

# CRIPPS, THE CARRIER

BY  
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## CHAPTER XXI.

Now being newly inspired by that warm theologian—as Miss Patch really believed him to be—Luke Sharp, the lady felt capable of a bold stroke, which her conscience had seemed to cry out against. Her loftier thoughts enlarged it. She delivered to her dear niece a letter, written in pale ink and upon strange paper, which she drew from a tacker once addressed to herself, and received "through their butcher" from a postoffice. Wondering who their butcher was, but delighted to get her dear father's letter, Grace ran away to devour it.

It was dated from George Town, English Guiana, and though full of affection, showed touching traces of delicate health and despondency. The poor girl wiped her eyes at her father's tender longing to see her once more, and his earnest prayers for every blessing upon their invaluable friend, Miss Patch. Then he spoke of himself in a manner which made it impossible for her to keep her eyes wiped, so deep was his sadness, and yet so heroically did he attempt to conceal it from her; and then came a few lines, which surprised her greatly. He said that a little bird had told him that during her strict retirement from the world, in accordance with his wishes, she had learned to esteem a most worthy young man, for whom he had always felt warm regard, and he might even say, affection. He doubted whether, at his own time of life, and with this strange languor creeping over him, he could ever bear the voyage to England, unless his little darling would come over to fetch him, or at least to behold him once more alive; and if she would do so, she must indeed be quick. He need not say that to dream of her traveling so far all alone was impossible; but if, for the sake of her father, she could dispense with some old formalities, and speedily carry out their mutual choice, he might with his whole heart appeal to her husband to bring her out by the next packet.

He said little more, except that he had learned by the bitter teaching of adversity who were his true friends, and who were false. No one had shown any truth and reality except Mr. Sharp of Oxford; but he never could have dreamed, till it came to the test, that even the lowest of the low would treat him as young Mr. Overshute had done. That subject was too painful, so he ended with another adjuration to his daughter.

"Aunt, I have had the most extraordinary letter," cried Grace, coming in with her eyes quite dreadful; "it astonishes me beyond everything. May I see the postmark of yours which it came in? I shall think I am dreaming till I see the postmark."

"The stamp of the office, do you mean, my dear? O, yes, you are welcome to see, Grace. Here it is, 'George Town, Demerara.' The date is not quite clear without my spectacles. Those foreign dies are always out so badly."

"Never mind the date, aunt. I have the date inside, in my dear father's writing. But I am quite astonished how my father can have heard—"

"Something about you, sly little puss. You need not blush so, for I long have guessed it."

"But indeed it is not true—indeed, it is not. I may have been amused, but I never, never—and oh, what he says then of somebody else—such a thing I should have thought impossible. How can one have any faith in any one?"

"My dear child, what you mean is this: How can one have any faith in worldly people? With their mouths they speak deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips—"

"Oh, no, to see him walk would show you that; and if being good to the poor sick people, and dashing into the middle of the whooping cough—"

"How am I to know of whom you speak? You appear to have acted in a very forward way with some one your father disapproves of."

"I assure you, I never did anything of the kind. It is not at all my manner. I thought you considered it wrong to make unfounded accusations."

"Grace, what do you mean, if you please?"

"I mean what I do not please. I mean that I have been here at least five months, as long as any fifty, and have put up with the miserableness—that I am to marry a boy with a red cord down his legs, and a crystal in his whip, and a pretty face that seems to come from his mamma's watch pocket, and a very nice and gentle way of looking at a lady, as if he were quite capable, if he had the opportunity, of saying 'bo' to any 'sose on the other side of the river.'"

"My dear, do you prefer bold ruffians, then, like the vagabond you were rescued from?"

