

The Quest of Betty Lancey

By MAGDA F. WEST

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CHAPTER VIII.

The warrant was served on the Harcourts that morning at six o'clock. Out of consideration for Mrs. Harcourt, whom her husband claimed as fragile, and who really looked as fragile as a piece of porcelain, the Harcourts were not removed to the jail but a cordon of sleuths was appointed to patrol their apartments. The hotel management was sorely wroth, and tried to insist upon the departure of the Harcourts, but Harcourt came down handsomely with an enormous amount of cash, and the mollified management became less censorious. Early that afternoon, Mrs. Harcourt fell very ill with a seemingly malignant fever—an outgrowth of their long residence in India, so her husband said. There was a brief preliminary hearing at 2:30 in the Harcourt apartments.

"My name is Harold Harcourt, and I live in the Hill district, in India," attested the witness, when called. "I am 35 years of age and have been married to my wife for the past six years. She is 24, and we have been traveling for her health during the past two years, following the accidental drowning of our baby son. My wife's mind has never been perfectly clear since the harrowing moment when she pulled our dead son out of the clutches of a treacherous pool, not fifty feet from her bedroom window. At the advice of physicians, we have gone from country to country, seeking novelty and change, hoping to restore her to her normal state. My occupation? Why, I have none. I receive a large income from inherited properties, so does my wife, and jointly we own several rich diamond mines. We never saw the young woman, Miss Lancey, I believe her name is, at all. I am positive my wife never did until last evening. Why we should be held like this is incomprehensible to me. On this card you will find the names of a number of London, and Calcutta firms, who will give you any references of me you may desire."

"The night of the murder of Corlisse Wayne we were in Milwaukee as our hotel bills and receipts will show. The following afternoon late we arrived and went to the Directory Hotel. That evening I was trying to explain to my wife some changes I was contemplating in my Indian estate and was sketching the plans with the idea of keeping her amused, as she had been particularly fretful and nervous all day. The room was close, and insufferable with the smell of steam pipes, so we had raised the window wide and flung high the shade. I drew out my wallet to get a memorandum and in doing so pulled out by accident a little photograph of my wife that I always carry with me, and some important passports. The wind sent the curtain flying and whisked these papers out of my hand. I hurried to the window and saw them light on an opposite fire escape and tried to recover them. As the hotel clerk has probably told you the papers were not recovered."

"Now, I trust, gentlemen, that my wife and I will be allowed to proceed without any further reference or entanglement in this most undesirable affair."

"Wasn't there a letter dropped out of your wallet?" asked Larry Morris, stepping forward. "If you please, I'd like to submit two exhibits in evidence." He produced the picture and the letter that had been fished from the fire escape and proceeded to relate how they had been acquired.

Harcourt's face flushed with pleasure at sight of the photograph. When the letter was handed to him he paled, whether with fright or with anger, was indistinguishable.

"This is an insult," he hissed.

"What's your wife's name, Mr. Harcourt?" asked the court.

"My wife? Her name? Mrs. Harcourt, of course."

"Her first name?"

"Narcisse."

"Did you ever see this letter before?"

The hotel register was brought into the room, and as expert testimony went to the effect that the signature on the register tallied with the conformation of the writing not only on the letter that had been picked up in the court-room, but with those found in the Wayne death chamber, Mr. Harcourt was requested to make copies of the documents and hand them to the court. He did this with great trepidation, but the results were very unlike the originals.

A movement was begun to prove that Mr. Harcourt had painfully disguised his writing and the matter was thrown to the experts again.

The man's garter Johnny Johnson had picked up in the closet of Mrs. Wayne's room, and a second one, only too plainly its mate, in the same gold emerald and amethyst design, marked with the initial "H," that he had found inside the threshold of the Flanders house at 94 Briarsweet place, were shown to Harcourt. He disowned there

emphatically and declared he had never seen either of them before.

Larry Morris, sworn next, told of the reasons for Betty's visiting the Harcourt apartments—displaying several photographs and sketches that had been made of the late Mrs. Wayne, remarking on the great similarity between the appearances of the two women, and begging the court to see for itself.

With Harcourt indignantly fuming, a comparison between the living woman and the photograph was made. Mrs. Harcourt was in a comatose state and as she lay prostrate on the wide bed, death pale and with her hair half unbound, the inquest of the preceding day rose like a mirage! The quick and the dead seemed one.

Harcourt was bound over till the fall term of court. No count was found against his wife.

CHAPTER IX.

