

A Husband by Proxy

By JACK STEELE
(Copyright, 1909, by Desmond Fitzgerald, Inc.)

CHAPTER V.—(Continued)

The "shadow" was a quarter of ten. Garrison entered his room, unlocked the door, and stepped into the hallway. He saw a shadow in the doorway, and he started. He called out, "Who's there?" and the shadow disappeared. He went back into his room, unlocked the door, and stepped into the hallway again. He saw the shadow again, and he started. He called out, "Who's there?" and the shadow disappeared. He went back into his room, unlocked the door, and stepped into the hallway again. He saw the shadow again, and he started. He called out, "Who's there?" and the shadow disappeared.

Garrison opened his suitcase on the bureau, removed one or two articles, and left the receptacle open, with the cover propped against the mirror. Despite the lateness of the hour he went out, to roam about the village. His fellow traveler watched only to see him out of the house, and then returned to his room.

In the town there was little to be seen. The houses extended far back from the railroad, on considerably elevated hills. There was a deserted street, and the dwellings were dark. No one seemed stirring in the place, though midnight had not yet struck.

Garrison was out for half an hour. When he returned his suitcase was closed. He thought of the matter so trifling till he looked inside, and then he underwent a feeling as if it had been rifled. But nothing was gone, so far as he could see. Then he noticed the folding pocket, for its fastening cord was undone. How well he remembered placing there the letter from Ailsa, months ago! A little surprised that he had so utterly forgotten its existence, he slipped his hand inside the place—and found it empty!

Even then he entertained no suspicions, for a moment. The letter, like the photograph, was no longer a valued possession. Yet he wondered where it could have gone. Vaguely uncertain, after all, as to whether he had left it here or not, his eye was suddenly caught by the slightest movement in the bureau. The movement was up at the transom, above a door that led to the next adjoining room.

Instantly turning away, to allay any possible suspicion that he might be aware of the fact that someone was spying upon him, Garrison moved the suitcase to a chair, drew from his pocket a folded paper that might have appeared important—although merely a railroad ticket—and, leaving the suitcase open as before, took a turn around the room.

All this business was merely for the benefit of the man whom he knew was watching from over the door. Starting with the suitcase, he proceeded to examine the various articles of apparel, and, leaving the suitcase open as before, took a turn around the room.

CHAPTER VI.

The Coroner

Not in the least reassured, but considerably aroused in all his instincts by these further developments of a night already full of mysterious transactions, Garrison, after a futile watch for his neighbor, once more plunged into a study of the case in which he found himself involved.

Vaguely he remembered to have noticed that the man who had come here to Branchville with him on the train carried no baggage. He had no doubt the man had been close upon his trail, and what he wanted, could not be so readily determined. Certain the man had extracted Ailsa's letter from the pocket of the case, yet half convinced that the thief had searched for the necklace entrusted to his care, Garrison was puzzled.

"Did you take possession of any property that deceased might have had at his room in Hickwood?"

"Sure," said Pike. "Half a dozen collars, and some socks, a few old letters, and a box almost full of cigars."

"If these things are here in your office," said Garrison, rising, "I should like to look them over."

"You bet, I can put my hand on anything in my business in a minute," boasted Mr. Pike. He rose and crossed the room to a desk where a large, deep drawer stood open with a key.

The dead man's possessions were, indeed. The three cigars which his pocket had disgorged were lying near a little pile of money. Garrison noted at once that the labels on the broken counterparts of the cigars were the same as those of the cigars in the box beneath his hand. The cigars inside were all precisely like the others. Five only had ever been removed, of which four were accounted for already. The other had doubtless been smoked.

On the even row of dark-woven smokes lay a card, on which, written in pencil, were the words:

A Birthday Greeting—With Love

Garrison let fall the lid and glanced with fading interest at the few insignificant papers and other trifles which the drawer contained. He had practically made up his mind that John Hardy had died, as the coroner had found, of heart disease, or apoplexy, even in the act of lighting up a smoke. He questioned the man further, made up his mind to visit Charles Scott and Mrs. Wilson, in Hickwood, and was presently out upon the road.

CHAPTER VII.

