

BY MISADVENTURE

FRANK BARRETT

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

I was shown into a sitting room, as pretentiously genteel and chilling as Mrs. Yeames herself, and there I waited till it pleased the woman to come to me. She waved me to a chair, after seating herself, without giving me her hand, for which I was grateful, though hitherto she had allowed me to take the tips of her clammy fingers. Her lofty air and patronizing smile showed that she participated in her precious son's belief with regard to the heritage.

"I have called to see your son, Mr. Lynn, madam," said I.

"He is not here," said she with that peculiar pronunciation which your "superior" person affects. "He is in London, where he has met with an accident requiring medical treatment which confines him to his room."

"Can you give me his address?" I asked. "I have business to transact with him."

"No, I cannot give you his address. I have received a wish from him, in which he begs me to act for him in all matters of a business nature until his return."

About three days after this, a client who had just returned from a business journey to the south of France dropped in to have a chat with me, and amongst other things he said:

"By-the-by, Keene, I crossed over with young Yeames."

"When?" I asked.

"On the fifteenth—night service. He pretended not to see me, so I did not bother him. I know a man at such times as this doesn't care for condolence and that sort of thing."

"He was going to Paris, I suppose?" I ventured to suggest.

"Oh, farther than that. I caught sight of him at the station where the line branches off to Monaco."

"You are sure of your fact?" I asked, though I had little doubt of it.

"I am as sure it was as I am that you are before me now."

Now the 15th was the very day he had left Coneyford for London. Was London not gay enough for him, that he must go on to Monaco for amusement? One thing was certain: Mrs. Yeames, to have received a telegram from him, must have known his whereabouts, and could not give me his address in London simply because he was at the other end of Europe. Why had she told me that lie? Because she did not wish it to be known that her son had gone to Monaco, lest it might be inferred that he had gone there for pleasure? That was the conclusion I came to.

It never entered my head that he had got out of the country for prudential reasons, and that the cause of his precipitate flight was that little paper pellet which was lying quietly in my handy drawer. There are things which escape even the suspicion of a lawyer sometimes.

CHAPTER XI.

Mrs. Yeames found time to quit her dressmakers, her crapes, bombazines, and the rest of it, in order to visit the two poor souls at Flexmore House and worry them. First of all, she attacked Nurse Gertrude upon the subject of mourning.

"Is it possible that you have not yet begun your mourning?" she asked, looking around her with a sniff, as if scenting the air for the smell of crepe.

"Miss Chip is making our dresses; they are to be home to-morrow," replied Miss Dalrymple.

"Very injudicious. I always have the dressmaker in the house. You know that an inferior article is not substituted for the material you have bought, and that none of it is kept back. Also you can be certain that good work is put in and no machining. The cost is very much less, too. What with lining and trimmings, and one thing and another, I fear those dresses will be a very heavy expense."

"Not more than I can afford to pay, I hope," said Miss Dalrymple quietly.

"I hope you have chosen a fashionable cut for my niece's dresses. I should have liked them to be like Sir Willoughby Chough's little girls, or the Honorable Mrs. Blinker's nieces'. You must have noticed how very elegant and high-class they are."

"I do not think Laure imitated any one's style."

"Surely you have not suffered that child to choose her own style?"

"Yes; Laure has very good taste in dress, and the dresses are for her."

"She'll be a perfect sight!" said Mrs. Yeames emphatically, with a dab of her hand. "How very unfortunate! If I had only thought of it a little earlier. Death, death! They'll all have to be altered, of course, when she goes to boarding school."

"But I am not going to boarding school," said little Laure despondently. "I am going to stay always—ever, ever!—with Nurse Gertrude. Mr. Keene says so."

"Mr. Keene knows nothing about it. Your guardian will settle such matters, and not Mr. Keene! And little girls should speak when they are spoken to—not before. I'm afraid I shall have a great deal of trouble with you when you come to live with me."

"But I am not going to live with you—never, never!" exclaimed the child, screwing herself in terror against Nurse Gertrude, and holding her arm for protection.

"We shall see about that," retorted Mrs. Yeames, pursing up her lips and contracting her nostrils viciously. Then turning to Nurse Gertrude, she said: "Have you made any plans with regard to yourself, Miss Dalrymple? Have you settled where you will go when you leave here?"

"No; it is impossible to settle anything definitely at present."

"One thing there is which should certainly be done without delay. It ought to be intimated to the servants that their services will not be required after their month is up. The house will be given up, of course. Perhaps you would like me to tell them they must go?"

"No. I am to consider my position here unaltered and no change in the routine is to be made until the will has been read, Mr. Keene says."

