

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

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

"A dreadful railway accident has taken place on the Southeastern railway. A goods train from London to Maidstone, which contained two wagons loaded with petroleum barrels, through some mistake in the signals, ran into the 4:30 train from Dover, at the point where the lines cross. The engine, tender, and three first-class carriages have been smashed up and burnt by the petroleum. Twenty-three passengers are either dead or dying."

The perspiration stood upon his brow as he read this—this grim and ghastly paragraph—over and over again.

"How could I possibly let them see this?" he groaned to himself. "They would go out of their minds with the horror of it. And yet," he thought struck him, "what is to prevent them from reading it all, and more beside, in the morning papers? Though, of course, there is hope—there must be a gleam of hope! Some must have escaped! How slow this train is. And yet, why should I want to travel faster? How do I know what awaits me at my journey's end?"

When the train reached London Bridge, a little before ten, he found all was bustle and confusion. The news of the accident had spread like wildfire, and a momentarily increasing throng of agonized friends and relatives besieged the officials, attacked the telegraph office and hurried hither and thither, backwards and forwards, in search of something definite in the shape of information.

Ted Burritt forced himself through the crowd which was gathered round some person in authority, and put the same questions which burst from so many lips at once.

"Was anything more known about the accident? When would the line be clear, and when would a train be allowed to run to the scene of the disaster?"



"What's that? Run, May, and see!"

And the answers, repeated over and over again, and passed from mouth to mouth, were:
"No further details of the accident had been ascertained, and no names of the victims had yet been published, as the telegraph lines had been broken."

The first train to Bannock Bridge, the scene of the disaster, would be run as soon as the line was clear, and that could not be for some hours longer. The unfortunate people who craved to know what might be the fate of some of their nearest and dearest, could do nothing but wait, hour after hour, every minute of which seemed an age, and each separate hour an eternity.

And so, at last, the hours wore away, and very early in the morning a train started, bearing its weary, haggard load of men and women, each hoping that God had at least been merciful to him, or her, whoever else He might have bereaved.

Ted Burritt sat in his corner of the carriage, and let his thoughts wander where they would. All at once the thought occurred to him, "What had become of the friend? The friend whom his father went to meet, and who was to return with him? But what did it matter about him? Why, but for him, though the accident would have taken place all the same, it would have had nothing to do with that pleasant, peaceful home at Dulwich!"

By the time he had recovered himself a little he saw that the day was beginning to dawn. Surely they must be very near the scene of the disaster.

Even in the faint early light, which was all they had to illumine the scene, signs of the recent catastrophe began to appear. By the side of the line they saw drawn up some of the ruined carriages. Another moment, and the train drew up at the picturesque little country station, which had now been converted into a temporary dead-house. The mournful, wild-eyed cavaliers, which alighted at the platform, were met by the stationmaster, who merely motioned with his arm, and said, "In there."

The whole crowd, with one accord, poured in the direction indicated. A dreadful sight met their eyes. In the waiting room and booking office a dozen charred remnants of human beings were laid out on tarpaulins—each one of which had lost all semblance to humanity. There was no

clue, no possibility of recognizing or identifying any.

Ted Burritt approached and looked down upon one; then staggered and nearly fell.

"Are these all?" he asked, in a dreadful whisper. The man who was in charge of this ghastly detachment answered, briefly, "There be a heap more on 'em in the church yonder!"

CHAPTER VII.

In the Vestry.

There was very little sleep for anyone at Magnolia Lodge that night. Mrs. Burritt was at last persuaded to go and lie down upon her bed, where she was ministered to by her daughter and the cook.

So in lamentations and torturing suspense, together with brief intervals of broken rest, the night wore away. The servants, with scared faces, crept about the house and prepared the breakfast, which nobody touched.

May Burritt came down stairs about eight o'clock, and the first thing that she saw was the daily paper lying in its accustomed place beside the urn.

"Ah!" she gasped, "now to know the worst!"

The account she sought was assigned the most prominent position, and was headed in large capitals, "Terrible Railway Accident! Thirty-two lives lost! Numbers roasted to death!"

She read the brief paragraph, into which so much horror was condensed, and stood as though turned to stone. Then coming back to herself, she murmured: "Mother must never see this, it would kill her!" And she left the room, taking the paper with her.

"After all, though," she ventured to hope, "there have been some saved. Why may not he be among them? Surely Ted will send a telegram soon. Poor boy! I wonder what he is doing?"

A little later in the morning, when

roof seemed to swallow up what little light there was.

"They've put 'em all inside the chancel rails," said the old man, who had constituted himself a sort of ghoulish master of the ceremonies.

No one seemed to care to be the first to approach that part of the holy edifice.

At last Ted Burritt, with a grim determination, approached the railing. Inside, the bodies, or what had once been bodies, were disposed in two rows.

