

"PING-PONG."

The shades of night were falling fast
As to the dining-room there passed
A youthful pair, who gayly bore
A box, on which was this—no more—
"Ping-pong."

They cleared the table with a swish,
From dolly down to butter-dish;
Then through the center stretched a net
And soon the ball the racket met—
"Ping-pong."

"Try not the game!" the housemaid cried.
"The dinner is ready now," she sighed,
"And I must put it on the board."
The young man turned and fiercely roared:
"Ping-pong!"

The cook strode to the open door,
And cautioned them to cease once more.
"The roast," she urged, "is sure to burn."
The maiden gasped: "I'm bound to learn
Ping-pong."

The family lurked in the hall,
And moaned: "Are we to eat at all?"
But still they heard the ping and pong
That made the cadence of a song—
Ping-pong.

And back and forth they smote the sphere
Until the dawn of morning clear.
The father, mother, sister, too,
Wailed hungrily: "Alas! my rue
Ping-pong!"

One day the searchers, out of breath,
Found all these people starved to death;
The cook, the housemaid, beau and belle,
The family—and, sad to tell,
Above them pinged the pongful knell:
"Ping-pong!"
—Baltimore American.

A Knave of Conscience

By FRANCIS LYNDE.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.—CONTINUED.

"You be damned," he said, "You think you've got a lead-pipe cinch on all the soft-heartedness in this world, but you haven't. I've thrown up this job—threw it up before I came here to-night."

Griswold staggered back into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

"I—I don't understand."
"Don't you? Well, you ought to. Reckon I've forgot the night when you stood in that door and kept them strikers from killing me? I haven't, and by — if I choose to be a man first and an officer of the law afterward, it's nobody's business but mine."

Griswold rose unsteadily, went across to the standing desk in the corner and leaned upon it with his face hidden in the bend of the arm. When he looked up again he was alone.

CHAPTER XXXV.

For a long time after the detective had gone Griswold paced the floor of the small office, treading out the wininess of humiliation and defeat, and trying, as a man may under such hard conditions, to decide upon a course of action which should be fair to all and decently fair for himself.

For a time it seemed impossible to draw any thread of sane procedure out of the revolutionary tangle in which Charlotte's confession had involved him. He told himself bitterly that she had felled him at the crucial moment; that she had stepped down from the pedestal of the ideal to become a woman of flesh and blood, loving, condoning and forgiving everything in the man to whom she had given her heart. But very quickly he was made to see the injustice of this; to see first that he had deliberately gone about to build a wall of personality around her judgment, and then, by his own confession of love, to apply a test too severe for any loving woman to withstand.

More than that, he saw that he had played the hypocrite with her even at the last moment. When he had gone to her, nothing had been farther from his thoughts than a confession of his guilt. The resolve to tell her all had come suddenly, and he had yielded to the impulse on the spur of the moment. None the less, he had let her believe that it was well considered; that he had determined beforehand upon the course he had outlined in the brief farewell.

Taking it all in all, he had an exceedingly bad half-hour after Griffin left him, and out of the fiery furnace of it emerged a man altogether different from the hot-headed proletry who had robbed the Bayou bank. He had stood alone against the world's condemnation in that act, and had thought it defensible from an impregnable position fortified by the rights of man. But now he was made to see the act and its culpability through the magnifying glass of another's personality. He had called it a social necessity, and no sin; and yet the direct consequences of it had been to destroy his ideal of uprightness to make a pure, God-fearing woman his accomplice after the fact.

While Griswold was thus fighting his way blindly out of the darkness into the light, the net in which he had emmeshed himself was cut at the point where it was the strongest. When Dr. Farnham returned from a visit to the iron works neighborhood he found his daughter waiting for him at the gate.

"Please don't get out," she said, "I want you to take me over to the hotel on the Point. Will you?"

The father cut the buggy and gave her a hand to climb up beside him.

"What's gone wrong, Lottie?—Anything that I may know about?" She shook her head. "Not now, poppa dear; but I must go."

She was silent and dry-eyed on the short drive; and when it was ended,

and the good doctor had waited a long half-hour for her at the hotel, he drove her home and was no wiser than he had been. She had had him go in with her to send her card to Mr. Andrew Galbraith, but beyond the fact that she had been closeted for a half-hour with the white-haired banker, the father knew nothing—nor did he seek to know, having perfect confidence in his daughter.

What took place in Andrew Galbraith's sitting-room at the summer hotel was never known to any save the two who were the actors in the little drama. But when Charlotte came out Andrew Galbraith accompanied her and put her into the buggy with her father. And she was crying a little, though not as those who weep without hope.

