

# THE COLONEL FARRAR MYSTERY



## AUTHOR'S NOTE.

The material facts in this story of circumstantial evidence are drawn from an actual recorded case, only such change of names and local color being made as to remove them from the classification of legal reports to that of fiction. All the essential points of evidence, however, are retained.

**T**HE Calf Skin club had assembled early for its weekly session and every member was in his accustomed place with Judge Grover in the chair. When the routine business was finished the chairman rose and said:

"We now will hear from Judge Stoakes who we trust has a story relative to circumstantial evidence, Judge Stoakes."

Judge Stoakes, a large man of dignified presence, whose silver hair alone bespoke his 70 years, rose and began:

"My story is of the troubled days in Missouri following upon the civil war, when factional rancor still ran high and the conqueror and the conquered lived together in outward amity but with secret suspicion. I had just hung up my shingle in a little town in the southern part of the state which had been the hot-bed of factional warfare, now captured by Lyon, now held by Price, and repeatedly preyed upon by the roving bands of irregulars of either side. Among the most noted leaders of these latter was Col. Jim Farrar. Among the northern sympathizers he was classed with Quartrell and the Youngers, but when the struggle was over he settled down quietly in the little town of Chester, and his tall form, his flowing moustaches, his campaign hat and long coat became him as the costume did many another warrior of the lost cause.

"Col. Farrar's household consisted of but one daughter, 17 years of age, and of that rare type of beauty which so often crops out in an adventurous and warlike stock. Her name was Lucile and she soon set the heart of every young man in a flame. I myself fell at the first glance, and as I look back down the long stretch of years I can see the black hair, the rosy lips and the flashing eyes of Lucile Farrar as I watched her in silent adoration in the meeting house, upon the street or flying along on her pony which seemed as full of life and spirits as its fair rider.

"It was silent adoration upon the part of us all, for never a glance did the fair Lucile have for any of us. But when Melvin Lessure came to Chester it was different. Something in her woman's heart must have drawn her toward him, for all the difference and all the scorn were gone and they gave themselves up willingly to a love that quickly ran the gamut from passing interest to passionate devotion.

"The very mention of a suitor for his daughter's hand was sufficient to send Col. Farrar into a rage terrible to witness. He noted the growing intimacy of Lucile and Lessure with jealous anger. But he could not watch her always, and many a time when he was away looking after the interests of his extensive plantation near the town we less fortunate youths saw Lessure starting on long walks with the fair Lucile.

"Melvin Lessure inherited all the fiery impulsiveness of a long line of French ancestry and was not the youth to brook long this uncertain entente of his lover's. He had a big plantation several miles from Chester and had moved into town for the social advantages that looked large to us then. He was amply able to support matrimony in a style equal to the best in the community. He was handsome, studious and courtly in his manners and seemed to be eligible from any point of view. The local Madame Grundy could find no reason why Melvin Lessure and Lucile Farrar were not a perfectly matched couple.

"But the rock on which their happiness seemed destined to break was that of factional rancor. Col. Farrar was of the south unreconstructed and unreconstructable. Gaspard Lessure, Melvin's father, had cast his lot with the north and had died at his own doorway defending his property against the enemies of his adopted flag.

"Melvin Lessure was no match for Col. Jim in brawn or bluster, but he hesitated not to go to him with his suit, and the storm he provoked I give you as it was later reconstructed through the searchings of the law.

"Never, by the Almighty, never!" roared the colonel. "Before I would see my daughter married to one of the accursed assassins of my country I would slay her with my own hands. Get out of my sight and never dare to raise your eyes to a daughter of the Farrars."

"Melvin Lessure stood with white face, clenched hands and gritted teeth while Lucile threw herself at her father's feet and weepingly begged and implored him to mitigate the harsh sentence. But he cast her rudely from him with a curse, and, turning to Lessure with murder in his eyes, said:

"You dog! You want my daughter—you! Why, I shot your father down in cold blood because he differed with me politically. Do you think I'll do less for you for trying to rob me of my daughter?"

"So it was you who killed my father," returned Lessure in a voice beneath the quiet of which lay the tense fixedness of a stern, unbending resolve. "Then, Col. Farrar, I tell you that I will have your daughter and I will avenge my father. Are you mine till death, Lucile?"

"I am yours till death," said the girl as she went over and placed her arm proudly about his neck.

