

THE DIAMOND BUTTON

FROM THE DIARY OF A LAWYER AND THE NOTE BOOK OF A REPORTER.

By BAROLAY NORTH.

CHAPTER XXV. HOLBROOK MAKES A DISCOVERY.

CHAPTER XXV. HOLBROOK MAKES A DISCOVERY. MONTI had clapped since the murder. It remained quite as much of a mystery as it had been in the beginning. The police authorities were directed in every direction, though they were clinging obstinately to their theory that Templeton had been killed for some reason or other.

On his way down town, on the morning following his walk with Annie, Holbrook had stepped into headquarters, and had talked with the high official who had supplied him with the sample of cloth and the diamond button. He had discussed the theory with the high official, and was compelled to acknowledge, with the standpoint of the authorities, and with the information which he possessed, the theory was plausible.

He was troubled over his own concealment of certain things, and while he felicitated himself upon the fact that neither Tom nor himself had said a word concerning Fountain, now that it was clear that he was not the guilty man, yet he thought he ought to tell the authorities of the suspicious things he had done to Templeton's and Fountain's relations to each other and to the dead Pierson. But what was he to say? He was in precisely the same position as to the Piersons. He couldn't speak without bringing down the affair, and if it had been difficult to do so before, now it was impossible to do so after what he had done.

So, without revealing any of his thoughts, he left and went to his office. He dismissed all further consideration of his duty in the matter with the thought that he was so involved by circumstances that he could not do what seemed to be an obvious duty without doing greater harm in other directions, and let his mind run on the joys of his walk with Annie on the previous evening and her charming qualities of mind and person.

This engaged, he reached his office. As he opened the door of the outer room, with more than usual vigor, he was startled by a loud crash. A clerk had been need a ladder that one leg was immovably fixed in front of the door. He had mounted it so as to gain access to a row of high shelves surrounding the office, on which were kept green wooden boxes, the figures of past years, the names of clients and of estates whose affairs the office had in charge being lettered in white on them.

When Holbrook had hastily swung round, he had struck a leg of the ladder, nearly toppling over the clerk and causing him to drop one of the boxes to the floor, upon which it fell so heavily as to burst open.

This was the crash which had startled him. Several of the clerks sprang to save the box, and as they lifted it up it fell apart, scattering its contents. "What papers are those?" asked Holbrook, viewing the wreck he had caused. "Old ones, I should judge," replied Clark, the managing clerk, bending over to pick one of the packages up.

From top to Sampson, Huron Co., a corner on that has been exchanged there. The papers were in all closed boxes. "What are these?" asked Holbrook. "I don't know," said the clerk, picking it up. "Look for the key," finding it locked and the key not in the lock. The office boy pawed over the papers, but could find none.

Holbrook took the box and turned it around and around. On one end he saw the letters "G. P." "What can it be?" he said, struck by the initials. "Being something to break it open." He carried it into his private room, and there he brought him a hammer and a broken dining knife.

By he writes of his villainy? "And yet tries to make amends at the close of a long and evil life," commented Holbrook. "Well," said Tom, "I'm sorry recovered from his delirium, 'the motive lay at the bottom of the murder is clear enough.' 'But who is the murderer?' 'There lies the information,' replied Tom, striking the paper he had laid upon Holbrook's desk. "But which? It was not Templeton, for he didn't kill himself for his own benefit. It was not Fountain, for we know he didn't do it. It is either Wessing, the Simpson or Preston."

"Preston. What Preston?" "Why, James Preston—the old drunkard." "Yes, but where is he? Who ever heard of him?" "Who ever heard of him?—why—hold hard—Lay, didn't I—why, bless my soul but I told you, didn't I?" "You are particularly loud and intelligent this morning, not to say ejaculatory." "But I say, didn't I ever tell you?" "In the course of our somewhat extended and frequent intimacy you have told me many things and had told me many things, but which particular piece of information you are referring to in your usual perspicuous manner, I am unable to ascertain without a little more light."

"Oh, what that gibing you are never so uninteresting as when you think you are sarcastic. But I say, didn't I ever tell you that the Shadow reported to me about an old man Preston and Parker?" "Never, my royal youth." "Tom, who was too seriously intent upon the discovery of the paper to fall into the vein of Holbrook, told with brevity the scene in the old house in Varick street." "The real soon was Holbrook?" "If you had told me this," he said at his conclusion, "I would have been well along in the quest without the aid of this document."

"I cannot for the life of me tell how I came to neglect it, but you see, on my side I never knew, for you never told me that the name of Mrs. Templeton's father was Carroll Preston." "However, we have the connecting link now, and the question as to who is the person is narrowed to a very few." "True. It must be either Wessing, the woman Simpson, or Preston." "Or Parker." "Ah, by George, he comes into the game, too, doesn't he?" "Yes, by reason of his connection and conspiracy with Preston."

"Holbrook," said Tom, after a moment's thought, "I do not believe that either Preston or Parker are in this part of the job." "Why—especially so with the others." "Listen to me a moment. In this paper, Pierson is at pains to state that he had no knowledge of his previous life—that he never knew that he bore another name previous to that of Pierson."

"Yes, I remember; I see what your line of reasoning will be." "Well, now he did know about the Fountain and Simpson marriages. In my interview with him he was only disturbed when I talked of Fountain. He was not at all disturbed when I talked of the marriage, whether he knew or not, could be identified with the Fountain. Hence is distinguished by his knowledge of the matter." "Well, but I don't believe that he knew anything about the marriage." "No, I don't believe that he knew anything about the marriage, but I do believe that he knew that he had another name, and that he had been married before."

"I request Judge Harkner to advise Mrs. Templeton that it is my wish that \$50,000 be given to Mrs. Wessing, of Philadelphia, if alive at the time of my death." "That \$50,000 be given Mrs. Fountain if alive at my death, and if not then to her son Harry Fountain if he be alive, but if not of age then to be held in trust for him by Judge Harkner. If he be dead, then the sum to be divided equally among Mrs. Templeton's children." "That \$50,000 be given to Mrs. Simpson under the same circumstances and conditions as the gift to the Fountain woman."

"I desire also that Mrs. Templeton shall pay weekly to my niece and jailbird of a brother, James Preston, \$30, in the hope that he will soon drink himself to death." "I am quite conscious that this is not a very noble gift, but Mrs. Templeton is as good a woman as her mother was and she will obey these instructions." "CHARLES PIERSON. New York, April 10, 1874." Holbrook laid the paper down, overwhelmed.

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TIMBER LAND, ACT JUNE 8, 1878. NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. UNITED STATES LAND OFFICE, OREGON CITY, OR., March 14, 1880. NOTICE is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the act of Congress of June 8, 1878, entitled "An act for the sale of timber lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington Territory," John S. Stansbury, of Clatsop County, Oregon, has this day filed in this office his sworn statement No. 1067, for the purchase of the SW 1/4 of Section No. 12, in Township No. 2 S., Range No. 3 E., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish his claim to said land before the Register and Receiver of this office at Oregon City, Or., on Friday, the 11th day of July, 1880. He names as witnesses: Jas. A. Fox, John Allen and Wm. Kield of Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon; John McIntyre of Sandy, Clackamas County, Oregon.

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