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THE MYSTERY OF THE INN BY THE SHORE



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

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CHAPTER XIII.

Continued.

"But didn't you hear what the doctor said? Didn't you wait to hear it?" persisted Nell.

"I waited to hear it, but I didn't succeed," said the colonel, in an offended tone.

The fact was that he and a number of other nobodies, who on one account or other considered themselves persons of great importance in the neighborhood, had been cruelly snubbed by the two medical men who had made an examination of the body when it had been brought into the town. For, after making their examination, they had both passed out of the building and through the throng which awaited them as quickly as possible, and had both declined at that stage to give a definite opinion as to the cause of death. So all the little-great men felt grossly insulted, and departed to their respective homes at a white heat of indignation.

"For all I know, they may bring it in 'Murder' against this fellow, King," said the colonel, irritably, not with any feeling of animosity against the person in question, but in order to get Nell to sympathize with his own grievance.

But the effect of his words upon the girl was electrical.

"Murder! Against Clifford?" cried she, springing to the door and gasping for breath. "Oh, you don't mean that! You can't!"

She burst into a violent fit of weeping, which made the colonel rather ashamed of himself. He tried to calm her, assuring her that nobody but the doctors, who were pompous asses without an idea how to treat men of powers and position vastly superior to their own, would ever entertain such a monstrous opinion. But she would not find enough comfort in his words; and at last, in spite of his and his daughter's efforts to detain her, she set off to walk to the Blue Lion, that she might at least have the assurance she longed for that nobody there shared the colonel's rashly expressed opinion.

"Mind, Nell, you are to come back here to sleep," commanded Miss Bostal, who objected to the girl's remaining in the vicinity of her highly undesirable lover.

But Nell would give no promise. She was deeply anxious, not only to hear how Clifford was and what people thought of Jim Stickle's death, but, also, to know how soon she would be able to speak to Clifford, whose advice had become more necessary than ever.

Refusing, therefore, a rather perfunctory offer on the colonel's part to escort her along the lonely road, she bade her friends good-by and started on her way to the Blue Lion.

But she got little reward for her pains. The house was shut up when she reached it; and Meg, who let her in, started at the sight of her, and hurried her up to her room, with scant information. Of course, the servant had heard of the finding of Jim Stickle's body; but she either would not or could not offer any opinions, either her own or anybody else's, as to the manner in which it came about; and Nell, fearing to rouse suspicion, was fain to go to bed unsatisfied. Only one piece of comfort was given her: Mr. King, who had a professional nurse in attendance on him, was getting on as well as they could hope.

On the following morning, George Claris, who looked worried and anxious, told his niece, as soon as breakfast was over, to pack her trunk for her journey to London. Nell did not dare to make any protest, nor even to ask any questions of her uncle, whose mood was clearly one to be respected. She had to content herself with Meg's report, obtained from the nurse, that Clifford had passed a good night.

Before ten o'clock Nell and her uncle were driving toward Stroan in the dog-cart, with her trunk behind them. They had not gone far when they noticed that something unusual was going on along the road. A party of men, among whom were two or three of the Stroan police, were busily engaged in examining the road itself and the ditch on either side. Nell with feminine quickness of perception, guessed that this search was in some way connected with the discovery of Jim Stickle's body on the previous evening; but her uncle, being less acute, pulled up his horse, and made inquiries.

"Hallo, what's up?" said he, addressing the nearest policeman.

"Oh, nothing in particular," replied the man, with a glance at Nell.

"Nothing as would interest you," added another of the searchers, and he, too, looked in an odd manner at the young girl who sat with pale face and silent lips beside George Claris.

"Well, you might give a civil answer to a civil question, I should think!" said the innkeeper, angrily.

His niece, more by gestures and coaxing little touches of his sleeve than by words, tried to induce him to drive on. But he was obstinate. As an old inhabitant and one, moreover, who had always been on good terms with every one, he thought he had a right to the information he had innocently asked for.

"Come now," he persisted, leaning out of the dog-cart, and speaking in a confidential tone: "If it's a secret, you know as I can keep it. I've kept secrets enough before, haven't I?"

But to his great indignation, he saw on some of the faces of the men at work what he took for a pitying smile. He lost his temper.

"Now then, out with it!" said he, in a sullen tone.

The policeman to whom he had first spoken repressed the smile on his own face, and answered seriously enough:

"We're not at liberty to say any more at present. But you'll know as much as we do very soon—this afternoon, most likely."

