

The Trail of the Dead:

THE STRANGE EXPERIENCE
OF DR. ROBERT HARLAND

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CHAPTER XII.

We drew up swiftly—four hundred yards, three hundred yards, one hundred—

And then, with a short, fierce bark of rage, the Pole dragged out his revolver and fired. As he did so, the sharp hum of a bullet, like the buzz of an angry bee, fled over us. I ducked my head at the sound; but I give myself the credit of saying that I poked it up again the next moment.

"May the fiend grip him, but he has a Mauser pistol!" cried Reski, and I saw that the weapon in his own hand was of the common bulldog make. "At this range I can do nothing against him."

He lashed his horses, and they plunged gallantly forward. I could see that Marnac had stopped his sleigh and was coddling his weapon with a perfect coolness. Even at that distance I seemed to feel the goggling murder in his eyes.

Zip! zip! He had missed again!

Thung! I saw one of the galloping horses stagger, and then his head and shoulders seemed to fall away, as if he had dropped forward into a hole. There was a bumping and a twisting wrench, the snow by the roadside seemed to spring up at me, and the next instant I was struggling in cold, blinding darkness.

I wriggled out from the drift, gasping, with the flakes in my mouth and eyes. The sleigh was twisted across the road, half covering the dead horse. The other two had scrambled to their feet and now stood shivering, with drooping heads. The fall had knocked the heart clean out of them. Reski lay beside them, huddled where he had fallen. Eighty yards away Marnac had stopped and was watching us. He seemed satisfied with what he saw, for presently he turned and, lashing his team, trotted on down the road.

I don't suppose it was more than a couple of minutes before Reski came round, though it seemed long enough to me. He had got a nasty thump on the head, but as a matter of fact his wrist turned out to be the more serious business, being very badly sprained indeed. I made a sling out of a neck wrap and fixed him up as well as I was able. The man had a remarkable vitality, besides brute courage, for, the moment I had finished, he walked over and examined the sleigh.

It looked hopeless enough. One of the runners had been torn almost clean away, and the central part was badly cracked. The body of the poor lad Ivan lay on its back in the roadway, staring up at the sky. I threw a rug over it.

"Well, we can't go on, that's certain," I said.

"Not in the sleigh, mein Herr," he answered calmly.

"And how else?"

"There are the horses, one for each. When you have freed them of their harness, I will ask you to assist me to mount."

There was no good arguing with him, and I was ashamed to seem less eager than a man in his crippled condition. With his clasp knife I cut the twisted traces away and freed them of their collars. At his direction I dragged the body of Ivan into the sleigh and left him there decently covered.

Reski mounted from the stump of a tree, to which I led the stronger of the pair. I was a fairly good rider, but I was excessively stiff from my long drive, and not a little shaken by my fall. My beast seemed to have the sharpest knife-bone of a back that Nature ever gave to horseflesh. But, after all, there was nothing to be gained by grumbling. Perhaps I was growing wiser by painful experience.

A curious pair we must have looked that morning. Reski, with his arm in a sling, and the butt of his revolver peeping from his waist belt, would have made as good a stage brigand as need be. For myself, I was in too much of immediate pain from the jolting trot of the brute I rode to carry a formidable appearance. I could never have imagined that a horse lived with such adamant fetlocks as mine seemed to possess.

I have no exact record of the time, but I should imagine that it was about half an hour later that we sighted Marnac again. He was then a good three-quarters of a mile ahead, but traveling leisurely. Also, I was very glad to notice that we were free of the waste lands, and that the spire of a church was poking out amongst some poplars ahead of him. He would never dare to use his revolver a second time when men were about. Also, we might procure another sleigh and team.

Reski sent his heels into his horse, and we quickened our pace, though the poor brutes were getting very done and drove heavily along with hanging heads. It was about then that I noticed a man behind us.

We were topping a slight rise when I looked round. He was then some distance in our rear, but coming up fast. As far as I could make out, he was in a sort of uniform and well mounted. The possibility of official help was very pleasant.

We were gaining on Marnac, who had not yet noticed us.

