

FOR HONOR'S SAKE.

BY E. L. FARMER.

PART THE SECOND.

THE CABLE MESSAGE FROM AMERICA.

At 10 o'clock on the night following this exciting day Mr. Bainbridge, Q. C., and his friend Dr. Daincourt were chatting together in the dining room of the lawyer's house. They had met by appointment, and were now conversing over the strange incidents of the Layton trial.

"It is in harmony with the whole of the proceedings. I am afraid, when Layton is put again upon his trial, that there will be no further discussion on the part of the jury, and that his conviction is certain."

"With the evidence as it stands at present," said Mr. Bainbridge, thoughtfully, "you are right in your conclusion. But there is here a mystery to be brought to light which, discovered, may lead to a different result. Almost unthinkably as this mystery now appears to be, its unravelment may, after all, depend upon a very slender thread. Fortunately, Layton's second trial cannot take place for a month. Before the month expires I hope to be able to lay my hand upon evidence which will prove him innocent of the charge."

"To judge from his attitude," said Dr. Daincourt, "he is indifferent as to the result."

"You are mistaken," said the lawyer; "it is only that he will not owe his release certain manner which I believe it to be in his power to disclose. Has it not occurred to you that he has been anxious all through to keep something in the background?"

"Yes," replied Dr. Daincourt, "that has been my impression; but it might be something which would more firmly fix his guilt. Is it your intention to follow up the case?"

"The chain, if there be one, is safely hidden, and I cannot for the life of me see a single link."

Mr. Bainbridge, leaning back in his chair, did not reply for a few moments, and then he said:

"I have two links to commence with. One of these is shadowy; the other is certain and tangible." And then, with the air of a man whose thoughts were engaged upon an important subject, he exclaimed, "If I could only discover its meaning!"

"The meaning of what?"

"The lawyer took a pack of cards from a drawer and selected a card, which he handed to Dr. Daincourt.

"The nine of hearts," said the doctor. "The card," said the lawyer, "that was found in the pocket of Layton's ulster."

"Is this your tangible link?" asked Dr. Daincourt, turning the card over in his hand.

"It is my tangible link," replied the lawyer.

"You are adding mystery to mystery. I think not," said the lawyer. "You were not in the court when the nine of hearts was produced."

"No."

"That and the latch key of Layton's street door were the only articles found in the pockets of the ulster. When the evidence relating to these articles was being given, I closely observed Layton's face. I knew, but he did not, that these two articles were all that were discovered in the pockets of the incriminating coat. When the latch key was held up he smiled faintly; he was not surprised. But when the nine of hearts was produced there came to his eyes a startled look—a look of bewilderment and astonishment; indeed, there was something of horror in his face. I needed no further sign to make me positive that he had been in possession of the card, and that it was the first time he had seen it."

"Something of horror, you say?"

"It was my impression, and I cannot account for it. Not so with his bewilderment and astonishment. To my mind they are easily explained."

"He asked no questions concerning the card," remarked Dr. Daincourt.

"He asked no questions," said the lawyer, somewhat irritably, "concerning a hundred matters upon which the witnesses should have been hardily pressed. Can you not see that this accentuated conviction that the nine of hearts is a link in the chain?"

"Yes, supposing you had not already arrived at a false conclusion with respect to poor Layton's knowledge of the possession of the card."

"I will stake my life and reputation," said the lawyer, earnestly, "upon the correctness of my conclusion. I will stake my life and reputation that, until that moment, Edward Layton did not know that the card was in his pocket."

"Then somebody must have placed it there."

"As you say, somebody must have placed it there."

"But in the name of all that is reasonable," exclaimed Dr. Daincourt, "what possible connection can you trace between a playing card, which is the ace of clubs or the king of spades, or the nine of hearts—it matters not which—what possible connection can you find between any playing card and the awful charge brought against Layton?"

"That," said the lawyer, drumming upon the table with his fingers, "is what I have to discover. You do not know, doctor, upon what slight threads the most important issues hang."

"I think I do," said Dr. Daincourt, with a smile.

not give in, and that person was on the jury. The prisoner was tried again and acquitted. During the time that had elapsed between the first and second trials additional evidence was found which proved the prisoner to be innocent. The jurymen, who held out for the first trial happened to have been some years before a friend of the prisoner, a fact, of course, which was not known when the jury was empaneled. After the result of the second trial Mr. B. declared that he had been guided by his feelings and not by the evidence.

