## COCCURRENCE COCCUR A Strange Misfortune

WRITTEN FOR THE ADVERTISER

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Author of "Pera's Lovers," "Mrs. Weston's Grandchild," "A Sailor's Bride," "Lord Burnside's Coming of Age," Etc.

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sufficient for a man. John smoked a lit- ous, John asked in tones of evident emotle in a mild way, he avoided public- tion: houses, desired a bicycle but could not afford it, went to church on Sundays of taking the notes?" when he had leisure and inclination, and,

If his ambitions were few, his wants were less. He cleaned his plate in the the latest music-hall ditty, and read a halfpenny newspaper when work permitted him, with that easy-going indifference which is the principal characteristic of the thoughtless domestic bervant.

John's employer, an elderly gentleman of means, troubled his head but little about his dependants. Provided they served him well he was satisfied. He disliked to find fault or interfere. John arrived with a good recommendation. John suited, John stayed. Whether he had a soul, or a mind, or an ambition beyond his humble estate, never occurred to Mr. Surtees, the type of person who always finds a good servant because he rests content with no other, and who, mildly self-centered, soars above all such minor questions as the duty of altruism and the care of his neighbor's soul.

Mr. Surtees paid good wages, he expected devoted service, and by some strange law of social economics he got Whether their names were John, William, or Thomas, a supply of young men were always to be found willing, sober, well-looking and anxious to carry coals and wait at table. They stayed a certain time, rarely more than two years, then departed to better themselves, and left the fields for others. John had only occupied the situation a few months, but had hitherto managed to afford no cause for complaint. He was an early riser, hard worker and respectful in manner. The butler conceived that he might allow himself an extra airing in the afternoon, secure that John in the pantry could start up alert at the faintest

sound of his master's bell. Thus all went well until a certain Tuesday in December (John had good reason to remember the date), when Mr. Surtees entered the library chilled with the frost, blue at the nose, his arms full of letters and papers. Some of these he now laid carelessly on the table, together with four crisp ten-pound notes just obtained from the bank. Then, feeling still cold and rather hungry, he threw off his coat, left the ordering of his papers till afterwards, and proceeded to luncheon.

Having finished his cutlet and drank a glass of sherry, Mr. Surtees, now warmed and comforted, returned to the library. There lay his letters, but not a trace of the bank-notes. He fumed, fidgeted, swore, pulled open the drawers roughly, looked inside, found nothing. He searched high and low, emptied his pockets, finally rang the bell.

"Has anyone been in this room since my return?" he inquired of the butler. "No one, sir," answered that functionary, scenting danger, and quickly running over in his mind the ways it might

"No one-you are sure?" The master's tone was harsh and irascible. The butler reflected under his impas sive mask of polite servitude. "No one but John, sir, who made up the fire ac

"Send John here." The butler departed, anxious to afford the scape-goat a taste of the fright he

cording to orders half-an-hour ago."

had just endured. "Here, John," he said, authoritatively to the young man whom he found busy polishing silver. "Master's in a rage, and wants you. What have you been

"Nothing," said John, frankly, quickly wiping his hands on a towel and drawing on his livery coat. His conscience accused him of nothing, and in his very unconcerned way he feared no evil.

Mr Surtees stood on the hearthrug, legs planted wide apart in the timehonored attitude of the British paterfamilias. The position gave him dignity. John was manifestly at a disadvantage. "John," Mr. Surtees spoke in a hard, judicial tone, "I understand you were in the library during the lunch hour."

"Yes, sir," said John, cheerfully. "I made up the fire as usual." "Did you see four ten-pound notes on

the writing-table?"

"No, sir; I never looked." "Think well, John. They have been removed by somebody. You are the only person who has access to the room." "I never saw them, sir," persisted

John, stoutly. Mr. Surtees again rang the bell. The

butler's face appeared promptly in the doorway, perturbed, yet passionately in-"John says he has seen nothing of the

notes. Call the housemaid." The housemaid, a pretty, confident girl, and finally all the household, were in-

> lime will show whether vour washing-powder is dangerous. One can't tell from the first few washings. After a time

"go all at once." Costly experimenting. But here is PEARLknown and proved to be absolutely harmless. te but a trifle more than corest. To save that trifle you risk all the wash.

