

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

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

"I've been dreaming," he said to himself. "I thought everything had been made quite clear to me about—"

Was he dreaming still, or was there some one in the room beside himself? Some one sitting before the writing table and bending forward as though writing. The figure had a pen in its hand, but it made no sound as it traveled over the paper! The next moment it had raised its head so that he saw the face. "It is the continuation of my dream," he said, and rubbed his eyes. He looked again. There was nothing there.

"How does that chair come to be there, in its old place? I thought I had pushed it back against the wall, and I have no recollection of moving it again. It is very strange."

He rested his hand upon the back of the chair. Oh, it was real enough. There was no mistake about it. But he could have sworn he had never moved—Ah, what in heaven's name was that? A simple enough thing, surely, to cause so much amazement and—what?—surely not fear—in the beholder. Only a pen lying upon the blotting pad, beside a sheet of paper. But the pen was wet, and there were fresh words added to those he had himself written before he fell asleep.

The sheet of paper was the one upon which he had written those vague and disconnected phrases, which had caused him so much perplexity and unprofitable speculation. They had been written irregularly, just in the same or rather that they had occupied on the mutilated sheet, with blank spaces between each broken sentence. Now each blank space had been filled in, and it was with perfectly indescribable sensations that he read the copy as it now stood:

"If you have not forgotten the friend of twenty years ago, you will, on receiving this letter, start at once for Dover, which place I expect to reach to-morrow morning. There is

sisted of only a few lines, but those few lines seemed to afford him considerable satisfaction. Judging by the play of his features. Indeed, the two who were watching him, it seemed as though the expression which overpread his face were almost one of triumph.

"Doctor," he said, "will you excuse me a moment? I have to send an answer to this by the bearer."

He spoke rapidly, and still that spirit of elation was perceptible in his words and actions. He seemed quite to have cast off that air of abstraction which had characterized his demeanor previously. He quitted the room leaving his sister and friend tete-a-tete.

"Now," said the latter to himself, "Go it, Jeremiah! Now's your chance. Make yourself agreeable for once in your life. But don't forget that you were forty-four last birthday, and you look it, every bit. Ahem! I suppose you are very much attached to your brother, Miss Burrill?"

"Attached to him?" was the exclamation. "Of course I am!"

"Exactly so—and I'm sure it's very much to your credit. Your brother seems hardly to be himself. I don't remember that he was as nervous and shaky, as he appears to be now, when I first met him—though he had a lot to try him, and—"

She put her finger upon her lips and gave a nervous glance at the door before she answered, sinking her voice to a whisper.

"He has been like that ever since the funeral. He goes and shuts himself up for hours, and I know that he is always thinking of that man who killed my father, and planning how he can hunt him down and bring him to the gallows. I don't mind telling you, because I know I can trust you, but—leaning across the table toward him—"I can't help feeling sorry sometimes for—that other man!"

"My dear young lady! I agree with

11 o'clock this morning? Yours obediently,

"JOHN SHARP."

Dr. Cartwright did not return home by the first train next day. The mere mention, on his part, of such a purpose being scouted as preposterous by his entertainers.

"I thought you spoke of three days at the least as the length of your visit," said his host; "and I want to have a long talk with you to-day if you don't mind."

"Mind!" said the doctor, "it's just what I should like."

They were at breakfast when this occurred, and the morning paper had just been brought in. Ted Burrill had been glancing over its columns in a careless way, with the air of one who feels certain that they are not likely to contain anything to interest him, when, turning the sheet, his attention was accidentally caught and held by something which appeared among the advertisements. There he sat, his mouth slightly open, and a vivid spot, caused by excitement or some other feeling, on each cheek.

"Anything very remarkable in the paper this morning?" asked the doctor, with an affectation of indifference; but noticing every change in the countenance before him from behind his spectacles. This remark recalled the other to himself. He seemed annoyed that he had betrayed his feelings so openly, and crumpling up the paper, threw it on one side before answering: "Nothing whatever. There is absolutely no news worthy of the name!"

"Now," thought the doctor, "is he deliberately telling an untruth, or what? Oh, certainly! I must get to the bottom of this!" Aloud he merely observed, "There never does seem to be much in the papers nowadays. Now, when I was in the 47th, etc." Notwithstanding this last remark, he did not forget to take an early opportunity of examining the paper.

