

THE FATAL REQUEST OR FOUND OUT

By A. L. Harris Author of "Mine Own Familiar Friend," etc.
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CHAPTER XXIV.

The Enigma.

He turned and saw behind him none other than that same James Ferrers whose narrative and confession he held in his hand; and again, lurking behind him in the shadow of the doorway, he saw the pale, narrow, furtive countenance of Perkins, the housemaid. For a moment there was an intense silence, during which both seemed to hold their breath and nerve themselves for the struggle that lay before them.

"The letter!" he cried, advancing towards the other, threateningly. "The letter, or—"

"There are five chambers in the revolver still undischarged," was the calm reply. "Is that what you are thinking of?"

The other man fell back a step and his face became ashen in hue.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"Who are you, and now do you dare to defy me? You a thief!—"

"You asked my name this morning," was the answer, "and for reasons of my own, I refused to give it you. Those reasons no longer exist. Do you still wish to know it?"

The master of the house contemplated the man he had that morning discharged from his service with feelings he could not have put in words.

Such utter fearlessness, such a total disregard of the consequences of the act in which he had been caught red-handed, seemed to point either to the most hardened criminal, or to one who knows he is possessed of some secret power. His voice faltered him, and once more, with a mingling of suppressed fury and incomprehensible apprehension, he gasped, "The letter—"

"I insist—and your name!"

The young man advanced a few steps. "My name," he said, "is—"

and he whispered the rest in his ear. No need to ask whether he knew

such unmistakable physical weakness. "What is that you say?" he repeated. "And how can you deny aught in the face of this confession which I hold in my hand?" And he shook the envelope in his face.

This action stirred the other powerfully.

"Give it me!" he cried. "I command!—I implore! That confession—though how you know it be such I cannot tell—is sacred. Or, no—with a sudden change—keep it and read it after I am dead! I am a dying man—no hear me out! Not long ago an eminent physician uttered my sentence. He gave me a year to live—a year, that is, if I kept myself free from all excitement and received no sudden shock. To-night, I feel, has reduced my term of existence to days or hours. It is not for myself that I ask this—it is for my child."

He had touched the one responsive chord. Ted laid the envelope which contained the secret, down upon the table.

"If I consent to spare you the punishment due to the deed," he said slowly, "I must first know all. Your written confession, to be perused after death, will not satisfy me. How shall I know then that you have not lied? I must have it from your own lips now, or—"

"And have you not already had it from my own lips?" exclaimed Mr. Ferrers, with sudden passion. "Have I not declared to you that I am not your father's murderer? Am I not ready to swear it, however much appearances may be against me? I swear I never murdered him!" The young man put his hand to his head, bewildered.

"Do you deny that you are the man who wrote the letter which summoned my father to Dover?—or that you are the other passenger who traveled by the 4:30 train and occupied a com-

panion, covered with writing, in the heavy scrawling hand, which he now knew well.

"THE TRUE NARRATIVE AND CONFESSION OF MR. JAMES FERRERS, OF THE STRANGE TRAGEDY OF THE 25TH OF APRIL."

"I arrived in England on the 21st of April, after having been absent twenty years. The reasons for that prolonged absence I do not propose to enter into at length. Suffice it to say that I had committed an act which brought me within reach of the law, and, but for the influence of friends, I might have expiated the deed by transportation.

"Reckless extravagance, betting and gambling, with a mad attempt to recover my position by speculating with money which was not my own, brought me to this shameful pass. The matter was allowed to blow over—to be hushed up—and the actual sum made away with was reimbursed. But I was a Pariah—an outcast—shunned and despised by all but one. One friend stood by me, one man still gave me help of his countenance and extended the right hand of fellowship towards me, and he was my old friend, Silas Burritt. He alone was there to bid me farewell as I left England, a disgraced man. He alone bade me hope for better things and look forward to retrieving the failure of the past in the promise of the future. So I set sail for America, with the expressed resolve of not returning until many years had elapsed and those who were acquainted with my shameful history were either dead or else had forgotten it and me.

