

Prisoners and Captives

By H. S. MERRIMAN

CHAPTER XIX—(Continued.)

The effect of the discovery that they distinctly formed a group apart was barely visible to the keenest glance. Helen's slow, gentle eyes were turned toward the center of the house, bent vaguely on the brightly dressed occupants of the stables. "I suppose," said Helen, closing her fan, "that all this is rather trivial for you. The interest you take in it must be superficial now that you are so busy."

"Oh, no!" Tyars hastened to begin; he was looking past her in that strangely persistent way into the theater, and something he saw there made him turn his head quickly toward the stage.

"Halloo!" he exclaimed. Then he caught her wrist in his grasp. "Keep still," he whispered.

The painted curtain was being right forward like the main sail of a bark, and from the space at either side a sudden volume of smoke poured forth in huge, uneven clouds.

In a second the whole audience was on its feet, and for a moment a sickening silence reigned—the breathless silence of supreme fear.

Then a single form appeared on the stage. It was that of the man referred to by Claud Tyars a moment before; he who played the villain's part so unconsciously. He was still in his dark wig and pallid make-up. On his arm he carried the coat he had just taken off, and the other arm, clad in white shirt sleeve, was raised in a gesture of command.

"I must ask you," he cried, in a full, clear voice, "to leave your seats at once. And his tones were drowned, completely overwhelmed by a strange, unearthly roar; the roar of a thousand human voices roused in one surging wall of despair, like the din of surf upon a shingle shore.

The man shouted, and his gestures were almost ludicrous, even that supreme moment, for no sound could be heard from his lips.

Then the gas was turned out, and in the darkness a terrible struggle began. Some who came out of it could find it to nothing on earth. Women shrieked and men forgot themselves.

As the gas flickered and finally collapsed those in the stage box caught a momentary vision of wild, distorted faces coming toward them. The pit had overflowed the stables, strong barriers crumpled like matchwood. Into a hundred minds at once there flashed the hope of escape through the stage boxes.

"Grace! Easton!" it was Tyars's voice raised, yet not shouting. The crisis had come, the danger was at hand, and Helen knew who it was that would take the lead. She heard the two men answer.

"Keep the people back. I will break open the door on the stage. It is our best chance."

The girl felt herself lifted from the ground and carried to the back of the box.

"Helen!" whispered Tyars.

"Yes."

"Are you all right?"

"Yes."

"I thought you had fainted, you were so quiet! Hold on to my coat! Never leave go of that!"

He turned away from her, and above the din and uproar came the sound of his blows upon the woodwork of the door. It seemed impossible that such strokes could have been dealt by an untrained human hand.

Between the blows came the sickening sound of the struggle at the front of the box. Imprecations and supplications, mingled with groans and the dull thud of merciless fists upon human faces. Shoulder to shoulder the two men—the American and the Englishman—fought for the lives of the women placed by the hand of God under their protection. It was a terrible task, though few women reached the front of the box. Each man struck down, each assailant beaten back was doomed, and the defenders knew it. Once down, once under foot, and it was a matter of moments.

Fresh assailants came crowding on, trading on the fallen and consequently obtaining an ever-increasing advantage as they rose on a level with the defenders. Neither seemed to question the wisdom of Tyars's command. It was a matter of life or death. Those already in the stage box would only be crushed by the onrush of the others were they allowed to enter. With a dazed desperation the two men faced the frightful odds, hammering wildly with both fists. Their arms ached from sheer hard work and they panted hoarsely. Their eyeballs throbbled with the effort to pierce unfathomable darkness. It was quite certain that their defense could not last long.

"Stick to it!" yelled Tyars. He might have been on the dock of the Marial during a white squall, so great was the uproar all around him. At last there came the sound of breaking wood.

"Grace!" shouted the voice of Tyars.

"Yes."

"Look after Miss Winter when we go."

"Easton!" he cried again.

"Yes, old man!"

"Come last, and keep them back if you can." Then a minute later he shouted, "Come!"

At the same instant the roaring crowd of madmen poured in over the front of the box, like soldiers storming a bastion. The door which Tyars had succeeded in opening was so narrow as to admit of the passage of only one person at a time, but at this instant the larger door leading into a narrow passage, the real exit from the stage box, broke down before a pressure from within, and from this point also a stream of half-demented beings tried to force an entrance.