Those on the right hand lay in coffins which had been hastily gathered from all parts of the neighborhood; those on the left were mere groups of ashes collected together on pieces of tarpaulin.

Ted Burritt began at the right-hand side. The other people followed his example, and the old clerk acted as cicerone.

"This 'un," he said, indicating the terrible contents of one coffin, "is supposed to be a young female, as they found a thimble and a bit of a dress among the ashes. Thimble 'ad the name o' 'Lizzie' scratched on it."

A man who was craning his neck over Ted Burritt's shoulder gave a sharp cry: "That's my girl! That's my Lizzie! And her mother waiting for her at home, and won't believe anything can have happened to her—Oh, Lord!" and he broke out into wild outcries.

Some of the others, forgetful of their own concerns for a moment, gathered round him and made an attempt at consolation.

"At least you know which she is—that ought to be a little comfort to you."

"But I thought she might have been saved. She was such a good girl—and look at her there!" and he gesticulated towards the open coffin.

"I can't stand much more of this," murmured Ted Burritt, as he wiped the great drops of perspiration from his forehead.

They left the bereaved parent moaning over his child's remains and again passed on. The next three coffins were examined, shuddered at and left. The mutilated corpses which they contained possessed neither head, feet nor hands. They could never have been taken for anything human had not the fact been established beyond all doubt. Was either of those his father's?

There only remained one or two more belonging to that row, and they, too, were unrecognizable. After that nothing was left but the poor heaps of ashes on the other side.

"This is all, ladies and gentlemen," said the old man, with a sort of chancel-house cheerfulness, "sides one more in the vestry, as was put there in consequents of bein' very little damaged, 'cept about the legs; and pesson did say as I was to show 'im fust, though bein' easy recognized. But my pore old 'ed's bin all of a jumble since th' accident, and I clean forgot 'im. But anybody as likes can jest step into the vestry and see 'im for themselves. They've laid 'im out on the table, through bein' of a hextry size, and runnin' short o' coffins. 'E was found buried under a lot o' rubble, and they 'ad a deal o' trouble to git 'im out."

There was a general rush in that direction on the part of all those who had a male relative missing.

Were "Dandy-Lions."

He had been in the Dark Continent for two or three years, and when home on a visit he delighted to spin his "tall" yarns about his experiences in Africa. The hunting of wild lions was his speciality—how he could shoot them, how he could go out and be sure of finding one, how it was done, etc., etc., and he generally wound up by saying that he never yet saw a lion that he feared.

One night after he had finished vamping he was a little taken aback by one of his audience, who said:

"That's nothing. I have lain down and actually slept among lions in their wild, natural state."

"I don't believe that. I'm no fool!" said the great hunter.

"It's the truth, though."

"You slept among lions in their wild, natural state?"

"Yes, I certainly did."

"Can you prove it. Were they African?"

"Well, not exactly African lions. They were dandelions."

Practical Toys.

Toys, whether useful or as a pastime as instructors, are fascinating. However, the up-to-date toy is practical. Children have miniature working autos. A make-believe train, a splendid toy, is a real train of cars with real locomotive and real track. There are children out West on whose fathers' property small streams cross. These boys imitate the things they see going on about them. They build dams, check the water, construct miniature systems of irrigation in exact copy of the plan used by the farmers of that country. The water thus dammed nourishes a garden plot of their own.

In this play there is the dignity of education.

Thought Ade Needed Schooling.

The following story is going the rounds of Highland Park, where George Ade spent the summer. The aforesaid was walking along the street one day when he met a mite of humanity, kindergarten bent, one of Mr. Ade's summer colleagues and friends.

Mr. Ade called out: "Hello! Going to school?" The prompt reply came in the same tone of good comradeship, without the least suggestion of flippancy, but just as Mr. Ade would have it: "No; are you?"

THE FRUIT INDUSTRY

FLORIDA GROWERS OPPOSE CUBAN RECIPROCITY.

They Protest That They Will Be Driven Out of Business if Preferential Tariff Rates Are Granted in Favor of their Cuban Competitors.

The letters which appear below will serve to show the intensity of feeling which exists among Florida fruit growers regarding the favoritism which is contemplated toward their Cuban competitors. Finding it impossible to obtain from the Democrats who represent their state in Congress any measure of recognition of their claims to protection, these Florida agriculturists naturally turn to the Republican party for aid and comfort. The South is full of Democrats who believe in and want protection, and who would like to turn to the Republican party on that account. There was an excellent prospect that this tendency would become more and more general, and that ultimately protection would do in the South what it has so effectively done in the states of the Middle West, the Rocky Mountain States and the Far West. But this wretched blunder of promoting agricultural prosperity in Cuba at the expense of our own farmers seems likely to check the trend in the South toward Republicanism. It may do worse than that. It may prove costly to the Republican party in regions not long ago won from Bryanism and now counted as safely Republican.

