

THE MYSTERY OF THE INN BY THE SHORE



Florence Warden,
Author of "The House on the Marsh," etc.

CHAPTER XV.

There was an adjournment for luncheon at this point, and afterward came the supreme sensation of the day—the appearance of Nell Claris as a witness.

Tongues had been busy with her name since the crowd filed out of the court. No one could doubt the import of the questions the coroner had put to Miss Bostal. It was plain that Nell, the only person, except Clifford, who was known to have had any cause of ill-will toward the deceased man, now lay under the suspicion of being concerned in his death.

Perhaps the girl herself, when she came from the magistrate's room into the court, was the only person present who did not realize the position in which she stood. For she alone had been absent when the searching questions were being put to her friend.

Nell made a bad impression from the very first. She was wrapped up to the eyes in a long, squirrel-lined cloak and a boa of brown fur, and she wore a large hat, which helped to hide even the outline of her face from the crowd in the court behind her. But from the glimpse which could be caught of her features as she moved hurriedly into the place pointed out to her, it was evident that her far-famed beauty was for a time under eclipse, for her complexion was blurred with crying and her blue eyes looked sunken and colorless.

All that seemed to concern her was to hide as much of her face as she could, and to give her answers so that they should be heard by as few persons as possible. Throughout the whole of her evidence she had to be admonished to "speak up," and to answer at once and straightforwardly, instead of taking time to think out her replies, as she showed a strong disposition to do.

Altogether she was a bad witness, decidedly the worst of them all. Not even nervous Mrs. Mann gave so much trouble. If there had been no breath of suspicion of the girl before she stood in the witness's place, her manner and her answers would have been sufficient to arouse the feeling in all those who heard and saw her give evidence.

"You are the niece of Mr. George Claris, I believe? And you were present when the quarrel took place between the deceased and Mr. Clifford King?"

"There was no quarrel. Jim Stickels attacked him. He struck Mr. King with his knife through the window. He stabbed him."

"And Mr. King struck him back?"

"No. Yes. At least he caught hold of him and flung him away."

"Flung him to the ground, in fact?"

"I don't know whether he meant to do that."

"But, as a matter of fact, the deceased did fall to the ground, and lay there, stunned."

"He struck his head against the ledge of the window?"

"Yes. Do you know the reason why the deceased attacked Mr. King?"

Nell made no answer.

"I am sorry to have to press for an answer. Remember, there is nothing whatever creditable to a lady in being the object of jealousy between two hot-blooded young men. I believe it is an undoubted fact that Jim Stickels, the deceased, was jealous of Mr. King, and that it was the sight of Mr. King and you together which provoked him to attack a rival whom he regarded, rightly or wrongly, as more favored than himself."

Nell blundered into a hasty, incoherent answer:

"No. It was not that. He didn't. He couldn't. It was not that he was jealous. I always hated Jim Stickels, and he knew it. How could he be jealous when I detested him?"

For the first and last time in the course of her evidence Nell's voice was loud enough to be heard throughout the court as she uttered this terribly damaging speech.

When she had spoken and stood staring at the coroner with wide-open eyes a great wave of horror passed over the court, and the jury to a man felt sorry for her. They had all known this dissipated fisherman; they all felt the guilt of repugnance that must have existed between this refined young girl and him. And, while the conclusion was forced in upon their minds that she had taken violent means to rid herself of him and his persecution, they felt that they would have given a great deal to have been able to hush the matter up.

For while the loathing she so frankly expressed gave a reason and almost an excuse for her crime, on the other hand her fearless avowal of feeling now, when it was so greatly to her interest to hide it, seemed to show that she was in a state of mind in which she could hardly be considered responsible for her actions.

Meanwhile, however, the inquiry had to go on.

"Well, then," pursued the coroner, getting away from the fatal subject and speaking with extra dryness to hide his own sympathy, "you went to Colonel Bostal's house, and you and Miss Bostal went together to see Jim Stickels at his lodging to ask how he was?"

But here again Nell blundered past the opportunity thus given her for clearing her own character.

"I didn't want to go. Miss Theodora made me go," said she.

"Well, you went, at any rate, and you saw him, and spoke to him."

"No. I didn't speak to him."

"Well, you saw him, didn't you?"

"No. I wouldn't look at him. I heard him; that was all."

"You heard him tell Miss Bostal that he was going to Stron?"

Here a frightened look passed suddenly across the girl's face, causing

only an echo of his colleague, and was hardly listened to by the crowd in the court, who were occupied with a stronger situation.

