

The Trail of the Dead:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE
OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON and J. MALCOLM FRASER

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CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

The Irishman vanished and again came the murmur of voices. Then he reappeared, unhooking the grating and descending the ladder. At the edge of the hole I could see the faces of several members of the crew and caught the gleam of drawn knives. Evidently they did not trust us.

When it was over, we followed Blake up the ladder and waited quietly while he laid out Graden's revolver and our few belongings on the flap of a central table behind which the captain was standing. A short speech by the worthy, and the Irishman began again:

"The skipper wud have ye know," he said, addressing Graden with a growing dignity that would have been comic enough at a less unfortunate moment, "that ye stand accused iv carryin' off the old gut yonder and committin' burglary on his person. F'what do ye say to that, sorr?"

"It is absolutely untrue."

"Wan for him, thin. But Of'm to ask ye how ye account fer th' possession iv that pocket-book the skipper is holdin' so loving in his hand. He says that there's close on five hundred pounds in it. Is it yours?"

"No—it belongs to the old gentleman."

"The mischief it does! Then how did ye come by it?"

I feel certain that if my cousin could have told his story directly to the captain, the honesty of his manner and the simplicity of his narration would have had effect. But this pleading at second-hand was a sorry business. From his long pauses and facial contortions I soon gathered that Blake was not the linguist that he claimed to be. Indeed, the version which the captain received from him must have been something astounding. The tale was scarcely concluded when the captain raised his hand, and the floundering of the interpreter ceased abruptly.

Thus was his decision translated. He would touch at Southampton, where the case could be fought out in the English courts. In the meanwhile, as the evidence was overwhelmingly against us, we should be placed in irons and confined in the cabin where we then were.

He was a just man. Angry though I was at the time, I have come to think he did the right thing. The harmless appearance of Marnac, his ability to plead his cause, our obvious endeavor to keep him from communicating with the crew, our possession of so valuable a pocketbook belonging to him—no, we cannot blame the captain if he decided in his favor.

To attempt resistance would have been absurd. The men about us carried knives, and the butt of a heavy revolver showed warningly from the captain's pocket. For the first time in either of our lives the handcuffs snapped at our wrists. They moved out one by one; the door was closed and barred upon us. In another three minutes we were both asleep. Our ill-fortune, the doings of our worst enemy, the irons at our wrists—we forgot them all in the dead, still sleep that Nature grants to the very weary.

It was Blake who woke us with our midday meal. He was in his most talkative mood. Guilty or innocent, it made small difference to him, after he had decided upon the fact of our gentility. He was agog with the manner of Marnac's escape from us. The lad who was servant to the captain had been down in the lazarette, and from pure curiosity had poked up the trap in the cabin floor. With promises of money, Marnac had persuaded the youngster to guide him to the captain. In their haste they had forgotten to close the trap and grating behind them, though they had secured those at the head of the second ladder. Marnac had waited in the captain's room while the lad went forward to find his master. It was doubtless their interview that Graden had observed from the bridge. When the supposed victim of our plot had told his story, they had armed themselves and come to arrest us, calling the Irishman and two more of the crew in case of resistance. They had found us below—a source of delight to the Portuguese sailors, who had a healthy terror of Englishmen; and the rest we knew.

"Come, my man," said my cousin after he had concluded, "for yourself, now—do you believe us guilty?"

"Faith, sorr, 'tis a quare business entirely," he answered, scratching his red pole indecisively. "For whether 'tis you or the old gentleman that they'll lay by the heels in Southampton Water, it's not for me to be after saying. Sure 'tis wan of the two—which is all Oi knows."

"Now, listen to me, Tim Blake," said my cousin. "My name is, as I told you, Sir Henry Graden, and I am a rich man. I am not asking you to neglect your duty, which is to keep us in; but if you will have an eye to the door so as to keep that old gentleman out, there'll be five and twenty pounds in your pocket."

Whatever the Irishman may have thought of our characters, there was no doubt as to his belief in the genuine nature of the offer. He beamed upon us with a childlike jubilation that was quite comic in its enthusiasm.

"Indade, sorr, indade, and I will!" he cried.

"Have you the key?"

"I have, sorr. Wud your honor like to kape it? You can turn the lock whin I knock t'wice times."

