THE FATAL REQUEST

By A. L. Harris Author of "Mine Own Familiar Friend," etc.

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CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"I've been dreaming," he said to himself. "I thought everything had been made quite clear to me about—" Was he dreaming still, or was there some one in the room beside himself? Some one sitting before the writing table and bending forward as though

The figure had a pen in its hand.

that between us which I think will not allow you to deny this favor which I ask. I have much to say to you, and many questions to put which I alone can answer to my satisfaction. If you refuse I shall think, rightly or wrongly, that you are more to blame more as the criminal than what I once was, the friend of your youth.

"J——"

The young man read this through. Who had written it? Whose hand had completed the broken sentences and given them the meaning which they had heretofore lacked? Could he have done it himself, while in a state of somnambulism? No; for the hand writing was not his! At a glance he could distinguish the words which he had written himself. The handwriting over which he had labored and perplexed his soul. The words which had seemed to cast a slur upon the memory of his dead father—which was now removed.

He turned the sheet over. There, on the other side, were those words the last probably his father ever wrote: "My dear——" together with date, "April 18th."

He looked again at those mysterious sentences, upon which the ink still glistened. They were written in the same hand!

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Advertisement.

Next morning a party of three were assembled at breakfast.

"You should try to have much of an appetite this morning," remarked Dr. Cartwright, addressing his host, who appeared very distracted, with a tendency to start when spoken to. "How's that?"

The young man replied, as he fidgeted with his knife and fork, "That he didn't seem to care to eat anything, somehow."

At this moment there was an interruption. A maid presented herself with a letter which had just come by hand, and gave it to her young master, stating at the same time, that the bearer was waiting for an answer.

A letter! and come by hand! He started again as though he had been shot, and the doctor noticed that his hand went up to the breast pocket of his coat, as though there were something there he—The doctor shook his head as he made this observation.

"Tell Burritt took the letter held out to him, glanced at the superscription and tore it open. It apparently consisted of only a few lines, but those few lines seemed to afford him considerable satisfaction, judging by the play of his features. Indeed, to the two who were watching him, it seemed as though the mental anxiety which overspread his face were almost one of triumph.

"Doctor," he said, "will you excuse me a moment? I have to send an answer to this by the bearer."

He spoke rapidly, and still that spirit of elation was perceptible in his words and actions. He seemed quite to have cast off the air of abstraction which had characterized his demeanor previously. He quitted the room leaving his sister and friend tete-a-tete.

"Now," said the latter to himself, "Go it, Jeremiah! Now's your chance. Make yourself agreeable for once in your life. But don't forget you were forty-four last birthday, and you look it, every bit. Ahem! I suppose you have your heart attached to your brother, Miss Burritt?"

"Attached to him?" was the exclamation. "Of course I am!"

"Exactly so—and I'm sure it's very much to your credit. Your brother seems lucky to be blessed. I just remember that he was as nervous and shaky, as he appears to be now, when I first attended him—should be glad to try him, and—"

She put her finger upon her lips and gave a nervous glance at the door before she answered, sinking her voice to a whisper.

"He has been like that ever since the funeral. He goes and shuts himself up for hours, and I know that he is always thinking of that man who killed my father, and planning how he can hunt him down and bring him to the gallows. I don't mind telling you, because I know I can trust you; but I'm always afraid lest the table turns him—I can't help feeling sorry sometimes for—that other man!"

"My dear young lady! I agree with every word you have said, and I am much flattered by the confidence you have shown in me. But I'm afraid you have hit the nail right on the head, when you say, 'that other man.'"

"Quite sure?" said the doctor, still preserving his jocularity.

"I will give you the whole story from the day we parted. You know I did meet with—"

He began with the account of the burnt letter; and the little doctor listened with a concern lest he found impossible to disguise. "It's a sad pity it should have been so nearly destroyed," was his remark when he made, "because, of course, it is impossible to tell now what the rest of the contents of the letter have been."

(To be continued.)

MISTAKEN IN THE DIAGNOSIS.

Doctor's Error Affected the Size of His Pocketbook.

Albert Leverling, the black-and-white artist, responsible for so many comics, used to live in Chicago, but recently transferred his allegiance to New York. He took his hypochondriacal tendencies with him and they are still in good working order. His favorite pastime is the fear of some deadly disease, preferably a new one, go to bed imagining he has it, lie awake all night and wake up in the morning and get assurance that he is in perfect health, and then go back cheerfully to work.

One morning not long ago he turned up at the doctor's just as the man of medicine was getting into his carriage.

"I'm in a hurry," called the doctor, "and can't stop to see you, but it's all right—you mustn't be afraid."

