

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

By A. L. Harris Author of "Mine Own Familiar Friend," etc.
Copyright, 1891, by Cassell Publishing Company.
Copyright, 1902, by Street & Smith.

CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

"Know me? Of course he does!" was the reply. "Didn't I buy him of a drunken old Irish woman, and mend his broken leg for him? And do you think he's going to forget that, though he is only a duck?"

They remained pacing up and down the garden paths until it was quite dusk; the doctor persistently conversing on cheerful subjects, and refusing to allow the conversation to take a morbid turn.

At nine o'clock supper was served, consisting of boiled fowl and sausages.

"You'll take a leg and a wing and a bit of the breast?" said the hospitable little man, as he piled his visitor's plate. "You've got a trying day before you to-morrow."

CHAPTER XII.

The Other Passenger.

The inquiry into the death of Mr. Silas Burritt was held at the "Wheat-sheaf" in the long, low room usually dedicated to the flowing bowl and the promotion of social intercourse.

The same routine having been observed as on that previous occasion, Dr. Jeremiah Cartwright was called to prove the finding of the body—its position, appearance and subsequent removal to the vestry of the old church, and his examination of the remains—resulting in the discovery of a wound, with two orifices, showing that the bullet which had caused it had traversed the head completely.

Other scientific evidence followed, which is suppressed.

Mr. Edward Burritt was then called, and went through the form of identifying the deceased as his father, Mr. Silas Burritt, merchant, of Timber Lane, City, aged 50. He entirely negated the theory of self-destruction, stating that his father, to his certain knowledge, had not only never possessed anything in the shape of fire-

arms, but had always been remarkable for an unusual amount of nervousness, almost amounting to horror, with regard to anything of the kind, in consequence of an accident, with a tragical termination, which he had once witnessed. Dr. Jeremiah Cartwright, recalled at this juncture, here stated his firm conviction that the wound had not been self-inflicted, which he proceeded to prove, to his own satisfaction and the entire bewilderment of everybody else present, by the aid of a great many polysyllabic expressions and a torrent of professional phraseology, which swept everyone off their feet, but which, on being filtered down for the benefit of the unlearned, merely amounted to the following facts, viz., that the edges of the wound, by which the bullet had made its entrance, were torn and lacerated, as well as blackened and burnt by the action of the gunpowder, that the skin in the vicinity of the wound was blistered, the bleeding slight, and chiefly from the orifice of exit, and the two openings in the scalp nearly opposite each other.

Dr. Cartwright, having brought his evidence to a conclusion, now gave place to another witness, and one in whose power it might be to help to unravel the mystery. This last was the guard of the 4:30 train—an intelligent looking man, who, with a bandage round his head and one arm in a sling, bore tokens of the injuries he had received in jumping from the train while it was in motion.

On being questioned as to what he knew of the matter, he replied, without any hesitation, that he remembered the fourth carriage from the engine well, and the passengers that it contained in that particular compartment.

"Was he sure that there was more than one passenger in that compartment of the carriage referred to?"

"Sure and certain he was. There were two of them. He could swear to it. Didn't one of them, the taller of the two, tip him handsome to lock them in so that they might have the carriage to themselves for the journey?"

"And did you lock them in, and are quite sure that they were both together in the carriage when the train started?"

"Certain sure he was. He see them both together in the compartment as the train passed him, just before he swung himself into his van."

Being asked whether there was any-

thing about either of them that helped to fix his attention upon them, he answered that "the taller and thinner of the two—though they were both of them tall and well-grown—seemed uncommon particular about picking out a carriage to his mind. He noticed him looking into several before he fixed upon that identical compartment; and when he had, he beckons to him (the guard) and says, 'Look here!' he says, 'me and my friend, we don't want nobody else getting in here. We want this here carriage to ourselves till we get to London. Take this,' he says, 'and don't you let nobody else in whatever.' So I says 'All right, sir,' and locks the door, and thinks to myself, 'Anybody would think as it was a couple of honey-mooners instead of two elderly gents.'"

"Could he identify the body of the gentleman who had been shot as the companion of the other?"