The only advantage possessed by the original occupants of the box was that they knew the position of the small door.

The subsequent recollection of such individuals as survived were so fragmentary and vague that no connected story of the terrible tragedy in the stage box of the Epic Theater was ever given to the public.

Miss Winter remembered finding herself caught up in a strong pair of arms, which she presumed to be those of Oswin Grace. Almost at the same moment she and her protector were thrown to the ground. After that the next thing she could remember was the touch of a hand over her face and hair and a whispered word in her ear:

"Agnes Winter—is this you?"

She recognized the peculiar American twang which was never unpleasant. At that moment, she never understood. "Yes—yes," she answered.

"Then crawl to your feet. Don't try to get up; crawl over this man. I don't know who he is, but I surmise he is dead."

She obeyed, and found her way out of the narrow door and up some steps. Close behind her followed some one, whom she took to be Matthew Mark Easton, but it ultimately turned out to be Oswin Grace, who was in his turn followed by the American, but not until later.

Helen Grace heard the word "Come," and submitted obediently to the supporting arm, which half dragged, half carried her up some steps. She remembered being carried like a child through some darksome place where the atmosphere was cold and damp. Then she was conscious of a halt, followed closely by the sound of breaking wood and the tearing of some material—probably canvas, for they were among the scenery. After that she probably fainted, and was only brought to consciousness by the shock of a violent fall, in which her companion was understood. Then she heard a voice calling out: "This way, air; this way."

She recollected seeing a fireman standing in a narrow passage waving a lantern. By the time that she reached the open air she was quite conscious. "Let me walk," she said, "I am all right. Where is Agnes?"

"They are behind," answered Tyars. "She is all right. She has two men to look after her. You have only me."

"Wait for them," said the girl. "I will not go home without them."

"All right; we shall wait outside. Let us get out first."

They were standing in a small room, probably the office of the theater, and a policeman stationed near the window, of which the framework had been broken away, called to them impatiently.

The window was about four feet from the ground, and Helen wondered momentarily why Claud Tyars accomplished the turn so clumsily. In the narrow street he turned to a police inspector and pointed to the window.

"Lift the lady down," he said.

A cab was near at hand, and in it they waited—seated side by side in silence—for what seemed hours. The crowd dropped away, asking some more interesting spot. At last there was a movement at the window, and Tyars got out of the cab and went away, leaving Helen in an agony of mute suspense. In a few moments it was over and the girl breathed freely.

It seemed strangely unreal and dreamlike to hear Agnes Winter's voice again; to see her standing on the pavement beneath the yellow gas lamp, drawing together the gay little opera cloak round her shoulders.

As Miss Winter stepped into the cab she leaned forward and kissed Helen. That was all; no word was said. But the cabman sat hand in hand during the drive home.

Tyars and Oswin spoke together a few words in a lowered tone quite overwhelmed by the rattle of the cab, and then sat silently. The light of occasional lamps flashed in through the unshaded window, and showed that the men's clothes were covered with dirt and dust, which neither attempted to brush off.

When the cab stopped in Brook street, Oswin got out first, and going up the steps opened the front door noiselessly with a latch key. Tyars paid the cabman, and followed the ladies into the house.

The gas in the hall and dining room had been lowered, and they all stood for a moment in the gloom round the dimly dressed table. When Oswin Grace turned up the gas they looked at each other curiously.

Miss Winter kept her opera-cloak closed, simply stating that her dress was torn. Her hair was becomingly untidy, but she showed no sign of scratch or hurt.

Helen was hardly ruffled beyond a few little stray curls, almost golden in color, stealing down beside her ears. She smiled, showed her teeth, immunity from harm, and in all human probability the safety of her life to the enormous bodily strength of Claud Tyars. It was she who spoke first.

"Your arm!" she said, pointing to Tyars's right arm. "Has it hurt?"

He looked down at the limb, which was hanging in a peculiar way very close to his body, with a vague and questioning smile, as if it were not his property.

"Yes," he said, "it is broken."

Miss Winter and Oswin went to his side at once. Helen alone remained standing at the table. She said no word, but continued looking at him with very bright eyes, her lips slightly parted, breathing deeply.

