

The Trail of the Dead:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE
OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND

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CHAPTER VIII.

I was not favorably impressed with this breeder of pigs. He was an elderly man, full bodied, with white hair, that stuck out stiffly from under his fur cap, a red, bulbous nose, and shifty, suspicious eyes. He saluted us with a touch of his cap in military fashion.

"And what is your business, gentlemen?" he asked.

"It is less business than gratitude," said Graden courteously. "We have made this little pilgrimage to thank the producer of the Lemsdorf hams."

"You are not dealers, then?"

"No, but I—"

"Then take yourself off!"

"Herr Drobins!"

"Get clear out! Do I not make myself plain?" he cried, his dusky face nodding in time to his violent gesticulations.

"I will have no spies about the place!"

Graden sprang out of the sleigh and strode up to the angry farmer. For a moment I thought there would be a scuffle; but the huge bulk of his antagonist was not without its effect upon the German. I have often noticed that great stature has a curiously soothing influence on the bad temper of an opponent.

"Why did you call me a spy?" demanded my cousin.

"The people about here gossip of some secret I hold," he answered sulkily.

"Perhaps they speak true; perhaps false. Who can say? At least, I am no longer a fool; my eyes have been opened. You have a good thing here, Herr Drobins. There is a great future before you, if only you keep your knowledge to yourself," said the Englishman to me.

"If strangers come asking questions, they will be spies; send them away." It was fine advice he gave me; anyone can see that. So be off with you!"

"I am an Englishman myself, Herr Drobins. May I ask my compatriot's name?"

"I do not remember."

"What, then, was he like?"

"I cannot describe him."

"You are discreet, Herr Drobins. Come, now, let us strike a bargain. I will make a guess at your secret; if I am right, you will tell me what you know of this Englishman."

The German started back, staring at Graden with little, bloodshot eyes, in which surprise and fury were oddly mingled. Then, side by side, they stepped into the shadow of the pines, whispering together.

"They are all liars, these Germans," said our driver confidentially, turning to me. "For myself, I am a Pole."

"You heard what was said. Do you know anything of this English visitor to Herr Drobins?"

"Most certainly, mine Herr. He was of the name of Wakefield. He has stayed several nights at the 'Golden Adler.' For the rest, he has been the guest of him who lived out there, and he made a gesture down the road that he had come."

A nameless fear took me by the throat—a fear of unknown possibilities. I would have questioned the man more, but at that moment Graden and the farmer emerged from the shadow of the pines. The latter had abandoned his truculent manner. Indeed, he seemed oddly subservient. As Graden stepped into the sleigh, the man bowed low a curtsy, which my cousin answered with a curt nod of dismissal.

"Drive on!" he cried, and once more we were ploughing our way back to the Lemsdorf road.

"Did you ever study the properties of the root called madder, commonly known as a dye?" asked my cousin suddenly.

"No."

"Then I must explain from the beginning. It is right that you should hear."

He pulled the flaps of his deerstalker cap over his ears—indeed, it was bitter cold—and settled himself amongst the rugs. I caught the outline of his face—as jaws set, the cheeks drawn, the eye hard and keen, the whole purposeful and remorseless.

"When I was slicing the ham to-day," he continued, "an odd thing happened. My knife struck the bone and passed through it as if it had been putty. At a second glance I noticed that the interior of the section so divided was of a brownish red. It set me thinking. I began to remember certain facts. The talk of the old servant concerning a secret held by the owner of the pig farm at Grant concentrated my suspicions, the proximity of the dye-works confirmed them. I was almost certain of Herr Drobins' secret before he charged me with coming to steal it."

"Let me explain. Madder is a dye, as you know. But administered to man or beast, it has the curious effect of coloring and pulping the bones to a gristle. It is used sparingly on a few South German pig farms, that the hams may appear attractive when carved. Herr Drobins introduced it into German Poland. He obtained the root as he required it by arrangement with the dye works. Perhaps their presence suggested the idea to him."

"Whether or not Marnac knew of the uses of madder before he came to Lemsdorf, I cannot tell. From my talk with Drobins it would seem that his visit to his farm was more or less of an accident. But, either way, the visit gave him the weapon by which he might make a toad of his enemy. That bitter criticism, you may be sure, was for ever running in

his diseased brain. The practical details he learned at the farm would help him in what he had undertaken. His advice to that old German was a sound move, designed to cover his visits to the farm and the suspicions they might afterwards have excited.

