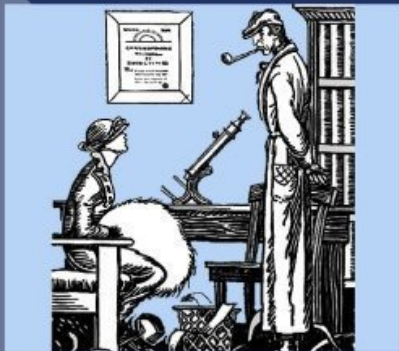


# Philo Gubb's Greatest Case



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# Philo Gubb's Greatest Case

by

# Ellis Parker Butler

Philo Gubb, wrapped in his bathrobe, went to the door of the room that was the headquarters of his business of paper-hanging and decorating as well as the office of his detective business, and opened the door a crack. It was still early in the morning, but Mr. Gubb was a modest man, and, lest any one should see him in his scanty attire, he peered through the crack of the door before he stepped hastily into the hall and captured his copy of the Riverbank Daily Eagle. When he had secured the still damp newspaper, he returned to his cot bed and spread himself out to read comfortably.

It was a hot Iowa morning. Business was so slack that if Mr. Gubb had not taken out his set of eight varieties of false whiskers daily and brushed them carefully, the moths would have been able to devour them at leisure.

P. Gubb opened the Eagle. The first words that met his eye caused him to sit upright on his cot. At the top of the first column of the first page were the headlines:

## MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF HENRY SMITZ

Body Found in Mississippi River by Boatman Early This A.M.  
Foul Play Suspected.

Mr. Gubb unfolded the paper and read the item under the headlines with the most intense interest. Foul play meant the possibility of an opportunity to put to use once more the precepts of the Course of Twelve Lessons, and with them fresh in his mind Detective Gubb was eager to undertake the solution of any mystery the Riverbank could furnish. This was the article:--

'Just as we go to press we receive word through Policeman Michael

O'Toole that the well-known mussel-dredger and boatman, Samuel Fliggis (Long Sam), while dredging for mussels last night just below the bridge, recovered the body of Henry Smitz, late of this place.

'Mr. Smitz had been missing for three days and his wife had been greatly worried. Mr. Brownson, of the Brownson Packing Company by whom he was employed, admitted that Mr. Smitz had been missing for several days.

'The body was found sewed in a sack. Foul play is suspected.'

"I should think foul play would be suspected," exclaimed Philo Gubb, "if a man was sewed into a bag and deposited into the Mississippi River until dead."

He propped the paper against the foot of the cot bed and was still reading when someone knocked on his door. He wrapped his bathrobe carefully about him and opened the door. A young woman with tear-dimmed eyes stood in the doorway.

"Mr. P. Gubb?" she asked. "I'm sorry to disturb you so early in the morning, Mr. Gubb, but I couldn't sleep all night. I came on a matter of business, as you might say. There's a couple of things I want you to do."

"Paper-hanging or deteckating?" asked P. Gubb.

"Both," said the young woman. "My name is Smitz--Emily Smitz. My husband--"

"I'm aware of the knowledge of your loss, ma'am," said the paperhanger detective gently.

"Lots of people know of it," said Mrs. Smitz. "I guess everybody

knows of it—I told the police to try to find Henry, so it is no secret. And I want you to come up as soon as you get dressed, and paper my bedroom."

Mr. Gubb looked at the young woman as if he thought she had gone insane under the burden of her woe.

"And then I want you to find Henry," she said, "because I've heard you can do so well in the detecting line."

Mr. Gubb suddenly realized that the poor creature did not yet know the full extent of her loss. He gazed down upon her with pity in his bird-like eyes.

"I know you'll think it strange," the young woman went on, "that I should ask you to paper a bedroom first, when my husband is lost; but if he is gone it is because I was a mean, stubborn thing. We never quarreled in our lives, Mr. Gubb, until I picked out the wallpaper for our bedroom, and Henry said parrots and birds-of-paradise and tropical flowers that were as big as umbrellas would look awful on our bedroom wall. So I said he hadn't anything but Low Dutch taste, and he got mad. 'All right, have it your own way,' he said, and I went and had Mr. Skaggs put the paper on the wall, and the next day Henry didn't come home at all.