The coroner's address to the jury was a very short one, and indicated more doubt in the mind of the coroner than existed in the minds of his hearers.

When the jury had retired the murmurs rose higher and higher, and the excited discussion of the probable verdict, although repressed a little by the presence of Nell, who sat like a statue by Miss Bostal's side, had grown into a loud roar before the jury returned into court.

When they took their seats the roar of the crowd had suddenly given place to a hush, in which the voice of the coroner asking if they had agreed upon a verdict was distinctly heard.

In a few minutes the news had spread from the court to the crowd in the market place outside that the verdict was: "Wilful murder by some person or persons unknown."

CHAPTER XVI.

When Miss Bostal, at the end of the proceedings, turned to Nell and told her to get up and come home, she found that the girl had fainted.

George Claris, who had not been near his niece during the inquest, but had stood in a corner by himself with folded arms watching the proceedings with a heavy frown, came forward suddenly at Miss Bostal's imperious gesture.

"Look, look, Mr. Claris, don't you see the poor child has fainted?" cried she, astonished at his apathy.

"Yes, I see," replied he, shortly, with a cool nod.

"Poor little thing! The horror has been too much for her! Poor little thing!" went on the lady, as she quickly unfastened Nell's cloak and loosened the front of her gown. "A glass of water, some one, please. And don't crowd around her; let her have all the air we can."

When the girl came to herself, as she did in a very few minutes, thanks to the ministrations of Miss Bostal, she was led away to the dog cart, which was waiting outside.

"Take great care of her," said Miss Bostal, solicitously, as Nell was hoisted in, in very pale and lifeless and miserable. "And if you will take my advice, you will send her off to her aunt in London by the first train to-morrow morning."

George Claris, who had remained taciturn, sullen, and on the whole rather neglectful of his niece, frowned as he threw a quick glance at her.

"Oh, she's all right," he said, with gruffness most unusual with him in speaking of his darling Nell. "She only wants the fresh air to bring her to. How are you going to get back, Miss Bostal? Can't I give you a lift? We will make room for you."

He looked up at Nell, expecting her to echo his words, and to make room for her friend; but the girl never moved.

Her uncle looked angry, but Miss Theodora smiled indulgently.

"Leave her alone," she whispered. "She's not herself yet. This wretched business has been too much for her."

"Why should it be too much for her more than for anybody else?" asked the innkeeper, fiercely.

Nell turned with a start, and her eyes were full of horror as she met those of her uncle. Miss Theodora pulled him impatiently by the arm.

"Men have no sympathy," she said reproachfully. "My father is just the same. You don't make any allowance for a woman's nerves. And yet, if we don't have nerves, you complain that we are mannish and unlovable. Oh, Mr. Claris, I didn't think it of you! I didn't, indeed. I've often thought that your gentleness to Nell was a pattern to be copied by other men in their treatment of ladies."

The excitement of the day had rendered Miss Bostal much more loquacious and condescending than was usual with her. Her father, who had not been in court, came up at this moment, and, with a nod to George Claris and a cold salutation to Nell, drew Miss Theodora away.

The old gentleman looked cold and was decidedly cross.

"Come away! Come along!" said he. "Mrs. Landsdowne will give us a lift on her way home. I don't know what you want to go hanging about this place for a minute longer than you need. I should think you were glad to get this gruesome affair done with. Come along!"

And Miss Theodora dutifully allowed him to lead her away.

To be Continued.

Known by Your Shoes.

If you go regularly to the same bootblack he not only knows you by your shoes, but he knows every pair of shoes that he has ever seen on your feet.

"These are better shoes than the button ones you wore last fall," said one of the Italian footworn shiners, who presumed on a long business acquaintance. He told the truth and set me to thinking.

"Do you remember those shoes?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. I put a button on them the first time you wore them, and that was right after you stopped wearing the light tan ones that you had for three summers."

"Do you notice and remember all such things?"

"Yes. We used to call you 'Old Tans' when we spoke of you. You see, we talk about our customers sometimes, and always know them best by their shoes. That man who just went out is 'Old Congress Gaiters.' We don't mean anything wrong by such names; it is only our way. We have very few customers who wear congress gaiters, and he is the only one who comes every day. Most of them are old men, for you see they can put the gaiters on easier than other shoes. That gentleman always wears them and he makes a pair last him nine months."—New York Herald.

The Fastest Ocean Steamers.

The fastest passenger steamer in the world is the Deutschland, which has made 554 miles a day, with a consumption of 570 tons of coal, almost a ton a mile.

