

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

By A. L. Harris Author of "Mine Own Familiar Friend," etc.
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CHAPTER I.

"We Shall Find It Out Some Day."

About the beginning of the month of April, 1884, the family of Mr. Silas Burritt observed a certain alteration in that gentleman's habits and demeanor. It appeared to those who studied him that he became imbued with an air of anticipation—that he started when a knock was heard at the door, and that the advent of the postman was awaited by him, if not with anxiety, at any rate with an amount of eager expectancy which was, in a general way, quite foreign to him.

It was also observed that the nearer they drew to the end of the month, the more these symptoms became exaggerated; and, as day after day went by unmarked by an unusual occurrence, he was observed to shake his head with a half-smile and a half-sigh, and mutter, as he thought to himself, "Dead or forgotten?" After which, he remained plunged in reflection for a considerable time.

It was his son Edward—more generally known as "Ted"—who happened to overhear these words, and they caused him no small amount of bewilderment.

He stood with his sister May in the hall of Mr. Burritt's large, old-fashioned house at Dulwich. It was about seven o'clock in the evening that, as the brother and sister were talking in low voices, the former was interrupted by the sound of an abrupt, loud, double knock.

"There's the seven o'clock post," said the girl. "I wonder if there's anything for father this time? If there is, I'll—"

But as she turned towards the direction of the letter box, the study door was thrown hurriedly open and an elderly gentleman rushed across the hall, and extricated from its receptacle one letter in a thin, foreign-looking envelope, the direction on which was written in a large, scrawling hand,



He recrossed the hall.

which barely left room for the stamp. There was a singular look upon his face, on which astonishment seemed struggling with some other emotion. Then he drew a long breath. "After all these years!" he said to himself. "So he has kept his word, after all."

He recrossed the hall, re-entered his study and closed the door. As he did so both the young people heard the key turn in the lock. Evidently their father was anxious not to be disturbed in the pursuit of the mysterious mission. Never it might be. Neither of them said any more on the subject at the time, but their minds were full of it as they each turned to go their different ways; the one to the billiard room for a little private practice, the other to the drawing room to try over the last new song.

"I wonder what it was?" soliloquized the former, "and what made the gun'vor so queer and unlike himself at the sight of it? However, it's no good troubling myself about it."

Mr. Silas Burritt remained shut up in his study all the remainder of the evening, and only encountered his son and daughter at breakfast the next morning—being Thursday—when he appeared to have regained his ordinary manner; notwithstanding to two pairs of inquisitive young eyes there still seemed to be a certain absent expression—the expression of a man (not that they described it to themselves in any such words) who has been reviewing the past, and whose thoughts still linger behind him among the years that have gone by. There was also a slight suspicion of nervousness about him, and several times he seemed on the point of saying something, which he put off from one moment to another. At last he made up his mind to speak.

"My dear," he said, addressing his wife, "I am thinking—that is, I have made up my mind—at any rate, I am going away for a day or so. At least—"

"Here he found that he had by no means miscalculated the effect of the announcement, for his voice at this juncture was drowned by a family trio—

"Where to? What for? How long shall you stay? How strange!"

This last remark, emanating as it did, from his son and heir, seemed to cause the object of it some little annoyance.

"Strange, Ted!" slightly knitting his brows as he spoke. "What do you mean? What is there strange in my leaving home for a day—on business?"

The last words came after a barely perceptible pause.

"Oh, then, it is business, after all!" broke in his daughter May, with an air of hardly repressed triumph. "I knew it was. I said so directly I saw the letter—didn't I, Ted?"

Her father turned round upon her, rather sharply. "What letter?"

"The—the letter that came last night," she stammered, disconcerted by the unusual tone. Then, reasserting herself, "I was in the hall, you know, when it came, and I thought it looked like business."

Her father's frown relaxed as he patted her on the shoulder.

"Inquisitive little girl," he said; "what does it matter to you what my letters are about?"

"But it was business, wasn't it?" she persisted, secure in her position of spoilt child.