"I wish I had noticed which page it was," he said to himself, as he ran his finger down each column in succession. But I don't see anything likely to account for the boy's peculiar behavior. Oh, here you are," as the door opened. "Think of the devil, you know, and—Hullo! you look very much excited about something! What is it?"

"I am excited," was the answer. "And you'll be excited, too, when you have heard all I have to say."

Dr. Jeremiah stared at the young man in astonishment. Then, "All right," he said, "fire away and astonish me as much as you like."

"Not here," he answered, "I want you to come with me to the room that was my father's study, and where we shall be sure of not being disturbed, as I keep the key myself, and never allow any one to enter it."

They crossed the hall; Ted unlocked the door; they entered, and he locked it again behind them.

Dr. Cartwright looked round him with considerable interest. He noticed the dust, now lying thicker than ever upon every object, small and great. He dusted a chair with his pocket handkerchief before venturing to sit down. Then he took off his spectacles and polished them carefully. "Now," he said, as he settled himself, "I'm quite ready to be astonished."

"You asked me a moment or two back whether I had found the other man?" said Ted—"meaning, of course, the murderer. I have."

"Quite sure?" said the doctor, still preserving his equanimity. "I will give you the whole story from the day we parted. You know all that went before."

He began with the account of the burnt letter; and the little doctor listened with an interest he found impossible to disguise. "It's a sad pity it should have been so nearly destroyed," was the first remark he made, "because, of course, it is impossible to tell now what the rest of the contents might have been."

(To be continued.)

MISTAKEN IN THE DIAGNOSIS.

Doctor's Error Affected the Size of His Pocketbook.

Albert Levering, the black-and-white artist responsible for so many "comics," used to live in Chicago, but recently transferred his allegiance to New York. He took his hypochondriacal tendencies with him and they are still in good working order. His favorite pastime is to read of some deadly disease, preferably a new one, go to bed imagining he has it, lie awake all night, seek his doctor in the morning and get assurance that he is in perfect health, and then go back cheerfully to work.

One morning not long ago he turned up at the doctor's just as the man of medicine was getting into his carriage.

"I'm in a hurry," called the doctor, "and can't stop to see you, but it's all right—you haven't got it."

"Haven't got what?" demanded the astonished artist.

"Whatever it is you think you've got. Not a symptom of it. Good bye, and he drove away."

"Well, now," said Levering, turning to a lamp-post as the only witness of the scene, "that's the time he's mistaken. I know I have got—ten dollars in my pocket to pay his last bill; but if he's sure I haven't got it, I'll get in line with his diagnosis," and he went around to the nearest junk shop and invested the money in a pair of brass candlesticks and a copper kettle.—Philadelphia Post.

Russian Doctors.
Russia is very short of doctors, having only eight for every 100,000 inhabitants. Great Britain has 180 for the same number.

Domestic Blunders of Women

By A MERE MAN

THE MANAGEMENT OF SERVANTS



Y one idea in these articles is to be strictly fair to women, and not, as so many other writers have done, to attack them unfairly on subjects of vanity, dress, extravagance, or any of the other well-worn topics. To have followed in the lines of my predecessors would, to my mind, have been to prove my own weakness, for we cannot change a woman's nature any more than we can man's, and, therefore, to attack women because they are fickle or vain-glorious seems to me as absurd as to attempt to prove that man is not the superior animal because he is, by instinct, fond of cakes and ale. Really, I do not want to attack at all, because it is as natural to me to be fond of women as it is for children to be fond of toys. My real idea is to give women an opportunity for defense, and to prove their strength. It is for this reason that I attack them where they elect to be considered strongest, namely, in their homes. The cry of late years is that women are as good as men, that they have been persecuted and kept under for years, and that, therefore, they should not be expected, in the first years of their emancipation, to be up to competing with men as bread-winners. That is quite reasonable, and, therefore, I do not gird at their mismanagement of the political and commercial sides of life.

But the management of the house they have always had, and, as I have said, there they fall sadly either to provide comfort, or to spend money in the proper way.

