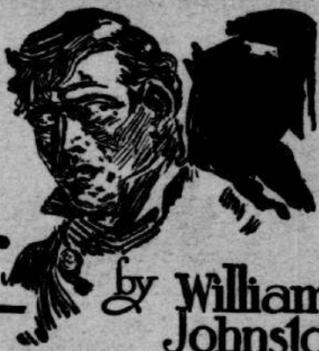


The Yellow Letter



by William Johnston
Illustrations by V.L. Barnes

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SYNOPSIS.

Harding Kent calls on Louise Farrish to propose marriage and finds the house in great excitement over the attempted suicide of her sister Katharine. Kent starts an investigation and finds that Hugh Crandall, suitor for Katharine, who had been forbidden the house by General Farrish, had talked with Katharine over the telephone just before she shot herself. A torn piece of yellow paper is found, at sight of which General Farrish is stricken with paralysis. Kent discovers that Crandall has left town hurriedly. Andrew Elser, an aged banker, commits suicide about the same time as Katharine attempted her life. A yellow envelope is found in Elser's room. Post Office Inspector Davis, Kent's friend, takes up the case. Kent is convinced that Crandall is at the bottom of the mystery. Katharine's strange outcry puzzles the detectives. Kent and Davis search Crandall's room and find an address, Lock Box 11, Ardway, N. J. Kent goes to Ardway to investigate and becomes suspicious of a "Henry Cook." A woman commits suicide at the Ardway Hotel. A yellow letter also figures in this case. Kent calls Louise on the long distance telephone and finds that she had just been called by Crandall from the same booth. "Cook" disappears. The Ardway postmaster is missing. Inspector Davis arrives at Ardway and takes up the investigation. He discovers that the dead woman is Sarah Sackett of Bridgeport. Louise telephones Kent imploring him to drop the investigation. Kent returns to New York to get an explanation from Louise. He finds the body of a woman in Central Park and more yellow letters. He sees Crandall, whom he recognizes as "Cook," enter the Farrish home. Louise again implores Kent to drop the investigation and refuses to give any explanation. Later Kent sees Crandall and Louise in an automobile. Kent returns to Ardway. Davis announces that he has planned to arrest the missing postmaster and also the master criminal.

CHAPTER XII—(Continued).

"Wait a minute," said Davis, and the constable checked the horse.

"Jumping out quickly the inspector seized the lantern and dropping back a few paces began making what appeared to be a minute examination of the road.

"Taint much of a road," the constable whispered to me while we waited. "It's only used for logging, though when we come up here this afternoon there was automobile tracks both going and coming."

"Any idea who made them?" I asked.

"Nops, but I guess he knows," with a gesture in the direction of the lantern light.

Just then Davis rejoined us, hanging the lantern over the dashboard again. Instead of resuming his seat, he knelt on the floor of the buckboard, peering down at the road as it was dimly revealed by the lantern.

"Go ahead slowly," he ordered.

As Dodds clucked to the horse I leaned down beside Davis and asked:

"What did you find?"

"Just what I expected. The automobile is somewhere ahead of us."

"Whose is it?"

"I don't know yet."

My curiosity would be denied no longer. Hitherto I had kept silent, hoping that Davis would confide in me on account of our strange journey.

"Whom are we coming out here after?" I asked.

"The postmaster and his accomplice, of course."

"Who is his accomplice?"

"I'm afraid I misstated the case," said Davis with a grim chuckle. "The postmaster is the accomplice. The other is the master criminal."

"Who is the other?" I persisted. "Is it Hugh Crandall?"

He was silent for a moment before answering. I attributed it to hesitation in admitting that he had been wrong and I right, and it was with considerable satisfaction that I finally heard him answer: "I should not be surprised if we found Crandall somewhere in the vicinity."

He continued to peer down into the road as the horse struggled up the hill till we came to a comparatively level plateau.

"Stop here," he called out authoritatively.

"The deserted cottage is at least a mile farther on," volunteered the constable.

"We'll walk it," said Davis. "We cannot take any chances of the wheels being heard."

Dodds pulled off the road and fastened the horse to a tree. Again taking the lantern Davis made a search of the road, finally returning the lantern to its place, after carefully extinguishing it.

"Come on this way, as quietly as you can," he directed.

"I've got this," I said, showing him the little pocket electric light with which I had explored the post office "Do you want it?"

"Keep it in your pocket. We may need it, but it is better not to show a light if we can avoid it."

