

THE CARUTHERS AFFAIR

By WILL H. HARBEN

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SYNOPSIS.

Metrod Hendricks, great detective, just returned from Boston, finds awaiting him an unsigned typewritten letter directing him to apartments in Palace hotel, where he will find remain of Mr. Weldon Caruthers—currently reported for past two weeks to be out of town. Detective seems to connect letter with attempt made on his own life some time previous. Goes with friend, Dr. Lampkin, to investigate. Upon search of Caruthers' apartments remains of cremated body and jeweled hand of victim are found in a vase. Hand bears marks of finger nails manicured to sharp points. Lampkin recalls reports of a row between Caruthers and Arthur Gielow, both suitors for hand of Dorothy Huntington, who is heiress to several millions should she marry Caruthers, unconditionally in case of Caruthers' death. Late that night Hendricks and Lampkin call at home of Miss Huntington. Dorothy shows detective typewritten letter, which was an invitation for herself and aunt to occupy with Count Bantinni, Italian nobleman, his box at horse show, as he was called out of town by pressing business. She recalls Gielow had expressed before murder intense hatred for Caruthers and believes him guilty, yet decides to help him, and with her aunt goes to his studio. Gielow has fled. His servant, Henri, tells of overhearing conversation to Bantinni. Henri thought his master insane. Hendricks, concealed in room, hears all this. Hendricks goes to consult Kola, an East Indian interested in occult researches who had helped him in much previous detective work, and located in an old colonial mansion among the palisades. Dr. Lampkin is summoned by Hendricks, who has been shot. Bullet is removed and detective warned not to leave his room. Hendricks unknown enemy had tried to chloroform him in his sleep. Detective had waked just in time, but was wounded by pistol shot before he could prevent his assailant's escape. Hendricks calls for a crematory employe, who confirms the supposition that ashes found were those of human body. Miss Huntington receives letter from Gielow in his own handwriting, postmarked at Charleston, S. C., telling of his crime and flight. Noted graphologist examines handwriting of this letter and says it is genuine. During a call on Sergt. Denham, detective of police department, Hendricks comes into possession of cuff with words written in blood over Gielow's name to effect that he was innocent, starving and confined. Going to Gielow's studio, Henri identifies cuff as his master's. Henri tells of strange influence Bantinni had over Gielow. Hendricks comes to conclusion Bantinni was the murderer, and through hypnotism made Gielow confess both in person to Henri and by letter to others. Hendricks and Lampkin go to Kola's retreat. Kola tells them Gielow is dead, and to prove his supernatural powers claims to go to detective's home in his astral body and bring back a Bible, which is handed to Hendricks amidst a lot of occult balderdash. Kola warns detective an attempt is to be made on his life. Reaching home, Hendricks learns how nearly Kola had deceived him when his mother tells of disappearance of Bible after one of Kola's calls during his absence in Boston. Coming now to Gielow's experiences, the story goes back to night of murder, when Bantinni by his strange power abducted his victim. Gielow wakes in narrow cell and realizes he is starving. Bantinni tells his prisoner he is in his power, and how during three days of unconsciousness he had been used to write letters to Miss Huntington and the police. The imprisoned artist manages to loosen a stone to side of cell. Through this opening he pushes his cuff out with its bloody message to the outer world. Sergt. Denham, not having known of Hendricks' connection with the affair, comes to him for advice. This brings out fact that cuff was found near palisades. Detective is now convinced of identity of Kola and Bantinni, and so informs Denham.

CHAPTER XIX.—CONTINUED.

At this juncture the office boy returned with the parcel for the doctor, and they saw that he was accompanied by Miss Huntington.

"I do hope you will pardon my intrusion," she said, humbly, to Hendricks, who had hastily risen to meet her, "but it seemed impossible to wait longer at home. Won't you tell me if you have made any progress?"

"We've made some in the right direction," said Hendricks, reflectively. "Come, sit down a moment. You look awfully cold. You have met Dr. Lampkin, and this is Sergt. Denham, of the detective bureau. We are all working for you."

