

The Arncliffe Puzzle

By GORDON HOLMES, Author "A Mysterious Disappearance."

"Sure," answered Bradshaw cheerfully. "That's part of the game. And if you'll believe me, Miss Holt, I have a list of the widows and orphans I have despoiled brought up to me every morning before breakfast. It amuses me, and keeps me from becoming dyspeptic, like other masters of the art."

He said this so solemnly that Edith, a little bewildered by the events of the past quarter of an hour, looked at him doubtfully. Then she saw light. "But you would not take any of Lord Arncliffe's money," she cried triumphantly.

"Why, no, I don't value any money unless I earn it. And to tell you the truth, I have rather more than I know what to do with, anyway. If you like, I will give a free library to Arncliffe."

Oh," he added, "if Dr. Lester intends to practice here I might endow a cemetery."

"You are a horrid man," cried Edith with mock modesty, "and I am glad Reggie won't be under your influence any longer."

"Why," exclaimed young Holt, "you are not going to get rid of me, Mr. Bradshaw?"

"It is not that," interrupted Edith. "Of course, you cannot remain a clerk under present circumstances. If you would like to go into the army—"

"The army?" cried Reggie, with an emphatic sniff, for he had imbibed much of the American spirit in a short period. "I mean to work, and I am going back to New York just as soon as you are comfortably fixed."

And later Edith realized that her brother was right. Only in strenuous endeavor lay redemption of the past and salvation for the future.

Mr. and Mrs. Alving were sitting in a window recessed in the entrance hall listening to the seemingly artless prattle of Miss Harland, when Edith and the rest came in. Lester and Phyllis had just returned, and indeed, he was unaware of her presence at the hall—and hence he naturally regarded the dainty little beauty with some curiosity.

Phyllis was also interested in the man who had been her bosom friend so many heartburnings.

"Just as I said," she commented to herself. "A nasty square jaw and a mouth like a rat-trap. I should like to punish him."

Phyllis had only one way of punishing a man. To Bradshaw's untimely indignation, she left her hand in Lester's for a full ten seconds, gazing up at him the while with big trusting eyes that had in them a suspicion of naive admiration. Men are only human, and Lester regarded this welcome as a natural tribute to his manly excellence.

Meanwhile Edith lost no detail of the pretty little scene. Perhaps the ultimate results of Miss Harland's flirtatious habits might have been disastrous but for the intervention of a lucky chance. After giving Lester a full discharge from her own battery of Phyllis averted her eyes in shy confusion, as was her usual custom, and the first person they fell upon was Bradshaw.

Good gracious! His jaw was square, too, and if Lester's mouth was like a rat-trap it seemed to her terrified imagination that here was a trap equal to holding a lion. William Lincoln Bradshaw was madly in love. In days to come he would, if his fortunes changed, toll unceasingly in the inferno of New York's climate for the dollars his wife would fritter away in Paris or Monte Carlo. But he would stand no nonsense, now or then.

Thus it was that a word, which they stood a little apart from the rest, he spoke to her. No word of love passed between them, but there was no need for explanations. "Say," he said quietly, "I won't have it."

Phyllis had a tear which she had managed to keep unshed through many desperate encounters, and now she summoned it up. But the granite mouth remained unmoved. That tear had never failed Phyllis yet, and she began to feel frigidly expectant.

"I did not mean anything," she faltered, not even attempting to deny the unspoken charge. And, lo, the tear fell, a pearl of price, splashing itself into diamonds of light on the cheek of two thousand pounds in stock, and as quickly as a jeweler could be summoned from London.

So it was evident that in their new-found happiness Edith and Lester had, like their friends, forgotten the shadow of tragedy which still draped Arncliffe Hall in sombre hues.

CHAPTER XXII.

One person, however, had not forgotten it. At the farther end of the spacious entrance hall Detective Hobson was watching the drive expectantly.

It was no part of his plan that Warren should meet Leigh and thus learn of Lester's rescue. So he sent Wilson to find the agent, with a message that Mrs. Warren wished to see him immediately. Hobson caught the sound of distant wheels and his face brightened. Then, at length, a dog-cart came into view, driven in Warren's usual furious style. That was enough for the detective. He walked up to Lester and Bradshaw, drawing them aside for a moment, and then he led them onward and out on to the drive.

