

# DONALD DONALDSON, JR.

Being a True Record and Explanation of the Seven Mysteries Now Associated With His Name in the Public Mind, and of an Eighth, Which is the Key of the Seven

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## CHAPTER XIII. THE DESIRE OF THE MOTH FOR THE STAR.

THE affair of the miser's hand made a great stir. I never have been able to trace the ways by which it got into print, but within thirty-six hours the newspapers seemed to be full of it.

I should not have regretted very seriously the publication of the exact facts, but the controversy which resulted was somewhat annoying. Donald suffered, but he bore it well. He was beset by interviewers and persons with cameras; all sorts of absurd theories were proposed to him; he received letters from many serious minded investigators and a number of them were several proposals from the theatrical managers who wished to exhibit him. The photographers secured plenty of snapshots, but the interviewers were obliged to depend upon their own imaginations, for Donald would not say a word to any of them.

All this became a debating society, though there was far less skepticism than I should have expected. My main concern was with the attitude of two persons, both of whom were witnesses of the manifestations—I refer to Bunn and Kelvin.

The effect upon Jim Bunn was most remarkable. I may truthfully say that he was never the same afterward. He had been profoundly impressed. Upon Kelvin the effect was peculiar. I will wager all I possess that he had no more doubt originally as to the genuineness of the manifestations than I have.

It was his very vitality by what he saw. Yet upon the third day afterward he told James Thornlyke, an old resident of Tumbago, that it was all mere trickery.

Thornlyke was the most notorious blabber who ever existed. He never kept a secret longer than the time required to go from the person who gave it into his keeping to the next with whom he had a speaking acquaintance.

Kevin, though, had been ignorant of this. There seemed no escape from the conclusion that he had deliberately selected the person most likely to spread the story broadcast.

I was amazed at this, and I taxed Kelvin with the slander. He showed considerable backbone, saying that he had only expressed a private opinion to an acquaintance and blaming Thornlyke for repeating it. That was all that was told in confidence. The event between Kelvin and myself was very unpleasant, and I could not help feeling throughout its duration that he was secretly trying to make it worse.

In the end I became quite sharp, to the effect that he was an ungrateful brute who ought to be walking on four feet and that, moreover, he was the last member of the animal kingdom that would be accused of another of unkindly deeds and dishonest trickery. This opened the breach once more between the Kelvin family and my own. Poor Donald! His boyish love affair was progressing over a very rough road.

There was some reason to regret this quarrel which would embitter the war for the control of the branch road. Carl Archer had a talk with me upon this point and suggested that it was very unfortunate to have Mr. Thornlyke in the quarrel, because he was a stockholder in the branch. I perceived the iniquity of the situation; but, having already given Thornlyke a piece of my mind, I could hardly take it back. However, I could not believe that he would make an excuse for deserting our party, to which he had pledged allegiance before the incident arose.

"I think that Donald is carrying this matter a little too far," said Carl. "It is true that he doesn't seem to be doing any harm, but we can't be sure that he won't, because we don't know the motive which has led him into all this wonder-working."

"Why don't you ask him?" said I. "I wish that you would," he replied very earnestly. "He's outside. Call him in."

"It won't do any good," said I. "Try it," he rejoined.

He got up on a chair and looked through the glass of the partition which is between my room and the main office. The glass part was once movable, but I had it fastened permanently some years ago and even added a double sash in order to exclude more effectively the noises from the main office, where many people were employed.

"He's out there, talking with Tim Healy," he said and called Donald's name, but the partition is so thoroughly impervious that he was not heard, although Healy's tall desk is directly upon the other side of it.

"I'll go out and get him," said Carl, "or you tell him to go out, Bunn," he added to old cashier, who sat at the desk upon the door.

"Tell Donald that we want to see him."

Bunn laid a paper on my desk and made some comment. As he turned to go Donald entered.

"My boy," said I, "do you know what your father-in-law is saying about you?"

"Yes," he replied cheerfully. "Mr. Kelvin thinks I'm bogus. I hope he'll be able to see it, and then we shan't have any more trouble."

"What is the exact truth, Donald?" said I.