Woman's mission is to always put the blame on some one else. Eve began it. She put the blame on the serpent, and her daughters have ever since blamed the serpent on the hearth—the servant. Do not run away with any idea that I am going, for mere love of paradox, to champion servants. A French writer has said, "So many servants, so many spies," and, in my mind, servants are many things worse than spies. But let servants be, as they are, woman's excuse for everything that goes wrong, just as servants put everything on the cat. I accept the gage. For the purposes of argument, we will admit that servants are at the bottom of all the evils of home life. Now let us inquire into that. The first question to ask the woman in the box, who is giving evidence for the defense, is:

"Who engages the servants?"
The answer is "I do." The witness, be it understood, is speaking on behalf of women generally. The next question is:

"Who directs the servants?"
The answer is the same, "I do." Pursuing this line, I ask the mistress: "From whom do your servants learn their business?"

"From me!"
"And anything they don't know, I may take it, is due to the fact that former mistresses have not taught, or have failed to teach, them?"

"That is so."
"Then, if the entire education, engaging, paying, managing and discharging of servants is carried on by women, and if the proportion of women over men servants is very large, the entire blame for the unsatisfactory state of the servant question must be due to women?"

The witness does not answer, and, on being pressed, bursts into tears, and finally says:

"It is all the fault of the men!"

Men, as a rule, have nothing to do with servants, the larger proportion of servants are women, and, therefore the faults of servants is only another proof that women are incapable of managing another very large section of a necessity which should go to make comfort and economy in the home. But perhaps it is not fair to judge entirely by majorities. Let us look at the exception, which again proves the rule. Bachelors keep their



In one of her tantrums.

servants, men or women, for years, and, with a few exceptions, always speak of them as treasures. Why is this?

Ask any servant who applies to you for a situation why he or she left his or her last place. The almost invariable answer is: "I could not get on with the mistress." Ask why any gentleman's gentleman, or my lady's maid, left his or her other place, and the answers are always, "The missus, the missus, the missus." As a rule, when a servant gives notice, and is asked by his master why he wishes to leave, the answer is: "I can't satisfy my mistress, sir," or "I can't get on with the cook." Servants very

seldom complain that they cannot get on with "the master." It is always "the missus." Again I ask—why is this?

The most unsatisfactory and sulky female servant will always smile and do anything cheerfully for her master, or the young gentlemen of the house, and when she is in one of her tantrums, it is, in nine cases out of ten, because she cannot get on with the missus, or the young ladies, or the other female servants—for the complaint of servants is always against what they call "She." "She" is the terror of the servant of either sex, and where there is dissension downstairs, the female servant is always at the bottom of it. Does not all this show that mistresses cannot manage servants, and that female servants cannot manage one another?

The servants of a house cost as much, as a rule, as the rent and taxes, and yet they never give satisfaction, and are never satisfied. Why is this? I could easily find fifty reasons to account for it. The mistress who overworks, the mistress who underworks, the mistress who is unkind, the mistress who is too strict, the mistress who is not strict enough, the mistress who makes favorites, etc., etc., would all prove fruitful subjects to enlarge upon were they not too obvious. The remarkable thing about the whole question is, that though money will secure you everything on the earth, no amount of wages will induce servants, as a rule, to stop long in a place. It is a mistake to imagine that servants are independent and love to roam. As a matter of fact, they are terrified to leave, because they never know what character a spiteful mistress may give them, and one bad character means the street. It is the haunting fear of this which makes them, if possible give notice, before they receive it, for this is their only protection. Is it natural to suppose that any friendless, and homeless, and moneyless creature willingly leaves a good roof, good food, and good wages, to run the chance of meeting a worse mistress? The thing is absurd, for the motto of servants is the not very lofty one of Gervaise:

"To have enough to eat and drink, to work all their lives, to die in their beds, and be buried decently."

When I was a little fellow, I heard



The mistress who is overkind.

a servant say that the fate of a servant was:

"To work while you are young, to beg when you are old, and to go to the devil when you die."

I have never forgotten it. There is very much to be said on the subject of mistresses and servants—very much more than I have either space or patience for, and there would be very little use in saying it if I had, as it seems all very obvious when you come to think of it, which women apparently never do. But this fact remains. We are as much indebted to servants for the comforts of home life as we are to our wives and daughters. The only difference between the two classes is that some of us are allowed to try and manage our wives and daughters, and some of us succeed, but none of us are ever allowed "to interfere with the servants"; all wives and daughters mismanage them, to our sore discomfort and their own; another thing is that we can get rid of our servants, but not of our wives and daughters, who, I candidly believe, are really the most to blame, though, poor souls, I do believe most of them try.

