

FROM PALACE TO MADHOUSE

Fate of the Gorgeous Home of a California Millionaire.

TRAGIC SUICIDE OF THE OWNER

Scene of Social Splendor, Champagne Orgies and Lofly Kicking Given Over to the Whims of Mental Wrecks.

Money talks. Not ever in plain language, but in parables and between the lines relates the San Francisco Chronicle, for capital is timid and capital says there is a blight upon Belmont, but says it is not in words, but thus:

"Belmont cost Ralston a million to build. It is as good as new—but Ralston lived there, lost his life and fortune. Sharon lived there, became entangled in troubles, which drove him, miserably, to his grave. It was tried as a school and failed. Capital will not touch it."

But heedless cannot harm nor omen dismay the lunatic and so the palace is to become a madhouse, or in the milder words, "a sanitarium for the treatment of nervous and mental diseases."

It seems that there could be no better end for the beautiful villa at Belmont than that it should become an asylum for the insane. There is at least wildness and romance in that and the place is one which should never come to a prosaic end. Its whole existence and even the ground on which it stood has been a tangled mass of mysteries, underground passages, subterranean lakes, romances, tragedies and wild adventures.

The mirrored walls which for thirty years reflected the most beautiful faces which passed through California will now return but the grin of the idiot and the dark mask which madness casts over the light of reason, for Belmont house is to be made the greatest private insane asylum in America.

Having manna may grow and howl through the graceful pillared halls of the summer pleasure palace of the great bonanza princes.

Houses, like their owners, unjustly suffer from the swinging changes time brings forth, as though every joy had a pain for its shadow and one cannot bid the welcome guest without burdening himself with the other.

Of joys the house gave many. It was built for nothing else than to delight every one of the five senses. A million dollars was spent for comforts and conveniences only. Not a dollar was wasted on the exterior, which was plain as possible, merely to weatherproof and shelter the guests within.

The most striking thing one notices about the house is the immense number of bedrooms, over sixty-five, the greater number of them having baths connected.

The house in many ways served for a model of the palace hotel and was itself the cause of the building of that vast caravansary.

When one of the titled Englishmen who visited there first saw the place he expressed great surprise that it should be denominated a palace. That was before he had seen the interior.

Ralston heard the remark and was stung by it, for he had never called his home a palace, nor thought of it otherwise than as a comfortable summer residence.

He said: "But I will build something, though, that will be big enough to hold half a dozen of their little palaces and show them that America, and California above all, is the place for human achievements."

Belmont Hospitality. Entertainments at Belmont were indeed true hospitality. The house was built at a time when there were no great restaurants or hotels in San Francisco. Everything was run on the pine shanty plan, for all men said that California was but a gold camp, and that when the gold was gone the people would go, too.

Ralston knew that as soon as the railroad was completed across the continent there would be an influx of eastern and European capitalists, and he wished to entertain them suitably, that they might be more readily persuaded to invest here.

In the big stone stables of Belmont there were usually from eighty to 100 horses, as good as could be bought, and on Sunday mornings there would often be four or five horse coaches sent out loaded with guests, to say nothing of two-seaters, buggies and saddle horses.

Ralston helped build roads all over his part of the country and the solid stone bedded highways which he prepared for public use are still the delight of bicyclists and automobilists who perhaps never heard of the name of the man who constructed the boulevards that have made San Mateo and Santa Clara such favorite outing grounds.

In the rear of the house is a large Turkish bath building, tiled as are the mosques of Arabia. Unknown to those who have seen guests at even the most regular inmates of the house was a subterranean lake on which floated a little boat. Descending by a concealed stairway from the interior of the house one found a landing at the bottom and from there might take a trip with candle torches as on the lake in the Mammoth Cave.

There is no one spot in all California which has more of the essential romance of the state centered about it than this old country seat at Belmont.

