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GENERAL DIRECTORY.

County Officials.

Judges of the Circuit Court—James A. Pearce, Chief Judge; Edwin H Brown and William R Martin, Associates Terms—jury, 1st Monday in April and October; non-jury, 2d Monday in January, 4th Monday in June.

Clerk of the Circuit Court—Thomas L. Day.

County Commissioners—Wesley Jarrell, Pres.; James B. Wright, Franklin P. Medford.

Judges of the Orphans' Court—John F. Dawson, Chief Judge; J. Olan Clark, Wm. H. Deen, Associates.

School Commissioners—Thomas W. Jones, President; Henry C. Fisher and Albert W. Sisk.

School Examiner and Secretary—W. S. Crouse.

Register of Wills—Robert J. Jump.

States Attorney—T. Alan Goldsborough.

Sheriff—Wm T. Hignutt, of E.

Professional and Business Cards.

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Denton, Md.

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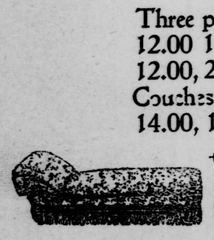


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H. S. GOLDEY, President.
Goldey College, Wilmington, Del.

MYSTERY OF THE BAYOU WOODS

By WALKER KENNEDY.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Herbert Wright goes to chief of police of Nibs in great agitation and tells him of his discovery of the murdered body of his father, John T. Wright, a wealthy cotton king, from whom he has been estranged, in the Bayou Woods near the town. The chief questions Herbert, whose answers cause former to suspect him of the crime. The chief, with a reporter, Irving Warde, goes to scene of murder.

CHAPTER II.—They find body and examine surroundings but fail to discover any reliable clue.

CHAPTER III.—Warde examines mysterious footprints in the snow and tells Col. Franklin, an old acquaintance of the murdered man, of them. Herbert is arrested on suspicion of being implicated in the murder.

CHAPTER IV.—Col. Franklin is a brilliant lawyer, but says he is unable to solve the mystery.

CHAPTER V.—At coroner's inquest strong circumstantial evidence against Herbert Wright is submitted and the jury charges him with the murder.

"I have some reason to doubt whether he has left Nibs," said Warde.

"Indeed," replied the colonel, keenly interested.

"Of course, it is only a surmise on my part, but there are certain circumstances which lend color to the idea that the murderer was not an ordinary thief, and that his motive was something else than robbery. It is my opinion that he is now in the city."

"That is important news, surely, if true. What proof have you in support of such a theory?"

"You see," answered Irving, smiling, "I have contracted the detective craze recently, and I have made some investigations on my own hook, and I believe the murderer has not only not run away, but that he has seen his victim twice this very day."

"How do you know this?" asked the colonel with a skeptical smile.

"I do not know it, but I suspect it very strongly, and I will give you my reasons for doing so."

He then gave a detailed account of his investigations. Col. Franklin listened attentively to the story without interruption and without betraying whether or not he was impressed with the young journalist's ingenious theories. When the story was finished, he sat lost in thought. He was evidently bringing to bear upon the evidence presented all the powers of his astute intellect. At length he said: "Your story is certainly startling, and you deserve great credit for the interest you have taken in the matter. I believe that your investigations will aid materially in solving the mystery, and I thank you for putting me in possession of such facts as you have."

This was all the satisfaction that Warde could get out of the lawyer, and he was visibly disappointed; but he knew that Franklin was not the man to catch at every plausible surmise offered, and, after obtaining from him the main events in the life of the cotton king for biographical purposes, he took his departure after agreeing to inform Franklin of any new discoveries on his part.

"I shall need every assistance possible in unwinding this tangled skein and you may aid me materially," said the great lawyer with a flattering smile as he bowed him out.

CHAPTER V.

The Wright place was one of the oldest homesteads in the country, but neither time nor war had dismantled it of its old-time grandeur. The sharper tints of the dwelling had been toned down, and there was left the soft repose fulness and aristocratic old age. Good care had been taken of it by the Wrights, who had kept it in thorough repair and enhanced its interior decoration. The long avenue, sentinelled by trees, leading to the house, was scrupulously gravelled, the trees were trimmed with care, and the lawn in summer was as smooth and soft to the eye as green silk.

The house itself was an example of the magnificent in structure. It had a long piazza, spacious halls and big rooms. Seen in summer, environed by the green foliage, it was very cheerful and inviting, but in winter its outward semblance was one of gloom and melancholy. One could easily imagine that it was hiding some unpleasant secret behind its massive walls. On Irving Warde this impression was deepened on the cold, cheerless morning of the inquest when, in company with his friend, the chief of police, he drove up the carriage way. The murky sky seemed somehow to have become entangled in the uncanny arms of the black trees, and the grayness of the earth added to the cheerlessness.

