

SERIAL STORY

The Chronicles of Addington Peace

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THE VANISHED MILLIONAIRE

I stood with my back to the fire, smoking and puzzling over it. It was worth all the headlines the newspapers had given it; there was no loophole to the mystery.

Both sides of the Atlantic knew Silas J. Ford. He had established a business reputation in America that had made him a celebrity in England from the day he stepped off the liner. Once in London his syndicates and companies and consolidations had startled the slow-moving British mind. The commercial sky of the United Kingdom was overshadowed by him and his schemes. The papers were full of praise and blame, of puffs and denunciations. He was a millionaire; he was on the verge of a smash that would paralyze the markets of the world. He was an abstainer, a drunkard, a gambler, a most religious man. He was a confirmed bachelor, a womanizer; his engagement was to be announced shortly. So was the gossip kept rolling with the limelight always centered upon the spot where Silas J. Ford happened to be standing.

And now he had disappeared, vanished, evaporated.

On the night of December 13, a Thursday, he had left London for Meudon hall, the fine old Hampshire mansion that he had rented from Lord Beverly. The two most trusted men in his office accompanied him. Friday morning he had spent with them; but at three o'clock the pair had returned to London, leaving their chief behind. From four to seven he had been shut up with his secretary. It was a hard time for every one, a time verging up on panic, and at such times Silas J. Ford was not an idle man.

At eight o'clock he had dined. His one recreation was music, and after the meal he had played the organ in the picture gallery for an hour. At a quarter past eleven he retired to his bedroom, dismissing Jackson, his body servant, for the night. Three-quarters of an hour later, however, Harbord, his secretary, had been called to the private telephone, for Mr. Ford had brought an extension wire from the neighboring town of Camdon. It was a London message, and so urgent that he decided to wake his chief. There was no answer to his knock, and on entering the room he found that Mr. Ford was not in bed. He was surprised, but in no way suspicious, and started to search the house. He was joined by a footman, and, a little later, by Jackson and the butler. Astonishment changed to alarm. Other servants were roused to aid in the quest. Finally, a party, provided with lanterns from the stables, commenced to examine the grounds.

Snow had fallen early in the day, covering the great lawns in front of the entrance porch with a soft white blanket, about an inch in thickness. It was the head-groom who struck the trail. Apparently Mr. Ford had walked out of the porch, and so over the drive and across the lawn towards the wall that bounded the public road. This road, which led from Meudon village to the town of Camdon, crossed the front of Meudon hall at a distance of some quarter of a mile.

There was no doubt as to the identity of the footprints, for Silas Ford affected a broad, square-toed boot, easily recognizable from its unusual impression. They tracked him by their lanterns to the park wall, and there all trace of him disappeared. The wall was of rough stone, easily surmountable by an active man. The snow that covered the road outside had been churned into muddy paste by the traffic of the day; there were no further footprints observable.

The party returned to the house in great bewilderment. The telephone to London brought no explanation, and the following morning Mr. Harbord caught the first train to town to make inquiries. For private reasons his friends did not desire publicity for the affair, and it was not until the late afternoon, when all their investigations had proved fruitless, that they communicated with Scotland Yard. When the papers went to press the whereabouts of the great Mr. Ford still remained a mystery.

In keen curiosity I set off up the stairs to Inspector Peace's room. Perhaps the little detective had later news to give me.

I found him standing with his back to the fire puffing at his cigarette with a plump solemnity. A bag, neatly strapped, lay on the rug at his feet. He

nodded a welcome, watching me over his glasses.

"I expected you, Mr. Phillips," he said. "And how do you explain it?"

"A love affair or temporary insanity," I suggested vaguely.

"Surely we can combine those solutions," he smiled. "Anything else?"

"No. I came to ask your opinion."

"My mind is void of theories, Mr. Phillips, and I shall endeavor to keep it so for the present. If you wish to amuse yourself by discussing possibilities, I would suggest your consideration of the reason why, if he wanted to disappear quietly, he should leave so obvious a track through the snow of his own lawn. For myself, as I am leaving for Camdon via Waterloo station in 23 minutes, I shall hope for more definite data before night."