He avoided meeting her glance in the dimly lighted room, and in a way which she had not noticed before; answering the questions put to him with a reassuring smile.

"It happened," he said, "during the first rush. We fell down somewhere through some scenery, and my arm came underneath."

"You put it underneath," corrected Helen, almost coldly, "to—save me, I suppose."

"Instinct," he exclaimed, tersely.

"Shall I fetch a doctor, or will you come with me?" asked the practical Oswin, gently forcing his friend into a chair. "We are surrounded by them in Brook street."

"I will go with you," answered Tyars. Refusing all offers of hospitality made by Oswin and his sister, Claud Tyars went off with his friend to the doctor's, leaving the ladies comfortably installed in arm chairs by the fire.

They protested that they could not possibly sleep, and that, as it was only twelve o'clock, they would await Oswin's return.

And the two ladies left there sat, each in her deep arm chair, tossing her neatly shod toes on the fender, and said never a word. They both stared into the fire with such a marked persistence that one might almost have suspected them of fearing to meet each other's glance.

At last Helen moved. She had evidently just become aware of a black mark on the soft mauve material of her dress. With her gloved hand she attempted to brush it off, and as this had no effect she began rubbing it with a tiny handkerchief. Then she raised her eyes. Miss Winter was watching her with a curious smile—a smile much more suggestive of pain than of pleasure.

Their eyes met, and for some moments both seemed on the verge of saying something which was never said. Then suddenly Helen bowed forward and covered her face with her two hands.

Helen recovered herself as suddenly as she had given way, and, rising from her chair, stood with her shoulder turned toward her friend, her two hands upon the mantel-piece, looking down into the fire. Her attitude, moral and physical, was reflective.

"I wonder," she said, "if every one got out of the theater?"

"Mr. Easton promised to come and tell us," answered Miss Winter.

Helen raised her head and looked critically at her own reflection in the old-fashioned mirror over the fireplace. The trace of tears had almost vanished from her young eyes—it is only older countenances that bear the marks for long.

Before she moved again the sound of cab wheels made itself audible in the street, and the vehicle was heard to stop at the door. Miss Winter rose and went to let in the newcomers.

It was Matthew Mark Easton. He followed Miss Winter into the dining room, walking lightly—an unnecessary precaution, for his step was like that of a child.

"I do not know," he was saying, "the etiquette observed in England on these points, but I could not resist coming along to see if you had arrived safely. No one hurt, I trust?" continued he.

"Yes," answered the girl, gently. "Mr. Tyars is hurt—his arm is broken."

Easton's mobile lips closed together with a snap, betraying the fact that he had allowed himself the luxury of an expletive in his reprehensible American way. He turned aside, and walked backward and forward for a few minutes, like a man made restless by the receipt of very bad news.

It was a matter of a second only. Like a serpent's fang the man's keen eyes flashed toward her and away again. The peculiarly nervous face instantly assumed an expression as near stolidity as could be expressed by an exceptional intelligence. Then he turned away, and took up a broken fan lying on the table, opening it tenderly and critically.

But Miss Winter was as quick as he. She knew then that he had guessed. Whatever he might have suspected before, she had no doubt now that Matthew Mark Easton knew that Helen loved Claud Tyars.

"The worst of it," he broke out, with sudden airiness, "is that there was no fire at all. It was extinguished on the stage. The performance might have been continued."

"It only makes it more horrible," said Miss Winter; "for I suppose there—were some killed."

"That is so," he answered. "They took forty-two corpses out of our box alone."

"I did not know," over his pillow, after a painful pause, "that it was so bad as that."

Oswin Grace came in, opening the front door with his latch-key. He was greeted with an interrogatory "Well?" from Miss Winter.

"It is all right," he answered. "It was a simple fracture. Old Barker set it very nicely, and I sent him off to his club in a cab."

"Then," said Easton, holding out his hand to say good-by, "I shall go and help him to bed—tuck him in, and sing a soft lullaby over his pillow. Good night, Miss Winter. Good night, Miss Grace."

(To be continued.)

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

NATURAL PEST KILLERS.