The old banker watched the buggy as it melted into the darkness of the driveway, and shook his head.

"There goes a woman that any man might be proud to give his name till," he said. "Now, if the young devil has half her courage—"

"A gentleman to see you, Mr. Galbraith," said the voice of the night clerk beside him. "I thought you were in your room, and I sent him there."

Griswold was standing, hat in hand, in the middle of the comfortable sitting room when the banker entered. "I beg your pardon," he began. "The clerk told me you were here, and I found the door open."

"Sit down," said the banker, not inhospitably, drawing up his own easy chair. But Griswold remained standing.

"No," he objected. "What I have to say may be said standing. Mr. Galbraith, did you ever see me before you came to Wahaska?"

The shrewd old face was unreadable by any, but if there was a certain glint of hardness in the eyes, it was tempered by the lines about the mouth.

"You wore a beard when you were in New Orleans, Mr. Griswold," he said at length.

"Then you recognized me?"
"Not at first, you may be sure."
"I suppose not; otherwise I should be awaiting my trial in the parish prison."

"Is there any good reason why ye shouldn't be?" demanded the old man, with a rasp in his voice.

"None at all, though up to an hour ago I should not have admitted it."
"And what made ye change your mind, I'd like to ask?"

"A number of things, but chiefly this: I have come to know now that what I did that morning was wrong."
"Wrong!" shouted the banker.

"Are ye clean daft, man? Was there ever any doubt about its being wrong?"

"Not from your point of view, perhaps; but if it had seemed wrong to me, I should not have done it."
"You're crazy, man; clean daft, I say."

"Put it in the past tense, if you please, Mr. Galbraith. I'm in my right mind now."
"And what cured ye, I'd like to know?"

"The fact that I found out an hour ago that I had made a good woman my accomplice after the fact. There can be no question about the sinfulness of that, so I am here to do what I may in the way of reparation."

"Go on," said Andrew Galbraith.

"First about the money—"
It was the canny soul of the old Scotchman that groaned.

"Ye lost it, ye loon; I know all about that. Go on with your reparations."

"How did you know I lost it?" queried Griswold, no little mystified.

"Never you mind what I know or how I know it. Go on, I say."

"But I didn't lose it; or rather, I lost it and found it again. Odd as it may seem to you, I have never regarded the money as my own. I have held it as a fund in trust for the good of my kind. Ninety-five thousand dollars are invested in the Wahaska iron works, and there are some three thousand dollars of undivided profits due on this investment. Here is a check payable to your order for my balance at the bank—\$3,940.57. The iron works stock can be sold at par to-morrow, if you like, and that, with the dividend and this balance, will make you whole again, with a small interest on the principal."

Andrew Galbraith heard him through, with grim satisfaction depicting itself on the shrewd old face.

"Ye're not so bad a financier," he said. "Now, what's to become of ye?"

"That remains for you to say. You may go and ring for the police, and I'll wait here till an officer comes; or if you don't care to be mixed up in it, I'll take the first train south and surrender myself in New Orleans."

"Is that all?"
"All but one thing. If you put the iron works on the market at once it will embarrass Mr. Raymer perhaps to the point of forcing him to the wall. I have no right to ask favors of you—"

The banker sprang up and began to tramp up and down in something as nearly approaching rage as he ever permitted himself.

"Why, ye callow young fule, what d'ye think I'm made of?" he exploded. "A few hours ago you and that brave bit of a lassie—God bless her—risked your two lives to save mine. D'ye think I'll be sending you to that leavin' death in the chain gang if ye were twenty times the crazy loon ye are?"

Griswold drew himself up. "You've got it to do, Mr. Galbraith. You must not compound a felony to save me."

"Compound your grandmither!" shouted the old man. "If you go and give yourself up in New Orleans, I'll go on the stand and swear I never set

eyes on ye before. Then ye'll have an old man's perjury on ye're soul to answer for. Na, na, lad; they call me a hard old skintint, but after a' I'm just human. You've turned face about, and it's not old Andrew Galbraith who'll be piling stones in your way. Go you right away down to the doctor's and tell that brave lassie of yours what's come of it a', and to-morrow we'll see about the money matters. Maybe I'll make up my mind to let sleeping dogs lie, and set ye up as my resident manager at your iron works. Go on, ye loon, before I turn ye out."

Griswold went toward the door, with his brain in a whirl, but when his hand was on the knob Andrew Galbraith stopped him.

"Hold on a minute, I forgot. There's a man here by the name of Griffin; he knows who you are, and he'll be nabbing you." Griswold smiled. "No, he won't. He has thrown up the job, as he will probably tell you to-morrow."