"Very little was seen of Lessure in town after that and it was whispered that he was staying out on his farm and keeping out of the late colonel's way.

"About two weeks after his unsuccessful interview with Farrar, which was noised abroad as such things are in a small town, Lucile Farrar disappeared, and the tongue began to wag in earnest. When for a week she had not turned up the townspeople, who had little love for Farrar at best, were ready to believe anything. His threat against his daughter was known and the bolder ones did not hesitate to whisper that he had put it into execution. These hints took form by degrees and at last a witness came forward who told of passing the colonel's house, situated on the edge of town, late at night, and of hearing low moans and pleadings.

"At last suspicion took such fierce root that the sheriff headed an investigating party. Col. Jim was away and they had free run of the premises.

"The search led to a cave in the side of the hill, once used as a cellar but long since abandoned. There they found torn pieces of a dress, a bloody hatchet and some tangled locks of black hair drenched with blood. The dress and the hair were easily identified as belonging to Lucile Farrar, the hatchet as the property of the colonel.

"When charged with the crime his knees tottered and he nearly fainted. He made no direct denial but moaned and cried like a child. During the trial that followed he seemed stunned and oblivious to what was going on.

"I will admit that the courts of to-day would be loath to accept so inadequate a corpus delicti, but our blood was hot in those times and it seems to me we hanged more than we do now. Service was had on Lessure and he testified to the facts of the quarrel and the threat. Upon this evidence and the prisoner's failure to deny they found their verdict of guilty and fixed upon the death penalty.

"As the day of execution approached Col. Farrar continued in a state of almost total insensibility. But when the sheriff came to read the death warrant he roused and raising his hand to heaven, said:

"Before my maker I swear that I am guiltless of my child's death."

"They led him to the scaffold and on the way he passed Melvin Lessure who was watching the scene like a bird fascinated by a snake. Col. Farrar requested the sheriff to stop, and



extending his hand to Lessure exclaimed: "Young man, I have wronged you and I have no wish to leave this earth with the ill will of any man. I ask your forgiveness for standing between you and my poor child and for the death of your father which I believed to be in the line of duty toward my country."

"Lessure trembled violently but did not reply or raise his eyes. The march to the scaffold continued. A deputy was forced to support the tottering form of Farrar while the sheriff adjusted the black cap. Then the sheriff stepped back and all was in readiness for the fatal word when Lessure sprang forward and cried in an agonized voice:

"Stop! I alone am guilty—I alone!"

"The officers of the law called him forward and demanded an explanation. He declared that Lucile was not dead but that they had run off and been married and his wife was then living in concealment in St. Louis, for fear of the wrath of her father and until he could settle up his affairs and join her. But he had not divulged to

her a plan which had formed in his brain to revenge himself upon her father both for his insulting words and for the death of his own parent. He had cut off a portion of her hair while she slept and dipped it in the blood of a lamb. He had also sprinkled blood over pieces of her dress. The hatchet was easily procured. These he had placed in the cave during one of Col. Farrar's numerous absences from the house and there also he had himself emitted the moans which had been heard. He would have carried his hellish plot through to the end but that the colonel's plea for forgiveness at the gallows unnerved him.

"This confession was made partly at the place of execution and partly afterward in the jail. As soon as it became clear that Lessure had an important statement to make the sheriff turned to the colonel to take the insignia of death from his head. Farrar, unobserved by all who were in the tent upon the words of Lessure, had sunk into a sitting posture. The sheriff stepped up to him and raised the black cap. He was dead.

"Lessure was immediately placed



under arrest. He blew his brains out in his cell that night with a pistol procured, no one knew how. Lucile went mad on hearing of the tragedy, and was confined some time in an asylum. She recovered and ended her days in a convent.

"That, gentlemen, is my story."

"There was a stirring of chairs and a general lighting of pipes which had been allowed to go out in the rapt attention that prevailed while Judge Stoakes was speaking, when Judge Grover arose and said:

"I believe I voice the sentiments of the club in extending thanks to Judge Stoakes."

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# The Methods of Josephine

By Ella Middleton Tybout

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I think I can truthfully say that the first time Josephine awakened any real interest in my heart was when I discovered she was in love.

One afternoon she returned with the usual bunch of violets and a most unusual expression. The instant I saw her I knew a crisis was at hand, and rose to the occasion as a cork rises to the surface of the water—lightly, buoyantly, yet determinedly.

