

SERIAL STORY

The Chronicles of Addington Peace

By B. Fletcher Robinson

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THE VANISHED MILLIONAIRE

I stood with my back to the fire, smoking and puzzling over it. It was worth all the headlines the newspapers had given it; there was no loophole to the mystery.

Both sides of the Atlantic knew Elias J. Ford. He had established a business reputation in America that had made him a celebrity in England from the day he stepped off the liner. Once in London his syndicates and companies and consolidations had startled the slow-moving British mind. The commercial sky of the United Kingdom was overshadowed by him and his schemes. The papers were full of praise and blame, of puffs and denunciations. He was a millionaire; he was on the verge of a smash that would paralyze the markets of the world. He was an abstainer, a drunkard, a gambler, a most religious man. He was a confirmed bachelor, a woman hater; his engagement was to be announced shortly. So was the gossip kept rolling with the limelight always centered upon the spot where Elias J. Ford happened to be standing.

And now he had disappeared, vanished, evaporated.

On the night of December 13, a Thursday, he had left London for Meudon hall, the fine old Hampshire mansion that he had rented from Lord Beverly. The two most trusted men in his office accompanied him. Friday morning he had spent with them; but at three o'clock the pair had returned to London, leaving their chief behind. From four to seven he had been shut up with his secretary. It was a hard time for every one, a time verging upon panic, and at such times Elias J. Ford was not an idle man.

At eight o'clock he had dined. His one recreation was music, and after the meal he had played the organ in the picture gallery for an hour. At a quarter past eleven he retired to his bedroom, dismissing Jackson, his body servant, for the night. Three-quarters of an hour later, however, Harbord, his secretary, had been called to the private telephone, for Mr. Ford had brought an extension wire from the neighboring town of Camdon. It was a London message, and so urgent that he decided to wake his chief. There was no answer to his knock, and on entering the room he found that Mr. Ford was not in bed. He was surprised, but in no way suspicious, and started to search the house. He was joined by a footman, and a little later, by Jackson and the butler. Astonishment changed to alarm. Other servants were roused to aid in the quest. Finally, a party, provided with lanterns from the stables, commenced to examine the grounds.

Snow had fallen early in the day, covering the great lawns in front of the entrance porch with a soft white blanket, about an inch in thickness. It was the head-groom who struck the trail. Apparently Mr. Ford had walked out of the porch, and so over the drive and across the lawn towards the wall that bounded the public road. This road, which led from Meudon village to the town of Camdon, crossed the front of Meudon hall at a distance of some quarter of a mile.

There was no doubt as to the identity of the footprints, for Silas Ford affected a broad, square-toed boot, easily recognizable from its unusual impression.

They tracked him by their lanterns to the park wall, and there all trace of him disappeared. The wall was of rough stone, easily surmountable by an active man. The snow that covered the road outside had been churned into muddy paste by the traffic of the day; there were no further footprints observable.

The party returned to the house in great bewilderment. The telephone to London brought no explanation, and the following morning Mr. Harbord caught the first train to town to make inquiries. For private reasons his friends did not desire publicity for the affair, and it was not until the late afternoon, when all their investigations had proved fruitless, that they communicated with Scotland Yard. When the papers went to press the whereabouts of the great Mr. Ford still remained a mystery.

In keen curiosity I set off on the stairs to Inspector Peace's room. Perhaps the little detective had later news to give me.

I found him standing with his back to the fire puffing at his cigarette with a plump solemnity. A bag, neatly strapped, lay on the rug at his feet. He

needed a welcome, watching me over his glasses.

"I expected you, Mr. Phillips," he said. "And how do you explain it?"

"A love affair or temporary insanity," I suggested vaguely.

"Surely we can combine those solutions," he smiled. "Anything else?"

"No. I came to ask your opinion."

"My mind is void of theories, Mr. Phillips, and I shall endeavor to keep it so for the present. If you wish to amuse yourself by discussing possibilities, I would suggest your consideration of the reason why, if he wanted to disappear quietly, he should leave so obvious a track through the snow of his own lawn. For myself, as I am leaving for Camdon via Waterloo station in 23 minutes, I shall hope for more definite data before night."

