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 ran behind him some other than that same James Perrers, whom anxiety and conclusion he held in his hand; and again, lurking behind him in the shadow of the doorway, he saw the pale, narrow, furtive countenance of Perrers, the homicide. For a moment there was an intense silence, during which both seemed to hold their breath and were transfixed 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 what do you dare to defy me? Your name?—"

"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 had 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! The 4:50 train and occupied a compartment 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," he said in the monotonous answer.

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

Mr. Perrers 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 Mr. Ashlock?"

"I never denied that I killed him."

Was the calm reply of the delver into his eye encountered that of his master without flinching, and he seemed to have waited and asked for the moment all agitation and alarm.

Edward Burtell tried to frame the next question and failed. His lips moved, but no voice proceeded from their motion.

"Liar!" he muttered, hoarsely, with the eyes glared from his face and dared 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 turn to stone, and the delver, who, it appeared completely exhausted by the strain of the last few minutes, let his chin fall back into his chair and breathed heavily.

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

"What do you mean? What horrible story is this? What fool is—"

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 eyeness began to return and deepen, and his face seemed to fall.

This adjured, Ted stripped off the outer cover.

Within were several sheets of paper, covered with writing, in the delver's trembling hand, which he now knew well.

"THE TRUE NARRATIVE AND CONFESSION OF MR. JAMES PERRERS, OF THE STRANGE TRAGEDY OF THE 27TH OF APRIL."

"I arrived in England on the 15th of April, after having been absent twenty years, for reasons for that prolonged absence I do not care to enter into at length. Suffice it to say that I had committed a crime which brought me within reach of the law, and, but for the influence of friends, I might have suffered the dead penalty of transportation.

"Reckless extravagance, betting and gambling, with a mad attempt to cover my position by speculating with money belonging to others, had brought me to this shameful pass. Twenty years were allowed to blow over—to be hushed up—and the scandal sum made away with was refunded. But I was a Parias, an outcast—shunned and despised by all my kind. One friend stood by me, one man and I knew from the help of his countenance and extended the right hand of fellowship towards me, that he was my old friend, Silas Burtell. He alone was there to bid me farewell as I left England, a disgraced man. He alone bade me hope for better things when I should return, relieving the failure of the past in the promise of the future. So I set sail, and, landing in Australia, resolved of not returning until I had paid back the money I owed those who were acquainted with my shameful history were either dead or else had forgotten my crime.

"At last the term of years which I had set as the limit of my voluntary exile having elapsed, I returned to return. I lingered purposely in my long 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 for 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 strangeness 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 had nothing to consider self 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 day under cover, and so make the acquaintance of his wife and family, and so arrange to travel by that ill-fated train known as the 4:20 express.

"To be continued."

WILL SHAKE NO MORE

Savage Handgripping Now the Fad in Society.

I have made up my mind absolutely, to shake hands no more. The stupid custom never originated in 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 a day's "grip" my hand is all bruised hurt someone's feelings by the grip, and they should hurt my hand a great deal.

At a reception I attended the other night, I was compelled to shake hands of more sitting in a group. I went up to the first person I met and found.

The first man ground together all my knuckle bones. The second squeezed my hand until it was reduced to a mere pulp. The third and fourth he hankled twisted my wrist and almost forced my elbow out of the socket.

I turned them, rout and branch, and hurried away to the far end of the room. When I looked back, they were expanding each other with enormous 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 back in the air and wave it to and fro in gentle contact with the person being addressed. That fashion, too, was idiotic enough, but it was decidedly more civilized than this furious, inescapade grip.—Sketch.

Made Speech to Amuse Wife.

A great many speeches have been delivered in the Parliament of Australasia, lives without any apparent excuse at all, so she said, but the speech he spoke merely to entertain his wife—unmistakably had ample justification.

The Rev. Mr. Hamilton was in the gallery with his wife, but the lady grew tired of the tedious proceedings and announced her intention of departing. He coaxed her to stay, but she was firm, and he had to have made a proposition.