"Peace," I asked him eagerly, "may I come with you?"

"If you can be ready in time," he said.

It was past two o'clock when we arrived at the old town of Camdon. A carriage met us at the station. Five minutes more and we were clear of the narrow streets and climbing the first bare ridge of the downs. It was a desolate prospect enough—a bare expanse of wind-swept land that rose and fell with the sweeping regularity of the Pacific swell. Here and there a clump of ragged firs showed black against the snow. Under that gentle carpet the crisp turf of the crests and the broad plough lands of the lower ground alike lay hidden. I shivered, drawing my coat more closely about me.

It was half an hour later that we topped a swelling rise and saw the gray towers of the ancient mansion beneath us. In the shelter of the valley by the quiet river, that now lay frozen into silence, the trees had grown into splendid woodlands, circling the hall on the further side. From the broad front the white lawns crept down to the road on which we were driving. Dark masses of shrubberries and the tracery of scattered trees broke their silent levels. The park wall that fenced them from the road stood out like an ink line ruled upon paper.

"It must have been there that he disappeared," I cried, with a speculative finger.

"So I imagine," said Peace. "And if he has spent two nights on the Hampshire downs, he will be looking for a fire today. You have rather more than your fair share of the rug, Mr. Phillips. If you will excuse my mentioning it."

A man was standing on the steps of the entrance porch when we drove up. As we unrolled ourselves he stepped forward to help us. He was a thin, pale-faced fellow, with fair hair and indeterminate eyes.

"My name is Harbord," he said. "We are Inspector Addington Peace, I believe."

His hand shook as he stretched it out in a tremulous greeting. Plainly the secretary was afraid, visibly and anxiously afraid.

"Mr. Ransom, the manager of Mr. Ford's London office, is here," he continued. "He is waiting to see you in the library."

We followed him through a great hall into a room lined with books from floor to ceiling. A stout, dark man, who was pacing it like a beast in a cage, stopped at the sight of us. His face, as he turned, looked pinched and gray in the full light.

"Inspector Peace, eh?" he said. "Well, inspector, if you want a reward name it. If you want to pull the house down only say the word. But find him for us, or, by heaven, we're done."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"You can keep a secret, I suppose. Yes—it couldn't well be worse. It was a tricky time; he hid half his schemes in his own head; he never trusted even me altogether. If he were dead I could plan something, but now—"

He thumped his hand on the table and turned away to the window.

"When you last saw Mr. Ford was he in good health? Did he stand the strain?"

"Ford had no nerves. He was never better in his life."

"In these great transactions he would have his enemies. If his plans succeeded there would be many hard hit, perhaps ruined. Have you any suspicion of a man who, to save himself, might make away with Mr. Ford?"

"No," said the manager, after a moment's thought. "No, I cannot give you a single name. The players are all big men, inspector. I don't say that their consciences would stop them from trying such a trick, but it wouldn't be worth their while. They hold off when goal is the certain punishment."

"Was this financial crisis in his own affairs generally known?"

"Certainly not."

"Who would know of it?"

"There might be a dozen men on both sides of the Atlantic who would suspect the truth. But I don't suppose that more than four people were actually in possession of the facts."

"And who would they be?"

"His two partners in America; myself and Mr. Harbord there."

Peace turned to the young man with a smile and a polite bow.

"Can you add any names to the list?" he asked.

"No," said Harbord, staring at the detective with a puzzled look, as if trying to catch the drift of his questions.

"Thank you," said the inspector; "and now, will you show me the place where this curious disappearance occurred?"

We crossed the drive, where the snow lay torn and trampled by the carriages, and so to the white, even surface of the lawn. We soon struck the trail, a confused path beaten by many footprints. Peace stooped for a moment, and then turned to the secretary with an angry glance.

"Were you with them?" he said.

"Yes."

"Then why, in the name of com-

mon sense, didn't you keep them off his tracks? You have simply trampled them out of existence, between you."

"We were in a hurry, inspector," said the secretary, meekly. "We didn't think about it."