"Peace," I asked him eagerly, "may I come with you?"

"If you can be ready in time," he said.

"It was past two o'clock when we arrived at the old town of Camdon. A carriage met us at the station. Five minutes more and we were clear of the narrow streets and climbing the first bare ridge of the downs. It was a desolate prospect enough—a bare expanse of wind-swept land that rose and fell with the sweeping regularity of the Pacific swell. Here and there a clump of ragged firs showed black against the snow. Under that gentle carpet the crisp turf of the crests and the broad plough lands of the lower ground alike lay hidden. I shivered, drawing my coat more closely about me.

It was half an hour later that we topped a swelling rise and saw the gray towers of the ancient mansion beneath us. In the shelter of the valley by the quiet river, that now lay frozen into silence, the trees had grown into splendid woodlands, circling the hall on the further side. From the broad front the white lawns crept down to the road on which we were driving. Dark masses of shrubberies and the tracery of scattered trees broke their silent levels. The park wall that fenced them from the road stood out like an ink line ruled upon paper.

"It must have been there that he disappeared," I cried, with a speculative finger.

"So I imagine," said Peace. "And if he has spent two nights on the Hampshire downs, he will be looking for a fire today. You have rather more than your fair share of the rug, Mr. Phillips, if you will excuse my mentioning it."

A man was standing on the steps of the entrance porch when we drove up. As we unrolled ourselves he stepped forward to help us. He was a thin, pale-faced fellow, with fair hair and indeterminate eyes.

"My name is Harbord," he said. "You are Inspector Addington Peace, I believe."

His hand shook as he stretched it out in a tremulous greeting. Plainly the secretary was afraid, visibly and anxiously afraid.

"Mr. Ransom, the manager of Mr. Ford's London office, is here," he continued. "He is waiting to see you in the library."

We followed him through a great hall into a room lined with books from floor to ceiling. A stout, dark man, who was pacing it like a beast in a cage, stopped at the sight of us. His face, as he turned, looked pinched and gray in the full light.

"Inspector Peace, eh?" he said.

"Well, inspector, if you want a reward name it. If you want to pull the house down only say the word. But find him for us, or, by heaven, we're done."

"Is it as bad as that?"

"You can keep a secret, I suppose. Yes—it couldn't well be worse. It was a tricky time; he hid half his schemes in his own head; he never trusted even me altogether. If he were dead I could plan something, but now—"

He thumped his hand on the table and turned away to the window.

"When you last saw Mr. Ford was he in good health? Did he stand the strain?"

"Ford had no nerves. He was never better in his life."

"In these great transactions he would have his enemies. If his plans succeeded there would be many hard hit, perhaps ruined. Have you any suspicion of a man who, to save himself, might make away with Mr. Ford?"

"No," said the manager, after a moment's thought. "No, I cannot give you a single name. The players are all big men, inspector. I don't say that their consciences would stop them from trying such a trick, but it wouldn't be worth their while. They hold off when goal is the certain punishment."

"Was this financial crisis in his own affairs generally known?"

"Certainly not."

"Who would know of it?"

"There might be a dozen men on both sides of the Atlantic who would suspect the truth. But I don't suppose that more than four people were actually in possession of the facts."

"And who would they be?"

"His two partners in America; myself and Mr. Harbord there."

Peace turned to the young man with a smile and a polite bow.

"Can you add any names to the list?" he asked.

"No," said Harbord, staring at the detective with a puzzled look, as if trying to catch the drift of his questions.

"Thank you," said the inspector; "and now, will you show me the place where this curious disappearance occurred?"

We crossed the drive, where the snow lay torn and trampled by the carriages, and so to the white, even surface of the lawn. We soon struck the trail, a confused path beaten by many footprints. Peace stooped for a moment, and then turned to the secretary with an angry glance.

"Were you with them?" he said.

"Yes."

"Then why, in the name of com-

mon sense, didn't you keep them off his tracks? You have simply trampled them out of existence, between you."