MILLIONS USE IT

John Bennet was a footman. His am- | terrogated in turn. All denied entering | some girl you're sweethearting bition never soared higher. It seemed to the room. John alone fearlessly conhim that to do his duty, even if that fessed his presence. At first respectful consisted only in such menial offices as and indifferent, gradually bewildered the money," said John, a ring of sturdy blacking boots and carrying trays, was and wondering, at last decidedly anxi- bravery in his voice and his regrets

"Do I understand, sir, you accuse me

"I accuse no one," said his master, in short, conducted himself like a re- sternly, "but appearances are against

"You don't surely mean-to-prosecute me?" stammered John, looking vainly for morning with a light heart, whistling sympathy to the stolid faces around him. "I do not know what I may do. Clearly my present course is to send for the police. You can go now." Therewith as much a friend as lawyer, and the two the dispenser of justice waved away his docile crowd of servants.

John returned to his plate-polishing, et with little zest. The butler sought his room, the cook her kitchen, in silence. No one as yet dared to breathe. A cloud hung over the household; a storm might break at any moment. Nobody addressed John. He sat down,

rested, his head on his hands, and reflected. Could it be true? He, John hitherto above suspicion, was believed to be a thief. No, of course it was not true; the notes would be found and the culprit discovered. Perhaps it was all a mistake, and they were not really lost at all. Still, his master had seemed very persistent. There was no likely thief, and John became the victim of circumstances. He jumped up quickly. He must not sit down; no, he must

not give up the game, he must search; the bank notes should be found. Just then the door opened and a burly policeman entered. He had a goodhumored face and a kindly light in his

eye, but John's first movement was that "Don't be frightened, my boy," said the policeman. "I've come to search your box. I've looked over the other servants, now it's your turn, and I must

overhaul your pockets.' John obeyed and put every facility in his visitor's way. "Has anything been found, sir?" he

asked nervously. "Nothing as yet. "Then it is all right. I know nothing

about the notes. I only went into the "Hush, my lad," said the policeman. "You had better say nothing, it might be

brought up against you later." The policeman's caution frightened him still more. Things were really serious, then.

"There, that's all; your box is finished." The policeman went out, his boots

creaking cheerfully, and John, absorbed in miserable reflections, was once more alone. He took up his coat again and turned the pockets right. He brushed it and put it on, thought a moment, then with a firm step he hurried to the library. If no one else could find the notes he,

who had the greatest interest in their recovery, surely would. He would never cease from rummaging and hunting until successful. Hope revived. No one could innocently fall into such trouble.

The library was empty. John looked around and spied his master's coat hanging over the back of a chair. He approached, thrusting his hands into the pockets in his eager search. Suddenly he heard his master's angry

"What are you doing with my coat?" Rosy from stooping, John looked up

quickly. "How dare you touch it! Leave the

dangerous! You are a thief!" John's limbs trembled under him. He, an honest lad, to be accused of stealing. The very thought choked him, he could

carcely speak. "I am innocent, indeed, sir, I am inno ent. I have taken nothing," he blurted

"It is fortunate for you," said Mr. Surtees, "that the police are not yet on your track. One word from me and you would be arrested. Meanwhile, go." "Where shall I go, sir?" said John,

"Wherever you like. I suppose you have a home?" he added, less malig-

"It will break my father's heart, sir," said John, a vision of that narrowminded parent's wrath before his eyes. 'Oh, sir, give me another chance, do. Time will show."

'Time to enable you to commit some more cleverly-planned robberles," exclaimed his master. "No, indeed, I've done with you. I only want honest people in my house. "Go!" John withdrew silently, a look of hunt-

ed anguish in his eyes. He was young and inexperienced. Unversed in the criminal law, and with all the respectable person's natural shrinking from it, he scarcely realized what his dismissal under such circumstances implied, yet he felt the full disgrace and horror of his situation. As he packed his small belongings he gulped down the unshed tears, trying, poor boy, to be as manly as he could. He scrupulously put aside his livery suit and hat, and such things as might not be supposed dis-

tinctly his property. He would leave the house, at any rate, free from the smallest blame. All was finished. He stood, billycock in hand, ready to depart, when the butler appeared.

