

How the Serpent Crept In

Jacob Fletcher and his good wife Mary had lived together the lives of farmers for twenty years or more and had never had an hour's misunderstanding. They had no children, but their company was all sufficient for each other, and at the age of forty-five they were in the best of health and without regrets. Then the serpent crept in. He was the agent of a life insurance company, and he sat down in the kitchen where Mrs. Fletcher was making pumpkin pies and talked her to a standstill. What he wanted was to secure mutual insurance, a policy by which the surviving husband or wife would profit in the sum of \$5,000. The farmer's wife had heard of such things, but was opposed to them, and the agent had to talk for two long hours before he could secure her promise to "talk to pa about it."

That night she did talk, though with out any heart in it and was much relieved when the husband turned to her and said:

"Mary, it would be like flyin' in the face of the Lord, and I wouldn't think of such a thing."

He had to think, however. The agent came back again and again, and at length his persistency received its reward. After much doubt and hesitation a policy was duly taken out and filed away in the bottom drawer of the bureau, and the serpent had inflicted its sting. That afternoon as the husband followed the plow in the field he found himself wondering whether he or his wife would die first and whether it would be good policy for him to build a new barn out of that insurance money in case he was the survivor. And the wife, as she sat peeling potatoes for supper and opening the oven door now and then to look at the baking bread, found herself wondering what she should do with the farm and all that money in case Jacob met his death. Two or three days later a windmill agent called, and as he incidentally heard of the mutual insurance he laughed and said:

"May be all right in your case, but I should look at it as a temptation to my wife to get rid of me. Husbands have been poisoned for less than \$5,000."

He was speaking in levity, but he sowed a seed. On that same day the wife of a neighbor dropped in for a gossip, and of course she was told about the insurance policy. It struck her at first as a good thing, but two minutes later she held up her hands and exclaimed:

"Mary Fletcher, do you know what you have done? You have prepared your own grave!"

"La, but how you talk!"

"Yes, you have. There isn't a husband on the face of the earth who wouldn't throw his wife down the cellar stairs and break her neck for \$5,000. You won't be alive to see Thanksgiving!"

Here was another seed, and that night for the first time since their marriage the farmer couple felt suspicion and distrust. As they sat together the husband looked the wife over and decided that in case of his death she would surely marry again. She'd have that insurance money, and she'd spend it with liberal hand, and along would come some piano man or sewing machine agent and snap her up as a prize. She might possibly erect a fifteen dollar headstone over his grave, but she would not go a dollar higher, and the clothes he left behind would be given to some neighbor's hired man instead of being preserved and wept over.

Thoughts as hard and bitter passed through the mind of the wife. Jacob had always been kind and loving, but there had never been \$5,000 at stake before. With her out of the way and that money in hand he would repaint the house, get a new team of horses, buy a top buggy and cut a great swell, and she even figured out who he would take for his second wife. They went to bed in an unhappy frame of mind, and two or three times during the night each woke up and wondered about hot lead being poured into husbands' ears and wives being smothered with pillows as they slept.

The next four weeks were wretched ones. Not a meal did the husband sit down to without wondering if the food or drink had been sprinkled or mixed with poison, and hardly an hour passed that the wife was not on her guard against some sudden attack on her life. One day the milk-house door flew to on her and made her a prisoner, and she uttered such screams of fear that the tramp on the highway who heard her did not dare go to her assistance until he had summoned help. At another time she slipped on the cellar stairs, and after much looking about she discovered a peach stone and treas-

ured it up as legal proof of the husband's planning. Love, trust and confidence had flown out of the window, and the neighbors sagely shook their heads and observed that they were prepared to hear of an awful tragedy any day.

One night the husband woke up with a chill of fear. He had dreamed that he saw his wife standing over him with a butcher knife raised to strike. He found her beside him and seemingly fast asleep, but he determined to pass the rest of the night on the hay in the barn. He had scarcely left the house when the wife woke up. She had dreamed of being hacked to pieces with the ax, and her husband's absence seemed to be proof that he had gone out after the weapon. She would baffle him by hiding in the carriage shed until morning. It therefore happened that while he was skirting the duck pond on the right to reach the barn she was skirting it on the left to reach the carriage house, and presently they came together in the darkness.

"Murderer!" she shouted as she turned to see.

"Murderer!" he shouted as he started back.