Berlin is to have a school for coachmen, in which drivers are to be taught how to get along in the crowded city streets.

The Pigeon-Post at Sea and in War.

By Adrien De Jassaud, of Paris.

IN France, during the siege of Paris, at a time when the German armies were surrounding the capital and cutting off the Parisian population from all communication with the outside world, Monsieur Rampont, the then Postmaster-General, conceived the idea of intrusting to pigeons the transmission of news, thus giving the inhabitants a knowledge of what was going on in the provinces. In this way those members of

free. The experiment is renewed daily, the distance on each occasion being imperceptibly increased. The bird's education cannot be considered complete, however, until it has attained the age of three years.

On land the pigeon is able to cover long distances, such as those between Rouen and Brussels or New York and Chicago. Its ratio of flight, under normal atmospheric conditions, is never less than 51,555 miles an hour, and never exceeds 49,853 miles on a long distance.

The pigeons are brought aboard the Transatlantic steamers in wicker cages having a drinking trough. As soon as the French coast is out of sight passengers desirous of sending a dispatch are notified to prepare it. In pursuance of this object the passenger is handed a small rectangular card on which he is to write as legibly as possible what he wishes to communicate, plus the name and address of the receiver; the card is then handed to the clerk intrusted with the transmission of the message. The clerk puts the different messages into a group, photographs them on a plaque to which adheres a film, reducing the writing in the course of the operation to such a degree that it cannot be deciphered except with the aid of a magnifying glass. The proof is developed, the film detached and carefully rolled, and then placed in a small bamboo tube, hermetically sealed, and weighing hardly one and one-half grammes. To this tube is attached a light kid band, provided with an automatic button such as is sometimes used to fasten gloves.

As soon as the tubes are ready the pigeons are taken out of the baskets containing them. These birds are extremely delicate—the slightest crushing injures them and renders them unusable.

On the following day, and under unfavorable weather conditions, the Champagne, having covered 360 miles, rescued the crew of the doomed Bothnia. Seven pigeons were sent

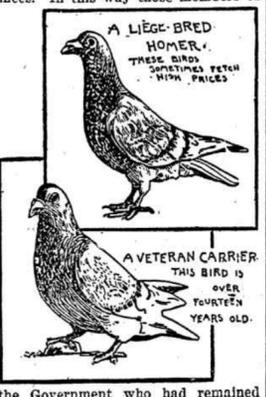
forth, each bearing a similar despatch. They took their flight at noon, and it was calculated that they should either reach land or some ship's mast. One of the birds dropped on the deck of the Chatterton, in the Bay of Biscay; the Chatterton cabled to Paris and to New York the loss of the Bothnia. A second bird was picked up by a freight steamer, which thereupon shaped its course for the locality of the disaster, came across the derelict, and towed it into an Irish port. A week later a third pigeon, wounded, and minus its despatch, reached its cote. The four others were never heard of again.

The pigeons employed by the Compagnie Transatlantique are selected with the most rigorous care. The head must be big and round; the bill relatively short and surmounted with a fleshy, heart-shaped excrescence; the eyes shine brightly; the breast must bunch out; the legs be short; and the wings must meet on a narrow and powerful tail.

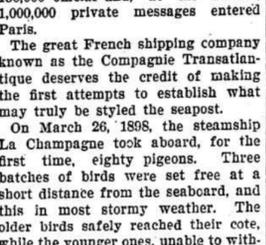
In addition to being endowed with an extraordinary instinct for shaping its course, a good carrier pigeon must possess great rapidity of flight and tremendous staying power. The first-mentioned quality—the "homing instinct," which is innate—is not susceptible of any improvement. The two others

may be secured by means of progressive and regular training. A pigeon's education begins when it is but three or four months old. It is conveyed a mile distant from its cote and then set

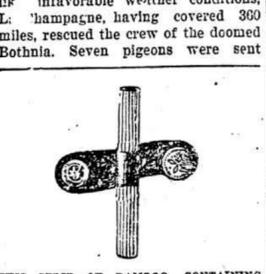
to be made use of for national defense. During a campaign the success of operations depends at most times on the rapidity with which the commander-in-chief is informed of the enemy's