"Well—yes—that is, partly so," he answered. "At least, it was from an old—"

He seemed to remember something and stopped short. "At any rate," he continued, "I have to go to Dover."

"Dover!" re-echoed the family.

"Yes," he said, rumpling his hair, and apparently taking some care in the choice of his words; "I find I shall have to go there. It is rather inconvenient just now, but it can't be helped; though it will not be more than a couple of days at the outside. By-the-by," turning towards his helpmate, "it is not unlikely that I may bring a friend back with me. No; it's no one you know," responding to the question he saw trembling on more than one pair of lips. "At any rate you had better have a room prepared in case of that event."

Half an hour later Mr. Burritt took a hasty but affectionate farewell of his family, who as they watched his departure and waved their hands to him, said to themselves that he would soon be back again among them. In spite of this belief, however, they craned

their necks to see the last of him.

A little later, when his sister, who had again had recourse to her piano, was practicing scales like a Trojan (if the expression is allowable), the young man put his head inside the door of the room in which she was, and the following brief conversation ensued:

"I say, May, do you know, it has just occurred to me that the gun'vor never mentioned the name of the friend he was going to bring back with him."

The scale of C major came to an abrupt conclusion. "To be sure he didn't. How funny! But then, you see, we forgot to ask him."

"I know we did; but you would have thought that he would have told us without that. However, of course it doesn't matter, and I suppose we shall find it out some day. T-t-t! I'm off."

CHAPTER II.

"After All These Years."

Mr. Burritt arrived at his destination between six and seven. Alighting, he gave a hasty and comprehensive glance round; as though he thought it half possible that he might be met by someone. Then he left the station and proceeded in the direction of the "Lord Warden."

Arriving at that famous hostelry he made a certain inquiry of the waiter who came forward to meet him. To which the reply was, that the gentleman referred to had crossed by the boat that morning and had engaged a private sitting room, leaving word that he expected a friend from town, who was to be shown up immediately on giving his name.

"My name is Burritt," was the reply.

"Then please to walk this way, sir." The man ushered him up a flight of stairs and along a corridor, then, indicating a particular door, said: "This is the room the gentleman has taken."

"I will announce myself," said Mr. Burritt, and the man withdrew.

Then, after a pause of a few seconds, he tapped lightly at the door. A voice from within cried: "Come in!" and answering the summons he turned the handle and entered. The occupant of the apartment, a tall, lean, elderly man, who was looking out of the window, turned round sharply and confronted the visitor. A look—a strange, wondering, intent look—passed between them. Then, the stranger, made a step forward. "Silas!" he

cried. "At last!"—and the men grasped hands.

Then followed a brief and impressive silence, during which each eagerly scanned the features of the other, and which Mr. Burritt was the first to break.

"James," he said, and there were traces of considerable emotion in his voice, "you are much changed. I should hardly have known you."

"Changed," exclaimed the other, somewhat bitterly; "and in twenty years! Is it to be wondered at?" Then, with an alteration of tone, "But I should have known you anywhere, Silas."

"Twenty years!" repeated his friend. "Ah, well, so it is! How quickly the years have flown. It seems nothing like that to me."

"It is that, all the same," said the other. "It is twenty years to the very day. This is the 24th of April, 1884. It was the 24th of April, 1864, when you said 'good-bye' to me on board the vessel in which I was to sail to a new country."

"It is a long time to remain an exile—a voluntary exile," said Mr. Burritt; "you might have returned years ago, had you chosen."

The other man shook his head gloomily. "I have kept my word," he said. "You remember my last speech to you? I said, 'I am going to begin a new life—to make my fortune. In twenty years, if I have done so, I shall return. By that time I may hope that my crime will have been forgotten. It may be that twenty years some of those who know my wretched story will be dead—I may even be dead myself; but, if not, I shall return to the country I am now about to leave behind; for surely in twenty years the disgrace which now tarnishes my name will be blotted out and forgotten. Until then, farewell!' And now," he continued, "the term of my self-imposed banishment is at an end. I have kept my word and I have returned."

Mr. Burritt laid his hand upon his friend's shoulder.