We walked forward, following the broad trail until we came to a circular patch of trodden snow. Evidently the searchers had stopped and stood talking together. On the further side I saw the footprints of a man plainly defined. There were some half-dozen clear impressions and they ended at the base of the old wall, which was some six feet in height.

"I am glad to see that you and your friends have left me something, Mr. Harbord," said the inspector.

He stepped forward and, kneeling down, examined the nearest footprint.

"Mr. Ford dressed for dinner?" he inquired, glancing up at the secretary.

"Certainly! Why do you ask?"

"Merely that he had on heavy shooting boots when he took this evening stroll. It will be interesting to discover what clothes he wore."

The inspector walked up to the wall, moving parallel to the tracks in the snow. With a sudden spring he climbed to the top and seated himself while he stared about him. Then on his hands and knees he began to crawl forward along the coping. It was a queer spectacle, but the extraordinary care and vigilance of the little man took the force out of it.

Presently he stopped and looked down at us.

"Please stay where you are," he said, and disappeared on the further side.

Harbord offered me a cigarette, and we waited with due obedience till the inspector's bullet head again broke the horizon as he struggled back to his position on the coping of the wall.

He seemed in a very pleasant temper when he joined us; but he said nothing of his discoveries, and I had grown too wise to inquire. When we reached the entrance hall he asked for minutes the man appeared. He was a tall, hatchet-faced fellow, very neatly dressed in black. He made a little bow, and then stood watching us in a most respectful attitude.

"A queer business this, Jackson," said Addington Peace.

"Yes, sir."

"And what is your opinion on it?"

"To be frank, sir, I thought at first that Mr. Ford had run away; but now I don't know what to make of it."

"And why should he run away?"

"I have no idea, sir; but he seemed to me rather strange in his manner yesterday."

"Have you been with him long?"

"No, sir. I was called to the Hon. John Dorn, Lord Beverly's second son. Mr. Ford took me from Mr. Dorn at the time he rented the hall."

"I see. And now, will you show me your master's room. I shall see you again later, Mr. Harbord," he continued. "In the meanwhile I will leave my assistant with you."

We sat and smoked in the secretary's room. He was not much of a talker, consuming cigarette after cigarette in silence. The winter dusk had already fallen when the inspector joined us, and we retired to our rooms to prepare for dinner. I tried a word with Peace upon the staircase, but he shook his head and walked on.

The meal dragged itself to an end somehow, and we left Ransom with a second decanter of port before him. Peace slipped away again, and I consoled myself with a book in the library until half-past ten, when I walked off to bed. A servant was switching off the light in the hall when I mounted the great staircase.

My room was in the old wing at the further side of the picture gallery, and I had some difficulty in steering my way through the dark corridors. The mystery that hung over the house had shaken my nerves, and I remember that I started at every creak of a board and peered into the shadows as I passed along with heaven knows what ghostly expectations. I was glad enough to close my door upon them and see the wood fire blazing cheerfully in the open hearth.

(CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED.)

AUTO'S VALUE IN WARFARE

Recent Maneuvers Have Shown That It Is a Power That Must Be reckoned With.

In the interesting presidential address before the Institution of Automobile Engineers, at London, T. B. Brown stated that in the recent army maneuvers held on a large scale in this country the automobile proved itself of the greatest advantage. The invaders and defenders, each consisting of one cavalry division and two infantry divisions, were furnished with approximately 110 petrol vehicles and 35 steam vehicles, which, working in conjunction with the railways, undertook the whole of the supplies to the armies. Where roads are available the gain by the use of automobiles over horses for this purpose is enormous, as it can easily be seen that where the latter cover 40 miles in two days the same distance would be covered in four hours by the former. It takes four motor lorries to carry one day's supplies for a brigade of about 4,000 men, and each lorry takes a three-ton load, which is equivalent to three horse wagons. Moreover, the motor vehicles take up only two-thirds of the road space required for the horse vehicles.

Doubtful Melody.

"A bird that can sing and won't sing must be made to sing," said the ready-made philosopher.

"Yes," replied the practical person. "but anybody who would be satisfied with the result of that experiment must have a mighty poor ear for music."