I put it back in my pocket and took the precaution of placing the revolver Davis had given me in the side-pocket of my coat where it would be more easily available. Davis moved off soundlessly through the clearing with the constable, I close at his heels.

"This ain't the direction of the cottage," whispered Dodds.

"I know. I want to find something else first," Davis explained, keeping straight on through the darkness, like a hound on a fresh scent.

He moved rapidly forward for a hun-

dre and fifty yards and then brought us up short with a sharp "Hist." As we strained our eyes into blackness we made out the shape of an automobile just ahead. Its lights had been extinguished and its engine was dead.

"Wait here," Davis again commanded as he crept silently toward it to make sure that the tonneau was unoccupied. He was back with us in a minute.

"Let me have that lamp of yours, Kent," he whispered, at the same time lighting a cigarette.

"Is that safe?" I exclaimed in surprise, amazed that he would dare to smoke when he had been taking such precautions against our being discovered.

"Sure," he replied laconically. "Whoever was in that automobile is at least half a mile away by now. The glass on the front lamps is nearly cold. I want to see the number, though. We may find it useful."

Taking my little electric lamp he advanced toward the machine, again, flashing the light for a second on the number, and then peering by its light into the tonneau, exclaiming as he straightened up: "I thought so."

If it was safe for him to smoke, the constable and I felt that it was safe for us, too, to relax our precautions, and together we had advanced until we were beside him.

"What did you find?" I asked, wondering at his exclamation.

"What I expected," he replied enigmatically.

The manner of his answer provoked me and I determined then and there to have it out with him.

"Look here, Davis," I said; "I brought you into this case and I do not like the way you have acted about it. I have freely told you everything I have discovered and have aided you in every way I can. Before I go a step farther on this trip I want to know more about it."

"What is it you wish to know?" he asked. The constable edged nearer for fear he might miss something of our conversation.

"First, where are we going?"

"To what is known as the deserted cottage, about a half mile farther on, at the edge of this clearing, a shack that was built for a shelter for lumbermen or quarrymen—which was it, Dodds?"

"Bait for one and used by t'other," the constable replied, "but tain't been used by either, so far as I know, for a dozen years."

"How do you know the missing postmaster is there?"

"Traced him."

"How?"

"Bicycle tracks," he answered with a chuckle. "You were not the only person who discovered that Rouser, when he disappeared, went on bicycle. In fact, Kent, you are a little slow as a detective. By the time you had ascertained that much, I ascertained where the bicycle tracks led to and had even gone so far as to have Dodds get warrants for Rouser and his accomplice."

"I still do not see how you got evidence enough to get a warrant for Crandall. Did you find him out here with the missing postmaster?"

"I didn't say I had a warrant for Crandall," replied the inspector sharply. "Did you ever hear of a John Doe warrant?"

"How do you know they are out here now?" I asked.

"We'll soon find out. Come on," he answered, starting across the clearing almost at a dog-trot.

There were many more questions I wanted to put to him, but there was no opportunity, and, besides, I doubted much if he would have answered them. At first he made little effort to move quietly, but after we had gone a quarter of a mile or more he called back in a whisper, "Quietly now."

We had come to a path which led us through a short thick growth of underbrush. As noiselessly as Indians following a trail we felt our way along, the silence broken now and then by the sound of a bough bent back, or a rustling leaf. Soon the path brought us out on some rising ground. Not fifty yards ahead of us appeared the deserted cottage.

"That's it," whispered Dodds.

"Sh!" answered Davis. "Wait here!"

We stopped there just at the edge of the underbrush, peering into the darkness, straining our eyes to see and our ears to hear. From the one window in the side of the one-story log hut a dim light shone, proving that the place was either occupied or had been very recently. As we became more and more accustomed to the darkness I could see that there were apparently two paths, the one on which we were standing and another leading off at about right angle.

As we looked and listened I heard a sharp crack, like the breaking of a twig that had been stepped on.

The sound, so far as I could judge, came from the other path, apparently a hundred feet away from the cottage. I turned toward Davis and saw that

he, too, had heard it. He was standing with his whole body tense, his head bent forward a little as if ready to spring at any instant.

As we listened, another sound came to our ears. At first indistinct, it quickly took the rhythm of footsteps hurrying along the path, a man walking rapidly, I decided. The hurrying footsteps came nearer and nearer. Davis now was crouching like a runner about to make a hundred-yard dash.

