

Under the Rose

Passages from
the Case-Book
of Inspector
FINNEY
VALENTINE,
Investigator
Extraordinary

THE FIREFLY

By FREDERIC REDDALE

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LATE in the forenoon of a dark and lowering November day a dilapidated express wagon of the "free lance" variety, laden with a single large trunk, nearly new, stopped in front of old Police Headquarters at 300 Mulberry street in Manhattan. The driver hopped off his perch in a hurry, went inside, and inquired for the detective bureau.

The fellow displayed so much agitation that the lieutenant in the front office sent him right up to the quarters of Inspector Finney Valentine, where he told the following strange story in choice Fourth ward speech:

"Me name's Barney Fogle. I was on me stand corner o' Lexington and Third aveny'er w'en a guy—a dago, I guess he was—comes up t' me an' apels whether I c'n move a trunk from th' Gran' Central. I tells him 'Sure thing, an' he gits in me wagon, sayin' he'll go wit' me."

"Well, cap, we goes inter th' baggage-room, an' th' feller hands over a receipt an' claims his trunk. He helps carry it, an' load it on me wagon, seein' 'twas too hefty for one man t' handle. I notice that he seems mighty ch'ice an' tender of it, which made what he says next sound purty queer. Th' guy hands me a dollar and says he wants me t' take th' trunk an' dump it in th' river—east or north would do—'cause there's nothin' inside but old books an' rubbish."

"Before I cud say I'd take th' job, he walks off an' that's th' last I seen of him. 'Course it was a queer order. Why didn't he sell th' old books t' some junkman t' waste paper? Then I looks at th' trunk—all new an' shiny—an' I says t' myself: 'What's a workin' guy like that doin' givin' away a good trunk fer? So I befts it again, an' it sure was a load—packed solid like—an' up-ended it t' have a look at th' bottom. What I see there y' can see f'r yerself, cap, an' I sizes it up that it's up t' me t' make a quick sneak f'r th' perlice."

"Where's the trunk now?" inquired Valentine, all alert at this dramatic story.

"In me wagon outside—less some guy's pinches it since I came in, which I guess n't."

"Fetch it up," commanded the chief, calling a couple of husky headquarters porters.

As the trio went out of the door, Valentine signaled quietly to a plain-clothes man to keep the husky expressman in sight and see that he didn't get away. Apparently Barney Fogle had no wish to escape; he had told an evidently straight story so far; but it was well to take no chances.

When the mysterious trunk was hauled into an inner room it proved to be a rather cheap affair, but full-sized, such as could be bought on the Bowers or lower Sixth avenue for three or four dollars. The lock was flimsy and the construction weak, the metal corners and bands being more for show than for service. Around it was knotted crosswise a length of common clothesline.

Altogether the trunk was ordinary and innocent-looking—until you looked at the bottom as it stood on end. There the thin basswood was stained a dark reddish brown as of some liquid which had sluggishly oozed through the cracks of the boards.

Inspector Valentine reached for a powerful magnifying lens and studied the telltale stains closely for some minutes. Then, lightening up he gave the curt order, "Open it!"

So they untied the knotted clothesline, and from a bunch of handy keys of assorted sizes one was found which fitted the lock. As the lid was flung back a horrid and revolting sight met the gaze. Crowded closely into the trunk, from which the tray had been removed, was the headless and armless body of a young woman, petite in form, nearly nude! The knees had been bent double close to the chest and the interstices between the body and the sides of the trunk were stuffed with sundry articles of feminine apparel, some of them torn in shreds to fit. Evidently here was a case of foul murder, for in the left breast was a deep knife or stiletto wound that had caused death.

"Would you recognize that man again?" questioned Valentine of Barney Fogle.

"Surest thing you know, cap!" asserted the expressman. "Hope you'll give me a chanst t' swear t' th' murderin' villain!"

"We'll do our best," said Valentine grimly; "but you can see there's mighty little to go upon until we find out who she is. But I want that statement of yours again in writing."

Calling a stenographer the inspector, by dint of question and answer, arranged Fogle's story in logical order. At its conclusion he said: "I'm afraid we'll have to detain you, Barney. But it's only a matter of form, you know—merely as a witness. If your story's straight you've nothing to fear."

So Barney was led away and lodged

in a cell downstairs. Then a score of plain-clothes men scoured the city for clues or for information as to any girl reported missing, all without avail, seeing that it was impossible to furnish a full description of the body.

Four days later came the second surprise. On a pile of snow and refuse left by some White Wings street-cleaners under an arch of the Brooklyn bridge there were found at daylight the missing head and arms done up in coarse wrapping paper. The face in life had been that of a girl about two-and-twenty, fair of skin and with a wealth of ruddy golden hair. The hands showed evidences of menial toil—probably housework, Valentine decided—and it was upon this basis that his sleuths, armed with photographs, scoured the city for clues that should lead to exact identification.