SOUTH FAVORS PROTECTION

Increase of Manufacturing Interests Changing Sentiment.

Washington, D. C.—Not a little consternation prevails in the Democratic camp at Washington because of the fact that Southern manufacturers and producers, dissatisfied with the terms of the Underwood bill, are appealing to Republican senators for relief. This is something that has been done before, but never in the past has the appeal from the South been as strong as now, due to the fact that the South is becoming more and more a manufacturing section.

Aside from the two senators from Louisiana, none of the Southern Democrats in the senate expect to break with their party when it comes to voting on the tariff bill, yet it is true that many Southern senators are protectionists at heart, though they do not so style themselves. They speak of advocating "tariff for revenue," but their preference is always for a tariff on the products of their particular states, and they are not much concerned about getting revenue from the products of other states or sections.

While no one expects the South to replace any of its sitting Democratic senators with Republicans, there is a general fear among senators from that section, and especially among those whose terms expire in two years, that they may be replaced by other Democrats who will be less inclined to vote against local interests.

IDAHO BRIDGES THREATENED

False Piers Carried Away at Lewiston and Trains Halted.

Lewiston, Idaho—All the false piers of the Northern Pacific Clearwater bridge at Spalding have been swept away by the high water and its bridge at Kamiah is also out of line. The Holbrook Island bridge at Lewiston over a branch of the Clearwater is also expected to go out at any minute. Hundreds of cords of drift are piled against the Spalding bridge and dynamite is being used to loosen the jam. No trains are passing over the bridge and Superintendent Burt, with two pliedrivers and a work train is on the scene directing the work. Both the Snake and Clearwater are rising rapidly and untold damage may follow if present weather conditions continue.

KINDLY LETTERS SELL BEST

Martha Washington's Brings \$300; Mrs. Lincoln's Complaint \$50.

New York.—The bitter letters which Mrs. Lincoln, widow of Abraham Lincoln, wrote more than 40 years ago, when in despair of getting congress to pass an appropriation for her assistance, were sold at auction Thursday. Most of the letters went to dealers for less than \$50. A letter in which Mrs. Lincoln offered to sell a black lace dress which cost over \$2500, brought \$30. The most acrimonious letter of all, one in which Mrs. Lincoln wrote that General Grant and his wife treated her with "utter heartlessness," brought \$50, the best price of the lot. A letter of Martha Washington, a simple, kindly letter to an old friend, with love and kisses and remembrances, sold for \$300.

Mrs. Wilson After Slums.

Washington, D. C.—Washington's slums will be cleaned out, if the influence and active work of the White House family count for anything.

Mrs. Wilson made several quiet trips of inspection through the capital's unsightly alleys this week, and joined other prominent women, including the wives of several senators and representatives, in attending a meeting of the women's department of the National Civic Federation. There a letter was read from the President approving the movement for wiping out disreputable alleys and providing sanitary homes at lower rentals for the poor.

H. M. Flagler's Will Filed.

St. Augustine, Fla.—Henry M. Flagler's will was filed Thursday and under it J. R. Parrott is to retain the head of the Florida East Coast railroad so long as he may desire. The estate is estimated to be worth between \$60,000,000 and \$70,000,000, and most of it goes to the widow. The son, Harry, will receive 5000 shares of Standard Oil company of New Jersey stock. J. R. Parrott, W. H. Beardsley and William Keenan, a brother of Mrs. Flagler, are named trustees under the will.

Suffrage Bill Is Vetoed.

Madison, Wis.—Governor McGovern on Thursday vetoed the bill ordering a referendum in 1914 on the question of extending the ballot to women in Wisconsin. The governor objects to the bill on the ground that, suffrage having been defeated by a majority of 92,000 in Wisconsin last November, another referendum on the subject so soon would be unwise and would result only in a more emphatic rejection.

Commoner Editor Is Choice.

Washington, D. C.—Richard L. Metcalf, editor of the Commoner, at Lincoln, Neb., has been recommended by Secretary Bryan to be a member of the Philippine commission. It is believed that the appointment soon will be made.

Bomb in Public Library.

