

# 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 I.

### I.—THE HAIRY CATERPILLAR.

It is with no intention of delighting the curious that I put my pen to paper. Only at the urgent desire of many members of my own profession have I undertaken a task necessarily disagreeable, and do now recall the details of a case which I take to be without parallel in the records of criminology. In the mental state of the afflicted being there was, indeed, little that was abnormal. Manias that are similar to his fill our asylums. But that laborious studies in the byways of science, rather than in her more frequented paths, had placed at the will of his disordered brain weapons of a deadly potency, transformed a personal misfortune into a great and urgent public danger.

I spent four years at Cambridge, where, though my degree was a high one, I found too many distractions to make such progress as I could have wished in my profession. Yet my interest in medicine grew steadily, and on leaving the university I determined, having both the means and the time at my disposal, to seek out a spot where I could throw myself into my work without the interruptions of old friends and old associations. The reputation of Heidelberg attracted me, and thither I migrated.

Sufficient for myself. The man who was to be associated with me in my strange quest I will describe with equal brevity. My cousin, Sir Henry Graden, Kt., M.D., F.R.S., F.R.S.G., was a man of remarkable personality—a surgeon of brilliant gifts that had made for him a European reputation, yet an eccentric—or so the world held him—who lacked the steady application necessary for complete success. He would throw himself into the solution of a problem, or the prosecution of a new experiment, with the utmost zeal; yet on achieving the desired result he would shake off the atmosphere of the hospital and laboratory and start on some wild-goose chase that might include the ascent of an unclimbable peak, the capture of a rare species of wild animal, or the study of a little-known tribe of savages. In person he was of great stature, and heavily, almost clumsily, built, with a rugged, weather-beaten face, keen yet kindly grey eyes, and brown hair, somewhat grizzled about the temples. In age he was well past the forties. In dress and deportment he might pardonably have been mistaken for a prosperous Yorkshire grazier. Indeed, he was wont to complain that he acted as a magnet to all the tricksters of London; though, from the shrewd smile with which he accompanied his protests, it was easy to see that he thoroughly enjoyed the diversion of turning the tables on his discreditable opponents.

It was towards the end of my second year at Heidelberg. An autumn sun had sunk to rest in a golden haze over the wooded hills, and the night, luminous under the harvest moon, lay upon the old town. I was sitting at my table, on which a shaded lamp threw its yellow circle, arranging the notes of the lectures I had that day attended, when there came a knock at the door behind me. I cried a sulky invitation, for I feared the appearance of one of my preposterous student friends, with his jargon of the duel and the promenade. But the next moment an enormous hand had dragged me into the realization of my duties as a host by standing me on my feet amid the clatter of a falling chair.

"Why, Cousin Graden?" I cried, for indeed it was he who had thus treated me. "What cyclone has blown you here?"

"Egad! I believe it's the truth I've heard," said he, throwing himself on to a sofa that cracked again under his weight—he was a famed breaker of furniture was cousin Harry Graden. "They told me that you'd shut yourself up for nigh two years—work, work, work—as if there was no young blood in your veins, and no green world lying around you, with not a yard of it that isn't worth all the most learned dissertations ever written."

I knew his favorite doctrine. It would have been as foolish to argue with him as to attempt to uphold the necessity for the Union with an Irish Home Ruler.

"But what are you doing here?" I repeated.

"It's to Berlin that I'm bound, to read a paper before a society that is good enough to be interested in some notes I took recently on the Kaffir witch-doctors. I'd a few days in hand, so I thought I would take a peep at my dear Heidelberg and, incidentally, at my worthy cousin, Robert Harland."

He rose and stalked about the room, ducking to himself like a contented hen. "Same old jugs and china pipes; same wainscot, a shade darker maybe; same old oak beams, a thought more smoky; same schlagers above the mantelpiece."

He took down one of the student's dueling-swords, and slipped his hand into the heavy hilt. Raising his long arm into the orthodox attitude, he swept the keen, thin blade in hissing circles.

"Do you ever tramp on the sawdust, and drum with the schlager, and bleed in the tank, Cousin Robert?"

"Not I. Though I have heard of your triumphs in the past, you man of blood!"

"And who has been gossiping?"

"Professor Von Stockmar. He asked me to supper the second day I arrived, for the sole purpose, I believe, of impressing me with the fame of a certain quelling desperado of a student, one day looking well and hearty."

"Yes, it is even so, Mr. Harland. One moment a steady flame illuminating this university with its light; the next, a sigh from the conqueror Death and it is extinguished. The active brain is still; the pen, trenchant, incisive, destructive, is laid aside for ever."

It was an impressive homily; but from so open and vindictive a foe it seemed singularly inappropriate.

"You seem surprised," he continued. "I fear that encounters in the cause of science may have led the public to believe that poor Von Stockmar and I cherished personal animosities. If that is so, I trust you will use your influence to contradict it. My sorrow is already heavy enough—without that unwarrantable suspicion."