"I don't know at all what I do prefer, Aunt Patch, unless it is just to be left to myself, and have nothing to say to any one. Somehow or other now—I do not mean to be wicked, aunt—but I don't think my father ever wrote that letter—I mean, at any rate, of his own free will. Somebody must have stood over him—I feel as if I really saw them—and made him say this, and that, and things that he never used to think of saying. Why, he never would have dreamed, when he was well, of telling me I was to marry anybody. He was so jealous of me, he could hardly bear any gentleman to dare to smile; and he used to make me promise to begin to let him know five years before I thought of any one. And now for him to tell me to marry in a week—just as if he was putting down a silver side to salt—and to marry a boy that he

scarcely ever heard of, and never even introduced to me—he must have been, he cannot but have been, either wonderfully affected by the climate, or shackled down in a slave driver's dungeon, until he had no idea what he was about."

"Have you finished, Grace, now? Is your violence over?"

"No; I have no violence; and it is not half over. But still, if you wish to say anything, I will do all I can to listen to it."

"You have made my head ache sadly. Leave your father's letter here."

"Oh, no, if you please, let me take it with me. How can I think without it?"

Miss Patch was so sleepy that she said, "Very well; let me see it again when you have made the tea." Whereupon Grace, having beaten up the cushion of the good lady's only luxury, and laid her down softly, and kissed her forehead, stole her own chance for a little quiet thought, in a shelter of the woods, more soft than thought. For the summer was coming with a stride of light; and bashful corners, full of lateness, tried to ease it off with moss.

In a nook of this kind, far from any path, and tenderly withdrawn into its own green rest, the lonely and bewildered girl stopped suddenly and began to think. The beautiful light of the glancing day turned corners, and came round to her; the lovable joy of the many, many things which there is no time to notice, spread itself silently upon the air, or told itself only in fragrance; and the glossy young blades of grass stood up, and complacently measured their shadows.

Here lay Grace for a long sad hour, taking no heed of the things around her, however much they cheered her. The white wind flower with its drooping bells, and the bluebell, and the harebell, and the pasque flower—softest of all soft tints—likewise the delicate stitchwort, and the breath of the lingering primrose, and the white violet that outvies its sister in fragrance and purity; and hiding for its life, without any one to seek, the sensitive wood-sorrel; and, in and out, and behind them all, the cups, and the scepters, and the balls of moss, and the shells and the combs of lichen—in the middle of the whole, this foolish maid had not one thought to throw to them.

What she was thinking of she never could have told; except that she had a long letter on her lap, and could not bring her mind to it. And here in the hollow, when the warmth came round of the evening fringed with cloudlets, she was fairer than any of the buds or flowers, and ever so much larger. But she could not be allowed to bloom like them. "Oh, I beg pardon," cried an unseen stranger in a very clear, keen voice; "I fear I am intruding in some private grounds. I was making a short cut, which generally is a long one. If you will just show me how to get out again, I will get out with all speed, and thank you."

Grace looked around with surprise, but no fear. She knew that the voice was a gentleman's; but until she got up and looked up the little hollow, she could not see any one. "Please not to be frightened," said the gentleman again; "I deserve to be punished, perhaps, but not to that extent. I fancied that I knew every cove in the county, I have proved, and must suffer for my ignorance."

As he spoke he came forward on a little turf ledge, about thirty feet above her; and she saw that he looked at her with great surprise. She felt that she had been crying very sadly, and this might have made her eyes look strange. Quite as if by accident, she let her hair drop forward, for she could not bear to be so observed; and at that very moment there flowed a gleam of sunshine through it. She was the very painting of the picture in her father's room.

"Saints in heaven!" cried Hardenow, who never went further than this in amazement, "I have found Grace Oglannder. Stop if you please—I beseech you, stop!"

But Grace was so frightened, and so pledge-bound, that no adjuration stopped her. If Hardenow had only been less eager, and then he might have made his bow, and introduced himself. But Grace thought of the rabbit man, and her promise, and her loneliness, and without looking back, she was round the corner, and not a ribbon left to trace her by. And now again if Hardenow had only been less eager, he might have caught the fair fugitive by following in her footsteps. But for such a simple course as that he was much too clever. Instead of running down at once to the spot where she had vanished, and thence giving chase, he must needs try a cross-cut to intercept her.