"That will hardly do," said my cousin, laughing. "We might have the captain visitin' us, which would mean a change of jailers. Now, as to the trap-door—is that also secured?"

"The lad we spoke of—he has the key, sorr. May the mischief seize him!"

"We can't leave it like that. See if you can fix it up to better advantage."

crew. After a moment's thought, he drew his pocket a handful of rubbish from which he extracted a large nail. Graden's boot served as a hammer, and with this he drove it into the keyhole.

"'Twill hold it foine!" cried he, regarding his work with exultation.

And so, with fresh assurances of watchfulness, he left us.

CHAPTER XXI.

The wind rose again that afternoon, and by four o'clock it was blowing very hard. The sea drove against the sides of the old ship in thunderous murmurs; now and again they sprang the bulwarks, crashing down upon the deck above us and shaking the iron fabric in convulsive tremors. In the confined cabin my nausea visited me again. Enough that I was supremely miserable.

At six, Blake had brought us a supper. His presence irritated me; and when he pressed food upon me, I spoke my mind strongly on the lamentable want of tact general amongst sailors. He gave us the comfortable news, however, that we were expected to reach Southampton by three next morning.

The night crawled on. Blake had helped us into bunks and covered us with rugs. I found the handcuffs of small inconvenience. I could hear Graden snoring. For myself, I could not go to sleep, but lay in the lowest misery, staring at the opposite partition, that rose and fell at the ship's rollings with a sickening regularity. Just before midnight, the lamp—that had probably been injured when Graden fell in the lazarette—smoked, flared, and expired. I was too unwell to care, except for the smell.

Yet it was the darkness which saved our lives.

It was about half an hour later that I first noticed it—a faint ray of illumination winking in the center of the cabin floor. At first I imagined that the nausea had affected my eyes, and so peered into the black of the night, rubbing them impatiently. But the rays steadied and, if anything, increased in volume. It was a ghostly thing to witness, this white knife-edge of light stabbing up from the solid planking without cause or explanation. I was about to shout to Graden when I remembered the trap-door. Someone was below in the lazarette!

For some moments I remained staring at the crevice through which the rays passed up to me. After all, it might be some member of the crew; but if not—if it were old Marnac! What then? He was an old man; he could not force the grating, even if he had obtained the key. We had seen to that.

I do not pretend to say that I was unafraid. There were devilish possibilities in a hatred such as that in which the mad professor held us. Yet after a while my curiosity overcame my fear, just as my fear had put aside my sickness. I rolled from my bunk—noisily enough, I dare say, but all sound was dulled by the turmoil without. The pitchings of the vessel made it impossible for me to stand, so I crawled forward to where the edge of the trap was outlined. I felt for and found the ring, gripped it with my teeth, and slowly, for the irons hampered my balance, raised the edge. Then with my hands I thrust the edge of the boot, which I had removed for that purpose, into the crack. Flat on my face, I peeped below.

It was indeed Marnac. The light of a ship's lantern, jammed between two barrels, drew streaks of silver from his white hair as he bent to his labor. Seated astride one of the steel cylinders that we had noticed, he was unscrewing the last of the nuts which secured its iron cap. What he intended I had no idea.

He was fingering the nut which the spanner had loosened, when I saw a face creep out of the shadow behind him. It was the captain's boy. With infinite caution he moved forward, with a blending of alarm and curiosity in his manner and showed he was no party to what was proceeding. Probably the key to the lazarette had been procured from him, and he had discovered its loss. When scarcely two yards from Marnac, the lurch of the ship threw him from his balance. As he stumbled forward, Marnac spun round with a scream of the most violent passion. Swinging the heavy hammer, he brought it down upon the bent head with a scorching blow.

The lad had dropped upon the floor face downwards; he did not try to rise again. "Murderer!" I cried down upon him, in horror at so fearful a spectacle.

Marnac dropped his weapon and started back, his fingers twitching, his eyes searching wildly round for a sight of his accuser. Yet when, at last, he saw my face above him, he drew himself together without a sign of trepidation—save that the hand with which he gripped the stairs still shook slightly.

"Ach! but it is you," he whispered up.

"For a moment I thought—but it was the folly of a child. And so, Mr. Harland, you come again to trouble me. Well, it is for the last time—mark you that—for the very last time."