"We were in a hurry, inspector," said the secretary, meekly. "We didn't think about it."

We walked forward, following the broad trail until we came to a circular patch of trodden snow. Evidently the searchers had stopped and stood talking together. On the further side I saw the footprints of a man plainly defined. There were some half-dozen clear impressions and they ended at the base of the old wall, which was some six feet in height.

"I am glad to see that you and your friends have left me something, Mr. Harbord," said the inspector.

He stepped forward and, kneeling down, examined the nearest footprint.

"Mr. Ford dressed for dinner?" he inquired, glancing up at the secretary.

"Certainly! Why do you ask?"

"Merely that he had on heavy shooting boots when he took this evening stroll. It will be interesting to discover what clothes he wore."

The inspector walked up to the wall, moving parallel to the tracks in the snow. With a sudden spring he climbed to the top and seated himself while he stared about him. Then on his hands and knees he began to crawl forward along the coping. It was a quaint spectacle, but the extraordinary care and vigilance of the little man took the force out of it.

Presently he stopped and looked down at us.

"Please stay where you are," he said, and disappeared on the further side.

Harbord offered me a cigarette, and we waited with due obedience till the inspector's bullet head again broke the horizon as he struggled back to his position on the coping of the wall.

He seemed in a very pleasant temper when he joined us; but he said nothing of his discoveries, and I had grown too wise to inquire. When we reached the entrance hall he asked for Jackson, the valet, and in a couple of minutes the man appeared. He was a tall, hatchet-faced fellow, very neatly dressed in black. He made a little bow, and then stood watching us in a most respectful attitude.

"A queer business this, Jackson," said Addington Peace.

"Yes, sir."

"And what is your opinion on it?"

"To be frank, sir, I thought at first that Mr. Ford had run away; but now I don't know what to make of it."

"And why should he run away?"

"I have no idea, sir; but he seemed to me rather strange in his manner yesterday."

"Have you been with him long?"

"No, sir. I was valet to the Hon. John Dorn, Lord Beverley's second son. Mr. Ford took me from Mr. Dorn at the time he rented the hall."

"I see. And now, will you show me your master's room. I shall see you again later, Mr. Harbord," he continued; "in the meanwhile I will leave my assistant with you."

We sat and smoked in the secretary's room. He was not much of a talker, consuming cigarette after cigarette in silence. The winter dusk had already fallen when the inspector joined us, and we retired to our rooms to prepare for dinner. I tried a word with Peace upon the staircase, but he shook his head and walked on.

The meal dragged itself to an end somehow, and we left Ransom with a second decanter of port before him. Peace slipped away again, and I consoled myself with a book in the library until half-past ten, when I walked off to bed. A servant was switching off the light in the hall when I mounted the great staircase.

My room was in the old wing at the further side of the picture gallery, and I had some difficulty in steering my way through the dark corridors. The mystery that hung over the house had shaken my nerves, and I remember that I started at every creak of a board and peered into the shadows as I passed along with heaven knows what ghostly expectations. I was glad enough to close my door upon them and see the wood fire blazing cheerfully in the open hearth.

(CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED)

CAP and BELLS

YOUNGSTER GIVEN HIS KISS

Conductor Obliging Holds Train Not Due to Start Until Mother Caresses Her Youngest.

She was running across lots to catch the 1:52 train for New York. It was precisely 1:52½, and the train already was panting into the station. At her heels was a youngster making as good time as he could, and he was crying. By the time she reached the station steps she was a good hundred yards ahead of the little boy, but he kept at, crying louder and louder. The conductor was holding the train for her.

"Madam," said the conductor as she climbed up the car steps, "who is that little boy?"

"My youngest," she said, perfectly breathless.

"What's he crying for?"

"I didn't have time to kiss him goodby."

"Well, you get right off this train and kiss. We can wait better than he can."

The conductor stood with his hand on the signal cord while the operation was performed, and then the train went off, leaving the youngster happy and smiling.

Maternal Spirit.

"Janice, take Fiddkins out for an airing."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Where's Master Tommy?"

"He's playing in the street, ma'am."