"Thrown it up? What for?"
Griswold hung his head. "I—I was lucky enough to save his life, too. I—"

"That'll do; ye've a mission that way, it seems. Now, then, be off with you."

Griswold left the room and hotel, walking as one in a dream. The dream lasted until he entered the gate of Lake Lodge and saw a flutter of white on the high veranda.

"What have you done, Kenneth?" she asked, when he would suffer her to speak.

"I have done what I could, dear, and it is nothing—less than nothing, in the way of reparation. Oh, Charlotte, you must be my conscience, if you take me. I am but a sorry knave, after all."

"A knave of conscience," she murmured; and he caught at the phrases.

"That shall be the name of the new book you are going to help me write," he said quickly, confirming it with a kiss.

And so indeed it was.

THE END.

GREAT CORK FORESTS.

Immense Tracts in Spain and Portugal Are Covered with the Evergreen Oak.

The cork forests of Spain cover an area of 620,000 square miles, producing the finest cork in the world. These forests exist in groups and cover wide belts of territory, those in the region of Catalonia and part of Barcelona being considered the first in importance. Although the cork forests of Estremadura and Andalusia yield cork of a much quicker growth and possessing some excellent qualities its consistency is less rigid, and on this account it does not enjoy the high reputation which the cork of Catalonia does, says the Boston Herald.

In Spain and Portugal, where the cork tree, or *Quercus suber*, is indigenous, it attains to a height varying from 35 to 60 feet and the trunk to a diameter of 20 to 36 inches. This species of the evergreen oak is often heavily caparisoned with wide-spreading branches, clothed with ovate oblong evergreen leaves, downy underneath and the leaves slightly serrated. Annually, between April and May, it produces a flower of a yellowish color, succeeded by the acorns. Over 30,000 square miles in Portugal are devoted to the cultivation of cork trees, though the tree virtually abounds in every part of the country.

The methods in vogue in barking and harvesting the cork in Spain and Portugal are virtually the same. The barking operation is effected when the tree has acquired sufficient strength to withstand the rough handling it receives during this operation, which takes place when it has attained the fifteenth year of its growth. After the first stripping the tree is left in this juvenescent state to regenerate, subsequent strippings being effected at intervals of not less than three years, and under this process the tree will continue to thrive and bear for upward of 150 years.

No Satisfaction in That.

"Yes," he explained, "she is very angry with him."

"Why?" she asked.

"Oh, he caught her dozing in the hammock and kissed her."

"While she was asleep?"
"Yes."

"And didn't know what was happening?"
"Yes."

"How inconsiderate. I should think she would be angry."—Brooklyn Eagle.

Almost Ready.

"Well, Hetty," said Uncle Bill, "I reckon you have written your graduating essay and are about ready to say good-by to school."

"I am almost ready, Uncle William," replied Harryette. "I have selected the material for my graduating dress, and as soon as I can decide whether to carry a bouquet in my hand or wear it in my corsage I shall give some attention to other trifles of the occasion."—Judge.

Real Unkind of Her.

Miss Frankleigh—Why, you are limping, Mr. Upstart! What is the trouble?"

Mr. Upstart—My feet are swelled from some unknown cause.

"You are always going in for extremes. Now, it is your feet—but usually it's your head."—Chicago Daily News.

A Definition.

Little Clarence—Pa, what is executive ability?
Mr. Callipers—Executive ability, my son, is the capacity for making some one else paddle your own canoe for you.—Judge.

SMART EFFECTS IN FELT MILLINERY



HARMING new toques and hats which have been designed for the winter season are delightfully original and very artistic in their outlines, and when these two characteristics are combined with the indispensable quality of smartness the ideal of the twentieth century milliner has surely been reached, and she may rest on her laurels for the time being.

One of the most noticeable novelties is a lovely picture hat of black velvet, the brim of which has a transparent wired edge of gauged white areophane, and the trimming, which is very simple in style, consisting of choux of black moire antique ribbon (a very popular trimming just now for black velvet hats), and long white ostrich feathers on the left side tipped with black. Needless to say, the materials are of the choicest quality, the feathers being specially beautiful, and herein lies one of the chief charms of this picturesque model.

Equally charming in its own way is an ermine toque, the crown of which is deeper at the back than in front, and partakes somewhat of the character of the hats which were immortalized by "Punch" some 40 years ago, in the days when crinolines were in vogue, and no toilette was considered complete without a chignon, but now, of course, the shape has been greatly improved upon, and with its large white Paradise bird and lovely tail, makes quite a pretty picture.

and is just the thing for wear with a coat or costume trimmed with the same fur.