The case of the Florida fruit growers, like that of the cane growers of Louisiana and Texas, is one that ought to appeal to fair minded protectionists. These people have invested all they possess in agricultural industries that are absolutely dependent upon protection against the cheaper lands and the cheaper labor of competing countries. They have relied upon the continuance of that protection. They cannot understand upon

hot skies of Cuba than in this 'Land of Flowers.' Cuba has long been known as the richest island in the world; its fertile soil making unnecessary the use of expensive commercial fertilizers; its orange trees and garden fruits and vegetables bloom and bear without the aid of the irrigation ditch. Already Cuba is not in need of aid from the United States; her vast resources are opening up under the impetus of fleeing American capital, deserting the mother country because the island already offers better inducements than the United States.

"Shall we aid this capital at the ruin of our own interests?" "There is now a tariff of twenty-two and a half cents upon a crate of pineapples from Cuba. Add this amount to the rate of transportation from Havana to Chicago and we have a total of 74 1-10 cents, less than we pay in freight rates to the same destination, it costing the growers of Florida 89 1/2 cents. In this a protection tariff that protects?"

"We feel that a reciprocity treaty with Cuba in her favor in regard to those fruits which are commonly produced here and there would end in irreparable disaster to the interests of an infant industry in our state that has already reached to mammoth proportions.

"The present tariff is actually inoperative and should be trebled in amount. Yours very truly, Fletcher A. Russell, A. B. Hamor, S. A. Brown, Mrs. D. N. Mott, Wm H. Tanere, R. V. Ankeny, A. E. Saeger, George A. Saeger, Fred G. Saeger, P. D. Aukeny, F. L. Hamor, Will L. Frantz, Mary H. Gridley, Marion A. Patrick, C. W. Kirk, H. G. Stouder, Ella S. Frantz, and John N. Waller."

Farmers Are Interested. Under the present tariff law, American farmers need not fear the importation into this country of competitive farm products. But what interests our farmers most is an industrial condition which creates a home demand. Take work from the great army of

"THEY THAT ARE WHOLE NEED NOT A PHYSICIAN."



Doctor Reciprocity—"My dear Mr. Samuel, your blood is too rich, you are feeling too good, and I want you to take these medicines in order to reduce this high prosperity fever now raging in your system. So, take bottle No. 1, first, as a laxative, and then bottle No. 2, which will effect a radical cure. If you follow my directions faithfully, I am sure it will change your condition in a short time. After this course of treatment, you will be obliged to use Dr. Cleveland's Celebrated (1896) Soup House Tonic, for some time. Dr. Cleveland's Tonic is not a very nice medicine to take, but it is the only one we use in our practice to meet the conditions that confront us."

what principle of justice or equity they are to be driven out of business for the benefit of alien competitors—for that is precisely what it amounts to in Florida and Louisiana in the event that the Cuban growers of cane sugar and fruits shall command the United States market with their cheaper products. Florida fruit growers put the case strongly in the following letters:

"Ankora, Fla., Oct. 19, 1903.—The American Protective Tariff League, New York City.—Gentlemen: You will find inclosed a letter with a few signatures from the leading men of our community. A few years ago, owing to the good offices of Senator Quay, who is only interested in Florida as a winter tourist and resident, we were enabled to get a tariff of twenty-two and a half cents upon pineapples, oranges being already adequately protected through the efforts of our California contingent of growers, organized and powerful as they are.

"Our representatives from Florida, at the time Senator Quay so kindly interested himself in our behalf, would not work for the pineapple duty, but actually voted against it in both bodies of Congress. Such bull-headed stick-to-it-iveness is only commendable when used with discretion, but it is odious when employed against right and justice.

"You are at liberty to use both these letters should you see fit. Yours very truly,

"Fletcher A. Russell."

"Ankora, Fla., Oct. 17, 1903.—The American Protective Tariff League, New York City.—Gentlemen: We emphatically demand that the Congress of the United States be not radical in its desire to ratify the reciprocity treaty in favor of Cuba. Should this romantic desire be consummated it would be far better to live under the

wage earners in this country, and our farmers soon feel the effect. If agricultural countries elsewhere have abundant crops there is naturally no foreign demand, and with no local demand, because of the impoverished condition of the consumers our producers have little show to realize on their investments and their toll.

The Republican cannot see why a single American farmer can conscientiously be a free trader. From 1893 to 1897 the free trade policies of the Democratic party were tried, and agriculture suffered with other industries. It would be the same again were the Democrats to gain strength enough to enact a tariff law. As we have said, American farmers are vitally interested in a continuance of present conditions.—Davenport (Ia.) Republican.

