closets complete the second floor plan.

Storage space is provided in the attic.

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