"So you're hoff, John?" he said. "And a good thing, too. Mind, you're not to run away, master says, till he has a talk with your father tomorrow." "I shall not run away." John stood &

little more upright. "I am an honest man, and I want to be cleared." "Cleared? H'm, not much chance of that, I think. It's sad to see premising young fellows going that way. Tell me," he added, with a leer of unwholesome curiosity, "was is a woman, John,

 $\mathbf{E}$  decreases the contraction of the contractio

"I have no sweetheart and I never say swung himself out of the door without another word, and act first of John's dramatic career was over.

The butler metaphorically rang down the curtain, locked the cupboards, and

put the key in his pocket. Then Mr. Surtees sent for his legal adviser, Mr. Cramp, of Cramps, Bland, Fettis and Co., and told him the story of John's misdemeanors over a glass of toddy after dinner, for Mr. Cramp was often spent an evening together. Mr. Cramp was as kind, and stout, and fussy person as his friend was thin and forbidding in manner. The pair were a complete contrast, but they understood one another.

"Yet, with all his smooth, bland, purring tones, Mr. Cramp was a terror to evil-doers. Justice in such a benevolent guise was even more to be dreaded. He listened now with the abstract look of a man not personally interested, holding up his glass to the light sometimes, and taking little caressing sips of its con-

"You had in the police," he observed. "The footman's person and his box were searched and nothing was found. The notes have not been cashed, then where

"That's the mystery. I fancy he made away with them.' "Ah! now the thing is becoming in-

teresting." "My impression is he stole the notes, and then, frightened at the consequences, destroyed them.'

"But how?" mused Mr. Cramp. "He had not much time." "He was alone in the pantry. There was a fire, he may have thrown them

"True, he may. What do you propose "I have no wish to prosecute." "You've no proofs."

"I should like to get the money back." "And I should like to know what became of it. I am inclined to think your surmise right. You made a complete

"At once. But, of course, I only laid them on the table." You are sure?" "Quite. I mean to apply to the bank

for repayment of the money. I have the numbers of the notes and have stopped their circulation." "They won't restore you the money without certain formalities."

"And they are?" "An affidavit of the destruction of the

notes." "I can't give that."

"No, but John can. John must tell the truth." "Easily. If you promise that no further steps will be taken against him, and that the matter shall rest there if he confesses, he will be only too glad. I expect the poor fellow is shaking in his

shoes already." "Your plan is not a bad one." "It is the only one."

"He was one of the nicest and quietest footmen I ever had," mused Mr. Surtees. "It is a pity." "He must have fallen into bad company, or perhaps he is a thief by na-

ture; one can never tell." "I suppose I must follow your advice." "Certainly, unless you decide to forego

the money and deal leniently with the thief." "No, no, that's impossible. I can't do room, leave the nouse! Your presence is it. It wouldn't be right to let him off it. It wouldn't be right to let him off scot-free. In this way we shall have a John tried to touch his hat to him respectifully, but Mr. Surfees turned away hold over him."

So it was settled. Mr. Surtees and Mr. Cramp called on John's father next day. The footman, as he had assured the butler, made no attempt to abscond and appeared at once shamefaced, unhappy, but calm. Mr. Surtees opened the ball and explained the motives of their visit. "We are satisfied that it was you, John," he said, "who took the money and made away with the notes, but Mr. Surtees has kindly determined not to prosecute you if you will confess the whole matter and tell us what you did

with the bank-notes." John again protested his innocence. His father interrupted him testily:

"That's the way he goes on. He keeps saying he knows nothing of the money, but I say: 'Tell the truth and shame the devil.' It passes my comprehension to see him on the high road to the dock when all the gentlemen want is a few words of confession."

