

The Colfax Bookplate

By
AGNES MILLER

WNU Service
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SYNOPSIS

On a certain Monday morning Miss Constance Fuller, seller of rare books at Darrow's Bookshop, New York, notices that the first customer is a dignified old gentleman, who saunters into the alcove placarded "Medical Works." Peter Burton, one of the employees, amazes Constance by telling her he paid \$510 for a book on the old law book containing a Colfax bookplate. Suddenly a girl's shriek of "Murder!" rings out. The elderly customer is on the floor unconscious, with his right wrist slashed. Just before the shrieking girl falls in a faint, she calls out to Peter: "Keep it! Keep it for me!" Peter's sister, Nancy, began that morning working at Darrow's. Nancy tells Constance of her elopement with Brandon Tower, an elopement which was cut short when Tower attempted to make off with Nancy's suitcase. Constance explains Darrow's card-index system to Captain Ashland, a nephew of Mr. Darrow's. They examine the book Peter paid \$510 for and find the bookplate to be a forgery. Constance is asked to assist Detective Almy in his investigation of the murder of the elderly gentleman. The girl who fainted, Julia Grosvenor, turns out to be his granddaughter. She can throw no light on the mystery. Constance calls on Julia, who seems relieved when told "Keep it for me!" was not unheeded. Darrow orders Constance to remove the bookplate from the book.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

In emulation of her cheerful industry, the water in the little aluminum pot began to bubble merrily, and three minutes later—the correct time, I believe, for tea to draw—Captain Ashland was drinking the brew which, with the crown, unites the British empire. The two other gentlemen did not have to be coaxed long to join him, so my judgment in laying in plenty of tea proved correct. The captain sat happily in a big oak armchair, Mr. Roberts accommodated his length of limb to the radiator, and Mr. Case leaned gracefully on a filing cabinet, all chatting coquily of this and that, while the rain descended and the wind blew, and Nancy contributed a one-act educational sketch, enbattered fashion, with a partner in the person of a messenger boy who came in with a package for Darrell's on Fifth avenue.

"Isn't this ripping!" cried the captain, radiantly. "Of course I know it's not manners to ask, but mayn't I have another cup?"

As he leaned forward to pass his teacup, his glance fell casually on the worn calfskin binding of Darrell's "Notes" still on top of the desk. He picked the book up deliberately, opened the cover, and again gazed with interest at the laboratory interior giving on the distant sea. "I fancy Miss Fuller thinks I'm never happy unless I'm stopping some one else's work and doing none myself," he observed. "This time she has all ready to soak off this bookplate, when I did what you call burned in, and asked for another American tea party!"

Mr. Case smiled politely. "Yes, we're to sell the book and bookplate separately, I hear."

"One often does better that way," observed Captain Ashland. "I don't know about prices here, I understand the book was expensive—five hundred and ten dollars, wasn't it? What would this curious bookplate likely fetch?"

Horror and amazement filled my soul and that of Mr. Roberts, whose glance intercepted mine as the captain thus calmly added to the list of disasters he had witnessed at Darrow's in less than four days, the fact that he was informed of the worst duke in buying that had befallen the house for years. Who had told him? Not I, nor Mr. Roberts, nor Peter, as surely; yet all of us might have sooner than the uncle who so desired, for some mysterious reason, to impress him favorably. Mr. Case was equal to the situation, however, choosing as he did, to answer the first of the two questions.

"I hadn't heard what was paid for the book," he said.

"I'm especially interested in this bookplate," went on the captain, finally accepting his teacup, "because when I saw it here at Miss Fuller's desk the other day, when I was studying your index, I noted directly how closely it resembled the work of one of our most famous engravers, Hugh Colfax, though it was, unmistakably, a counterfeit."

"How did you observe that?" inquired Mr. Roberts. "Yes, I will take another cup. If you please, Miss Fuller. And may I look at the print, captain. If you have finished with it?"

"But it's not a print, you see," said the captain, passing over the book. "It's really a drawing, an awfully clever imitation of a fine line engraving. I'm hardly ashamed to say I didn't detect the forgery until I had looked at the plate hard. Many a collector has been fooled by imitations inferior to this one. Still, there are suspicious things about it: for instance, the paper Colfax always favored a peculiar shade of brown."

"This is brown," said Mr. Roberts. "Yellow-brown," corrected Captain Ashland, "and no doubt the best that could be got; but Colfax used a special buff tinted paper which he col-

ored himself by some secret process—probably involving walnut-juice—which, however, died with him. He was a great artist, full of whims. I've seen many of his prints, all done on that shade of paper, and, of course, on a paper a century or more old, made of linen rags. This is of modern manufacture, made of wood fiber."