"Mr. Keene seems to be unduly interfering—to be overstepping the bounds of his—ah!—function," said Mrs. Yeames tartly.

Whereupon little Laure, with the courage of desperation, declared I was a dear old man, and wouldn't let cook be sent away, or let any one be made unhappy.

The day of the funeral came—and a sad day it is in my memory, for even a lawyer cannot bury an old friend without a pang of regret for the past that can never be renewed; a bitter yearning for the hand and the voice and the eyes that never again one shall clasp, and listen to, and look into!

I expected that Lynn Yeames would be sufficiently well to come back for the reading of the will; but he was not. However, Mrs. Yeames was there with a telegram of regret from him (she had torn off the heading, but I found out afterwards that it came from Monaco), and herself prepared to stand as his representative; and a fine monument of respectability she was in her crape. To her disgust, I had up all the servants into the room; indeed, I had invited every one whose name was in the will. Dr. Awdrey was there, looking as if he were going to have his head cut off, and Miss Dalrymple, and little Laure.

I opened the will, and in a dead silence I began to read it clearly and slowly. You might have heard a pin drop. After the usual preamble, came the legacies to the servants, whom Mrs. Yeames would have packed off with a month's wages, and then began the sniffing and sighing and smothered exclamations of astonishment and pleasure as they learned that there were a hundred pounds and a good suit of clothes to come to each of them out of the fortune of their kind old master. And when those were disposed of, I came to the Yeames bequest.

"To Mrs. Anna Maria Yeames, widow of my brother, Joseph Flexmore, I give and bequeath the sum of five pounds."

I looked at her over the top of my glasses as I read this. She folded her arms, closed her eyes, and assumed a look of injured dignity. I would have given as much as this bequest to have been able to look round and see how the servants managed to conceal their feelings. However, I contented myself with reading on:

"To my nephew, Lynn Yeames, stepson of the aforesaid Joseph Flexmore"—here I turned over the page, and glancing at Anna Maria, found her eyes open, and her expression indicative of assured triumph—"I give and bequeath the sum of fifty pounds and my glass case of stuffed birds."

Lowering the will and looking over my glasses, I said to Mrs. Yeames Flexmore:

"As your son is not here, I will apprise him by letter of this bequest."

"That is not all, I am sure. Read on, if you please," said the lady.

I bowed, and proceeded to read out in full the clause in which Flexmore constituted John Howard Awdrey, M. D., etc., sole guardian of his beloved daughter, Laure Constance Flexmore, and in recognition and consideration of his service in the capacity of guardian and trustee bequeathed to him the annual interest on such capital as remained after the payment of the foregoing aforesaid legacies, life annuity to myself one hundred pounds, and all outstanding debts, until the said beloved Laure Constance Flexmore should attain the age of twenty-one, when the whole estate would revert to her.

I paused here and again looked over my glasses at Mrs. Yeames. The woman had risen to her feet; she was white with passion. I saw she wished to speak, and waited. Her lip twitched convulsively; it was some moments before she could articulate.

"Do—do—do I understand," she faltered, "that he has left nothing to my son but fifty pounds?"

"And a glass case of stuffed birds; that is all," I said.

"All the property, in fact, goes to Dr. Awdrey?"

"The bulk of the property goes to Dr. Awdrey, in trust for Laure Constance Flexmore, who inherits when she is twenty-one years of age. Until that time Dr. Awdrey will receive from me annual payment of all interest accruing from the estate, in payment of services rendered as guardian of the child. There is a further clause providing for the appointment of a new guardian in the event of Dr. Awdrey's death, and the reversion of the whole estate to Dr. Awdrey in case of the child dying before coming of age, and

which I will now proceed to read."

"Don't trouble yourself—I don't wish to hear it!" screamed rather than said Mrs. Yeames.

"Madam," said I, "I am here to read this will, not solely for your pleasure."

"Let me look at the signature of that will," she cried, crossing quickly.

"There is the signature duly witnessed," I said, showing it; "and the date, you see, is the fourth of September of last year."

"Do you mean to tell me this is the will he made last year?" she asked.

"I do, madam. Have you any reason to doubt it?"

"I have," she said, and then stopped short. For how could she explain the means by which her son had possessed himself of a knowledge of the affair? She would have liked to proclaim me a scoundrel and a forger, as I believe she felt convinced that I was, but she had just strength enough to contain her passion.

"That will shall be contested," she said. "I will telegraph at once to my son. We shall put this into the hands of a trustworthy solicitor."

"That is the very best thing you can possibly do," said I.