With kicks and curses from Reski, and the application of a hazel branch from myself, we had squeezed a lumbering gallop out of our horses. The sleigh was not more than one hundred yards away. Reski gripped his reins in his teeth and drew his revolver.

"Stop, there! Stop, I say, in the name of the law!"

It was the man from behind who hailed us, but we rode on.

"Stop, or I fire!"

I pulled up. I don't think it was very cowardly when you think of it. Besides, I was anxious to explain.

Reski rode on.

The man who had shouted flashed by me, traveling at an easy gallop. He was dressed in a neat green uniform and carried a drawn revolver.

Reski rode on.

It was all over in a moment. The stranger cried another warning, to which the Pole answered with a snarl over his shoulder. The next instant there was a sharp report, and Reski's horse pitched forward, throwing his rider clear. He was then scarcely thirty yards from Marnac's sleigh.

The Pole was not hurt apparently, for despite his injured arm he scrambled to his feet in an instant. But he had lost his revolver in his fall and was helpless. He began a furious explanation in his national tongue, dropping the hated language of his Teuton conquerors.

"Speak in German, you Polish dog!" growled his captor, and then turning on me as I rode up—

"Here, you," he said, "dismount and stand by your accomplice. If you resist, I shoot!"

I obeyed. From his manner he was without doubt a policeman. Also I respect the law.

"Now, you," he said, addressing me, "explain, if you can, who is that man you shot and left in the broken sleigh down yonder. Remember, it is against you that you have already tried to escape and refused to surrender."

"There is the murderer, mein Herr!" I cried, pointing to Marnac's sleigh, now rapidly vanishing. "We were chasing him. Go after him at once, or he will get away."

The policeman laughed long and loud.

"A pretty tale!" said he. "This dog of a Pole here has been in mischief, without doubt; and you, who are—"

"An Englishman," I said proudly.

"Aha! perhaps you thought you were once more murdering the helpless Boer. A Pole and an Englishman! Ah, me! it is no wonder that together they hatched some fiendish contrivance."

It was no use to make a further appeal. Reski had seen that already. Side by side we tramped through the snow, with our captor and his ready pistol behind us. In half an hour we had reached the village we had seen ahead, and were lodged in a cell famously damp and cold. All communication with our friends was refused till the arrival of some local magistrate.

As eleven o'clock hammered from the steeple outside, Reski raised his head from his chest and glared across at me.

"He will have arrived at Knesen," he said. "There is a great choice of trains."

It was true enough. Marnac had escaped us once again.

IV.—THE ANONYMOUS ARTICLE.

In my narrative of the pursuit of Prof. Rudolf Marnac, it will have been observed that Fortune had been cold to us. In the incident which I now relate we were to some extent more favored; for though our supreme object was not achieved, we were yet enabled to save the life of her who is dearest to me in all the world.

I have told you of the homicidal mania which fell upon the professor, and of the series of events which caused my cousin, Sir Henry Graden, the eminent scientist and explorer, to be associated with a Heidelberg student, as I then was, in an effort to contrive his capture. How we failed to bring about the murderer's arrest in Poland, through the stupidity of a forest guard, I have already explained. By the time I had obtained my release, Marnac had again disappeared. A linguist well provided with money, and on all points but one perfectly sane, had no difficulty in finding refuge in the cities of Europe.

I have been in some doubt as to the best means of briefly describing the present incident. Miss Mary Weston, with whom I discussed the matter, at once offered to place her diary at my disposal. Upon its perusal I suggested that she should herself extract the necessary items, adding such introduction and explanatory notes as seemed necessary. To this she has very kindly consented; and the first portion of this remarkable story I therefore leave in her hands.

MISS MARY WESTON'S NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was in the winter of 1899 that my father's health began to fail. In the May of the following year I returned from my school near Paris, and instead of entering at Girton, as my father had previously arranged, I became his secretary. I was then just eighteen. I did the very best I could, and in his dear, kind way, he made me forget my miseries at the endless blunders I committed. You see, there were only we two; for my mother died shortly after I was born, and I was their only child. We saw few people at our little house, which was on the Trumpington road, just outside Cambridge. Ladies I met would often pity me for the dull and lonely life I led, and that used to make me very angry. We were never dull or lonely, my dear father and I.

