

# CRIPPS, THE CARRIER

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## CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"Well, Mr. Overshute, I have met with a good deal of rudeness in my early days; before I was known, as I am now. It was worth my while to disarm it then. It is not so now, in your case. You belong to a very good county family; and although you are committed to inferior hands, if you had come in a friendly spirit, I would have been glad to serve you. As it is I can only request you to say what your purpose is, and to settle it."

"You puzzle me, Sharp," said Overshute—about the worst thing he could have said; and he knew it before the words had passed.

"I am called, for the most part, 'Missor Sharp,' except by gentlemen of my own age, or friends who entirely trust me. Mr. Russell Overshute, explain how I have puzzled you."

"Never mind that. You would never understand. Have you any idea what has brought me here?"

"Yes, to be plain with you, I have. One of your least, but very oldest tenants, has been caught out in poaching. You hate the game laws; you are a radical, rafter, and reformer. You know that your lawyer is good and active, but too well known as a Liberal. It requires a man of settled principles to contest with the game laws."

"You could not be more wide astray!" cried young Overshute. "No, no, thank goodness, we are not come so low that we cannot get off our tenants, in spite of any evidence; you must indeed think that our family is quite reduced to the dirt, if we can no longer do even that much."

"Not at all, sir. You are much too hot. I only supposed for the moment that your principles might have stopped you."

you; because you have little for anything. Now repeat your question, moderately."

"Where have you put Grace Oglander?"

"Let me offer you a chair again. Striding about with frozen feet is almost the worst thing a man can do. However, you seem to be a little excited. Have you brought me a letter from my client, to authorize this inquiry?"

"From Mr. Oglander? Oh, no! he has no idea of my being here."

"We will get over that. You are a friend of his, and a neighbor. He has asked you, in a general way, to help him, in this sad, great trouble?"

"Not at all. He would rather not have my interference. He does not like its motive."

"And the motive is, that like many other people, you were attached to this young lady?"

"Certainly, I am. I would give my life at any moment for her."

"Well, well! I will not speak quite so strongly as you do. Life grows dearer as it gets more short. But still, I would give my best year remaining to get to the bottom of this problem."

"You would?" cried young Overshute, looking at him, with admiration of his strength and truth. "Give me your hand, sir. I have wronged you. I see that I am but a hasty fool."

"You should never own that," said the lawyer.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Meanwhile, all Beckley and villages around were seething with a ferment of excitement and contradiction. Esther Cripps had been strictly ordered by the authorities to hold her tongue; and so

er. Oh, my! How that startled me! Somebody coming the short way from the fields! That wonderful man, as it always prowling about, unbeknown to any one. They don't like me in the village much, civil as I am to all of them. But as sure as six is half-a-dozen, that Smith is the one they ought to hate."

"If he is there, show him in at once," said the squire; "and let no one come interrupting us."

This was very hard upon Mrs. Hookham; and she could not help showing it in her answer:

"Oh, to be sure, sir! Oh, to be sure not! What is my poor opinion, compared to his? Ah, well, it is a fine thing to be a man!"

The man, for whose sake she was thus cast out, seemed to be of the same opinion. He walked, and looked, and spoke, as if it was indeed a fine thing to be a man; but the finest of all things to be the man inside his own cloth and leather. Short and thick of form he was, and likely to be at close quarters a dangerous antagonist. And the set of his jaws, and the glance of his eyes, showed that no want of manhood would at the critical moment forsake him. His face was of a strong red color, equally spread all over it, as if he lived much in the open air, and fed well, and enjoyed his food.

"John Smith, your worship—John Smith," he said, without troubling Mrs. Hookham. "I hope I see your worship better. May I shut the door? Oh, Mary, your tea is waiting."

"Mary, indeed!" cried Widow Hookham, a vaguely departing; "young man, address my daughter!"

"Now what have you done, Smith, what have you done?" the old gentleman asked. "Or have you done nothing at all as usual? You tell me to have patience every day, and every day I have less and less."

"The elements are against us, sir. If the weather had been anything but what it is, I must have known everything long ago. Stop, sir, stop; it is no idle excuse, as you may seem to fancy. It is not the snow that I speak of; it is the intense and deadly cold, that keeps all but the very strong people indoors. How can any man talk when his beard is frozen? Look, sir!"