Surrounded immediately by the gnarly oaks and brown hills, which make so much of our scenery, and in the distance, all about it, the blue, chemical covered mountains—Belmont is California.

our drive was going to take us through more than one change of climate. The old plank road rumbled and swayed underneath us and the flying sand cut our faces through our heavy veils. When we came to the end of the sand and the plank road the train was whistling behind us and Mr. Ralston whipped up a little more, as he called it. As a matter of fact, the horses needed no whipping, all they wanted was the chance, and they seemed willing to do the going. After we got to the top of the grade and in sight of the ocean our speed was again increased. It seemed as though every change of the road was excuse for faster traveling.

"If the horses cannot trot fast enough they can run," was the way that our gentleman driver looked at traveling gait; it made no difference to him how a horse traveled so that he got there.

"We made two changes of teams and the last one took us over roads which were built for the purpose, with easy turns and well crowned surface. We lost a little on the train, as it made up time on the straight reaches, and when it stopped at a station we would be up with it again. As we swung out of the long straight road into the avenue which led to Belmont we crossed not a hundred feet ahead of the train, which was slowing down as it came into the station.

"Another minute and we were clipping along past the tree branches that overhung the driveway. A beautiful hazy valley with a blue mountain rim around it opened away on our left and just below the roadway a heavy black smoke rolled up from the private gas works that set the Belmont house ablaze with light.

"We drew up under the porte-cochere and bundled down hastily, for the horses were shaking off great flaky masses of foam and lather and the grounds were anxious to get them in the stables to cool. "Once in the house it was a succession of surprises and delights that did not cease until I left.

"The motherly housekeeper had my things brought up to my room, which was on the third floor, overlooking a terrace of orange trees. A cool bath to freshen me from the dust of the ride and then dressed for dinner I delighted myself for an hour in looking at marbles, bronzes and oil paintings which filled the great lower floor.

"There were some twenty persons at the table, yet so large were the rooms, so attentive the waiters and above all the powerful personality of the host so pervading that all seemed to blend and concentrate until it was like the smallest and coziest of family affairs.

"The dinner, the waiters and chef had all been brought from the city that morning, as was the custom when there was any sort of a function. While everything was elaborate it was apparently simple and so smoothly regulated that there was none of the stiffness which usually dominates. An orchestra was placed in the mezzanine floor of the reception hall and filled the house with its music.

"After dinner there were more arrivals in carriages of guests from neighboring villas at San Mateo and Redwood.

The Merry Dance. "In the meantime the great partitions between the billiard and dining rooms and the reception hall had been raised and the doors opened between corridors and music room, so that we could dance round and round the main floor of the house; something over a block the distance was. Some time we were under the bright glare of the myriad prismatic glass chandeliers, then gliding into the semi-darkness of the corridors, where the moon, half screened by the big maples outside, threw patchy lights on the polished floors; from there again back into the grand music room, whose mirrored sides showed reflections back and forth until the repeated figures vanished in the distance. I had many times that evening, but never had I traveled and while they had seen more elegance or greater size in European residences, castles or courts, yet never before such a combination of homelike comfort, spacious apartments and architectural beauty.

"At midnight a supper was served in the art gallery, while dancing still continued beneath us.

"Looking down from the curved balcony this there passed a continuous stream of gorgeously costumed women in evening dress or uniforms, all dancing, whirling unceasingly and repeated in mirrors on every side, the only figures in repose being here and there a marble statue on its pedestal serenely contemplating the activity with which in their helpfulness they seemed ready to take part.

"Before 1 o'clock all but the inmates of the house had departed and we were soon at rest in our rooms, for there was to be a coaching party to the ocean the next day and early start was to be made.

"Breakfast Sunday morning was served after the European custom just as we happened to drop in. The gentlemen waited on the ladies and the delightfully unconvivial recalling of the experiences of the night before by the breakfast table, which will never be effaced from the mind of one of us as long as we live.

"After breakfast came the four-in-hands and we went the jolliest party I had ever seen brought together for a drive and to the ocean, where they were to have a light lunch taken in hampers, returning in time for dinner.

"For myself I preferred to stay and investigate the house and grounds, which I felt at liberty to do as I pleased to leave."