"You judge yourself too harshly," he said; "the word crime is too severe a one to apply to that youthful indiscretion—sin, if you will—repented of as soon as committed."

"Repentance!" cried the other, impatiently; "what is the good of repentance? Will it recover a lost reputation and wipe out a stain upon the past? The fortune I went to seek is mine, but I would give it all for an unblemished record, so that I might not be ashamed to look any man in the face. Ah, Silas! it is a terrible thing to think that a child of mine should ever blush for her father!"

"You are married, then?" inquired Mr. Burritt, gladly seizing the opportunity thus offered of changing the dismal subject. "Is your wife with you?"

"I am a widower," was the reply. "My wife died twelve years ago, leaving me with one child—a daughter."

"Tell me all about your daughter," said Mr. Burritt, "and how you came to make up your mind to part with her for so long? I have a daughter of my own—as well as the son who was born before you left England—and though I have been threatening to pack her off to boarding school for the last four or five years, I never could reconcile myself to the idea of the separation. And now she's too old—nineteen last birthday," and her father shook his head over his own weakness and smiled, an indulgent parental smile.

"That's the age of my Agnes within a year," said the other; "strange that we should have daughters so nearly the same age!"

He looked at his companion strangely. "I am in your hands, Silas," he said; "you can ruin me in my child's eyes, as well as in the eyes of the world, whenever you please."

(To be continued.)

The Real Thing in Toothaches.
"Geewhittaker! Jumping Moses! But it was the worst case of toothache I ever bumped against," he said. "It was easy in the early part of the evening, but when midnight arrived it got busy for fair. Liniment, hot and cold water and all the rest of the standard remedies were applied without avail. Seven thousand devils, with seven thousand red-hot sledges, hammered, hammered and hammered away at the throbbing nerve. That tooth stood upon its head, rolled over the carpet and hung out of the window. It growled, grumbled, moaned and muttered, laughed, cried, ran, walked, trotted, galloped, sailed, flew, dug and excavated, and did everything under the heavens but quit and go to sleep like a decent tooth and stop monkeying—"

"But why didn't you have it extracted?"

"Just as soon as Brown could get to the dentist's he—"

"Great Scott, man! Wasn't it your tooth?"

"No; it was Brown's."

Floored the Englishman.
At a dinner party in London Miss Beatrice Herford was taken down by an Englishman whom she discovered to be a fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and who professed to know by name all the places on the map of England. Miss Herford had long struggled with such names as Cholmondeley (Chumley), Crichton, (Cryton), and the rest, and this struck her as an opportunity.

"As a geographer, and especially as a Royal Geographer," she said, "you will be able to tell me where Winkie is."

The Royal Geographer was puzzled and asked if she was sure she had pronounced it properly, and how it was spelled.

"I pronounced it in the most English way I could," said Miss Herford. "It is spelled W-i-n-d-s-o-r-C-a-s-t-l-e."—New York Times.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson VIII. Nov. 22—The Curse of Strong Drink—Proverbs 20:1, 23:20, 21, 29-35.
Golden Text—"Wine is a mocker"—Proverbs 20:1.

Wine is a Mocker.—V. 1. This fact is the essence of the lesson for to-day. "Wine is a mocker." A deceiver, who mocks at his victims whom he has brought into trouble by his deceptions.

1. Wine is a mocker, because (1) it pretends to "make glad the heart of men," and does so at first, but as soon as the habit of drink is fastened on the man, it changes to a cup of sorrows and of death.

2. Because its attractions are but the bait which leads into the trap, where once caught the victim loses freedom, and by his sorrows and losses purchases wealth for those who have set the trap.

3. Because it leads its victims to self-deception.

4. Because it pretends that its victim can stop drinking any time he wishes to, while at the same time it takes away the will, it makes it difficult to break the chains. It causes a disease in its victim which he cannot cure. To stop is like stopping in midair after one has taken the leap over the precipice. The time to stop was before the leap.