It was only a minute of suspense and yet the effect on my nerves was indescribable. I wanted to scream like a hysterical girl; I wanted to run, forward or back, it made no difference; I wanted to do something, anything—anything but stand there and wait in the darkness.

All of a sudden the form of a man hurrying along the other path became visible. He seemed to be carrying something. Davis took two or three noiseless steps forward and stopped abruptly. From the shadows, from nowhere it seemed, the figure of another man appeared directly in the path of the oncomer.

"Hold on here!" it said, or something like that.

With a curse the first man dropped whatever he was carrying and started to run. The second man started after him. With not more than ten paces between them the pursued man suddenly wheeled. A revolver flashed and the pursuer with a muttered curse fell headlong in the path. The hunted man turned and, with headlong speed, plunged down the path.

At the revolver shot Davis had leaped forward, and, needless to say, Dodds and I were not far behind him. Fast as the fugitive was vanishing Davis was even faster. With the movement of a trained runner he, the wiry inspector, quickly outdistanced Dodds and myself and was close on the heels of his man.

As I ran breathless behind him, hoping to arrive in time to help him in his capture, I saw the man ahead halt and turn. Instinctively I knew he was about to shoot again, and, raising the revolver I had been carrying all the while, without even trying to aim, I fired in his direction just as I saw the flash from his revolver.

There was hardly a second between the two reports and then—

A woman shrieked.

I turned sick with horror. There could be no mistaking it.

It was the voice of Louise Farrish.

With overwhelming dismay it came to me that I had shot the woman I loved. Too stunned to move I stood there. My whole body seemed turned to stone. My arms hung helpless at my sides. My legs refused to move. My mouth was fever-dry and my tongue lay lifeless. Yet my vision, I recall, seemed clear and strong, penetrating the darkness as if it had been

ground and sprang after him. I found him bending over an unconscious form on the ground. Just as I reached the spot he had lighted a match. He lifted it to see my face, and as he did so I saw that the woman lying there apparently lifeless was indeed my Louise.

Overwhelmed with anguish and remorse, I flung myself beside her, entreating her forgiveness. The other man shoved me roughly aside.

"Don't be a fool," he exclaimed. "She's shot! She's killed!" I cried. "I shot her!"

"I tell you she has only fainted," he cried angrily. "Help me carry her over there by the window."

Together we lifted her and bore her gently to the side of the cottage, where we laid her on the ground. Joy surged in my heart as I saw and heard that she was still breathing, joy that was not even abated when I saw by the window light that my companion was none other than Hugh Crandall.

But just then all other thoughts were driven out of my head by the sight of a thin stream of blood trickling down the sleeve of Louise's automobile coat.

"I tell you she is shot. See," I cried, all my anguish coming back anew.

With trembling hands I helped Crandall cut away her sleeve, dreading all the time to see and know the worst.

"It's only a scratch," said Crandall, with a sigh of relief.

Across her rounded arm was a red-dent gash where the bullet had cut its way through the tender flesh. While my head told me that Crandall was right, that it was only a flesh wound and not in the least dangerous, in my heart I still felt little better than a murderer. Three inches to the right, and the bullet from my revolver would have stilled her heart for ever.

She opened her eyes and stared at us in a puzzled way.

"Why, Harding, dear," she said in feeble surprise, "are you here—here with Mr. Crandall?"

For answer I bent and kissed her. What mattered it if Hugh Crandall was the criminal? What mattered it if the chain of mystery was still unsolved? What mattered it if the author of the yellow letters had escaped from the inspector? Louise lived! She loved me!

Davis and the constable came running up the path, panting from their chase, but empty-handed.

"Is she hurt?" asked Davis as he saw the three of us grouped under the window.

"A flesh wound, not at all dangerous," Crandall answered, while I knelt there caressing Louise's hair and whispering softly to her.

"How about you?" asked Davis.

"He didn't hit me," Crandall answered with a short laugh. "I tumbled



"A Flesh Wound, Not at All Dangerous," Crandall Answered.

broad day. I seemed to see, as if the sight belonged to some one else, some one outside myself. I saw the inspector and constable, both apparently unhurt by the shots, dash on in pursuit. I saw a man's figure rise up from the path. I seemed to hear him call out: "Louise, Louise, where are you? Are you hurt?"

There was no answer. Almost I had persuaded myself that the strain on my nerves, the horror of the night and the shock of the shooting had given me a hallucination, that the woman's shriek I had heard was but a phantom of a fevered brain, when the figure I had seen rise from the path, dashed into the thicket, repeating its agonized cry: "Louise, Louise, where are you?"

