

# SERIAL STORY

## The Chronicles of Addington Peace

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### MR CORAN'S ELECTION

Ten o'clock! Big Ben left no doubt about it; for the giant clock in the tower of the house of parliament is a noisy neighbor. The last stroke thundered out as I climbed the stairs that led to the modest lodging of Inspector Addington Peace, and silence had fallen as I knocked at his door. I was alone that night and in the mood when a man escapes from himself to seek a friend.

I found the little detective at his open window, staring across the tumbled roofs to where the abbey towers rose under the summer moon. The evening breeze that came creeping up with the tide blew gratefully after the heat of the July day. He glanced at me over his shoulder with a short nod of welcome.

"Even the police grow sentimental on such a night," I suggested.

"Or philosophic."

"The reflections of Diogenes the detective, or the Aristotle of Scotland Yard," I laughed. "May I inquire as to the cause of such profound thought?"

He held out a slip of paper, which I took and carried to the central lamp. It was an old newspaper clipping, stained and blurred, relating in six lines how James Coran, described as a student, had been charged at the Bow street police court with drunkenness, followed by an aggravated assault on the constable who arrested him. He was fined three pounds or seven days. That was all.

"Not a subject of earth-shaking importance," I said.

"No; but it has proved a sufficient excuse for blackmail."

"Then the victim is a fool," I answered hotly. "Why, from the look of the paper the affair must have taken place a dozen years ago."

"Thirty-two years this month."

"Which means that the riotous student is now a man of over fifty. If James Coran has gone down the hill, the past can't hurt him now; if he has led a respectable life, surely he can afford to neglect the scamp who threatens to rake up so mild a scandal. Blackmail for a spree back in the seventies—it's ridiculous, Inspector."

The little man stood with his hands behind him and his head on one side, watching me with benevolent amusement. When he spoke it was in the ponderous manner which he sometimes assumed, a manner that always reminded me of a university professor explaining their deplorable errors to his class.

"Mr. James Coran is a respectable middle-class widower who lives with his sister Rebecca and two daughters in the little town of Brendon, twenty-four miles from London. He arrives at the Fashionable Clothing Company—his London establishment in Oxford street—at ten o'clock in the morning, leaving for home by the 6:18. In his spare time he performs a variety of public duties at Brendon. He is a recognized authority on drama, and has produced a pamphlet on dust carts. As a temperance orator his local reputation is great, and his labors in the cause of various benevolent associations have been suitably commemorated by a presentation clock, three inkstands, and a silver tankard. His interests are limited to Brendon and Oxford street; of world movements he thinks no more than the caterpillar on a leaf considers the general welfare of the cabbage patch. Please remember the facts, Mr. Phillips, in consideration of his case.

"Six months ago an envelope arrived at his house with two inclosures. One was the newspaper clipping you hold; the other a letter denouncing him as a hypocrite, and warning him that unless the sum of twenty pounds was placed in the locker of a little summer house at the end of his garden the writer would expose him to all Brendon in his true character as a convicted drunkard.

"Coran was in despair. He had imagined his unfortunate spree long forgotten. Not even his own relatives were aware of it. He was trying for a seat on the county council; the election was due in a month, and he relied for his success on the support of the temperance party. As an election weapon the old scandal could be used with striking effect. So he paid—as many a better man has been fool enough to do under like circumstances.

"In three days—on Saturday, that is—the election takes place. This morning he received a letter similar

to the first, save that the demand was for a hundred pounds. He had just sense enough to see that if he allowed himself to be blackmailed again it would merely encourage further attempt at extortion. So when he arrived in town, he took a cab to Scotland Yard. I heard his story, and caught the next train down to Brendon. I did not call at the house, but gathered a few details concerning him and his family. In all particulars he seems to have spoken the truth.

"Must the hundred pounds be placed in the summer house tonight?"

"No. The blackmailer gave him a day to collect the money. It must be in the locker tomorrow night by eleven o'clock."