A Startling Discovery

Garrison walked along the road to Hickwood out of state, the better to think. Unfortunately for the case in hand, however, his thoughts wandered, and he slipped back to New York and the mystery about the girl masquerading to his father. His mind was so full of these things, that he thought of Dorcas, despite the half-formed suspicions which had crossed his mind at least a dozen times.

Her jewels were still in his pocket—a burden she had apparently found too heavy to carry. How he wished he might bring her confidence in him freely and unreservedly with the thrill it could bring to his heart!

The distance to Hickwood seemed to slip away beneath his feet. He arrived in the hamlet far too soon for the day, and business seemed wholly out of place.

The railway station, a store, an apothecary's shop, and a cobbler's little den seemed to comprise the entire commercial street.

Garrison inquired his way to the home of his man—the inventor.

Scott, whom he found at a workshop, the back of his hand, was a thin, stooped figure, gray as a wolf, wrinkled as a pine, and stunted about the mouth by a frown. His eyes, beneath their overhanging brows of gray, were singularly sharp and brilliant. Garrison made up his mind that the blaze in their depths was none other than the light of fanaticism.

"How do you do, Mr. Scott?" said the detective, who had determined to pose as an upper-air enthusiast. "I was stopping in Branchville for a day or two, and heard of your interest in aeroplanes, and dirigible balloons so long ago that I thought I'd give myself the pleasure of a call."

"Um!" said Scott, closing the door of his shop behind him, as if to guard a precious secret. "What did you say?"

"Your friend informed me duly."

"I haven't yet made myself famous as a navigator of the air, but we all have our hopes."

"You'll never be able to steer a balloon," said Scott, with a touch of asperity.

"I begin to believe you're right," asserted Garrison artfully. "It's a mighty discouraging and expensive business, any way you try it."

"I'll do the trick!" I've got it all worked out," said Scott, betrayed into the triumph that he felt to be approaching. "I'll have plenty of money to complete it soon—plenty—plenty—but it's a long time coming, even now."

Garrison. "Some of us never enjoy such good fortune."

"The world don't know how great I am," declared the inventor, instantly off, on just the minute that insurance company gives me the money, I'll be ready to startle the skies! I'll blot out the stars for 'em! I'll show New York! I know what I'm doing! And nothing on earth is going to stop me! All these fool balloonists, with their big silk floating cigars! Deadly cigars is what they are—deadly! You wait!

Garrison was staring at him fixedly, fascinated by a new idea which had crept upon his mind, with startling abruptness. His one wish was to get away for a vital two minutes by himself.

"Well, perhaps I'll try to get 'round again," he said. "I can see you're very busy, and I mustn't keep you long away from your work. Good luck and good day."

(To be Continued)

GREATEST WOMAN IN ALL THE WORLD—MME. CURIE

A MIDDLE-AGED woman, fairly tall, and with a pale face, she had regular, straight, and of the slightly harsh-looking, suggesting privation. Her forehead remarkably high and crowned with waves of golden hair. Her eyes alight with enthusiasm.

Such is Mme. Curie, whom her admirers call "the greatest woman in the world" and who, in conjunction with another French scientist has made such wonderful discoveries regarding the element polonium, which is 5,000 rarer than radium. Of course, it was Marie Curie who, with her husband, discovered radium.

She is one of those very rare women with a passion for science. Most women lack the nicety of observation, the attention to minute detail, the patience, and the physical strength, required for laboratory work. Her love of research is an inheritance.

Her nursery was a laboratory. Forty years ago (Mme. Curie is now in her forty-fifth year) she gave up her dolls to play with retorts, crucibles, and test tubes in the scientific workshop of her father, M. Sklodowski, professor of physics at a college in Warsaw. Like most professors, he contrived to spend a considerable portion of his income on scientific experiments.

Her little daughter, as soon as she could toddle, spent her playtime with him. When she was a little older she constituted herself his "washer," cleaning the instruments and apparatus after he had done with it. Quickly she would don an old apron and wash and dry dishes, beakers, mortars, burners, pipettes. These were her toys, and she handled them reverently.

When she grew older she began to learn the various places in the laboratory of every instrument and every bottle, and something of their meaning.