From his short brown beard he took lumps of ice, beginning to thaw in the warmth of the room, and cast them into the fire to hiss. Mr. Oglander gazed as if he thought that his visitor took a liberty. "Go on, sir, with your report," he said.

"Well, sir, in this chain of crime," Mr. Smith replied in a sprightly manner, "we have found one very important link."

"What is it, Smith? Don't keep me waiting. Don't fear me. I am now prepared to stand anything whatever."

"Well, sir, we have discovered, at last, the body of your worship's daughter."

The Squire bowed, and hid his face. By the aid of faith, he had been hoping against hope, till it came to this. Then he looked up, with his bright old eyes for the moment very steady, and said with a firm though hollow voice:

"The will of the Lord be done! The will of the Lord be done, Smith."

"The will of the Lord shall not be done," cried Mr. Smith emphatically, and striking his thick knees with his fist, "until the man who has done it shall be swung, Squire, swung. Make up your mind to that, your worship. You may safely make up your mind to that."

"What good will it do me?" the father asked, talking with himself alone. "Will it ever bring back my girl—my child? Bereaved I am, but it cannot be long. I shall meet her in a better world, Smith."

"To be sure your worship will, with the angels and archangels. But to my mind that will not be satisfaction, till the man has swung for it."

"Excuse me for a moment, will you, Mr. Smith, excuse me? I have no right to be overcome, and I thought I had got beyond all that. Ring the bell, and they will bring you cold sirloin. Help yourself, and don't mind me. I will come back directly. No, thank you; I can walk alone. How many have had much worse to bear! You will find the undercut the best."

As soon as Mr. Smith had appeased the rage of hunger, the Squire came back calmly to talk with him. Mr. Oglander had passed the bitterest hour of his long life yet; filled at every turn of thought with yearning to break down and weep. Sometimes his mind was so confused that he did not know how old he was, but seemed to be in the long past days, with his loving wife upon his arm, and their Gracie toddling in front of them. He spoke to them both as he used to do, and speaking cleared his thoughts again; and he shook away the dreamy joy in the blank form of facts. At last he washed his face, and brushed his silver hair and untended beard, and half in the looking-glass expected to see his daughter scolding him; because he knew that he had neglected many things she insisted on.

"I hope you have been treated well," he said, with his fine old-fashioned bow. "I do not often leave my guests to attend to themselves in this way."

"Don't apologize, Squire, I beg you. I have done first chop, I assure you, sir. I have not tasted real mustard, ground at home as yours is, since I was up in Durham County, where they never grow it."

"Well, Mr. Smith," said the Squire trying to smile at his facetiousness, "I am very glad that you have done well in weather like this, a young man like you must require a good deal of nourishment. But now, will you—will you tell me—"

"Yes, your worship, everything. Of course, you are anxious; and I thoroughly enter into your feelings. I just resolved to beat the weather, and have it out with everything. So I communicated with the authorities in London."

(To be continued.)

Good and Bad Jokes.

No joke was ever good enough to make amends for the poor ones by the same author.—New York Press.

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

#### Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

##### What Russia needs most of all for immediate relief is a grand duke famine.

Looking at his picture, one wonders how any woman ever married Johann Hoch if she saw him first.

A New York physician who wants to drown all the idiots might start the ball rolling by jumping off Brooklyn bridge.

"Bluebeard" is not an appropriate name for Johan Hoch. His record makes Bluebeard look like a monogamist.

The magazine "How to Make Money" has failed. Lots of persons are suspected of having made money by failing.

Apparently a model husband is not what the women want. They prefer a creature of flesh and blood, even though he has imperfections.

It must be a great consolation to the family of a deceased autoist to know that the speed records and his neck were broken at the same time.

Maxim Gorky is said to be studying English. That looks like convincing evidence that some enterprising American lecture bureau has opened negotiations.

Uncle Russell Sage may not be one of the ten men who are to own the country in the near future, but he'd like to see them get his share of it away from him!

The wonderful success of the Japanese army doctors in saving their sick and wounded soldiers has attracted the attention of the whole civilized world. What is the secret?

Mrs. Hetty Green, it is said, is much given to lurching on doughnuts. The doughnut commerce is cheap, filling, and shape bears an attractive resemblance to an additional cipher.

It is interesting to learn that "Jan I falls on Sunday fourteen times during the present century." Still there is nothing that can be done. The world will have to try to make the best of it.