He halted Warren, who pulled up his steaming horse.

"Oh, Mr. Warren," said the detective gently, "your mother has been asking for you everywhere. I saw her inside there a moment ago."

Warren beckoned to a gardener's boy. "Here, take the cart to the stables," he said, striding toward the door, which the detective had purposefully left open.

Hobson followed close at his heels. Shutting the door before the waiting footman could intervene, he touched his quarry smartly on the shoulder. "I want you, Warren," he said, with an ominous change in the tone and manner of his address.

Warren turned and put up his hands.

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With the sheer instinct of self-defense. It was what Hobson wanted. The young agent, scarcely yet realizing the dreaded truth, found himself securely handcuffed after a brief struggle.

The two girls started apart, each clinging instinctively to the man of her heart. It was Hobson's great moment, and he made the most of it.

"Harry Warren," he said in a loud, clear voice, "I arrest you for the murder of Lord Arncliffe and the attempted murder of Thomas Alving. I warn you that anything you may say will be taken down in writing and used in evidence against you."

For a moment Warren became blind with terror, but that and all other emotions gave place to the sense of shame at standing there manacled before women—before Edith, whom, in his way, he loved. And so he hung his head and stood silent, until a strangled sob made him look up. It came from Edith, who had caught sight of Mrs. Warren standing like a statue at the foot of the staircase.

The old housekeeper was so ghost-white that the very sight of her brought a tightening of the heart. Warren laughed hysterically when he saw his mother, and he turned to Hobson with an air of bravado.

"All right," he said gruffly. "I confess the whole business. I poisoned Lord Arncliffe, and I attacked Mr. Alving to obtain possession of the books which showed my defalcations. Sorry, Mr. Alving, but I need must when the devil drives—you know. Now, is that sufficient, or am I to be kept here any longer to amuse the company and torture a poor old woman?"

"Yes," broke in Lester, always generous. "This is infamous, Hobson. You might very well have arrested Mr. Warren privately. In fact, I understood—"

"You will please allow me to carry out my business in my own way, Dr. Lester," said the police officer, with a certain stern dignity. "I represent the crown now, and I will not allow you or anybody else to interfere with me in the execution of my duties."

While this unexpected altercation was taking place, Mrs. Warren came forward slowly, with the firm step and impassive face of a woman born to command.

"It is all over, mother," muttered Warren, hurriedly. "I have confessed to the murder of Lord Arncliffe and everything else, so the less said the better."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Harry," she answered, a gleam of the wonderful mother-love coming for a fleeting instant into her calm eyes. "You were always a loving son, whatever else you have been. But this farce must stop before it becomes a tragedy."

"Not another word, mother!" growled Warren almost brutally. "Don't listen to her," he shouted in a frenzy, raising his manacled hands in entreaty. He almost flung himself on Hobson. "Take me away, do you. Why are you keeping me here?" he bellowed again.

Mrs. Warren silenced him with a pitiful gesture.

"No, my boy," she murmured. "At best, I could look forward to only a few more years, while you, even if they imprison you, may yet enjoy something of life. Gentlemen, it was I who poisoned Lord Arncliffe."

Mrs. Alving and the two girls looked at the stately housekeeper with wondering horror, but the old solicitor, learned in the ways of the world, shook his head.

"What a miraculous thing is that maternal love, which leads from the cradle to the grave!" he whispered to Lester. "But it will not save her son, poor woman."

Hobson, however, seemed to be of a different opinion. "I quite believe you, madam," he said. "But do you understand the consequences of such a confession?"

"Perfectly," replied Mrs. Warren, quietly. "I make the statement of my own free will, and am prepared to give proofs of it. There," she said, laying a bundle of letters on the table, "are papers which will bear out, and here is the bottle which contained the poison I administered to Lord Arncliffe, together with a description, in his lordship's own handwriting, of the nature and action of the poison. He had forgotten it, or he would surely have mentioned it in the codicil to his will."

