

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

By A. L. Harris Author of "Mine Own Familiar Friend," etc.
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CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

Before he could reply the housemaid put in another word.

"Begging your pardon for speaking, after being told to hold my tongue, but it's something beginning with a 'B'—as I saw it myself in a prayer book I came across accidental."

"So that is how you came by your information," said her master. "Something beginning with a 'B,' is it? Suppose you let me see the book?"

"Which I intended to have showed it to you at the first," she said, fumbling in her pocket and producing the well worn little volume, which she was about to hand to her master, when—

A sudden dart—a long arm stretched out, and a powerful hand wrested it from her.

"This is my property," exclaimed its owner, sternly. "The name written within may be mine or another's, but so long as I choose to keep it a secret—secret it shall remain."

"This is most extraordinary conduct!" exclaimed Mr. Ferrers, "most extraordinary! Under the circumstances, only one course is open to me. It is impossible for me to harbor under my roof one who has obtained admittance under a false name, and absolutely refuses any explanation. I must, therefore,—assuming his severest expression, while the young man seemed to hold his breath as he waited for the sentence to be pronounced upon him—"I must, therefore, discharge you at once, and with a month's wages in lieu of the ordinary notice."

It was all up.

"When—when am I to leave?" inquired Ted, with eyes fixed upon the floor and heart beating furiously.

This question seemed to take the person to whom it was addressed unawares.

"When?" he answered; "why—oh,

He struck a match, and, lighting the candle, advanced towards the door of the apartment into the lock of which he inserted his duplicate key.

He entered and closed the door behind him, without, however, completely shutting it.

He put his candle down on the writing table while he considered what was to be done next. The waste paper basket first attracted his attention as being at once the nearest and the easiest object on which to exercise his powers of investigation.

It was about a quarter full of torn fragments, which he promptly emptied out before him. A rapid and cursory examination was sufficient to prove that these were of no importance. So he swept them back into their original receptacle.

The next thing to be done must be to tackle the writing table. How was this to be accomplished? Shocking to relate, he produced from his pocket nothing less than—a bunch of skeleton keys!

To his great disappointment one after another of the drawers upon the right hand proved to be empty. He turned his attention to those on his left.

He put his hand to one and pulled out the tightly wedged contents. He spread it open; yes, it was a newspaper—some months old. What could be the reason for preserving it? A sudden thought—he looked at the date and then—Yes, there it was on the inside sheet. "Terrible Railway Accident! The 4:30 train from Dover wrecked and partially consumed!" There was a full account of that ghastly affair, with minute details of all the horrors—a recollection of which returned to him, most vividly as he scanned the column. He replaced the first, and took down another and another.

"Further details—number of bodies

"I will try the third first," he said, and inserted one of his skeleton keys into the lock. This drawer—the third in order from the top—on being opened showed itself, strangely enough, to contain three articles, all of a widely different character.

These were a large and bulky envelope, a revolver and a small bottle of colorless fluid. The young man could not repress an exclamation of surprise and triumph as his eye fell upon these.

The secret he had been in search of so long lay ready to his hand—the proofs of the crime were there waiting for him to grasp them. He knew it, and yet hesitated. The shock of the discovery seemed to paralyze his hand, so that for an instant he was unable to stretch forth and take possession of what he believed would make him master of a man's fate.

At last he put out his hand, which trembled as he did so, and took up the revolver. It was a six-chamber revolver, and a glance showed that one of the chambers had been discharged.

A fierce, hungry look came over his face as he noticed this, and, laying the weapon down, he searched for something which he always carried about him—the conical shaped bullet which had been discovered in the stuffing of the fourth carriage from the engine. He dropped it into the empty chamber, which it fitted exactly.

"Proof number one!" he said, with grim joy, as he felt the dreadful thirst for blood return upon him with all its former strength. He laid the revolver down and took up the small stoppered bottle. What was this, and what bearing had its contents upon the matter? He removed the stopper and inhaled the contents carefully. A strong and unmistakable odor of bitter almonds greeted him. Prussic acid, beyond doubt! What did this point to? There seemed to be only one answer possible—Suicide! A means of escape provided in case of the worst happening. He replaced the stopper and placed the bottle by the side of the revolver, while he took up the third and last article. This was the envelope before mentioned. It was large and thick and sealed in no less than three places. On it, in place of an address, were written the strange words: "To be burned, unopened, after my death."

To be burned, unopened, after his death!—what did that mean? Why, if it were to be burned, unopened, had he put himself to the pains of writing it? For that the envelope contained the completed copy of the "true narrative and confession of the strange tragedy" he had not the least doubt. But why had he described it as the strange tragedy? Cowardly and detestable it might well be—but why strange?