"You say you have done something?" faltered the young lady, as she sat down near the radiator. "Oh, I do hope—I am almost afraid to ask—"

In her agitation she seemed unable to conclude her remark.

"We know where Bantinni is," explained Hendricks, "and, as you know, we have reasons—strong reasons, in fact, for believing that Mr. Gielow was in his power only a few days ago. You must not be too hopeful, however, for you must realize that it would be against Bantinni's interests to allow your friend to live and be a witness against him. Pardon me for not being able to put the situation before you more delicately, but I do not want to raise false hopes."

They saw her shrink under the words like a flower placed before the open door of a furnace. She said nothing. Hendricks lit his lip and pulled his beard as if angry at himself. He tried to throw a more hopeful ring into his tones as he went on:

"We are going out to Bantinni's place at once. It is just above Fort Lee, on the Jersey side. If we are fortunate enough to find Mr. Gielow still alive, everything possible shall be done for him. Dr. Lampkin has already sent for the necessary medicines. We were just getting ready to start."

"Have you yourself any hope that Mr. Gielow may be found alive?" asked the young lady as she rose.

Hendricks looked down.

"It may sound paradoxical," he said; "but I base my hopes in regard to his fate on his statement, made perhaps two days ago, that he was starving."

"Oh, don't say that!" cried Miss Huntington.

"You see," went on Hendricks, as they all moved towards the door, "Bantinni placed him in confinement for a purpose. If he had not desired that Gielow should be kept alive for awhile he would have put him out of the way at once. It looks as if the count intended to let him live for awhile and has forgotten to give him attention."

Miss Huntington laid her hand on Hendricks' arm.

"I am going to ask a great favor," she said, tremulously. "I want to go with you. If he is—dead, I should like to be there at once, you know, and if he is alive, I could help!"

Hendricks' face fell. He glanced dubiously at the sergeant and Dr. Lampkin, then his face slowly cleared up.

"I really don't see why you couldn't go," he said. "I have ordered a closed carriage to meet us at the elevated station. You could remain in the carriage till we went in and made the arrest and then you certainly would come in handy."

"Oh, you are so good!" she exclaimed. "Please do not lose any time."

CHAPTER XX.

As the carriage was ascending the gradual incline of the rugged road through the woods surrounding the old mansion, the four occupants agreed that, to prevent any suspicion of their intentions entering the mind of Kola, the sergeant and Miss Huntington were to remain inside the carriage with the blinds down while Hendricks and Dr. Lampkin went in. And just before getting out, when the door was reached, Hendricks said to the sergeant:

"Keep a good look-out, and if he should escape us and make a break for the front, stop him."

"All right," agreed the officer, and he smiled apologetically at Miss Huntington as he took out a big revolver and laid it on the seat between them. Lampkin and Hendricks had their revolvers cocked ready for use in the pockets of their overcoats. It had been agreed that they were to take Kola by surprise, get him well under fire and then calmly demand the restoration of the prisoner.

Going up the steps, Hendricks and Lampkin found the big front door open, and as no one came to answer their ring they were hesitating as to what course to pursue when Kola thrust his cowed head through the curtains and called out, cheerily:

"Oh, hello! Come right in, gentlemen."

When they went into the room in which Kola had entertained them the night before, they found the windows darkened and the same dim lights burning overhead.

"I have just got up," said the Indian, with a smile. "That performance last night took all the strength out of me. I hope I'll never have to go through that sort of thing again to convince anyone of my ability in that line."

"You won't have to, my boy," replied the detective. "But I want to have a talk with you."

"I know—I know, sit down," and Kola waved his hand at the lounge on which he had reclined the preceding night, but it had been moved against the wall. He sat down in a chair at a table. Hendricks and Lampkin both obeyed. The former thrust his hand into the pocket of his overcoat and grasped the butt of his revolver.

"Kola," he began, "I have reasons for thinking Gielow is alive and—"

"Hold on!" the Indian broke in, with a laugh. "Listen to me, Hendricks. What if I should tell you that you are absolutely in my power—you and your friend—that simply by pressing the electric button under my hand I could hurl you both into eternity?"

A startled look flashed into the face of the detective. He looked above him and then down at his feet.