"If I'd thought Henry would take it that way, I'd rather had the wall bare, Mr. Gubb. I've cried and cried, and last night I made up my mind it was all my fault and that when Henry came home he'd find a decent paper on the wall. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Gubb, that when the paper was on the wall it looked worse than it looked in the roll. It looked crazy."

"Yes'm," said Mr. Gubb, "it often does. But, however, there's something you'd ought to know right away about Henry."

The young woman stared wide-eyed at Mr. Gubb for a moment; she turned as white as her shirtwaist.

"Henry is dead!" she cried, and collapsed into Mr. Gubb's long, thin arms.

Mr. Gubb, the inert form of the young woman in his arms, glanced around with a startled gaze. He stood miserably, not knowing what to do, when suddenly he saw Policeman O'Toole coming toward him down the hall. Policeman O'Toole was leading by the arm a man whose wrists bore clanking handcuffs.

"What's this now?" asked the policeman none too gently, as he saw the bathrobed Mr. Gubb holding the fainting woman in his arms.

"I am exceedingly glad you have come," said Mr. Gubb. "The only meaning into it, is that this is Mrs. H. Smitz, widow-lady, fainted onto me against my will and wishes."

"I was only askin'," said Policeman O'Toole politely enough.

"You shouldn't ask such things until you're asked to ask," said Mr. Gubb.

After looking into Mr. Gubb's room to see that there was no easy means of escape, O'Toole pushed his prisoner into the room and took the limp form of Mrs. Smitz from Mr. Gubb, who entered the room and closed the door.

"I may as well say what I want to say right now," said the handcuffed man as soon as he was alone with Mr. Gubb. "I've heard of Detective Gubb, off and on, many a time, and as soon as I got into this trouble I said, 'Gubb's the man that can get me out if anyone can.' My name is Herman Wiggins."

"Glad to meet you," said Mr. Gubb, slipping his long legs into his trousers.

"And I give you my word for what it is worth," continued Mr. Wiggins, "that I'm as innocent of this crime as the babe unborn."

"What crime?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"Why, killing Hen Smitz--what crime did you think?" said Mr. Wiggins. "Do I look like a man that would go and murder a man just because--"

He hesitated and Mr. Gubb, who was slipping his suspenders over his bony shoulders, looked at Mr. Wiggins with keen eyes.

"Well, just because him and me had words in fun," said Mr. Wiggins. "I leave it to you, can't a man say words in fun once in a while?"

"Certainly sure," said Mr. Gubb.

"I guess so," said Mr. Wiggins. "Anybody'd know a man don't mean all he says. When I went and told Hen Smitz I'd murder him as sure as green apples grow on a tree, I was just fooling. But this fool policeman--"

"Mr. O'Toole?"

"Yes. They gave him this Hen Smitz case to look into, and the first thing he did was to arrest me for murder. Nervy, I call it."

Policeman O'Toole opened the door a crack and peeked in. Seeing Mr. Gubb well along in his dressing operations, he opened the door wider and assisted Mrs. Smitz to a chair. She was still limp, but she was a brave little woman and was trying to control her sobs.



"Through?" O'Toole asked Wiggins. "If you are, come along back to jail."

"Now, don't talk to me in that tone of voice," said Mr. Wiggins angrily. "No, I'm not through. You don't know how to treat a gentleman like a gentleman, and never did."

He turned to Mr. Gubb.

"The long and short of it is this: I'm arrested for the murder of Hen Smitz, and I didn't murder him and I want you to take my case and get me out of jail."

"Ah, stuff!" exclaimed O'Toole. "You murdered him and you know you did. What's the use talkin'?"

Mrs. Smitz leaned forward in her chair.

"Murdered Henry?" she cried. "He never murdered Henry. I murdered him."

"Now, ma'am," said O'Toole politely, "I hate to contradict a lady, but you never murdered him at all. This man here murdered him, and I've got the proof on him."

"I murdered him!" cried Mrs. Smitz again. "I drove him out of his right mind and made him kill himself."

"Nothing of the sort," declared O'Toole. "This man Wiggins murdered him."

"I did not!" exclaimed Mr. Wiggins indignantly. "Some other man did it."

It seemed a deadlock, for each was quite positive. Mr. Gubb looked

from one to the other doubtfully.

"All right, take me back to jail," said Mr. Wiggins. "You look up the case, Mr. Gubb; that's all I came here for. Will you do it? Dig into it, hey?"