"Uncle George, we shall lose the train," said Nell, in a quivering voice. Then the policeman glanced from George Claris to the trunk behind; and, as the dog-cart drove off, he whispered some words to the man nearest to him, which sent him running at a good pace in the direction of Stroan.

Uncle and niece had scarcely got on the platform of the little station when the local police superintendent dashed through the doorway after them.

"Ah, Mr. Claris, I'm just in time, I see," he sang out cheerily, as he touched his hat politely to Nell. "Going up to London for a holiday?"

"Not me. Can't afford holidays," replied Claris, rather sulkily. "I'm seeing my niece off, that's all."

"Well, I'm sorry to have to stop the lady's trip, but we shall want her as a witness at the inquest that's to be held this afternoon. Very sorry, Miss," he went on to Nell, "but it's only put ting off the pleasure for a few days."

But Nell looked as much overwhelmed as if the summons had been a death warrant. She made no answer, but stood silently, tearless but terror-struck, in front of the two men staring at the approaching train, with her lips parted and a wild look in her eyes.

Her uncle roused her with a rough shake of the arm.

"What's come to the girl? Don't look like that!" said he in her ear. "Folks'll think that you had a hand in it yourself if you go into court with that face!"

To his surprise and chagrin she took him at his word.

"Will they say that, uncle? Will they dare to say that?" she asked, with such breathless earnestness that he stepped back with a frown on his honest red face.

"Bless the girl! You give me quite a turn with your whisperings and your scared face," said he, testily. "Come along back home, and for goodness' sake don't let them think as you wanted to get away. The Lord only knows what people say at these times if you don't keep your wits about you, and answer questions like a reasonable creature."

Nell said nothing. But the innkeeper's heart sank within him as he drove her home, and perceived that his once light-hearted and merry little niece was trembling like a leaf the whole way.

CHAPTER XIV.

The inquest was held in the little town-hall in the market-place, and the ugly whispers which were afloat concerning Jim Stickle's death brought together such a gathering that the meagre accommodation provided by the old building was taxed to the utmost.

It was evident from the outset that this was no ordinary case of a drunk man found dead in a ditch, with nothing about him to tell how he came by his death. From the very first moment when the doors were opened, and the crowd rushed in and filled in a moment the space allotted to the public, there were murmurs and whispers flying from mouth to mouth, indicative of the general belief that some person or persons of a higher social position than the dead fisherman, and more generally interesting than he, would be implicated in the course of the proceedings. The questions: "Where's the young lady?" and "Won't the gentleman be well enough to come?" were often but never satisfactorily answered. The witnesses in the case were in the magistrate's room, so rumor said, and were to be brought out one by one as they were wanted.

That part of the court usually occupied by the officials alone held on this occasion a good many curious ones drawn thither by the open secret of the romantic interest attached to the case. A few portly wives of local tradesmen, sandwiched in among the members of the sterner sex, lent their presence to the scene. There was a hum and a buzz from end to end of the tightly-packed court as the jurymen filed in, and taking their places on the oaken seats, black with age, which were already old when Charles the First was king, were sworn one by one, duly charged by the coroner. After the bail in the court caused by these proceedings, there was a loud buzz of talk when the jury filed out again to view the body. The policemen, little used to such a scene of excitement in their quiet, little town, roared themselves hoarse in their endeavor to maintain silence on the part of everybody but themselves.

When the jurymen returned the interesting part of the proceedings began. The first witness called was the boy, Charles Walcott, who had found the body. His evidence did not take many minutes, and consisted merely of the information he had given at the Bell Inn the evening before. He had seen the body lying by the roadside, had called to the man, had touched him; and being unable to detect a movement or to obtain an answer, had run with all speed to give information of his discovery.

The second witness was the detective, Hemming. He admitted the open secret that he was a private inquiry agent, and that he was staying at Stroan on business. He had been the first to reach the body after Walcott's discovery of it, and he had been one of those to identify the deceased as Jim Stickle, the fisherman. The man was quite dead when he found him, but the body was still quite warm.

"At what time was it that you first saw the body?" asked the coroner.

"I heard it chime the half-past eight by St. Martin's Church clock when I was about halfway between Stroan bridge and the place where we discovered the body."

"Was there anything about the position in which the body lay, or anything else, in fact, to enable you to form an opinion as to the cause of death?"

"Nothing whatever, sir," answered Hemming, who gave his evidence in the clear voice and confident manner of the old policeman, who feels that the court is his own theatre, where he is bound to get a hearing and deserves it.