At the sound, life came again into me. I dashed my revolver to the

over the bucket of milk he was carrying and dropped when he saw me. Didn't you get him?"

"He's safe," answered the inspector. "He ran plump over the edge of a precipice in the dark. We heard the thud of his body on the rocks below. He must have been instantly killed. We'll get the body in the morning. He must have fallen two hundred feet."

"A good two hundred," the constable added as Davis turned to peer in the window of the hut.

"And inside there," said the inspector after a minute's survey of the interior, "is the other one, the master criminal—safe enough for the present."

"Why," said the constable, who had followed the inspector's example in looking through the window, "what's that Aleck Young?"

EVICTED VICEROY FROM HOME

Element of Humor in Recent Action of Petulant Government of New South Wales.

Australia is a land of political experiments. The latest of these is the eviction of the governor-general or viceroy, the official representative of the king. It is the government of New South Wales that has performed this astonishing feat, and the indignation which burst forth at the moment is giving way to prolonged laughter. Since the union of the colonies under the name of the Commonwealth of Australia, it has been the habit of the governor-general to live for a part of the year at Sydney, New South Wales, and for the other part at Melbourne, Victoria, Government house at Sydney is the property of the government of New South Wales, having been the residence of the governors of that colony before the commonwealth was formed; but the colonial government gladly lent it to the viceroy of all Australia for the honor of his presence in the city.

But the government of the colony recently took offense at the proposal of the federal government for the establishment by the commonwealth of a post office savings bank, which would have come into competition with the New South Wales State Savings bank, and rashly resolved to emphasize its opposition, hoping perhaps to frighten the federal government from its purpose, by resuming possession of government house and thereby turning out the governor-general. The deed has been done and Lord Denham has left the city, cheered all along the route to the railway station by the citizens, and presented on their behalf by the lord mayor with an address expressing love and loyalty, condemning the action of the government as an indefensible outrage on the national hospitality, and affirming the official residence at Sydney re-established. Alas for the spiteful landlord! There is in this affair the libretto for a comic opera.—Boston Herald.

ROYAL HEADS NOT ALL WEAK

Some Able Men Among Those Who Are at Present the Occupants of European Thrones.

Though the kings and princes of Europe include some sadly deteriorated physical specimens, it would be a mistake to suppose that they have not some able men among them. Probably they average as high in mental ability as kinds did in the middle ages when they not only reigned, but governed. The German emperor is a strong ruler, and Francis Joseph of Austria has called his crassly built empire on a very even keel for many years.

Victor Emmanuel of Italy is a very prudent and clever man, who can think and act on his own responsibility, and Alfonso of Spain is a man of great spirit and an able politician. Ferdinand of Bulgaria is cutting a wide swath just at present, and is credited with brains.

George V. of England is commonplace, but prudent. Accounts of the character and ability of the Russian Czar differ widely. Some who have seen him credit him with great ability, but the course of events in Russia does not seem to justify this estimate. King Haakon of Norway is undoubtedly a clever man, and King George of Greece has been an excellent diplomatic agent for the Hellenic kingdom, as well as a shrewd moderator of the personal ambitions of Greek statesmen.

Man as Bad as 7,000 Years Ago.

"Man has showed no improvement either in intellectuality or morals from the days of the earliest Egyptians and Syrians, 7,000 years ago, to the keel-laying of the latest dreadnought," according to a survey which Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, known as the "grand old man of science," completed on the eve of his ninetieth birthday.

"There has been, of course, a great accumulation of human knowledge," he adds, "but for all that we are no cleverer than the ancients."

"There is still more abominable vice going on; every kind of cruelty to the poor and children; adulteration in every commodity, and lies everywhere."

"The average of mankind will remain the same until natural selection steps in to raise it. The outlook is hopeful."

Sun Power in Egypt.

At Meadi, a suburb of Cairo, is a sun-power plant of unusual interest. It consists of five reflectors, each 204 feet long, whose cross section is in the form of a parabola, with the generator units at the focus. The last named are of zinc, built of rectangular sections 14 inches wide.

To render them efficient they are painted with a black paint of high heat absorbing capacity. The water is introduced at the lower end and the generator at its upper end is provided with silvered glass mirrors. The plant works best at a pressure slightly below the atmosphere.—Scientific American.

In Merry England.

"That's rather a handsome mantelpiece you have there, Mr. Binkston," said the visitor.

"Yes," replied Mr. Binkston, proudly. "It is a memorial to my wife."