CONGRESS having appropriated \$100,000 for the importation of parasitic insects to devour the gipsy moths, the question arises whether another appropriation may not soon be needed to import something to rid us of the parasitic insects. If this sounds paradoxical, remember the story of the English statistician who was spent in importing experiments and more were rationally devoted to protection of our native birds, hundreds of thousands of dollars would be saved to agriculture and horticulture.

Out of some thousands of birds native to North America scarcely a half dozen have proved to be injurious instead of beneficial. The cuckoos, warblers, chickadees and many of our other common birds have proved to be invaluable destroyers of gipsy moths. The rose-breasted grosbeak eats great numbers of the potato beetles, and the scoules are attacked most vigorously by the various titmice.

The ornithologists declare that even the hated chicken hawk destroys so many snakes, insects, mice and other small predatory animals, and so few chickens comparatively, that it is a benefactor rather than an enemy to the farmer; while the amount of corn the crow destroys is much more than offset by the vast number of insects he consumes.

They say that a bird which deserves much more consideration than it gets, either from the Audubon Society or the law, is the quail, an authority estimating that every quail is worth a dollar to the farmer for each of nine months in the year and 50 cents for each of the other three months, its services being in its consumption of seeds of weeds, injurious insects and worms.

Rational protection of our native birds costs little, and it cannot fail to give marked results in the country's food production.—Cincinnati Post.

THE "BOSS" AND THE STATESMAN.

TWO of the distinct types rise to prominence in public life—the party "boss" and the statesman. It is seldom that one man combines in his own person the characteristics of both, for they spring from different ideals of public duty.

The boss devotes himself to bringing about the success of his party because he desires to profit by the opportunities which accompany victory at the polls. His motto is, "Win; honestly, if possible; but any way, win." Out of this policy spring all the frauds and scandals of political campaigns.

The frauds begin in the election of delegates to nominating conventions. Outing delegations are sent from districts where the machine is weak, and the packed convention gives them the seats to which others have been fairly chosen. The other steps in the process are fraudulent registration to make a majority in a doubtful district, purchase of votes, and dishonest canvasses after the polls are closed.

Such practices are so general, nor even frequent, but they have become common enough to be responsible for the continuance in power more than one State boss. Within a few years the pass of such bosses have been greatly thinned. Some of the have died, others have lost their control of their party. The standard of political morality is perceptibly higher than it was.

The other type of man is indifferent to political machines. He makes his appeal direct to the people. His object is—and this is statesmanlike—he is the more steadily he pursues that object to carry out principles and policies, not only to carry the next election.

No more party leader in American history enjoys a fame to be compared with that of the high-minded Washington, whose sole desire was for the establishment of free representative government. Lincoln's unselfish toil for the preservation of the Union raised him on a pedestal so high that the party bosses of his time scarcely reach to his feet. The virtue of the boss is as short as the gratitude of his followers when he has no more favors to grant.

This is a government by parties, and party managers are necessary; but the people seldom forget that the great principles for which the parties stand are of more importance than the personal fortunes of any individual.—Youth's Companion.

AMERICANS ABROAD.

NEWSPAPERS are printing the customary summer stories of crowds of visitors from this country flocking to Europe and overrunning the hotels and public places. The treasury statistics show that about 150,000 Americans go to Europe every year, and the estimated average expenditure of this army of visitors is \$1,000, so that European hotel owners, storekeepers, transportation companies and other purveyors to sightseers receive about \$150,000,000 annually from the overflowing American pocketbook.

The money spent by 150,000 Americans in foreign lands containing 200,000,000 people or more seems like a small matter, relatively, but it cuts a large figure in the balance of trade and in the international banking exchanges. The United States sells annually to foreign countries merchandise valued at upward of \$500,000,000 more than the value of merchandise imported.

Here is a huge balance of trade which must be settled in some way. If Europe were required to ship gold in payment for this difference, foreign banks would be in the stress of a financial crisis in a short time. Of course, the Americans who go abroad have no purpose of saving Europe from this condition, but as a matter of fact the \$150,000,000 of American money that are spent in Europe every year help to maintain an equilibrium in international exchange, without which there would be a serious derangement of the current of trade among nations.—Kansas City Star.

TRAINING FOR MATRIMONY.