"Which means that you will watch the place and pull out the fish as he takes the bait. It seems simple enough, anyhow."

"Oh, yes," he said. "But it is the faulty sense of proportion in Coran which provides the interest in the case. Even at the time the scandal was no very serious matter. What must be his frame of mind that it should terrorize him after all these years?"

When I left him half an hour later it was with the promise that I should have first news of the comedy's conclusion—for a tragedy it certainly was not, save for the blackmailer, if Peace should catch him.

The following afternoon I was sitting in my studio with the cigarette—that comes so pleasantly after tea and buttered toast—between my lips, when my servant, Jacob Hendry, thrust in his head to announce visitors. They came hard upon his heels—a long, gray-whiskered man in the lead, and the inspector trotting behind. As they cleared the door the little detective twisted round his companion and waved an introductory hand.

"This is Mr. James Coran," he said. "We want your assistance, Mr. Phillips."

The long man stood staring at me and screwing his hands together in evident agitation. He had a hollow, melancholy face, a weak mouth, and eyes of an indecisive gray. From his square-toed shoes to the bald patch on the top of his head he was extremely, almost flagrantly, respectable.

"I am taking a great liberty, sir," he said humbly, "but you are, as it were, a straw to one who is sinking beneath the waters of affliction. Do you, by chance, know the town of Brendon?"

"I have never been so fortunate as to visit it," I told him.

"I understand from the police officer here that you have traveled abroad. Accustomed, therefore, to the corruption that taints the municipal life of other cities, you can scarcely comprehend the whole-souled enthusiasm with which we of Brendon approach the duties, may I say the sacred trust, of administering to the sanitary and moral welfare of our county. Those whom we select must be of unstained reputation. From a place on the sports committee of the flower show I myself have risen through successive grades until even the houses of parliament seemed within the limit of legitimate ambition. But now, sir, now it seems that, through a boyish indiscretion when a student at the Regent's street polytechnic, I may be denounced in my advancing years as a roysterer, a tippler, almost a convicted criminal. They would not hesitate. Mark my words, sir, if Horledge and Panton—my opponent's chief supporters in Saturday's election—are informed of these facts, they will mention them on platforms, they may even display them on boardings."

He paused, sighed deeply, and wiped his face with a large silk pocket handkerchief. The situation was ridiculous enough, yet not without a certain pathos underlying the humor, for the man was sincerely in earnest.

"If I can help you, Mr. Coran, I am at your disposal," I told him.

"It is a matter of considerable delicacy," he said. "My younger daughter, Emily, has formed an attachment which is most disagreeable to me."

"Indeed," I murmured.

"The young man, Thomas Appleton by name, is of more than doubtful character. Miss Rebecca, my sister, has seen him boating on the Thames in the company of ladies whose appearance was—er—distinctly theatrical."

"You surprise me."

"He has been known to visit music halls."

"Did Miss Rebecca see him there, too?"

"Certainly not, sir; but she has it from a sure source. It was obviously my duty to forbid him the house. I performed that duty, and extorted a promise from my daughter that she would cease to communicate with him. In my belief, it is he who has discovered

the scandal to which I need not again refer, and, in revenge, is laying this blackmail. The law shall strike him, if there is justice left in England."

"And where do I come in?" I asked, for he had paused in a flurry of indignation.

"Perhaps I had better explain," Peace interposed. "Owing to this unfortunate love affair, it is plain that no member of Mr. Coran's family must learn that this young man is suspected or that steps are being taken for his arrest. It would not be unreasonable to fear that he might be warned. I am staying with Mr. Coran tonight, but I do not want to go alone. I might take an assistant from the Yard, but it is hard to pick a man who has not 'criminal investigation department' stamped upon him. You look innocent enough, Mr. Phillips. Will you come with us, and lend me a hand?"

I agreed at once. It could not fail to be an amusing adventure. After some discussion, it was arranged that Peace and I should be introduced as business friends of Mr. Coran, who had asked us down to Brendon on a sudden invitation. A telegram was sent off to that effect.