She clenched her teeth, and shook her head at me with such fury in her face as I hope never again to see disgracing the face of a fellow creature; and then she turned her back on us and marched out of the room with as much dignity as she could command.

CHAPTER XII.

I was drawing up some papers the next afternoon when Mr. Lynn Yeames was announced. I slipped the papers in a drawer, turned the key, and rose from my chair as the young man was shown in. He had the decency to assume a limp, albeit he had come over on horseback.

"I want to see Mr. Flexmore's will," he began after brusquely nodding a salutation.

"The will itself is not in the office," said I; "but you can see the draft from which that will was drawn up." And I fetched from a tin box that precious draft.

He knew the sight of it at once, and holding it in his hand, he looked steadily at me through his half-closed eyes, with his lips firmly set, and his brows knitted as though he were saying to himself: "You confounded old vagabond!"

"Supposing I am prepared to swear that this is not Flexmore's last will?"

"In that case, I might be compelled to prove that it is."

"How would you do that?"

"In the first place, there are the witnesses to the signature, and then there is Dr. Awdrey, whose evidence I could bring—if any evidence were required."

"Dr. Awdrey!" he exclaimed. "Did he know that this will existed?"

"Certainly he did. It was in consequence of that knowledge that he induced the late Mr. Flexmore to decide upon making that second will, which I was prevented from getting duly signed."

"Show me that second will," he said in a tone of authority.

"It is destroyed. If it were not I do not think I should show it to you. If it were in your possession even, and you could prove that Flexmore intended to sign it, there could be no possible change in the result. There is no revoking the first will."

He nodded, still looking at me steadfastly with his half-closed eyes, his brows knitted and his lips set. I suppose he thought to intimidate me. He didn't succeed.

"Now tell me," said he presently, "why you led me to suppose that this first will was favorable to me, and the second antagonistic. Tell me that."

"Because," said I, "it is a professional rule to conceal one's clients' affairs from those who seek to discover them, and because I saw no harm to my client in allowing you to form any conclusion you pleased, and by whatever means you chose. That is the rule as regards a lawyer and his client. But there professional delicacy ends. If a lawyer is acquainted with a secret of a person not his client, he may conceal it or publish it as circumstances direct."

"That completely disconcerted him—unduly as it seemed to me then, for I was only thinking of the mean and underhand manner in which he had sought to learn Flexmore's testamentary intentions. It never entered my head—I wish it had—that his anxiety related to that paper pellet he had lost."

He looked at me, then at the table, as he flicked it with his riding whip; then at me again; finally as if uncertain as to the extent of my meaning, and to prove it, he said:

"Supposing I gave you a thundering good horsewhipping, as you deserve, what would you do?"

"Bring an action for damages like a shot," said I.

He drew a long breath, and there was visible sign of relief in his expression.

"You're wanted, if you please, sir," said my servant, coming to the door.

Never Burnt Before.

"Will you direct me to Farmer Skinner's house?" asked the newly-arrived boarder.

"I will if you want me to," replied the station lounge.

"I shall have to ask you for explicit directions, because I've never been there before."

"Gosh! I know that, ain't ye're so set on goin' there now."—The Catholic Standard and Times.

Unlimited Stock.

Box (after ten years' absence)—What became of Skinner, the dry goods man? When I left he was in financial straits—selling out at cost.

Knox—Oh, he's doing business at the old stand—still selling out at cost.



Value of Humus.

1. Humus is decaying vegetable matter in the soil.

2. It is the storehouse of nitrogen, the most expensive and the most necessary of all plant foods.

3. It contains the food upon which the soil organisms live, whose function is to convert organic nitrogen into nitrate in order to be available for the use of plants. It materially assists in decomposing the mineral constituents of the soil, such as potash and phosphoric acid, making them available for the use of plants.

4. It increases the power of the soil to hold water without becoming water-logged.

5. It makes clay soil more open and friable. It serves to compact sandy soil and increases its drought-resisting power.

6. It prevents washing to a great extent; thereby diminishing the loss of fertility by that cause.

7. Soil filled with humus more readily admits the air so necessary to all useful plant growth.

8. There appears to be a distinct relationship between the amount of humus in the soil and the amount of available nitrogen therein. It has been observed that when it is absent from the soil there is a distinct reduction of the ability of that soil to grow crops. Hence in practice in order to obtain the best crops we have to resort to barnyard manure rather than the use of concentrated fertilizers.—Rural World.

Convenient Harrow.

After working several years among stones, stumps, grubs and young orchards, I learned I needed a special harrow for the work. I could find none to suit me; so studied and planned and made one last spring, which does even better than I expected.