Surprises and Mysteries. There is a charm about the place which comes over everyone, and with it all there is a fatality pursuing, such as that which destroys so many beautiful women. Nobody could live in the place without being tempted to strange and eccentric adventures. It makes the workday world seem unreal merely to wander through the pillared halls; to walk from room to room, through openings where the walls have disappeared up into the ceilings.

The house is full of surprises and mysteries. Lift a trap door under a stairway and see a lake beneath you with cavernous arches stretching away into the darkness, and then to feel the floors and walls jar and tremble as some valve is opened and a surging torrent of water is poured into it from the lake on the mountain.

The search for water in this dry canyon was the greatest undertaking upon which Ralston entered. At first he had tried small wells and springs which failed. After that a tremendous cavern was excavated in the mountain side back of the house and lined with masonry. All of the rain-water from the roof was led into this, but still the supply was insufficient. A diamond drill from the mines was then set to work in the valley near his private works in front of the house. At a great depth and before water was reached the drill struck a ledge of Jasper which resisted all efforts and finally it broke off.

A shaft was then sunk and from the bottom of it a tunnel run across the canyon and extended far under the mountains on either side. No water was found, and the tunnel is still there to mystify some future geologist.

His final and successful plan was to buy a mountain tract across the valley and build a large stone dam, fifty feet high, which created an artificial lake that has given a perpetual supply ever since.

From here the water is led across the valley in a six-inch main to the subterranean lakes and reservoirs around and under the house, and also to smaller ones on the hill above. A separate system of trellises all over the buildings and on the roofs are directly connected with the high pressure of the water from the mountain

and in addition a large steam fire pump was located next to the Turkish bath, in which steam was kept up continually. The stables cover about a third of an acre and are built of stone, with solid timber floors six inches thick which would not even creak if an elephant walked over them.

The gas works, reservoir and stables each cost \$40,000, and are good as new, as in fact are all the improvements on the place, from the main house down to the door lock, everything was built to last for all time.

Scene of Great Feventions. While Ralston owned Belmont he entertained continually. The parties were of all sorts, from the quiet times when a few bright Bohemians were driven down by himself in his private coach to meet a theatrical troupe who were already being entertained and entertaining there, to the grand affairs, such as the times when special trains conveyed San Francisco society en masse to banquets with Admiral Farragut or General Sherman.

Ralston, whether voluntarily or by accident, died as a result of grief from the treatment given him by his old associates at the time of the suspension of the Bank of California. The Belmont place fell into the hands of Sharon and from that time on to his death the magnificence of the entertainments was redoubled.

Sharon's love of politics and the requirements brought him under a wide range of social obligations. The guests of Belmont during his time ran the whole gamut of the social scale from Mammy Pleasant and Sarah Althea Hill to General Grant and Earl Duffryn, governor general of Canada.

Down the toboggan of time the house has come with a crash, from the glorious days when gay debutantes were put into champagne baths, on through the later years, until parties gave rise to burglar stories, under poor old house, sold for a song, less even than some poets' songs have brought, it goes with all its mirrors, bronzes and oil paintings to shelter the human wrecks whose mental lights have faded.

BOSTON BAKED BEANS.

How New England Housewives Prepare Their Most Famous Dish. Of baked beans, the genuine New England food, Sallie Joy White writes at our dictation in the October Woman's Home Companion. This is the way she says the famous dish should be prepared:

"The best bean to use is the pea-bean—which is the smallest white bean that is grown. A quart of the beans should be carefully picked over the night before they are to be used and all the specked ones removed. If the beans are over a year old they may be soaked overnight in cold water, the water being turned off in the early morning and replaced with fresh water. If the beans are not a year old they have not to be soaked over night, as they would grow too soft and would break and become mushy when cooked, a result that is to be sedulously avoided. In the morning put them over the fire in cold water and parboil them very slightly. Allow the water to come just to a boil, then take them off, drain them through a colander and pour cold water over them, rinsing them thoroughly. This rinsing is all the water from them in which they have been boiled, and it is an additional firmness, which tends to prevent their breaking while in the process of further cooking. Furthermore, the beans will have a much more delicate flavor and will be less likely to disagree with a person who has a delicate stomach or a tendency to dyspepsia.