For the first fifteen minutes of the train we shared a crowded compartment. Gradually, however, our companions dropped away until we were left to ourselves. Mr. Coran was in evident hesitation of mind. He shifted about, screwing his hands together with a most doleful countenance. When he commenced to speak he leant forward as if afraid that the very cushions might overhear him.

"I have mentioned my sister Rebecca," he said. "She is a woman of remarkable character."

"Indeed," I murmured, for he chose to address me more directly.

"We have differed lately on several points of—er—local interest. It is very important that she should not learn the cause of my appeal to the police. Anything that aroused her suspicions might lead to consequences very disagreeable to myself."

"I will be discreet."

"My daughters will—er—benefit largely under her will. She would cut them out of it without hesitation if she learnt that their father had been connected with so—er—disgraceful a scandal. You understand the situation?"

"Perfectly. It must render your position additionally unpleasant."

He sighed and relapsed into a melancholy silence, in which the train drew up at Brendon station. A couple of turns, a short descent, and we drew up at a gate in a long wall of flaming brick.

As we walked up the drive I looked carefully about me. The house was also of red brick and of mixed architecture. I believe the architect had intended it for the Tudor period, with variations suggested by modern sanitary requirements. The garden before the windows was of considerable size, with laurels and quick-growing shrubs lining the edge of a lawn and several winding walks. At the farther end a thatched roof, rising amongst the young trees, showed the position of the summer house which played so important a part in the story we had heard.

It was striking six as we entered the hall. Our host led us straight to our rooms on the first floor. We had been told not to bring dress clothes, so that ten minutes later we were ready to descend to the drawing room.

Mr. Coran's daughters, a pair of pretty, bright-faced girls, were seated in those careless attitudes which denote the expected appearance of strangers. Miss Rebecca, a tall, spectacled female, whose sixty years had changed curves for acute angles, reposed in the window, reading a volume of majestic size. She laid it down with a thump, removed her glasses and received us with great modesty and decorum. The inspector and a fox terrier, that set up a barking as we entered, were the only members of the party that seemed natural and at ease.

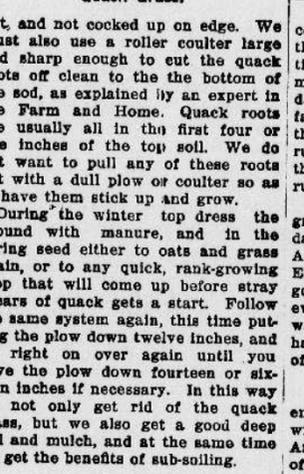
I found the dinner pass pleasantly enough, despite the gloom that radiated from the brother and sister. Emily, the victim of the "unfortunate attachment," quite captured my fancy, though I am not a ladies' man. Twice we dared to laugh, though the reproving eyes of the elders were constantly upon us. In the intervals of my talk with her I obtained the keenest enjoyment from listening to the conversation of Peace and Miss Rebecca. The lady cross-examined him very much as if he were a prisoner accused of various grave and monstrous offenses. Upon the question of anti-vice legislation she was especially urgent. (CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED.)

### TO ERADICATE QUACK GRASS

Excellent Plan for Getting Rid of Weed is to Bury it So Deep Will Never Sprout Again.

Our plan of getting rid of quack grass is to bury it so deep that it will never come up to the light of day again. But if we have a shallow soil it will not do to turn up the raw subsoil all at once. A deep soil is very desirable, and will make the quack grass supply us with it.

In the fall we plow the ground fully ten inches deep, being sure to use a plow that lays the furrow down



### PULLETS BETTER THAN HENS?

Enthusiasts Take Opposite Sides on the Egg Laying Argument—Few Good Points Given.