"At any rate, so far from its being burned, unopened," he said, aloud. "I will now myself—"

He held the letter in one hand and, with the other he was about to break the seals, when a voice cried:

"Stop!"

(To be continued.)

Doctors Knew a Good Thing.
Congressman John Sharp Williams tells of a man in Mississippi who is a hypochondriac of the first order. This individual's failing is a source of never-ending amusement to his fellow townsmen. It was of this man that some one humorously remarked, in answer to a question as to how the sick man was getting on, that "he complained that he was feeling somewhat better."

Mr. Williams says that the hypochondriac was one day telling a friend of his efforts to regain his old-time health. He ran over the list of doctors whom he had consulted. Whereupon the friend remarked:

"Well, old man, I must say that you appear to have lots of faith in doctors."

"Certainly I have," replied the sick man. "Don't you think the doctors would be foolish to let a good customer like me die?" — Colorado Springs Gazette.

Long Lines of Kings.
Though Japan be the latest country to enter the circle of world powers, her emperor surpasses all sovereigns in the length of his pedigree, according to the London Chronicle. He is the one hundred and twenty-second member in direct, unbroken descent of his family who has sat on the throne of Japan. The founder of his house was, in Japanese legend, a goddess of the sun, and contemporary with Nebuchadnezzar, 666 years before the Christian era. On the other hand, the Romanoffs have been royal only since 1601, when they succeeded to the sovereignty of the then extinct house of Rurik. As for other European rulers, King Edward can go back to Cerdic, 255 A. D., the Hapsburgs to 952 A. D., and the Hohenzollerns to the eighth century, but as kings only to 1701.

Why It Wasn't Legal.
In the New York Law School at a recent lecture on the making of wills the case of a woman in one of Rider Haggard's books was cited. This woman had a man's will inscribed in ink on her back. And the will was held regular and legal because it had been made in writing.

After giving this practical illustration, the professor called on John Smith, saying:

"Is a will so inscribed regular and legal in your opinion?"

"No," answered Smith.

"Why not?" asked the professor.

"Because it's a skin game," replied Smith.

The professor felt angry enough to order Smith out of the room, but the class laughed so much that he decided to overlook the student's flippancy.

Bedroom Hangings.
Nothing is prettier or more dainty for bedroom decorations than the upholstery dimities in the old English style. They can be got in many patterns and launder beautifully, so are more durable than a flimsy fabric. They may be used in the entire decoration of the room for bedspread, canopy, window hangings and dressing table covers.

At the window it is prettiest to



Worn When Away.
The selection of traveling gowns is frequently found to be a difficult matter, for they must be becoming, and above all things practical and useful. One worthy of attention was carried out in reseda green cloth, its dominant note in all particulars being simplicity. The neat little coat was cut double-breasted and prettily strapped and embellished with a touch of fine silver embroidery. This, when worn open, displayed a daintily tucked lawn shirt with linen collar and dark green velvet tie, both being feminine in style, yet of irreproachable neatness. The skirt was gracefully plaited and cut walking length, and designed to wear with this costume was a warm green cloth wrap and a pretty felt hat trimmed with ivy leaves and berries.

White Linen and Lace.
Gowns of coarse white linen, much trimmed with heavy laces, are to be worn even more than during the last hot season.

Some of these are fashioned on quite elaborate models, as, for instance, one which has a Directoire coat entirely of heavy white lace, with small hip panels of the linen overlapping the lace. The skirt is long and sweepingly graceful, for this is intended for a dressy gown, and bands of the lace are run up and down it.

The new buttonhole embroideries and the button laces, whereon dangle countless little crocheted balls, are extremely effective on these coarse white linens.

Fashionable Loose Coat.
Loose coats make ideally comfortable wraps and are in the height of style. This one can be made with the smart little shoulder capes or without and can be buttoned over or rolled back to form revers. The model is made of tan colored broadcloth, the revers of satin in the same color edged with Persian braid, but all cloaking materials are appropriate.

Extravagant Garter Buckles.
Some of the new garter buckles are extravagant in setting and design. One seen recently was of Roman gold set with a fleur de lis design of diamonds. Another Roman gold garter buckle had a china medallion set in the frame, on which the monogram or favorite flower of the owner could be painted. These buckles also come in sterling silver at three times the price of the pseudo gold.

A Suggestive Stole.
A stole which is full of suggestions is made of plain Brussels net, with flowers or leaves cut out of cloth and sewed on to the net foundation. Tinted flowers would be pretty for the woman with time and taste, and velvet could be used instead of the cloth. An entire gown of such work would not be too great an undertaking, and would be very handsome.

Things That Help.
Use soapy water when making starch. It will make the clothes more glossy and easily ironed.

Line black silk undershirts with flannel to insure warmth.

Dusty or rusty looking jet trimmings can be made quite new looking if soaked for about ten minutes in equal parts vinegar and water. Dry in a cool place.