"Well," he answered, smiling, "the truth is that Mr. Kelvin would do well to wait. He has seen things that were hard to explain, but he will see others that are a thundering sight harder. But I can't help it. I call you to witness, Uncle John, that I was dragged into this business by the heels. You know how painful it is to me."

"Donald," said Carl kindly, "in our presence and upon honor—all joking aside—do you claim the possession of any unusual power?"

"A minute or two ago," said Donald, "you weren't so anxious about the power. You wanted to know what the motive was which had led me into all this wonder-working."

Carl started and gripped the arm of his chair.

"Your exact words," said I.

we heard under his roof. Why, Carl, you and I have played together as innocently as if we were children. Have you the heart to bring such innocent infamy as this into a scene so sweet?"

"Isn't that infamy," he protested. "My love for you?"

"Say blasphemy, if you prefer the world," she cried. "It seems to me like that when uttered in this little corner of the world that has been sacred as



"We will not quarrel," said he sadly, "the presence of God in his own temple to me. Be sane and honest, Carl. How can you deliberately sacrifice the friendship of my husband and my father, to say nothing of mine?"

"For you, Dorothy," he replied with an emotion of which I would not have thought him capable, "I cannot be your friend. God knows that I have tried."

"If God had known it," said she, "you would not have fallen in love with me. You would have given me the strength to succeed. No, you have not tried."

"I cannot be your friend," insisted Carl. "As for the friendship of the others, do you fancy that I shall tell them?"

"Do you fancy that I shan't?" retorted Dorothy, almost in tears from shame and rage. "How dare you hint that I would share a secret with you and exclude my husband? I wouldn't do it if it were about a pint of peanuts, and you should have found that out by this time."

I had a glimpse of Carl at this moment, and his face was so white that it seemed to shine.

"You will tell him," said she slowly. "It is honorable. But upon the other hand I was equally bound in honor to tell you."

"You were bound in honor not to have any such thing to tell," replied Dorothy with spirit.

"I will not quarrel," said he sadly. "I have only one word more to say. The time must soon come when I shall offer you the deepest sympathy of my heart. I cannot offer it to you in the name of friendship. I won't be to you. That is why I tell you now that I love you."

"It seems to me that if you foresee trouble coming to me you have now put it out of your power to help me. But what do you mean? Do you expect me to have to come to my husband?"

"Will you keep the secret?"

"Not from him," she answered firmly. "If there is good reason, I will keep it from everybody else."

"I cannot speak on such terms," said Carl. "Indeed, I would better not speak on any terms. I have lost your esteem. I cannot count upon your help. You would distrust me. But, Dorothy, remember this: There is some one very near and dear to you much dearer than has any right to be—whom I have honestly tried to save, but I have failed."

Dorothy was more bewildered than alarmed.

"I know that my husband has lost money," she said. "Mr. Bunn has led him into a very foolish investment. He may suffer heavily, but it will be no such catastrophe as you imagine."

This, by the way, was the first time I had received that Donald had gone with Bunn into a certain wild dream of finance which I will here describe simply as the Harbrook Land company. I had earnestly advised Donald against it, and he supposed that I had been avariciously small. My conscience had been dragging me away from that window; now it dragged me back again.

"That is but a small part of the trouble," said Carl. And then suddenly: "Dorothy, don't disclose this. You will regret it. I have spoken to you from really good motives, even though you may seem to be mistaken, and in the strictest confidence."

"There can be no confidence of this kind with a wife," said Dorothy, "if she really is one. But, Carl, I begin to see some sort of sincerity in you, and this is what I will do to reward it. I will tell my husband that you have spoken in a way to offend me, but that I have forgiven you, and I will beg him not to ask me any questions. I will not say, and directly asked, that you have spoken to me of his business difficulties, which I believe that you greatly exaggerate. But I can take this course only if you promise me to change from the heart outward—to be to me in all your thoughts that which you may honorably be, and no more. Will you do this?"

"How can I look at you?" he began, but she interrupted him crying:

"Carl, this is monstrous! I am an old woman. I am the mother of a grown man. I have lived my life, and it has been a wondrous and beautiful life to live. I have had such love—such perfect love."

"You trifled with me," he said in a sudden rage. "Your husband is as cold as the dead. He neglected you openly. He has no eye for your beauty, for this living miracle of your unfeeling youth which has been bestowed upon you. In my belief, that you might wait for a real love."