"Colfax died about eighteen-thirty, didn't he?" I inquired.

"Yes; he was about seventy-five, I believe. The arithmetic gave me another reason for doubting the authenticity of this drawing," said the captain, looking whimsical. "Colfax, you see, was a patriot first and an artist afterward—"

I laughed and helped him out: "He never would accept orders from Americans because he absolutely opposed the Revolution. And as it seems likely that this old American law book must have been the property of an American, it doesn't seem likely that the plate would have been designed by Colfax."

"Especially," added the captain, "as the design is pictorial. As was natural enough in a man with Colfax's royalist sympathies and aristocratic clientele, he almost always made heraldic designs for bookplates—that is, designs showing the family coat of arms. Only something out of the common would have led him to make a pictorial plate, if he ever did."

"May I have a look at it now?" asked Mr. Case, as Mr. Roberts closed the book to drink his nonsensical tea. "Rather an imaginative picture, isn't it?"

"All except the immediate foreground," agreed Captain Ashland. "That table covered with old instruments—I don't recognize many of them—looks very realistic, and the alembic and skull are conventional owners' symbols used on many a doctor's bookplate. What the rest of the picture signifies, one could hardly tell without knowing something about the owner."

"The ship looks realistic, to me," observed Mr. Roberts, absolutely unable to refrain from differing with some one any longer. "Maybe the



"What Would This Curious Bookplate Likely Fetch?"

owner was a sailor. And what about those good strong pillars? Maybe he was an ex-sea captain. They always build a good substantial house somewhere, to retire to."

"Such classic columns," said I in structively, for I couldn't let Mr. Roberts contradict and not do so myself "are often used as a purely conventional frame for a bookplate picture."

Mr. Case nodded approvingly, but the captain, intent on making another point, noticed none of us. He said:

"And there's an unmistakable giveaway in the signature; did you notice it, Miss Fuller?"

"Yes," I assented; "the 'circled serpent,' as it's called, is quite wrong."

"Yes, his tail is in his mouth, as it should be, but the mouth is open not closed. It's a very strange error in detail, for the general execution of this drawing shows a marvelous grasp of Colfax's characteristic method—bold, a few fine lines of shading, wonderful clearness in the smallest details. It's just the difference between the master and the imitator."

"Another instance where a closed mouth would have been the part of wisdom!" suggested Mr. Case. Lightly he closed the book and put it into my hand, and as I laid it on the desk, Nancy's cheerful chatter ceased. She looked at me expectantly; I saw she had finished all the work assigned her, and was looking for more.

I was just about to give her some directions when she stepped up quietly and pointed to a pile of books in front of me.

"Shall I take those now?" she asked. "Yes, please," I said, "and then place them all on the wagon to be returned to the shelves."

She avidly swooped up everything in sight; yes, thanks to her industry, Darrell's "Notes" would be listed after all! Her enthusiasm for work seemed contagious. The teapot was now drained, and Captain Ashland moved that the session should adjourn with a rising vote of thanks, and inquired eagerly, as he took his leave, if I did not really think we really ought to have tea every day.

CHAPTER VII

Night Watch.

"Tell me, shall you be able to sell the book and the bookplate separately for five hundred and ten dollars together?" demanded Nancy.

I had to wait one whole second before deciding what to say, and it took her far less than that to transfer her self to the large oak chair just vacated by the captain, and a thick pile of papers to my desk. "Please look at my work and tell me if it is right, so I can go on," she requested. "And what about the five hundred and ten dollars?"

"If you want to get on at all, you will have to occupy yourself with what concerns you," I said.

"Wait a minute! There's more about the book. Just now Wilkey

nearly died, after I'd said I'd do what she told me."

"You haven't mentioned that occasion."

"And hour ago she asked me to help you, though it would be an ordeal, especially since I was inexperienced. I said I was here to learn; besides, all my letters were finished, though the other girls weren't. Then she asked me, very sweetly, to inquire of Mr. Case, who was always so nice, whether there had been any offer yet for that old law book she had sent down to you by me on Monday afternoon. She said her cousin, Magistrate Juddes, would give a hundred dollars for it if that would be enough."

"And you have not asked Mr. Case! Nancy, it's vulgar to wink."