"Don't, father, don't!" pleaded John. "Yes, my boy, I will. You've had a good education and a good example from me," pursued the irate father. "However, sirs,"-he addressed himself to the gentlemen-"as I see, if this here affair ain't cleared up right and straight it's no son of mine he'll be, but, quick march, and out of the house you go." "We trust it will not come to that," said Mr. Cramp, in his soft, purring tones. "The wisest thing is to make the best of a bad business. Confession is the only expiation he can give. Let him do so at once without delay. No doubt the lesson, if severe, will prove salutary. Turn over a new leaf, young man, and perhaps your father may yet live to be proud of you." "Not much chance of that," said Mr.

The Publisher of the Best Farmer's to us states: would say that I do not know of a nedicine that has stood the test of time like MINARD'S LINIMENT. It has been an unfailing remedy in our household ever since I can remember, and has outlived dozens of would-be competitors

"We've no wish to press or hurry you, John," continued Mr. Cramp, rippling on "We'll leave you to think it over and tomorrow we'll call again and hear your decision."

With which lenient remark the gentlemen departed, escorted to the door by the apologetic and indignant father. "Do you know," said Mr. Cramp to his friend on the way home. "I fear lest we have made a mistake. The parents are respectable people, and John may be in-

gray eyes." "How could that be? No no else had even a chance of stealing the notes." "To be sure; yet truth is stranger than

nocent. He has an honest look in his

John passed a miserable evening. His father stormed, swore and raved at him, declaring he was the family disgrace, the curse of his mother, and a precious fool into the bargain.

"Take the gentleman's offer, it's the only chance," he concluded.
"But if I am innocent?"
"Stuff and nonsense! If you are, you can't prove it."
"Truth will out."

"Truth will out."

"Truth, where's the truth? The gentleman says you're a thief."

"And I know I am not," responded John. John.

His mother meanwhile wept silently, and from time to time threw at him piteous looks.

John could stand his father's rating better than her silent grief.
"Oh, father, what is to be done?" he

groaned.

"Take the gentleman's offer or go to jail." Therewith Bennet senior retired to bed in dudgeon.

John sat down in the kitchen. His heart felt heavy as lead, his head swam, he began to be afraid of his own convic-

tions.

The whole world seemed arrayed against him, no ray of light pierced the darkness that surrounded him. Then a soft step approached and two arms were flung round his neck.

"My boy, my poor boy!"

"Mother, don't cry. Leave me, go to sleen."

"I can't sleep. John, if you love me,

confess."
"But, mother—"
"You'll have peace, dear, then."
John held his mother fast locked in his embrace, their tears mingled. She at least loved him, but even she believed him guilty. They stayed thus several minutes pressed tightly against each other, united in their misery, two poor, disconsolate souls, helpless and despairing. It wrung the mother's heart to know her son a criminal, it tortured the man to be the cause of his mother's suffering. Each wanted to help the other. The agony of each was duplicated. Suddenly John spoke:
"I'll do it, mother, for your sake. And may Heaven forgive me," he added, under his breath.

der his breath.
"My boy, I knew it. I knew you would Keer "My boy, I knew it. I knew you would. You were always a good lad. Keep straight now, won't you? Promise me."
"I promise." said John, kissing his mother's hand. At that moment he felt unworthy to kiss her cheek.
"You'll do it tomorrow?"
"Tomorrow. And you'll fret no more, mother?"

mother?"
"I'll try not to, John, my son." Then the old lady crept back to her room and John held vigil till the day.
Mr. Cramp had an easy task next morning. He found John quiet and docile, and completely resigned to his position. He solemnly declared that he had stolen the notes and thrown them into

tion. He solemnly declared that he had stolen the notes and thrown them into the fire. He expressed full contrition for the act, and "signed the affidavit, which was duly attested. His calm misery touched the lawyer.

"You've done right," he said as they left the house. "You will never regret it. Be an honest man for the future."

After their departure John shut himself up in his room.

Even his mother's entreaties failed to move him. He neither ate nor slept for forty-eight hours. At the end of that

forty-eight hours. At the end of that time he came forth aged, pallid, with a hard, impassive look in his face.