He sat himself across the cylinder. As he did so I felt a hand upon my shoulder, and knew that Graden was awake.

"You might have spared the lad," he said very quietly.

Marnac looked up with one of the best-like glances that showed the disordered brain.

"It was a necessity," he said. "He would have prevented my act of justice upon you—upon you who have tried so hard to hinder me in my revenge upon my enemies who are also the enemies of science. Do you understand what I am about?"

"Perhaps," answered my cousin grimly, and at the word he jerked away my boot, letting the trap fall into its place.

"To the door, Robert," he whispered. "To the door and shout for help, or it is all over with us. He must have noticed the ammonia cylinder this afternoon. If he turns the tap, that stuff will choke the life out of us. The gas

is under immense pressure and will pour up into this den like water from a fire-hose. Run, man, run!"

I staggered across the heaving cabin to the door and dropped upon my knees, hammering with my irons and screaming for aid. It seemed to me that the thunders of the storm redoubled in violence, as if Nature was conspiring to shout me down. Once I looked round and saw that the light about the trap had gone. Graden had smothered the spot with blankets. Presently he came groping to me, raising his voice in hoarse bellows.

And then it happened. There came an acrid, piercing scent to my nostrils, that grew and grew until my lungs seemed to contract, so that I fought for very breath. My cries ceased. I struggled to my feet, with my head raised like a bird's through the lungs. Brilliant lights flashed in my eyes; there were hollow drumming in my ears. And then it seemed that the air left me in a vacuum. I fell, and forgot it all.

It was daylight when I remember facts again. The motion of the ship had ceased, and there was an English stranger by my side. My chest felt bruised and battered, and my eyes still watered freely. Also I was very weak and ill.

"My cousin?" I faltered.

"We have got your friend round," said the doctor—for so I felt that he must be, "also the other man."

"What man?"

"The man who pulled you out after the cylinder exploded. A red-headed fellow—Blake, I think his name is. You owe your lives to him. You had both fainted when he opened the door."

"Then he heard us, after all! Tell me—what became of Marnac?"

"I really don't know about him. I don't think he was injured. Oh! perhaps you mean the old gentleman who bolted?"

"Bolted?"

"Yes, of course there was great excitement over the accident. The captain was dreadfully cut up over the death of his servant. He could not imagine how it came about. When the ship arrived here, Mr. Marnac, or whatever his name was, slipped away by a shore-boat, while everyone was fussing over you. Your friend has gone to inquire about him. I fancy the old man had something against you both, hadn't he? Or was it you against him?"

"Both, doctor, both," I whispered, shutting my eyes.

HOW IT WORKED.

Wife's Scheme to Cure Her Husband of Excessive Smoking.

She read about it in the back of a magazine. The advertisement said that it was tasteless, that it could be administered in the breakfast coffee, and that it would cure the most confirmed smoker of the tobacco habit without his knowledge.

To be sure, Elmer smoked only three or four cigars a day. Still, why should he smoke at all? She didn't.

So she wrote for the cure, and in due time it arrived, in a plain, sealed package, with full instructions inside.

Unfortunately it arrived before she was up. Elmer opened it, smiled to himself, sealed it up again and said nothing.

The next morning she gave him his first dose.

"This coffee has a bitter taste, hasn't it?" he asked.

"Your stomach must be out of order," she answered. "It tastes all right to me."

"Strange."

That night he brought home a large, new box of cigars. Usually after dinner he smoked once. But that night he smoked all the evening. The atmosphere was thick.

The second morning he complained again about the coffee's bitterness.

"Well, no wonder your taste is out of order," she said reproachfully, "considering how you smoked last night."

"I've had the most remarkable craving for tobacco lately," he muttered.

And at dusk he brought home a costly meerschaum pipe and a pound of Cavendish, and shutting himself up in the library, smoked like a forest fire until bed time.

"Hadin't we better change the coffee? Surely you must have noticed its odd taste," he said on the third morning.

"No, I haven't noticed it," she answered faintly.

He brought home from the city in the evening a huge box of Egyptian cigarettes, a hookah, and a jar of Turkish tobacco.

"I never enjoyed smoking as I've done lately," he explained. "I can't keep a cigar out of my mouth."