"I most certainly shall be glad to so do," said Mr. Gubb, "at the regular terms."

O'Toole led his prisoner away.

For a few minutes Mrs. Smitz sat silent, her hands clasped, staring at the floor. Then she looked up into Mr. Gubb's eyes.

"You will work on this case, Mr. Gubb, won't you?" she begged. "I have a little money--I'll give it all to have you do your best. It is cruel--cruel to have that poor man suffer under the charge of murder when I know so well Henry killed himself because I was cross with him. You can prove he killed himself--that it was my fault. You will?"

"The way the deteckative profession operates onto a case," said Mr. Gubb, "isn't to go to work to prove anything particularly especial. It finds a clue or clues and follows them to where they lead to. That I shall be willing to do."

"That is all I could ask," said Mrs. Smitz gratefully.

Arising from her seat with difficulty, she walked tremblingly to the door. Mr. Gubb assisted her down the stairs, and it was not until she was gone that he remembered that she did not know the body of her husband had been found--sewed in a sack and at the bottom of the river. Young husbands have been known to quarrel with their wives over matters as trivial as bedroom wallpaper; they have even been known to leave home for several days at a time when angry; in

extreme cases they have even been known to seek death at their own hands; but it is not at all usual for a young husband to leave home for several days and then in cold blood sew himself in a sack and jump into the river. In the first place there are easier ways of terminating one's life; in the second place a man can jump into the river with perfect ease without going to the trouble of sewing himself in a sack; and in the third place it is exceedingly difficult for a man to sew himself into a sack. It is almost impossible.

To sew himself into a sack a man must have no little skill, and he must have a large, roomy sack. He takes, let us say, a sack-needle, threaded with a good length of twine; he steps into the sack and pulls it up over his head; he then reaches above his head, holding the mouth of the sack together with one hand while he sews with the other hand. In hot anger this would be quite impossible.

Philo Gubb thought of all this as he looked through his disguises, selecting one suitable for the work he had in hand. He had just decided that the most appropriate disguise would be "Number 13, Undertaker," and had picked up the close black wig, and long, drooping mustache, when he had another thought. Given a bag sufficiently loose to permit free motion of the hands and arms, and a man, even in hot anger, might sew himself in. A man, intent on suicidally bagging himself, would sew the mouth of the bag shut and would then cut a slit in the front of the bag large enough to crawl into. He would then crawl into the bag and sew up the slit, which would be immediately in front of his hands. It could be done! Philo Gubb chose from his wardrobe a black frock coat and a silk hat with a wide band of crape. He carefully locked his door and went down to the street.

On a day as hot as this day promised to be, a frock coat and a silk hat could be nothing but distressingly uncomfortable. Between his door and the corner, eight various citizens spoke to Philo Gubb,

calling him by name. In fact, Riverbank was as accustomed to seeing P. Gubb in disguise as out of disguise, and while a few children might be interested by the sight of Detective Gubb in disguise, the older citizens thought no more of it, as a rule, than of seeing Banker Jennings appear in a pink shirt one day and a blue striped one the next. No one ever accused Banker Jennings of trying to hide his identity by a change of shirts, and no one imagined that P. Gubb was trying to disguise himself when he put on a disguise. They considered it a mere business custom, just as a butcher tied on a white apron before he went behind his counter.

This was why, instead of wondering who the tall, dark-garbed stranger might be, Banker Jennings greeted Philo Gubb cheerfully.

"Ah, Gubb!" he said. "So you are going to work on this Smitz case, are you? Glad of it, and wish you luck. Hope you place the crime on the right man and get him the full penalty. Let me tell you there's nothing in this rumor of Smitz being short of money. We did lend him money, but we never pressed him for it. We never even asked him for interest. I told him a dozen times he could have as much more from us as he wanted, within reason, whenever he wanted it, and that he could pay me when his invention was on the market."

"No report of news of any such rumor has as yet come to my hearing," said P. Gubb, "but since you mention it, I'll take it for less than it is worth."

"And that's less than nothing," said the banker. "Have you any clue?"

"I'm on my way to find one at the present moment of time," said Mr. Gubb.

"Well, let me give you a pointer," said the banker. "Get a line on Herman Wiggins or some of his crew, understand. Don't say I said a

word,—I don't want to be brought into this,—but Smitz was afraid of Wiggins and his crew. He told me so. He said Wiggins had threatened to murder him."

