



Mrs. J. B. Ellis

THE SABLE WINGS OF CHARITY

By FRANK H. CRAWFORD

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A CARBINE shot split the night air; a bullet impinged against the top of the prison wall and went slinging off down across the city, and a man in stripes dropped thirty feet to the city street.

He lay for a moment in a grotesque huddle where he had fallen, near the curb, in the flaky shadow of the granite wall.

The heel of his right shoe had been torn off by the carbine shot.

The man heard quick footsteps behind him. He turned toward the two forms that approached him. "All I need," he admitted beseechingly, "is paper, matches and a bag of tobacco. I can make 'em myself." He stepped coolly in between the two, took an arm of each in his and walked out with them into the Halloween moonlight.

The man who was dressed in the garb of a green devil thrust the end of his tail in his pocket and grinned appreciatively at the bareheaded man in the convict's garb.

"All he needs," he repeated, "is paper, matches and a bag of tobacco."

"That's it," agreed the one who carried a broad-bladed ax on his shoulder and was dressed in the wrinkled black hose and red mask of a headman. "It can make 'em itself. It says it. What the devil do you know about the nerve of it?"

He stared admiringly at the bareheaded man beside him.

"Say, you went the limit, didn't you? Even got your head shaved! You sure look the part all right. If it wasn't Halloween, you'd be pinched on sight."

"Yes," smiled the man in stripes, with an infection of modesty in his tone. "I don't think the getup's half bad, myself. Which one of you has the tobacco?"

"The devil reached inside his jerkin."

"You don't look like a man that would match up right with a cigarette. If you want a man's size, long, black stogie made right here in Pittsburgh out of imported Connecticut filler, with the old Pennsylvania wrapper, why, smoke up."

"Good!" breathed the man in stripes, as he exhaled a puff of the heavy, fragrant smoke. "Good! Let's be moving. What do you say?"

Arm-in-arm they went down the middle of the brilliantly lighted, white-ciffled canyon.

At each crossing the bareheaded man glanced to right and left. The streets were blocked with packed cars filled with gay onlookers, and traffic police at each corner held in check all vehicular movement east or west.

The man held close to his companions' arms and drew them on slowly down the avenue through the rout. Somewhere, a bell had begun to toll.

At the southern end of the avenue, where the crowd had become less dense, the man in stripes halted abruptly. In the blaze of curb lights his searching eyes had caught sight of a line of blue-coated figures.

Closer to him he drew his chance acquaintances, whose own grotesqueness served to heighten the illusion of bizarre mummyery created by his penal stripes, and they turned them back up the avenue again.

Dropping heavily down upon the city, out of the night, still came the totemlike reverberations of the bell.

But three blocks north the man, peering ahead through the crowd, saw a second line of blue that crawled from wall to wall—that advanced step by step to meet that other line that had already thrust him back with its impassable pressure.

"Say," inquired the devil, "are you seeing things?"

A headless form in flowing white edged through the mob.

"Yes! A ghost!" gasped the man, but he laughed aloud as he swung about.

They moved southward once more along the close-packed avenue. Half way down the square a hideously grinning baboon elbowed them apart.

The man in stripes was alone among the jostling thousands.

He edged over to the sidewalk. Before him was the vestibule entrance to one of the few old-fashioned office buildings still left in the section. He stepped back through the vestibule, grasped the handle of the inner door and turned it. The door was locked.

With cool fury he gripped the handle with both hands and twisted steadily. It was quietly done, but the screw of the handle shank was sheared off by the strain and the knob came loose in his hands, though the lock still held. The man dropped the knob silently in his pocket. He flexed his lean fingers appreciatively and turned to regard more closely whoever else might still chance to share his shelter.

He found himself face to face with two black-robed, black-hooded sisters of charity.

"We are not in costume," the taller of the two answered the inquiry in his eyes. "We are what we seem. We were caught in this—in crossing the city, and took shelter here till the crowd should thin."

The man bowed. He stepped to the doorway and glanced up and down the avenue.

In a momentary spirit of aloofness he noticed, in vivid detail, the lighting scheme of a show window, the faded sign over a shop, the checkered facade of a towering white building where, here and there, on thirty floors, was

going forward the nightly routine of office cleaning.

He turned back toward the rear of the vestibule.

"Good ladies, I think it might be well for you to go—now!"

The taller sister stepped to the entrance.

"I think not, yet." She shook her head. "The crowd is still too great."

He saw that she had the wide-eyed loveliness of Du Maurier's Trilby. And he saw in her bearing the unmistakable evidence of good birth and gentle breeding.