He both could and would; except that there had been a sort of a smile on his face then and he looked very different now. In fact, he had struck him (the guard)—in spite of the tip which the other party gave him—as being by far the agreeable and most pleasant-spoken gentleman of the two; and he had been most uncommon sorry that he had, on recognizing the body, because, you see, he had quite made up his mind that he had escaped as well as the other one.

Being asked to explain himself, said he didn't see much what there was to explain. What he meant was that he thought that if one gent got off scot free, the other might have done the same.

"What did he mean by the other having got off scot free, and what was his authority for speaking as he did?"

Why, it was simple enough. Being in the rear of the train, he was conscious of nothing until he found himself thrown violently on the floor.

Recovering himself, he jumped from his van and alighted on his feet, but was struck by a fragment of something and knocked down. He rose to his feet again, though suffering from wounds in the head, hand and knee, and saw a sight the like of which he had never seen before. With his keys in his hand, he ran up and down the line, hardly knowing what he was doing. As soon as he began to get his senses back, which had been pretty well knocked out of him, he unlocked all the doors of the carriages that he came to, though they were already unlocked on one side. After he had done all he could, he went and sat down by the side of the line, for he began to turn faint and dizzy.

While he sat there he saw a tall, rather thin, elderly gentleman making his way slowly towards him, who limped a little as he walked. As this latter came nearer he recognized him as being the same individual who had given him the tip, and told him to keep anyone else from getting into the carriage.

Witness noticed that his face was ghastly, and that he breathed like a man who had been running a race, but naturally put it down to the terrible shock and the fright caused by the accident. As he came up to him, he (the guard) spoke to him and said, "Glad to see you're safe, sir! I hope the other gent is the same?" But he only stared at him in a queer, dazed sort of way, without making any answer, and passed on down the line.

At last, after some debate, the verdict agreed upon was:

"Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown."

Ted Burritt and his friend the doctor left the place together.

"What will be your next step in the matter?" asked the latter.

"First, to take my father's body home—then to look for his murderer!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Coming Home.

Early in the evening of the same day Dr. Jeremiah was bidding his new friend "good-bye" as he saw him off from the station.

The train puffed slowly out of the station, and the last view Ted had of the little man showed him standing at the end of the platform and waving his spectacles after him. He gave him a parting salute out of the

window of the carriage and then drew in his head, sank back into his seat with a sigh and began to review the events of the last few days.

"Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown!"

And he had to break this, as well as all that went before it, to those two women at home. A grewsome task!

Well, so much the worse for the man who had been the cause of it all. So much the worse for him when the day came for reckoning up accounts; the day that would see him in the criminals' dock; the day that would place a noose round his neck. And the young man felt that that would be a day well worth waiting for, even though it might be indefinitely prolonged.

But he would never rest, and never give up, until he had helped to bring it about; for it seemed to him that revenge would be incomplete and robbed of half its sweetness unless it were his foot that helped to dog the murderer and his hand that helped to hurry him to a felon's doom. Oh, yes, he must be an agent, if not the chief, at any rate an important one.

He hoped among his father's letters and papers—contained in a sealed packet, which he carried about his person—to come upon something which might help to set his feet in the right track.

Then the thought struck him, if he could find that letter! The one that came less than a week ago! If it had not been destroyed! And why should it have been? Unless—and he recalled that, at the time, distasteful allusion of Dr. Cartwright's—unless there were something compromising in it!

But he rejected the idea now, as he had then. No doubt he would be able to find the letter. It was most probable that it was included among those other papers which were even now in his possession.

Meanwhile, at Magnolia Lodge, the days had dragged heavily along. Mrs. Burritt having once taken to her bed (a recumbent position being looked upon by her as the most proper and becoming one in which to encounter affliction) immediately upon receipt of the sad tidings had not since sufficiently recovered herself to leave it again. "Grief," she said, "always had a peculiar effect upon her spine, and she didn't know whether it was the blinds being down, or the sight of her widow's cap, but she couldn't help feeling that she was not long for this world. Anyhow, they must not grieve, but be sure and bury her by the side of their dear father." All this could scarcely be said to add to her daughter's spirits, only, there was so much to be done, that she had, fortunately, little time in which to indulge in morbid reflections on her own behalf. There were letters to be written, dressmakers to be interviewed, and a host of other things, which must be done whether the house be one of joy or mourning.