"His method of getting into touch with his victim was simple. He introduced himself as an Englishman by a letter which he himself wrote in his capacity of Heidelberg professor, well knowing that the police had not made public their suspicions of him. He assumed the name of Wakefield—the first that suggested itself to him—and the nationality of an Englishman, for, as we know, he spoke the language to perfection. He administered madder in some form until Mechersky grew ill; after which, in his position of medical attendant, the rest was easy. He fled when he knew that the end of the tragedy was at hand, that every bone of his victim was fragile as thin glass. Probably he caught a momentary glimpse of us in the 'Golden Adler'; and his midnight visit was to assure himself of your identity. You were in great peril that night, Cousin Robert; I shudder to think how great."

"He has probably escaped to-day; there is a fast train to the west at 12 o'clock he could catch. But I vow before heaven, I vow before you as my witness, that I will pursue this fiend until I have run him down. Heaven knows I have no hatred towards him. I feel to him as a man might feel towards a mad dog which is a danger to the peaceful men, women and children of his village. It is the duty of the citizen to risk his life in its capture."

"Where do we go now?" I asked.

"To the railway. We must gather what news we can."

The winter night was falling drear and cold when our tired horses staggered up to the station door. I scrambled out, hungry, cramped, exhausted in body and mind, and followed my cousin within. The station was empty at the moment save for a distant corner where a man sat huddled on a traveling valise. We advanced at once upon him. When we were a dozen feet away, he started up and faced us.

It was Mossel, the lieutenant of the Heidelberg police.

"Any luck, mein Herr?" said he to Graden.

"What in the world are you doing here?" was the astonished answer.

"Well, mein Herr, I thought you knew something, and followed you. When I arrived this morning, I said to myself: 'The great white English ferret will be at work to-day searching for the rat. I will wait at the station like a net into which Mr. Ferret may turn the rat.'"

Graden skipped up to him and shook him warmly by the hand.

"Capital, Mossel, capital! And you—had the net any luck?"

"The net was sitting upon the rat's luggage when you arrived this moment. The net has been here for five hours, and is cold and hungry. The net is of opinion that the rat must have seen him and abandoned his luggage. He has not left by train."

"But he can escape in no other way. We have him, Mossel, we have him."

"So it would seem," said the lieutenant calmly.

CHAPTER IX.

III.—THE CHASE IN THE SNOW.

I have endeavored to give the facts of my strange story without omission or exaggeration. If I have failed, it is not from forgetfulness; for I do not think there is a single detail that is not permanently fixed in my memory. Even now I have but to shut my eyes to see the face of Marnac peer into my old rooms at Heidelberg, to stand once more trembling with terror in the desolate courtyard of Castle Oster, to drive through the blinding snow to where the body—

But enough. I do not forget.

I have already told you of the murder of Prof. von Stockmar by his rival, Prof. Marnac of Heidelberg, and of the discovery of the crime by my cousin, Sir Henry Graden, the well-known scientist and explorer, who was then my guest at that university. I have described the steps that led to our following the murderer to Lemsdorf, in German Poland, and the means by which he compassed the death of the unfortunate Mechersky. I have, moreover, laid before you the evidence that led my cousin to believe that Marnac was suffering from delusions, and that his extraordinary crimes were in revenge for certain harsh criticisms of a book on which he had spent many years of labor. In my last statement I traced the pursuit down to the station of Lemsdorf, where the murderer, flying from the scene of his revenge upon the Russian professor, had been turned back from the railway by Mossel, the lieutenant of the Heidelberg police, who had followed us to render assistance. Mossel, indeed, had waited by Marnac's side for six hours, but the man himself had failed to appear.

The winter's sun, chilled to a dusky ball, was dipping behind the snow-clad ridges to the eastward when we scrambled back into the sleigh. As our tired horses stumbled through the outskirts of the straggling wooden town, the shadows rushed across the sky as if flying the pursuit of the gale that shrieked amongst the houses. Night had fallen.

Surely we had him in our hands. He had not fled by rail. Somewhere

in the town he must be lurking, this grey-haired figure with the heart of a hunted wolf. The thought of it drove away the aches and cramps of exhaustion, and I sat bolt upright in my seat, staring into the gloom ahead, half expecting to see him move across the snow before us like a slinking beast of prey. We had decided to drive straight to our own inn, the "Goldner Adler," where, as we had discovered, Marnac, under the name of Wakefield, an English traveler, had also passed the previous evening. Little had we thought that the being we pursued, fresh from the murder of the man we had come to save, was sharing the same roof-tree. Perhaps there might be news of him at the "Goldner Adler."

Reski, the tall, handsome Pole, who had about him more of the feudal knight than a country inn-keeper, met us in the porch, bowing a stately welcome.

"You have had a bad drive, gentlemen," said he. "The wind has been fierce, and the snow, was heavy. Supper will be ready in half an hour."