It may seem absurd that so distinguished a man as Dr. Weston, M. A., D. Sc., F. R. S., the Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge, should have relied on the help of a half-educated school girl. But he was always pleased to say that my love and sympathy were worth far more to him in his work than if he had been served by the cleverest woman that ever headed an honor list.

I well remember the appearance of Prof. Marnac's book, "Science and Religion," which was published simultaneously in German and English at the beginning of the June of that year. My father was violently opposed to it, but I was far more concerned over the state into which it threw him than I was about the book, which, as a matter of fact, I never read. He dictated to me a most severe criticism, which at his instructions I sent to the editor of the University Review at 102A, Henrietta street, Covent Garden, London. The article was signed "Cantab," a pseudonym that my father often used, as he had the greatest objection to publicity.

About ten days after the August University appeared—that being the number which contained his article—my father received an anonymous letter. It was my duty to open and sort his correspondence, and I was thus able to intercept it. It was addressed to "Cantab," and had been forwarded, unopened, by the editor of the review. The envelope bore a German stamp, but the post-mark had been smeared and was quite undistinguishable. The letter was neatly written in English. It consisted almost entirely of the most violent personal threats against my father. The writer declared that he would soon find out "Cantab's" real name, and would suitably repay him for his slanders against the greatest scientific work of the century. I was very frightened about it, but several friends to whom I showed the letter laughed away my fears, saying it was undoubtedly the work of some madman, and advising me to burn it. This I did. I never mentioned the affair to my father, whose health was giving me great anxiety at the time.

During September my father had taken a cottage on the Cornish coast, and when the end of the Long Vacation came, the doctors forbade his return to Cambridge. I had hard work to persuade him that it was best to obey their orders; but at last he gave in, and we settled down for the winter.

The cottage was built at the foot of a low hill strewn with boulders and torn by the autumn rains. Upon its summit the chimney of an abandoned tin mine rose against the sky like a vast flagpole, with roofless buildings grouped around it in melancholy decay. It was always a depressing spot to me, and I rarely visited it, though the view was splendid. About half a mile before the cottage the moorland ended abruptly in a line of glorious cliffs, two hundred and fifty feet of granite and shining porphyry from brow to breaker. This was my favorite walk. I loved to crawl to the edge, that I might peer over at the reefs that sprang out from the tumbled rocks at the cliff foot like the bones of a giant's hand. I have lain thus for hours watching the great rollers advancing in that stately, inexorable march of theirs, rank following rank, until they burst in thunderous green fountains of foam. Sometimes, when a fierce wind blew from the southwest, the spray they hurled into the air would wet my face, even where I lay so infinitely far above them.

Between the cottage and the cliff the ground dipped into a little glen, or goral, as the country folks called it, choked with storm-twisted trees and deep with gorse and ferns. Through it ran our cart track, winding down to the fishing village of Polleven, where the tiny, stone-roofed houses clung to a gap in the cliff wall like barnacles on a rock.

Besides my father and myself, Marjory, our cook-housekeeper, who had been with us ever since I could remember, was the only other inhabitant of the cottage. On Tuesdays and Thursdays a red-cheeked maiden, who had quite remarkable powers of breaking crockery, came to help from Polleven.

So were we living on Nov. 27. From that date I will chiefly rely upon my diary for the details of my terrible experience. Please do not laugh at the form in which I wrote it. Mr. Harland has asked me to make no alterations, and so here it is.

(To be continued.)

Not to Be Trusted.

After a wordy argument in which neither scored two Irishmen decided to fight it out. It was agreed that when either said "I've enough" the fight should cease.

After they had been at it for about ten minutes one of them fell and immediately yelled: "Enough! I've enough!"

But his opponent kept on pounding him until a man who was watching said:

"Why don't you let him up? He says he's got enough."

"I know he says so," said the victor, "between punches, 'but he's such a liar you can't believe a word he says.'"—Washington Post.

Rival News Interest.