It was about half-past seven on Tuesday evening when she heard the sound of wheels. She hastened into the hall and met her brother. The first glance showed her the alteration that had taken place in him. He looked very worn and full of trouble, much older, and she thought, much sterner. She had been in the habit of regarding him as a boy—was he not barely three years her senior?—now he looked a man, every inch of him. A hasty greeting passed between them, and then she went to prepare her mother for his arrival.

Mrs. Burritt was dozing, and her daughter hesitated for a moment before rousing her. As she stood, waiting, she heard heavy footsteps ascending the staircase—footsteps of men, who were carrying something of great weight. She knew what it was. They came on slowly past the door of the room in which she was. Then, after a short time, she heard them descending the stairs again; the door of the house was closed, and at the same moment her mother woke.

(To be continued.)

HIS RIGHTS IN THE CASE.

How an Aggrieved Man Might Abolish Cat Concerts.

A retired citizen in the southeast section has been greatly annoyed by the howling on his own fence and shed in the back yard or a big black cat in the neighborhood. Not being able to sleep, he called upon his attorneys the other day to discuss with him what could be done in the way of getting rid of the cats.

"There the cat sits every night on my fence," the sufferer explained, "and he yowls and yowls and yowls. Now, I don't want to get into any trouble with my neighbors, for I am a lover of peace, but I would like to know if I am not justified in putting a stop to it?"

"Certainly," replied the lawyer. "I am well within my rights if I shoot the cat, then?"

"Um, well, I would hardly like to say that," answered the lawyer. "The cat does not belong to you, as I understand the case?"

"No."

"And the fence does?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, I think I may safely say that you have a perfect right to pull down the fence."—Washington Times.

Standard Oil Branches.

The International Oil Company of Japan, which is a branch of the Standard Oil Company, has a large refinery at Navetsu, besides owning important wells on the western provinces. Sixty-eight native companies have been forced to combine, so that there are now two competing companies, neither of whom has one-fourth the capital of the International company.

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

By A. L. Harris Author of "Mine Own Familiar Friend," etc.
Copyright, 1891, by Cassell Publishing Company.
Copyright, 1902, by Street & Smith.

CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

"May, my dear," she said, "I dreamt your father had come home. I made sure I heard his footstep coming up the stairs. But it was only a dream," she sighed.

On being told of her son's return, she at first decided that she would get up; but the thought of the exertion proved too much for her.

"I've brought him home, mother," was the first thing he said, after he had been kissed and cried over.

"Yes, my dear," she answered, "you said you would and I never doubted it. But it's a sad, sad home-coming!" And here the poor lady gave way and wept abundantly.

Her son consoled her to the best of his ability, wondering all the time how she would take it when she came to know the truth—the truth, which must come out sooner or later.

The presence of the dead is always a subject more or less of superstitious fear to the less educated classes; consequently Ted was hardly surprised when he observed a decided disposition on the part of the domestic staff to avoid, as much as possible, the upper portion of the house. But he was surprised to find himself giving way to a feeling of nervousness—of anticipation, when he was alone in his room (which was situated next to the one in which his father lay in his coffin) that night.

He had a good mind not to go to bed at all, but to sit up and read—read something humorous. He sneered at his own cowardice. What on earth made him feel like this? He had not been afraid of his father living, why should he fear him dead?—dead, as lying in his coffin, with the lid screwed down and the door locked?

He turned up the gas and chose a volume, "The Innocents Abroad."

After a short time he was surprised to find himself actually growing

sleepy. He would shut up the book and go to bed. A prodigious yawn followed, and he nearly dropped his book.

The next moment a sound of something heavy falling brought him broad awake with the sensation of a cold wind passing through his hair.

What was it? Was it in this room or the next?

The next moment he gave a short, harsh laugh, as he saw that the bullet from the revolver, which he had placed upon the bureau, had fallen from thence to the ground, where it had rolled some way.

He picked it up and deposited it in a drawer, which he locked for greater security.

"I don't want to be disturbed that way again," he said to himself. "My nerves must be awfully shaken to let such a trifle as that knock me over in the way it did. I wonder whether it will be any good going to bed after this? It is no use trying to read any more."