"I believe a Mr. George Wakefield slept here last night," said Graden, dusting the clinging flakes from his outer wraps. "It is always pleasant to meet a compatriot. If he is still in the house, perhaps he will join us at our meal."

"Herr Wakefield! No, mein Herr, he has not yet returned."

"So, he has gone out?"

The innkeeper hesitated, glancing uneasily at his questioner. He was evidently in some uncertainty of mind.

"He is a strange man, the Herr Wakefield; though, perhaps, for an Englishman—"

"He is not more mad than usual, eh, Mr. Landlord?" laughed Graden.

"Mein Herr, it was not my intention to speak thus of your great people," apologized the man. "If he has surprised us, it is doubtless because we, being ignorant countryfolk, do not understand his customs."

"Why, what has he been about?"

"Well, mein Herr, it is this way. After you had started for your drive to the house of the Prof. Mechersky, Herr Wakefield came running down from his room with many questions concerning you. He seemed sorry that you had gone without seeing him. He then paid his bill with the liberality of the English, who are indeed a great and generous nation, and commanded that his luggage should be carried to the station for the midday train. At 11 he himself set out for the station upon foot. We were sorry to lose so good a guest. What, then, mein Herr, was our surprise when a little after 12 he reappeared, having ridden back upon the sleigh that had taken his baggage to the station! The man who drove it told me that Herr Wakefield had left his baggage upon the platform unregistered, and that he had seen a stranger standing by it as if in charge."

Graden glanced at Mossel, who grinned luminously.

"Proceed, Mr. Landlord," he said.

"He had only peeped into the station and left at once, the man said. He demanded of me a sleigh and good horses, but the best I had were with you, and it was necessary to send for others from a neighbor. He was very impatient of delay, using angry words. At last he drove away, and he has not returned."

"Who went with him?"

"Ivan, my eldest son."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"No, mein Herr; only I heard him cry to Ivan to follow the eastern road which is towards the Russian frontier."

"And while he waited for the horses, what did he do?"

"As I have said, at first he abused me roundly for the delay. Indeed, mein Herr, I was surprised at his knowledge of German, for before he had spoken it very badly. For the rest, he sat by himself, reading, in the best room."

"Please to show us there."

We tramped in single file after the landlord through the ill-lit passages to the "best room," a parlor set aside for important guests. It seemed a peculiarly inartistic apartment, with green wall paper and angular chairs covered with purple antimacassars. On the central table stood a lamp, and beside it lay a number of those dingy books that seem common to inns of all nations. Graden made for them at once, and as he sorted through the pile of time tables, catalogues, and trade papers, we stood watching him in surprise. Suddenly he stopped in his search with a little grunt of satisfaction, and drawing a chair to the table, sat down. I looked over his shoulder. He was actually reading a German Baedeker!

"Doubtless you are planning a picnic party?" I suggested, with as much sarcasm as I could put into the question.

"I know you are tired and hungry, my good Robert," he answered; "but please keep quiet."

He had reached "Lemsdorf"—I could see the name at the top of the page—and now was turning the leaves very slowly. Suddenly he held up the Baedeker to me.

"Do you see that?" he asked sharply.

A jagged line of paper ran along the inner crease of the guide book. The map of the district had been torn away!

Mossel thrust me gently aside and, bending over, examined the under page thus left exposed. He took the book from Graden's hands and, carrying it to the lamp, continued his scrutiny.

"You are quite right, Mossel," said my cousin. "His pencil had a sharp point."

"You have a keen eye, Herr Graden," grinned the policeman. "In our business you would have made some reputation."

"This is a new edition. How long have you had it?"

"But a few days, mein Herr."

"And have you been visited by any tourists in that time?"

"No, mein Herr."

"Then this should make it a certainty, for I have a Baedeker of my own upstairs. One moment, while I fetch it."

(To be continued.)

FARMS AND FARMERS



Cost of Raising a Calf.

A good deal of discussion has often been provoked as to the cost of bringing up a heifer calf. Mr. Clark, of the Alabama experiment station, has recorded data. The record covered the period from birth to maturity—approximately two years.

One of the calves, which weighed at birth fifty-six pounds, consumed during the first year of her life 150 pounds of home milk, 273 pounds of skim milk, 66 pounds of bran, 224 pounds of hay and was pastured for 161 days. When she was 1 year old she had cost \$12.86 and she weighed 435 pounds.

During the second year her rations were made up of sorghum hay, silage, oat straw, corn stover and a little cotton seed and bran. The pasturage period covered 224 days. The cost of the feed was \$9.09 for the second year and she weighed at the end 665 pounds. Thus the total cost of feed up to the time of maturity was \$21.95.