"Mr. Wiggins is at present in the custody of the county jail for killing H. Smitz with intent to murder him," said Mr. Gubb.

"Oh, then--then it's all settled," said the banker. "They've proved it on him. I thought they would. Well, I suppose you've got to do your little bit of detecting just the same. Got to air the camphor out of the false hair, eh?"

The banker waved a cheerful hand at P. Gubb and passed into his banking institution.

Detective Gubb, cordially greeted by his many friends and admirers, passed on down the main street, and by the time he reached the street that led to the river he was followed by a large and growing group intent on the pleasant occupation of watching a detective detect.

As Mr. Gubb walked toward the river, other citizens joined the group, but all kept a respectful distance behind him. When Mr. Gubb reached River Street and his false mustache fell off, the interest of the audience stopped short three paces behind him and stood until he had rescued the mustache and once more placed its wires in his nostrils. Then, when he moved forward again, they too moved forward. Never, perhaps, in the history of crime was a detective favored with a more respectful gallery.

On the edge of the river, Mr. Gubb found Long Sam Fliggis, the mussel dredger, seated on an empty tar-barrel with his own audience ranged before him listening while he told, for the fortieth time, the story of his finding of the body of H. Smitz. As Philo Gubb

approached, Long Sam ceased speaking, and his audience and Mr. Gubb's gallery merged into one great circle which respectfully looked and listened while Mr. Gubb questioned the mussel dredger.

"Suicide?" said Long Sam scoffingly. "Why, he wan't no more a suicide than I am right now. He was murdered or wan't nothin'! I've dredged up some suicides in my day, and some of 'em had stones tied to 'em, to make sure they'd sink, and some thought they'd sink without no ballast, but nary one of 'em ever sewed himself into a bag, and I give my word," he said positively, "that Hen Smitz couldn't have sewed himself into that burlap bag unless someone done the sewing. Then the feller that did it was an assistant-suicide, and the way I look at it is that an assistant-suicide is jest the same as a murderer."

The crowd murmured approval, but Mr. Gubb held up his hand for silence.

"In certain kinds of burlap bags it is possibly probable a man could sew himself into it," said Mr. Gubb, and the crowd, seeing the logic of the remark, applauded gently but feelingly.

"You ain't seen the way he was sewed up," said Long Sam, "or you wouldn't talk like that."

"I haven't yet took a look," admitted Mr. Gubb, "but I aim so to do immediately after I find a clue onto which to work up my case. An A-I deteckative can't set forth to work until he has a clue, that being a rule of the game."

"What kind of a clue was you lookin' for?" asked Long Sam. "What's a clue, anyway?"

"A clue," said P. Gubb, "is almost anything connected with the late lamented, but generally something that nobody but a deteckative

would think had anything to do with anything whatsoever. Not infrequently often it is a button."

"Well, I've got no button except them that is sewed onto me," said Long Sam, "but if this here sack-needle will do any good--"

He brought from his pocket the point of a heavy sack-needle and laid it in Philo Gubb's palm. Mr. Gubb looked at it carefully. In the eye of the needle still remained a few inches of twine.

"I cut that off'n the burlap he was sewed up in," volunteered Long Sam. "I thought I'd keep it as a sort of nice little souvenir. I'd like it back again when you don't need it for a clue no more."

"Certainly sure," agreed Mr. Gubb, and he examined the needle carefully.

There are two kinds of sack-needles in general use. In both, the point of the needle is curved to facilitate pushing it into and out of a closely filled sack; in both, the curved portion is somewhat flattened so that the thumb and finger may secure a firm grasp to pull the needle through; but in one style the eye is at the end of the shaft while in the other it is near the point. This needle was like neither; the eye was midway of the shaft; the needle was pointed at each end and the curved portions were not flattened. Mr. Gubb noticed another thing--the twine was not the ordinary loosely twisted hemp twine, but a hard, smooth cotton cord, like carpet warp.

"Thank you," said Mr. Gubb, "and now I will go elsewhere to investigate to a further extent, and it is not necessarily imperative that everybody should accompany along with me if they don't want to."

But everybody did want to, it seemed. Long Sam and his audience joined Mr. Gubb's gallery and, with a dozen or so newcomers, they

followed Mr. Gubb at a decent distance as he walked toward the plant of the Brownson Packing Company, which stood on the riverbank some two blocks away.