Fruit a Complexion Beautifier.
There is no better cosmetic for the skin and no better complexion beautifier than a large, juicy apple eaten at night. Some will find perhaps that the skin of the apple gives them indigestion, so it is better to peel it. Next to the apple as a blood purifier is the cranberry; it is most wholesome. Oranges eaten in the morning are very beneficial.

The Necessary Trunk Cover.
A trunk cover is a necessity for the woman who "lives in her trunk." A green denim cover was attractive with its edge buttonholed in white long and short stitch. The monogram of the owner was worked in the center. A steamer trunk covered in this fashion, when piled with gay colored pillows, makes an excellent window or cozy corner seat.

Novel Bonbonnières.
One of the most charming bonbonnières of the season is of bisque or china, in Japanese style. It represents a little almond-eyed maiden carrying in either hand a basket or panier. Both of these receptacles are filled with bonbons. The trinket can be very appropriately applied for table trimming.

Novel Ideas.
The more unusual the trimming on costumes this season the better, and anything you like is fashionable. Second hand shops are the resort of many a fair maiden these days. Antique buttons of metallic ornaments, queer braidings and quaint meadollions are used as coat trimmings and to trim fur stoles.

Readers of this paper can secure any May Manton pattern illustrated above by filling out all blanks in coupon, and mailing, with 10 cents, to E. E. Harrison & Co., 65 Plymouth Place, Chicago. Pattern will be mailed promptly.

Name _____
Town _____
State _____
Pattern No. _____
Waist Measure (if for skirt) _____
Bust Measure (if for waist) _____
Age (if child's or miss's pattern) _____

Write plainly. Fill out all blanks. Enclose 10c. Mail to E. E. Harrison & Co., 65 Plymouth Place, Chicago.

At the window it is prettiest to

INTERESTING TO AMERICANS.

Western Canada Will Soon Become the Supply Depot for Wheat for Great Britain.

During the past year about 50,000 Americans went from the United States to Canada. Most of these settled upon farm lands, and the writer is informed by agents of the Canadian Government that the greatest success has followed the efforts of nearly all. To their friends on this side of the boundary line the fullest assurance is given of the prosperity that is in store for them. There will always be a splendid market for all the grain, cattle, and other produce that can be raised in Western Canada, and with the advantages offered of a free homestead of 160 acres of land, and other lands which may be bought cheaply, an excellent climate, splendid school system, educational advantages of the best, what more is required. The husbandman gets more return for his money than in any other country in the world.

On the occasion of Sir Wilfred Laurier's visit to the Corn Exchange, London, England, Colonel Montgomery, V. D., made several important statements. "The function," he said, "which you have just been assisting in connection with a kindred association has doubtless shown you the importance of the provision trade of Liverpool in its relationship with the Dominion, and the enormous possibilities of the future development of that trade. Well, the grain trade of Liverpool has interests with Canada no less important than those of the provision trade. When it is borne in mind that 80 per cent of the breadstuffs of this great country has to be brought from abroad, you will readily appreciate with what great satisfaction we view the large and steadily increasing supplies of grain which are annually available for export from Canada, and I challenge contradiction when I say that of the wheats we import from Russia, India, the Pacific, and the length and breadth of the United States, none gives more general satisfaction, none is more generally appreciated than that raised in the Province of Manitoba. We cannot get enough of it, and it is no exaggeration to say that there are before us dozens of millers who hunger for it. This is not the time to enter into statistical questions, but we look forward with confidence to the time at which, with the present rate of progress, the Dominion of Canada will have a sufficient surplus of wheat to render this country independent of other sources of supply. I think I may, with justifiable pride, remind you that this is the chief grain market of the British Empire, and through its excellent geographical position, as well as through the enterprise of its millers, it is now the second milling center in the world.

Send to any authorized Canadian Government agent for copy of Atlas and information as to railway rate, etc.

Hope is the mainspring of life.—Socrates.

The Useful Camel.
The Somali camel can eat everything and drinks nothing. It will make a meal where even the country pony would starve. Dareso, mimosa, acacia—all come alike to it; and when shoots and leaves are withered it can fall back on roots, thorns and bark. That sort of digestion makes it, of course, valuable in a country where the bill of fare seems compiled in the interest of the carnivora, but its indifference to liquid is its especial virtue. While the Arab camel needs drink daily, his Somali brethren when on a march are watered only every fifth day, and when drouth prevails may be left for ten. When grazing they are supposed to be watered every sixth day, but such regularity depends on the energy of the herders and the condition of the grass, the herds when the grass is green being often left without water for as long as three months.

Japanese "Singing Insects."
Among the natural curiosities of Japan are its singing insects. The most prized of these tiny musicians is a black beetle named "susumushi," which means "insect bell." The sound that it emits resembles that of a little silver bell of the sweetest and most delicate tone.

