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Holdenhurst Hall



WALTER BLOOMFIELD

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CHAPTER IV.

In this unprofitable occupation I wasted I know not how long, until, doubting whether I should be awake in time to keep the promise I had made to conduct my aunt Gertrude over our old house—no brief task, for it contained thirty or more rooms and was a maze to the uninitiated—I hurried to bed, and was soon in the torments of the most chaotic dream which has ever disturbed my brain. I beheld gorgeous barbaric palaces set in delightful climes; processions of men, magnificently apparelled, of which the principal figures displayed an amazing profusion of jewels; vast heaps of gold coins of strange mintage; quaint jars filled with precious stones which gleamed and sparkled; and dimly lighted vaults in which fierce men, bearded and turbaned, were inflicting horrible indignities on defenceless women, strangling some with bows and beheading others with scimitars. These scenes were presented to my mind as in a phantasmagoria, the last appearing so intensely real in its horror that I shrieked at beholding it, and rushing at a hideous old Turk, who was firmly grasping the hair of a kneeling girl while he swung his scimitar around the better to strike her neck, I awoke, bathed in perspiration, and was spared the agonizing encounter.

The church clock struck four, and the glow in the Eastern sky was as yet but feeble. I was intensely relieved to find myself once more in my usual frame of mind, amid my usual surroundings. My terror vanished on opening my eyes and discovering my situation; but the dream had made an impression on my mind so deep that I could not disengage my thoughts from it; neither could I in any way account for it. I had never been subject to oneirodynia, nor had I recently read or talked of oriental magnificence and barbarity. I was powerless either to account for the dream or to dismiss it from my mind.

After pondering the matter for three hours or more I arose, and dressing myself with the same fastidious care as on the previous day—a habit which I had resolved to henceforth cultivate—I descended into the breakfast-room. My father and uncle were standing by the window engaged in earnest conversation, and old John was busy at his sideboard. My uncle at once stepped towards me and seized my hand, which he squeezed rather harder than I considered necessary or comfortable, and having wished me a good morning, informed me that I had been the subject of his conversation with my father.

"I am afraid you find Holdenhurst a very dull place when you can find nothing more interesting to talk of," I remarked.

"Not at all, not at all," said uncle Sam. "I will tell you all about it before I leave."

"Breakfast is quite ready," said my father, "and we may as well have it at once, although it wants some minutes to eight. Mrs. Truman will take her breakfast in her room."

At this we all three took our seats at the table.

"Why, Ernest, my boy, what has become of your color?" asked uncle Sam. "Yesterday you were a typical little Englishman, but this morning you appear as bloodless as a New York dudo."

I related my dream. Uncle Sam laughed immoderately at the recital, and pushing his chair somewhat further from the table, swayed himself to and fro and roared. My father's face, too, wore a broad smile which merged into a laugh as I proceeded.

"Did you read the 'Arabian Nights' just before you went to bed?" my father inquired.

"Arabian Nights?" echoed uncle Sam, interrupting me as I was about to reply. "Why, if he were in London, I should have said that he had been to the Alhambra, witnessed the ballet, got drunk, and been locked up for the night. Ha, ha! I'd give a thousand dollars, and sup on pork and cucumbers for a month, if only I might dream that dream."

"It seems to please you, Sam," said my father.

"It does. If I had not become an American, I would have exchanged my nationality for that of Turkey or Persia, my Christianity for Mohammedanism. Boundless liberty and absolute despotism both appeal to my taste. Besides, they are not so different as some people suppose; extremes meet, you know. The quasi-liberty enjoyed, or the quasi-despotism suffered—express it which way you will—by Englishmen in England, would be intolerable to me. By-the-by, I'm not the first Truman who has renounced his native nationality, am I, Bob? Didn't that old ass of an alchemist, who spent twenty years of his life in trying to extract gold from everything that did not contain it, become a Turk?"