And that night he smoked cigars and cigarettes, meerschaum and hookah till he saw her rise and hurry, with a vindictive look, to the kitchen.

Following on tiptoe, he saw her unlock a drawer, take out a bottle that he knew, and pour its contents into the sink. He chuckled.

And thereafter he complained no more about the coffee and his tobacco appetite shrunk back to its normal proportions.—Chicago Chronicle.

Have You One? Little Willie—Say, pa, what is a mutual friend?

Pa—A mutual friend, my son, is one who makes it his business to keep you informed of the mean things your other friends say about you.

Square with the World. "Thank goodness," said Bunkum, "I can once more look the world in the face."

"Because why?" queried Winkum.

"Because the last of my debts was outlawed yesterday," explained Bunkum.

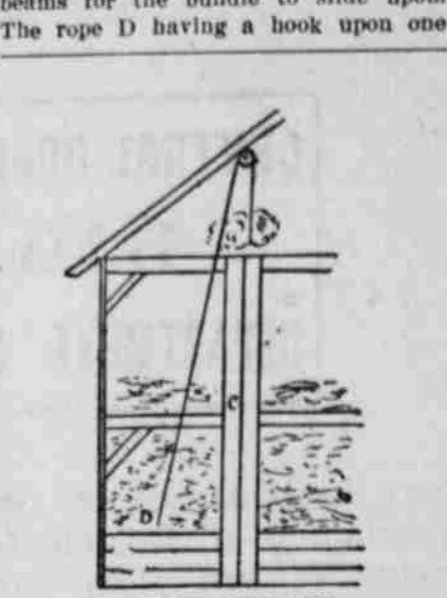
He Would Do. "Have you had any experience as chauffeur?"

"Well, I can show you the receipts for the fines I have paid."—Woman's Home Companion.



Filling the Mow Made Easy.

An easy method of filling mows with straw from the thrasher or with hay when partly full is as follows: Fasten a pulley on a rafter a little beyond a beam. Nail two wide boards C on the beams for the bundle to slide upon. The rope D having a hook upon one



FOR FILLING THE MOW.

end, is placed under and around the straw and fastened. The bundle is then lifted by a man at D. When it reaches the top beam it swings in and is lowered into the mow. It can then be placed where wanted and unfastened. This device is very handy and saves much time.

Macaroni Wheat.

Grant Robinson of St. Paul, Minn., has purchased 40,000 acres of land in Presidio county, Texas, which he will devote to the culture of macaroni wheat on a scale the largest ever attempted in the world. Extensive preparations are now going forward for the consummation of the plans of the capitalist. Seed for planting will be brought to this country from the Volga region of Russia.

The field will be cultivated on the very latest and most improved method of wheat farming. Monster stake plows will be utilized in breaking up the land; in fact, all of the latest types of farming machinery will be used on the plantation.

Mr. Robinson proposes to have the largest and best managed wheat farm in the world. He will build a system of tenant houses and supply the wants of his laboring men from a commissary. A school will be built for the children of the laboring men, as well as churches, etc. The farm is near Valentine, accessible to the railroad, and has proven under tests to be admirably adapted to the culture of macaroni wheat.

Putting first-class apples in cold storage for sale in late winter or early spring, is usually very profitable, says Farming. Other fruit and farm products may also be stored to advantage. The expense of a cold storage plant precludes its use by most fruit growers. Co-operation among farmers will sometimes be possible along this line. Granges and other farmers' organizations may do educational and practical work also. But available for every farmer are the refrigerator plants now found in almost every city. Rooms or space may be rented as one needs. Generally it is best to store in the city where it is intended to sell, that the produce may be on the ground in case of an advantageous market. Many a grower of fine fruit would be dollars ahead by availing himself of cold storage facilities.

Sheep Shearing Table. Make a table with a hollow top, on which to lay the sheep. On each side of the board have a strap or rope with a snap hook to hold kicking sheep. The

hollow top places the sheep at a disadvantage in trying to get up. This table is also very handy in tagging sheep; also in cleaning hogs, as the water will fall through the slats and will keep the hogs much cleaner.

