

THE FAMILY STORY



THE MURDER OF A WIFE.

ONE night, just as it was growing dusk and the lengthening shadows brought weird memories to me, I was disturbed by the rattling of a cab which stopped at the door with a loud "Whoa" from the driver and a pull that brought the horse on its haunches.

A man sprung out of the cab, and, hastily running up the steps, pulled frantically at the door bell. Although it was nearly dark I had time to distinguish the features of one of the leading lawyers of the city.

As my servant showed him into the front parlor, by the window of which I was sitting, he came forward, and, grasping me by both hands, said: "Mr. Martinot, we need no introduction; we both know each other professionally so well that a personal acquaintance is unnecessary."

I motioned him to a chair. "I will be seated," said he, "but only long enough for you to get ready to go with me. I want you to go to the Tombs. My client, in whose behalf I have called to see you, is there. He is in the shadow of the gallows. The noose is around his neck."

It is no unusual thing for me to be called by a professional man, and therefore I gave no thought to the case as we were rattling through the streets, but the impatience of the lawyer was such that he would not allow the cabman to slacken, even upon the slippery pavements. We were nearly there before he mentioned the case. He seemed unable to talk from nervousness. When the shadow of the Tombs fell upon the cab he turned to me and said:

"I can tell you only one thing about the case; my client is innocent. That is absolute. In his confession to me he could explain nothing; he only knows that he is innocent."

With this brief prelude I followed my guide up the stairs leading to the Tombs and into the somber gallery that runs along murderers' row. In the last cell, surrounded by not more than ten square feet of space, sat my man. He occupied a wooden chair, and when the turnkey unlocked the door he gave no sign excepting to bury his head deeper in his hands and groan.

At a glance I saw that he was a gentleman. He was a man in the prime of life, not over 40, well dressed, clean-shaven and handsome. This I saw in spite of the dark gloom upon his countenance, for never in my life had I seen such a subject despair shown in the face of a human being.

Mr. Martinot, have read many of them under an assumed name. My wife knew of my little pastime and ridiculed it. When I wrote at home I could only do it in the still hours of the night when she was asleep.

"Last Wednesday morning at the breakfast table my wife, who had been extravagant of late, brought up the subject of a residence uptown. She wanted to be opposite Central Park and to ride with the swells of Fifth avenue. I opposed her and she retorted sharply.

"You will regret this," I said as I rose from the table. "You may regret it sooner than you think. By God," I cried, as the memory of the things she had said swept over me anew, "I wish I could go away and never see your face again."

"Of course I was sorry for the words as soon as I had said them, and during the day I squared matters with my conscience by sending a basket of flowers to her. I even notified a real estate manager that I was in the market for an uptown residence.

"I was detained that night at my office, and when I reached home the church clock opposite was tolling the hour of 11. I went softly in at the front door, and knowing that my wife would



"I HEARD A VOICE SAY: 'FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, CAN IT BE HE?'"

be asleep at that hour I walked through the long hall to a little study situated at the rear end of the hall. Here stood a small writing desk, and here I knew I could be alone for an hour to quiet my mind from the business events of the day and to indulge in my favorite recreation of story writing.

"A plot had come to my mind as I came uptown in the cars, and I resolved to write it while it was fresh. A flattering letter from a publisher who had accepted my latest story made me resolve to supply him with another as soon as possible.

"This time my wife shall know of my work and be proud of it. I will enter society and court the literati, while she enjoys herself with the but-terflies," I said to myself, smiling, as I dipped my pen in the ink.

"The plot of my story was a singular one. It was the 'Murder of a Wife.' "With accuracy I went into each startling detail, and as I wrote down the bloodthirsty words I saw that my anger for my wife was melting away, even as the beauty of the story grew underneath my fingers. When I had finished I saw that I had achieved what would be the greatest work of my life, and that honors would come to me from the public who would read my story.

thought I heard behind me a stealthy step. On the second page I heard it again. This time there were whispers. I listened and heard a voice say, "For the love of God, can it be he?"

I sprang to my feet and turned around.

A loud shriek rose to the ceiling and out upon the hall floor there fell a heavy weight. It was a man and over him bent a woman.

"You scared him almost to death, sir," said she. "I told him that it was only one of them detectives that they are always sending here, but the back of your head looked so much like master's that it scared him most to death."

"Why should that scare him?" I asked.