A question that is being debated much at present among poultrymen is whether hens or pullets are capable of greater egg production. Some claim that, while hens lay fewer eggs than pullets, they lay larger and heavier eggs, and because of this fact the eggs command a better price than those laid by pullets. It is true that most hens do lay a slightly heavier egg than pullets, but in many sections of the United States eggs are sold without grading, and consequently the smaller egg commands as good a price as the larger one.

Others are in favor of pullets because they lay so many eggs which, they claim, possess a better flavor than those laid by hens. No one disputes the fact that pullets are better layers than hens.

The eggs laid by pullets do not hatch as well as those of hens. The chicks from pullet eggs and not, as a rule, nearly so strong and lively as those from hen eggs. For this reason it seems to be advisable to use pullets for layers and hens for breeders.

### LIVE STOCK NOTES

The squealing pig sucks the profit. Oats is a very valuable feed for the working horse.

Are the pigs making profits out of the feeds consumed? Discard the filthy sweat pads that always make sore necks. Do not put the colts in a pasture fenced with barbed wire. The heavy draft team should never be driven faster than a walk. It is inexcusable to have lousy colts, but such things are often seen. Clean water, fresh air and good feed is the best "horse medicine" yet found. Get the suckling pigs to eat whole oats on a clean platform as soon as possible. Watch the sheep carefully during the lambing season, for a dead lamb is a live loss. Close attention to the grazing will insure the most nutritive value from the pastures. Sheep like a short bite. Do not let the pasture grow too high before putting them on it. Fat lambs always bring a good price. Keep them growing every minute from their first breath. A barbed wire cut always leaves a scar. A scar always takes the value off a young horse. Collars should never be swapped from one horse to another any more than men should trade boots or shoes. The milch goat is having quite a boom just now, but there is little danger that the cow will be crowded off the earth. Rape has been found to be one of the best forage crops in connection with a light grain ration to make rapid and economical growth in pigs. Hog cholera may not be a filth disease, but human cholera is, and the hog owner whose pens are unclean is running a great risk of losing his stock.

# CEREMONIES at HINDU WEDDING

FEW foreigners in India have the privilege of witnessing a high caste Hindu wedding and only special circumstances enabled the writer to be present at the ceremonies described here.

Subhadra, the barber, had arranged a marriage between Anandi, only daughter of Dhola Buksh, a wealthy member of the Kahatriya caste, and Surindro Tagore of the same caste. That is one function of barbers in India. Anandi was not quite ten. Surindro was just eighteen. Anandi had never seen her future husband. Nobody had ever thought of asking the opinion of either of the most interested parties as to the proposed marriage.

The expenses of a Hindu wedding comes upon the bride's father, and they are so great that a family sometimes is ruined or impoverished for many years by the marriage of a daughter. The next most costly affair is the burial services. Should the head of the family escape bankruptcy when his daughter is married, the eldest son is almost sure to be ruined when he buries his father.

The woman barber, who is another great institution in India, came every day. For two weeks she bathed Anandi frequently in perfumed water. Every day the girl's hands and feet got an application of henna. On the evening of the wedding day Anandi was bathed in rose water and her hands and feet got a last application of henna.

Many Jewels.

She was dressed in a red silk sarree embroidered with gold and finished with a golden border at the bottom. Around her waist were wound chains of gold, which were fastened by gorgeous buckles set with jewels.

Her arms from the shoulder to the wrist were covered with armlets and

bracelets. Close under her throat was a necklace of pearls, below which hung a dozen or more gold chains. Her ears, which had been pierced in six places, had earrings of fine workmanship suspended from each hole. From where the hair met the forehead was hung a fringe of gold and pearls. On her ankles were gold bangles. All of this gold would have proved a heavy burden to the bride if she had been obliged to walk, but she was not.

In another part of the house the gurus of the two families were laying down the law to the two fathers-in-law, making the necessary settlements and promises. This ceremony, which is tedious and lasted several hours, was enlivened by the babus who went among guests and sprinkled them with rose water which was carried in silver vases.

an upon the ears of the guests burst the cry "The bridegroom comes!" All heads were turned to see six little girls who could not have been over six years of age bearing lighted torches run through the court and out into the street and lead Surindro in.