Sheffield, England—An ingeniously constructed bomb, bearing the inscription, "Votes for women," was found in the public library here Thursday. The bomb was plunged into water.

OREGON STATE ITEMS OF INTEREST

General News of the Industrial and Educational Development and Progress of Rural Communities, Public Institutions, Etc.

LONG CREEK ROAD USABLE

Expense of Construction of 30 Miles Estimated at \$50,000.

Prairie City.—The preliminary survey made by William Narkus and E. C. Jones, under direction of the citizens of this place, for a new road extending through the mountains in a northwesterly direction to Long Creek, a distance of 30-odd miles, was completed Saturday. The viewers pronounce the project of building this road entirely feasible at a reasonable cost.

The object in building this new road is to open up to Prairie City trade the entire Northwest section of Grant county, a trade that has hitherto gone out by way of Austin by means of a much longer haul. Work on the road will begin at once and be rapidly pushed to completion.

The expense of construction, about \$50,000, will be borne in large part by the county. It is reported that the Sumpter Valley Railway people will aid the enterprise in every possible way.

CUTWORMS BECOME EPIDEMIC

Condon Merchant Looks for Little Effect From Austrian Beef.

Portland.—The late spring has caused an epidemic of cutworms in the wheat fields of Eastern Oregon, according to Lester Wade, a young merchant of Condon, who was in Portland for several days on a business trip. The same reason is responsible for a shortness of range grass and the feeding of cattle, he says, is progressing slowly. In spite of these drawbacks, however, Mr. Wade is optimistic that the summer will be successful from an agricultural standpoint.

Mr. Wade, who conducts a retail store in Condon, is also an extensive feeder of cattle at his ranch. He looks for little material effect from the importation of Australian and Mexican cattle for beef, declaring the native animals far superior for the fancy trade at least.

ORENCO SCHOOL IDEA NOVEL

Children Have Elaborate Flower Gardens on Vacant Blocks.

Orencia.—Most cities and towns are satisfied when they have prepared school gardens for their children, but not so with Orencia. In addition to having school gardens of early and late vegetables at their homes the children have started an elaborate flower garden on a vacant block.

Plans for this garden were prepared free of charge by Charles P. MacDougall, a landscape architect of Portland. Winding walks are laid off between the beds of flowers with borders of tall growing flowers around the outer edges. Although the entire school has only about 100 pupils of all grades, about 75 are engaged in this flower garden work.

Along the front of the block in letters 10 feet in height, and extending 250 feet parallel with the Oregon Electric line are laid out in flowers "Orencia School Gardens."

Cherry Fair Dates Set.

Salem.—A movement was inaugurated at a big mass meeting under the auspices of the Board of Trade and Commerce Club, to have the most elaborate cherry fair this year ever held in Salem. The fair will be July 4 and 5, and a Fourth of July celebration will be held in connection with it. The management of the Chautauqua, which starts June 3, also will co-operate with the fair management.

Fred S. Bynon was named president; Joseph Baumgartner, secretary, and Harley White, treasurer, of the fair organization.

Rate Fight Is Planned.

Astoria.—Dr. Alfred Kinney, president of the committee of direction of the Port of Astoria, has announced the appointment of the executive board of 21 members, which will have direct charge of the energetic campaign for equitable rail freight between this port and interior points. The committee will also direct the efforts for the immediate dredging of a 40-foot channel to the sea, and the erection of modern port-owned docks, for the construction of which \$800,000 in bonds are to be issued.

Pure Seed and Disease Laws.

Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis.—The new laws on pure seed and on contagious diseases in Oregon are the subjects of important articles in the new issue of the Oregon Countryman, just off the Oregon Agricultural College press. Dr. James Withycombe designates the new livestock sanitary law as one of the best efforts for constructive legislation enacted in this state for some years. Prof. H. D. Scudder urges every farmer to read the provisions of the new seed law.

Price of Wool Descends.

Pendleton.—Smythe Bros. have disposed of their Arlington wool clip to J. P. Dufour, receiving 15 1/2 cents for coarse wool and 12 1/2 cents for fine wool. This is one of the largest individual clips in Eastern Oregon. For a similar clip last year Smythe Bros. received 18 cents for coarse and 13 1/2 cents for fine wool. Tariff agitation is said to be the cause of general depression in the wool market.