The case was so unusual in its barbarous details and public clamor was so insistent that the girl's slayer be brought to justice, that Valentine himself went out on the case, and it was he who rounded up the first definite evidence.

He discovered that the murdered girl was named Annie Greg, born in New York, and that she worked as waitress and maid-of-all-work between times in a restaurant in South Fifth avenue much frequented by foreigners of the artisan class. Annie was a good girl, they all said; she had roomed alone over her work-place, which was also a lodging-house. Because she was so cheerful and dapper, so light-footed and light-hearted, some one had nicknamed her "The Firefly." It was testified that she had few men friends, but had been known to chat freely with one of the customers whom she frequently waited on at meal-times. The description of this man tallied generally with that given by Barney Fogle of the fellow who engaged him to move the trunk; he was a foreigner—a "dago," in the current New York phrase applied to all immigrants from the south of Europe. But no one knew his name or where he worked, and he hadn't visited the restaurant for some days. So a detective was stationed near by where he could keep watch on the entrance, and a code of signals arranged with the proprietor should Annie Greg's friend appear. When her room was searched—they had to force the door, the key being missing—everything was found in apple-pie order; it looked as though she had merely stepped out for awhile, expecting shortly to return.

Meantime, of course, efforts had been made to trace the trunk through the channel by which it had first arrived at the Grand Central baggage-room. Here another snag was encountered; the baggage-master could only show for receipt a piece of common writing paper on which had been scrawled in pencil some cabalistic letters and figures which seemed to be meant for a "V" and an "M," followed by the half illegible numerals, "72869." Hence as no regular express company had done the work, it was going to be difficult to discover when, by whom, and from whence the ghastly burden had been removed in the first place after the victim's body had been concealed therein.

Long and painfully did Valentine study that dirty scrap of paper and the half-effaced scrawl thereon. At length he decided that it might possibly prove to be an address—No. 728 Sixty-ninth street, either east or west—while the Roman numerals "VM" might perhaps stand for a real name! It was only a guess, but in the detective business guesses are sometimes equivalent to inspirations.

No. 728 Sixty-ninth street proved to be in the up-town "Little Italy" of Manhattan island—a region of tall and densely populated tenement-houses, well down toward the East river. The "flats" were fairly respectable, ranging from two to five rooms in a suite. Here Valentine found his knowledge of Italian a god-send; the janitor volubly ran over the list of his tenants until he came to the name "Vincente Mario," who was, he said, a single man inhabiting two rooms on the fourth floor—a very nice, quiet-spoken fellow, whose description for the second time filled that given by Barney the expressman. Signor Mario, it appeared, was an "artist"—that is, he was employed somewhere downtown as assistant to a sculptor. The trail was waxing warm, thought Valentine. Stepping to the nearest telephone he ordered another plain-clothes man to keep tab outside No. 728 until further orders.

But on reaching headquarters Inspector Valentine found a welcome surprise awaiting him. Seated in his office was the officer who had been detailed to watch the restaurant, and in a chair by the window lounged a swarthy but not bad-looking Italian aged about twenty-eight, nattily dressed and carefully barbered.

"We've got him, chief!" said the sleuth hoarsely, "an' he admits he knew Annie Greg."

"I'm very glad to see you, Signor Mario," said Valentine in Italian.

"Come over here—I wish to talk to you."

"Si, si, signor," answered Mario, without the slightest embarrassment. "I'm always at the service of the signor captain."

"When did you last see Annie Greg?" was the abrupt question immediately fired at Mario.

"Eight—maybe ten—days ago," was the answer.

"Where was that?"

"In the restaurant where I eat upon occasion."

"Why haven't you been there since?"

Mario shrugged his shoulders and extended his palms. "I eat when I feel hungry—now here, now there—not always in the same place." The answer was given without embarrassment and with apparent candor.

"Where do you work?"

"For Signor K—," mentioning the name of a well-known American sculptor in the artists' celebrated colony in Macdougall alley.

"How long?"

"Two-three years. Signor K— brought me with him from Naples, where I had also helped him."

"Did you know that Annie Greg was dead—murdered?" was the question suddenly shot at Mario.

"Daid; Murdaired! Nevaire! The signor must be joking!"

"Look at these," commanded Valentine sternly, thrusting a group of photographs of the trunk, the torso, and the dead girl's face and arms into Mario's hands. "Now what do you know about that, Mario?"

"Jesu Maria!" breathed the suspect, and a look of terror or of horror

search of my room?" he inquired gently.