It was here Henry Smitz had worked. Six or eight buildings of various sizes, the largest of which stood immediately on the river's edge, together with the "yards" or pens, all enclosed by a high board fence, constituted the plant of the packing company, and as Mr. Gubb appeared at the gate the watchman there stood aside to let him enter.

"Good morning, Mr. Gubb," he said pleasantly. "I been sort of expecting you. Always right on the job when there's crime being done, ain't you? You'll find Merkel and Brill and Jokosky and the rest of Wiggins's crew in the main building, and I guess they'll tell you just what they told the police. They hate it, but what else can they say? It's the truth."

"What is the truth?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"That Wiggins was dead sore at Hen Smitz," said the watchman. "That Wiggins told Hen he'd do for him if he lost them their jobs like he said he would. That's the truth."

Mr. Gubb--his admiring followers were halted at the gate by the watchman--entered the large building and inquired his way to Mr. Wiggins's department. He found it on the side of the building toward the river and on the ground floor. On one side the vast room led into the refrigerating room of the company; on the other it opened upon a long but narrow dock that ran the width of the building.

Along the outer edge of the dock were tied two barges, and into these barges some of Wiggins's crew were dumping mutton--not legs of mutton but entire sheep, neatly sewed in burlap. The large



room was the packing and shipping room, and the work of Wiggins's crew was that of sewing the slaughtered and refrigerated sheep carcasses in burlap for shipment. Bales of burlap stood against one wall; strands of hemp twine ready for the needle hung from pegs in the wall and the posts that supported the floor above. The contiguity of the refrigerating room gave the room a pleasantly cool atmosphere.

Mr. Gubb glanced sharply around. Here was the burlap, here were needles, here was twine. Yonder was the river into which Hen Smitz had been thrown. He glanced across the narrow dock at the blue river. As his eye returned he noticed one of the men carefully sweeping the dock with a broom--sweeping fragments of glass into the river. As the men in the room watched him curiously, Mr. Gubb picked up a piece of burlap and put it in his pocket, wrapped a strand of twine around his finger and pocketed the twine, examined the needles stuck in improvised needle-holders made by boring gimlet holes in the wall, and then walked to the dock and picked up one of the pieces of glass.

"Clues," he remarked, and gave his attention to the work of questioning the men.

Although manifestly reluctant, they honestly admitted that Wiggins had more than once threatened Hen Smitz--that he hated Hen Smitz with the hatred of a man who has been threatened with the loss of his job. Mr. Gubb learned that Hen Smitz had been the foreman for the entire building--a sort of autocrat with, as Wiggins's crew informed him, an easy job. He had only to see that the crews in the building turned out more work this year than they did last year. "'Ficiency" had been his motto, they said, and they hated "'Ficiency."

Mr. Gubb's gallery was awaiting him at the gate, and its members were in a heated discussion as to what Mr. Gubb had been doing.

They ceased at once when he appeared and fell in behind him as he walked away from the packing house and toward the undertaking establishment of Mr. Holworthy Bartman, on the main street. Here, joining the curious group already assembled, the gallery was forced to wait while Mr. Gubb entered. His task was an unpleasant but necessary one. He must visit the little "morgue" at the back of Mr. Bartman's establishment.

The body of poor Hen Smitz had not yet been removed from the bag in which it had been found, and it was to the bag Mr. Gubb gave his closest attention. The bag--in order that the body might be identified--had not been ripped, but had been cut, and not a stitch had been severed. It did not take Mr. Gubb a moment to see that Hen Smitz had not been sewed in a bag at all. He had been sewed in burlap--burlap "yard goods," to use a shopkeeper's term--and it was burlap identical with that used by Mr. Wiggins and his crew. It was no loose bag of burlap--but a close-fitting wrapping of burlap; a cocoon of burlap that had been drawn tight around the body, as burlap is drawn tight around the carcass of sheep for shipment, like a mummy's wrappings.

It would have been utterly impossible for Hen Smitz to have sewed himself into the casing, not only because it bound his arms tight to his sides, but because the burlap was lapped over and sewed from the outside. This, once and for all, ended the suicide theory. The question was:

Who was the murderer?

As Philo Gubb turned away from the bier, Undertaker Bartman entered the morgue.