FARMERS' FREE SOCIAL GIVE

Brownsville Warehouse Company Is Host to Public.

Brownsville.—The second annual "Farmers' Social" was successfully given here last Saturday night under the auspices of the Brownsville Warehouse company, of which Charles Sterling is manager, and which is arranged for agriculturists, many of whom of this place were present in addition to 400 farmers and their families.

The program was given in the hay warehouse of the company, which was transformed into an opera house and consisted of music, songs, dances and finally the rendition of drama by high school students. Lyons, of the warehouse company, described the methods pursued by the company in the past few years in building up a large market for products of this section. During the past year the company had paid over \$50,000 in cash to the farmers alone.

The unique method of entertaining the farmers was inaugurated last year by the company, at the close of a successful shipping season, and proved less a success than the one given last week.

WILL GROW BETTER PRUNES

Association Thinks Results Might Easily Be Improved.

Salem.—That the prune growers of the Northwest are determined to obtain better results in future is indicated by the proceedings of a meeting of the Northwest Pruners' association held recently in Portland, H. S. G. secretary, making public the proceedings here. The principal subject of discussion was the possibility of overcoming the mistakes of 1911, and, possibly, arriving at a basis by which the prune could be standardized. One of the great industries of the Northwest, and yields to Oregon growers alone about \$1,000,000 annually. The 1911 crop, for some known reason, did not keep well, as a result has greatly injured the business. Representatives of various agricultural colleges attended meetings in Portland and gave views, which the growers say will be of great benefit to them. There will be concerted action in an effort to place the crop on a higher scale and obtain the best results.

Fine Fair Garden Planted.

Salem.—That the floral decoration and landscape work will be the most elaborate at the state fair this year ever attempted in Oregon is the declaration of Hugh Bryan, state landscape artist. Three Portland firms will each exhibit 300 new varieties of dahlias, many of which have never been seen in this part of the state. Mr. Bryan has planned a bed to contain 1000 begonias, 600 of the tuberosa variety and 400 Vernons. Mass planting of begonias on such a scale as is contemplated, except in international exhibits, has never been attempted in this country, and the bed will be one of the greatest attractions at the fair. The usual planting of asters, cannas, roses, geraniums, gladioli, etc., on the principal courts of the grounds, is being done.

Wool In Demand at Echo.

Echo.—The second wool sale of the season in Eastern Oregon was held at Echo Saturday. Regardless of the fact that the duty on raw wool was doomed to go, the bidding was as high as that of last year, in fact, a higher price was paid for the same grade of wool than was received for the 1912 clip. The sales totaled 318,000 pounds, at prices ranging from 12 cents to 14 1/2 cents a pound, as follows: Antoine Vey, 100,000 pounds; Crimmins & Pierce, at 14 cents; William Pedro, 48,000 pounds; Halliwell, Jones & McDonald, at 14 1/2 cents; John Kilkenny, 100,000 pounds; DeFour, at 14 1/2 cents; B. Doherty, 70,000 pounds to Green, at 12 cents; Joseph Cunha, who has 80,000 pounds; William Slusher, who has 112,000 pounds, were offered 14 cents and 13 cents, respectively, but refused the offers.

Bandon Wharfage Improved.

Bandon.—Many changes are being made along the waterfront here this summer. The warehouses are increasing their facilities for the handling of freight. The passenger traffic in and out of port and up-river is taxing the capacity of the steamers. The Coquille River Transportation company has just added a new, modern steamer with a capacity of 120 passengers. The old wharves of the A. F. Easterbrook company are being torn down, that their entire waterfront may be equipped with new docks.

Buena Vista Crops Good.

Buena Vista.—Polk County's showing for crops of grain, clover and fruit are excellent and in all districts farmers are optimistic concerning the season's prospects. In the hills of the county where the red soil is used for prunes and other fruits a heavy yield is expected. The yield of wool in the county this year was light and farmers do not approve of the present action of the President concerning the reductions on wool.