An unusual commotion reigned about the place. The negro servants were in a flurry of excitement and the neighbors were arriving in twos and threes, ostensibly sad, but devoured by curiosity. Each one present had his own theory of the murder, and a great many gratuitous suspicions were handied about in the crowd. Warde was content to use his ears and eyes while he waited developments. Perhaps among those present stalked the bold perpetrator of the crime. This thought made him silent and watchful, and he soon became absorbed in the contemplation of some of those who had arrived.

Franklin also was there and taking a marked interest in the inquest, for he talked a great deal with the coroner and whispered with the chief of police and the sheriff, and occasionally he could be seen interrogating some person who appeared to have a story to tell which might throw light upon the tragedy.



"HE TALKED A GREAT DEAL WITH THE CORONER."

When the coroner was ready to take up the examination the crowd repaired to the apartment where the body had been deposited. There were two parlors, which, by means of sliding doors could be merged into one room almost large enough to accommodate those present. Those who could not get in stood in the halls and managed to hear the testimony.

None of the deceased's family was present except the young man who had given the police the information about the murder. Under police surveillance he wandered up and down the hall pale and unhappy, apparently absorbed in reflections by no means wholesome. Curious eyes were often turned toward him, and frequently eyes that had another light than of curiosity in them, but he seemed oblivious to it all, although being under arrest he knew that suspicion pointed to him.

His mother and sister were said to be very much unnerved by the tragedy and remained in their rooms until they were compelled to testify.

When the jurors had taken their seats and everything was in readiness, an examination of the body by the coroner revealed the fact that Wright had been shot in the back of the head, and at close quarters, too, as was evidenced by the powder burns on the hair. And the inference was unavoidable that the murderer had been walking behind his victim, and that the latter did not expect the attack. He must also have been fully aware who it was that walked thus behind him, for the squareness with which the blows had been dealt showed that he had not turned his head in suspicion or curiosity.

The first witness examined was an old negro, who was evidently in grave doubt whether the coroner would send him to jail for life or order him hanged on the spot should aught go amiss with his testimony. His terror gave an incongruous element of comedy to the serious business on hand. He took his seat gingerly and the coroner began to question him.

"What's your name?"

"London, sah," was the answer.

"London?" said the coroner, in surprise.

"Dat's my name. Ef you doan bleeve me you can ax de mistes of hit ain't. I done tole you de truf."

"I don't doubt that, old man," said the coroner, repressing with an effort an inclination to smile. "Now tell us your last name."

"Wright, sah. I jes' calls myself London Wright, sah."

"Well, London, we want to get out of you what you know about this murder."

"Lordy, boss, I doan know nuthin' 'bout it. I clar ter goodness I didn' hab nuthin' ter do wid it. Mars John always done treat me well."

"Nobody thinks you had anything to do with it, London," the coroner said, reassuringly, "but there is some information that you can give us, perhaps. Tell me, were you at home the day before Mr. Wright was killed?"

"Yes, sah; I was dar."

"Did anybody call on that morning?"

"Yes, sah."

"Who was it?"

"Well, young Mr. Wright was one. Tudder man I doan know who he was."

"Mr. Wright had two visitors then?"

"Yes, sah."

"Who got there first?"

"Dis udder man."

"Can you tell me what this other man looked like?"

"No, sah. I didn see him; I ony heyrd him. You see Mars Wright he sen' me ter clean the gun up for him, 'caise he gwine huntin' nex' day, an' he tole me soon's I got it fixed ter fetch it ter him in de library. Wen I done git it cleaned an' teck it ter him, I foun' de library doah wus shut an' locked, an' I hearn two pussons talkin' in dar kinder low. Wen I knocked, Mars Wright he comed ter de doah an' he holler froo ter bring de gun back later; dat he wus busy den. Well, I go out ter de stable an' feed de hosses, an' in 'bout half er hour I went back an' gib Mars Wright de gun. De stranger whoever he wus, wus done gone."

"You have no idea who he was?"

"No, sah. I guess Mars Wright mus hab let him inter de house hesef, caise I axed all de niggers bout him, and dey didn nobody pear to know nutin bout him."

"What made you ask about him?"

"Well, you see, us cullud folks likes ter know who comes ter de house, an all bout 'em, so's we kin talk it all ober in de kitchin monst ourselves."

"Oh, I see. Well, how long was it before young Wright put in an appearance?"

"He come a'mos soon's I done gib Marster de gun, fur I lets him in myself fo I goes out."

"Did he seem troubled?"

"Yes, sah. He looked mighty ornresty, an' he was mighty swif' too, fur he jes' said, 'Whar's my father?' an' wen I tole him in de library, he pushed me outen de way, an' he went right in. I was so surprised like dat I stood dar in de hall an' hearn all dey say ter one anudder 'fo' I knowed wat I was doin'. But I 'clar dey talk so loud an' 'cited dat I couldn' he'p it, an' de doah wus open, too."