When, two days later, Mr. Henry D. Franz, of Franz, Doubleday & Co., Bankers, San Francisco, California, arrived, the Wayne murder mystery and the unaccountable disappearance of Betty Lancey were still in a chaotic and unsolvable state. Likewise the Man-Aperilla. His going was like his coming—unseen by man, unknown and all untraceable. Hamley Hackley, too, the strange lessee of 94 Briarsweet place, was not to be found. The milkman, who claimed he had been paid for a month's wares in advance, continued to leave a daily allowance of milk and cream on the back stoop, and the accumulation of bottles on the Flanders doorstep was waxing large. Cables from London brought word that Hackley was a younger son of the late Sir Walter Hackley; that for four years past he had been conducting tropical explorations, and that he was possessed of an immense private fortune. The immediate family, an aged mother and widowed sister, and two brothers, both unmarried, lived in England for years, and had heard nothing of Hamley that bore upon his life with any degree of definiteness. He was a bookish sort of fellow; imaginative and fond of original research, quiet, and of no bad habits so far as they knew, agreed all reports. No photographs of him since he was a plump little codger of six were to be had. A copy of one of these so ran the message, was being made in London, and would be forwarded immediately upon completion.

Johnny Johnson felt that he had drawn a blank in his sleuthing expedition through the house at 94 Briarsweet Place, where the death chamber visitor had vanished. The rooms smelled musty and the house bore the stamp of the unoccupied save for several suits of clothes, wearing the imprint of a Piccadilly tailor, hanging in the closet of one of the bedrooms. These must have fitted a man of medium height and build. There were no personal memoranda around, and to all intents the house was the same as when Attorney Flanders had let it, nearly a week previous. The garter Johnny had found on the threshold was a woeful aggravation.

"If the owner had only lost one of them," soliloquized Johnny, "I might have traced him by matching the pair. As it is now, there's no chance at all!"

Mr. Franz, who was a plump little German, a shade too well-tailored, a whit too urbane, had fetched with him a picture of Corlisse Wayne that tallied exactly with the portrait that had blown from Harcourt's window. That the same negative had permitted both prints was manifest.

Then they led him into the presence of Mrs. Harcourt. She was sitting in the shadow of the window wrapped in a wadded gown of poppy red silk. She was very flatless and had not spoken a word for hours. Harcourt declared that this had been her wont at intervals since the death of the baby.

They sent Franz into the room a little ahead of his escort. "Mrs. Wayne," ejaculated the banker, letting fall his little black valise. "Why, they told me you were dead!"

He advanced a few steps, and reached forth his hand, but the moment he glimpsed Mrs. Harcourt's eyes he dropped his outstretched arm and stepped back.

"It is—It is—It is not—the same," he murmured, studying closely the face and figure before him. Mrs. Harcourt dropped her eyes in a terrified fashion and raised them again to find the soft, calm gaze of Philip Hartley fixed steadily upon her. For a full moment she looked sharply, composedly at Hartley, then from him to her husband, and then again to Franz. Springing from her chair, with the terror of a child, she flung aside her wrappings, and throwing herself upon Hartley, clung to him, screaming:

"Oh, can't you save me from them; save me, take me away; they kill me with those awful drugs!"

Franz paled and turned his horrified gaze out of the window.

"The delirium again!" cried Harcourt. "Poor girl, poor girl!"

Harcourt strove to take his wife away, but she would not loose her grasp upon the arm of the reporter, and there was no gainsaying the clasp of those cold and tautly interlocked fingers.

Hartley, the tender, coaxed the frightened woman into the bedroom, and despite Harcourt's expostulations sent for a doctor. Harcourt swore they would kill her and declared himself a better man of medicine than half the practitioners in the town. Every time he approached his wife, however, she broke into frightful screams, and kept her eyes constantly averted from her husband's gaze. The sight of Franz appeared to have broken some chain, have forged some link in her mind that bore directly upon this mystery—unfolding mystery.

While they anticipated the doctor the examination of Henry Franz went on. It was disappointing in its indefiniteness of result.

But the body of Corlisse Wayne had been taken from the vault where it lay pending identification by Mr. Franz, so from Mrs. Harcourt's rooms they led him to the body. Then the coffin lid was loosened and the shrouded figure of the dead woman was revealed. She was more the image of Mrs. Harcourt than Mrs. Harcourt herself. For Mrs. Harcourt, when they left her, was sunk in a deadly coma, and the livor of death seemed reflected on her countenance. Corlisse Wayne lay there, calm, quiet and all at ease, like sleeping marble.

"Wonderful, wonderful! The likeness," commented Mr. Franz. He scrutinized the face and hands of the corpse closely and said slowly:

"I am positive that this is the woman that our firm knew as Corlisse Wayne. Who the woman at the Directory Hotel may be, the woman who so closely resembles her, I cannot say. All I know of Mrs. Wayne is that her deposits with us have been coming, as I wrote you, for some time. When we had notice of her death we delayed opening her safety deposit box till we had a court order. Within we found the most gorgeous collections of jewels imaginable—here are photographs of them—necklaces, stomachers, all of them trinkets for the adorning of woman. Also copies concerning transfers of various property interests in Central Africa, particularly in the regions mapped as unexplored. Several of these make mention, indefinitely, of diamond mines of great value, apparently. One typewritten letter was in the box, addressed to Mrs. Wayne and signed, 'Your Fond Father.' Here is a copy of it."