THE worthy bishop of Ripon laments that England has no schools for engaged couples. It is an oversight from which our own country also suffers. There is no end of schools of law and medicine, schools of typewriting and trade, dancing, dramatics, cooking, correspondence, china painting, wood carving and leather burning by mail. But no benevolent millionaire has yet endowed a preparatory school for matrimony.

Yes, matrimony is the most important condition of life and should command the most careful preparation. A few primitive prescriptions of honest tea, sulphur and treacle and flannel and goose oil are passed down from generation to generation, but the truly scientific courses of the lecture room and laboratory still remain to be founded.

In France a paternal government after the ceremony, presents bride and bridegroom with an attractive little booklet of advice about family affairs. We have not got that far in England, or this country. But when we come to think of it, there is a school, too, kept by Experience, where folks can learn a few things about matrimony as about most other subjects. The bishop of Ripon is free to improve upon it if he can, but for our part we do not believe there is any better instruction to be had anywhere. And then let us not forget what Dr. Holmes said about training a boy—"The best time to begin is a hundred years before he is born."—Pittsburg Press.

STUDYING THE EARTHQUAKE.

Efforts to learn how buildings may be made to resist attacks of earthquakes are being made by the United States geological survey to find out the effect upon various kinds of structural material of earthquakes, says the Boston Transcript. Numerous inquiries have been received by Charles D. Walcott, director of the survey, since the California earthquake as to the buildings which best stood the shock of the catastrophe and the reasons why some buildings survived and others fell in the wake of this convulsion of the earth. Interesting light on this phase of the earthquake was thrown by a letter recently received at the survey from Charles G. Yale, who is the special geological survey agent on the Pacific coast. Mr. Yale was in San Francisco at the time of the earthquake, and therefore had excellent opportunities for studying its effect. His offices are located in the Appraisers' building.

This building, Mr. Yale says, in his letter to Director Walcott, was one of the few business structures in San Francisco which was not injured either by the earthquake or the fire. With the exception of the falling of a little plaster on several floors the building is wholly free from damage. "It is probably the only building of its kind in the city," said Mr. Yale, "which does not show a single crack in its walls. This may be due to the fact that the foundation of the building consists of a 6-foot bed of solid cement placed upon thousands of piles, and that the bricks are put together with cement, instead of mortar. The walls of this building are thicker below the sidewalk than they are above. Thus when the building is shaken by an earthquake it moves as a monolith. The vibration of this building in the recent earthquake was considerable, but the only damage done was to the plaster, which fell on several floors."

Prior to the California earthquake a body of engineers representing large industrial undertakings in several States visited the survey in Washington, seeking information about the strength and endurance of materials to be used in a variety of building and construction work. The survey was unable at the time to supply them with the facts. The result of the investigation in California will be awaited with interest. The opportunity is there for the local agents of the survey to obtain a deal of valuable information on a subject about which comparatively little is known. It is information which will be useful to the builders of the new San Francisco and to the architects throughout the country who are to design the skyscrapers of the future.

CONCERNING THE SNORER.

Surgery as a Preventive—John A. Morris's Snoring Chamber.

A long-time reader begs for a cure of the snoring habit, says the New York Press. "Yes," he says, "I am a snorer from 'way back,' and what that means any member of my family can tell, as all have had to suffer through it many a sleepless night. If you know something against snoring please hasten to my rescue." Well, no man knows when he snores, because he is in deep sleep and slumber profound. If his habit of stertorous breathing is an affliction to his family let him call in the household surgeon and have both his soft palate and uvula removed. For, be it understood, snoring is breathing in such a manner as to cause a vibration of the organs mentioned. If thy throat offend thee, pluck it out!

The lamented John A. Morris was a mighty snorer. On board his steam yacht the Cora he built a snoring room in which he hermetically sealed himself for the afternoon nap. This room was walled with a material which was a nonconductor of sound and the old gentleman could saw wood, strike knots and rend bowlders to his heart's content without disturbing a soul.