Chances were against him. He had an exceedingly strong will of his own, and having had the worst of this matter so far, he was doubly resolved to go through with it. Without a second thought, he ran back to the spot which he had left so unadvisedly. There he did what he ought to have done ten minutes or a quarter of an hour ago, he ran down the slope to the nest in the nook which had been occupied by Grace. Then he took to the track which she had taken; but she had been much too quick for him; she had even snatched up her letter, so that he was none the wiser. He came to a spot where the narrow and thickly woven trackway broke into two; and whether of the two to choose was more than a moment's doubt to him. Then he seemed to see some glint of footsteps, and sweep of soft sprays by a dress towards the right; and making a dash through a dark hole towards it, was straightway

enveloped in a doubled rabbit net, cast over his hat.

"Hold 'un tight, Jarge, now thou'st got 'un," cried out somebody whom he could not see, "pouchin' us'll pouch 'un!" "Pouchin'—my good friends," cried Hardenow, trying to lift his arms and turn his head round, but all vainly; "you can scarcely know the meaning of that word, or you never would think of applying it to me. Let me see you, that I may explain. I have been trespassing. I am afraid; but by the purest accident—allow me to turn round and reason quietly. I have the greatest objection to violence; I never use, nor allow it to be used. If you are honest gamekeepers, exceeding your duty through earnest zeal, I would be the last to find fault with you; want of earnestness is the great fault of this age. But you must not allow yourselves to be misled. You are pulling me! you are exceeding your duty! Is the bucolic mind so dense? Here I am at your mercy—just show yourselves. You may choke me if you like, but the result will be—oh!—that you will also be choked yourselves."

"A rare fine plucked one as ever I see," said rabbiting George to Leviticus Cripps, when Hardenow lay between them, senseless from the pressure on his throat; "ease him off a bit, my lad, he never done no harm to me. They long-coated parsons is a good old woman. Lay hold right end foremost, soon as I have stopped 'un's praching. Did ever you see such a guy out of a barrow?"

Heavy-witted Tickass made no answer, but laid hold of the captive by his shoulders, so that himself might be still unseen, if consciousness should return soon. Black George tucked the feet under his arm, and in no better way than this these two ignorant bumpkins swung the body of one of the leading spirits of the rising age to the log pound.

Thomas Hardenow was not the man to be long insensible. Every fiber of his frame was a wire of electric life. He was "all there"—to use a slang expression, which, by some wondrous accident, has a little pith in it—in about two minutes; not a bit of him was absent; and he showed it by hanging like a lump upon his bearers as they fetched him to an empty hog house, dropped him anyhow, and locked him in; then one of them jumped on a little horse and galloped off to Oxford.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Meanwhile, at Cross Duck Hour, things were becoming, from hour to hour, more critical and threatening. If Mr. Sharp could only have believed that his son was now a man, or at least should be treated as though he were; and if after that, the too active lawyer could only have conceived it possible that some things might go on all the better without him; it is likely enough that his righteous and gallant devices would have sped more easily.

But Luke Sharp had governed his own little world so long that he scarcely could imagine serious rebellion. And he cared not to hide his large contempt for the intellect of Christopher, or the grievance which he had always felt—at being the father of a donkey. And so, without further probation or pledge, he went forth to make his own arrangements, leaving young Kit to his mother's charge, like a dummy, to be stroked down and dressed.

If he had left Kit but an hour before, for his mother to tell him everything, and round the corners, and smooth the levels, and wrap it all up in delicious romance, as women do so easily, with their power of believing whatever they wish, the boy might have jumped at the soft, sweet bait; for he verily loved his sylvan maid. But now all his virtue and courage, and even temper, were on the outlook; and only one thing more was needed to drive him to a desperate resolve.