"Was the body lying face downward, in such a position that the man may have been too drunk to rise, and have been suffocated in the grass and mud?"

"He was lying face downward, as I have said, sir. But his mouth was not close to the ground. I don't think it possible that he could have been suffocated. His clothes were quite loose about his neck also."

"Then you formed no opinion as to the cause of death?"

"Well, sir, I had heard something; and it made me jump to a conclusion as I should not otherwise have done. With your permission, sir, I would rather not say at the present stage what that conclusion was. It was formed from nothing I saw about the body."

There were whispers in the court. The people in the crowd looked at one another, and intimated that there was not much worth knowing that the London chap didn't know. They all felt kindly toward Hemming for speaking out so that they could hear him, an accomplishment in which the non-professional witness is so lamentably deficient.

This was the gist of Hemming's evidence, the few further questions which he was asked producing unimportant answers. Each witness had to put up with a trivial question or two from the members of the jury, who all wished to make the evidence given bear more weight than the giver intended.

The third witness called was Lucas Mann, in whose house the deceased man had been a lodger at the time of his death.

Mann deposed that Stickle was brought home by two men at a time which he fixed as between a quarter and half-past six. Stickle, who was in a half-dazed condition when he arrived, came to himself entirely within a few minutes and told him a story as to how he came to be stunned. Stickle had then seemed quite well, had had a cup of tea by the fire, and had expressed his intention of walking to Stroan that night. Then there had been a knock at the door. Stickle himself had opened it, and after a conversation with two ladies who had come to see him, he had gone out by the back door abruptly. The next thing Mann had heard of him was that he had been found dead on the road.

The next two witnesses were the men who had picked Jim Stickle up from the ground, at the back of the Blue Lion, after his encounter with Clifford. These both deposed that the man was unconscious when they picked him up, that he began to recover almost immediately, and that they did not have to carry him to the cottage where he lodged, but only to support him a little, as he complained of feeling "a bit giddy-like." They said that he seemed to be quite himself before they left him at the cottage.

There was a buzz of excitement in court when Miss Bostal was called. With the feminine witnesses began the real interest of the case. Enough had leaked out by this time for every gossip in Stroan to be aware that the quarrel between the gentleman, Clifford King, and the fisherman, Jim Stickle, had been on Nell Claris's account; and everybody knew, also, that Miss Bostal had espoused the cause of Jim Stickle, and so had brought herself prominently forward into the romantic story. Although Jim Stickle had not borne the best of characters, it was natural that after his sudden and mysterious death there should be a strong revulsion of popular feeling in his favor.

"Poor chap!" they said to one another. "It was clear he was awful fond of the girl, and to be sure, she must have given him some encouragement for him to have made bold to go for her fine gentleman love."

To be Continued.

Familiarity Breeds Contempt.
"There's one thing I am sure cannot be denied," remarked the Observer of Events and Things; "and that is no golfer is a hero to his caddy."—Yonkers Statesman.

The Chinese never wear wool—not even in the depth of winter, and generally speaking, the entire population clothe themselves in cotton all the year round.

UNCLE SAM HAS HALF BILLION OF GOLD

Keeps Right on Hoarding the Yellow Metal Up.

BAROMETER OF BUSINESS CONDITIONS.

The Fund Now Held is Said to Be the Second Largest of the Kind Ever Contained in Any Government's Treasury at One Time—The Government of Russia Holds the Record of Having Had the Largest.

Washington, D. C. (Special).—Officials of the Treasury Department lay great stress upon the importance of the fact that the gold fund in the Government coffers is of gigantic proportions. United States Treasurer Ellis H. Roberts says that it indicates a wonderful degree of prosperity throughout the land, and this assertion is repeated on all sides. Department officials say that the gold fund is a barometer of the business conditions; that when it is low business is bad and when high business is good. Therefore they assert that the general condition of the country was never better than now.

The gold fund at the close of business Saturday amounted to \$564,142,521. It has been hovering about the figure for months, and on July 29 it reached the highest point in the history of the Government, when it was \$566,000,000. The fund, as made up includes \$150,000,000 of gold reserve, \$357,488,089 of gold certificates, \$44,327,800 of which are covered into the Treasury, and \$55,654,434 gold coin and bullion.