"Very well. And Janice?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Be careful with Fiddkins when you come to a street crossing. I can't bear the thought of the little darling being run over by a trolley car or an automobile."

Unruffled.

"I have my good points," said Waserby.

"I fail to see them," said Pickledorf.

"That's all right," answered Waserby. "I cannot find it in my heart to blame a fellow man because he is afflicted with myopia, which may possibly be still further complicated by strabismus."

A Militant Lady.

"Did you ever think that you would make a good king?"

"Never thought about that. But in one respect my wife would shine in regal circles."

"In what way?"

"She would make such a good colonel for one of those royal regiments. You know the custom of appointing 'adies'?"

FORCE OF HABIT.



Clovertop—That old boss you sold me stopped right in front of the church as the bell struck one, and he never moved till it struck two.

Cyrus Snodgrass—Oh, yes; I forgot to tell you he'd been in a horse car, and that it took strokes of the bell to start him.

Hiking Home.

He had telegraphed his wife for money.

"I shall count the hours until I see you," he wound up, with a touch of pathos.

"Also the ties," she briefly wired back.

The Effect.

"That baby of yours gets on my nerves."

"Now why does the little darling affect you so?"

"He has such a creepy way about him."

Seeking a Handicap.

"I wonder why it is that a woman like a glattess marries a man like a pygmy?"

"I don't know, unless it's because she's too much of a woman to take a chance on a fair fight."

MAKE EASY JOB OF MOVING

Much Depends on Proper Preparation Made Before the Actual Day of Departure.

When you have weeded out your collection of clothes, bric-a-brac and all your odds and ends, pack what you have decided to keep and get the other things out of the way as quickly as possible.

To pack pictures, large boxes and plenty of excelsior and paper are necessary. These may be packed early in the game, as they are not necessary to the running of the household. Barrels are best in packing dishes and china or plaster bric-a-brac.

It will be found much easier to unpack if a list is made of the articles in each box or barrel. These can be numbered in black paint and the lists made accordingly. When you start to unpack you have only to consult your lists to see what each box holds. For instance, if a box with the big black figure 6 stares you in the face you can look up list number 6 and find that the parlor pictures and the lace curtains are in that box. This will simplify matters greatly, as the boxes can be unpacked as their contents are needed.

KIND OF COWS TO BUY

Animals Not Adapted to Dairying Cause Failures.

To Obtain Best Results It is Essential That Strict Dairy Type Be Kept—Beef Value of Secondary Importance.

(By E. A. MARKHAM, Idaho Experiment Station.)

It is not difficult to find men, even in the most prosperous dairy communities, who do not believe that dairying pays. They have tried it and failed. Some have purchased good stock, but poor management or false economy in housing or feeding prevented them from getting the results they expected, but by far the largest number of these failures are due to the use of animals that are not adapted to dairying.

Those who purchase a few cows when the price of butter fat is high and sell them off when the price goes down naturally have a rather poor opinion of the dairy business. To obtain the best results it is essential that the animals purchased for the dairy should be of the strict dairy type, and be made a permanent part of the farm live stock. Those who purchase cows with the intention of milking them but a short time and then selling them off when the price of butter-fat drops or when the animal goes dry naturally look more for beef producers rather than milk producers. It is impossible to build up a good dairy herd by this method.

Dual-purpose animals may be used in some localities to good advantage, but to get the best results one of the special dairy breeds should be used. This does not mean that only thoroughbred animals should be used, but animals that are bred for milk production. A good dairy cow should produce enough butter-fat in her best days that the value of the beef may be of secondary importance, if not entirely ignored.

A person purchasing an implement considers first how much service he can get out of it and not its value as scrap iron when worn out. Those who purchase a dairy cow should consider how much butter-fat she will produce and not the value of her hide and carcass.



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The Housekeeper

If a glass jar will not open, set it down in an inch or two of hot water.

When agate kettles must be set over fire, grease bottoms and the smut will readily wash off.

Fine linens and all pieces of hand-some lingerie should be wrung out by hand and never through a wringer.

Apple rose is a delicious dessert, made with steamed apples filled with jelly, covered with a meringue and browned.