5. Because continually it is promising happiness and health, especially to the young—"Drink, and you will be happy, with joys beyond your highest dreams. Drink, and your sickness will flee away, and health and strength be renewed. Strong drink is the famous fountain of youth, from which flows keener wit, freer social life, brighter hopes, fuller success."

I. Instead of Peace, Strong Drink Leads to Quarrels and Brawls.—V. 1. "Strong drink is raging." (R. V., "a brawler"; Septuagint, "Drunkennes is insolent.")—It tends to make men quarrelsome, noisy, boisterous, rough, no longer masters of themselves, or restrained by the laws of morality and decency. "And whosoever is deceived thereby," "or goes astray therewith," as with a companion leading him out of the true path, is not wise.

II. Instead of Wealth, Poverty and Rags.—V. 21. "The drunkard and the glutton." These two are classed together because they are both examples of self-indulgence, and yielding the higher nature to the control of appetite. "And drowsiness." "The lethargy, long sleeping, which necessarily follows a life of riot and revelry." "The disinclination and unfitness for work resulting from night revelry."—Delitzsch. "Shall clothe a man with rags." Its whole tendency is toward poverty, and this warning is intended as a stimulus to industry and virtue.

Example. Andrew Carnegie, in sending a contribution to the National Temperance Society, writes: "The best temperance lecture I have delivered lately was my offer of ten per cent. premium on their wages to all the employes on my Scottish estates who will abstain from intoxicating liquors."—Advance, 1902.

"Sir Hiram Maxim, speaking on the same subject, says: 'The English workman spends a great part of his earnings in beer, tobacco, and betting; he has no ambition. The American workman wishes to "get on"; he accomplishes a great deal more work in a day than any other workman in the world.'" (This is true in many cases but not in all.)—Christian Endeavor World.

III. Not Joy and Pleasure, but all Manner of Sorrows.—V. 29. "Who hath we? who hath sorrow?" The words corresponding to the two substantives are, strictly speaking, interjections, as in the margin, "Who hath Oh? who hath Alas? The woes are to great and too many to name separately. They are woes of body and woes of mind; woes in one's self, woes in family; pains, diseases, poverty. A man sick on account of his sins suffers very differently from one sick in the providence of God. A prison, a cross, may be a glory, or it may be a shame. "Who hath contentions?" May mean the conflict between desire and conscience; more probably, quarrels and bickerings. "Quarrelsomen in his cups" is an old saying. It excites tongue and brain; and "when wine is in, wit is out," and every evil word is spoken that stirs up bad feeling in others. "What quarrels, fightings, and even murders are constantly growing out of the drunkard's 'contentions'! Strong drink inflames the passions, and at the same time removes the restraint of conscience and will—it first maddens and then unchains the tiger."—R. R. Meredith. "Who hath babbling?" Foolish talking, vile conversation, noisy demonstrations, revelation of secrets. His tongue is "set on fire of hell." The R. V. translates, "Who hath complaining?" "The word is now commonly regarded as meaning 'sorrowful complaint; for example, over the exhausted purse, the neglected work, the anticipated reproaches, the diminishing strength.'"—Delitzsch. Nothing goes right with the drinker. He complains of God, he complains of society, he complains of his family, of his circumstances, of everything. Nothing can be right to one who is so wrong. "Who hath wounds without cause?" "Wounds received in causeless or wholly unprofitable disputes, wounds and stripes such as come of the brawls of drunken men."—Lange. Without cause. "Upon very slight provocation which men inflamed with wine are very apt to take."—Pool. The thought may go farther than this. Drinking men are especially exposed to acci-

dents and diseases which temperance would have prevented." "Who hath redness of eyes?" "The word does not refer to the reddening, but the dimming of the eyes and the power of vision."—Delitzsch. The copper color is another of the signs of the slave of strong drink, who "makes his nose blush for the sins of his mouth."