The fund held on July 29 is said to be the second largest of the kind ever contained in any Government's treasury at one time. The Government of Russia holds the record of having had the largest gold reserve fund. About three years ago, when that nation returned to the gold-standard system of finance, she had in her national purse the sum of \$598,000,000 as a gold reserve fund. This is the largest in the history of nations. At the present time, however, she does not hold any such sum. The latest figures available from foreign nations concerning their gold reserve funds were obtained last June. It appears that France at that date held the largest amount. The figures in round numbers of the four principal nations are:

France \$514,000,000

Russia 362,755,000

Germany 276,434,000

England 188,884,880

TEXAS GUESSING AT LOSSES.

Total Damage From Floods Expected to Reach \$1,000,000.

Dallas, Texas. (Special).—The only rays of hope which penetrate the gloom of the flood situation come from the weather reports, which predict fair skies, the fact that the Brazos river at Waco is again falling.

Railways are tied up worse than ever before in the history of the State. The only railroad which has so far estimated its damage is the International and Great Northern. General Passenger Agent Price, of that road, says the actual damage to the International roadbed will reach \$100,000, and that the road is now a worse sufferer.

An accurate estimate of the losses, including the damage to railroads, drowning of live stock, the washing away of bridges, residences and business houses, in addition to the damage to cotton and other crops, is impossible at present, but it is safe to say that \$1,000,000 is conservative.

PREPARING FOR CORONATION.

Decorators at Work in London and Seats Being Sold.

London (By Cable).—Optimism regarding the coronation is slowly reviving under the stimulative effects of the surgeons' bulletins and the confident forecasts of the medical journals. Whether the King's will is imperious, or his medical advisers consider it necessary to humor him, there is a determined effort to subject the patient, who is nearly able to make one or two turns on the deck of the yacht, to the fatigue and excitement of the coronation ceremony. Motives of state prevail, although there is general agreement among medical men that an ordinary patient would not be fit for so hazardous an experiment a few weeks after a most serious operation.

The business of selling seats is looking up now that the programmes of the procession and the ritual are reappearing, and the decorators here and there are touching up the faded glories of the June preparation.

ADMITTED TAKING \$120,000.

Joe Used Money of one Concern to Operate Another.

Boston (Special).—Henry F. Coe, ex-treasurer of the Bowker Fertilizer Company and the Dudley Hosiery Mills, of Newton, who was arrested for the alleged embezzlement of \$120,000, was held for the grand jury in \$10,000 bail, which was furnished.

Specifically he was accused of the larceny of a note for \$25,000 payable on demand from the Bowker Company on June 3. Mr. Coe waived examination.

In a statement issued by the Bowker Company the history of the affair is given, together with a confession signed by Mr. Coe, in which he said that he had used the notes of the Bowker Company in carrying on the business of the Dudley Hosiery Mills, at New London, for 10 years, and that he had used \$120,000. Experts, it is said, have found the amount stated to be exactly correct.

Alabama is Badly Parched.

Montgomery, Ala. (Special).—Reports received here indicate a serious condition of drought in Alabama. Less rain has fallen in the State during the last three months than in any similar period since 1839. Crops in many sections have been almost destroyed. In the middle western counties, which are large producers of cotton, the ground has not been thoroughly wet since April. Corn has been damaged beyond recovery, and the prospect is that the food crops will give a light yield.

SUMMARY OF THE LATEST NEWS.

Domestic.

The investigation into the Craven lynching has brought out the names of several men alleged to be implicated. Negroes testified freely before the coroner's jury.

J. C. McCaslin shot and killed Lottie Russell, seriously wounded F. Max Peters, and then committed suicide at the Salt Palace Grounds, at Salt Lake City.

Mrs. John Edwards, wife of the foreman in charge of double-tracking work on the New York Central near Williamsport, held a gang of malicious Italians at bay.

Congressman Pugsley has gone abroad to investigate the methods of European bankers. He is a member of the Banking and Currency Committee of the House.

Whitelaw Reid, United States ambassador to the coronation of King Edward, has returned to this country. George Gould has purchased the majority of the stock of the Union Railway Company of Memphis.

Light earthquake shocks are still being felt in Los Alamos Valley.

All the property of the Norfolk Heat, Light and Power Company, together with all franchises, power and privileges granted to that company by the Legislature of Virginia and the Councils of Norfolk, passed into the hands of the Norfolk, Portsmouth and Newport News Company.

The Imperial Tobacco Company, of Great Britain and Ireland, will enlarge their operations in Richmond, Va., and immediately begin the construction of a mammoth plant. The company has recently completed the purchase of a site upon which the factory will be built.

Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard, the wife of Richard Henry Stoddard, the writer and poet, died at her home, in New York, at the age of 80. Mrs. Stoddard was herself a writer of some prominence.