"Why—I was not aware that Mrs. Binkston had passed away," said the visitor, sympathetically.

"Oh, no, indeed, she hasn't," smiled Mr. Binkston. "She is serving her thirtieth sojourn in jail. That mantelpiece is built of the bricks she was convicted of throwing."

THE KITCHEN CABINET

IGNITY comes not from possessing honors, but in the consciousness that we deserve them.

The greatest truths are the simplest and so are the greatest men. —Heraclitus.

SOME PLAIN DISHES.

A plain beef stew is an appetizing dish when nicely prepared, and one which gives variety.

Beef Stew.—Cut all the fat from the meat and put it into a frying pan to try out all the fat. To a pound and a half of the meat allow a large onion cut fine, two tablespoonsful of minced carrot and the same of celery. Cut the meat in small pieces. Put the vegetables into the fat of the pan and cook until well heated through, then add the meat, which has been rolled in flour, and cook until well browned; add two teaspoonfuls of salt, a few dashes of cayenne pepper and water to just cover. Set on the back part of the stove where it will simply keep hot for two or three hours. The last hour add a pint of sliced potatoes, and when the potatoes are done, serve at once.

Apple Croquettes.—Add half a cup of bread crumbs to a pint of thick sour apple sauce, mix well and shape in balls, dip in egg and crumbs and fry in deep fat.

Brown Bread.—Take two cups of graham flour, a cup of white flour, a cup of nuts and a cup of raisins mixed, a teaspoonful each of soda and salt, a teaspoonful of baking powder, half a cup of molasses, and a cup and a half of sour milk. Bake one hour in a slow oven.

Corn Souffle.—Melt a tablespoonful of butter and stir in a tablespoonful of flour; when well cooked add a pint of hot milk, poured on slowly; add one by one the yolks of three eggs, beating well. Add a cup of corn chopped or put through a meat grinder; season with salt and cayenne. Fold in the stiffly beaten whites of the eggs and put the mixture into a well-greased baking pan, set the pan in hot water and bake twenty minutes. Test it with a knife—it comes out clean the souffle is done.



SMALL kindnesses, small courtesies, small considerations, habitually practiced in our social intercourse give a greater charm to the character than the display of great talents and accomplishments. —N. A. Kelly.

DELICACIES FOR OCCASIONS.

When a change from the ordinary is desired, try making a banana salad like this: Use a potato scoop and cut out the balls from firm bananas; put back into the carefully opened skins, cover with French dressing, and serve.

Frozen Cheese With Figs.—Mash two good-sized cream cheeses, beat them with a half cup of whipped cream, sweeten to taste, pack in a mold and bury in ice and salt four hours. Cut in rounds with a biscuit cutter, make a depression in the center of each with a spoon and place in each a preserved fig, stem end up.

Cream of Spinach Soup.—Press a cup of cooked spinach through a sieve, add a pint of thin white sauce and a pint of chicken broth. Season with salt and white pepper, and serve, poured over the yolks of two eggs mixed with a half cup of cream.

Oysters in Grape Fruit Cups.—Save the shells of halves of grapefruit; chill by standing in cold water, fill with chipped ice, lay an oyster on each half shell in depressions in the ice with a lemon quarter in the center, or a shell of lemon peel filled with a sauce to be used on the oysters.

Celery Boulettes.—Chop some celery and cold boiled potato until you have a cupful of each; add an egg yolk, a tablespoonful of butter, half a cup of pecans. Moisten with milk and mold into balls; dip in egg and crumbs and fry in deep fat. Serve with a sprig of parsley on each.

Steamed Salmon With Potato Balls.—Pick up the contents of a large can of salmon, add salt, pepper and a tablespoonful of lemon juice. Fold in a small cup of cream, which has been whipped; put into a buttered mold and steam three-quarters of an hour. Turn out and surround with potato balls dipped in butter and rolled in parsley.

Nellie Maxwell

Place for the Thermometer.

If you have only one thermometer, sacrifice your curiosity as to the outside temperature and hang it in your living room, that you may preserve your health by keeping the room "just warm enough."

Fruit Notes.

Grape fruit is at length becoming popular in Germany. It is not so many years ago since it began to become popular in the United States, and it should be remembered that Germany was first to eat the tomato.—Christian Science Monitor.

Rough on the Suter.

Her Papa—"Is my daughter willing to marry you?" Her Suter—"Yes, sir."

Her Papa—"Is it an election bet or is love really blind?"—The Club Fellow.