Towne—So Greathead is dying, eh? Is he resigned?

Browne—Yes, he is now, but the excitement over the San Francisco disaster had him worried for a time.

Towne—Why, how?

Browne—It occupied so much space in the newspapers he was afraid his obituary would be slighted.—Philadelphia Press.

No Pretense.

"So you want to work?"

"Please don't misunderstand me. I don't want to work, but I've got to."—Philadelphia Ledger.

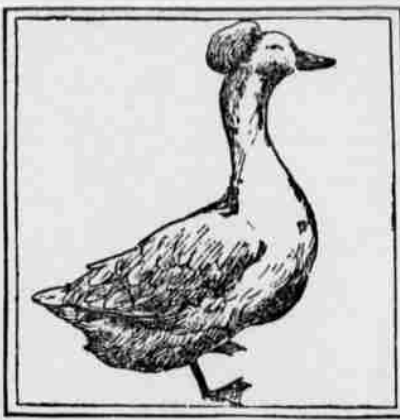


Crested White Ducks.

Bulletin No. 64 of the Department of Agriculture says of the Crested White duck:

The Crested White duck is what may be called an ornamental duck, much the same as Polish chickens. They are not bred to any great extent in this country, and they are very seldom seen in the showrooms. They have no especial value to the farmer, as better and more easily bred birds are to be found in the Pekin and Aylesbury.

These ducks have a medium-sized head; medium-sized bill, a large, well-balanced crest upon the crown of the head; a rather long neck; a medium-length back; breast, round and full; body, round and of medium length; medium-length wings that smoothly fold; hard, stiff tail feathers, with well-curved feathers in the tail of drake; and short and stout thighs and shanks. Their eyes are large and bright and of a deep leaden blue or gray color. The shanks, toes and webs are of a light orange color.



CRESTED WHITE DUCK.

The standard weight of the adult drake is seven pounds; adult duck, six pounds; young drake, six pounds, and young duck, five pounds.

A Splendid Wheat Crop.

The annual crop and business report of the Commercial National Bank of Chicago, covering the Mississippi Valley, and a few of the more important States of the Pacific coast, says, in part:

"The wheat crop of 1906 will be among the largest and best ever produced. The yield not only will be great, but the weight and quality will be far beyond the ordinary. In these respects it may be considered nearly perfect. The period of uncertainty is closing rapidly and the crop may now be called practically out of danger. The yield of soft winter wheat is large, quality the finest and movement free. Inasmuch as this movement has begun early and all grains are now nearly or quite on an export basis (with the tendency of prices downward), a large export business may be expected."

Marketing Farm Produce.

A small farmer who has made a success of marketing his produce gives sound and ingenious advice in a recent magazine. His preliminary work suggests Hannah Glasse's famous preface to her instructions for cooking hare:

"First find a lady customer," is his advice. To her sell nothing but the choicest of fruit and produce. It will not be long before she will acquaint her friends, and they in turn will pass along the word to others. It pays to sell nothing but the best; the inferior produce can be fed to stock, and in a short time the farmer will find he has a good market and a good price, with no leakage of profit to the middleman.

Cucumbers.

I raise five crops instead of one on the same ground, and on the same vines with hardly any extra work. Plant in the usual way. When a cucumber is taken from the vine let it be cut with a knife, leaving about an eighth of an inch of the cucumber on the stem. Then slit the stem with a knife from its end to the vine twice, leaving a small portion of the cucumber on each division. On each separate slit there will be a cucumber as large as the first. By this method you will only need one-fifth the ground that you would need if growing cucumbers in the old way.—Walter Strossnider in Epitomist.

Soot and Smoke Kill Cattle.

What was at first thought to have been a contagious disease among cows belonging to Allanson Hallcock, of Washingtonville, near Middleton, N. Y., has been discovered to be the result of too much smoke and soot. Eight cattle died and post-mortem examinations have shown large quantities of soot in their stomachs. Near the place where the cows were pastured a large steam shovel has been operating and clouds of smoke from the engine settled upon the wet grass upon which the animals fed.

Profits of Middlemen.