She handed Hobson a quaint old Venetian flask as she spoke. It was iridescent with age, and as the rainbow gleams caught Bradshaw's eye, the American started forward.

"Why," he cried, "that was the thing I saw in the tree!"

"So it was you," said Mrs. Warren, curiously unemotional. "I rather suspected it. I ought to have killed you."

Harry Warren had broken down now. He was sobbing like an overgrown child, but his grief was so plainly in his mother's behalf that none could feel anything except pity for him. Mrs. Warren glanced at her son, but she obviously nerved herself to continue.

"Let us reach the end," she cried, imperiously. "I killed Lord Arncliffe because I was afraid he would discover my son's defalcations, and I knew that from him no mercy was to be expected. Most people have regarded Lord Arncliffe as the famous philanthropist, the benefactor of his species. To me he was an unrelenting and inveterate enemy."

She paused, and seemed to sway a little, but she waved aside the chair which Lester offered her.

"Forty years ago," she went on, "William Bradshaw and I were engaged to be married. Then I met Harry Warren, and although Mr. Bradshaw was even then wealthy, I married him for poverty and married the man I loved. I never regretted it, and my discarded lover never forgave me. When my husband died, fifteen years after our marriage, I was left destitute, with a baby three years old dependent upon me. It was then that Lord Arncliffe asked me to come and see him. As he was an invalid at the time, I thought, and her features yielded to bitter memory for old proposal. For my son's sake, I was prepared to accept it, but I soon learned that he merely required a house-

keeper—someone to look after his servants and see that his table was kept creditably.

"I was glad! A competence was forthcoming, and I had my son at my side. And I was free to live with the undimmed memory of my dear husband. Then Lord Arncliffe began a system of petty persecution. He always treated me with the most scrupulous respect, but he never lost an opportunity of pointing out how different my position might have been. I endured it for my child's sake, and I cultivated a calm indifference which has made me more like a sphinx than a living woman. His hatred was unrelenting. I nearly killed him once before. My husband, God help him, was given to drink. It was his only failing, and I found Lord Arncliffe—Lord Arncliffe, the advocate of temperance—giving wine to my boy of ten!"

"But tell me, Mrs. Warren," interposed Lester, who, like the others, was watching her narrowly, and whose professional instinct was aroused, "what was the poison you gave Lord Arncliffe?"

"I found it in a secret drawer, there," said she, feebly indicating a Florentine cabinet at the head of the stairs. "The secret drawer had warped a little, and when I opened it I found an old bottle and some directions, written by Lord Arncliffe himself, many years earlier. It is said that five drops a day will kill a man in a month, ten drops a day in a fortnight; twenty in a week, and so on. I had a special reason for hastening the end, so I gave Lord Arncliffe five drops daily, and he died exactly in the month. I think he guessed the truth—I hope he did!"

Lester picked up Lord Arncliffe's paper. "Acqua Tofano," he read aloud. "Manna of St. Nicholas! Good heavens! To think that it duped me and Matheson! Is there any left, Mrs. Warren?" he demanded with a fresh anxiety which communicated a thrill to the listeners.

"No," was the answer, given faintly, and with something of a ghastly smile. "I took all that remained an hour ago, when I knew that you had escaped from Leigh and my son. And I think," she confessed with a little gasp, "I have only about five minutes of life left."

(To Be Continued.)

STOPS IN SERMON TO RESTORE CHILD

Bishop Finds Theme in a Lost Girl at an Illinois Camp Meeting.

Chicago, July 31.—Bishop William A. Quayle, spying a little flaxen haired girl with tear filled eyes standing in the aisle, paused in his sermon at the Methodist camp meeting at Desplains with the query: "What's your name, dearie?"

"Crystal," she answered with a sob. "Where do you live?"

"In Woodlawn."

"What's the trouble?"

"I—I can't find my mama."

Stooping, he lifted the child in his arms, and holding her before the assemblage, asked whether the mother was present. She was, and claimed the child.

Continuing, he said: "A child lost. There are thousands of boys and girls in Chicago who are lost. Let us try to save them, and for several minutes the incident furnished him with a theme."