The professor seemed deeply affected. Removing his spectacles, he pulled from his side pocket a large silk pocket-handkerchief. As he did so, a tinkle caught my ear. A square box of some white metal had fallen to the floor. It rolled into the lamplight, where the lid flew open. The professor hastily clapped on his glasses; but already Graden had retrieved the box and was presenting it to him.

"There was nothing in it, sir," said he, for the professor had stooped and was examining the carpet minutely.

"I thank you, I thank you."

"Pray do not mention it. Cousin Robert, if you and the professor will excuse me, I will step across and take a last look at poor little Hermann. Where are his rooms?"

Before I could answer, the professor was on his feet.

"Pray accept me as your guide," said he, moving towards the door. Graden bowed his thanks like a polite elephant. I followed the pair down the stairs.

It was growing late, and the narrow streets of the students' quarter were well nigh deserted. A moon, like a polished shield, hung over the old castle above us, picking out each turret and parapet in silver grey against the sleeping woods that swept upward to the sky-line. Across our path the gabled house cast broad, fantastic pools of shadow. A wind had risen with the moon, and sighed and quivered in the roofs and archways. Once, from a distant tavern, came the faint mutter of a rousing chorus, but soon it was swallowed and carried away by the midnight breezes.

We had not far to walk, and in five minutes the professor was tapping discreetly with an ugly devil-face of a knocker on Von Stockmar's door. Presently the bolt was drawn, and Hans, the grey-bearded servant of the dead man, stood in the doorway, a lamp held high above his head. He blinked upon us moodily, with eyes dimmed by old age and recent tears, till, catching sight of Graden's huge bulk, he stepped forward with a snort of surprise, flashing the light in his face as he did so.

"Ah! Goodness! but it is Heinrich der Grosse!" he stammered. "Ach! Herr Heinrich, but have you forgotten Hans of the Schlagers, servant of the honorable corps of the Saxo Borussiae?"

"No, no," said Graden, shaking the veteran by the hand. "So our little Hermann took you for his servant, as he promised? This is a sad day for us both, old friend. Tell me, how did it happen?"

"Do not ask me, Herr Heinrich. My mind wanders—I, who served him nigh on twenty years and was as a father and mother to him."

The worthy fellow put down the lamp in the little hall into which he had led us, and mopped his eyes with a hand that trembled with emotion.

But Graden persisted in his quiet way and soon extracted the details. It seemed that it was the custom of the dead professor to take a nap after his midday meal. That afternoon, however, his sleep was unduly prolonged, and at four Hans, who knew he had an engagement about that hour, slipped in to wake him. His master was lying on the couch in his bedroom, where he was wont to take his siesta. But he was in a curious, huddled position and breathing stertorously. Hans failed to rouse him, became alarmed, and hurried off for a neighboring doctor. That gentleman diagnosed the case as a sudden and severe chill which had settled on the lungs, causing violent inflammation. Everything possible was done, but by eight he was dead. Beyond the remarkable violence of the seizure, the doctor had said, there was nothing in the symptoms. Overwork had doubtless undermined the constitution and rendered it vulnerable to a sudden attack.

"And while he was asleep—had he visitors?" asked Graden.

"The street door is never locked during the day."

"But would you not have heard the steps?"

"It was my custom to sleep too, Herr professor allowed it."

"So, I should like to take a last look at your poor master, friend Hans. By the way, Cousin Robert, where is our guide, the learned Marnac? I did not see him leave the house."

"Perhaps the Professor Marnac has already gone to my master's room, the second to the right on the first floor," suggested the old servant.

(To be continued.)

Yellow Peril.

"More startling news from Shanghai," exclaimed the man with the paper, excitedly. "I tell you it is only a matter of time when the Chinese will try to do us up."

"Well," said the peaceful man in the scorched shirt, "at present we will be satisfied if they only do up our shirts and collars. I can't even get them to do that right."

An Off Year for Travel.

"My husband won't go to Europe this year."

"What's his excuse?"

"He says all the newspapers would wonder why."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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# FARMS AND FARMERS



There is more clean corn ground this year than usual. The cultivator cannot do its best work when rains are plentiful and abundant.

Federal and Utah state sheep inspection officials have decided to make dipping compulsory in the state in order to eradicate the scab.

It is claimed that although the conditions of food and climate in Japan offers no serious obstacles to sheep farming, there were in 1901 only 2,545 sheep in that country.

Value of a Butter Cow.

The value of a cow considered as an investment was lately figured out by H. P. Guerrier, the Illinois expert. Starting with a poor cow, one that produced 200 pounds of butter a year, he reckons the food cost at \$39 and the labor at \$12.50, while the butter is worth only \$35, or less than the market value of the food consumed. The fancy butter cow produces 400 pounds of butter per year, and on the same basis of reckoning nets her owner interest on \$400, besides paying for the food and labor. The price of butter in both cases is reckoned at 20 cents. The fancy cow consumed somewhat more food than the other, but the difference was more than offset by the increased amount of skim milk. According to Mr. Guerrier, the fancy cow is better worth \$400 than the ordinary cow taken as a gift.