Marie Corelli roasts Carnegie for clearing away alleged historic buildings at Stratford-on-Avon for a library site. When in doubt as to the best way to get publicity, tangle up with Carnegie.

The discovery of Jupiter's sixth satellite is peculiarly gratifying. We have always felt that a luminary of the size and brilliancy of Jupiter ought to have more than five professional hangers on.

The Vandavia Railroad Company is pensioning its employes who are 70 years of age and over. There undoubtedly are soulless corporations, but it is wrong to conclude that a thing is soulless merely because it is a corporation.

New York people now ride in subways, they have taverns in subways, where they can eat, drink and be merry underground, and a good many of them earn their living in subways and cellars; but they still have to come to the surface to be buried.

Eight hundred thousand paupers! Such is the frightful record of England and Wales at the end of November last, when winter was just beginning. One person in every forty-one of the whole population was in receipt of poor-law relief. Almost a quarter of a million persons were in the workhouses and the rest had outdoor relief. The numbers were much larger than those of the year before, and were increasing rapidly. Distress was greatest in London, but throughout the country the condition of the poor was more wretched than it had been for many years, and there is no prospect of better times in the near future.

"Toughs are not wanted in any branch of the United States army, for men of that class rarely make good soldiers," said J. R. Stanley, a sergeant at the recruiting station at Eighth and Main streets, Cincinnati. "The public does not know that something more than physical fitness is required of a man who wants to enter the army. Of course, the recruiting officers cannot investigate the moral character of every recruit. If, however, a recruit shows that he is of low moral character and takes pride in being a tough, he is refused permission to enlist. Whenever a father brings a son to our station and wants us to enlist him we always investigate closely. Usually we find that the son is incorrigible."

Our government is constantly called upon to protect "American citizens" who become involved in difficulties

abroad. This protection is one of the most important of its duties, and yet one of the most delicate and embarrassing. If performed at all it must be performed promptly and effectively, and yet the department is always handicapped by the probability that such applicants are impudent impostors or well-meaning dupes. It is safe to say that a majority of the so-called American citizens who appeal for intervention in their behalf are foreigners by birth who have taken out, or pretend to have taken out, naturalization papers for the express purpose of returning to the land of their nativity and there engaging in pursuits more or less acceptable to the authorities.

After many years artists and archaeologists are again turning their attention to Herculaneum, which was buried by the outpouring from Vesuvius at the same time as Pompeii; and an effort is making to raise funds to undertake excavation of the lost city on a large scale and in a systematic manner. A small part only of Herculaneum has been uncovered, but the treasures found were more valuable and interesting than those found in Pompeii. The city lies under eighty feet of soft rock formed from the mud which engulfed it. The rock is not so easily worked as the ashes which covered Pompeii. Nothing has been done since 1865, when the excavations threatened the two villages that have been built over the site of Herculaneum, but if sufficient money were available, the work could be pushed with safety and speed. The Royal Academy of Arts of England has been interested in the subject, and President Roosevelt has consented to act as chairman of the American committee that is to be formed for raising the needed money.

The old apprentice system had many evils, and its victims have been alternately food for pity and for mirth. Dickens' "Marchioness," with her small notions and her lively fancy, and Simon Tappertit, with his small legs and smaller brains, were fair personalities of popular prejudice against the system of "binding out." But at least an apprentice did have a chance to learn a trade. To-day such learning comes more by hit than any good wit. A young girl hired by a dressmaker runs errands, does up bundles, or at most overcasts a seam; but she learns nothing of the art which her mistress practices. So the shop-boy knows less of tools than of brooms, and relies, at least, on "influence" to secure for him a position for which he has no technical training. To make a beginning in supplying the need for skill in industrial life, trade schools for girls have recently been opened in two Eastern cities. Applicants must be between the ages of 14 and 17. They are examined in the rudiments of sewing, which must be thoroughly mastered before they go further. Then they are taught every use of the needle—dress-making, cloakmaking, millinery and embroidery. They study the various machines for sewing, buttonhole making and braiding. A good course in designing is open to girls who show ability for it. Meantime they are trained to neatness and punctuality, and to insight into the larger questions of business conditions, business methods and business honor. When they are graduated they are prepared to take positions requiring a high degree of skill, and are also equipped with some idea of the dignity of good work, the identity of the interests of employer and employed, and the wider view of labor so necessary to the character and the comfort of the self-supporting woman. The training promises so much that schools of this sort ought to spring up in every city of our land. One important element of that joy in work which alone makes life worth living is the sense of ability to do the work well. The untaught girl, struggling with a task for which she knows that she is inadequate, hates her taskmistress, the work and herself. Give her a skilled hand, and the needle ceases to represent a bondage; it represents a pleasure. Her whole attitude toward her occupation is transformed by the easy miracle of a technical education.