Josephine went at once to her room and closed the door with decision. I hovered on the stairway, palpitating with uncertainty, and the affectionate solicitude which is so far removed from mere vulgar curiosity. Finally, mustering all my resolution, I turned the knob of the door and entered with quite a jaunty air, carelessly humming a tune.

Josephine lay face downward on the bed, the violets crushed and broken, and the heels of her patent leather shoes sticking pathetically outward. A choking, gasping sound revealed that she was crying into the counterpane. Gently murmuring an endearing epithet, I laid my hand upon her head.

"Oh, Aunt Gertrude!" sobbed Josephine, "Aunt Gertrude!"

"Poor child," I returned, responsive-ly, "I understand—I understand."

"O, no, you don't," she interrupted, ungratefully. "You—you can't."

"Josephine," I said, kindly but firmly, "you are engaged to be married—and to a man."

It was evident she was astonished at my perspicuity, for she raised her head as though listening and nodded assent.

"Furthermore," I continued, follow-

ing up my advantage and speaking with conviction, "you are unhappy."

Down went her head again, and the sniffling into the counterpane recommenced.

"Dear," I whispered with unalloyed sweetness, "is he worthy of these tears?"

"No reply."

"Do you love him," I continued, "deeply, truly, everlastingly?"

Josephine sat upright and pushed the hair out of her eyes.

"Oh, Aunt Gertrude," she gasped, "it isn't him—it's them."

"Them?" I hazarded, faintly.

"Yes," said my niece with the calmness of despair, "that's the trouble. I'm engaged all right—but there's two of him."

"Tell me about it," I suggested, chiefly because I felt something was expected of me.

"Yes," she agreed quickly, "I might just as well. I've got to tell somebody."

"I ignored the last clause and composed myself to listen. Her story was briefly thus:

Being unable to withstand the fascination to two callow youths, and finding it impossible to preserve the peace between them, Josephine had formulated the scheme of taking them on alternate days, like two varieties of pills, as it were. She remarked casually that she had stopped their visits to the house, as she disliked to see them glare at each other, and, moreover, her evenings were thus left free for others. She did not explain this, however, but insinuated parental opposition and daily persecution of herself, borne with angelic sweetness.

Gently, but decidedly, I laid the facts of the case before my niece. I told her that, as she could marry but one man, it was manifestly improper to be engaged to two.

"You must now," I continued—ignoring her remark, because I could not help comprehending that such a situation might be agreeable, albeit sinful—"you must now, dear child, make your selection. Which of your suitors do you love the better?"

"Yes," said Josephine miserably, "it's up to me to choose, and I've done it."

"Let your heart guide you," I advised gently.

"That's just what I tried to do," returned Josephine, confusedly, "but the old thing wouldn't work. So I tossed up a penny—heads for Ned and tails for Harry. It came down tails."

"And," she continued, quietly, "I'm going to elope with him tonight."

"Tonight!" I ejaculated, aghast.

"Yes, tonight. And, oh, Aunt Gertrude, I don't want to one bit. It's not Harry, after all—it's Ned. Just as soon as the penny came down tails up I knew it was Ned I wanted, but I

was afraid to toss again, because then if I got Ned I might want Harry—don't you see?"

I did not see. In fact, such vacillation was quite incomprehensible to my well-balanced mind, but I was obliged to devote my energies to soothing Josephine, who again turned her face to the counterpane and wept copiously.

"And he's waiting on the corner by Trinity church," she sobbed; "he said he'd wait till I came. And it's raining. And he has a cold. And I simply can't go marry him. And he's bought the ring. And I think Harry's such a hideous name. And he'll wait till I come, and—and—"

Josephine suddenly sat upright and grasped my hand.

"You go," she said, "you go, and explain things."

It is needless to recount the argument that followed. Enough to say that I finally agreed to go and tell the man waiting to marry my niece that, after all, she preferred some one else.

Josephine produced a long, light cloak and wrapped me in it; she also adorned me with a large hat loaded with plumes, because, she explained, Harry would be looking for just that costume. Over the hat and face she tied a thick veil, remarking that no one could possibly tell who was inside it, and perhaps Harry would marry me in spite of myself, as he was very impatient. Then she giggled hysterically.

Secure in the consciousness of my rectitude, I compressed my lips and drew on my rubbers.