For Ringing Hogs.

Make a box 6 feet long, 4½ feet high, 18 inches wide and put a floor in it. Put a door in one end and a stanchion in the other end with loose bolts, so you can adjust it easily to suit the size

of the hog. The stanchion is the same as for cows, except the one you move should not have a bolt through it, but a notch cut in lower end to catch over bolt. When you are through ringing, loosen stanchion. The hog will always step back, then lift out the loose stanchion so he can go through. Simply catch the hog in stanchion to hold him and then use the tongs. Have a narrow shoot at rear end of box so you can drive hogs into it easily.—Farm and Home.

Fattening Coop for Poultry.

In the fattening of poultry for market it is always a good plan to confine the birds to quite small quarters in order that the food given them may accomplish the best possible result. The fattening coop should be where it is light and dry and the birds must be kept comfortable at all times. More than all, the coop or coops must be kept clean, else the fowls are likely to become sick and will not in such condition take on flesh. Where there are a number of fowls to fatten coops are arranged on a wide shelf which forms the bottom, then when it is to be cleaned simply lift it up and set in another place, leaving the shelf free to clean thoroughly. Any box of light material will do for the fattening coop with wire netting to within six inches of the bottom. Across this space a bar may be placed with just enough space between it and the wire netting so that the hen can get her head out to feed.

A narrow trough should be kept in front of the coop and be filled with a variety of grain in mixture so that the fowl may help itself when it desires. These coops are very inexpensive, easy

to make and will prove very economical. The illustration shows the idea very plainly.—Indianapolis News.

When to Dock Lambs.

The docking of lambs should take place when they are 2 or 3 days old. Of course, it may be done later, but the injury resulting is less at the age named than later. When docking is deferred until the lambs are several weeks old bleeding is usually profuse. In some instances it will cause the death of the lambs unless it is stayed. The flow of blood may be checked by tying a cord tightly around the adhering portion of the tail, and better still by searing the wound with a hot iron.

Farm Notes.

A man makes a mistake when he depends on a scrub bull to head his herd of cows.

If you want to make the strawstack benefit the cow, put some of it under her for bedding.

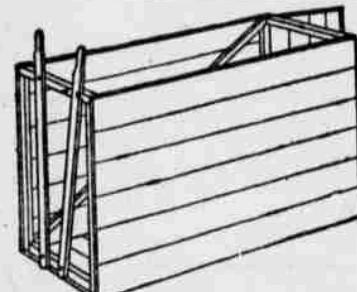
A man is quite liable to make a mistake when he attempts to grow three crops of corn in rotation. This is taking a step backward.

With the hay loader and the horse hay fork hay ought to go into the barn rapidly. When hay is cured it cannot be put away too fast.

At a recent public sale of mule teams and other farm stock in Hancock county, Indiana, the mules averaged \$268 a span. This was the average price set by the buyers themselves, the teams being placed in the ring to sell for just what they would bring.

Waste Land in Corn Fields.

Most corn growers plant more acres to corn than they harvest. Investigation has shown that there are twenty-five acres and often a much larger area of idle land in every corn field of 100 acres. This idle land results from the failure of seed here and there throughout the field to grow. It is cultivated just the same as if it were properly engaged. The farmer, therefore, wastes labor and loses the use of the land. Where a large acreage of corn is grown the aggregate loss is an important item.



BOX AND STANCHION FOR RINGING.

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Tomatoes and Nitrate.

One hundred pounds to the acre of nitrate of soda applied to the tomato crop when the fruit is beginning to set will largely increase the yield and hasten the time of ripening. Spread the nitrate broadcast or between the rows just before a shower, and then cultivate it into the soil. One quarter of an ounce to a plant is about right in small gardens. Experiments at the New Jersey station have shown that nitrate applied about the middle of June had a much greater effect on the crop than the same amount applied earlier in the season. A dressing of 100 pounds per acre increased the crop one-third above that of a plot not so treated. Nitrate of soda is a very quick working fertilizer. It produces rank, dark green foliage, which obstinately resists the attacks of insects and mildew. We have found nitrate excellent also to produce early asparagus, but care must be taken not to apply too much.

Method for Testing Eggs.

A simple method for testing eggs, which comes from Germany, is based upon the fact that the air chamber in the flat end of an egg increases with age. If the egg is placed in a solution of common salt it will show an increasing inclination to float with the long axis vertical. By watching this tendency the age of the egg can be determined almost to a day. A fresh egg lies in a horizontal position at the bottom of the vessel; an egg from three to five days old shows an elevation at the flat end, so that its long axis forms an angle of 20 degrees, and an egg a month old floats vertically upon the pointed end.

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