"My Dear Daughter—It is with great despair that I urge upon you again, the necessity for finding your brother Francis, and securing from him the route to the Thougaley Mines. He is the only living soul who has this knowledge. His refusal to divulge the information to me is but another proof of his unnatural and unfilial attitude. I must insist that you find Francis and make him tell you the location of the lost fields. Cease seeking your will o' the wisp ideal—your foolish love. Find Francis instead and having found him return home to Hackley as soon as possible. He is growing uncontrollably jealous of you, and not only threatening your life, but mine, and that of the children, too. They are both well, but Paula has had much trouble with her throat since the rains began. I'm afraid she will never be well in this climate. Do not misunderstand me. Hackley is where you cannot trifle with him any longer, and the demands on our moneys have been so great that unless we get hold of the new fields, we will be poverty-stricken at the end of the year. I wish you would quit your gaming. I do not mean less wealthy, mind you, but practically poor. Reflect what this means. Corlisse, seek out Francis, find him if possible, and by all means make him draw you a chart or map of those famous and almost forgotten fields. Take care of yourself, my daughter. With much love,

"Your Fond Old Father."

"That straightens it all out for us nicely now," chattered Hank Smith's voice on the air. "Hamley Hackley is Corlisse Wayne's husband, and Wayne must have been her maiden name. Evidently she didn't love Hackley, and she ran away to love somebody else and to find her brother Francis, and to learn about those diamond mines. Now if the whole bunch of them lived in Africa, I'd believe that the Man-Aperilla is a trained ape, a sort of body servant that followed along after the husband. He traced her here to the Desterle house, leased the Flanders home, and then called on her surreptitiously. I don't believe Hubby ever went to murder his little wife, but they got into a family row because Wife didn't want to go home with Hubby, and in the fracas that followed wife got the worst of it, and, by the way—here Hank's voice sank to a whisper—"I wonder if she really was dead or only drugged? And have any of you noticed the similarity between the names 'Hamley Hackley' and 'Harold Harcourt'?"

"You reason like a woman, Hank," growled Larry Morris. "You're contradictory from the start."

"Perhaps."

(To be continued.)

Obvious.

"That new clerk hasn't any more backbone than a rubber ball."

"In that case it ought to be easy to bounce him."—St. Louis Star.

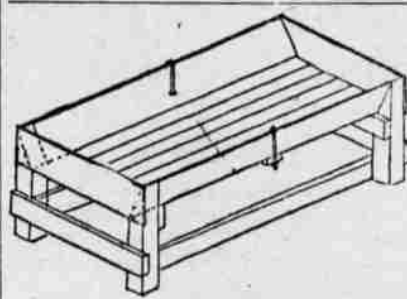
Teeth of the Cat and Dog.

A full-grown cat has 30 teeth, while a dog has 42.



Plan for Feed-Box.

The illustration of a feed box is self-explanatory, and with the following list of dimensions should be easy to build: The legs are made from 4x4's 34 inches on the high side, sawing a bevel at one end of 12 inches; the sides are 2x12 inches; the length of the box is 8 feet. The bottom is made by joining seven common floor boards, generally using fence flooring clear of knots as possible. The best way to lay the bottom is to take 16-foot fence boards, laying the two end 2x4 cross pieces 4 inches from the end. Across the center lay two other 8 inches apart, sawing the bottom in two to make the bottoms for two boxes. The 2x4 across the center, which is used for supporting the center of the bottom, should be made of hard wood. Clamps go around this 2x4 and over the top of the box. Use a 16-inch clamp, such as commonly used for building hay racks; bore through the 2x4, place the clamp bottom side up over the side of the box and draw it up tight. The lower edge



FEED BOX.

of the 2x12 used for sides should be planed to a bevel to match the bottom of the box.

For feeding meal it would be well to place a corn crib strip 1x4 inches around the top of the box. This will prevent the wind from blowing the meal out, as it projects over on the inside 2 inches.

Teeth Should Be Examined.

A great many of the troubles of the horse come when the owner thinks he is treating him the best in winter when there is little work and the horse is turned out to pasture, or to an alfalfa stack. There are a number of points to keep in mind when disposing of the horse for the winter, says a Colorado bulletin.

First of these is the condition of his teeth. Remember, if he has been living largely on chop feed, or other grain that requires little mastication, that his teeth may not be in condition to handle the roughage of the pasture or the poor quality of hay which is usually fed to horses that are not working. He may be parrot-mouthed and not able to bite off the grass.