"But still, you must go—now," he insisted gently, "for here are three of us not in costume, sister. I, too, am what I seem."

Suddenly he felt a childlike and restless longing for a woman's understanding, for a woman's compassionate and divine forgiveness.

Through the din of the city's barbaric play, still came dropping heavily out of the night, the bell's alarm.

"In three minutes they will be here—I will be seen, and then—then I shall say goodnight to all the world," he told the pale girl beside him swiftly, "for I will not go back. And I feel that I would not want—you—here, when that time comes. But hear me! Tonight, each night out in the world, a thousand, whom none in the world from the rich world's plate would save, starve to death. But the crumbs's withheld. Who then are the murderers? Last week a factory burned—a hundred girls, white-fleshed like you, with bosoms made for children's lips, were trapped and killed. Whose life is claimed for blood atonement? Today a people sing a chant of hate and the smell of men unburied poisons the air where that song is heard. Who walks in stripes up a scaffold's steps in penalty for that?"

"I—I have—killed—one man—a man I had not hated. It was in his room. You perhaps have read?—Benedict Grant. He was—a big man—and beautiful as Absalom. We played that night. He lost. He was given to sullen rages at times. That night he lost his hold upon himself. He said one thing—the unforgettable, and unforgettable thing—of a woman, and I told him just how abominably he lied. It was primitive. He jerked a javelin from the wall and I found my hand upon a Fiji club."

"You will not leave? Then I must go to meet them, before they find me here. I would like a prayer for you to follow me—where I will be—tomorrow."

He stepped toward the outer doorway. "Stop!" A hand touched his shoulder.

He turned swiftly but the thing was done.

The girl with the wide, gray eyes, had unknotted her cincture, had thrown her left arm about the man's shoulder so that her unloosened robe fell like a drooping sable wing behind him, and with her hand, she had caught up the other woman's arm in a tense grasp so that the man's stripes were hidden by their somber garments.

"Bow your head! Come!" she whispered.

He bent his head to the girl's height and the three stepped down to the pavement and out to where, for an instant, a space was clear, and then the girl with the wistful lips drew the others into a simple step and they danced their way through a little lane that opened up for them, till they neared one line of blue, and the girl snatched a feathered wand from a careless hand and saucily brushed with it the face of a stocky sergeant of police, and glanced archly back over her shoulder and laughed at him; and so the three danced out from that zone of death and then, in silence, moved on and away to where the streets were empty and quiet and dark. Then the girl drew gently away from the man whose head was bare.

They stood silently for a moment in the purple shadow of a belfry tower, beside a gray-stone, century-old churchyard wall.

"To try to put in words what is in my heart," the man spoke slowly, "would be so useless! But—"

He knelt and lifted the hem of the girl's black robe to his lips.

Then he stood before her, with his hands clasped behind him.

From where they had stopped they could see the green and red lights of a towboat bound for the gulf, gleaming across the silent river's ink-black surface; the blast of the steamboat's deep-toned whistle quivering on the cool night air.

"I have not the right to ask," the man spoke reverently, "but might I have a name to link with the memory of this night's charity—to carry with me to the end of my life?"

The girl, with eyes downcast, drew her companion's arm in hers. She moved silently away a step or two, then paused and turned and looked up steadily into the man's eyes.

"If, for what I have done this night, I should chance to be remembered through all those years of peace and happy freedom, I pray that you may have, then let it be as—Sister Benedicts."

"But, while you were of the world, when you were still a carefree girl, a little laughing child, may I not have that name, also, to bear in memory?"

"Ah! You ask—me—that?"

The girl called—Sister Benedicts clasped her sodden anguish. Her eyes were closed.

When at last she spoke again, it was in a voice of level tones and utter weariness.

"In the world, while my brother lived—my only brother, whom I dearly loved—my name was Janet, Janet Grant. My brother's name was Benedicts."

FARM POULTRY

CONTROL OF ROUP BY SANITARY RULES

Contagious roup is probably caused by unsanitary conditions of the hen-house and yards. It is aggravated by cold, damp weather. Correction of the causes, so far as possible, is most advisable, as remedies are slow working and not sure in effect.

It causes a loss, not only from a heavy death rate, but also from the interference with egg production and weakened vitality in breeding. It is very contagious, especially in damp, cold weather, and attacks both young and old stock.