"Sure sir, I don't know, but lately he has been like, like—"

At this moment the man opened his eyes. "Forgive me, forgive me," he cried. "I have dreamed of it day and night, forgive—"

"I will forgive you nothing," said I, "until you confess how your curiosity made you creep up behind your master that night and read what he was writing. Confess how you went upstairs and killed your mistress and robbed her of her jewels; confess how you hid after the others were called and pretended to be asleep; and confess how you have allowed an innocent man to suffer for your crime."

AGRICULTURAL NEWS

THINGS PERTAINING TO THE FARM AND HOME.

Alfalfa a Drouth-Resisting Plant—Irrigation Coming to Every Farmer—Clearing Up the Barnyard—Best Branches of Farming.

A Drouth-Resisting Plant.
The chief reason why alfalfa hay will grow in the short grass country is that it has long roots. They have been known to strike twenty-feet deep for moisture. The plant will not thrive, therefore, in soil that is not open and deep. An ideal place for its growth is along the river bottoms in the western part of Kansas—land under which great lakes of "sheet water," miles upon miles in extent, are found from ten to twenty-five feet below the surface. The roots of alfalfa readily push down to the water and drink when they need moisture, and the result is that the plant blossoms and prospers, and becomes a never-failing source of revenue to the man who cultivates it. On the rolling uplands, where there is scarcely an average rainfall of twenty-five inches a year, the plant will live and produce hay nearly always. It makes good pasture under ordinary conditions there, and is almost certain every year to produce a fine crop of seed. All the uplands are fertile enough, the only trouble about making use of that fertility being the lack of moisture. Irrigation has not yet succeeded in bringing water in abundance to the assistance of the tiller of the soil in this region, and therefore only such a plant can live as has deep roots, and a pertinacity that even the hot winds of Kansas can not shake.—Harper's Weekly.

Irrigation.
Irrigation in some form will come sooner or later, and the farmer will then be independent of drouths. In fact, irrigation can be practiced on a majority of farms if the owners will go to the expense of arranging for a water supply. The windmill, hydraulic ram and engine can be used to force water into a tank or reservoir, from which it can be obtained for crops by gravity. What farmers should consider is not the expense but the prospective gain. It has happened year after year that at critical stages during the growth of crops drouth appears and destroys the farmer's hopes, the loss during a single season being greater than the expense of an irrigating plant. It is also possible that with an unlimited supply of water the yields may be more than doubled and the profits greatly increased. In this region the rains will assist the farmer the greater portion of the growing period, the supply of water to be stored being only sufficient to tide the crops over a dry spell. With the ability to apply water to crops at will, and the liberal use of fertilizers, the crops grown on land that has been used for experimental purposes have been enormous, as much as three times the average yield having been secured.

Clearing Up the Barnyard.
After the great bulk of winter-made manure is drawn from the barnyard and spread upon the fields, there always remains a considerable amount of scattering manure, which, if not gathered up, is sure to be in large part wasted. It should at least be always plied in heaps, where it will be less liable to waste than if spread. In most barnyards there are accumulations of finely rotted manure that have been left in previous years. It does not pay to leave such rich manure to go to waste. Two or three loads of such scrapings are easily worth a dozen from the piles of unfermented manure. Much of this old manure is rich enough to be used as a hill dressing for corn, to be dropped in the hill with the seed grain. It will make the corn come up a dark green and be more vigorous all the season.

Best Branches of Farming.
Dairying and poultry keeping are about the only branches of farming that afford a nearly continuous income. The main and staple crops yield a harvest but once a year. The profits of farming, generally speaking, come slowly, and must be patiently waited for. To some young men, ambitious to get rich fast, this seems to be a reason for choosing to engage in some other business. But the returns of intelligent farmers, although slow, are pretty safe and sure. The young live stock which a farmer raises must be fed and cared for a long time before any profit comes back, but the profit comes in due time. Their growth and increase in weight goes on silently and steadily as money at interest, and, in the end, should amount to much more. One important return of profit for labor bestowed and the cost of fertilizers applied comes to the skilled farmer in the course of years through the increased fertility and value of his farm.

Peas on Poor Land.
Land that is too poor for any other kind of crop may be profitably sown with peas, putting in with the seed enough lime, phosphate and potash to make the grain. This on very poor land is a better first crop than clover, as the pea grain is large and will produce a strong enough stalk to live, while the young clover is so small that it may easily be killed out before it gets root hold in the soil. It is hard to get a clover catch on poor soil, while peas will grow, no matter how poor the soil may be.