He announced his immediate intention of scaling another situation. But he He announced his immediate intention of seeking another situation. But he had reckoned without his host. His troubles began in earnest now. He had no character. He could give no explanation of his reasons for leaving his last place; he could refer to no one. From door to door he wandered, always turned away with contumely. At last, footed away with contumely. At last, 100tsore and sick, he was thankful to accept
the post of helper in a livery stable.
Day out, day in, he toiled, silent and decently behaved, until he attracted the
attention of his master. By degrees he
was favored, advanced, and at last permitted to drive a doctor's hired

vored, advanced, and at last per-to drive a doctor's hired rougham. Act II. began now in a period of comparative happiness. He had regular work, he was trusted and respected. The doctor's housemaid, Jenny, a buxom girl of twenty, graciously consented to walk out with him on Sundays, even to promout with him on Sundays, even to promise vaguely to marry him some day. John's good spirits returned; he plucked up courage and began to whistle music hall tunes again. The dreadful past seemed almost obliterated. Yet deep hall three again. The dreadful past seemed almost obliterated. Yet deep down in the bottom of his heart lay the consciousness of that fatal paper which no doubt still reposed in Mr. Surtees' desk. He had bartered away his honor, and untroubled peace could never again and untroubled peace could never again e his. His old master had not forgiven spectifully, but Mr. Surtees turned away and refused to acknowledge his saluta-tion. Still, he had not prosecuted him,

tion. Still, he had not prosecuted him, and the worst was over.

One summer's day John, spick and span in a new livery, drove his horse smartly up to a house whence the doctor, his professional visit paid, was issuing. He exchanged a last few words with a friend, a stout, pleasant-looking man. John knew him at once, and under the healthy tan of his cheeks he paled. It was Mr. Cramp. The lawyer caught sight of him and the recognition was mutual. He bent over into the carriage and whispered to the doctor: ed to the doctor:
"Have you had your coachman long?"
"A matter of six months. He is an

excellent driver."
"That he may be, but I am sorry to say I know him. He was once concerned in theft, and, what is more, he confessed it in writing."
"Indeed! you surprise me. I should not have thought it."
"I daresay he have "I daresay he has reformed. Anyway, I have warned you; be careful, that's

all."
"Thanks; I'll be careful."
The next day John received notice. He asked for reasons. The doctor gave none. He was impenetrable, simply declared that John did not suit him. John entreated, prayed, without avail. Matters were even worse at the livery stable. The manager asserted there was no vacancy there even for a helper, and another coachman had already been found achman had already been found

for the doctor.

And thus Act III. of the tragedy commenced.
Once out of a situation the saved-up Once out of a situation the saved-up money quickly melted away. John was thankful when at the approach of winter he starfed again at the lowest rung of the ladder as helper, at lower wages. The work was harder, too, the master less considerate for the men. John caught a cold which developed into bron-He became a mere shadow of

chits. He became a mere shadow of himself, hacked by a wearing cough. His mates, blustering kindly, advised him to betake himself to bed.
"If I do," said John, despairingly, "I shall never get up again." shall never get up again."
His work gone, fever rioting in his veins, he turned to Jenny and begged her to visit him. She replied without more ado that her employer had forbidden her to hold any further intercourse with him. Then John's courage broke and he thought of death. Yet one hope remained however. remained, however. It was the last—Mr. Surtees' forgiveness. He wrote to him and told him how, lying on his death-bed, he once again asserted his innocence. He implored him to forgive innocence. He implored him to forgive and let him die in peace. Mr. Surtees's short answer declined his

request.
Mr. Cramp. however, hearing that through his indiscretion John had lost his place, came tardily to the rescue. He sent a doctor to prescribe, and spoke a few cheering words to the invalid. John revived a little. "It's not death I mind, sir." he groun-