"At last the term of years which I had set as the limit of my voluntary exile having all but expired, I ventured to return. I lingered purposely on my journey, so that when I landed at Dover, it was twenty years to the very day I had first set sail.

"At Dover I waited the arrival of my old friend.

"He came, and the meeting was a painful one on both sides.

"After so long a parting, there was a sense of restraint between us, such as there could hardly have failed to be. But, after a while, this feeling became less noticeable. We had much to say, and I, for my part, had many questions to ask and much to learn. One thing I did learn—the most important of all—which was that, with one exception, I might consider myself free from the fear of any witnesses of the past appearing to blight the prospects of the future.

"It was agreed that I should spend the next night under his roof, and make the acquaintance of his wife and family, and we agreed to travel by that ill-fated train known as the 4:30 express.

(To be continued.)

WILL SHAKE NO MORE.

Savage Handgripping Now the Fad in English Society.

I have made up my mind absolutely, to shake hands no more. The stupid custom never appealed to me, but I have complied with it, hitherto, in order to avoid hurting people's feelings.

Now that the "grip" has become fashionable, however, I shall have to be cautious. After all, it is far better that I should hurt someone's feelings a little than that they should hurt my hand a great deal.

At a reception I attended the other night, there were three acquaintances of mine sitting in a group. I went up to them and shook hands all round.

The first man ground together all my knuckle bones. The second squeezed my fingers until they were reduced to a mere pulp. The third, not to be balked, twisted my wrist and almost jerked my elbow out of the socket.

I cursed them, root and branch, and hurried away to the far end of the room. When I looked back, they were regarding each other with open-mouthed astonishment. I could see that they had meant well; the new fashion was to blame.

A few years ago, you will remember, it was considered rather smart to hold your hand high in the air and wave it to and fro in gentle contact with the hand of your acquaintance. That fashion, too, was idiotic enough, but it was infinitely more civilized than this furious, insensate grip.—Sketch.

Made Speech to Amuse Wife.

A great many speeches have been delivered in the house of representatives without any apparent excuse at all, so the New York member who spoke merely to entertain his wife undoubtedly had ample justification.

The New York member was in the gallery with his wife, but the lady grew tired of the humdrum proceedings and announced her intention of departing. He coaxed her to stay, but she was insistent, until her husband made a proposition.

"If you will stay an hour," he promised, "I will go down on the floor and make a speech."

She agreed to stay and the New York member kept his promise, making, in fact, a very creditable argument about something in which he had not the slightest interest.

Might Be Worse.

Biffbang—They say Meeker leads a regular dog's life at home.

Cumsoc—Unhappily married, I suppose?

Biffbang—Well, not exactly; but his wife shares her affection equally between him and her poodle.

Brief, But Pointed.

"Say, pa," queried little Johnny Bumpknicker, "what's a fool-killer?" "A fool-killer, my son," replied the old man, "is the gun he blows in."

HEARTH & BOUDOIR.

Child's Sacque and Kimono.

Loose sacques that can be slipped on at a moment's notice are always in demand for the wee folk, who must be kept warm. The little sacque and kimono illustrated are quite different in effect, but each serves its purpose admirably. The sacque is made of white cashmere with trimming of lace insertion and frills and the kimono of pale blue flannel embroidered with French knots, but both are suited to a variety of materials.

The sacque is made with fronts and back that are gathered and attached to a shallow yoke. At the neck edge is a big round collar that falls well over the shoulders and the sleeves are full and ample, gathered into wristbands. The kimono is made in one piece which is so shaped as to form sleeves when tied together at the open spaces.

The quantity of material required



4650 Child's Sacque and Kimono, 6 mos., 1, 2 and 4 yrs.

for the medium size (2 years) is for sacque 1 1/2 yards 27 inches wide, 1 1/2 yards 32 or 1 1/4 yards 44 inches wide, with 4 yards of insertion and 6 yards of edging to trim as illustrated; for kimono 1 yard 27 inches wide or 3/4 yards 32 or 44 inches wide.