"What did they say?"

"Fust Mr. Herbert he speak kinder sof'-like, an' he tell he pa dat he come ter him fur ter git he'p. He say dat he wife an' he baby was a-starvin', an' dat he couldn' beg from nobody else; dat he didn' keer fur hisself but he couldn' stan' fur ter see dem hongry, an' so he come ter he pa fur some hep. Ole Mars Wright he answer kinder temtious-like, an' say dat he hearn tell nuff bout dat. He say Mr. Herbert ain got no business ter marry ginst he will, an' dat he mus' teck de sequences ob it. Den Mr. Herbert he git mad an' tell he pa dat he gwine hab somethin' anyhow, dat he was clean stracted an' he jes' boun' ter hab it. Den Mars John order him furm de house, an' tell him he ain' got no more time ter talk wid him, fur he wus agittin' ready ter go huntin' de nex' day."

"What did young Wright do then?"

"He jes' crump he hat on he haid and rush out, an' he mos' knock me ober de hat rack as he got out."

"Did he threaten his father?"

"No, sah; he didn' say nuthin', but he jes' look despit, kinder 's if he didn' know what he wus doin' an' didn' keer."

London was then excused, very much to his relief, and he left the witness stand with the air of a man who had just escaped a deadly peril. The other servants were examined in routine, but nothing of importance was added to London's testimony.

There was a perceptible stillness in the assemblage when the next witness, Herbert Wright, was called, and all heads turned to look at him as he made his way to the witness stand. He was not nervous, though he was the very picture of forlornness. He appeared to take only a vacant interest in the investigation, and was either careless or oblivious of his own danger. At the moment he took his seat every mind there was revolving the probability of his having been the guilty cause of the present tragedy. With a rather bored air he waited the coroner's questions. After giving his age, name and other formal information, such as is required on occasions of this kind, he was asked the following question:

"You and your father were not on the best of terms, were you?"

"No, sir."

"What was the cause of your falling out?"

"My marriage."

"Why did he object to your marriage?"

"I can't see," said Wright, testily, "what my father's objection to my marriage has to do with his murder."

"It may have a great deal to do with it," said the coroner, significantly.

"Oh, I see," said Wright, with cool sarcasm. "You think that perhaps this may furnish a clew to connect me with his death. Very well. If the troubles that have overtaken me and mine will satisfy your curiosity and entertain this crowd, why I am ready to narrate them. Ask me what you will."

"I will repeat my former question," said the coroner. "Why did your father oppose your marriage?"

"His objection was to my wife?"

"On account of her poverty, or anything of that kind?"

"Not that I know of."

"His objection was a personal one?"

"Hardly that. For she was beautiful and amiable as well."

"I don't understand then what his objection to her could have been. Will you explain it?"

"Well, if you must have it, my father many years ago got into a difficulty with his overseer, Jefferson Baxter, and killed him. It was a very unfortunate affair in every way, and reference to it was carefully avoided in our family. My father was a very taciturn man naturally, and he never told me anything about it. I was from home a great deal, having been sent to college when I was 15, and I never knew the full details of the affair. Indeed, I only knew that years ago he had killed his overseer and that he had been cleared by a jury. To make a long story short, my wife is the daughter of Jefferson Baxter,

continued on page eight.

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Boldly ventured is half won.—German.

A bold attempt is half success.

Courage in danger is half the battle.—Plautus.

Courage should have eyes as well as arms.

The man who has never been in danger can not answer for his courage.—LaRochefoucauld.

Looking a difficulty in the face will often kill it.

Tender handed stroke a nettle,
And it stings you for your pains
Grasp it like a man of mettle,
And it soft as silk remains.
—Aaron Hill.

Florida.

The first Jacksonville tour of the season via the Pennsylvania Railroad, allowing two weeks in Florida, leaves New York, Philadelphia, and Washington by special train February 2. Excursion tickets, including railway transportation, Pullman accommodations (one berth), and meals en route in both directions while traveling on the special train, will be sold at the following rates: New York, $50; Buffalo, $54.25; Rochester, $54; Elmira, $51.45; Erie, $54 85; Williamsport, $50; Wilkesbarre, $50.-85; and at proportionate rates from other points.

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LEROY LONGFELLOW, West Denton.

Order Nisi.

James C. Mullikin, Assignee, vs. William K. Patchett.

In the Circuit Court for Caroline County. In Equity.

Ordered this 25th day of January, 1904, that the sale of the property mentioned in these proceedings, made and reported by James C. Mullikin, Assignee, be ratified and confirmed, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the 28th day of March next, —Provided a copy of this Order be inserted in some newspaper printed and published in Caroline county, once in each of three successive weeks, before the 26th day of February next.

The report states the amount of sales to be $700.00.

THOMAS L. DAY, Clerk.

True Copy—Test: THOMAS L. DAY, Clerk.

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