"I should believe you," he said. "My God, doctor, he has trapped us!"

"Don't move a muscle or raise a finger if you want time to say your prayers," chuckled Kola, "for as sure as you sit there you will be dead in a minute. The rug under your feet covers some thin boards over a cavern two feet deep. With all your shrewdness you have never suspected me, but you do suspect Count Bantinni, and it does not suit me to have you prying further into his affairs. I have tried twice to get you out of my way, and I do not intend to fail this time. Now, get ready. I assure you it is a genuine delight to see that expression on your face. I'd get you a mirror, Hendricks, but to do so I'd have to take my hand off the button."

"I can ask only one thing," said Hendricks, calmly, and a perspiration broke out over his face.

"What is that?" asked Kola, with a smile.

"My friend here is not responsible for what I have done, and I hope—"

"Oh, there is not a ghost of a chance for him!" broke in the Indian. "You can see that, Hendricks."

Lampkin was speechless with surprise. He had been slow to grasp the awful seriousness of their predicament, but when he did it completely unnerved him.

Kola glanced past them at a little clock on the wall.

"I'll give you just a minute," he said. "It's as much time as I can afford to allow. My Indian pal has become shaky and threatened to desert me if I sprung the trap on you. I must pacify him and show him how safe we are. I could explain to your driver out there that an accident had happened, and no one would think of blaming me."

Then, although their eyes were glued to Kola's sinister face, they observed the silk curtains behind the Indian stir as from a breeze, then the curtains parted cautiously, and Sergt. Denham peered in. They saw from the wondering gaze of his wide-open eyes that he was mystified by their unexpected silence, their white faces, and the half-crouching attitude of the Indian as he leaned over the table, his stiff fingers on the button. Like a flash a plan of action came to Hendricks, and its subtlety was worthy of his great intellect. The words he called out the next instant he hoped would stay the death touch of the murderer and furnish a key to their predicament to Denham.

"Hold one second!" he cried. "I know something you ought to know, Kola. We are completely in your power. I know that when you press that electric button we shall be hurled into the pit below, but you must listen."

Kola's enjoyment seemed intense.

"I don't want to hear anything from you," he laughed. "Get ready."

Hendricks drew a deep breath. The most startling feature of the situation was that Denham did not seem to comprehend their peril. He half smiled as if he thought Hendricks were playing one of his practical jokes on his man before arresting him.

"Time's up," announced the Indian.

"Denham, jerk him backward!" yelled Hendricks, and, in the sudden shock of astonishment over the puzzling command, the Indian involuntarily raised his finger from the button, and the situation seemed to flash upon Denham. Like a projectile hurled from some



"YOU WILL BE DEAD IN A MINUTE."

powerful destroying machine he sprang at Kola. He caught him by the throat and pulled him over the back of his chair. Hendricks sprang from the rug, dragging the almost inactive doctor with him. Kola wriggled in Denham's clutches and managed to get on his feet. But, with his fingers digging into the Indian's throat, the sergeant bore him backwards over the table. In the struggle Kola's shoulder pressed down on the electric button. There was a crash of timbers under the lounge just vacated, and with a dull, subterranean rumble the flooring over that spot disappeared in a yawning black hole.

Hendricks was beside himself with rage as he towered over the now passive Indian.

"Oh, you dirty scamp!" he ejaculated. He took a pair of handcuffs from his pocket and fastened them on Kola's wrists.

The Indian's face was the color of ashes.

"Downed me, after all," he said, resignedly.

"You dirty puppy," was all that Hendricks seemed able to say, but in a moment he was perfectly calm.

"Kola," he said, firmly, "we want Gielow."

The Indian sat down in his chair. He had grown calmer, and now a sort of dogged smile played over his face.

"Oh, you do!" he said, almost with a sneer.

"And we are going to have him," added Hendricks.

"Never," said Kola. "It doesn't suit me to give him to you. I know I am good for the electric chair, anyway, so why should I tell you where he is? There is not another man alive that knows the secret entrance to his cell. You would have to blast away this whole hill of stone to get at him, and then you'd not find him alive. The last time I saw him, two days ago, he was dying of starvation. Huh! Gielow's suffering and death is all the satisfaction I shall have out of the business. You will find enough of my elec-

trical appliances down below to amuse you, but the secret vaults can be entered by no one besides myself. I learned the secret from the sole survivor of the old gang of counterfeiters, and leased the place for that reason."