Poverty is usually recognized as pinching a woman harder than a man. It needed all the girl scientist's pluck and enthusiasm to sustain her during the early student days in Paris. The pale-faced, high-browed girl who was afterwards to divide with her husband and M. Becquerel the Nobel Science award of \$20,000 and who was destined to be the first woman to be appointed chair at the Paris Sorbonne, was so poor when she first arrived in the city that she had to go to study at a municipal working class technical school. It was in the laboratory here that her wonderful capabilities attracted the attention of Professor Curie, whom she subsequently married.

Mme. Curie lives frugally in a quiet house in Paris, screened from the outer world by a high wall. When she is not in her laboratory or indulging in her favorite recreation, cycling, she is to be found teaching her little daughter, to whom she is passionately attached. For the mother is never lost sight of in the scientist. She is as devoted to her home as though she had never heard of pitch-blende.

Other women who might be invited to envy her are disarmed by her modesty. When an admirer belabors her with compliments upon her achievements she smiles almost in astonishment and shrugs her shoulders as though she had done little to make a fuss about.

When, upon the death of her husband, she was appointed to a chair, at the Sorbonne, the great seat of learning in Paris, it was decided by several women to present her with a testimonial. The occasion demanded it (so it was thought), for was not Mme. Curie the first woman who had ever achieved such an honor?

The scientist's reply, however, spoilt everything. She said quietly: "It would be contrary to my husband's ideas and certainly to my own." So her feminine admirers departed without leaving their testimonial behind.

Yet, despite her modesty, it is known that she was more than a mere assistant to her husband. It is, indeed, claimed that she herself was the originator of the radium discoveries. The best testimonial to her ability came from Professor Curie himself when he was offered the decoration of the Cross of the Legion of Honor and refused it because the same decoration was not offered to his wife.

She shares with most savants that faculty of abstraction that is so valuable to those engaged in scientific work. When she is employed upon a difficult piece of research she hears nothing, sees nothing, and is unmoved by anything that is not directly concerned with her investigations. It is said that when a servant ran into the laboratory screaming loudly, "Madame, madame, I have swallowed a pin!"

"There, there, don't cry," said Mme. Curie soothingly. "Here is another that you may have."

Mme. Curie has a sister who is a notable doctor of medicine in Austria, and as an instance of heredity it may be stated that the famous scientist believes that her little daughter shows promise of even more brilliant scientific powers than herself. She is training the child in the intention of developing these talents to the utmost.

LIVING EXPENSES OF OTHER DAYS

WE hear much of the increased cost of living in these days as against the more fortunate ones of the eighties and nineties, but it would have rendered even our more lucky brethren

of twenty and thirty years ago envious to read of the cost of living in England several hundred years previously.

For instance, consider the time of the Plantagenets. The man with the equivalent of twenty-five cents might maintain his family well for the period of a week. With that amount of money he could satisfy the butcher, the baker, and the grocer.

Seven hundred years ago one might buy in England the finest of fat sheep for twenty-four cents, a purchase enabling him to give a feast on a penny's worth of mutton. A cow was more expensive, but even at that one might be able for one dollar and a half, while for a nice fat porker the Englishman at that period need relinquish only eighty cents. In the fourteenth century a pair of chickens could be bought for two cents, and five cents was a fair price for a good goose. New-laid eggs fetched about one and a half pence in those days; and for three cents the brewer was obliged by law to sell three gallons of beer, containing some forty-eight glasses.

The price of wheat sometimes fell to forty cents "a quarter," but in harder times it would bring four and five dollars. Nevertheless, at the latter figures a good many pounds of bread could be got for one cent.

Even in Elizabeth's time prices were very low. A household book of 1589 gives these typical prices: Beef, two and one-half cents a pound; neck of mutton, twelve cents; twenty-eight pounds of veal and a shoulder of mutton, fifty-six cents; cheese, four cents a pound; wheat, three dollars and eighty-four cents a quarter ton.

In England's good old days pasture and arable land were sold at ridiculous prices—two cents an acre for the former and twelve cents an acre for the latter being deemed a fair annual rental. Draught horses were plentiful at seventy-two cents each, and oxen brought about a dollar and twenty cents apiece. House rents were so absurdly small that it is reported that a fair wage for a London maid was four dollars and eighty cents a year to her landlord.

When, six centuries ago, a father sent his son to an English university, four shillings a day was considered a comfortable allowance, with a margin for such luxuries as wine at eight or twelve cents a gallon.