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

She consented to stay and the New York member kept his promise, making, in fact, a very creditable speech—a speech of which he said he had not the slightest interest.

Might Be Worse.

Bilfhang—Why are Mewler leads a regular case of dyspepsia?

Cumsoo—Unhappily married, I suppose?

Bilfhang—Well not exactly, but his wife shares her affection equally between him and a lapdog.

Brief, But Pointed.

"Say, pa," queried little Johnny Bumpernickle, "what's a fool-killer?"

"A fool-killer, my boy, is a policeman, the man, 'is the gun he blows in."

ILLINOIS NEWS

Choice items from over the state, specially selected for our readers.

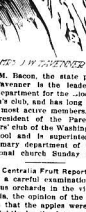
BIG ACREAGE OF BROOM CORN

Increase in Illinois on Account of Unusually Cold Weather.

There has been a sprinkle of buying fever on in the central Illinois broom corn district but some of the brush has brought over $100 a ton. There is a little left in the hands of the growers which is worth $100 or more, but it is in the hands of men who are determined to have their price or more. Shipping from the district has been going on recently and the drain is telling severely on the small amount still left. One crop of thirty tons sold for $90 a ton. The unusual weather has had the effect of increasing the acreage of broom corn in Illinois. The sights were so cold that for over a week ice was frozen over half an inch thick in tanks and most ground which was intended for oats will be planted in broom corn.

HONOR FOR WOMAN

The clubs of Bloomington have been honored by the appointment of a leading member, Mrs. J. W. Taverner, to be delegate at large for Illinois in the biennial convention of the National Federation of Women's Clubs, which will meet in St. Louis May 17 to 25. The selection was made by Mrs. Eugenia M. Bacon, the state president.



MRS. J. W. TAVERNER

Mrs. Taverner is the leader of the home department for the Bloomington Woman's club, and has long been one of the most active members. She is also president of the Parents' and Teachers' club of the Washington Public school and is superintendent of the primary department of the Congregational church Sunday school.

Centralia Fruit Report.

After a careful examination of the numerous orchards in the vicinity of Centralia, the reader of the fruit reports is that the apples were injured very slightly by the late snowstorm. The peaches are in better condition than was expected. In the timberland orchards a half a crop is reported. All other small fruits are safe, and the berry fields look fine.

Defends His Sister.

As the result of a quarrel at the Baltimore and Ohio Southwestern depot at Parmlendale, Patrick Fogarty fired a shotgun at Thomas Dunbar, in the presence of a large number of persons. Dunbar was filled with buckshot. Fogarty claims he shot Beard in defense of his sister.

C. E. Convention.

The Centralia district Christian Endeavor convention will be held in Mount Vernon on Wednesday and Thursday, June 1 and 2. The counties of Marion, Clinton, Washington and Jefferson comprise the district. There will be 100 or more delegates in attendance.

Clerks Will Play Ball.

The retail clerks of Mount Vernon have organized a baseball team. Fletcher Jones is pitcher, Kalpaugh and Walter Boyd manager. The other members are Ed Dunbar, La Verne Cooper, Charles Palmer, Frank Dewey, Fritz Oehm, Orlie Pemberton and William Dewey.

National Guard Changes.

Adjt. Gen. Thomas W. Scott has appointed William S. White as captain and assistant quartermaster, national guard. The resignation of Capt. John D. Yorkes as captain of troop D of Springfield, first cavalry, has been accepted.

World's Fair Guard.

Cliff O. Maurer, former captain of Company B, Fifth Infantry, of Taylorville, has been appointed one of the Jefferson guards at the World's Fair.

Farmers Elect Officers.

The Farmers' union of Richview has elected the following officers: President, Clyde Whittenberg; secretary, Edward Tate, treasurer, J. Vaughn.

Successful Pauliist Mission.

The mission which is being conducted by Fathers Conway and Harney, Paulist fathers of St. Patrick's Catholic church, Decatur, is being largely attended. The mission will be continued until June 1.

Speaks to Librarians.

Miss Alice Tyler, secretary of the Iowa Library commission, spoke at Decatur last week before the Illinois Library association. Miss Tyler was formerly assistant librarian of the Decatur library.