Valentine nodded as he took the key.

"I am willing—I have nothing to fear," exclaimed Mario dramatically, almost proudly, and for the minute the inspector almost believed him. But at that moment the door opened and a raucous voice was heard to exclaim:

"Why, that's th' damned dago what told me t' chuck his trunk off th' dock! Let me at him, fer th' love of Mike!"

"That settles it, I guess," sighed Valentine. But not even at this damning identification did Vincente Mario quail.

"It is a mistake," he affirmed quietly and confidently. "I do not know the man, nor the trunk of which he speaks."

"Y' lie, y' scut!" exclaimed Barney. "Yer tried t' put me in bad, an' y' know it!"

Mario's only response to this trade was a half-wearied, half-cynical shrug of the shoulders. The fellow was a most consummate actor.

"Take him downstairs," ordered Valentine; the last he saw of the Italian as he went out of the door he was nonchalantly rolling a cigarette.

"Now for his rooms," said the chief. To witness the search he took along one of his most trusted subordinates.

The tiny two-room flat proved to be scrupulously clean and in apple-pie order. There was not the least sign of a struggle, of bloodshed, or of any lethal weapon. And yet Valentine believed that this was the place

tally as the probable version of the murder.

The Italian had lured the girl to his apartment for no good purpose. To hide a minor crime, and stifle her cries, he had stabbed her with a fine stiletto which he afterward dropped overboard from the Queensboro bridge. Then he went out and bought the trunk; when that proved too small he was forced to play the part of a butcher; hence the dismemberment.

It needed for a final touch only the coming forward of the truckman who removed the trunk to the Grand Central station in the first instance to weave a complete web of evidence around Vincente Mario which confirmed and supplemented his confession.

But Finney Valentine, stern detector of crime, always regarded it as a miscarriage of justice that the slayer of pretty Annie Greg escaped with merely a life sentence.

DO CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN?

Attitude of the Modern Sage on the Subject of Dress and Its Objects.

"O, Sage," said the young man, "I am surprised, almost grieved, to find that one who has such a reputation for wisdom as you, should pay so much attention to his clothes. You are as immaculate and as nobly as a young lover."

"And why not?" asked the elder man.

"Why not, indeed?" rejoined the

Must Be Filled Always With the Spirit

THE greatest need of the church today, and especially of her ministry, is spirit-filled personalities. The pulpit and the pew must be surcharged with the potential power of the all-encompassing Holy Spirit. There is no substitute for such an infilling, there can be none. The peril of our modern church life is, that this fact is too much lost sight of or neglected. We are glad that other churches are emphasizing this truth, churches who in the past were not so persistent in emphasizing this vital truth. One need not attend the Winona Indiana Bible conference meetings, to be convinced that the Presbyterian church is forging to the front on the line of spirituality. This is cause for rejoicing. Then those who heard the world-famous F. B. Meyer of London, April 25, when he addressed the ministers in Cleveland, will remember how among other things, he laid special emphasis on the ministry being in partnership with the Holy Spirit. He himself is a splendid illustration of such an anointing.

Life Work Well Done. This blessed man of God, though his life's sun is westerling, being well up in the sixties, yet in his declining years when most men lead a retired life, is president of the World's Sunday School association, and is now with others touring through the states, speaking on an average three times a day, is a marvel of spiritual power, because he is a spirit-filled man. He told us ministers in his Cleveland address that we must take the holy spirit into partnership with us in our work. With all the energy of his consecrated and sanctified personality he emphasized this vital truth and fact. He said the holy spirit must be the invisible force or partner, permeating the message, and the messenger, and the aim of the preacher should be under the delivery of a spirit-filled message to achieve results, immediate results. He should make unexpected appeals to the unsaved in the midst of the sermon, and not always wait until at its close. The very suddenness of the appeal, startling the unsaved in the audience, will often prove effective.

The Word of God. He also said ministers must make much of the word of God, more than is generally being done. His criticism on the American ministry was that there is too much topical and not enough expository preaching. He remarked: You are splendid and eloquent at topical preaching, but if you want to realize more effectiveness and larger results in soul-saving you must do more expository preaching which deals fully with the word of God. The speaker told us that he commenced at Genesis and got to the prophecies of Zechariah in fifteen years in his Sabbath morning expository sermons, and for the evening expository sermons during those fifteen years commencing at Matthew's gospel he got to Corinthians. Those sermons compose largely his forty books of devotional spirit. You must preach the gospel straight, he declared, so that the holy spirit can say Amen to your message, in its preparation and in its delivery.