"Haven't got what?" demanded the astonished artist.

"Whatever it is you think you've got. Not a symptom of it. Good bye," and he drove away.

"Well, now," said Leverling, turning to a lamppost as the only witness of the scene, "I know for sure that he's mistaken. I know I have got it—ten dollars in my pocket to pay his last bill; and if he is right about that, he can get in line with his diagnosis," and he went around to the nearest junk shop and invested the money in a pair of brass candlesticks and a copper kettle.—Philadelphia Post.

Russian Doctors.

Russia is very short of doctors, having only eight for every 100,000 inhabitants. Great Britain has 180 for the same number.

11 o'clock this morning? Yours obediently,

"JOHN SHARP."

* * *

Dr. Cartwright did not return home by the train next day. The more mention, on his part, of such a purpose being second as preposterous by his entertainers.

"I thought you spoke of three days at the least in the length of your visit," said his host; "and I want to have a long talk with you to-day if you don't mind."

"Mind!" said the doctor, "it's just, what I should like."

They were at breakfast when this occurred, and the morning paper had just been brought in. Ted Burritt had let it slip from his hand, as from a careless way, with the air of one who knows beforehand that it is most likely to contain anything to interest him, when, turning the sheet, his attention was accidentally caught and held by something which appeared among the advertisements. There he read, he read—not slightly open, and a vivid spot, caused by excitement or some other feeling, on each cheek.

"Anything interesting to you in the paper this morning?" asked the doctor, with an affectation of indifference; but there could not escape from the countenance before him from behind his spectacles. This remark recalled the other to himself. He seemed annoyed that he had betrayed his interest in the paper, and folded up the paper, threw it on one side before answering: "Nothing whatever. There is absolutely no news worthy of the name!"

"Now," thought the doctor, "is he deserving of the name of a fool or what? Oh, certainly! I must get to the bottom of this!" Aloud he merely observed: "There seems to be very little much in the papers nowadays. Now, when I was in the 47th, etc." Notwithstanding his resolve, he did not forget to take an early opportunity of examining the paper.

"I, sir," he thought, "will pick page it was," he said to himself, as he ran his finger down each column in succession; "but I don't see anything likely to account for the boy's peculiar behavior. Oh, here it is, I'm at the door opened. 'Think of the devil, you know, and ——' Hullo! you look very much excited about something! What is it?"

"I am excited," was the answer. "And you'll be much too, when you have heard all I have to say."

Dr. Jeremiah stared at the young man in astonishment. Then, "Fire right," he said, "fire away and astonish me as much as you like.

"Not here," the answer, "I want you to come with me to the room that was my father's study, and where we shall be sure of being disturbed; as I keep the key myself, and never allow any one to enter it."

They crossed the hall. Ted unlocked the door; they entered, and he locked it again behind them.

Dr. Cartwright looked round him with considerable interest. He noticed the dust, neglected appearance than ever upon every object, small and great. He dusted a chair with his pocket handkerchief before venturing to sit down. Then he took off his spectacles and polished them carefully. "Now," said he as he seated himself, "I'm quite ready to be astonished."

"You asked me a moment or two back whether I had found the other m——" said Ted—"meaning, of course, that murderer!"

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ILLINOIS NEWS

Choice items from over the state, specially selected for our readers

COUNTY CLERK 19 YEARS

Belleville Jury Returns Verdict in Favor of George C. Thomas.

A jury in Belleville, before whom was tried indictments against George C. Thomas, county clerk of St. Clair county, returned a verdict of not guilty. The last grand jury returned nine indictments against Thomas, charging him with having embezzled money supposed to belong to the county and others to the state. Under state institutions for the keeping of county charges, it appears that the state institutions have been accustomed to render bills to the county monthly. These bills, it is alleged, would be allowed by the board of supervisors and a warrant drawn for the amount. It was charged by the special committee that Thomas, instead of paying the money as ordered, indorsed the county warrants and cashed them and appropriated the money to his own use. At the end of three months the institutions which had not received their money would render a statement to the county, indicating the monthly bill and the balance due from back account in one sum, and this would be allowed by the county board and paid over to the institutions to which it was due. The defense claimed that Thomas cashed the county warrants and their stead mailed his personal check to the state institutions for the amounts due.

BRIDE-TO-BE CHANGES HER MIND

Woman Uses Her Prerogative and Balks at the Last Moment.