"The crowd outside is getting impatient, Mr. Gubb," he said in his soft, undertakery voice. "It is getting on toward their lunch hour, and

they want to crowd into my front office to find out what you've learned. I'm afraid they'll break my plate-glass windows, they're pushing so hard against them. I don't want to hurry you, but if you would go out and tell them Wiggins is the murderer they'll go away. Of course there's no doubt about Wiggins being the murderer, since he has admitted he asked the stock-keeper for the electric-light bulb."

"What bulb?" asked Philo Gubb.

"The electric-light bulb we found sewed inside this burlap when we sliced it open," said Bartman. "Matter of fact, we found it in Hen's hand. O'Toole took it for a clue and I guess it fixes the murder on Wiggins beyond all doubt. The stock-keeper says Wiggins got it from him."

"And what does Wiggins remark on that subject?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"Not a word," said Bartman. "His lawyer told him not to open his mouth, and he won't. Listen to that crowd out there!"

"I will attend to that crowd right presently," said P. Gubb, sternly. "What I should wish to know now is why Mister Wiggins went and sewed an electric-light bulb in with the corpse for."

"In the first place," said Mr. Bartman, "he didn't sew it in with any corpse, because Hen Smitz wasn't a corpse when he was sewed in that burlap, unless Wiggins drowned him first, for Dr. Mortimer says Hen Smitz died of drowning; and in the second place, if you had a live man to sew in burlap, and had to hold him while you sewed him, you'd be liable to sew anything in with him.

"My idea is that Wiggins and some of his crew jumped on Hen Smitz and threw him down, and some of them held him while the others sewed him in. My idea is that Wiggins got that electric-light bulb to

replace one that had burned out, and that he met Hen Smitz and had words with him, and they clinched, and Hen Smitz grabbed the bulb, and then the others came, and they sewed him into the burlap and dumped him into the river.

"So all you've got to do is to go out and tell that crowd that Wiggins did it and that you'll let them know who helped him as soon as you find out. And you better do it before they break my windows."

Detective Gubb turned and went out of the morgue. As he left the undertaker's establishment the crowd gave a slight cheer, but Mr. Gubb walked hurriedly toward the jail. He found Policeman O'Toole there and questioned him about the bulb; and O'Toole, proud to be the center of so large and interested a gathering of his fellow citizens, pulled the bulb from his pocket and handed it to Mr. Gubb, while he repeated in more detail the facts given by Mr. Bartman. Mr. Gubb looked at the bulb.

"I presume to suppose," he said, "that Mr. Wiggins asked the stock-keeper for a new bulb to replace one that was burned out?"

"You're right," said O'Toole. "Why?"

"For the reason that this bulb is a burned-out bulb," said Mr. Gubb.

And so it was. The inner surface of the bulb was darkened slightly, and the filament of carbon was severed. O'Toole took the bulb and examined it curiously.

"That's odd, ain't it?" he said.

"It might seem so to the non-detective mind," said Mr. Gubb, "but to the detective mind, nothing is odd."

"No, no, this ain't so odd, either," said O'Toole, "for whether Hen Smitz grabbed the bulb before Wiggins changed the new one for the old one, or after he changed it, don't make so much difference, when you come to think of it."

"To the deteckative mind," said Mr. Gubb, "it makes the difference, that this ain't the bulb you thought it was, and hence consequently it ain't the bulb Mister Wiggins got from the stock-keeper."

Mr. Gubb started away. The crowd followed him. He did not go in search of the original bulb at once. He returned first to his room, where he changed his undertaker disguise for Number Six, that of a blue woolen-shirted laboring-man with a long brown beard. Then he led the way back to the packinghouse.

Again the crowd was halted at the gate, but again P. Gubb passed inside, and he found the stock-keeper eating his luncheon out of a tin pail. The stock-keeper was perfectly willing to talk.

"It was like this," said the stock-keeper. "We've been working overtime in some departments down here, and Wiggins and his crew had to work overtime the night Hen Smitz was murdered. Hen and Wiggins was at outs, or anyway I heard Hen tell Wiggins he'd better be hunting another job because he wouldn't have this one long, and Wiggins told Hen that if he lost his job he'd murder him--Wiggins would murder Hen, that is. I didn't think it was much of anything but loose talk at the time. But Hen was working overtime too. He'd been working nights up in that little room of his on the second floor for quite some time, and this night Wiggins come to me and he says Hen had asked him for a fresh thirty-two-candle-power bulb. So I give it to Wiggins, and then I went home. And, come to find out, Wiggins sewed that bulb up with Hen."