A Warning. "My reader, beware of habit! Habit is the most significant word to be found in the English vocabulary. Get an artist to paint it in letters of fire and hang it on the walls of your chamber where your eye shall catch its message when you retire, and where it may greet you again with the rising sun. Gaze upon it until it is deeply cut in the sanctuary of your inner being, just where the lamp of life may cast its ruddy light over it. Habit is to be your curse or your benediction; it is either to conquer you or to enable you to conquer. To-day it is transforming you into a scyphont or a prince of freedom. To-day you are either girding your soul with fetters of sorrow or building a chariot that will conduct you to paradise. Good habits are as potent for emancipation as vile ones are for slavery and anguish. One may resolutely form habits of purity, honesty, fidelity, till he breathes the air of divinity as his native air. As he eventually becomes an expert and master in melody, by years of inexorable drill, he may become divine by a like inexorable fidelity to the principles of righteousness. Each day his own hand either places a coronal on his brow or pushes the dagger to his vitals. He is building his dungeon or his mansion."—Clarence Lathbury.

V. Attractive Temptations.—V. 31. "Look not thou upon the wine. Do not put yourself in the way of temptation. He who goes freely into temptation is already more than half fallen. When it is red." Red wines were most esteemed in the East. The wine of Lebanon is said to be of a rich golden color, like Malaga. "When it giveth his color." "Literally, its eye, the clear brightness, or the beaded bubbles on which the wine-drinker looks with complacency."—Plumptre. "In the cup." "Sparkles or bubbles when poured out or shaken; carries a bead, which is regarded as an indication of the strength and quality of the liquor. Some wines are celebrated for their brilliant appearance."—W. Hunter. "When it moveth itself aright." Better as in R. V., "When it goeth down smoothly." This does not refer to the sparkling of the wine, but rather it "describes the pellucid stream flowing pleasantly from the wine skin or jug into the goblet or the throat."—Plumptre. This verse (thus pictures out the attractive side of wine, when it seems perfectly harmless to sip a little when it is bright and inspiring, thrilling the nerves with delight, promising all joy and freedom. It is the shining side of evil that is so dangerous, this embroidered veil that hides the death beyond, this flowery entrance to the path that leads to death.

VI. The Bitter End.—V. 32. "At the last it biteth like a serpent." Like a serpent it will be brilliant of color, and glide with easy motion, and like a serpent it will bite. "Adder." "The second word, adder, is the more specific, and is said to be the cerastes, or horned snake; the first more generic."—Cook. The cerastes is exceedingly venomous. It lurks in the sand, coiled up, perhaps, in a camel's footprint, ready to dart at any passing animal.

VII. Stupefying and Destroying the Mental and Spiritual Nature.—Vs. 33-35. 33. "Thine eyes shall behold strange women." Better as in R. V., and margin of A. V., "strange things." "Under the influence of alcohol the senses become confused, so that one sees wrongly the things that surround him. In later stages this changes into the horrors of delirium tremens" (Professor Beecher) when the drunkard sees demons and flames, and all horrible things." Utter perverse things." He loses his "good judgment, betrays secrets, becomes incoherent or profane or obscene in his talk." He speaks in utter confusion and utters reckless nonsense.

34. He is as reckless and foolish "as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea." "Asleep on a vessel in the storm, and unconscious of his danger." "Upon . . . a mast." An unsteady place, whence he is almost certain to fall.

35. "They have stricken me. . . and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not." This is the inebriate's contemptuous answer to the admonitions of those who warn him of sickness and sounds. He has been stricken, and not made sick; he has been beaten, but he has felt no bruises. It was but the temporary results of a frolic. There is no occasion for being troubled. Advice and warning are of little use then. The very drinking habits dull the conscience and harden the heart. "The fool will not learn even by experience." "When shall I awake?" Better, omitting the interrogation, when I shall awake "I will seek it yet again." "The picture ends with the words of the drunkard on waking from his sleep. He has been unconscious of the excesses and outrages of the night, and his first thought is to return to his old habit."—Cook. This is a true picture. One of the greatest punishments of drunkenness is this insatiable appetite, that, in spite of all warnings and in the face of all consequences, the drunkard returns again to his cups.

FARM SCCELLANY

Oleomargarine in Wisconsin.