The pattern, 4650, is cut in sizes for children of 6 months, 1, 2 and 4 years of age.

The New Wide Girdle.

Girdles are becoming more complex as they widen. Some that close in back taper off into ends that extend down the skirt and end in fringe or like dangle. Some of these go away to the hem; others not far from the waist line.

Boy's Blouse Knickerbocker Suit.

No costume yet devised takes the place of the blouse suit for the growing boy. It allows perfect freedom for the active limbs and is becoming and tasteful at the same time that it is ideally comfortable.

This one is made of blue serge stitched with corded silk and is as serviceable as it is attractive, but there are a variety of materials from which to choose. With the coming of warm weather washable fabrics will be in vogue and for the cooler days all the light weight wools are appropriate.

The suit consists of blouse and knickerbockers. The blouse is shaped by means of shoulder and under-arm seams and finished with tucks at the front, which give the effect of a wide box plait, while its lower edge is drawn up by means of elastic inserted in the hem. The sleeves are box plaited and finished with straight cuffs. At the neck is a turn-over collar. The knickerbockers are the regulation ones that are opened at the sides and drawn up by means of elastic beneath the knees.

The quantity of material required for the medium size (8 years) is 3 1/2 yards 27 inches wide, 2 1/2 yards 44 inches wide or 2 1/4 yards 52 inches wide.

The pattern, 4655, is cut in sizes for boys of 4, 6, 8 and 10 years of age.

Elaborate Umbrella Handles.

The handles of umbrellas and parasols have grown so elaborate and expensive since the new sets have been introduced that it is desirable to have a case to protect them when traveling. One made of light-weight green tapestry with a sprawling pattern of pink roses was appropriate. It was lined with chamols skin.

Trim and Pretty Girdles.

Bead belts have had their day—but artistic creations of the kind from abroad are always a fait. The narrow patent leather belt that was so undeniably trim and stylish has been banished, and the broad belt of soft leather or suede has taken its place. The broad belts are unbecoming to the average woman, they are very expensive and call for high-priced

Readers of this paper can secure any May Manton pattern illustrated above by filling out all blanks in coupon, and mailing, with 10 cents, to E. E. Harrison & Co., 65 Plymouth Place, Chicago. Pattern will be mailed promptly.

Name.....
Town.....
State.....
Pattern No.....
Waist Measure (if for skirt).....
Bust Measure (if for waist).....
Age of child's or miss's pattern).....

Write plainly. Fill out all blanks. Enclose 10c. Mail to E. E. Harrison & Co., 65 Plymouth Place, Chicago.

buckles that can never be used for any other belt. One of the best of them is of soft suede in a pale gray. It crushes almost as easily as a satin, and therefore accommodates itself nicely to the figure. Broad red leather belts look well worn under short Eton coats.



Sectional Tucked Skirt.

Triple skirts are shown in many of the newest costumes and are greatly liked for all the pretty soft fabrics in style. This one is made of foulard, amethyst color with figures of black and white, stitched with black corded silk, and is charmingly graceful, but is adapted to the entire range of seasonable materials, cotton and linen as well as silk and wool, and is peculiarly desirable for bordered goods and the washable fabrics which it is always well to cut straight at the lower edge.

The tucked upper portion is fitted smoothly over the hips but allowed to fall in folds below and the center and lower portions give graceful lines that harmonize therewith.

The skirt consists of the three portions, all of which are straight at the lower edges. The upper portion is left plain at the front but is tucked at sides and back while the center and lower portions are gathered at their upper edges. Each section is finished with a hem and beneath those of the upper and center portions the joinings are made. When preferred the tucks at the belt can be omitted and the fullness arranged in gathers.

The quantity of material required for the medium size is 11 1/4 yards 21 inches wide, 8 3/4 yards 27 inches wide 5 3/4 yards 44 inches wide or 4 1/4 yards 52 inches wide.

The pattern 4654 is cut in sizes for a 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inch waist measure.