"Lay a thin slice of fat salt pork on the bottom of the bean-pot and on this a small onion; pour in the beans. Have ready a piece of salt pork weighing one or two pounds, the rind scored every quarter of an inch, and put it in the pot with the beans, arranging it so that the top shall be even with the top of the beans and the rest buried in them. If the pork is very well salted and partly smoked, it will require only about one-third of a teaspoonful; but if it is fat use one full teaspoonful. Add one salt-spoonful of ground mustard, one heaping tablespoonful of granulated sugar or two tablespoonfuls of molasses—most people prefer this to sugar, but it is a matter of taste—cover with cold water, set in a moderate oven and bake from eight to ten hours slowly and steadily."

NEW YORK'S WATER.

Some Figures that Will Amaze by Their Enormous Size. In 1882, says Munsey's, the storage capacity from Croton dam (Croton lake and reservoir), the natural ponds of the system and the old reservoirs was 9,500,000,000 gallons. Croton lake holding in reserve but half a billion of this.

Now four new reservoirs, Sodom and Bob brook, Titicus, Carmel and Amawalk hold for future needs at any hour \$2,000,000,000 gallons more. The storage reservoir in Central park will increase the present capacity and the Bronx system reservoirs 3,500,000,000 more stored up, not against a rainy day, but against a succession of dry ones.

The new Croton dam, the Cornell dam, as it is officially called, will store marvellous quantities of water, and will be a high close one end of a narrow valley. The water will come against this and back up the valley, submerging lowland after lowland into one gigantic lake, engulfing old Croton lake, covering the whole valley.

All the rivers of the Croton system will flow into it and both the old and the new aqueducts will be its outlets. It will "back water" up among the hills sixteen miles from its dam, wiping out the sites of three old villages, and will increase the storage capacity two-thirds, bringing it to 70,000,000,000 gallons, adding itself 30,000,000,000.

With these resources and these greatly increased opportunities of storing up a huge reserve of water against evil times of drought, it may be an acre over a million that the poor future will certainly need additions on a larger scale than ever before.

The explanation is to be found in a few illuminative figures. The demands of New York for water have increased at a phenomenal rate. In 1870 the city was using 160,000,000 a day; in the winter of 1895-1900 it used, according to official records, 254,000,000 gallons. This summer the consumption will largely increase. The hour when New York will call for 300,000,000 gallons a day is near at hand; in fact, it is said it will be reached in a year or a little more.

Rather Inconsistent. Philadelphia Press: "My dear," said the sensational clergyman, "I want you to write to all the city editors and ask them to send representatives to the church on Sunday to report on the abolition of the pulpit."

"Very well," replied his wife, who was also his secretary, "what do you propose to preach about?" "I will strongly urge the abolition of all Sunday labor."

PREACHER'S UNIQUE METHODS

Subdues Untrained Horses and Preaches Gospel at Same Time.

EQUALLY SUCCESSFUL IN BOTH CALLINGS

Tames Wild Mustangs and Makes Them Docile and Then Talks to the Crowd of Religion.

William Mullen, who arrived in the city last week from the west, combines in unique occupations of evangelist and expert horse trainer. He has tamed the spirit of some of the most vicious mustangs that have ever entered any of the South Omaha yards and has given daily exhibitions on the streets of Omaha with equine subjects which seemed to the bystanders sufficiently fierce. Mullen's purpose in showing his new method is to draw a crowd, and in the intervals of wrestling with colts he is engaged in preaching the gospel.

Mullen's method of taming horses is one which he himself has perfected, and which he never fails to apply with success. The treatment saves all pain to the animal, Mr. Mullen says, and is much more speedy of result than any other. The candidate for discipline is turned into a paddock with a broken animal and the trainer approaches him gently with a halter, having at hand a rope rigged of a peculiar construction. The first task is to get the halter successfully over the animal's head, when may be done by reaching around the neck of the broken horse to the space next to the fence where the colt may be relied upon to take refuge.