The fact remains, however, that women arrogate to themselves the management of servants, and prove their incapacity for the task by the deplorable state of the servant market. Men manage shop girls, waitresses, factory girls, and all sorts of women engaged in their businesses; but men cannot stop at home to manage servants, and if they could, they could not prevent their wives and daughters from interfering. The question is: What is to be done so that we may live in peace when our day's work is done?

It looks like an impasse, but it is not. The larger proportion of servants are women, therefore it is women we have to deal with. The real remedy is to promptly sack all your women servants, and engage men only. Men servants will cook, make beds, sweep, and wait at table. Why should they not do so for families? They do it in hotels, especially in France, in restaurants, and in the army. Women apparently cannot, or will not, learn, and women appear to be unable to teach them. Men can teach themselves to cook in a very short time, and all the rest is child's play. Yes, the solution of the servant question is to get rid of your women servants, engage men, and make them entirely unanswerable to yourselves. Men servants will cost a little more, but one man can do two women's work. Chinamen make capital servants; so do Hindoos. Why not Europeans or Americans?

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STOCK BARN DESIGN

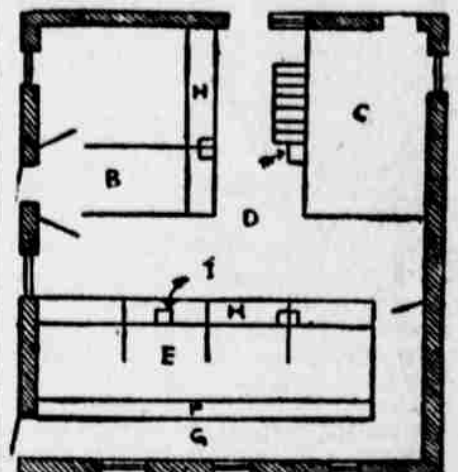
COMMODIOUS BUILDING FOR REASONABLE PRICE.

Room for Eight Head of Cattle, One Single Horse Stall, One Box Stall and One Sheep Pen.—Cost Would Be About \$415.

E. R. D.—Please publish the plan of a barn 30 by 34 feet, with stall room for nine cattle; also a single stall and a box stall for two horses; and a pen, 12 by 15 feet, for sheep. I would like two mows overhead with a driveway between them. Can you give me an estimate of the material needed and the probable cost?

The accompanying plan of basement of barn, 30 by 34 feet, contains rooms for eight head of cattle, one single horse stall, one box stall, and one sheep pen. The floor above has a driveway of 12 feet, with a mow of 12 feet one side over the cattle, and one of 10 feet over the horses and sheep pen. The stairway goes down from the side of the barn floor and the feed is put down through a mowing door in the side of the barn beside the stairway. By using the swinging door it will always be kept shut and prevent draughts in the stables.

The cost of a cement concrete wall, and concrete stable floor, together with the frame work above, would be about \$415 besides the expense of



Ground Floor Plan of Stock Barn 30 by 34 Feet.

boarded the men working on the barn.

Overhauling an Old Frame House.

C. S. D.—I have an old frame house which I wish to overhaul and raise about one foot. Some of the posts are rotted off both top and bottom and some of the beams are rotted where morticed into the sills. I also wish to raise the roof without taking it off. Can I use the old plates or should I procure new ones?

In raising old barns and putting basement walls under them, I have often had the posts spliced at the bottom where they had been rotted off, and they answered as good as new ones. But I think if you have to splice your posts, both at the top and bottom, it would be cheaper and make a better job, if you were to take the house down, for in raising the roof, you would have to splice all of the studding and you would practically have to plaster the most of the house. The same plates and rafters can be used again if desired.

Plastered Walls Remain Wet.

A. A. M.—Walls plastered some time ago continue to be moist and sometimes water will run down. Walls that were painted are ruined. What would you recommend?

The cause of these walls being so wet is that the rooms are not properly ventilated. The walls of the rooms being colder than the atmosphere of the kitchen the steam escaping from the kitchen it condenses on the walls. The proper way to avoid this is to have ventilating flues built in the chimneys and have a grate placed near the ceiling so that it can be opened or closed when desired. I think if your kitchen were ventilated so that all the steam were taken out, you will overcome your difficulty. It might be well to arrange a hood a few feet above the stove, having a connection with the smoke pipe.

Buckwheat as Stock Food.