"And I am really most refined, as anybody can see. When have I had a chance to ask Mr. Case anything? I had only time to stop in the stock room and look at their telephone directory while I was telling Dennis to go up and say I found my typewriter would be required, after all; and there really is a Magistrate Juddes. And now it's no use asking Mr. Case. Miss Wilkes will just have to accept the fact that the book's going into the catalogue. Listen, Constance; where do you keep it?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I'm worried about it, on Peter's account. I want it to be safe. Maybe with a fake bookplate, he'll be in a worse hole than ever. Perhaps if you had it right by you, you might have a chance to make somebody buy it for more than Magistrate Juddes would offer."

I felt touched.

"Nancy, dear," I promised, "I'm going to write the most alluring possible advertisement of that volume, and also of the bookplate. No Juddes shall lay his marauding fingers upon it until the world is apprised of all its charms; and until Juddes or some similar Juggins with money to waste comes along, it shall remain here in the lowest left-hand drawer of my desk."

Nancy went back to work, satisfied; we labored steadily through the chorus of "Good nights" from the evening exodus. Only for Peter did I stop one moment.

"I'm going up tonight to a place called Raynes Foreside to buy a lot of horrible old trash," he informed me discreetly, viewing Nancy's back. "Kid's doing better, eh?"

"She's a great worker," I compromised.

I looked at Peter's downcast face, and a thought that had occurred to me over the steaming kettle reverted. I felt convinced that he was carrying some heavy secret burden relating to Julia Grosvenor. I had never forgotten that state of frantic alarm which had seized him on the threshold of Mr. Case's office last Monday, though ever since his manner had been so calm as to be almost unnatural, particularly when he and I had been talking to Mr. Almy. If I could have only told him of my visit to Julia, of her recognition of him in the shop, her relief on hearing that he had denied all understanding of her exclamation! But knowing that that visit was confidential, I merely said:

"Buck up, Peter! It's up to you to come back from Raynes—whatever it is—with your shield or on it. Others can be relied on to keep the home fires burning."

Peter looked grateful, but said nothing, for at that instant Nancy swung round and saw him. He put man's first question to woman.

"When are you going home?" he inquired sternly.

"At six o'clock," said Nancy, sweetly, viewing him with calm appraisal. "Constance, come and have dinner with us."

"No, thank you—thank you both very kindly," I repeated as Peter urged the invitation on me brightly.

"If you won't come to dinner to-night, you must come and stay with me all night tomorrow," declared Nancy, tenacious as usual of her wishes, "or I'll be all alone."

"That's a fine idea!" exclaimed Peter. "Yes; it was mine," said his sister. "Will you come, Constance?"

"I shall be delighted, my dear, to help the eight other occupants of the house bear you company."

"One for you, Nancy!" cried Peter. "Well, Constance, good-by till Saturday, at the latest. I'm off for Plymouth Rock and way stations!"

Nancy and I worked alone in the silent shop without further interruption. The silence of the big building was restful and unbroken, save by a distant, infrequent rumble of late traffic. Not until I had nearly finished dinner, sent in to me, did I hear a single sound in the shop. Then, an expected, far back, I heard a faint movement.

It was repeated. . . . It came again. . . . pattering footsteps sounded on the left hand aisle. Next minute a dim figure materialized in the dusk as I turned, and to my relief, ever more than my surprise, I recognized Mr. Case just as he started back in amazement, close at my left.

"Why, I thought you'd gone to dinner," I said matter-of-factly.

"I thought you had," he countered. "Everybody else has who's going to work tonight. I was just doing some of my work now, because I like a late dinner hour. The rain has nearly stopped. Why don't you go out and get something better to eat?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Prosaic Shepherding

Shepherding is becoming a science in France. A school of shepherding is operating at Rambouillet. The school is a government institution, fostered by the ministry of agriculture. It teaches many things that the shepherds with their crooks, painted by artists and described by poets, never bothered about. There are no picturesque costumes. Students are not judged by their ability to sing or pose. They have to study the work of shepherding with a view to making a profit on sheep. About all the romance left in the profession is the sheep dog.

Of Indian Origin

Tennessee is an Anglicized form of an Indian word—Tenassee, said to mean either a curved spine or river with the great bend.