Contagious roup is probably easier to identify than any other poultry disease. It usually starts like a simple cold, with a thin, watery discharge from the nose and eyes. This secretion has a peculiar, offensive odor. Inflammation sets into the nasal passages, eyes and spaces just below the eyeballs. The birds then often cough and sneeze. Breathing becomes noisy, and if the air passages of the nose become entirely blocked, they breathe through their mouths. The birds soon lose their appetite and become depressed, their wings drooping and their feathers ruffled. The secretions from the nose and eye change from fluid to a yellowish, cheese-like mass. This grows rapidly about the eyelids and the nostrils. One or both eyes become enlarged and swelling may appear on the head.

The exact cause is not known. Whatever it is, the organism is hard to kill, because it penetrates into the tissues. If the formations about the head are removed, the uneven bleeding surface which is left forms a new mass in 24 to 48 hours.

Infected birds carry the disease from place to place and infect others by contact. Food and water may become contaminated by the secretions from sick birds and healthy birds become infected in this way.

Roup is easily controlled by proper management and housing. Damp, unsanitary, poorly ventilated, overcrowded, drafty quarters are conducive to its spread. The first treatment is to remove the cause at once. Only valuable birds should have individual treatment. A simple cure for the sick bird is as follows: Place it in a dry, well-ventilated place away from the other birds, and give it plenty of fresh water and feed. Every morning and evening remove all the matter from the eyes and nostrils of the bird and dip its head into a solution of bichloride of mercury (1-1000). This is made by placing one 7.3 mercury bichloride tablet in a pint of water. Hold the bird firmly and immerse the head until the eyes are covered, keeping it there a few seconds or until it struggles. In most cases, the following procedure is advisable: Dispose of bad cases by killing and burning them.

Isolate birds having colds.

Be sure quarters are dry and tight on all sides, with adequate opening in the front for ventilation and light to reach every part of the house.

Allow at least three square feet floor space per bird.

Place a little kerosene on the top of the drinking water or one 7.3-grain mercury bichloride tablet in a gallon of water in a nonmetal container. These should never be used more than ten days in succession.

Place one pound epsom salts per 100 birds in the drinking water or a wet mash.

Judgment in Feeding

Good judgment must be exercised in feeding the pullets after they are mature and are in their winter houses. Usually eight quarts of hard grain is fed to one hundred birds a day. One-third or one-fourth of this amount should be fed in the morning and the balance at night. When about half the birds are laying well they may require as much as ten or twelve quarts per day. Sometimes, however, eight quarts is too much and it is necessary to cut down on this amount. Mash should always be kept before them in hoppers or feeders.

Poultry Notes

Cull nonproducing hens.

Chickens need sunlight to prevent rickets.

It is a good plan during warm weather to keep a little earth spaded up in the shade of a tree for the fowls' dust bath.

Broilers and fryers are most profitable when they reach the market before the slower-grown chicks are ready.

Breeds of dairy cattle vary in their origin, size, color, and in the quantity and quality of the milk they produce.

Successful dairymen and cow buyers insist upon cows which represent some one of the distinct dairy breeds, the choice being largely a matter of personal preference.

A dairyman who began to weigh the milk from his cows, and to keep a record of each milking, found that the cow he thought was the poorest in his herd gave next to the highest yield.

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Explaining Politeness
It is because good is rare that goodwill has been invented, which, without having its solidity, has all its brilliancy. Thus, to replace the kindness we lack, we have devised politeness, which has all its appearance.—De Levis.

Carries Cook's Name.
Sally Lunn, the popular tea cake, received its name from a pastry cook of Bath, England, Sally Lunn, who about the end of the Eighteenth century used to carry such cakes about in a basket.

Latvia Forests Unexploited.
Forests of Latvia are not exploited but the government auctions the privilege of cutting trees in various sections.

Seven Years Writing Novel.
Mrs. Humphry Ward, the noted English novelist, devoted practically seven years to her novel, "Robert Elsmere." She meditated on the story for four years before beginning it. She spent three years in writing it.

Helpful Providence.
Providence has given us hope and sleep as a compensation for the many cares of life.—Voltaire.

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It's a tremendous task to excavate a large cellar with a teaspoon—a small matter with a steam shovel. Then why use some of our old habits?
—Indiana Construction Recorder.

Kipling Philosophy.
After all, yourself is the only person you can by no possibility get away from in this life and, maybe, in another. It is worth a little pains and money to do good to him.—Kipling.

His Name in Full.
Summoned at Burton, a man stated that his name was Bertram Abiff Wellborne Montague Thomas William Henry Lawrence Stupendaduke Simpson Hudson.—London Tit-Bits.

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