The cut will to some extent explain how it is made. I made mine of oak timber 2½ inches by 3¼ inches, 4 feet long and 6 feet 3 inches wide. It is composed of a middle section and two wings, the latter fastened to the middle section by ½ inch bolts 8¼ inches long, on which the wings fold very easily. The teeth are scattered over the harrow so that they are 9 inches or more apart, and yet cut every 3 inches, and are placed in the harrow sloping back, about 20 to 25 degrees from a perpendicular. They cut just as well and do not catch as if placed in perpendicular, and are easier on man and team. I have heddles to the middle section of mine, and a rope from each heddle to the outside corner of each wing, so as to lift it conveniently and quickly. I can pass readily between trees or stumps less than 3 feet apart. It is just the thing for orchards and rough ground, while on clean smooth ground it works just as well as any other smoothing harrow.—A. J. Umbo.



GOOD HARROW.

When Trees Are Blown Over. Should excessive winds blow the top of a tree out of shape, which often occurs, cut it out, leaving a nearly erect southwest branch to become the new central stem. Shallow, loosely planted trees sometimes blow over. They may be put back by excavating on the opposite side and pushing the tree back, tamping the earth as firmly as possible on the side toward which it leaned. Care should be taken not to wrench the roots loose in this operation.

Cutting Back Trees.

In highly interesting experiments at the Woburn (England) experimental fruit farm in cutting back apple trees when planted the ultimate result was found to be that trees not cut back until the end of the first year continued to form wood in subsequent years, and the crop borne by them during the first ten years was only one-third of that borne by those which were cut back when planted.

In purchasing nitrate of soda, the most quickly available source of nitrogen for plants, buyers should steer clear of low grade nitrate. The more usual adulterants are common salt, and salt cake from the manufacture of acids, both worthless as fertilizers and containing no plant food. Nitrate of soda now comes in original bags, which now contain about 200 pounds. The old 310-pound bag was very clumsy.

Watering the Horse. A successful horse raiser says: "I count the swallows my horses take while drinking a pailful. Some take larger swallows than others, but I know them all. If I am out on the road and come to a trough, I get out and count while my horse drinks, so that he will not take too much at once. I give water often, and so keep my horses free from bowel trouble caused by overdrinking."

Wood Ashes. It is seldom that a farmer can accumulate a sufficient amount of wood ashes for a large field, but on farms where wood is used there is a limited supply which can be put to good use on the garden or on the young clover. Ashes are excellent also on all grass lands and in orchards. They are applied broadcast, in any quantity desired, as many as 100 bushels per acre having been used on certain soils.

Making Swamp Land Tillable. A drainage ditch twenty-four and one-quarter miles long that will drain 85,000 acres of Iowa land is fairly under way in Monona and Harrison Counties. It will cost about \$750,000, and will empty into the Missouri River just a little above the town of Little Sioux. The swamp land reclaimed will make some of the most valuable farm land in the State.

Farm Notes. Many orchardists make a great mistake planting trees too deep. Hogging down corn has a great deal in its favor, but the hogging process should be finished before heavy snows come.

There is something the matter with the man who must drive past all the adjoining farmsteads in order to visit his neighbors.

Many a person makes the mistake of thinking that the hen house should be warm at night. So long as it is warm enough to prevent the freezing of the combs that is sufficient. The greatest necessity is to cut off all drafts.

The proper thing to do with the stray dog in neighborhoods where hog cholera is prevalent is to kill him and bury him "in the shade of the old apple tree."

The advantage of testing each ear of seed corn separately is that nearly all the poor seed can be thrown out. If only one ear in each bushel is found to be imperfect it will pay to do the testing.

Cheese Under False Colors. According to a recent consular report about 2,000 imported empty Camembert cheese boxes, bearing the names of well-known French cheeses, were imported at New York on one steamer recently. Duty had to be paid on the printed matter on their 2,000 labels and another duty on the imported boxes. According to a New York

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Nothing to Say. The man who had sculptured the Egyptian sphinx was standing off and looking at his handiwork.

"But what does it mean?" inquired the bystanders.

The sculptor hesitated.

"I—I don't know," he answered. "Consult your Handbook."

As for the sphinx, it grinned slightly but said nothing.

Just the Thing. Raleigh (in hat store)—I would—aw—like to get a hat.

Proprietor—What style would you prefer?

Raleigh—I'm not particular as to the style, doncher know. I want something to—aw—suit me head.

Proprietor—Just step this way, please, and I'll show you our line of soft hats."

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