

# 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!—a—"

"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 failed 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 my self 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-

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 Burrill 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-

per, 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 24th 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 Burrill. 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 purposefully 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 wretches 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 callous. After an, 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.

Cumsoe—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 Bumpertickle, "what's a fool-killer?"

"A fool-killer, my son," replied the old man, "is the gun he blows in."

## BUILDING THE NAVY.

### WHOLE COUNTRY A UNIT ON THE PROPOSITION.

Senator Gorman's Opposition to the Creation of a Proper National Defense Will Be Condemned—His Own Party is Against Him.

The naval appropriation bill reported to the house authorizes the construction of one first class battleship, two first class armored cruisers, and three scout cruisers at a total cost of \$28,000,000. The bill authorizes also an increase of 3,000 in the number of sailors. The construction of so many cruisers is recommended because it is desired to give a better proportion to the navy. Last year provision was made for five battleships.

The committee says in its report: "If we judge public sentiment correctly it is in favor of the continuance of the policy of building up our navy. If we stopped now we would be left behind the leading countries of the world. The American people will not indorse the policy of sacrificing the American navy for internal improvements, nor is there any such necessity."

It is not mistaken in its judgment. The people do not wish to see the policy of building up the navy abandoned. That is not because they are bellicose and desire naval wars, but because experience and reason have brought them to the conclusion that the country must have a respectable and growing navy for purposes of national defense and the maintenance of American rights. President John Adams began the construction of a navy. Under Jefferson the work was stopped. He thought a navy unnecessary. When the war of 1812 came this country found itself at a terrible disadvantage because of that Jeffersonian policy which has an advocate now in the senate.

What is true of the people generally is not true of all the Democrats in the United States senate. The Democratic leader in that body, Senator Gorman, has put himself on record against naval expansion. He would spend money for internal improvements which his party once deemed unconstitutional, but not for warships. He said:

"We have naval vessels everywhere. Have you not enough now? Everybody will answer 'yes' unless it is true, as was floating around in high naval circles, that we are marching around the globe with a chip on our shoulder looking for the one great nation that troubles us more than any other in our trade relations to get up some trouble."

In his address at a Lincoln day dinner in New York the secretary of the navy quoted and commented on that repellent demagogical statement. He confessed that he was surprised by it, for he had thought that the policy of naval progress was not at all open to partisan attack. He had hoped that that policy would be continued no matter which party was in control of the national government, but his faith has been shaken by Senator Gorman's factious and unpatriotic utterances.

If that senator were as astute as he has been given credit for being, there might be cause to fear that he had gauged the sentiment of his party and truly represented it when he inveighed against an increase of naval force. But he has lost his astuteness or his cunning. He is blundering around blindly in quest of a partisan issue. He says "the navy is getting topheavy. There are too many men, too many sailors, too many guns afloat." He cannot persuade the mass of the Democrats that this is true. The navy will continue to be increased despite the unworthy opposition of an incompetent and discredited senatorial "leader."

The Salvation of China.

Secretary Hay's Note suggesting that Russia and Japan limit the area of hostilities as far as possible and that the neutrality and administrative entity of China be respected has borne fruit. It is believed that his views commend themselves to the two governments to which they are specially addressed, and they assuredly do to most, if not all, of the neutral powers of Europe. When the substance of the note was made known there was some questioning and caviling in Europe. In some quarters it may have been due to vexation that the United States should have taken the lead in a matter of such general concern and importance, or there may have been a misconception of the scope of the secretary's proposition.

Of course the voice of unfriendly criticism was heard at once in the United States. Whatever the administration may suggest to protect the interests or to enhance the reputation and influence of the country is attacked directly or by innuendo. It was insinuated that Secretary Hay was about to drag the United States into war, that he was seeking to form a compact with other nations to compel China to remain neutral, and to compel Russia and Japan to respect that neutrality, or that he had made a move unfriendly to Russia, dictated by a desire to help Japan.