Hendricks proposed to Lampkin to go with him downstairs.

"Get your gun ready," he said. "He has a dark-skinned assistant somewhere about here."

"I think he has slipped," said Denham. "I saw a fellow in foreign clothes run out of the side door. I was afraid it was your man giving you the slip, so I came in to see about it, and happened to get here in time."

"Oh, he's gone," said Kola, grimly. "He is a coward. He knew what I was going to do in regard to the dead-fall and was too chicken-hearted to face it."

"Kola," said Hendricks, "it can do you no possible good to keep back information in regard to Gielow's whereabouts."

"You will never know that from me," answered the Indian.

Hendricks' face fell. He signaled Dr. Lampkin to follow and led the way downstairs.

In the basement they found nothing of note except a trunk bearing the initials of Weldon Caruthers.

"That's what he brought the body in," said Hendricks.

In the big cellars below, they found, directly under the trap Kola had arranged, the yawning opening of a deep pit.

"An awful hole," said Hendricks, as he turned away. He pointed to some large steel vessels and two large copper cylinders such as are used for making lime light in the theaters.

"That's where he cremated the body section by section," he said. "He thought, as most murderers do, that his secret was well guarded."

They searched through all the rooms of the cellar, and then Hendricks stopped.

"We are losing time," he grunted, in disappointment. "I believe Kola told the truth about his being the only one who knows the secret of Gielow's hiding-place. I am also sure that Gielow is somewhere under ground. We have seen one cavern, and it is not unlikely that there are others. It has long been believed that they are under this hill. Can't you think of some plan to wring the truth from that imp?"

They had paused before the door of a little room where a dim light shone over the transom. Lampkin tried the latch, and, finding the door unlocked, he pushed it open. The room had shelves on all three of its walls, and these shelves were well filled with all sorts of bottles.

"His laboratory," said Lampkin. "No, I cannot tell you what to do. Ah! I have an idea."

The doctor took down a bottle and read the label and then uncorked it and applied it to his nose.

"Ether," he said. "This bottle reminds me of an experiment I once saw performed at a medical college. A thief was made to confess under the influence of ether. In the first stages of anaesthesia a subject almost invariably becomes talkative and will talk about exactly what he desires most to keep back."

"Bring it upstairs, for the love of mercy," cried the detective. "It can't do any harm."

As they entered the reception-room Kola's questioning glance became fixed on the bottle in the doctor's hand.

"Huh!" he grunted, "you need not try to give me that. I won't take it."

"Find me a towel, Hendricks," was all the doctor said. He spoke like a determined man who is thoroughly angry.

Hendricks darted into a bathroom near by and returned with the required article.

"Now lay his lordship on the floor," the doctor said.

Kola wriggled like an eel, but, with Hendricks at his head and Sergt. Denham's determined hands at his feet, they soon had him laid out. Dr. Lampkin folded the towel into the shape of a funnel and saturated it with the fluid from the bottle. Then he started to put it over Kola's mouth and nose.

"Hold on, give him one more chance," ordered Hendricks. "Where is Gielow, Kola?"

The only answer the Indian made was to close his lips tightly.

"The devil is trying to hold his breath!" cried Lampkin. "I'll show him a trick that will beat that. I can make him talk!"

And, holding the towel over Kola's nose with his left hand, he began to punch him violently in the chest. This proceeding made the Indian gasp for breath, and forced him to take deep draughts of the ether.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE DEWEY RECEPTION.

An Illuminated Procession of Civic Organizations at Washington—A Military and Naval Parade.

Washington, Sept. 25.—Upon the arrival in Washington of the train bearing Admiral Dewey on the evening of October 2, an admiral's salute will be fired at the station. A troop of cavalry from Fort Myer will be in waiting, and will act as a bodyguard for the hero of Manila during the entire celebration, accompanying him to all exercises which he attends, and returning with him again to his abode.