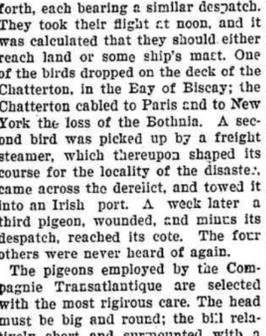
THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAD REMAINED IN PARIS WERE PUT IN TOUCH WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE WHO WERE AT TOURS. IN ORDER TO ATTAIN THIS SUBJECT A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PIGEONS WERE CONVEYED BY BALLOON FROM PARIS TO TOURS, WHENCE THEY WERE SET FREE, BEARING MESSAGES PHOTOGRAPHICALLY REDUCED TO MICROSCOPIC DIMENSIONS ON VERY LIGHT COLLOID FILMS. IN THOSE DAYS THE DISPATCH WAS ROLLED UP AND INCLOSED IN A QUILL ATTACHED TO THE TAIL OF THE PIGEON. BY THESE MEANS OVER 150,000 OFFICIAL AND, AT THE LOWEST, 1,000,000 PRIVATE MESSAGES ENTERED PARIS.



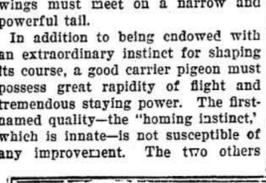
THE GREAT FRENCH SHIPPING COMPANY KNOWN AS THE COMPAGNIE TRANSATLANTIQUE DESERVES THE CREDIT OF MAKING THE FIRST ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH WHAT MAY TRULY BE STYLED THE SEAPOST.



THE CLERK TO DO WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM. THE CLERK ATTACHES EACH TUBE TO THE LEG OF A PIGEON BY BUTTONING THE KID BAND ABOVE DESCRIBED. A PIGEON IS ABLE TO CARRY A WEIGHT OF FIFTEEN GRAMMES WITHOUT ITS DETRACTING FROM THE RAPIDITY OF ITS FLIGHT.



IT HAS OFTEN BEEN ASKED WHAT CONSTITUTES THE MARVELLOUS FACULTY OF SHAPING ITS COURSE BY THE CARRIER PIGEON. NEITHER SEA NOR MOUNTAINS NOR FORESTS INTERFERE WITH THIS FACULTY. THE BIRD STEERS ITS COURSE AS IF GUIDED BY A COMPASS. AS THE PIGEON FLIES AT AN ALTITUDE OF NOT MORE THAN 100 YARDS TO 180 YARDS IT IS NOT AIDED BY ITS VISION, FOR IN THAT CASE, GIVEN THE ROUNDNESS OF THE GLOBE, IT WOULD HAVE TO SOAR TO AN ALTITUDE OF 7076 YARDS. NOW, ACCORDING TO AERONAUTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED IN THE MATTER, THE BIRD AT THAT ALTITUDE QUICKLY DROPS TO A MUCH LOWER ONE. ARE THEY THEN GUIDED BY MAGNETIC CURRENTS? ARE THEY ENDOWED WITH A SIXTH SENSE? THE MATTER REMAINS A MYSTERY.



THE PIGEON IS ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THE TALONS OF THE BIRDS OF PREY TO RENDER USELESS ALL EFFORTS MADE TO CAPTURE THE DISPATCH. MOREOVER, THE PIGEONS ARE PROTECTED FROM THE ASSAULT OF THE

movements. To this end use is made of cavalry patrols and of the field telegraph and telephone. But to insure the safe arrival of information none of these means is so reliable as the carrier pigeon. Scouts are liable to be made prisoners or killed, telegraph or telephone wires may work faultily or be destroyed. These mishaps are avoided by the use of the carrier pigeon.

In war time the role of cavalry consists more especially in seeing and reporting what it has seen. It is often an easy matter to see, but to report oftentimes attended by difficulties.

Herein lies the value of the carrier pigeon. Troops on the march are accompanied by portable cotes. They consist of huge wire cages provided with lateral shutters; the cage is transported on a two-horse four-wheeled wagon. When it is found expedient to reconnoitre the position of the enemy or surprise its movements a few pigeons are taken out of the portable cote and placed in a wicker cage in

thirty thousand designs submitted to the recent competition open to Australian artists and others. The flag decided upon has the Union Jack in the top left hand corner, with a

pointed star immediately beneath it emblematic of the six federated States, while the other half of the flag is devoted to depicting the Southern Cross. The Government and official color is to be blue, while the mercantile marine of the new commonwealth will fly the flag with a red ground. The approved design was submitted by several competitors.—New York Tribune.

To Ward Off Avalanches.

Avalanches are so common in Switzerland that devices are now being made to control them. The Swiss form earthenworks or intrenchments which are pointed in such a fashion that avalanches coming in contact with them are split and so driven aside.

An earthwork of this kind has been built near the church at Oberwald in Wallis. It was first hollow within but received so many shocks from avalanches that the people of the Oberwald recently made it massive and solid.