A lovely hat of soft pastel blue felt has transparent insertions of coarse white Irish crochet lace let into the brim, with a very narrow border of mink on either side. Soft twisted folds of blue chiffon are draped round the crown and tied loosely together at the side, and the ends are taken over the brim and carried round the crown to form a bandeau, which rests on the hair and softens the lines of the brim. A lovely white ostrich feather droops over on to the hair at the back.

The large toque, somewhat in the Toreador style, is made of black moire antique, with a brim of the new black plush and black ostrich tips curling over the brim on to the hair on the left side, but the novelty of the model consists chiefly in a tie of moire ribbon, the center of which is folded and sewn on to the brim at the back for several inches, the ends then being tied into a cravat bow, which hangs down on to the hair below the brim, these ends being fringed out a little just like a pretty tie.

A pretty model in the fashionable three-cornered shape is made of grey chenille trimmed with black and white speckled wings, one pair of which point downwards at the back, while another pair are coquettishly fixed at the top, this being a very popular way of wearing wings just at the present moment.

THE DAINTY MODES IN HOME GOWNS



HOUSE and tea gowns were seemingly never so smart as this season, but with all their smartness they are yet serviceable, and it is the combination of these two qualities that make them popular. Modistes tell me that the call for the elaborate models has been unusually large, and as the gown is an all year garment interest in them will not wane.

Above are pictured two of the most charming models, and in these you have both the tea gown smart and the tea gown serviceable, not that the second model does not skilfully combine smartness with its serviceable qualities, but that the first graceful garment being of a special loveliness which preclaims it at once as a newly arrived model from Paris, and further suggests an ideal addition to a wedding trousseau.

Its coloring is a delicate shade of turquoise blue, and its fabrics glaze silk veiled with chiffon, and, further, cleverly combined with crepe de Chine and Brussels applique and guipure laces. The shape, too, is very original and distinctively becoming, the waist-line being fully revealed at the sides by the shortness of the lace bolero, while length is given to the figure by the stole ends in front and the gracefully hanging Watteau back. Now could even a bride-elect desire a daintier garment?

Next, for the matron who wants to study her comfort as well as her appearance, and is, moreover, obliged to count the cost of her clothes, comes that serviceable tea gown of black peau de soie, lined throughout with

nun's veiling, so that it may be coolly warm, and trimmed—in order that it may be quite becoming—with an applique of ivory lace in a design of roses which trail all over the yoke while smaller lace-petalled flowers encircle the collar band and the cuffs which eventually catch in the puffed fullness of the sleeves. Softly plaited and ruffled frills of black chiffon fall, fichu fashion, about the shoulders and meet in front in the bondage of a long-looped bow of black velvet, and bordering the slightly trained fullness of the skirt there is a tucked frill of the silk. So, as the gown can be depended upon to do decorative duty for many a long day—or, rather, I should say, evening—it is indeed well worth the initial outlay of six and a half guineas.

Of course, too, the accordion-plaited tea gown, being always in demand, is as much in evidence in the fashionable stores, while, for morning wear, the gown of Japanese quilted silk is still likely to be a favorite, being light, warm and made with a deep collar and cuffs of white silk edged with a full frill which introduces the color of the gown as a border, pretty also.

Then again there are some new and very pretty designs in flannel; notably one which suggests the kimono somewhat and is all bordered with a deep applique band of white lace.

ELLEN OSMONDE.

By the Sea.

He—If you refuse me, I'll dash my brains out on the rocks below.

She—You couldn't. A man who would do that hasn't any brains.—*The Philadelphia Bulletin.*

A VICARIOUS SUICIDE

BY JOHN H. RAFFERTY.

When they had told a number of stories illustrative of the east with which great criminals sometimes cheat the law, Capt. McCarthy, who was never a Sherlock Holmes, and scouted all such impossible character, told this one:

It is true that a great many criminals cheat the law after their crimes are known; it is also true that a great many horrible crimes are committed that are never heard of by the authorities. We had a little fellow down in Boston one time that did a nice bit of detective work that never came to anything. It was a case of forgery and the complainant, a man named Mark Gillespie, was a pretty rich man. It seems that his bookkeeper, a fellow named Porter, had forged and cashed enough checks before he was discovered to pretty near bankrupt Gillespie.