At the home of the Morris on Throg's neck Mr. Morris imitated the snoring room on the Cora to a large extent. At some little distance from the south side of the house he erected a room of glass. The foundations were of steel and there were sundry and certain appliances for deadening sound. In this apartment the sage slept. If our long-time reader can sleep on his face, so that when the soft palate and uvula in a state of relaxation do not interfere with the breathing apparatus, he will make no noise during the night. If he were to sleep on one side or the other, with his mouth shut, and could avoid disturbance of the nora, there would be dead silence also. But the trouble in New York's peculiar atmosphere is that a person's nasal cavity fills with mucus about bedtime and breathing through the nose is an utter impossibility.

Useful and Ornamental.

A colored clergyman in Georgia was performing the service of baptism recently when he paused in the midst of the service to inquire the name of the infant. With a pleased smile the proud mother replied:

"We is goin' to call de child Shady."

"Shady!" repeated the minister. "Oh, I see. It's a boy, and his name is to be Shadrach."

"No, sah, it ain't no boy. It's a girl."

"It's dis way, sah. Our name's Bower, an' mah husband thought it would be a fine thing to call her Shady. 'Shady Bower' sounds kinder pretty."

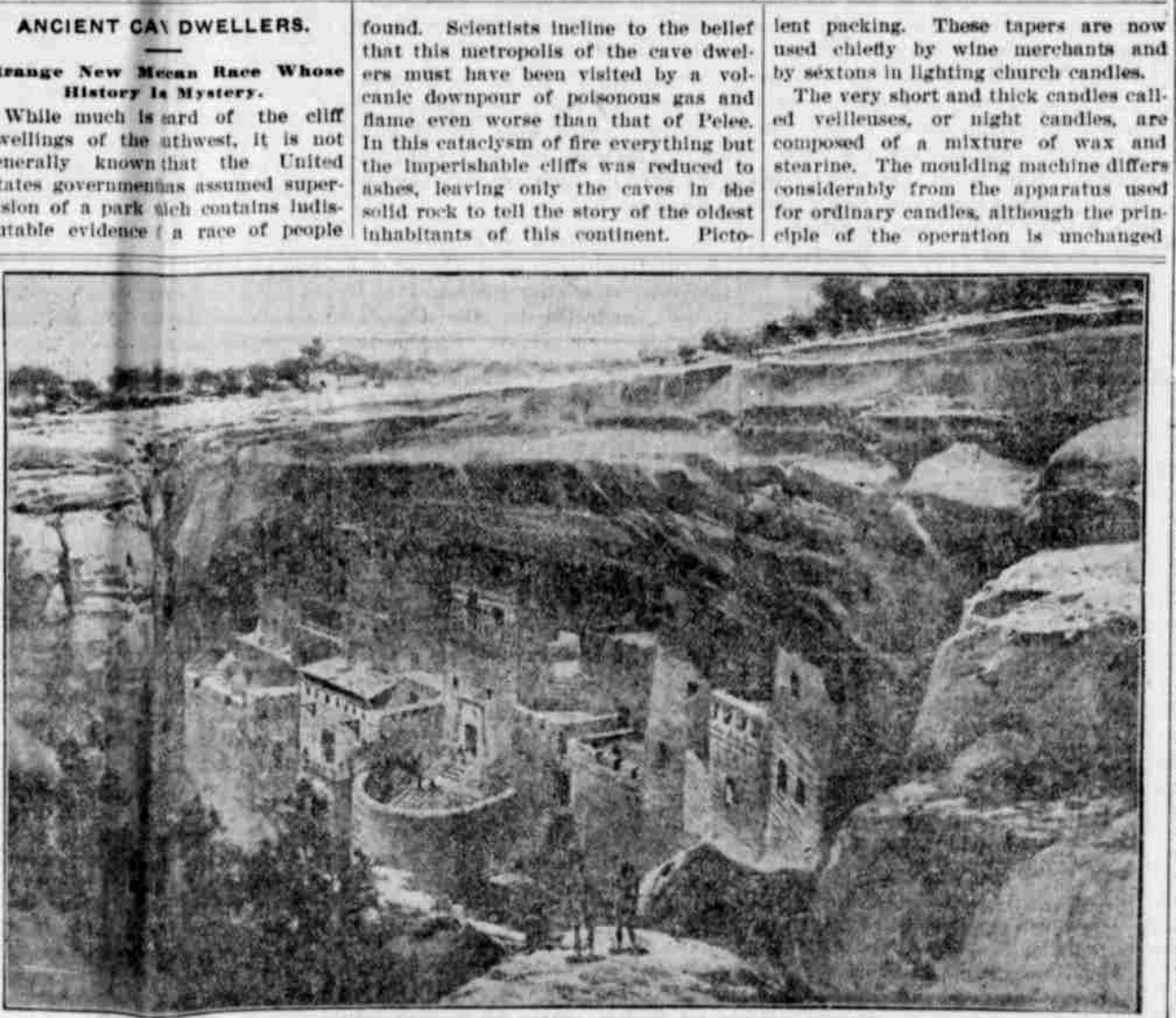
—Success.