From the depot Admiral Dewey will be driven to the white house, where President McKinley and the cabinet will be waiting. The entire party will then proceed to the reviewing stand at the treasury department to witness the illuminated procession of civic organizations. This will be one of the most effective spectacles ever seen in Washington, with the line of march glowing with red fire and an elaborate pyrotechnic display overhead.

The next morning Admiral Dewey will be taken to the white house again by the citizens' escort, and shortly afterward will start for the capitol as the leading figure of the military and naval parade. Here the celebration will culminate by the presentation of the nation's sword at the east front of the capitol at the hands of Secretary Long. Tuesday night President McKinley will give a dinner at the white house in honor of the hero of Manila.

Gen. Miles will be at the head of the military and naval parade Tuesday morning. Gen. Harries will command the civic parade.

Tiffany & Co., of New York, have shipped to the navy department the 1,600 medals which were authorized by congress for the officers and crews of the various vessels taking part in the fight at Manila. These were provided for at the same time that Admiral Dewey's sword was authorized, an appropriation of \$10,000 being set aside for the work.

ABOUT SOLDIERS' DISCHARGES

Hereafter Those Who Swear That They Enlisted Too Young Will Be Punished for Making False Oath.

Washington, Sept. 25.—It has been determined by the war department that the practice of dishonorably discharging soldiers from the army at the instance of parents shall be broken up. The authorities have been granting such discharges on the representation that certain soldiers were under age. Proof of this has usually been furnished by the parents or guardians of boys, who, in order to enlist, must have taken an oath that they knew to be false. Dishonorable discharge has hitherto been promptly granted. Hereafter the department will not be so generous. When a soldier seeks a discharge on the ground of having sworn falsely he will not be dishonorably discharged. He will instead suffer the penalty which attaches to making a false oath and will be imprisoned, probably at Leavenworth, pending his discharge.

AMERICAN PRISONERS.

The Filipinos Have Not Made Good Their Offer to Surrender the Americans Held Captive by Them.

Manila, Sept. 25.—No information has been received from the naval expedition at Subig bay. The Filipinos have not made good their offer to surrender the American prisoners and they have not sent an officer to meet Maj. Gen. Otis, as promised.

Nothing further has been heard from the rebel officers who conferred with Gen. MacArthur recently and returned to their own lines. Chief Signal Officer Thompson has gone on a two-weeks' tour of inspection of the cable service of all the southern islands.

Oklahoma's Big Railroad Show.

Guthrie, Ok., Sept. 25.—The statement can probably be made with safety that more miles of railroad will be built in Oklahoma during the next two years than in any other state or territory in the country. The number of chartered and prospective lines is astonishing. From January, 1898, up to this time 26 railroad charters have been issued by the territorial secretary. Some of these railroads have been built. The total mileage of these chartered lines is 8,312 and the capital stock nearly \$100,000,000.

New System of Army Promotions.

Washington, Sept. 25.—All requests for appointment as brigadier generals in the volunteer army are being denied by Secretary Root. It has been agreed that these important places shall be reserved for officers of volunteers who distinguish themselves in the service. No amount of influence will effect a promotion. The president has approved the recommendation of Secretary Root that meritorious service alone shall be considered the cause of advancement.

Want Miles for President.

Chicago, Sept. 24.—It has come to the knowledge of western congressmen that there is a movement on foot in Massachusetts to put Gen. Nelson A. Miles before the country as a candidate for president. Members of congress have received letters recently informing them of the plans for a conference to be called soon for the purpose of considering the matter and organizing a national committee to take charge of the campaign.

Taking No Risks.

"No, sah," expostulated Col. Kaintuck, "bathing in rough water is all very well, sah, faw the young folks, but not faw me, sah. Not faw me."

"But why not, colonel?"

"Why, sah, I might swallow some watah unawares, sah. That's why not, sah!"—Illustrated American.

Guarded Matrimony.

Mrs. White—Well, Edna and Sydney are married at last and are sure to be happy, for a more harmless and inoffensive pair I never knew in my life.

Mrs. Bright—Ah, I see. A safety match.—Boston Courier.