"Perhaps maybe you have sack-needles like this into your stock-

room," said P. Gubb, producing the needle Long Sam had given him. The stock-keeper took the needle and examined it carefully.

"Never had any like that," he said.

"Now, if," said Philo Gubb,—"if the bulb that was sewed up into the burlap with Henry Smitz wasn't a new bulb, and if Mr. Wiggins had given the new bulb to Henry, and if Henry had changed the new bulb for an old one, where would he have changed it at?"

"Up in his room, where he was always tinkering at that machine of his," said the stock-keeper.

"Could I have the pleasure of taking a look into that there room for a moment of time?" asked Mr. Gubb.

The stock-keeper arose, returned the remnants of his luncheon to his dinner-pail, and led the way up the stairs. He opened the door of the room Henry Smitz had used as a workroom, and P. Gubb walked in. The room was in some confusion, but, except in one or two particulars, no more than a workroom is apt to be. A rather cumbrous machine--the invention on which Henry Smitz had been working--stood as the murdered man had left it, all its levers, wheels, arms, and cogs intact. A chair, tipped over, lay on the floor. A roll of burlap stood on a roller by the machine. Looking up, Mr. Gubb saw, on the ceiling, the lighting fixture of the room, and in it was a clean, shining thirty-two-candle-power bulb. Where another similar bulb might have been in the other socket was a plug from which an insulated wire, evidently to furnish power, ran to the small motor connected with the machine on which Henry Smitz had been working.

The stock-keeper was the first to speak.

"Hello!" he said. "Somebody broke that window!" And it was true.

Somebody had not only broken the window, but had broken every pane and the sash itself. But Mr. Gubb was not interested in this. He was gazing at the electric bulb and thinking of Part Two, Lesson Six of the Course of Twelve Lessons--"How to Identify by Finger-Prints, with General Remarks on the Bertillon System." He looked about for some means of reaching the bulb above his head. His eye lit on the fallen chair. By placing the chair upright and placing one foot on the frame of Henry Smitz's machine and the other on the chair-back, he could reach the bulb. He righted the chair and stepped onto its seat. He put one foot on the frame of Henry Smitz's machine; very carefully he put the other foot on the top of the chair-back. He reached upward and unscrewed the bulb.

The stock-keeper saw the chair totter. He sprang forward to steady it, but he was too late. Philo Gubb, grasping the air, fell on the broad, level board that formed the middle part of Henry Smitz's machine.

The effect was instantaneous. The cogs and wheels of the machine began to revolve rapidly. Two strong, steel arms flopped down and held Detective Gubb to the table, clamping his arms to his side. The roll of burlap unrolled, and as it unrolled, the loose end was seized and slipped under Mr. Gubb and wrapped around him and drawn taut, bundling him as a sheep's carcass is bundled. An arm reached down and back and forth, with a sewing motion, and passed from Mr. Gubb's head to his feet. As it reached his feet a knife sliced the burlap in which he was wrapped from the burlap on the roll.

And then a most surprising thing happened. As if the board on which he lay had been a catapult, it suddenly and unexpectedly raised Philo Gubb and tossed him through the open window. The stock-keeper heard a muffled scream and then a great splash, but when he ran to the window, the great paperhanger detective had disappeared in the bosom of the Mississippi.

Like Henry Smitz he had tried to reach the ceiling by standing on the chair-back; like Henry Smitz he had fallen upon the newly invented burlaping and loading machine; like Henry Smitz he had been wrapped and thrown through the window into the river; but, unlike Henry Smitz, he had not been sewn into the burlap, because Philo Gubb had the double-pointed shuttle-action needle in his pocket.

Page Seventeen of Lesson Eleven of the Rising Sun Detective Agency's Correspondence School of Detecting's Course of Twelve Lessons says:--

*In cases of extreme difficulty of solution it is well for the detective to re-enact as nearly as possible the probable action of the crime.*

Mr. Philo Gubb had done so. He had also proved that a man may be sewn in a sack and drowned in a river without committing willful suicide or being the victim of foul play.



# THE END



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