They both went slipping down the bank, clawing and clutching at each other, and brought up with a great souse in the pond. Wet and bedraggled, they climbed out on opposite sides, and while she spent the remainder of the night shivering under the current bushes and wondering if he would kill her at first blow or chop her up by degrees he sat on the doorstep and made up his mind to appeal to the law without further delay. Morning had come, and the pair had confronted each other when a neighbor who was passing halted at the gate to say:

"Hello, Jake, have you heard the news?"

"No," was the reply.

"Ain't you and Mary insured in the Sure Pay Life Insurance Company?"

"Yes."

"Well, she's busted higher'n a kite, and your policies ain't worth corn-cobs."

"She's busted for sure?" queried Jacob.

"Sure's you live."

"And I ain't insured and Mary ain't insured, and we wouldn't get a durned cent if either died?"

"Not a durned red."

"Then—then, come here, Mary, come and kiss me," said the husband as he opened his arms.

"Pears to me like you might be glad of the bust up," remarked the neighbor.

"Turned if I ain't!" replied Jacob, with tears in his eyes.

"And so'm I!" sobbed the wife as she threw her arms around his neck.

Must Destroy Stamps.

Spokane, April 4.—A Spokane student attached imitation stamps to four letters and sent them through the mails. As a result, every business college in the United States must quit the use of these play stamps, and the factory at Columbus, O., must quit printing them.

Stamps bear the words, "Imitation Postage," but the letters are very small, and the imitation was close enough to carry four letters to their destination.

One went to the dead letter office, and it is supposed came under the eyes of the Washington officials. This resulted in a sharp letter to Postmaster Hartson, ordering the destruction of all the bogus stamps, and declaring that a further offense would mean vigorous prosecution and a term in the federal penitentiary.

The letter was read in the Blair Business College today. The name of the offending student is withheld. The order will be obeyed.

Held for Wife Murder.

Vancouver, B. C., April 4.—John Costello, a Mexican fisherman, who came here from California, is in the city jail on suspicion of being connected with the death of his wife.

The police were notified that a woman was dead in a disreputable district, locally known as Tar Flats. Two policemen were sent to the house, and found the dead body of an Indian woman named Agnes lying on a bunk. In the house at the time, and all more or less intoxicated, were John Costello, Pete Miller, Wade Cunningham and two women—Sally, or Annie, and Lucy Smith.

Costello, whose real name is said to be Castilla, told the officers that the dead woman was his wife. The woman's face was discolored as if she had choked to death, and as Costello was well known to the police, the officers took him with them to the police station. The others were brought up afterwards.

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TO DYNAMITE ESQUIMALT

Scheme of Plotters Was Foiled

Boer Sympathizers Were Leaders in the Proposed Plan to Cripple Britain.

Vancouver, B.C., April 4.—Former Premier Charles A. Semlin today made public the details of the plan of one of the most daring and startling plots against the British government that has been conceived in late years in America. In an interview, the ex-premier told of the frustration of a plan to blow up the navy docks and, if possible, the fortress of Esquimalt. The entire plan was arranged in San Francisco by members of the Clan-na-Gael. Its fortunate discovery by agents of the British consul in the Golden Gate city caused the failure of the scheme, but the arrangements were carried out as far as possible even on British soil, until the British authorities forcibly interfered. Until today the plot and its discovery were kept a secret.

The whole plot occurred at the beginning of last year, when Mr. Semlin was premier, and he was officially interested in all the arrangements made to frustrate the plan. Two men were sent from San Francisco for the purpose of carrying out the blowing up of the docks. Their names, as learned by the British consul at San Francisco, were Dennis McDermott and Albert Renvicker, the former an Irishman and the latter a native of Belgium.

The first intimation received by the British Columbia government was from the governor general, the Earl of Minto. The latter had been advised officially by the British consul at San Francisco. Premier Semlin immediately sent word to Admiral Beaumont, who was at that time in charge of Esquimalt and commandant

of the North Pacific squadron. The two consulted and that evening the commandant issued an order that the guards of the forts and the navy yards should be doubled and only the most trusted men should be detailed for duty.

IN AID OF THE BOERS.

The information communicated by the consul at San Francisco was that a meeting of the Clan-na-Gael had been held at San Francisco, at which means were discussed of how to aid the Boers in their war against Great Britain. When the meeting was called at first, there was no intention to suggest the use of force, but McDermott, who was present, offered to go to Esquimalt and attempt a body blow by dynamiting as much as possible of the forts and the navy docks there. He asked for the naming of a companion to assist him in the deed. A number of inflammatory speeches were made, and it was being decided that they should all draw lots for the honor of sharing in the glory of the fight against England when Renvicker stepped forward and offered himself. The men were plentifully supplied with funds, and started on their journey for the north by a Southern Pacific train from Oakland.