The anticipations of a record-breaking attendance were justified. D. W. Potter, president of the Desplains Campmeeting Association, authorized the statement that there were 10,000 people on the grounds. Five special trains were run to the grounds from Chicago on the Chicago and Northwestern railroad and many came in automobiles and carriages. Many were present from other Illinois cities and towns outside of Chicago, and the country surrounding Desplains furnished its quota.

The atmosphere was humid, the sun was hot, and the mass of people who filled the auditorium and the space within hearing distance beyond the windows perspired freely.

The Rev. Dr. W. T. Threlk, district superintendent of the Chicago district, was in charge. "It is the privilege of the gentlemen to remove their hats," he declared. Both hats were taken, and coats and hats went off. The people evidently were happy, and were determined to make the most of their opportunities and to treat lightly their inconveniences.

Rain commenced to fall at 11:30 o'clock and continued for an hour, making it difficult for Bishop Quayle to be heard and the "Glory" song was started. When the rain subsided the meeting was continued. The bishop had concluded his sermon before the song was announced and the subsequent speaking was in the nature of an exhortation to the unconverted to begin the Christian life.

The rain drove everybody on the camp ground to cover. They sought shelter in the hotel and in the two tents which are used for the children's and young people's meetings. Plentiful dinners under the trees had to be postponed to later in the day. To relieve the temporary distress the authorities announced that the people might remain in the auditorium and eat their lunches. A great number of them were turned into an old-fashioned church social.

DUG UP 60 BOMBS.

El Paso, Texas, July 31.—Deputy United States Marshal Hillebrand today located 60 bombs three miles north-east of El Paso where it is believed Mexican revolutionists had hidden them. A secret service officer from San Antonio traced the bombs from Ysleta, below El Paso, to the place where they were found today.

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SPIES TO USE WAR BALLOONS

Sky-Scouting May Become a Feature of Modern Warfare.

New York, July 31.—Scouting from the sky, photographing the camps and defenses of the enemy from balloons, and sending information by wireless to headquarters, is one of the possibilities of warfare of the future which is being considered by the United States Signal Corps for the department of the east.

Interest in aerial manoeuvres in war will be accentuated in the tests to be held by the war department at Fort Myer in August.

While he does not believe that the flying machine has yet shown itself to be entitled to consideration, Col. Scriven said he believes that experiments made in Europe, with the dirigible balloon, as well as with lesser ones in this country, show that these ships of the air will be valuable in collecting information about the enemy which heretofore has been impossible.

In discussing these possibilities Col. Scriven said he is of the opinion that balloon scouts may be enabled to get an almost complete photographic picture showing fortifications and the distribution of forces by means of the telephoto, a new instrument with which, by the use of an extra lens, it is possible to focus on objects at a distance of perhaps a mile, and secure such detail as will make the picture seem as if it had been taken at a few hundred feet.

Col. Scriven explained that the camera could be placed in the bottom of the balloon and operated by clock-work.

He stated that there would be some danger of a balloon being hit by projectiles while engaged in such scout work. It has been demonstrated in Europe, he said, that a balloon at a height of one mile can be destroyed by gunfire, and a mile is about the limit of ascent. At the same time the wrecking of a balloon at such a height would require the greatest skill, as there would be no perspective to help in taking aim.

The balloon in warfare, said the officer, might also be used to tow explosives through the air and drop them into the enemy's strongholds. He said that such war ballooning as he foresaw might necessitate changes in the construction of our seacoast defenses.

SAVED FROM DROWNING

Three Point Edward Visitors Rescued by Lighthouse-keeper.

Port Huron, July 31.—Charles Gorman, of Alliance, Ohio, and two young women, Miss Alice Newing, of Ridgetown, Ont., and a companion whose name could not be learned, who are staying at Point Edward, Ont., capsized in a small skiff nearly a mile from shore in Lake Huron yesterday afternoon.

The trio were rescued by George Perry, one of the lighthouse keepers, who put out to their rescue in a small launch.

One of the girls attempted to obtain a glass of water from the lake, and in so doing capsized the boat.

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