Labor was pretty cheap, however, and even the salaries paid distinguished men seem ridiculous to modern notions. Three cents a day was a fair wage for a laborer, and at the highest sum paid. Twenty dollars was held to be no mean salary in those days. That was the sum paid to the assistant clerk of Parliament and more than the average priest received.

THE JARR FAMILY

Mr. Jarr's Crony Starts a Crusade Against the Pernicious Cigarette

(By Roy L. McCordell)

WHAT you come in my liquor store smoking the things for?" asked Mr. Slavinsky, the glazier down the street.

And he indicated what he meant by "them things" by reaching over his bar and taking Mr. Slavinsky's cigarette from him and throwing it on the floor.

"What is it you would want?" asked Mr. Slavinsky. "Is it that I should smoke a pipe?"

"No, I don't want it as you should smoke a pipe," said Gus. "Why can't you smoke a good five-cent cigar?"

"Because there aren't any," said Mr. Jarr, who came in just in time to hear Gus' query.

"Such a man as he is!" Mr. Slavinsky, half admiringly, "He takes my cigarette, what my boy Shidney gets me, and he throws it away."

"Why, Gus, have you become a crusader against the cigarette, like Carrie Nation?" asked Mr. Jarr.

"No, I ain't anything what is like Carrie Nation, said Gus. "I ain't got any use for her, she is as big as crank and my uncle, what keeps what a beer garden. He has a sign up what says: 'Welcome All Nations but Carrie Nation.'"

"What's your kick against cigarettes, then?" asked Mr. Jarr.

"No, I ain't no use for them," said Gus. "I don't even keep them to sell because there ain't no profit in them. And so when I see a customer of mine smoking them I know he has been spending money some place else—which he ain't got any right to do. Besides, he ain't afraid Slavinsky's cigar, which his whiskers and it makes me worried."

"Well, it used to be that to smoke a cigarette was a sign of being a dude and you'd get hooted at for smoking the things," said Mr. Jarr. "But now the dudes are smoking pipes."

"Should I be a dude and smoke a pipe?" asked Mr. Slavinsky, who was of a friendly disposition and desired to please.

"No," said Gus, "and you can't be a tough guy, Levi, to smoke cigarettes in my place. I got good five-cent cigars if anybody wants to smoke. Anyway, I never seen them cigarettes smoked senseless, except by my brother Meyer what plays the 'banjo and piccolo. Meyer he found he hadn't time to smoke a meerschaum pipe when it wasn't on his orchestra at Terrace Garden, and one cigarette hadn't enough—hadn't enough, you know."

"Nonsense!" suggested Mr. Jarr.

"Yes, that's it," replied Gus quickly. "My brother Meyer found that one cigarette hadn't enough of what he needed, and so he used to take his piccolo. I think it's got eight holes in it and fill the holes full of cigarettes and so smoke a whole lot at once. Well, but you fellows going to buy anything?"

"We were so interested in the account of the ingenuity of your brother Meyer that we forgot the calls of commerce," said Mr. Jarr.

"Gus, he's got a fine family," said Mr. Slavinsky, begging Gus' last question and so "putting it up" to Mr. Jarr.

"Sure I got fine people!" said Gus, falling into the trap. "But my people ain't so good as my wife Lena's people!" he added, tossing his head.

"My Lena's people, ah! They are all hockeborn. Why, say, so stuck up they are," he added, proudly. "They are mad at her yet for marrying me. And she's mad at me for the same thing."

"So?" asked Mr. Slavinsky, who was derisive.

"It's just as I tell you," Gus went

on, swelling with family pride by marriage. "Why, my Lena's people, they think their feet on me!"

And Gus leaned back with an important air, as if to say: "There, that's the kind of connections I have!"

"I wish some of my wife's people wouldn't speak to me," said Mr. Jarr, musingly. "My wife's mother, for instance."

"You didn't marry in a fine family like I did," said Gus, condescendingly, "that's why."

"Give us a drink," said Mr. Jarr. "I'd take a little of the old stuff, but it's too dear."

"It can't cost no more than it's worth," said Gus.

"Here's good fishing!" said Mr. Jarr, as Gus drew a glass of beer for the trio.

"Do you fish?" asked Gus. "I never knewed it."

"Oh, I fish for recreation now and then," said Mr. Jarr.