A circular has recently been sent to dealers in oleomargarine in Wisconsin by J. Q. Emery, Dairy Food Commissioner of that state, warning them that every available force of his office will be exercised to enforce the state law and exact the full penalty for violations thereof. The Wisconsin law, which is a copy of the Massachusetts statute, is more stringent than the national law in that it specifically prohibits the sale of oleomargarine "which shall be in imitation of yellow butter," while the United States oleomargarine law of 1902 provides:

"That all articles known as oleomargarine, butterine, imitation, process, renovated or adulterated butter or imitation cheese, or any substance in the semblance of butter or cheese not the usual product of the dairy and not made exclusively of pure and unadulterated milk or cream, transported into any state or territory or the District of Columbia and remaining therein for use, consumption, sale or storage therein, shall, upon the arrival within the limits of such state or territory or the District of Columbia, be subject to the operation and effect of the laws of such state or territory or the District of Columbia, enacted in the exercise of its police powers to the same extent and in the same manner as though such articles or substances had been produced in such state or territory or the District of Columbia, and shall not be exempt therefrom by reason of being introduced therein in original packages or otherwise."

In the Wisconsin statute the term "artificial" in relation to color is not used. To be lawfully salable under the laws of that state oleomargarine or butterine must be "free from coloration or ingredient that causes it to look like butter." Since, therefore, the law prohibits the sale of a product which looks like butter, it makes no difference by what means, natural or otherwise, it acquires a yellow color, it is still unlawful in Wisconsin. The circular was provoked by the circulation of advertisements soliciting Wisconsin dealers to handle certain brands of butterine described as having "a rich creamy shade."

Making Firm Bacon.

In Denmark they look upon barley as the best for good bacon. Exercise is conducive to firm bacon, and if plenty of buttermilk is used, I do not think there is any danger of soft bacon. After a pig reaches 75 or 100 pounds almost anything can be given it in the way of feed. Some of our packers have been advocating keeping the hogs until they are eight or ten months old as a help to produce the firm bacon, but if fed right a hog may be put on the market at six months old. I think in many instances the value of roots has been overestimated, but they certainly help to keep the hogs in good condition, and prevent them from becoming too fat when young. Without roots, our difficulty has been to get them to grow rapidly without getting fat. Fed on something bulky they will grow and at the same time not become very fat. It is a little difficult to explain the reason. The question of wheat feeding has never been taken up by our institution. In feeding it, I should mix something bulky with it, or it might be gummy and indigestible. I would much prefer feeding some roots with it. For young pigs we found oats better than most feeds. We grind them as finely as we can mix with middlings.—Prof. G. E. Day.

For the San Jose Scale.

The lime, sulphur and salt wash is invariably used in California and much of the Pacific Coast for the control of the San Jose Scale. Experienced orchardists there have used it for many years and have demonstrated that it is, when properly made and applied, a successful remedy for this pest. The use of the wash in the East has been delayed because of the belief that it was not adapted to eastern climatic conditions by reason of the uncertainty of securing two or three weeks of dry weather following treatment. But extensive experiments with this wash during the past two years in Illinois, Georgia, New Jersey, New York and Ohio clearly prove that the wash is an efficient remedy in these states, even when applied during what was considered extremely unfavorable weather. In spite of frequent heavy rains the wash adhered well to the trees. It appears to be a very promising remedy for the San Jose Scale and is recommended to the orchardists of Ohio as deserving of a thorough trial.—Ohio Bulletin.

Fattening Ducks.

From Farmers' Review: I have not had much experience in fattening ducks, as I always sell nearly all I raise for breeding purposes, and can never raise enough to fill the orders I get. For feeding my young ducks in the fall after the corn begins to dent, I cut it from the cob with a corn knife and feed them, and they grow very fast. Old ones will get very fat on that once a day and ripe corn twice a day, with plenty of fresh water to drink and clean quarters. Either young or old ducks always want a clean, dry place for the night. Dampness is very hurtful to young ducks. Some will not believe this, as they are a water fowl, but this has always been my experience.—Mrs. J. W. Bloxham, Grundy County, Iowa.