And that one thing was supplied in the purest innocence by Mrs. Sharp; though the question would never have arisen, if her son had been left to her sole handling.

"Then, mother, I suppose," said Kit as simply as if he had smelled no rat whatever, thoroughly as he understood that race; "if I should be fortunate enough to marry beautiful Miss Oglannder, we shall live on bread and cheese, until it shall please the senior people to be reconciled, and help us?"

"No, Kit. What are you talking of, child? The lady has 20,000l. of her own. And 150,000l. to follow, which nobody can take from her."

With a very heavy heart he turned away. Nothing more was required to settle him. He saw the whole business of the plotting now; and the young romance was out of it. He went to the bow-window looking on the lane, and felt himself akin to a little ragamuffin, who was cheating all the other boys at marbles. Hard bitterness and keen misery were battling in his mind which should be the first to have its way, and speak.

"This comes of being a lawyer's son!" he cried, turning round for one bad glance at his mother. "She said that she disliked the law. I don't dislike, I abhor it."

(To be continued.)

## She Knew It.

"Madam," said the boy, as the lady of the house answered his ring at the front door, "you know that where there is smoke there must be some fire, don't you?"

"Yes, bubby."

"Well, there is a heap of smoke coming from your kitchen windows and I shouldn't wonder if there is some fire."

"I know there is. My husband was mad and went away this morning without kissing me and I have just knocked a barrel to pieces and split up the mixing board and started a fire to bring him back on the run. Much obliged, little boy, but I know all about it."

When a young man begins to call on a girl twice a week his mother fears the worst.



## Orchid Worth \$5,000.

The *Cypripedium Fairriensium* is one of the rarest orchids in the world. It was introduced into England some fifty years ago, and at one time was comparatively well known, but subsequently it died out and is now to all intents and purposes a thing of the past. One tiny scrap is still known to exist in England, as well as four equally small pieces in Paris, but as flowering plants all specimens of the orchid have disappeared, alike in the collections of Europe and in the Botanic Gardens of Calcutta, where also they once flowered. For some years a



A \$5,000 ORCHID.

firm of orchid growers in St. Albans, England, has had a standing offer of a reward of £1,000 for a healthy specimen of the orchid, and as the plant originally came from the almost inaccessible wilds of Bhotan, among the lofty Himalayas, these regions have for many years been searched by adventurous spirits anxious to gain the reward. It is now announced that the search has been successful, and the lucky finder, when he lands his plants in England in good condition, will receive the prize of £1,000.

## For Hen and Chicks.

While there are several forms of coops for the old hen and her chicks, says the Indianapolis News, the one built on the well-known lines, a full span, is generally considered the most desirable, although there are several ways of improving this old affair. One of the main troubles with the old coop is that it was not always dry, a serious defect when one considers how harmful dampness is to young chicks. This may be prevented as well as preventing the warping of the boards if the two strips placed across the top are lapped, as shown at Fig. C in the illustration.

Then ventilation may be supplied by placing a number of small holes in the peak of the roof at the back and in front, covering a similar place with fine wire netting, doubled as shown in the illustration and at the point B. This wire will keep out vermin as well. The lower part of the coop is so arranged that a small door may be readily opened when it is necessary to let the old hen out, and yet she cannot get it loose herself; the



CHEAP CHICKEN COOP.

slats are placed far enough apart so that the chicks can go in and out at will and they should be placed wide apart so that no change will need to be made as the chicks grow. A little more lumber and brains put in the making of coops for chickens would make the old hen more comfortable and prevent many of the chickens from dying of roup.

## Feeding Silage to Cows.

Many cows will like silage the first time they taste it; a few will nuzzle at it for a few feeds, but for a few feeds only. It is best not to feed too heavily to a cow just learning to eat it. I have had cows eat greedily of it the first few feeds and then become turned against it, but a little bit in their trough for a few feeds and they are all right again. For a cow, though, which is used to it, nothing under eighteen or twenty pounds to a feed will gorge her.—Cor. Farmers' Guide.