A Few Questions. Will it be possible for Mr. Cannon to hold Congress as completely in check as he hopes to do? Will it be possible to pass the Cuban reciprocity bill at the extra session? Will it be possible to prevent congressmen from injecting the tariff into the debate? Mr. Roosevelt would answer "yes" to all these questions; but the Republican politicians, who know a great deal more about politics and Congress than he does, are not at all sure on any of them; and for that reason they advised him against the extra session.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

EASY TO KEEP HOUSE.

No Problem at All in the Jungles of the West Indies. The negro housewife in the West Indian jungle finds housekeeping very easy. Fruit and vegetables grow wild all about the hut, and the river abounds with fish.

On wash day all she has to do is to pick a few of the berries of the soapberry tree, take her clothes to the river, and use berries as she would use ordinary soap. Even her cooking pots grow on the trees, the calabash cut in halves being used for this purpose. Calabashes are used also for bowls, basins and jugs for carrying water from the river, while the small ones make excellent cups.

In the afternoon, when she is ready for her cup of tea, the negress picks half a dozen leaves from the lime bush growing at her door, boils them, squeezes the juice from a sugarcane for sweetening, and the cocoonut supplies the milk. Thus she has a delicious cup of tea without depending on the grocer for it.

She makes the mats for her floor out of the dried leaves of the banana, plaited and sewn together, as the old country people in this country make their rag mats.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE.

Recent Benedict's Declaration as to His Infant Son.

A man—we'll call him Brown—was last year receiving congratulations because of the fact that he had at last succeeded in finding a member of the opposite sex who was willing to cook and make his bed for him for the consideration of a wifely title.

Brown was last week being congratulated because of the arrival of a son and heir.

Now, Brown, by the way, was thirty-nine years of age when he married, and consequently was well qualified to give his opinions as to the state of matrimonial affiliation.

"When do you think is the proper time for a man to marry?" he was asked one day this week.

Brown looked wise. "Twenty-one," he replied. "Look at all the years of happiness I've missed. Great Scott! if that son of mine does not get married when he is twenty-one I'll horse-whip him."

In such channels run the thoughts of newly made parents!

How to Do Without Servants.

It behooves all house mothers to meet the question of how to do without servants. And in order to keep up the standard of mental, spiritual and physical excellence in women, they must be willing to consider that it would be better to live on plain food, to have fewer ornaments to dust in their homes, to wear less elaborate gowns, and to have more time to read with their children, to walk out under the beneficent skies of this fair land and to reflect on those things that are so abundantly set before the citizens of the twentieth century; that will make for an elevation of class, an entire leveling of conditions that depend on the grade of mind that meets them.—Florence Jackson Stoddard, in Sunset Magazine.

Brown Knew.

Senator Bacon of Georgia has for his hobby the natural sciences, in which he is unusually well versed.

He was talking one day about the effect of heat and cold, explaining with great thoroughness the rule that "heat expands and cold contracts."

Suddenly he smiled. "I am reminded of a story," he said. "There was a boys' class in physics before which this rule came. The rule was discussed in its various aspect and bearing, and finally the teacher said:

"Brown, suppose you give me a good example of the rule. Can you do it?"

"Yes, sir," said Brown. "In the summer, when it's hot, the days are longer; and in winter, when it's cold, the days are short."

On Our Knees.

Lord, what a change within us one short hour! Spent in Thy presence will avail to make! What burdens lighten! what temptations slake! What parched grounds refreshed, as with a shower! We kneel, and all around us seems to rise, and all the distant and the near Stand forth in sunny outline, brave and clear! We kneel, how weak!—we rise, how full of power! Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong, or others that we are not always strong? That we are ever overborne with care—That we should ever weak or heartless be—Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer, And joy and strength, and courage are with Thee.

Fair Play in Business.

It is of vast importance to the future manhood of this country that scorn of unfairness should be universal. Above all, let it be applied strenuously to unfairness in business. We are a commercial people. Our boys must go into commerce. Our professions are so mingled with commerce that it is often hard to distinguish if they be professions. If we are to wink at unscrupulousness in commerce then we are doomed to become a race of tricksters and manhood is dead within us.—McClure's Magazine.

Mercantile Fleets.

Compared with the year 1901, the German, English, Danish, Dutch, French, Italian, Austro-Hungarian and Greek flags show an increase, especially the two latter; the Norwegian, Russian and Spanish flags show a decrease. Non-European flags are seldom seen at Hamburg. In 1902 only one American ship, of 2,147 tons; one Brazilian ship, of 121 tons, and one Argentine ship, of 1,068 tons, entered the harbor.

Memory of Dark Days. Senator Hanna says he thinks the voters of Ohio are not likely to favor a change this year. He knows what he is talking about. The memory of the dark days from 1893 to 1897 is too fresh to permit of the commission of any act of folly this year.—Cleveland Leader.