The vindication of a disinterested policy dictated solely by a desire to keep China out of a conflict which almost inevitably would end in the partition of the empire is at hand. Japan has acceded to the suggestions of Secretary Hay, and the formal concurrence of Russia is momentarily expected. The Russian government appears to have been slow to move because of its uncertainty as to the exact meaning attached by Secretary Hay to one of the phrases in his note. It is confidently believed at Wash-

ington that the concurrence of France in the American proposal has removed whatever doubts may have been entertained by Russia, and that the United States has achieved a great pacific victory.

The Chinese government has issued a proclamation of neutrality. No doubt it wishes to be absolutely neutral, but it may be beyond its power to regulate the conduct of the fanatical, uncontrollable elements in the population of northern China. Even if there should be local outbreaks, they hardly will interfere with the workings of the beneficent plan devised by the American secretary of state, which will, in all probability, be accepted and loyally observed by the belligerent powers.

The Consular Service Bill.

No one expects much enthusiasm from politicians for measures diminishing spoils opportunities or limiting the area of their activities. The Lodge bill for the reorganization of the consular service of the United States has been indorsed by numerous industrial and commercial organizations. Indeed, the business interests of the country are practically a unit for the adoption of the merit system in the selection of consuls and the abolition of the fee system.

Notwithstanding this fact, and in spite of the further consideration that the bill has been recommended by the Senate committee on foreign relations all sorts of "constitutional" objections are now raised by its opponents. The measure, they say, is unnecessary, and no president would feel himself bound by its provisions. The right of the executive to appoint consular officers cannot be abridged by regulations prescribed by congress, it is gravely argued, and it is undignified to enact laws which must be purely advisory. All this has been heard before, ad nauseam, and to consider it seriously would be a waste of space and time.

The truth is that the opponents of the bill do not want merit in the consular service. They know the defects of the present system and they know that the service is maintained under the provisions of a law passed in 1856, which is necessarily antiquated and entirely inadequate to existing conditions. But the defects do not injure the political side of the service. They affect foreign commerce, for which congressmen having friends and hangerson to reward for actual or imaginary aid care very little. If the existing law relating to the consular service is constitutional, the Lodge bill cannot be unconstitutional. At any rate, no executive would deem it safe or expedient to disregard a merit bill in obedience to personal and spoils politics.

The enactment of the Lodge bill by the present Congress would be a departure from the do-nothing and stand pat policy, but it is a departure which the business interests will not only cheerfully "stand," but gladly welcome. The friends of the measure are not hopeful; are they sufficiently energetic and earnest?

### Reciprocity With Canada.

The agitation in favor of reciprocal trade relations between the United States and Canada has been renewed by the Detroit chamber of commerce. The aim is to have the joint high commission reconvened for the purpose of negotiating a reciprocity treaty.

There is much to commend the idea. Both countries have many interests in common. Properly drawn, a reciprocity treaty would benefit both.

The first Canadian reciprocity treaty was made in 1854 and terminated by us in 1866. American sentiment over the Canadian protection of Confederate emissaries and the large balance of trade against us led to our withdrawal. In 1874 another treaty was negotiated, but failed of ratification by the senate.

In the two years, 1865 and 1866, under the old treaty, the balance of trade was largely in Canada's favor, but the conditions that immediately followed the war were principally responsible for this. In the main, the treaty promoted our commerce and was beneficial to both countries.

### Mr. Bryan's Prize Platform.

The Commoner's offer of \$100 for a Democratic platform is surrounded with conditions that make the competition a cruelty which should call for police interference. The rule that the prize platform must be agreeable to ten Democratic newspapers is enough to fill a whole incurable ward with men made "loony" by the attempt. The generous offer of an extra \$5 for a letter from Mr. Cleveland, Mr. Gorman or Judge Parker indorsing any platform any one of the newspapers named can draw is likely also to have a violent effect on weak-hearted editors. Mr. Watterson, who rails against the money power, and the other gentlemen invited to the joust will be so agitated at the temptation to the corruption of Democratic editorial morals opened up by the Commoner's reckless liberality that they probably will decline to take part in it.

### Protectionist and Prosperous.

A free trade contemporary remarks that every industry of France enjoys a high degree of prosperity, and asks: "Has France made her tariff rates exportant?" France has always been a protectionist country. The savings of her people are proportionately the largest in the world.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

### Novelty of Possession.

Col. Bryan admits that while abroad he secured one new idea, but he is keeping it to himself until the novelty of possession wears off a little.—Washington Post.