Enacting by Law.

An edict of Charles IX. of France, dated 1563, made it a civil offense to offer any guest more than three courses at a meal. If a fourth appeared, the provider of the feast was liable to a fine of 200 francs, while the guests who partook of it could be called upon to pay the authorities 40 francs each.

Importing German Trees.

Three hundred and twenty-three thousand vigorous young spruce trees, come out from Germany, recently arrived at Potsdam, N. Y., where they are to be planted by a company that expects to make a cutting from them about twenty years from now.



CLIFF-DWELLINGS AS THEY WERE IN THEIR PRIME.

ANCIENT CAVE DWELLERS.

Strange New Means Race Whose History Is Mystery.

While much is said of the cliff dwellings of the arid west, it is not generally known that the United States government has assumed supervision of a park which contains indisputable evidence of a race of people found. Scientists incline to the belief that this metropolis of the cave dwellers must have been visited by a volcanic downpour of poisonous gas and flame even worse than that of Pelee. In this cataclysm of fire everything but the impervious cliffs was reduced to ashes, leaving only the caves in the solid rock to tell the story of the oldest inhabitants of this continent. Photographs of the interior of the caves show the remains of the dwellers, their tools, and their food.

Jack Beeson—Yes, in Boston we have all cultured love making. When a young man goes wooing in the Hub he must embrace all foreign phrases and poetical quotations. You don't see anything like that in prosaic Chicago.

Dick Lakeside—I should say not. Here a fellow is satisfied to embrace the girl.

Best He Could Do.

"You know," said the young man in the case, "that I am poor, but don't you think we might be able to live on bread and cheese and kisses?"

"Then," replied the fair maid, but—"You can work your father for the bread and cheese and I'll attend to the rest."

Infrequent.

Kind Lady—I have nothing but some lobster salad and mince pie. You surely don't want that for your breakfast?

Wearily Walker—Oh, dis is me dinner, mum. I had me breakfast day before yesterday.—Cleveland Leader.

Getting at the Facts.

Maudie—Did young Sapiegh get down on his knees when he proposed to you?

Clara—Really I can't say—but he already had down on his upper lip.—Columbus Dispatch.

More Important.

"Here's an article in this paper entitled 'How to Tell Good Milk.'"

"I'd much sooner read an article on 'How to Tell a Good Milkman.'"

—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

HOW WAX TAPERS ARE MADE.

The manufacture of Night Candles and Paraffin Paper.

In the manufacture of wax tapers and the long and slender tapers which are known as rats de cave (cave candles) the method introduced into France by Pierre Bissonnier in the middle of the seventeenth century is still in use, says the Scientific American.

The method is practiced to-day in the Carrière factory at Bourg la Reine, near Paris. The cords of which the wax is composed pass into a basin of melted wax heated by a small furnace, from which they are drawn through a perforated plate to a large wooden drum which is turned slowly by hand. The operation is repeated two or three times, the size of the hole through which the cord passes being increased each time. When the waxed cord has attained the required size it is wound on large reels in skeins of 400 or 500 meters (about 1,500 feet), which are boxed and shipped to wholesalers. It is also furnished in lengths of from 3 to 10 meters (10 to 33 feet) folded as often as may be required for convenient packing. These tapers are now used chiefly by wine merchants and by sextons in lighting church candles.

The very short and thick candles called veilleuses, or night candles, are composed of a mixture of wax and stearine. The moulding machine differs considerably from the apparatus used for ordinary candles, although the principle of the operation is unchanged.