Mutton for Farmers' Tables.
There is no meat quite so convenient for farm use as mutton, as the carcass of an average sheep can be easily kept in most families until it can be eaten. It is very easy to kill and dress a sheep.

Not even poultry can be prepared for the table with so little trouble. What is better, the mutton killed on the farm is of superior quality. It lacks the "woolly taste" which so often comes to mutton from sheep that have been long driven to market, or that have had to endure long journeys by railroad, often without food or drink for twenty-four to thirty-six hours. It is one of the advantages of better prices for wool that more farmers will be able to keep sheep. If mutton could more generally supersede fat, greasy pork on farmers' tables, they and their families would be much more healthy than they are under present conditions.

Sweet Potatoes.
Some of the varieties of sweet potatoes that are most popular in the South will not succeed with Northern growers. The sweet potato requires a long season to grow in, and only the early kind will succeed in the Northern States. It is usually a mistake to send South for sweet potatoes to plant. The Northern varieties, propagated in slips for planting by seedsmen, are much better, as well as cheaper, than trying to winter the sweet potato and cut it into sets for planting, as is done with the ordinary white potato. It is a great advantage in growing sweet potatoes to have well-rooted plants ready to set out when the soil and air are warm enough to insure rapid growth. Most of the successful Southern varieties of sweet potatoes are watery and poor when grown North.

Horticultural Hints.
Give the orchard all the potash that it needs.
Coarse, raw manure is not fit for the garden.
Toads, frogs and lizards are useful in the garden.
The green melon is the best seller in the market.
Prune the quince tree and train it to a single stem.
Extra work in getting a good seed bed pays in garden work.

Cut off all the bruised roots when planting a tree, but do not mutilate the top.
A neglected orchard encumbers land that might be used profitably for other purposes.
A late crop of cabbage is easily grown, for the seed can be planted in the open ground.
Five acres in cucumbers for pickles will ordinarily pay as much as all the rest of the farm.

Seedling Peach Trees.
In every peach orchard free from the yellows, there will be more or less seedling peach trees springing up every year from pits dropped after the peach was eaten the previous fall. It requires freezing to open these pits, and the germ usually comes forth with the first warm weather of spring. These seedlings will usually be of poor quality, as they are only natural fruit. But if they are set out in rich soil as soon as the shoots start, they will grow rapidly and be plenty large enough to be budded in July next. It is a comparatively easy thing to learn to bud. In this way a stock of peach trees can easily be secured if one plants peach stones from healthy fruit in the fall, and takes care to use only buds from healthy stock for budding purposes.

Location for Bees.
Many people fail of success with bees because they do not place the hives right. If too shaded the bees are likely to be attacked by the moth miller, which breeds those worms that destroy the honey. It is well to have the bees up early, so the hives should front to the east, so as to catch the first rays of the morning sun. Either a well-roofed, low building should be put up as a bee stand, or the hives should be set on a bench under a tree all through the summer. In winter it is not best that bees should see sunlight. If an underground cellar out of doors can be fitted up where the temperature may be kept below freezing all the time, it will be much better than the warmer house cellar.

Guessing vs. Knowing Weights.
When the farmer sells one of his animals to the butcher to kill and market, the latter has every advantage. He is used every day to estimating weights, and his business makes it necessary to guess closely. So in most such sales by guess, the farmer is apt to be cheated, often by fifty or a hundred weight. Every farmer who has occasion to sell anything by weight should procure a pair of farm scales. They will save their cost often in a single year.

Notes for Shepherds.
Sheep fertilize the pastures.
Sheep are death to wild mustard.
Eastern Australia has 100,000,000 sheep.
Don't keep a flock in unventilated quarters.
The Merino matures too slowly for a profitable mutton sheep.
The demand for stock sheep has been very strong this season.

Second growth clover is highly recommended for lambs after weaning. Once in a while the stables should have an extra and thorough cleaning. Dry feed and nothing else will likely cause sick sheep before spring. Oil meal is a remedy.
The ram is by no means a coward, and we have seen one put up a successful fight against a dog.
To compel the ewe to raise a lamb and grow a big fleece the same year is too much work for her.
The breeding of lamb rams is a serious mistake to both the breeder and customer, says a flockmaster.—Western Plowman.

A man is always looking for letters, but he never answers them.