## INTERESTING TO AMERICANS.

### Western Canada Will Soon Become the Supply Depot for Wheat for Great Britain.

During the past year about 50,000 Americans went from the United States to Canada. Most of these settled upon farm lands, and the writer is informed by agents of the Canadian Government that the greatest success has followed the efforts of nearly all. To their friends on this side of the boundary line the fullest assurance is given of the prosperity that is in store for them. There will always be a splendid market for all the grain, cattle, and other products that can be raised in Western Canada, and with the advantages offered of a free homestead of 160 acres of land, and other lands which may be bought cheaply, an excellent climate, splendid school system, educational advantages of the best, what more is required. The husbandman gets more return for his money than in any other country in the world.

On the occasion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's visit to the Corn Exchange, London, England, Colonel Montgomery, V. D., made several important statements. "The function," he said, "which you have just been assisting in connection with a kindred association has doubtless shown you the importance of the provision trade of Liverpool in its relationship with the Dominion, and the enormous possibilities of the future development of that trade. Well, the grain trade of Liverpool has interests with Canada no less important than those of the provision trade. When it is borne in mind that 80 per cent of the breadstuffs of this great country has to be brought from abroad, you will readily appreciate with what great satisfaction we view the large and steadily increasing supplies of grain which are annually available for export from Canada, and I challenge contradiction when I say that of the wheats we import from Russia, India, the Pacific, and the length and breadth of the United States, none gives more general satisfaction, none is more generally appreciated than that raised in the Province of Manitoba. We cannot get enough of it, and it is no exaggeration to say that there are before us dozens of millers who hunger for it. This is not the time to enter into statistical questions, but we look forward with confidence to the time at which, with the present rate of progress, the Dominion of Canada will have a sufficient surplus of wheat to render this country independent of other sources of supply. I think I may, with justifiable pride, remind you that this is the chief grain market of the British Empire, and through its excellent geographical position, as well as through the enterprise of its millers, it is now the second milling center in the world.

Sent to any authorized Canadian Government agent for copy of Atlas and information as to railway rate, etc.

Hope is the mainpring of life.—Socrates.

### The Useful Camel.

The Somali camel can eat everything and drinks nothing, it will make a meal where even the country pony would starve. Dromedary, mimoso, acacia—all come alike to it; and when shoots and leaves are withered it can fall back on roots, thorns and bark. That sort of digestion makes it, of course, valuable in a country where the bill of fare seems compiled in the interest of the carnivora, but its indifference to liquid is its especial virtue. While the Arab camel needs drink daily, his Somali brethren when on a march are watered only every fifth day, and when drouth prevails may be left for ten. When grazing they are supposed to be watered every sixth day, but such regularity depends on the energy of the herders and the condition of the grass, the herds when the grass is green being often left without water for as long as three months.

### Japanese "Singing Insects."

Among the natural curiosities of Japan are its singing insects. The most prized of these tiny musicians is a black beetle named "susumushi," which means "insect bell." The sound that it emits resembles that of a little silver bell of the sweetest and most delicate tone.

### The Most Common Disease.

Yorktown, Ark., Feb. 29th.—Leland Williamson, M. D., a successful and clever local physician, says: "There is scarcely another form of disease a physician is called upon so often to treat as Kidney Disease. I invariably prescribe Dodd's Kidney Pills and am not disappointed in their effect for they are always reliable. I could mention many cases in which I have used this medicine with splendid success, for example, I might refer to the case of Mr. A. H. Cole.

"Age 31, greatly emaciated, some fever, great pain and pressure over region of kidneys, urine filled with pus or corruption and very foul smelling and passed some blood. Directed to drink a great deal of water, gave brisk purgative and Dodd's Kidney Pills. The pills were continued regularly for three weeks and then a few doses every week, especially if patient felt any pain in region of kidneys. Cured completely and patient performed his duties as farm laborer in four weeks."

"Dr. Williamson has been a regular practitioner for over twenty years and his unqualified indorsement of Dodd's Kidney Pills is certainly a wonderful tribute to this remedy.

It is with men as with horses; those that do the most prancing make the least progress.—Laron de Stassart.