Transatlantic Plane and Its Crew of Three



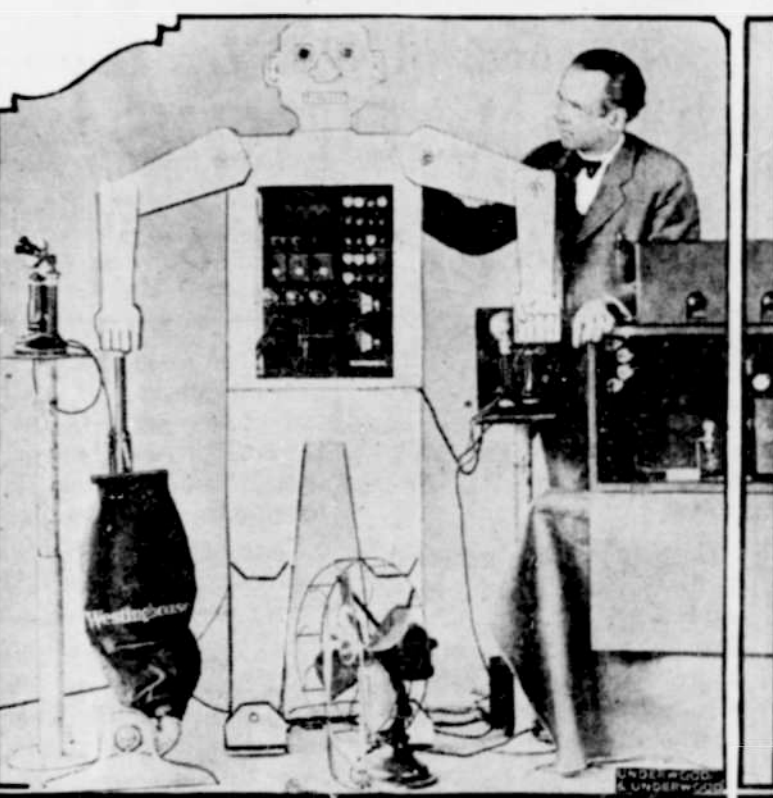
The transatlantic trimotored monoplane Friendship is shown above, together with its crew, Miss Amelia Earhart, above; Wilmer Stultz, pilot, at left, and Lou Gordon, copilot, at right.

Where Secretary Hoover Spends His Vacation



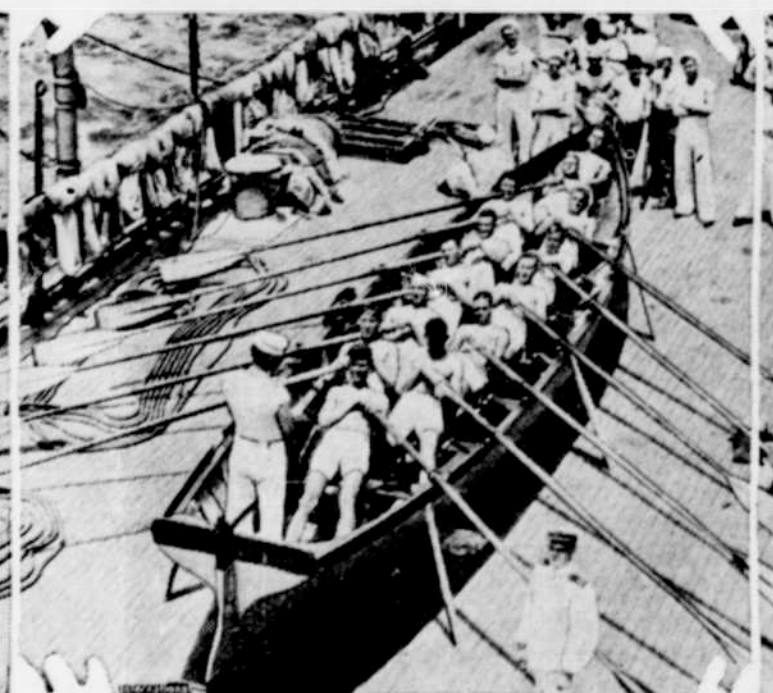
Secretary of Commerce Hoover decided to spend his summer vacation in his 1,250-acre ranch near Wasco, Calif. The ranch house is shown in the photograph.

Televox Now Talks Like a Man



"Televox," the robot invented by Roy J. Wensley of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing company, which executes commands given over the telephone, has been improved by the addition of a voice and when given a command now answers in a deep bass voice.

Racing Gobs Training on Dry Deck



Members of the racing boat crew of the U. S. S. New York in Honolulu waters, as they appeared in their racing craft on the dry deck of the boat, practicing their long sweeping stroke in preparation for contests with crews of other ships.

LITTLE BITS OF INFORMATION

An internal combustion locomotive is being tested on English railroads. There are sixty-nine land grant colleges in the United States.

America's coal deposits are so placed that mining is much easier than in European mines. Dentists' offices that travel about in trucks are a great help to people in sparsely settled regions of Australia.

Four violins were sold at auction in London recently for \$7,750. Motor bus lines are opening up a number of the rural districts of South Africa.