The Most Common Disease.
Yorktown, Ark., Feb. 29th.—Leland Williamson, M. D., a successful and clever local physician, says:

"There is scarcely another form of disease a physician is called upon so often to treat as Kidney Disease. I invariably prescribe Dodd's Kidney Pills and am not disappointed in their effect for they are always reliable. I could mention many cases in which I have used this medicine with splendid success, for example, I might refer to the case of Mr. A. H. Cole.

"Age 31, greatly emaciated, some fever, great pain and pressure over region of kidneys, urine filled with pus or corruption and very foul smelling and passed some blood. Directed to drink a great deal of water, gave brisk purgative and Dodd's Kidney Pills. The pills were continued regularly for three weeks and then a few doses every week, especially if patient felt any pain in region of kidneys. Cured completely and patient performed his duties as farm laborer in four weeks."

"Dr. Williamson has been a regular practitioner for over twenty years and his unqualified indorsement of Dodd's Kidney Pills is certainly a wonderful tribute to this remedy.

It is with men as with horses; those that do the most prancing make the least progress.—Baron de Stassart.



"This is my property!"

as soon as you can; or"—with a slightly more lenient tone, as he reflected that, after all, as the fellow himself had said, there might be reasons, not necessarily bad, for the concealment—"you can remain until to-morrow, if you like."

Victory! Another night, which was all he required.

He could scarcely prevent himself from showing some signs of exultation. Ah! perhaps by this time to-morrow the situation might be changed. He might be the judge, and another—

"Stay one moment," Mr. Ferrers continued.

This time he addressed the woman Perkins, who had reached the door.

"As I have also a strong objection to persons who pry into other people's concerns and interfere with their private property, you may as well take a month's notice at the same time. That will do; you can go."

The bitter was bit. She had not a word to say for herself. She had succeeded in wreaking her spite upon him who had despised her attractions and repulsed her overtures, but she had done it at the expense of a good situation. Moreover, the man whose disgrace she had labored to secure laughed in her face as he passed her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Envelope With Three Seals.

It was twelve o'clock on Friday night. The clock in the hall below had struck the hour. Another half hour ticked slowly by, and at the end of that time a door in the upper part of the house was opened softly and by imperceptible degrees.

The room within was in darkness and the figure of the man who cautiously emerged was barely visible in the general gloom.

He crept lightly on his stocking feet past the doors of the rooms on the upper floor, and began to descend the staircase.

It was much in his favor, the stairs being so well and so massively constructed, that there was no startling and treacherous creak to betray the feet which trod them secretly in the dead of night. And so he made his way slowly and safely to the floor on which the room was situated into which he was minded to penetrate. After careful and noiseless search, he succeeded in laying his hand upon a candle and a box of matches, which, earlier in the evening, he had secreted in a convenient, but out-of-the-way corner.

found—distressing scenes—the inquest—the verdict—mysterious discovery with regard to a first class passenger—foul play suspected! Verdict of Wilful Murder! And so on and so on he retraced his way through the whole of that dark tragedy—wasting what he felt to be precious time, but unable to tear his attention away from these records of the past.

At last he rammed the paper back into its pigeon hole and turned his attention again to the drawer beneath. When it at last yielded to his efforts, he was rewarded by the sight of a flatly folded packet of parchment, tied with tape—the identical last will and testament which he had heard spoken of so often by the cook. But this, though of interest in one way, was not that of which he was in search, and he began to feel a quail of fear lest, after all, his quest should prove useless.

His eye, roaming restlessly about, was caught by the gleam of brass in a dark corner. The candle, which was sufficient to light him at his task, still left the greater part of the room in semi-darkness, and there was something over there, in that corner, which he had not taken into account.

It was an old fashioned piece of furniture—the only shabby and evidently second hand article in the room. It was an upright article and was divided into two portions, the lower containing drawers and the upper being shut in with doors, which were fitted with a brass lock and fastening.

It was old and much scratched, and had apparently seen considerable use; but must have been a good article originally. He took the candle in his hand and, crossing the room, inspected it closely. "There is a look about it"—holding the candle up higher—"as though it might have a history attached to it. It looks"—with a sudden impulse—"as though it might be trusted to keep a secret." He put the candle upon the mantelpiece close by and again resumed his burglarious operations. "I shall soon be able to pass muster as an experienced house-breaker, at this rate," he remarked to himself, with grim irony, as the lock turned traitor, and the door, swinging open, revealed a number of drawers within, each garnished with a lock and brass handle. Which should he attack first? Much time had already been wasted, and at that moment, as though in answer, the clock on the mantelpiece chimed three, while the clock in the hall without repeated the hour after it.