George Coughlin, a marriage license clerk in East St. Louis, has an unused marriage certificate which he declares he will hold for a time, because he believes the young woman who it was intended to inferentially called again. George Hanschen and Mattie Lewis called at the office and secured the modern license, Hanschen filled out the required document and handed it to the bride-elect to sign, and she had signed it some through with a dozen lines before she tossed the paper away and declared that she was not in a humor to marry and would proceed no further with the ceremony. The would-be groom pleaded unanimously with her, reminded her that his friends, who had been notified of his intentions to become a benedict would ridicule him, but she remained firm in her decision to remain single for a while longer.

* * *

Runaway Boy Fools Police.

Willie Thomas, aged 16, was picked up on the street of Belleville by the police and who admitted being the runaway, burglarious lad that had boarded a train at Benton, Ill., to sell papers, was furnished transportation by the Belleville police. He had not go no sooner left than John Thomas of East St. Louis, father of the boy, arrived in Belleville. He commended the police chief that he had been cleverly worked by the boy. He said, however, that the lad's grandmother lived at Benton and he had doubtless run away from home to visit her.

Sentence for Alleged Swindler.

Henry Flaschenram, the man who induced Lillian Gilmore, Chicago, to start out to sell his cheap jewelry in the hope that they might get a "fine voiture a la mode," was sentenced in the United States court at Chicago by Judge Humphrey. He will serve four years in the penitentiary if the upper court does not interfere. The sentence was light, in fact, being 19,000 before the postal authorities put a stop to the proceedings.

* * *

Reverses Hugging Case.

The appellate court has reversed the Hinckle-Cotwell case and remanded it back to the Christian county circuit court for a second trial. The suit was for the sum of $5,000 damages for injuries. The plaintiff, Miss Estelle Nichols of Taylorville, claims that E. M. Cotwell, Chicago, assaulted one of her ribs while hugging her. The circuit court found in favor of the defendant.

Takes Acid on Train.

Mrs. Richard Wood, of Mount Vernon died on a Chicago and Eastern Illinois train near Thebes from a dose of carbolic acid. Mrs. Wood purchased the acid in Mount Vernon, shortly after which she boarded the train. It is said that she evidently had taken it by at breakfast that it would be her last meal with them, but they thought nothing of it at the time.

Gets Blood Poison From Corpse.

William Balborn, an undertaker, died at Granite City from blood poisoning, having contracted the poison several days before while handling a dead body. Mr. Balborn was 38 years of age and formerly was president of the board of aldermen of Venice.

Town Secures Free Phones.

The Kinloch Telephone company has agreed to install a public telephone in the Kinloch Commercial club. The village board has served notice that all telephone poles be removed from the streets unless the free telephone was given.

Romance Back of Claim.

Mrs. Ella M. Walt of Louisville, Ky., is in Springfield and has filed claim to certain lands in Clinton county, which are involved in a romance dating back about twenty years.

DOES NOT OPPOSE J. MITCHELL.

Secretary Ryan Declares He Is an Admirer of Miners' President.

Reports have been circulated in some of the larger cities that the reform movement in Illinois to oust the United mine workers in Illinois opposed the acceptance of the operators' ultimatum for a reduction of wages was that he desired to supplant John Mitchell as national president. He was asked: "Mr. Ryan, have you anything to say in regard to the rumor sent out from Chicago that you are taking this stand against accepting the compromise scale offered by the operators in the hope that if it is rejected President Mitchell will resign and that you may be made the national president at the end of this term?" Mr. Ryan replied: "Emphatically, I am not. I never dreamt of such a thing. I have no aspiration to that position. I have always been an admirer and ardent supporter of John Mitchell. Results may show that President Mitchell is right. It may be that our judgment was mistaken in taking a different view. I hope that time will show this to be true. John Mitchell will never have a stanchier supporter than I, and there is no man I hold in higher esteem."

MISSIONARY IN COREA.

Rev. Graham Lee of Rock Island, a Presbyterian, is one of the American missionaries in Corea whom United States Minister Griscom is trying to extract from the Japanese-Chinese war. Mr. Lee is stationed in Pingyang, but is supposed to have been conveyed to Pusan, where other mis-

REV. GRAHAM LEE.

**sionaries are congregated. From his post in Tokio Minister Griscom sent a report to the state department Feb. 20, telling of his efforts to protect missionaries in Corea. The report reads as follows: "In view of the fact that there are some twenty American missionaries in Pusan and that they are unable to communicate by telegraph with Mr. Allen in Seoul, I deemed it advisable to mention the matter informally to Baron Komura. In reply to my inquiries Baron Komura stated that ample measures were being taken to protect all foreigners in Pusan, and the Japanese consul had been instructed to use every effort to protect all foreigners in Corea. I have