Consumers of fruits and vegetables in large cities are charged high prices by the hucksters and grocers. In Chicago peaches are selling retail for thirty-five or forty cents for a small basket containing about twenty to twenty-five peaches; other fruits and vegetables in proportion. It would be interesting to farmers to know just how much of this is booked as profits. Farmers get no such prices; in fact they are lucky if they get one-third of the prices now prevailing in Chicago. Either some class of handlers is making exorbitant profits or there is an unnecessary expense attached to the business of distribution. It costs money to handle produce. It requires storage, horses and men, and none of these things are cheap in the city, but there is no good reason why the consumer should pay three hundred per cent profit on what the farmers sell.—Farm, Field and Fireside.

The Robber Cow.

Two cows cost \$40 each a year for keep. One of them yields 4,000 quarts of milk a year, that bring \$80. The other yields 1,200 quarts, that bring \$26. The latter loses about \$14 and reduces the gain on the former from \$46 to \$32. Why do you keep that 1,200-quart cow? You would be better off with the one that clears \$46, for you would have only half the investment, half the work and half the feeding, and you would gain \$14 each year.

There would be no surplus butter on the market for years to come and prices would rule strong if all the cows were eliminated which are kept at a loss. Dairy farmers have not yet half waked up to an understanding of the great practical importance of weeding out the unprofitable cows from their herds. Many a man would make a fair profit, that now faces constant loss, if he would keep only such cows as pay a profit on their keep.

Heavy Horses.

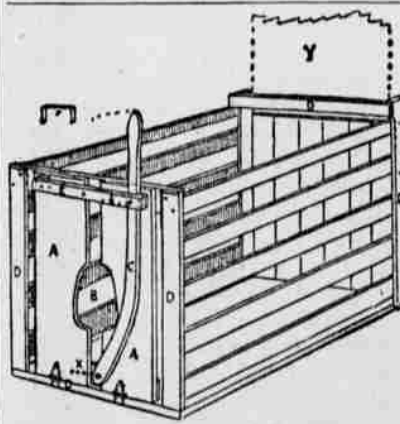
The weight of a horse is an important item in estimating his value for draft purposes, for the fine-boned horse, with well-developed muscles, may do as much work as the heavy-boned one for a short time, and is even better for road purpose. But in plowing, or other heavy, steady drawing, the light horse is less useful. Then, in price, the weight is an important item. If a good horse weighs over 2,000 pounds he may possibly sell for as much as \$1 per pound, and from 1,800 to 2,000 pounds, for less, the price rapidly declining, 1,200 to 1,500 pound horses selling at from 10 to 30 cents per pound, though it is considerably more than any other grade of stock on the farm will bring if the horses are well bred.

Water Needed by Corn.

Much interest has lately been manifested in determining the exact amount of water required for the growth of plants. This is just as important in the east as in the irrigated region, for we often have droughts which made necessary the most careful cultivation to prevent plants from suffering. Professor Clothier has found that after corn becomes two feet high each stalk uses up three pounds of water a day until the ears mature. This is equivalent to an inch of rain a week. In regions where the average rainfall is lower, and where a good, milky quality of sweet corn is desired in the garden during August and September, it is obviously necessary to have the soil in the most perfect state of cultivation so as to retain as much moisture as is needed.

Hog-Ringing Trap.

The frame for this hog-ringing trap should be made of 2x4-inch lumber bolted together at corners. The dimensions are 4 feet 2 inches long, 2 feet 4 inches high and 1 foot 6 inches wide. There is a sliding door at the back end. When the hog puts his head through the hole in front, jam the lever against his neck.



SIMPLE HOG-RINGING TRAP.

To Feed Barley to Horses.

Barley has as yet been little used for horses in the eastern part of the United States, probably because of its general high price. On the Pacific coast it is extensively used for breeding horses at all kinds of work. Where the horse's teeth are good and the labor not severe, barley may be fed whole. Ground barley is unpleasant to the horse while eating, and if, instead of grinding, the grains are crushed to flattened disks between iron rollers, they are more palatable and acceptable to the horse.