When the halter is safely on, Mr. Mullen goes to the horse's tail, gradually stroking it and lifting it up, standing at the same time on the side of the older animal in order to be safe from kicks. The trainer then separates the tail from the animal, the center of a soft rope around the bone of the tail three times. The tail is then braided, the rope forming a loop. Mr. Mullen's technical method from this point is described in his own language as follows:

"Now take a soft rope which will cut through No. 1, carry the end over the horse's and colt's necks and fasten in the ring of the halter, put the other end in the ring of the back, which we will call No. 2; then the other end of No. 2 into a rope around the neck, which we will call No. 3. Take through the slack of No. 1, dropping the end that is not fast to the halter in front of the colt, still holding up Nos. 2 and 3 from the back of the colt. Reach in front of the colt with No. 1, then pick up the end of No. 1 and bring the two ends of No. 1 from opposite sides, putting the two ends of No. 1 under the body of the colt. If the horse, walk back and put No. 3 through the loop in the colt's tail, putting No. 2 through the eye of No. 2 and then No. 1 through the eye of No. 2, and bring No. 1 to the ring of the halter. Then pick up No. 1 from opposite sides, putting the two ends of No. 1 under the body of the colt. Then take a soft rope over the colt's withers to No. 1; then take the colt in front of a high fence, where he can be tied. No horse or other colts should be left near him now. Do not tie him to a hitching post or tree, for the small strain of the rope will break, and he will get scared, but to a high, smooth, strong fence, five or six feet high, and tie him to the ground. He may buck, jump and throw himself, but if he is in a good place with a ground, with a high fence in front of him, he cannot injure himself, nor yet get tangled in his own rigging."

Mr. Mullen completes his process with kindness and petting and other methods less distinctively his own. The rigging as described technically above has a very peculiar effect upon an animal endowed with a piece of salt pork. Whenever it allows itself to buck or kick the ropes around his neck and strong tendency to draw his mouth back to its tail, the pressure being when the colt becomes more tractable. The broncho which insists on making a display of temper speedily finds himself pursuing his tail in the manner of a kitten in a frolic.

In his street displays Mr. Mullen does not supply himself with a paddock or an extra horse, but subdues the "subject" simply with his formidable rope rigging. It is not his molasses—most people prefer this to sugar, but it is a matter of taste—cover with cold water, set in a moderate oven and bake from eight to ten hours slowly and steadily."

Moody Institute in Chicago. Mr. Mullen has made an interesting trip in his double capacity and has preached gospel and trained horses in nearly every western state since he left the Chicago headquarters of the institute twenty-seven months ago. Although he has sometimes fallen behind in his expense account Mr. Mullen believes that he has accomplished more than enough good in his clerical capacity to cover the shortage. Mr. Mullen has been accompanied on his tour by his wife and two small children. He is now on his way back to Chicago, where he will join in a reunion of his old classmates, all of whom started out into evangelical work at the same time. Mullen will continue to give his exhibitions and gospel services for several afternoons at Sixteenth and Harney streets.

The wolf in the fable paws on sheep's clothing because if he is traced on his own reputation he couldn't accomplish his purpose. Counterfeiters of DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve couldn't sell their worthless salves on their merits, so they put them in boxes and wrappers like DeWitt's. Look for them. Take care. DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve. It cures piles and all skin diseases.

Lieutenant Hobson has not received the reward the secretary of war recommended for his heroic record in Santiago. He recommended that he be advanced eight numbers for the exploit, and it is expected the recommendation will be renewed in his annual report.

It is understood Lieutenant Hobson, who has fondness for line duty, would prefer to be transferred to the line and have his advancement made there instead of in the staff, and it is probable that an effort will be made to comply with his wishes in this respect.

There is only ONE POND'S EXTRACT and everybody knows its purity, strength and great medicinal value. Don't take the weak, watery Witch Hazel preparations represented to be "the same as" POND'S EXTRACT. They generally contain "wood alcohol," which irritates the skin, and, taken internally, is a deadly poison. Get POND'S EXTRACT, sold only in sealed bottles in buff wrappers.

For syphilis, (halting and Mosquito Bites)

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