"I never caught any of them recreations," said Gus, "but soon the founders will be running."

"The last time I go fishing," said Mr. Slavinsky, "a man gets drowned."

"How so?" asked Gus.

"He falls out the boat and hollers: 'I can't swim! I can't swim!' And I said: 'I can't eeder, but I don't brag about it!'"

"Sure," said Gus, "that's what I'd a told him."

THE PEWTEER DISEASE

A RECENT report from Berlin to the effect that a single pewter vessel, the "Bumper of Breslau," brought over eight thousand dollars at the sale of the famous Lanna collection very strikingly demonstrates the favor which antique and highly ornate objects of this material have regained with collectors and connoisseurs.

The collecting of old pewter is, however, attended with a certain risk, for it is a strange, although little-known fact, that this metal is subject to an affection of disease which in German is very appropriately designated zinnpest (tin plague).

It is a well-known fact that some metals are subject to phenomena which resemble in their effects the diseases that attack living organisms, cause them to decompose or decay. Especially is this the case with pewter, whether as a result of chemical changes consequent on its composition or not is not known. We do know, however, that if exposed to a low temperature under the influence of a transformation under the influence of which it is ultimately reduced to powder. As long as the temperature does not go below sixty-eight degrees, Fahrenheit, there is no danger. Even at sixty-five degrees, Fahrenheit, the effects are barely noticeable; but to temperatures lower than this the metal is decidedly susceptible. This is the reason why so small a number of specimens remain to us from the period when tin or pewter was extensively used. Exposed to the vicissitudes of changing temperatures, they have gone to pieces. Even a cold museum will work their destruction.

Collectors of old pewter who will carefully look over their specimens are likely to note the appearance of dull, grayish-looking spots, almost non-metallic, and of a crumbling dust-like character. This is the first symptom, and means that the process of disintegration has commenced and accounts for the more or less dilapidated condition that occurs in choice specimens of work in this metal, such as pewter medals, etc. To the same destructive influence the same speedy corrosion of tin roofs may be ascribed. Where choice specimens of pewter-work, such for instance, as the highly prized antique pieces by Briot or Enderlein, dating from the Renaissance period and superbly decorated in relief, are concerned, this would be a dire misfortune, and the affection should be promptly dealt with as soon as its occurrence is noted. The most efficacious treatment, though useful only in the earliest stage, is found to be boiling for a period of time in pure water, and subsequent rubbing with a damp, soft cloth dipped in whitening. Moreover, as the disease appears to be contagious in character, the careful examination of all specimens from time to time and removal of any that show signs of infection is a wise precaution for owners to take.

Tin is a peculiar metal, and it is not surprising that its alloys should do strange things. It is so extremely ductile that it can be rolled, pressed, or beaten into thin sheets, as well as into the shape of tin foil or the manufacture of the tubes in which paint, cosmetics, etc. are put up, which are pressed at a single stroke of a powerful press from a button-like blank. The metal flows into the narrow spaces and interstices of the mould almost as though it were a liquid, which is all the more remarkable when its decidedly crystalline character is considered. When a piece of metallic tin is bent the crystals strike against one another with a peculiar and characteristic creaking sound. Tin is also insoluble, but if it or its alloys is really heated it imparts a peculiar odor to the hand. One of the most valuable characteristics of tin is its resistance to the effects of oxidation. It can be exposed to the air for a long time without showing any of the effects of oxidation, whereas its alloys—bronze for instance—soon accumulate a patina by absorption of oxygen. A remarkable feature of the process of decomposition in pewter is that the product is not an oxide or other combination of tin with foreign elements, but pure metallic tin, only in place of being crystalline it is amorphous.

PLANT SOCIETIES

THE science of botany has been greatly advanced by the development of what may be called the sociology of plants—that is, the study of their relations to one another as well as their adjustments to surroundings. Botanists recognize that plants are not scattered haphazard over the globe, but are organized into definite communities. A pond has its plant society, all the members of which fall into their proper places. A swamp forest consists of trees possessing a certain social relationship and differing from those that form a scattered social organization of plants to another. A little pond may give place to a swamp moor, this to a society of swamp shrubs, and this again to a swamp forest of tamarack, pine, and hemlocks. So societies of plants on dry land succeed one another as the conditions change.