During the time occupied in making the arrangements, the British authorities had been busy. Not only did they guard in every possible way against an unforeseen stroke, but they prepared to systematically watch the two men who were to travel north from San Francisco. So it came about that a detective employed by the British consul accompanied the men from the Golden Gate city to Portland, and there he handed over his interest to two northern detectives, who were well up in the location and environment of all the neighborhood of Victoria and Esquimalt.

The two men came directly through to Seattle, where they spent a couple of days. They made small purchases in the stores, visited many people and gave the detectives a warm time in watching them. While there was no definite assurance of this possible to be gained at the time, it was afterward clearly learned that they made arrangements to secure an amount of high explosives in Seattle and from there would take it to Victoria.

The two dynamiters then took

train to Vancouver and were again followed by the detectives. They stayed here for one day and then proceeded to Victoria, from which city they could operate against Esquimalt, which is only a couple of miles out of town.

TAKEN IN BY A SOLDIER.

In Victoria the two detectives gave up most of their watching to the care of a certain sergeant, whose name Mr. Semlin never heard. This sergeant belonged to one of the infantry regiments stationed at the fort and was an experienced detective. He made the acquaintance of the two sightseers from San Francisco, who went out to the forts to see the big guns, and entirely won their confidence. He also pretended to be imbued with the same feeling of hatred against the British and by and by McDermott had so far converted him that the British sergeant was willing to assist in the blowing up of the forts. McDermott even went so far as to propose that they get rid of Renvicker, leave him to bear the blame, and themselves to double across the straits when the destruction was accomplished. McDermott never suspected that he was being drawn into a net and that his plan was known to the admiralty authorities, and he chafed under the delay that his new-found British friend imposed. Renvicker seems to have got next to the fact that their

scheme was known, for he suddenly disappeared, and the officials were glad to get rid of him.

Then they lost no time in disposing of the Esquimalt career of McDermott. Just what happened to him on a frosty night when he ventured too close to the British sentinels at the dock yard, Mr. Semlin does not pretend to know. But next day the man from San Francisco, who had come north for the purpose of converting the British fortifications into a mass of flying debris, marched meekly between two of his majesty's marines down to the outer wharf. There he was furnished with a second class ticket and enough money to last him to within sight of the Golden Gate.

Mr. Semlin says that this was the last ever heard of the plot. His statement today was the first public mention ever made of it.

The amount of sugar consumed in the civilized world last year was over 6,000,000 tons.

Meat, it is said, can be kept fresh for a week or two by putting it in sour milk or buttermilk and placing it in a cool cellar. It must of course be rinsed well before it is used.

A single brewery in Munich uses 118 railway freight cars of its own besides 28 belonging to the state. Other breweries have 143, 90, 100, 86, etc.

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ALARMING CONDI

Confronts Ca ing to Imm

Many Sickly Europe Reports to be the North

Ottawa, April 4.—A report of things, and immigration into Canada has brought prominent people by American also reveals an app Canadian laws to co practically new to the Robert Waterhorn, a most inspector of the in Canada, has start the statement that the European immi prohibited from ente States from the D American officers st and at other order, are sufferi most infectious

The fact is still is known to army of pay is left to fois in the principal tion in the Domi met the country, an aladies broadcast The two chief dise these rejected immi trauma, a disease eventually causes and favus, a scalp the leprosy in its which causes a los leaves the scalp bathsome scab. R most are highly in are indigenous to age and Asiatic T need mendicants dumped, at the ave a week, upon t this dumping proc ever since last American board was commissioned authorities to ex grants going into through Canadian This was a wise p as the diseased pe were beginning to eluding Ameri ere pouring the the United States Parties of them, reported from U ed sent back to E turned to the stat Montreal, a

The average Ca of the constantly of the diseased at pass there are it United States h competent staff of the several borde that tight the de desirable class of not do so, inspec really useless show. This is that immigration to the United St past four years, in 1907 the figur 1901, 25,000. Si about 500 perso Montreal alone, to to enter the consequently rem there is the sit by the American understood. made the subject investigation, an adopted and enl a great a mena will being of 'C American inspec sent work for legislation along now in vogue i will probably fo which will bar dangerous class What Canada out of the right authorities are e tedly active and which is the mother cou States. In Gre agencies have, with the dis amount of desc personally con the indu Canada, this a much over 4,00 The season has rather than u