## Keep a Sheep Dog.

Every farmer who has a flock of fifty or more sheep ought to keep a good shepherd dog. He is worth a big price in the first place, and will earn his cost every year in saving sheep and lambs and in doing the work of a man. Their intelligence is almost human and they will take sole care of a flock of sheep, spending every day and night with them if allowed to do so. It is better, however, to put the sheep in an inclosure at night, and relieve the dog from the care of watching them. In the morning he may be sent out with them, and he will herd them on any field of land or keep them within any bounds indicated.

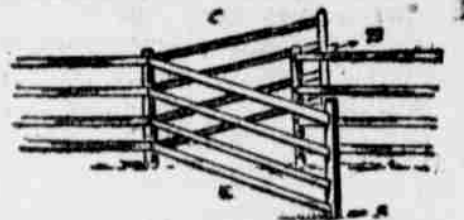
The fidelity of the shepherd dog is remarkable. In Colorado one night last winter a herder brought his flock and hurried to his cabin to cook himself some supper, for he was more than usually hungry. But he missed the dog, which usually followed him to the cabin of an evening to have her supper. The herder thought it rather strange, but made no search for the dog that night. But when he went down to the corral the next morning he found the gate open and the faithful dog standing guard over the flocks. The herder in his haste the night before had forgotten to close the gate, and the dog, more faithful than her master, had remained at her post all night, though suffering from hunger and thirst.

On another occasion this same dog was left to watch a flock of sheep near the herder's cabin while the herder got his supper. After he had eaten his supper he went out to where the sheep were and told the dog to put the sheep in the corral. This she refused to do, and, although she had no supper, she started off over the prairie as fast as she could go. The herder put the sheep in the corral and went to bed. About midnight he was awakened by the loud barking of a dog down by the corral. He got up, dressed himself and went down to the corral, and there found the dog with a band of fifty sheep which had strayed off the previous day without the herder's knowledge; but the poor dog knew it, and also knew that they ought to be corralled, and she did it.

A well-bred shepherd dog—the Scotch collie, if bred from working stock, is the best—will cost from \$22 to \$50, but they are worth it any time.

## Stock-Proof Open Gate.

The drawing will give you an idea how much time and worry can be saved if you have cattle or horses in the pasture and through which many walkers pass daily. It takes only one extra panel of fence. Simply place a panel (C) one and one-half feet past



STOCK-PROOF GATE.

first post in panel D and panel E the same distance, but letting C be on one side, while E is on the other, and at the same time leave room enough through which one person may pass with ease. As panel D fits in between C and E, it becomes impossible for a horse or cow to pass. A shows the entrance and B the outlet. The main reasons why I say it is better than a gate are as follows: 1. It is always open to people and is shut to horses and cows. 2. If you had a gate in its place it would so often be left open by careless, indifferent, thoughtless people. 3. It is much easier to make or keep in good shape than a gate. Some may say that there is no need of either, but if you did not have some handy opening through which walkers could easily pass they would climb over your fence and then you would soon have two or three planks off, and probably broken.—Farm Journal.

## Poultry Pickings.

It is not always the fat hen that becomes broody.

The scratching hen gives her chicks much exercise.

Pullets hatched now will come in for late summer layers.

Give the whole wheat to the hen and soft feed to the chicks.

Drive the young under shelter during sudden showers of rain.

Try a camphor ball for lice. Place one in each nest as you set the hen.

Whole corn, grit and fresh water are the best fare for the sitting hen.

The fact that the hen is laying is no sign that she wants to leave her young.

Keep food constantly before the sitting hen so she can help herself at will.

Thirteen eggs in early spring and fifteen during late spring and summer are large enough sitfugs.

Whitewash the interior of your coops and sprinkle carbolated lime on the floor. This disinfection drives away lice.

Covered runs are a protection from hawks, cats or dogs. They should be moved to fresh plots of grass each week.