After turning about uneasily for some time, he fell into a troubled sleep. There was not a sound or movement of any sort in the house, and he had slept on for about two hours when, all at once, without any warning, he awoke. What had roused him? The same voice which he had heard once before in the very early morning.

"Ted!" It seemed to come to him through the dividing wall. And this time, as before, he answered back without thinking—his senses still half under the influence of slumber—

"Yes, father; what is it?"

And the same voice, whether it was only his own brain, or came from some unknown source, answered him back again—

"Press the spring at the back of the recess!"

"Ted," said his sister, compassionately, at breakfast the next morning, "how had you look. Poor boy! Tell me—with a shudder—'how did father look? Do you really think he did not suffer much? Oh! I wish I could have seen him once more, just for one last look! Dear old dad!'"

"Don't you go on like that, May; I can't stand it. What's more, I've got to have a very serious talk with you presently."

"What about?"—with some curiosity.

"It's something you ought to know—something you must know. But I'll give you a shock. Let us go into the study. I can tell you best there."

CHAPTER XIV.

An Eye for An Eye.

The room to which he referred was the one which had been his father's private sanctum. Consequently, it was full of memories to the two who now found themselves alone in it, and wherever they turned their eyes they lighted upon some token of his presence, or some silent witness of those habits which were inseparably connected with his name.

A sheet of writing paper with something written on it lay upon the blotting pad, and the pen which he had last used lay beside it with the ink dried upon it. Everything spoke of the dead. His spirit seemed to pervade the room, which he might only that moment have quitted.

Ted's eye was caught by the sheet of paper lying upon the writing table, with something written upon it. There was the date—April 23—the day before he left home, and beneath it:

"My dear ——" Not half a dozen words in all, and nothing to show to whom it was addressed or why it was left scarcely begun.

If the blank paper could only speak! If the pen which lay beside it could be made to carry out what the hand had failed to complete!

He turned to his sister, who had sunk upon a sofa by the half-darkened window and was watching his movements and the play of his countenance with a gradually increasing sensation of heaviness about the region of the heart.

"May," said her brother, "it's no use putting things off, it only makes matters worse; so listen attentively to what I am going to tell you, and behave like the good little girl you can be."

It was ten minutes later and the room looked just the same, and yet



"It's no use putting things off."

there was a difference. The empty chair, the "Bradshaw" lying open upon the table, and even the wastepaper basket, had become objects to be regarded with bated breath and a sense of shuddering awe.

Murdered! That dreadful word, which suggested such hideous possibilities to the mind of the hearer!

She had listened in silence and horror as he repeated the suspicions, which were now certainties, as far as he was concerned. "And now, you see, May," he concluded, "what we have to do is to find the murderer; track him step by step, and then—"

He paused significantly.

"And then?" in an awe-struck voice from his solitary listener.

"Then—that depends," was the grim reply. "You know what the Bible says in the case of the slayer?"

She shook her head.

"Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot!"

"It's dreadful to hear you talk! It frightens me!" she murmured.

"Frightens you, does it?" was the angry reply. "Perhaps you would like to sit quietly down and do nothing?"

"No, no," she hastened to answer. "But I thought the police—"

"Just listen to her!" was the scornful interruption. "The police! Leave it to them, indeed! What do they care? No, I don't know what I shall do. I have thought of a plan, and I believe I know the man to go to—some one I've heard of, and who will help to put me on the right track."

They turned to leave the room together. He gave another last look round before closing the door. Then, turning to his sister, as he put the key in his pocket, "You will have to break this to mother."

"Oh, must I! How dreadful!—couldn't you?"

"Of course not," hastily. "It's your place to do so, and I couldn't think of taking it upon myself."

"Very well," she answered, meekly. "If I must, I must." How she did it she never knew; but, somehow, the words were spoken and the dreadful truth revealed.

Mrs. Burritt, partly to her daughter's relief, seemed hardly capable of realizing it. "He's dead!—dead!" she cried, hysterically. "It doesn't make any difference to me how he died. What does it matter so long as he is dead—dead—dead?"