Loose, belted back coats are very fashionable for walking suits.

The drooping shoulder line is most fashionably imperative at present. Tiny ruffles, now a very smart trimming feature, is an old fashion revived.

The passing of the long coat by spring is confidently predicted by fashion wisacres.

The prevalent idea in dress just now is to have everything loose and comfortable.

Ruffles such as were in style in 1830 now trim the skirts of the smart house gown.

Newer by far than either tucks or shirings are the old-time gaugings and smockings.

A feature, wholly new, upon the coats of tailor gowns for dress wear is the high girdle.

Except for strictly rough-and-ready gowns the swagger sleeve is almost two-thirds lace.

Illuminated Leather Novelties.

"Illuminated leather" table mats and spreads are taking the place of the burnt leather novelties which have been so popular. Some rich effects are obtained by this new method of

decoration, which is far handsomer than anything ever devised by the pyrographer. The work is done by the use of a stencil and the decoration is in the embossed style.

One of the most elegant table mats is circular in shape and about thirty-six inches in diameter. It is of dark brown leather and has a Grecian scroll border in gold, with raised iridescent figures above it. As the light falls on the mat the latter appears to be illuminated, hence the name.

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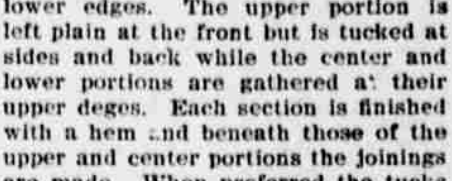
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The pattern 4654 is cut in sizes for a 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inch waist measure.

When pouring hot fruit into a glass dish place the latter on a wet cloth. This prevents any chance of the glass cracking, which would otherwise be very likely to happen.

When bottling pickles or ketchup it is a good plan to boil the corks, and while hot press them tightly into the bottles, so that when they are cold they are tightly sealed.



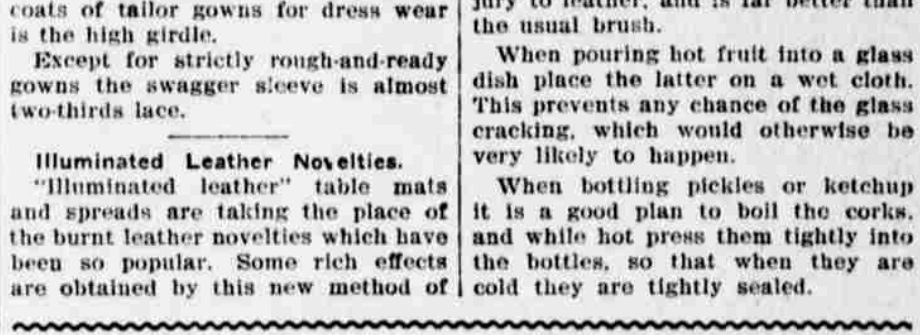
Informal Talks.

A strip of carpet glued to a piece of wool will remove mud from boots quickly and without the slightest injury to leather, and is far better than the usual brush.

When pouring hot fruit into a glass dish place the latter on a wet cloth. This prevents any chance of the glass cracking, which would otherwise be very likely to happen.

When bottling pickles or ketchup it is a good plan to boil the corks, and while hot press them tightly into the bottles, so that when they are cold they are tightly sealed.

ONE OF THE NEW LINEN WAISTS.



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Broderie, with bands of Bulgarian embroidery, makes the smartest of all smart materials for shirt waists. The excellent model shown is made of white linen tannine with bands of the same material embroidered by hand, all the linen fabrics, colored as well as white, are in vogue and woven bandings, similar in color and design to the embroidered ones can be obtained. The waist is tucked to give a yoke effect at the front and to form a V at the back and includes the favorite sleeves of the season that are snug

at the shoulders and form full puffs below the elbows. The front edge is finished with a regulation box plait, over which the banding is applied, so that the design becomes suited to a plain waist as well as to a trimmed one. The quantity of material required for a woman of medium size is 4 1/2 yards 21, 3 3/4 yards 27 or 2 1/2 yards 44 inches wide with 2 1/4 yards of banding, 2 1/2 inches wide to trim as illustrated. A May Manton pattern, No. 4617, sizes 32 to 40, will be mailed to any address on receipt of ten cents.