The teeth should by all means be examined by a veterinarian, if the owner is incapable. Rough feed must be well chewed before it can be properly digested.

Reducing the Meat Bill.

In many American families meat is eaten two or three times a day; in such cases the simplest way of reducing the meat bill would very likely be to cut down the amount used, either by serving it less often or by using less at a time. Deficiency of protein need not be feared when one good meat dish a day is served, especially if such nitrogenous materials as eggs, milk, cheese and beans are used instead. In localities where fish can be obtained fresh and cheap, it might well be more frequently substituted for meat for the sake of variety as well as economy. Ingenious cooks have ways of "extending the flavor" of meat; that is, of combining a small quantity with other materials to make a large dish, as in meat pies, stews, and similar dishes.

Properly Braced Corner Post.

The ordinary braces set in line with the wires do not prevent the corner post from leaning. A brace set in the direction that a post would lean, or a stay wire in the opposite direction,



BRACING FOR THE CORNER POST.

are either effective, but both are undesirable. The two posts on each side of and nearest to the corner post should be braced, as shown in the cut. A wire should run from the top of one post to the bottom of the other to tighten the brace, which will throw the strain on five posts instead of one. —C. C. Ormsbee, in Farm and Home.

A New Dip for Cattle.

The Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture has adopted a new dipping solution for cattle. The crude oil method has been abandoned on account of its often injurious effect on steers.

All cattle shipped in from Texas must be dipped in order to keep out Texas fever by killing the ticks, which carry the disease. The new dip is an arsenical solution, much cheaper than the crude oil, just as effective and less injurious. It is made by boiling 10 pounds of commercial arsenic, 24 pounds of sal soda and 1 gallon of pine tar in 40 gallons of water. It is then increased to 50 gallons by adding water, and this solution is enough for 450 gallons of water when mixed with it. The cost is about a cent a gallon, or about 25 cents per steer in dipping. The only danger from the use of this dip is that a steer might accidentally swallow some of the solution, a quart of which would cause death.

How Much Seed to Sow.

The question of the proper amount of seed to sow is never settled. Two and one-half bushels of average oats, sown broadcast, are not too many on average land, average seasons; and about one-half bushel less when drilled in, is looked upon as about right by most oat growers.

Many good farmers differ, however, on this, many thinking a peck will bring as good or better results. There are varieties of oats with a very large berry which would have to be increased to get the same number of plants to the acre that the very small berry oats would give. Still, as a rule, a large vigorous seed will produce a large vigorous plant and this would need more room than a smaller one. The season and soil make considerable difference, too, with the amount of seed. Pasturing grain with sheep or other light stock, tends to thicken it, also to shorten the straw and to prevent lodging, though it frequently adds to the length of time for ripening. When there is danger of oats lodging, thick seeding tends to prevent it.

A Novel Insect Catcher.

Only people who have had crops or plants destroyed by insects can appreciate what a pest these little things



are. Always excepting, of course, the victims of the voracious mosquito. In the country all sorts of homely devices are used to catch the bugs and kill them, and an Oregon man, who probably had his apple orchard overrun by some destructive species, patented a trap for the pests. A barrel has pieces cut out of the upper portion and is half filled with rotten or bruised apples or some other odoriferous fruit. On top of the barrel is placed a pan partially filled with water, oil or some poisonous liquid. From the apex of a tripod that keeps the basin from falling off the barrel hangs a lantern. In the daytime the insects will be attracted by the odor of the fruit, and in flying up to feast many of them are likely to fly into the water. At night the lantern is lighted and bugs will come from afar to flutter against it and meet their death in the liquid below.

Hints About the Farm.

Refill the salt box in the pasture. Give the horses a bran mash twice a week.

A good swing stanchion is not uncomfortable to the cow.

Gratifying the appetite adds greatly to the thrift of the flock.

No ups and downs in care and feed, but keeping everlastingly at it.

Set the strawberries in rows four feet apart and two feet in the row.

Avoid extremes in everything. Money invested in land cannot easily be lost.

If the pump bucket leaks, take it to town with you. The tinner will fix it while you wait.

The plan of hay farming with chemicals has its attractions, especially for the oldish man, who desires to get rid of the care of live stock, and to cut down his labor outgo to the lowest possible amount.

Milk from unhealthy cows is not safe to use and only cows in good health can make profitable use of the food given them. The herd should be inspected at regular intervals by a competent veterinarian.

A garden of an acre, well tended, will produce vegetables enough to supply an ordinary family year in and year out, as well as to feed a flock of fowls whose eggs may be traded for groceries at any country store.

The man who puts the finest products on the market is the one who reaps the bountiful rewards. Be sure your products are in the most acceptable condition before marketing if there is a desire to win new customers.