"And you think that something of the sort may have happened in this case?"

"Had you been on the jury, what would have been your verdict?"

"Had I been on the jury, what would have been my verdict? Despite my firm conviction that Layton is an innocent man, I should have brought him in guilty. It was not my opinion I had to be guided by, it was the evidence, and the evidence in Layton's case, as it was presented to the court and appears in the papers, indisputably proclaimed him to be a guilty man. Again, when the verdict was pronounced I withdrew my face; as I say there a startled look of wonder and astonishment; to his own mind the evidence against him was conclusive. Then it was that I observed him for the first time gaze upon me with an expression of interest and attention. Not once during the trial had he looked at them in any but a casual way, and I should not be surprised to learn that he was ignorant of their names. This is most unusual. Ordinarily a prisoner pays great attention to the jury upon whose verdict his fate hangs. He gazes upon them with deep anxiety, he notes every change in their countenance, and he is anxious to know what he believes to be in his favor. Not so with Layton. When the jury were empaneled, he paid not the slightest attention to them; he did not turn his eyes toward them; he might have been both deaf and blind for all the interest he evinced."

"Perhaps you are right," said the doctor, "that he is very short sighted, and that without his glasses it would have been impossible for him to distinguish the foremen."

"I am quite aware of it," said the lawyer; "but he had his glasses hanging round his neck, and it is remarkable that not once during the trial did he put them to his eyes. I have seen him tapping his pocketbook, a list of the names, social standing, and business and professions of the jurymen engaged on this Layton mystery. As regards only one of them, my informant is incomplete. I know their ages, whether they are married or single, whether they have families, etc. I know something more—I know the name of the one man who would not subscribe to the verdict of guilty which the other eleven, almost without leaving the box, were ready to pronounce. Curiously enough, this dissentient is the person respecting whom I have not yet complete particulars. I know his name, but he has not been supplied with his address. I shall, however, obtain it easily, if I require it."

"What is his name?" asked Dr. Daincourt.

"James Rutland," replied the lawyer. "At this moment there was a knock at the door; and a man servant made his appearance."

"A telegram laid," said the lawyer, "has brought this message and is waiting to know whether it is correct and whether there is any answer. He says he has been in your room, and that he was directed on here to your private address, the instructions being that the message was to be delivered immediately, either at your professional or private residence."

Mr. Bainbridge opened the telegram and read it. It was unusually lengthy, and from the expression of his face appeared to cause him great surprise.

"Let the lad wait in the hall," he said to his servant, "and you come up the moment I ring."

"Very well, sir," said the servant, and he went to the door, closing the door softly behind him.

"I have been taking a leaf out of your book," said Dr. Daincourt. "You seem to learn so much from observing the faces of people that I have been endeavoring to watch your face while you were perusing the telegram."

"What have you learned?" asked the lawyer.

"Nothing," replied Dr. Daincourt, smiling, "except that it appears almost as long as a letter, and that it has caused you surprise."

"Has caused me something more than that? It has absolutely startled me."

"You must forgive my rudeness. I spoke lightly, not seriously. If you have anything particular to attend to, don't mind me, I will go."

"No," said the lawyer, "I want you, and I think you will be as started as I am myself. This is a cable message from Pittsburgh, America, and, as you judged, it is more like a letter than a telegram. See, it covers three sides of paper; I will read it to you:

"From Archibald Laing, Box 1236, P. O., Pittsburgh, U. S., to Mr. Bainbridge, Q. C., London.

"Reports of the result of Edward Layton's trial have been published in the papers. There will, of course, be a new trial. If at or before that new trial you establish Layton's innocence, I hold myself ready to pay you the sum of \$25,000. If you will employ yourself to that end, I have called to Messrs. Morgan & Co., bankers, Thresholme street, to pay you the sum of \$10,000 in independent of the \$25,000 mentioned in the telegram. See, it covers three sides of paper; I will read it to you:

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The Financier South of March. An observant metropolitan barber says that he can sell one's physical condition by the state of the hair!

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