Sowing Spinach. Early spinach is seeded in the fall. The ground should be plowed and made fine, plenty of well-rotted manure applied, and the seed sown in rows about 16 inches apart, which should be done with a seed drill having a small roller to cover and press the earth on the seeds, the depth of planting the seeds being about half an inch. The seed should be sown before cold weather sets in. When the plants are up let them grow until the ground is frozen, and then cover with straw, which should be removed early in the spring. Spinach is a very hardy plant and is seldom injured by cold.

Soapsuds for Plants. The ordinary concentrated lye is really caustic soda, which is cheaper than potash. Soda lye makes hard soap and potash lye soft soap. Soapsuds from soft soap makes a valuable fertilizer, but soda soapsuds are not considered valuable, except for celery and asparagus, which are always benefited by soda in any form. The use of any kind of soapsuds is beneficial in assisting to liberate plant food in the soil, however.

The Secret of Success. The superiority of butter made in Denmark is known the world over where butter is sold. Many investigations of Danish methods have been made and the conclusion is that cleanliness is the secret of the success of the Danish dairyman in making butter.

Good Poultry Feeder. Get a flat, empty grocery box and cut a section out of it, as shown in illustration. Nail a strip of thin board over the beveled portion and set the affair against the wall. Here you have a self-feeding box in which can be put grit, bone, charcoal or grain. One or two partitions put in before cutting out the beveled section would make two or three compartments, in which

two or three of the articles could be kept at the same time. This is the easiest possible way to make a self-feeding box. Have the top or cover part of the box slanting, so that the fowls cannot roost on it.

Value of Farm Animals. The Department of Agriculture has published a statement of the number and the value of farm animals.

There are over a billion and a half dollars' worth of horses in the United States, and the total value of all live stock amounts to \$3,655,380,443. The humble mule leads all other animals in average value per head. The detailed list of classes is as follows:

Farm Animal.	No.	Av. price per head.	Value.
Horses	18,718,578	\$90.72	\$1,510,889,906
Mules	3,494,061	98.31	344,680,520
Milk cows	19,793,866	29.45	582,788,592
Other cattle	47,967,656	15.85	748,171,709
Sheep	50,631,619	3.54	179,056,144
Hogs	52,192,847	6.18	321,802,571

No Grain in the Orchard. There are many ways of caring for an orchard. We work our land in corn as long as possible, in order to cultivate the trees and keep the land clean. This is to prevent us being troubled by rabbits. Where there are no trees or grass we can put the richness back into the soil with clover. If the land is rich this clover may be cut for hay, if poor, it should be left and turned under to enrich the land as much as possible. Never plant any of the small grains in the orchard. Growth is the most necessary item for the young trees.—T. H. Todd, Missouri.

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Lime Nitrogen. Every gardener likes to use a stimulating fertilizer to hurry the crops along. For this purpose nitrate of soda and sulphate of ammonia are most frequently employed. Nitrogen is the element chiefly sought and all known means of obtaining it cheaply have been tested. Lately much interest has been shown in lime nitrogen or calcium cyanamid. The results of recent experiments with this fertilizer indicate a high value for it. In some tests it has shown only 80 per cent of the effectiveness of nitrate of soda while in other tests it proved superior.

Lime nitrogen seems to be harmful if placed in direct contact with the seeds or roots of plants. It should preferably be mixed with the soil and applied from eight to fourteen days before seeding. It will then greatly hasten the growth and maturity of garden plants. Some gardeners have found that it is best to mix the lime nitrogen with the soil five to ten inches below the surface. The best results have been obtained by mixing the fertilizer with twice its weight of dry soil before applying. Lime nitrogen should not be applied at a greater rate than 135 to 270 pounds per acre.

Save Falling Leaves. When the leaves begin to fall, do not burn them. Save all of them. They make the humus that by and by becomes soil, and is of immense value in all its stages of change. The most irrational work ever done by a human being is to take what nature has spent the whole summer in creating for him, and throw it back into its elemental conditions. These leaves are nature's contribution, and her very best contribution to man's wealth. They are naturally spread all over the lawns each year, as a winter protection; and after they have accomplished that mission they are worked over into a compost of humus. As a rule, do not rake them too completely off the lawns. The leaves you do take instead of burning, use for banking up buildings, for that will save coal; to cover or bank around plants; for stable bedding; or on the floors of henhouses, and in rooms where the hens may scratch during the winter.

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