Four-fifths of all sewage in the United States is dumped into streams and rivers. The new "baby" type of doll was the most popular in this country during the last Christmas season.

WILL NAME REED



Charles M. Howell of Kansas City, who will place the name of Senator James A. Reed of Missouri in nomination for the Presidency at the Democratic national convention in Houston, He is an eloquent orator.

COOLIDGE PREACHER



Rev. John Taylor, pastor of the Congregational church at Brule, Wis., where President Coolidge will worship during his vacation on Cedar Island. Mr. Taylor is blind and reads from a Braille Bible.

It's Side-Splitting

A European scientist predicts that within five years we shall be able to split an atom. And to think that a few years ago we sneered at people for splitting hairs!—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

That's It

We like the man whose impulse it is to say yes much better than the one whose impulse is to say no, but the trouble is that the former never has anything to lend.—Ohio State Journal.

Don't Make a Toy Out of Baby—Babies Have Nerves

By RUTH BRITAIN



Much of the nervousness in older children can be traced to the overstimulation during infancy, caused by regarding baby as a sort of animated toy for the amusement of parents, relatives and friends. Baby may be played with, but not for more than a quarter of an hour at an hour daily. Beyond that, being handled, tickled, caused to laugh or even scream, will sometimes result in vomiting, and invariably causes irritability, crying or sleeplessness.

Fretfulness, crying and sleeplessness from this cause can easily be avoided by treating baby with more consideration, but when you just can't see what is making baby restless or upset, better give him a few drops of pure, harmless Castoria. It's amazing to see how quickly it calms baby's nerves and soothes him to sleep; yet it contains no drugs or opiates. It is purely vegetable—the recipe is on the wrapper. Leading physicians prescribe it for colic, cholera, diarrhea, constipation, gas on stomach and bowels, feverishness, loss of sleep and all other "upsets" of babyhood. Over 25 million bottles used a year shows its overwhelming popularity.

With each bottle of Castoria, you get a book on Motherhood, worth its weight in gold. Look for Chas. H. Fletcher's signature on the package so you'll get genuine Castoria. There are many imitations.

Fun of Bear Hunting

A bulletin of the American Game association contains the following: "Bears are now prized as game in Maine as highly as deer and moose. The bear is equipped with wonderfully keen scent, and can detect a hunter for at least half a mile when wind conditions are right. His hearing is equally keen, and it tests the skill of the best hunters to approach him within shooting distance. His eyesight is not keen."

"The Maine commissioner of game advises hunters to use a heavy rifle in bear hunting, nothing less than the 30-30. The 25 caliber fails to deliver a blow with enough shock to put a bear down for keeps. He says that only an average of one out of four bear hit by Maine hunters is secured, and many of the wounded animals undoubtedly die later and are wasted. It is generally a waste of ammunition to hit a bear anywhere except through the shoulder or head. A body shot will not stop them."

Archbishop and Reporters

We should enjoy knowing the archbishop of Canterbury. He makes public declaration that he is a slow thinker and speaker and that he sometimes stumbles through an address, only to find that the newspaper reporters have caught his meaning and presented it in perfect form. So many people—not archbishops—are continually complaining that the reporters "never get anything right."—Worcester Telegram.

Reporting Progress

We casually inquired of our ten-year-old today how he was getting along at school, and he replied: "Just fine. We pulled a fake bomb and went through 'em for a touchdown, and they didn't even know who had the ball."—Smith County (Ky.) Pioneer.

On the Carpet

"Your standing in studies is satisfactory but your deportment is not."

"Will that keep me from graduating, professor?"

"Well, if you keep on we may have to give you a black sheepskin."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Necessary Preparations

"I hear that your wife has taken up golf."

"Well, she intended to, but the tailor was two weeks late with her knickers and I couldn't get delivery on a sports roadster for her. She expects to start in about two weeks."

Part Owner

Landlord (in court)—I want an ejectment order against my tenant, who has paid no rent for a year and ten months.

Magistrate (smiling)—He is not your tenant. He is your guest.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Wrinkles indicate character—not always good.

Only fools cherish revenge.



Allen's Foot-Ease. The Antiseptic, Healing Powder for tired, swollen, smarting, aching feet. It takes the friction from the shoe, prevents blisters and sore spots and takes the sting out of corns and bunions. Always use Allen's Foot-Ease for Dancing and to Break in New Shoes. Sold everywhere.

Use a Pinch, Use Allen's Foot-Ease.

For Poisoned Wounds or Rusty Nail Wounds, Ivy Poisoning, etc.

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