Primitive though this method of guarding against huge masses of snow, the Swiss maintain that it is proving of admirable service, and owing to the attention which Dr. Steiner has now drawn to the subject, it is thought likely that many new earthworks will be erected in Switzerland during the summer. At first sight it may seem incredible that a comparatively small mass of earth and stone should have the power of opposing any resistance to an avalanche, but experience shows that it has, and the reason evident is because it is properly constructed and is placed in the very spot where the impact of an avalanche is likely to do it the least injury.

Happy Course of a Bowlder.

One of the greatest curiosities in the neighborhood of New York is now to be seen at the foot of the Falls. Between two frame houses built there is a giant bowlder twenty-five feet wide, which fell from a great height at the top of the Falls, and sweeping down the front of the cliffs, up rooted big trees, tore up tons of loose stone and cut a wide swath the entire distance. Finally, after zig-zagging from one side to the other, it rolled in between two frame houses and stopped there.

The people were asleep in the houses

when the rock started. They had barely time to make their escape when it made its appearance at their front door. They are now thanking the lucky stars that the enormous stone did not hit one of the buildings.—New York Herald.

Worth It.

The cost of living, we are told, has reached the highest point for a decade. Well, and is not life worth more than it ever was before? It certainly is to those of us who are alive.—Boston Transcript.

Age Limit For Railroad Employees.

A compulsory scheme of retirement at the age of sixty-five of all responsible officials and stationmasters in the service of the North British Railway Company is shortly to be inaugurated.

Boy Murderer in Prison For Life.

Smith Jones, aged thirteen, was received at the Indiana Northern Prison, Laporte, October 24, to serve a life sentence for murder. Warden Shideler says Jones is the youngest convict received in the history of the prison, and it is said that no other penal institution in the United States has so young a prisoner convicted of first degree murder. Jones killed a man twelve years his senior. The latter is alleged to have taunted Jones, and the boy retaliated by drawing a knife and stabbing his victim to death.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

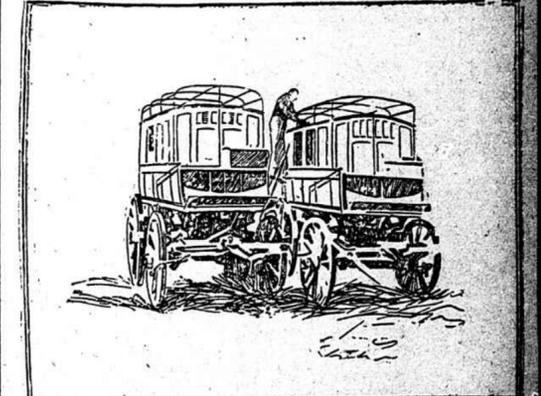
Aerolite Burns a Barn.

It is reported from Kieff that a large aerolite fell in the village of Wisienki, a few miles from Kieff, the noise of its fall being heard for a distance of fifteen miles.

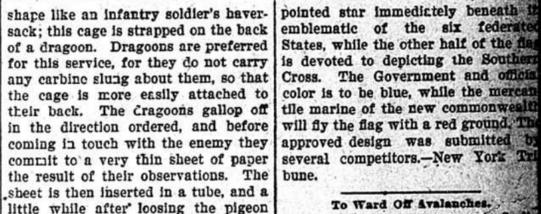
According to a Warsaw dispatch (October 18) in the London Express, the aerolite crashed through a barn, setting it on fire, and within half an hour fourteen peasants' houses were in flames. A boy, three years old, was burned to a cinder in one of the dwellings.



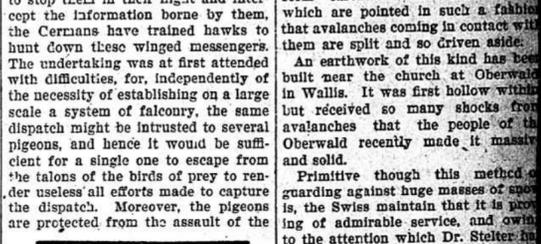
THE AUSTRALIAN FLAG. A Selection Made From the Thirty Thousand Designs Submitted to the recent Competition Open to Australian Artists and Others. The Flag Decided Upon Has the Union Jack in the Top Left Hand Corner, with a



TWO OF THE PIGEON-CAGE WAGONS USED IN THE FRENCH ARMY.



A CASE FOR A CARRIER-PIGEON.



A DRAGOON SCOUT—HE CARRIES ON HIS BACK A SUPPLY OF PIGEON MESSENGERS.