BARREN VICTORY FOR NEGROES.

Little Likelihood of Success in Enterting School at Alten.

An interesting feature of the Alton school case decided by the Illinois supreme court is that the colored people as a whole may still be unable to gain the admission to all the white schools. The case started from the Scott litigation for his two children. During the seven years the case has been in court, at least one of the children has been older than the school age, and the other is nearly too old to go to school. Now it is claimed by local authority that when the mandate is issued by the supreme court, as it probably will be soon, the writ will apply only to the Scott children, and that for the remainder of the colored people the victory will be a barren one. Upper Alton had a similar suit many years ago, and when the writ of mandamus was issued it applied only to the children of one family.

Family is Reunited.

Mrs. Agnes Watts and her little daughter, Catherine Catherine Watts, have returned to Springfield from Canada, after a two years' absence, and once more their family is reunited. After litigation involving kidnaping charges, adulteries and divorces, recently settled, peace is restored. Mrs. Agnes Watts, Jr., who was named as one of the defendants in the kidnaping case, was recently married in the East to Dr. Stanley Whitley, formerly of Springfield.

Prepares for Trouble.

Capt. J. N. Ashlock of the Alton night police has one of the most dangerous weapons in the city, which he purchased in anticipation of trouble during the Pyrotechnic Fair. The weapon is a magazine revolver machine gun, similar to the weapons used by the Chicago city police. Captain Ashlock will use the weapon to guard the treasurer's office at night, it being necessary for him to be frequently alone guarding bad characters.

Children Get Property.

The supreme court has affirmed the decision of the Christian county circuit court in the Orlando Piper will case. The case was decided by both courts readers invalid the will of Orlando Piper of Assumption, and the estate, valued at $50,000, will now be divided equally among the eight children of the deceased. Three of the children, who were not bequeathed any property, brought the suit to test the validity of the will.

State Historical Exhibit.

George B. Black and Mrs. Jessie Weber have gone to St. Louis to arrange for the exhibit of the Illinois state historical society, showing the interesting features of the extensive exhibit at the World's Fair will be valuable relics from the Lincoln home in Springfield, and Lincoln relics from Washington and other places in the United States.

Quincy Utters a Protest.

It having been announced that the Wabash intends to run its fast passenger trains that connect Quincy with towns in Brown county, Quincy business men and shippers had an indignation meeting in the chamber of commerce. A committee was appointed to draft resolutions protesting against the action of the Wabash and present to the general manager.

Traction Company Defies Mayor.

The Illinois Central Traction Company is acting on the theory that the franchise granted by the mayor of Springfield city council, signed by the mayor, is effective and will take up the work of building under that franchise. The mayor says he will prevent the work with his police force if it is attempted, and probably be carried into the courts.

Boring for Coal.

Jayne brothers are boring for coal at their mines in the south part of Springfield, near the Quincy, Carrollton and St. Louis railroad. They struck a fine vein of coal at a depth of 34 feet. The gas was lighted and burned for some time, but, as the pressure is greatly reduced, it is believed to be only a pocket which will soon be exhausted.

Gets World's Fair Appointment.

Roy L. Wilson, of Alton, has been appointed assistant superintendent of the display division in the Horticultural building at the World's Fair. Mr. Wilson is a graduate of the horticultural department of the Illinois university at Champaign.

Woman Murderer Begins Sentence.

Mary Terry, sentenced to twenty years in Chester penitentiary for the murder of Leona Granberry, has been taken to the prison.

Merchants Elect Officers.

At the annual meeting of Quincy Retail Merchants' association, J. O. Fisher was elected president, George Schoel vice president, Frank Wolter, treasurer, David Stern, W. T. Dunn, M. A. J. Oppenheim and N. Heintz, trustees.

Has Arm Torn Off.

Richard Taylor and David Miller were thrown from a wagon in a runaway accident at Quincy. Taylor had his right arm torn off at the elbow, and Miller received numerous bruises.