"Cruel, cowardly, cold-blooded murderer!"

it. No need for further explanation. With a sudden cry, his hand pressed to his heart, and a ghastly greenish settling down upon his face, Mr. Ferrers dragged himself to the nearest chair.

"The medicine—the medicine!" he whispered, in a dreadful tone, pointing with one hand towards the mantelpiece. The other, following with his eyes the direction of his gesture saw a bottle and glass.

Ted made a couple of strides in the direction signified and was back again with the medicine bottle and glass. He read the directions on the label, measured out the proportion prescribed and held the same to the lips of what seemed the almost dying man.

Mr. Ferrers, apparently revived by the draught he had swallowed, partially recovered his voice.

"Lock the door!" he said to his old friend's son. He obeyed, and the two were left alone face to face. They confronted each other in silence, the one still seated, the other standing opposite to him, with folded arms, looking down upon him.

"What have you to say to me?" asked the former, in a feeble, broken voice.

"What have I to say to you?" repeated the latter never moving his eyes from the face of the man before him. "What should a son have to say to his father's murderer?"

Mr. Ferrers rose from his seat as the infamous title was hurled at him, and, despite his pallid countenance and evident weakness, there was a natural dignity about him now as he faced the furious and menacing countenance opposed to him.

"This is not the first time you have applied that shameful word to me," he said. "This must not be."

"What?" cried the young man. "After having once admitted the crime, do you now seek to deny it? Then hear me repeat it again!" and rising his right hand, he emphasized each word by pointing with his forefinger—"Murderer! Cruel, cowardly, cold blooded murderer!"

The other man staggered as though struck, and supported himself with one trembling hand on the back of his chair.

"It is false," he said—"false! I am guiltless—in thought—if not in deed!"

He spoke with difficulty, and again his hand was pressed to his side.

"What is that you say?" asked his opponent, who had not caught the last words, but who involuntarily lowered his voice in the presence of

partment in the fourth carriage from the engine?"

The other man bent his head. "I do not deny it."

"And you deny that the bullet that was discovered in the padding of the same compartment, which the fire only partially consumed was discharged from the one empty chamber of the revolver which lies yonder?"

"I do not deny it," was the same monotonous answer.

"Then tell me," cried the young man, in a frenzy, "tell me, whose was the hand that fired that shot?"

Mr. Ferrers raised his head and answered clearly, and without hesitation, "Mine!"

The effect of the answer was electrical.

"What!"—in a tone that thrilled through the hearer—"you admit all this, and yet, in the same breath deny that you killed my father?"

"I never denied that I killed him," was the calm reply of the elder man, as his eye encountered that of his inquisitor without flinching, and he seemed to have cast aside for the moment all agitation and alarm.

Edward Burritt tried to frame the next question and failed. His lips moved, but no voice proceeded from them until—

"Liar!" he muttered, hoarsely, with his eyes glaring, "to try and fool me like this! How can you have killed my father and yet not be his murderer?"

"Because," said the other, "I shot at his own request!"

CHAPTER XXV.

The Narrative.

These remarkable words were followed by another silence, during which the younger man seemed turned to stone, and the other, who appeared completely exhausted by the strain of the last few minutes, let himself fall back into his chair and breathed heavily.

Then the first, recovering himself, and speaking in a hoarse, strange voice, which even to his own ear sounded unnatural, asked—

"What do you mean? What horrible story is this? What foul lie—"

The other man pointed to the letter lying on the table between them.

"Read it," he said, with an effort, and, even as he spoke those two words, the greyness began to return and deepen, and his face seemed to fall in.

Thus adjured, Ted stripped off the outer cover.

Within were several sheets of pa-