The young detective, I think his name was Moran, did the outside trimmings, such as looking for the missing bookkeeper in out-of-the-way places. I found out that he had been very clumsy with Porter, and by deligent inquiry I discovered that the employer's habits were no better than those of the embezzler and forger. In fact, for a man who attended to business so well during the day, I couldn't quite understand how he kept up the all-night pace, too. In the course of my investigations I found out that the handwritings of Gillespie and his bookkeeper were almost identical, so much so, that it was a hard matter to tell by the set of books which they kept where the employer's writing left off and the bookkeeper's commenced. When I commented on this, Gillespie told me that this similarity of handwriting was simply a coincidence, that he and Porter had often commented upon it, and that the latter had never made any secret of his ability to write exactly like Gillespie.

Of course, I discussed the different phases of the case with young Moran and he began to take an almost feverish interest in it that I couldn't quite explain. Well, the whole thing seemed to come to an end when some laborers away out on Putnam street found in a lime kiln near a new building the dead body of the missing bookkeeper. There was no doubt about the identity in spite of the fact that the lime had eaten away most of the flesh, for the usual good-by letter of suicides was found in a leather pocketbook inside of the clothing. It was duly signed "Porter," and included a full confession of the forgeries, with an itemized statement of the amounts taken. Gillespie, of course, dropped the case then and the police passed it up as soon as the coroner's verdict was announced. But I didn't know for nearly a week later that young Moran hadn't dropped it. I found out that he had quit the force, but I saw him on the street one day and traced him to Gillespie's own office. I "laid for him" that night, and he admitted that he had hired himself out as Porter's successor. He was now keeping Gillespie's books. When I swore that I'd keep mum and help him all I could without betraying our acquaintance he told me that he was quite sure that the body in the kiln was not Porter's at all. Letters had been coming almost every day to Gillespie, marked "personal," but in that same peculiar handwriting that we both knew as characteristic of both Gillespie and the missing forger. It wasn't likely that three different men could always write thus in exact triplicate, and I had to admit that it "looked queer."

The next odd discovery of young Moran was that Gillespie himself had abandoned his old style of handwriting and now used a square, labored kind of back-hand. That he had transferred all his money, or what was left of it, from his old bank and opened a new deposit against which he checked in a wholly different handwriting. I was so puzzled by this that I dropped in casually at Gillespie's office to make sure that my friend Moran wasn't mistaken in his employer's identity. He wasn't. It was Gillespie, all right. I was sure because I had come to know him well. I passed Moran without noticing him, of course, but that night he told me that Gillespie didn't seem to be a very good business man, kept bad hours, left everything to his clerk and acted like a raw hand at the simplest business transactions.

"I don't think it's Gillespie at all," explained Moran. And then, more mystified than ever, we began to further prove that this Mark Gillespie, for whom Moran was now clerking, was the same person who had lodged the information against the dead or missing Porter. We proved it in a hundred ways, and then I had the laugh on Moran. But how about those letters? Could Gillespie be writing letters to himself? Or was Porter alive? And if a fugitive, why did he write to the man whom he robbed? We puzzled over that for weeks, and Moran watched like a hawk for a glance at the contents of one of those mysterious letters. Finally, almost distracted with the problem, he opened one and found it written in some unintelligible code made up of incoherent English words and unassigned. He had searched every drawer, shelf, closet, and receptacle in the place for evidence, and at last there was nothing left but to search Gillespie himself. This was easy, provided we had the nerve to do it, because the man was in the habit of visiting the office at all hours of the night to get money out of his safe. Well, we did. We worked the burglar act on him. Masks, sand-bag and chloroform did it, and we stretched him on his sofa in the back private office, and took everything except his money. We even took his watch, hoping that a photograph inside might help us.

And it did. On the inside of the lid we found a photograph miniature of boy twins; an old picture in which the two Gillespies appeared like young immigrants just landed at Castle Garden.

"He's a Gillespie all right, Cap!" said Moran, when we got safely into my room and examined the photograph. "But he's not Mark Gillespie. He's Mark's twin! It was Mark in the limekiln!"

And I had to admit that it looked likely enough. But we didn't know what to do. — was for going back to get a "held for the chief" warrant and running Gillespie in, but Moran thought that we'd better go after Porter first. You see, he thought that Porter had murdered his employer and that the twin brother "stood in," so we put matters off till the next day, and Moran went down to the office as usual to work. But his boss didn't show up that day. Inquiry at the bank showed that he had cashed out all his funds, and we never saw nor heard of him afterward. We might have landed one or both of them—Porter and Gillespie—but when I went over the case with the chief he grinned at me and said "Mac, you're getting nutty."

However, I'm sure that both the rascally bookkeeper and the unnatural brother fixed up both the fraud and the murder, and it's a cinch they went scot-free, as many like them have done.—*Chicago Record-Herald.*