The bridegroom was seated upon a rug placed in the center of the court for him. While he was seated on this rug, and it was as much as an hour, he was instructed in his marital rights and duties by the family guru.

On the ground, nearly in front of Surindro, was a small pan of bright red coals of sacred fire; and at his side was the barber, who was master of ceremonies and who from time to time blew a trumpet.

The family guru left the courtyard and went into the women's apart-



ments, where stood the women and children, each woman with a chuddah drawn tightly over her face. Then five women came in, all of them closely veiled and wrapped in silk sarrees. The first was the bride's mother. On top of her head was a little tray filled with red hot coals of fire. She carried a jewelled chhatree of water in her hand.

Bride Carried In.

The four other women bore trays loaded with different kinds of fruit. The women marched around the bridegroom seven times, the mother pouring the water gently out of the chhatree so that it formed a circle around Surindro. She then stepped aside and the bride was brought in.

A number of symbolic figures had been chalked upon a board. On top of these figures the bride was seated and then carried into the room by the barber and his assistants. Within the circle which had been made by the water the mother had spilled Anandi was carried around Surindro six times. The board was then lowered from the shoulders that bore it and the bride was placed at her husband's feet.

During this ceremony the bridegroom had never moved a muscle. The barber and his assistants now lifted Anandi to the level of Surindro's face, underneath a large sheet which had been stretched over their heads. The bride's mother and another woman, near of kin, were on either side of the bridal pair. Each woman held a light close to the face of the bride and bridegroom and the sarree was removed from the bride's face.

The sheets were then carried away and the bridegroom walked into the gods' house. The barber and his assistants carried the bride in just after her husband. Within a circle chalked

on the floor the bride and bridegroom were seated opposite one another; between them was a vase filled with flowers. On this vase the back of the bridegroom's hand was placed, while the back of the bride's hand was placed in his palm. The two hands were then bound together with wreaths of flowers, while in them the marriage fee was placed.

Each family guru laid down the law to the opposing father-in-law; but not one word was said to the bridal couple. At the side of the bride's father was a large dish filled with water from the sacred Ganges, into which he had dropped a ruby ring and a thin iron bracelet. The bracelet was given to the bride and the ring to the bridegroom, who were both sprinkled with some of the sacred water and the flowers were thrown at them.

The bride still on the plank, was lifted and carried, first to the right side of the room and then to the left. The sarrees of the bride and bridegroom were next tide together. This made them husband and wife.

After the marriage knot had thus been tied the bride was placed on her feet, standing in front of her husband with her back toward him. The attendants placed in her hand a plate upon which were some rice and some plantain, while a wisp of lighted straw was thrown at her feet. The bride was then conducted to her husband's side; in the parting of her hair at the front some red powder was rubbed. This red powder may be worn by wives only, never by maids or widows, and the chuddah, which she now donned for the first time, was drawn over her face.

### FORCE OF FEMININE POLICE

Norwegian Women, With Official Position, Are Given Appropriate Duties to Perform.

The appointment of another policeman at Christiania now brings the feminine police force in Norway up to seven, three of whom are in Christiania, two at Bergen, one in Stavanger, and one in Christiansand.

The special duty of the chief policeman in Christiania, Sergeant Osen, is to keep under surveillance girls and women suspected of living immoral lives and female beggars, while her two colleagues interrogate women tramps, and, if deserving, render them help, look after the children and see

that they are kept off the street as vendors and beggars.

The policewomen all perform occasional night duty and patrol some of the worst quarters of the city. With the exception of the policewomen at Christiansand, who wear a complete official uniform, the women are dressed in plain clothes, only wearing green capes bearing a small medallion stamped with the crown and lion of Norway, to distinguish them from ordinary citizens.

No Doubt.

Visitor—"What lovely furniture!" Little Tommy—"Yes; I think the man we bought it from is sorry now he sold it; anyway, he's always calling."