It was not a pleasant evening. A fine, sleety rain fell steadily, turning the pavements into shining sheets of glass, over which I shuffled carefully.

Trinity church is situated on a side street entirely off the main thoroughfare, where it is very quiet and secluded. I paused as I reached the corner and laid my hand on my bosom, a little to the left of the breast bone, as described in physiologies when locating the heart. Its throbbing was very evident.

Summoning all my fortitude, I looked in the direction of the church. There, beside the lamp-post, stood a manly form, and drawn conveniently close to the curbing was a herdic cab.

Suddenly an arm appeared about my waist, a face was pressed close to mine, and I distinctly felt the pricking of a moustache. I blushed beneath the veil and was glad the street happened to be dark and quiet.

I found myself gently but forcibly propelled towards the cab, the door of which stood invitingly open. Twice I strove to articulate, but both times my voice failed me.

"I'm going on the box with the cabby," he continued, cheerfully, "to make sure he gets the right place. It won't do to have any mistake, you know. Now, then, in you go."

And I found myself picked up bodily and deposited in the cab. The door slammed and we were off.

I was eloping.

My first impulse was to scream, but this I resisted firmly; my second, to draw the laprobe closer about me, and to this I yielded and resigned myself to the inevitable.

The cab stopped abruptly and the cab door was flung eagerly open. Strange undulations traveled up and down my spine.

We were in the chapel by this time, and the clergyman in his robes was waiting for us with two witnesses—everything very proper and legal. As I could not trust my voice I began to fumble with my veil; at least I could uncover my face.

"Let me help you," he said, gently and untied the knot.

I turned and faced him, and for a moment we stared at each other as though petrified.

"The devil!" he exclaimed, very rudely, I thought.

I made a gigantic effort to speak.

"My dear young friend," I said in a voice which sounded weak and automatic to my own ears, "I fear my presence may be somewhat of a disappointment as well as a sur prise—"

But I got no further, for he turned helplessly to the clergyman as though terrified.

"Take her away," he gasped, "there's some mistake. Let me out of this!"

But the minister lifted his hand solemnly.

"There seems to be some strange misapprehension," he said, sternly; "let us get to the bottom of this matter at once. Did you expect to marry this gentleman, madam? Pray explain."

And I explained as well as I could.

When I reached home—a long time after, for the distance was great and the street cars slow—I found my wrapper and slippers laid out in my room and Josephine hovering anxiously about the window watching for me.

I told her the whole story, and she laughed in a way I thought ungrateful and unappreciative.

"Josephine," I said solemnly, "I shall never recover from this night's experience. I hope you will always remember all I have done for you."

"Oh, well," returned Josephine carelessly, "of course it was awfully good of you, but do you know, Aunt Gertrude, I think you bungled the thing most awfully."

## BOTH STRENGTH AND BEAUTY

Proper Respiration Adds to Each, But Is Too Little Understood.

There will be fewer flat-chested women and much less nervous prostration when proper attention is giving to breathing, says an exchange. As Delsarte has said, there should be "strength at the center, freedom at the surface," and this freedom is but acquired by learning to use one's lungs at will. By developing and enlarging them the thoracic cavity is increased, and upon the degree of this power depends expansion.

In order to control one's nerves one must learn to command one's involuntary muscles, which are diaphragm, the heart and the intestines. By breathing deeply and controlling one's breath and so increasing one's lung capacity, the heart action is stimulated, and this supplies the nerve centers with fresh blood, and the nerves act upon the muscles and the brain upon the nerves and muscles.

In order not to have any waste of nerve force, the chest should be kept

active by deep inhalations, thus loosening the tension of unemployed members. The persistent and regular practice of a breathing exercise will not only do this, but will give poise and self-confidence.

The movements of respiration stand in a double relation to the nervous system, being required to introduce oxygen into the blood, which takes up the oxygen, and freeing itself of the carbonic acid it contains, the latter thus acts as a powerful stimulus to the lung nerves.

One should remember to avoid collar-bone breathing, to cultivate the raised and active chest, and to gain control of the diaphragm in order to have complete mastery of breathing.

It is not necessary to take a long, tiresome trip to some far away place in order to be taught to care for oneself, for nature will come to one's aid with joyful alacrity in one spot as well as another.

But knowledge is not the only thing required. It is its application that counts, and this means steady, fast determination.