W. G. C.—Please give the value of buckwheat when ground as a food for stock; should it be fed alone or with other grain, if so, in what proportions with ground oats or barley?

The grain of buckwheat has a fair feeding value for all classes of live stock. Its nutrients run somewhat lower than the leading cereals. In a hog-feeding experiment a mixture of half buckwheat and half of barley, rye and wheat gave greater gains than buckwheat alone, or wheat alone, and almost as great as a mixture of wheat, barley, rye and bran. Buckwheat mixed with other grain in equal quantities is especially good for milch cows and hens, and it is also valuable for conditioning horses for market, but the flesh is said to be soft for heavy work.

Quantity of Hay in Mow.

D. McL.—About what quantity of timothy hay should there be in a solid block 12 feet by 14 feet and 10 feet deep?

Ans.—About 500 cubic feet of well-settled timothy hay is calculated to weigh one ton. On this basis the mow in question should contain about three tons and 720 pounds of hay.



The figure had a pen in its hand.

that between us which I think will not allow you to deny this favor which I ask. I have much to say to you, and many questions to put which you alone can answer to my satisfaction. If you refuse I shall think, rightly or wrongly, that you still regard me more as the criminal than what I once was, the friend of your youth.

The young man read this through. Who had written it? Whose hand had completed the broken sentences, and given them the meaning which they had heretofore lacked? Could he have done it himself, while in a state of somnambulism? No; for the handwriting was not his! At a glance, he could distinguish the words which he had written himself. The words over which he had labored and perplexed his soul. The words which had seemed to cast a slur upon the memory of his dead father—which was now removed.

He turned the sheet over. There, on the other side, were those words, the last probably his father ever wrote: "My dear—" together with date, "April 23rd."

He looked again at those mysterious sentences, upon which the ink still glistened. They were written in the same hand!

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Advertisement.

Next morning a party of three were assembled at breakfast.

"You don't seem to have much of an appetite this morning," remarked Dr. Cartwright, addressing his host, who appeared rather distraught with a tendency to start when spoken to, "How's that?"

The young man replied, as he fidgeted with his knife and fork. "That he didn't seem to care to eat anything, somehow."

At this moment there was an interruption. A maid presented herself with a letter which had just come by hand, and gave it to her young master, stating at the same time, that the bearer was waiting for an answer.

A letter! and come by hand! He started again as though he had been shot and the doctor noticed that his hand went up to the breast pocket of his coat, as though there were something there he—The doctor shook his head as he made this observation.

Ted Burrill took the letter held out to him, glanced at the superscription and tore it open. It apparently con-

veyed words you have said, and I am much flattered by the confidence you have shown in me. But I'm afraid it's no use talking to him. I was the same at his age," he continued, "but at forty-four one sees things differently."

"Are you forty-four, Dr. Cartwright?" she inquired, innocently. "Then you are not quite a quarter of a century older than I am. I shall be twenty next month."

"I wish I hadn't been in such a devil of a hurry to be born," thought the doctor; "I wish I had waited another ten or fifteen years or so. I wish she'd got red hair and a squint, or that I was cut out after a different pattern myself."

Later in the morning he paid a visit to the lady of the house. She sat up in bed to receive him, with her Indian shawl over her shoulders, and allowed him to feel her pulse in the friendliest possible way. But when Dr. Cartwright had left the room, he shook his head and remarked to himself, "Unless I'm very much mistaken, that woman is dying of just nothing at all."

"Doctor," said Ted Burrill, meeting him at the foot of the stairs, "I am afraid I shall have to leave you for an hour or two—a little matter of business, you know."

"Don't hurry back on my account. I shan't miss you in the least! He's off! I'll just go and—No, he isn't. Why, what's he coming back for? Forgotten something?"

"I've dropped a letter—the one I received this morning. I thought I put it in my pocket, but it isn't there. I suppose you haven't seen anything of the kind lying about?"—he cast a hasty glance round him, but not seeing it—"Never mind," he said. "After all, it is not of much consequence, and I know the contents."

The door banged again and he was gone. A few moments later his sister crossed the hall.

"I wonder what the doctor's doing?" she said. "It is very rude of us to leave him to himself in this way. What's that?"

Her eye had been caught by something white, lying on the mat at her feet. She picked it up and saw that it was a letter, the contents of which merely consisted of a couple of lines, as follows:

"Dear Sir—The luggage has been claimed. Can you call upon me at