"I have not had to wait," said Dorothy in a voice indescribably sweet. "And now," she added, "this is the end, absolutely the end. I asked you for a promise. Give it to me and think upon the words I have said to you while they are fresh."

"I will think upon that which is most sacred to me," he said, looking straight into her face, "and for the sake of it I will either conquer my heart or surrender it with all my mortal part to the dust of the earth—to the unconscious dust that cannot suffer."

This pledge struck me as somewhat theatrical, and yet it was spoken with heartbreaking sincerity and seemed to have a considerable effect upon Dorothy.

"The way to cease to desire something," said she, "is to desire some-

## A PECULIAR HOTEL.

Its Rooms Named For States Instead of Being Numbered.

"In a little town in the Backwoods of Mississippi," remarked a traveling man, "is a peculiar hotel. It is just like any other hotel except in the way the rooms are named. They are not numbered, as is generally done, but each room is named for a state of the United States."

"Why," I stopped at the place, I was assigned to a room called 'Delaware.' It was correctly named, too, for it was one of the smallest rooms in the house. A man who was occupying 'New Hampshire' made complaint to the landlord that the man in 'Maine' was drunk and boisterous and was thus keeping him awake. This seemed strange, when we recall that Maine is a prohibition state. Two men up in 'Montana' were keeping up the reputation of the wild west by engaging in a noisy poker game. A big fat capitalist had 'New York,' which was the best room in the house. The room named for Alabama is too ordinary for anything, and a farmer was occupying it the night I was there.

"It was funny to stand in the office and hear a bellboy tell the clerk that towels were wanted in 'Iowa' and that the fellow in 'North Dakota' was kicking like a steer because he had no fire. 'Send two Manhattan cocktails up to Mississippi' was one of the orders that the clerk gave. 'Be sure to call the man in Florida at 5 o'clock in the morning' said one of the employees, and thus it went. This hotel is a curiosity to the traveling public. It is conducted by an eccentric old fellow, but where he conceived the idea of naming rooms after states I do not know."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

## WRESTLING WITH RUSSIAN.

The Traveler Wanted a Towel and Finally Got It.

A. H. Savage Lander, in his book of travel, "Across Coveted Lands," relates an amusing railway incident that occurred in Russia while he was en route to Persia.

"Unable to get at my towels packed in my registered baggage and ignorant of the Russian language," he says, "I begged of a portly yellow passenger what was the Russian word for towel, so that I could ask the guard for one. 'Palatinski,' said he, and I repeated 'palatinski, palatinski, palatinski,' so as to impress the word well upon my memory. Having enjoyed a good wash and a shampoo and dripping all over with water, I rang for the guard, and, sure enough, when the man came, I could not recollect the word. At last it dawned on me that it was 'palatinski,' and 'palatinski!' I asked of the guard. To my surprise the guard smiled graciously, and, putting on a modest air, replied, 'Palatinski niet, please it is not in Latin. I speak only Russian,' and the more I repeated 'palatinski,' putting the infection now on one syllable, then on the other, to make him understand, the more flattered the man seemed to be, and modestly refused the same until he said: 'This was incomprehensible to me until my polyglot fellow passenger came to my assistance. Do you know what you are asking the guard? he said in convulsions of laughter. Yes, I am asking for a towel.' 'No, you are not,' and he positively went into hysterics. 'Palatinski' means 'Do you speak Latin?' How can you expect a Russian railway guard to speak Latin? Look here, increase the inspector is at being mistaken for a Latin scholar. Ask him for a palatinski, and he will run for a towel!"

"The man did run on the marble word being pronounced in Latin," returned with a nice clean palatinski, which, however, was of little use to me, for I had by this time got dry by the natural processes of dripping evaporation."

"The Stomach is the Man.

A weak stomach weakens the man, because it cannot transform the food he eats into nourishment. Health and strength cannot be restored to any sick man or weak woman without first restoring health and strength to the stomach. A weak stomach cannot digest enough food to feed the tissues and repair the tired and run-down limbs and organs of the body. Kodol, Dyspepsia Cure cleanses, purifies, sweetens and strengthens the glands and membranes of the stomach, and cures indigestion, dyspepsia and all stomach troubles. Smith Bros.

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