#### The Wedding of the Sales-Lady.

She was a stylish sales ladee, A night-watch-gentleman was he. He loved, and asked if she'd agree A clergy-gentleman to see. She murmured "Yes," and grew quite red, But quickly fixed the day to wed. The wedding was a swell affair—No common "men" or "women" there. To be "en regle" was her aim, So only "gents" and "ladies" came. The cashier-lady of the store, The gentleman who walks the floor, The elevator-gentleman, The scrub-lady—and so it ran. Then when arrived the parting time, Cab-gentlemen with two sublime Real lady horses, snowy white, Whirled bride and groom into the night! And e'en the trunks that with them went Were handled by a baggage-gent. —Catholic Standard and Times.

"She," every Princess daughter argues to herself while lying snug in bed in the morning, when her mother builds the fires, "doesn't mind it. Why, mother is so in the habit of getting up early she simply couldn't lie in bed late if she tried!"



"YOU THREATEN ME, DO YOU?" SAID MR. SHARP. "I THINK THAT YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, YOUNG MAN."

"Oh, dear no! My mother could not take it all in that way. Now where have you put Grace Oglander?"

Impetuous Russel, with his nostrils quivering, and his eyes fixed on the lawyer's, and his right hand clenching his heavy whip, purposely fired his question thus, like a thunderbolt out of pure heaviness. He felt sure of producing a grand effect; and so he did, but not the right one.

"You threaten me, do you?" said Mr. Sharp. "I think that you make a mistake, young man. Violence is objectionable in every way, though natural with fools, who believe they are the stronger. I am sorry to have spoiled your whip; but you will acknowledge that the fault was yours. Now, I am ready for reason—if you are."

With a grave bow, Luke Sharp offered Russel the fragments of his pet hunting prop, which he had caught from his hand, and snapped like a stick of pepper-mint, as he spoke. Overshute thought himself a fine, strong fellow, and with very good reason; but the quickness of his antagonist left him gasping.

"I want no apologies," Mr. Sharp continued, going to his desk; while the young man looked sadly at his bracken-knocked butt; "apologies are always waste time. You have threatened me, and you have found your mistake."

"You never could do that to me again."

"Very likely not. I shall never care to try it. Physical force is always low. But, as a gentleman, you must own that you first offered violence."

"Mr. Sharp, I confess that I did. Not in word, or deed; but still my manner fairly imported it. And the first respect I ever felt for you, I feel now, for your quickness and pluck."

"I am pleased with any respect from

far as in her lay she did so. But there were others—the squire's three men, and even the carrier himself, who had so many things to think, that they were pretty sure to say some of them.

Now, Mrs. Permitage having been obliged to return to Cowley, Mary Hookham's mother had established her power by this time, and was in charge as the squire's housekeeper. She plainly declared Esther's tale was neither more nor less than a trumpety cock-and-bull story. She would not call it a parcel of lies, because the por girl might have dreamed it. Walking in the snow was no more than walking in one's sleep. Depend upon it, she had seen a bush, if indeed she did see anything, and being so dazed by the weather, she had gone and dreamed the rest of it.

"Now, sir," she cried, rushing in to the squire, with a basin of first-rate ox-tail soup, upon that melancholy New Year's Day, "you have been out in the snow again! No use denying of it, sir; I can see it by the chattering of your teeth. I call it a bad, wicked thing to go on so."

"You are a most kind and good soul, Mrs. Hookham. But surely you would not have me sit with my hands crossed, doing nothing."

"No, no; surely not. Take the spoon in one hand, and the basin in the other. You owe it to yourself to keep up your strength, and to some one else as well, good sir."

"I have no one else to owe it to," the old man answered, sadly tucking his napkin into his waistcoat pockets.

"Yes, you have. You have your Miss Gracie, alive and kicking, as sure as I be."

"Why do you talk so about my darling?"

"Because, sir, please God, I means to see you spend many a happy year together."