The next was the day of the funeral. It was numerously attended, either out of respect or curiosity, and, as he

reviewed the troops of friends and acquaintances that assembled round the grave, the son of the dead man wondered, for an instant, whether it were possible for that one false friend to be among them?

But the idea was rejected as soon as formed. He looked in vain for one who corresponded with the description of the tall, thin, elderly man, with a dried-up look and grey moustache, and who walked with a limp when last seen by the guard.

It was exactly nine o'clock on the night of the funeral when Ted Burritt put the key in the door and admitted himself into the room which had been his father's study.

He carried a lamp in his hand, which he placed upon the writing table. Everything remained as it had been on that former visit; the only difference lay in the fact that the film of dust was a little thicker upon the various contents of the room.

He was about to seat himself in the old leather chair in which his father had always sat, when, apparently changing his mind, he pushed it back against the wall and looked round for another, which he dragged forward.

He took the sealed packet from his breast pocket and placed it on the table before him. It was sealed up in a sheet of blue paper and indorsed—

"Papers found by me, after the accident, on the person of the late Silas Burritt, Esq., and preserved intact."

"Jeremiah Cartwright, M. D., etc."

It was of considerable bulk, but Ted knew that his father was in the habit of carrying about him a miscellaneous assortment of documents of no particular importance. For some time he hesitated to break the seal.

There might be, after all, something there that the dead man would wish no other eyes but his own to look upon; something, not exactly discredit-able, he would not acknowledge that even to himself, but something which he might have wished kept private, and which no one else should seek to pry into. If that were the case—

He cast his scruples on one side, broke the seal and tore open the wrapper. At the first sight of the contents thus revealed to view, the young man uttered an exclamation of dismay, for the first document which met his eye was burnt and brown, and reduced almost to tinder.

Were they all alike? If so, the doctor would hardly have taken the pains to preserve them so carefully.

With delicate manipulation he removed the topmost paper and placed it on one side. But, with all his care, the edge crumbled and broke away in his hands.

Beneath this one was another equally injured; but, below this again, was a paper only partially singed, so that an idea of its contents might be arrived at after careful inspection. From a few words that met his eye, he made it out to be a bill of lading, and put it aside with the others. The rest he spread out before him on the table.

(To be continued.)

A Second Noah's Ark.

An old lady recently bargained with a London cabman standing outside a railway station to take her into town. The sum being agreed upon, the dame returned into the station and soon reappeared with two parrots in cages, which she handed up to the cabman. Again she journeyed to the platform and brought out two cats. A third trip she made, bringing back a daintily dressed fox terrier, and a fourth expedition was interrupted by cabby exclaiming: "Beggin' your pardon, ma'am, but you ain't expectin' a flood, I s'pose?"

"Dear me, no," was the reply; "whatever made you ask that question, cabby?"

"O, it's all right, ma'am," said Jehu. "I thought I'd ask 'cos I ain't certain as 'ow my horse can swim, and I fancied by the look of your luggage that you were a-takin' my keb for a Noah's ark!"—Ram's Horn.

Virtues Many Has Olive Oil.

It is invaluable as a medicine in many cases, and especially so for children.

For a weakly child, or one who is just recovering from typhoid or some debilitating fever, salad oil will sometimes work wonders. The plan is to rub the oil over the child's body, especially about the upper portion, taking a few drops in the palm of the hand and rubbing it well into the tissues.

The nourishment the skin thus receives is almost beyond belief, and is of the greatest possible service in building up the child's strength.

When suffering from a severe cold, it is a good thing to omit the child's daily bath and to rub its back and chest with oil. To insure no further cold being caught by the little one, wrap the child in a blanket and carefully screen it from drafts while rubbing operation is in progress.

Why Little Folks Are Big Eaters.

It has been laid down as a physiological rule that the requirements of adult diet depend not on the weight of the eater, but on the extent of his bodily surface. In the case of children this rule is further modified. An infant may weigh one-eighth as much as a grown man, but its surface is more than one-seventh as great. As the first requirement of the infant's food is to replace the heat that is continually being lost by radiation from all parts of the body, the latter fraction determines the needed proportion of nourishment rather than the former. But in the case of a growing child food is also needed to supply the increase of bodily weight. In all, an infant's ration may be five times as much as would be estimated from its actual weight alone. Success.