Preach the word of God, he continued, and not other subjects. If you want the sanction of the holy spirit upon your message and his confirmation in its presentation you must be a clean man, otherwise he will withdraw himself from you and withhold his seal of approval from your sermon. Be simple in your exposition of Bible passages so that children can understand you. Preach more to children. Mr. Meyer has a Sunday School connected with his church in London numbering 4,000, and has 400 teachers. It is his custom to preach an eight-minute sermon to the boys and girls when in his home church. A minister or pastor, he said, must be the power behind the throne in the Sunday School, he must stand vitally connected with it. A minister linked to God and in partnership with the holy spirit will accomplish much for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. What an inspiration to listen to such an unpretentious and spirit-filled man. May the holy spirit descend upon our ministry in mighty effusion.—Evangelical Messenger.

Laws. The laws of nature are definite and must be obeyed. Their infraction entails inevitable penalty. The laws of society are usually good, sometimes bad, for instance the laws of Russia. The law of God is the highest law. It is the expression of the divine mind and will.—Rev. R. S. Dawson, Presbyterian, Kearney, N. J.

Rebellion. One rebellious organ in the human body leaves the body diseased and subject to death. So one unlovely or vicious or rebellious member of the church, which is the body of Christ, leaves the body weak and lacking in the power of execution.—Rev. M. E. Harlan, Disciple, Brooklyn, N. Y.

The First Man. I do not believe God made Adam and Eve, after the fashion in which we are told.—Rabbi Charles, Hebrew, Boston.



gleaned in his black eyes, but no more so than was natural; beyond this quite allowable evidence of emotion there was not a tremor of hand or lip. "She is daid, you say! Ah, povera bambino! Who is the wretch who did this thing? When did it happen?"

"I thought you could tell me that," said Valentine drily, though he secretly began to have his doubts. Mario's coolness under fire was superb, supposing him guilty.

"Me!" exclaimed Mario. "No, no, the signor captain is joking. We were simply good friends, nothing more. She waited on me in the restaurant whenever I went there, and once or twice we went to Coney Island and back on the boat. But that was all."

These statements Mario made with such apparent candor and innocence as to arouse Valentine's suspicions anew. It seemed as if his manner was too perfect to be genuine.

"Well, it may be as you say, Mario," said Valentine at length, "but we shall have to detain you, I'm afraid, as the only witness we have found thus far who knew poor Annie. Meantime I'll trouble you for the key of your room uptown."

While he was speaking the chief had pressed an electric button under his foot. To the attendant who answered the call he murmured a few words. Meanwhile Mario had fumbled in his pockets and finally produced an ordinary flat door-key of the Yale pattern.

"You mean you will instigate a

where poor Annie Greg had met her death. Together they literally turned the two rooms upside down and inside out; even the scantily furnished bathroom did not escape their scrutiny, although its appointments were spotless.

And it was this bathroom that finally yielded the eagerly sought evidence that was destined to send Vincente Mario to the electric chair. Hanging on the single gasjet, in full view, was an ordinary brass doorkey with a single link, the tag bearing the number "37."

"What was the number of the girl's room where she lodged?" demanded Valentine of his companion.

"Blest if I know—did it have a number?" was the answer.

"We'll soon find out," said Valentine grimly. "Remember, we had to break open her door because the key was missing. If this is it—" The rest of the sentence was lost as the two officers clattered hot-foot downstairs and into the street.

The key and its numbered check proved to be the "missing link" in the chain already forged around Vincente Mario. The key fitted the lock and both were identified by the restaurant keeper and the proprietor of the South Fifth avenue lodging-house as having been used by Annie Greg. When confronted by this bit of evidence—the little thing so frequently overlooked by big criminals—Mario broke down and confessed to what Valentine had already outlined men-

young man. "I am afraid I cannot explain. Many people have told me it is foolish to pay so much attention to clothes. That's all I know."

"It is a common error," spoke the Sage, "but it is nevertheless an error, and one which once possessed me. When I was young as you are, I was attracted by the external things only and of these external things clothes were by far the most important. When I was a little older, I underwent a reaction. I had a revulsion of feeling. Somehow I gained the idea that clothes were an absurdity in toto. I thought that the inner spiritual man was everything. According as my thoughts became introspective, I neglected my external appearance and went about unkempt and slovenly."

"The two extremes," suggested the young man discerningly.

"Yes, the two extremes, but with neither alone was I happy. Without clothes I found I could not go among my fellows in comfort and thus the social side of me became atrophied. Without knowledge and an inward appreciation of the important fundamentals of life, I could not be happy in my own company."

"Wherefore," observed the young man, "you struck a happy medium by compromising on both."

"Yes. Now I pay strict attention to my external appearance while inwardly I laugh at the folly of the world which makes it necessary."

In Spain wireless telegraph apparatus is used to detect the approach of thunderstorms.