MULES FROM THE MINES.

Antics of Those that Are Brought Up to Daylight.
The superintendent of the Sweet Springs mine undertook a thorough renovation of the mine the day after the miners went out on the strike, and the first step preparatory to a general cleaning up was to remove the mules from the underground stables and put them out on pasture.

Some of them had not been out of the mine for months, a number had been below the surface for two or three years, and one had not seen the sun shine for seven years—as long as Jacob served for Leah.
They were led from the mine, twenty-seven patient creatures, and turned loose in Morrison's pasture field. They stood about close together, knee-deep in the lush, green grass and sweet red clover, with drooping heads and eyes half closed, as though dazed by their sudden change of circumstances. At last as the sun dropped down behind Bowman's hill one gray old veteran threw up his head and sniffed at the fine, fragrant air blowing down the valley, and in a moment a little movement went through the whole group.

The old leader wheeled about sharply, took a long look at the clear sky above, the brawling little brook chattering over the stones, the grass and the trees, then he threw up his head, stiffened his tail and set forth a prolonged, penetrating, strident hee-haw-aw-aw, which woke the echoes over on Maple ridge, and with an awkward lumbering bound he started down the long slope. In an instant the whole mass had separated and was in motion. Such running, racing, kicking and jumping were never before seen. Stiff knees, dim eyes and spavined joints were all forgotten in the pure enjoyment of out of doors. They brayed and belloved, ran and kicked, stopped for breath, then began again.

The whole village gathered at the fence to see the fun. The men and boys laughed and shouted, the babies crowed and one or two women cried a little, for there were sores and lameness and weakness in plenty.
When night fell they were still rolling about and racing, forgetful of the hunger and thirst that might be satisfied by the running stream and the grass.

Old Mrs. Bascom, who lives at the edge of the pasture field, was awakened in the dark hours toward morning by the rapid rush of hoofs thundering down the hillside, and turning over on her pillow she murmured drowsily: "Dear Lord, who would a-thought that any livin' critter would be so glad and thankful for nothin' but air and freedom!"—New Lexington Tribune.

Unruly Sledge Dogs.
Carlo, a big retriever, opened the ball by killing one of the Ostiak dogs. He swaggered about among the pack, and exhibited all the supposed characteristics of the Britisher abroad. To check his homestead, or rather cannibal, propensities, I tied the dead dog round his neck. This, however, he evidently viewed as an excellent arrangement, especially devised for the arctic, where the food supply is defective, and at once proceeded to make a cold lunch of his late adversary, looking up at me with grateful eyes, evidently thinking that it was very considerate of Jackson thus to provide him with a larger right at hand. After this the dead dog was removed, and Carlo was always decorated with a muzzle. I afterward made a good sledge dog of him, but he could not stand the severe climate, and although the doctor made a blanket coat for him, the poor old chap died sledging during the first fortnight in spite of it.

The rest of the pack were hardly less bellicose, but conducted their battles on lines hardly in accordance with civilized warfare. With the exception of two or three dogs, I always had the entire pack chained up, having taken out a large supply of English chains; but I found these quite inadequate to strain these comparatively small dogs. One dog would break loose, and then commence a fight with another. The whole pack would become wildly excited, and all would then fall upon the losing combatant. The result would be another dead dog.—F. G. Jackson, in the Geographical Journal.

They Were Wed.
Pretty Miss Polly declared she'd not wed. She'd "rather, yes rather, far rather, be dead."
"Twere better to lie in the cold, cold grave
Than be some horrid man's humble slave."
"For what is a wife but a slave?" she said,
"A slave when once she is wed!"

Handsome young Harry, too, said he'd not wed.
"For a wife must be petted and pampered and fed."
"Twere better to live your life all alone,
That your nose may escape the proverbial grindstone,
"For a husband is naught but a slave!" he said,
"A slave when once he is wed."

As might be expected, this perverse young pair fell in love at first sight and did straightway declare
"Twere better, far better, they twain should be one
Than lonely to sigh and true happiness shun,
"For Love is a slave, yes, a slave!" so they said,
"Forever a slave," and they wed.
—Chicago Times-Herald.

Hobnail Shoes.
In many parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire shoes for the working classes of both sexes are sold with heavy, square hobnails, whose clatter in the streets in the morning as the wearers go to work is almost intolerable.
A favorite trick of a scoundrel is to place good men in such a position that they are compelled to stand by him.