Willard C. Von Derlip, a Boston lawyer, has been arrested on the charge of embezzlement. He had charge of several estates. He says his shortage is about \$100,000.

On Wolfe Creek, W. Va., Joseph Hardesty was killed and his four sons were injured by the explosion of the boiler in his saw mill.

Governor Cummins, of Iowa, will investigate the right of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway to reorganize in that State.

A California geologist says that the recent earthquakes at that State are not due to volcanic activity, but to local causes.

Flora Lucier, 17 years old, eloped from White Valley, Mass., with Harry Moore, a Barre farmer.

Fifteen hundred boilermakers and shipbuilders and their helpers in Chicago are on a strike.

At Decatur, Ill., Charles Kerney, a deaf mute, killed himself because of ill health.

Postoffices at Niles, Ohio, and at Bloomsburg, N. Y., were robbed.

A strike of rug weavers in Philadelphia has been settled.

Charles Craven, the slayer of Wm. H. Wilson, a farmer, who lived near Herndon, Va., and who has been pursued by over 100 people and by bloodhounds, was captured on a farm near Ashburn, Va. He was asleep in a hayrick and was seized by three of his pursuers—Ernest Norman, John Higgins and Henry Bryant—before he had time to offer resistance. He was lynched at Leesburg.

Miss Susie Costerbader, who was recently assaulted by John Lomax in the woods near her home at Potomac Mills, Westmoreland county, Va., died from burns received while kindling a fire.

The New York Mail and Express is authority for the statement that a merger of Southern Railroads is projected.

Foreign.

Before a meeting of the British Medical Association Surgeon General Buller charged that Sir Redvers H. Buller in 1881 used Red Cross wagons for taking ammunition to the front.

Former President Steyn, of the Orange Free State, arrived at Southampton with his family. He was too ill to bear the journey to London.

The story published by La Presse in Paris, to the effect that a shot had been fired at President Loubet, was found to be without foundation.

The mission of the King of Italy to Berlin is to secure the Emperor's assent to his project for a reduction of European armaments.

Canada is to have a steamship service between one of its ports and South Africa.

J. B. Pioda, Swiss minister to the United States, was appointed minister to Italy. Dr. C. D. Bourcart, who was appointed to succeed Mr. Pioda at Washington, declined the appointment.

A severe engagement was reported between the revolutionary forces under General Herrera and the government troops at Ague Dulce.

C. Arthur Lynch, the Nationalist member of the British Parliament, was committed for court on the charge of high treason.

President Loubet signed the decree for closing the unauthorized religious establishments in Paris.

The strong tide defeated the attempt of Holben to swim across the English Channel.

The will of Lord Pauncefote, late ambassador, was probated in London.

Upon her arrival in London May Yohe declared Captain Strong's statement to the effect that she got the money raised on the pawned jewelry, to be a fabrication.

Elihu Root, United States Secretary of War, was greeted upon his arrival at Havre by General Pistor as the official representative of the French Minister of War.

Financial.

The New York Cotton Exchange will close August 9, coronation day.

Baltimore's exports for the fiscal year 1902 were \$80,500,000, a decrease of \$25,850,000.

Standard Oil denies that it is to become a greater monopoly than it is at present.

St. Paul's net earnings for June increased \$20,161 and Union Pacific's increased \$731.

Union Traction books will close on August 27 for the annual meeting of September 18.

Mexican Mustang Liniment

will readily overcome Loss of Hair, Dissected Hoofs and Scratches in horses' mules and cattle. Farmers try it.



A toad under a harrow

suffers no more than the faithful horse that is tortured with Spavins, Swinney, Harness Sores, Sprains, etc. Most horse owners know this and apply the kind of sympathy that heals, known far and wide as

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NEW-YORK TRIBUNE FARMER.

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Send your subscriptions and money to THE RECORDER, Monterey, Va.

Send your name and address to the NEW YORK TRIBUNE FARMER, New York City, and a free sample copy will be mailed to you.

Depravity of the Young of the Human Race

A fond father says that nowhere is there to be found as well-developed a brand of natural depravity as that which animates a 6-months-old infant, and he tells this story in confirmation of his opinion:

The other evening he was left alone with his tiny son and heir. The youngster's mother went to the theater. His aunt went out also, and so did his nurse, and the man was left in full possession of the field.

About 7 o'clock, with sublime disregard for modern rules, which say babies must be put upon a bed and left to go to sleep by themselves, the father began to rock his child to sleep. And he rocked and crooned and walked steadily from that time until 9.