LARGEST TREE IS CUT FOR FAIR

Will Furnish Enough Material to Build Forty Farm Wagons.

Alton will furnish a tree on the farm of Mike Rebels, six miles east of Waterloo, is being chopped down and will be exhibited at the World's Fair. It is probably the largest tree in Illinois. It is 95 feet high, 8 feet in diameter near the ground, and 5 feet thick so feet up, where shoots its first branch. It was purchased by J. M. White of Macoutah for $80. It will be cut into 10-foot sections. A spot should have had to be entered, as there is no circular saw in this section large enough. It is estimated that forty farm wagons could be made of the wood. The timber is valued at $1,000. Rebels claimed, one day he put of gold at the foot of this tree, which has made him comparatively wealthy.

Wins $10 by Marrying.

R. J. Carson of East St. Louis won $10 with a friend that he would be married before noon. The wager was taken, and Carson telephoned that man. While an hour after making the wager, Carson had gone Miss Lizzie Vogt, formerly Miss Allen Jackson, and secured a marriage license him downtown. She did so, and at her request, the license office, Carson requested Mrs. Vogt to come in and get a marriage license. She complied and in less than fifteen minutes they had been married by Judge Driscoll.

Sells Skin to Aid Mother.

In an attempt to aid the mother of his employes who was terribly burned, Charles Richter advertised in the Chicago papers that he would give $1,000 worth of live cuticle. Among the persons who responded to Richter's "ad" was a boy. He offered to let the doctors take as much as they wanted, and the operation was sick, and he wanted the money to aid her.

Immense Gas Reservoir.

The Citizens' Gas, Electric and Heating company completed a deal by which that company gains into possession of 275 acres of land in Ohio, north of Fort Worth. Eighty acres of this will be used for a new reservoir. The capacity of the reservoir will be 400,000,000 gallons, eight times the capacity of the old reservoir.

Southern Illinois Coal Line.

A new coal railroad is known as the Egyptian Coal Railroad Company, has been organized in Carbondale, with the following as directors: Chas. E. Hamilton, Chas. H. Hieth, Joseph Bundy, R. E. Rendrick, F. Hatchinson, E. S. Patten and G. R. Huffman. The new line will run from the Mississippi river to Mount Vernon.

Edwardsville Will Get Road.

L. Nichols, consulting engineer of the McKinley syndicate, which is constructing the Chicago, Springfield and St. Louis electric line, stated that Edwardsville would be made the northern portion of that company's road was decided upon, the road would pass through Edwardsville.

Raise Library Guarantee.

The state board of health has removed the quarantine from the Taylorville public library. The place has been closed for four weeks because of a scarlet fever epidemic.

Violates School Law.

Mrs. Anna Tokafer, charged with violating the school law by neglecting to send her children to school, was fined $10 and costs by Justice of Peace W. H. Kaun of Taylorville.

Big Block of Coal.

The Breese coal and mining company has shipped a 700-pound block of coal at the St. Louis world's fair. It was mined by Henry Dorries, Jr., and is a well known miner.

School Exhibit for Fair.

The Cairo high school has collected an exhibit of the work done in the school during the year, and will ship it to schools to be sent to the World's fair at St. Louis.

Scarlet Fever Closes School.

The Sugar Grove school, east of Virginia, has been closed on account of an epidemic of scarlet fever in that neighborhood.

Asks $10,000 From Railroad.

James Kirkland, a boy employed in the circuit court at Springfield sealed the Wabash at Alton for $10,000 for personal injuries.

Baptizes Thirty-five.

Rev. W. M. Rhoads of Upper Alton baptized thirty-five persons at the pleasant Point Baptist church, near Greenfield.

Class Honors for Girl.

Miss Mollie Lewis has been selected by the senior class of Jacksonville for 1904 to deliver the salutatory address. Miss Lewis is a daughter of Mayor Lewis. The graduating exercises will take place in May.

Take Up Dancesome Work.

The Woman's Home Missionary society of the three Methodist Episcopal churches in Springfield will engage in a dancesome work in the city, beginning May 2, with Miss Hartwell in charge.