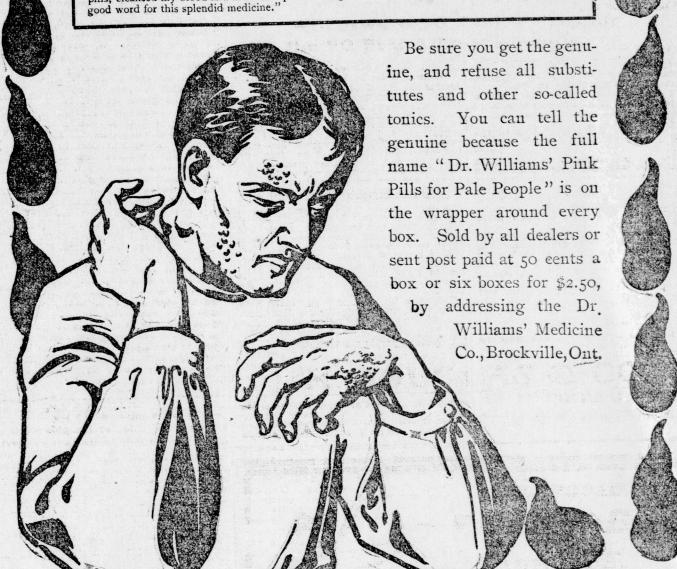
Blood troubles are many, important—and dangerous, and manifest themselves in many painful and offensive ways, such as scrofula, eczema and boils. These troubles are particularly likely to make themselves felt during the Spring months, and as the impurities in the blood penetrate every part of the system they are responsible for a large proportion of all disease.

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ed; "it's the disgrace. Everything's been | Cramp passed a sleepless night. Next against me, everything, and there seems no way out of it."

The way out of it came unexpectedly. Mr. Surtees, while apparently in the best of health, was seized with a fit of apoplexy and died. Mr. Cramp's duties as executor and residuary legatee being imperative, poor John's miserable fate for the mement was forgotten. Mr. Cramp looked through his friend's papers, took everything carefully out of the drawers of the writing-table and carried them home to inspect, leaving orders that the furniture should be cleaned up and prepared for the forthcoming sale.

That evening, attentively perusing the documents, toasting his feet before the fire, and enjoying a few moments of well-earned leisure. Mr. Cramp was dis-

"What is it, Susan?" he asked, impatiently, as the parlor-maid entered with patiently, as the parlor-main entered with a letter.

"A note. sir, from Mr. Surtees' house-keeper, marked 'Immediate.'"

The lawyer frowned, then neatly ripped up the envelope. Four ten-pound notes fluttered out on the floor.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Cramp, proceeding to read the paper that had enveroned them. wrapped them. The housekeep housekeeper informed him that on

The housekeeper informed him that on pulling out the drawers of the writing-table in order to commence operations, she found an obstruction, which, when removed, proved to be the notes inclosed. "Now, where have I seen those?" said the lawyer to himself. "I seem to remember the numbers." Then, in a flash, light came to him. They were the notes John Bennet confessed to stealing.

Rennet confessed to stealing.

Mr.

And he was innocent, after all!

merning he hurried to the bank. In answer to his inquiries, the head cierk hesitated, looked up ledgers, dived into books, till his interlocutor almost danced with impatience. Then he pronounced with impatience. Then he pronounced solemnly that Mr. Cramp's surmise was aid Mr. Cramp, "why did the man con-

Mr. Cramp started. "And this man is John lay motionless in bed. The spring John lay motionless in bed. The spring of life was broken. He turned his face to the wall and gave his soul to God. The world which had never concerned itself much about his affairs was dead to him now. He swam in a pool of content, idealess, half unconscious.

Mr. Cramp pushed the door of his garret open brutally. He could wait for no ceremony.

ceremony.

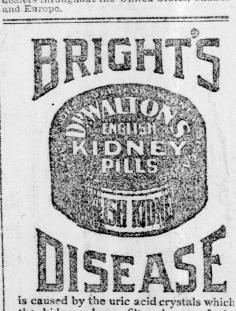
"John," he cried on the threshold,
"you're cleared! The notes have been found!" He waved them above his head.
But John was too far gone to heed. He turned slowly; the sparkle of his eyes were dim, thought only came to him belting and incoherent. 'You're cleared, man-get well! You're cleared! "Cleared!" Then suddenly he understood, and a great light shone on his face. "Jenny," he said; "Jenny, my darling, you'll not be ashamed to come

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