No All-Round Poultry Food.

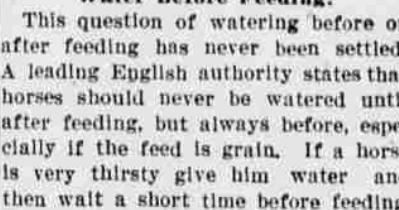
A correspondent asks for some poultry food which will answer for general purposes—that is, a food which will make hens lay, which is also good for little chicks and which may be used for fattening later if desired. Novices in poultry raising are quite likely to be more or less disturbed by the amount of detail required to carry on the work successfully and are generally seeking for some short cut, especially in the line of feeding. The same food which will make hens lay without fattening them will not do to fatten them on. Of course, corn is usually a part of the variety fed hens and will of itself fatten them, but it is not used by itself as a regular diet for laying hens. It would be as absurd to feed hens cracked corn entirely as it would be to feed little chicks the whole kernel.

Water Before Feeding.

This question of watering before or after feeding has never been settled. A leading English authority states that horses should never be watered until after feeding, but always before, especially if the feed is grain. If a horse is very thirsty give him water and then wait a short time before feeding. If possible, horses should always have access to water. They will drink less and there is much less danger of indigestion or cholera. If a horse is exhausted from overexertion, the supply of cold water should be limited. If water is tepid, a much larger amount may be allowed.

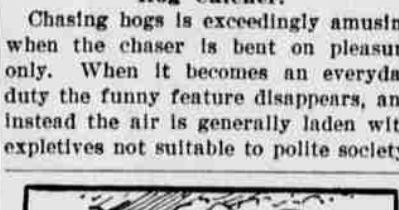
Hog Catcher.

Chasing hogs is exceedingly amusing when the chaser is bent on pleasure only. When it becomes an everyday duty the funny feature disappears, and instead the air is generally laden with expletives not suitable to polite society.



What Makes Quality in Eggs.

The grocer soon learns that he must send good eggs to his customers or he will not have them long, and the farmer who is progressive will soon learn that he must do the same. The word "fresh," when applied to eggs, may mean a great deal, or it may not. The egg grower who wishes to create a regular demand for his eggs at high prices must market his stock promptly. For there is nothing that so disgusts the experienced handler of eggs as to find that the eggs that he bought for fresh had been held in the country for two or three weeks. Storage eggs, that are put into the refrigerator immediately after they are laid, come out better, after four or five months have elapsed, than the eggs that are allowed to remain in the farmer's pantry for a month after they are laid before they are marketed.



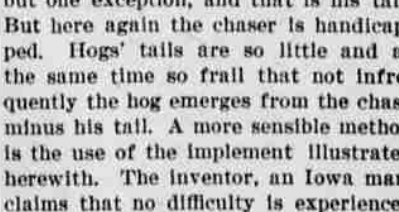
The Truck Garden Insect.

Insects infesting truck gardens very often affect field crops as well, but it should be borne in mind that pest exterminating methods that are of no use in large areas are often the best in a small patch where there is more intensive cultivation, and where the price the output brings will warrant more outlay.



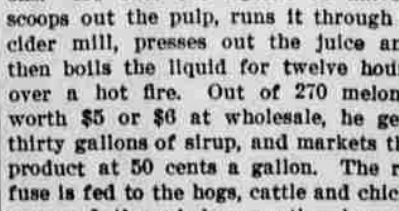
Kerosene Emulsion.

One-half pound of soap, one gallon of boiling water, two gallons kerosene. Churn with a force pump for a few minutes until it forms a smooth, butter-milk like emulsion and reduce ten to twenty-five times.



Foul Odors in Cellar.

When cellars become musty or foul, and odors are noticed, the best thing to do is to close all the doors and windows and burn enough sulphur to fill the cellar room with dense fumes. Leave it closed for an hour or two, and then open the doors and windows. Next, whitewash the walls and ceilings with two coats of good whitewash. Sulphur gas is heavy and settles, hence care must be used to agitate the air in the cellar by selecting a windy day for the work. Sulphur fumes will destroy all kinds of germs.



New Use for Watermelons.

A Georgia farmer is said to have become the pioneer in a new industry—namely, making sirup out of watermelons. He cuts the melons in halves, scoops out the pulp, runs it through a cider mill, presses out the juice and then boils the liquid for twelve hours over a hot fire. Out of 270 melons, worth \$5 or \$6 at wholesale, he gets thirty gallons of sirup, and markets the product at 50 cents a gallon. The refuse is fed to the hogs, cattle and chickens, and the whole operation is very profitable.