In roasting meat turn it over with a spoon instead of a fork, as the latter pierces the meat and lets the juice out.

Olives and radishes are eaten with the fingers. Oranges, peaches and apples are pared, quartered and then eaten with the fingers.

In making cream sauce to use with a vegetable, add just a few drops of vinegar after it is made. It improves the flavor greatly.

To wind a curtain, remove it from the bracket, wind it up by hand and then put it into the brackets and pull it out full length. Repeat if necessary.

To prevent the dust from rising when sweeping a carpet sprinkle over the floor tea leaves that have been washed and squeezed nearly dry, and be careful not to tread on them.

Roast of Round Steak.

Put a thick round of steak in a short-handled frying pan, spread a layer of sliced onion over it. Dredge with salt, pepper and flour and over it lay thin slices of bacon. Put in a hot oven twenty minutes, being careful not to let the bacon burn. At the end of that time add enough boiling water to cover over the beef. Cover the frying pan loosely and cook slowly three hours, adding more water, as necessary. When the steak is done lift onto a warm platter, put the frying pan on the stove and thicken the gravy with one teaspoon flour mixed with cold water. Season with salt and pepper, boil a few minutes, strain and pour over the meat.

Salt Pork Scramble.

Soak a pound of salt pork to freshen it. Drain it, cut it into pieces about an inch square; fry these in hot fat, move them about that they may be equally cooked. When they are almost done enough stir in with them from six to twelve well-beaten eggs, beat all quickly together. When the eggs are set turn the mixture upon a hot dish and send baked potatoes to table with it. If the pork gives out a good deal of fat while it is being fried, pour this off before dishing the meat. Time, a quarter of an hour; sufficient for four or five persons.

Fruit Turnovers.

Use puff paste for these. Roll it out to about one-fourth inch thick and cut it out into circular shaped pieces of the desired size; pile a teaspoonful of fruit on half of the pastry center, sprinkle over some sugar, wet the edges, and turn the paste over it. Press the edges together and crimp if desired, brush the top with white of egg, sprinkle with sifted sugar, and bake on tin sheets or pans in a brisk oven for about 20 minutes. Raw fruit or jam or drained canned fruit may be used for the filling. Little should be used in each.

Sewing Hint.

When outlining round forms it is much easier to make the outline stitches from left to right, as they will then conform to the rounded shapes. Knots should never be used in embroidery of any kind, and when beginning the outlining run a few stitches to the commencing point and then cover these stitches with the outlining. After the work is finished run the thread back and fasten with a button-hole stitch.

Emptying the Washtub.

The newest tubs have faucets or taps in the side which come into use when the tub is to be emptied. But those who cannot afford these tubs may have their old ones, if of wood, fitted up similarly at little cost. Then a long piece of garden hose attached to the tap serves to conduct the water out of doors or into a sink in another room, so emptying the tub with little expenditure of energy.

AUTO'S VALUE IN WARFARE

Recent Maneuvers Have Shown That It is a Power That Must Be reckoned With.

In the interesting presidential address before the Institution of Automobile Engineers, at London, T. B. Browne stated that in the recent army maneuvers held on a large scale in this country the automobile proved itself of the greatest advantage. The invaders and defenders, each consisting of one cavalry division and two infantry divisions, were furnished with approximately 110 petrol vehicles and 35 steam vehicles, which, working in conjunction with the railways, undertook the whole of the supplies to the armies. Where roads are available the gain by the use of automobiles over horses for this purpose is enormous, as it can easily be seen that where the latter cover 40 miles in two days the same distance would be covered in four hours by the former. It takes four motor lorries to carry one day's supplies for a brigade of about 4,000 men, and each lorry takes a three-ton load, which is equivalent to three horse wagons. Moreover, the motor vehicles take up only two-thirds of the road space required for the horse vehicles.

Doubtful Melody.

"A bird that can sing and won't sing must be made to sing," said the ready-made philosopher.

"Yes," replied the practical person, "but anybody who would be satisfied with the result of that experiment must have a mighty poor ear for music."