"You mean old Roger," said my father, thoughtfully. "Yes, I believe he did; but he must have reverted to the nationality of his fathers, if not to their faith, for he lived many

very few friends, and no enemies—so far as I know. Nearly all my time since I left school has been passed at Holdenhurst—walking and riding about the place and reading and playing to father."

"What is it that you play?"

"The pianoforte. I am very fond of music, and so is my father."

"You must play for me this evening. I am a poor pianist, but some people think I can sing," said aunt Gertrude. I replied that I should be delighted to do so.

While this conversation was in progress we had walked as far as the entrance hall, which I thought was the best place wherein to essay my skill as showman. This hall was a large square apartment with floor, walls and ceiling of dark oak. Opposite the great door, and distant from it about twenty feet, was an enormous fireplace with a chimney piece of white marble fantastically carved, surmounted by a portrait in oils of a red-faced middle-aged man clad in a leather jerkin, with collar of preposterous width, and a floppy hat of such liberal proportions that an Italian peasant might have envied it, supposed to represent the founder of my family.

He looked little enough like a man who would ingratiate himself with his king or anybody else, but as I subsequently heard my uncle remark, it is probable that Henry VIII. was a better judge of women than men. On the right and left of the fireplace were wide staircases which led up to corridors. The walls were nearly covered with pictures, chiefly family portraits, relieved here and there by weapons and deers' antlers hung in various devices. Doors led out of the hall into the dining room, library and two parlors or reception rooms, and from these doors to the great entrance door were laid narrow strips of carpet—a highly necessary precaution, for as some people have painfully learned, a frozen lake is not more slippery than a polished oak floor. Indeed, I well remember when I was a young boy the amusement I derived from peeping over the banisters of the staircase to see my father receive his guest, the newly appointed Bishop of Norwich. The Bishop was a fat man, intolerably ceremonious, and with an ever-present consciousness of his newly acquired dignity, but he was unacquainted with the qualities of polished oak floors. Scarcely had this divine crossed our threshold ere he lay on his back, brandishing his legs rhythmically in the air, until restored to perpendicularity by the united efforts of my father and old John.

My aunt was greatly interested in the pictures, and asked more questions about them than I was able to answer. Nearly half an hour was spent examining the entrance hall, and I had to state plainly that at this rate of progression a day would be inadequate for the accomplishment of our task, and to suggest that we paid less attention to each object of interest. We then wandered into the library, carefully turned over the old parchments which still lay on the table, and looked at the calligraphy and seals; examined the covers of many books and the title pages of a few—treasures, all of them, such as would excite the admiration of the most phlegmatic of bibliographers and move not a few of the tribe to larceny, including a perfect copy of Grafton's Chronicle, copies of Shakespeare's plays printed when their author was yet writing and acting in London, early copies of Spenser and of most of the Elizabethan dramatists, as well as many old Bibles, products of the early printing presses of continental Europe.

These books, worth, as I afterward learned, nearly as much money as the entire Holdenhurst estate, did not interest my aunt as much as I had expected, and we quitted the library and went into the drawing room.

What a beautiful face and how cleverly painted! exclaimed my aunt, pausing in front of a portrait by Watts which had the place of honor in our drawing room. "I was studying it just before you came down stairs. Of course it is your mother. You are very like her, Ernest."

The obvious inference from my aunt's sentence, and her use of my baptismal name for the first time, concerned me greatly.

On many occasions had I suffered from a natural proneness to blushing, but surely my self-consciousness had never been so acute as at this moment. The blood mounted quickly to my face. I could feel its warmth and realize the absurdity of my aspect, but was unable to think clearly, and not knowing what to say, remained silent. My aunt noticed my confusion and further remarked—

"Why, I declare, you resemble her more than ever!"

I think my aunt must have repented having caused me so much confusion, for she suddenly turned the conversation, and inquired if any of my mother's relations were living.

I confessed my inability to answer this question positively. "My grandfather was a very unfortunate man," I said. "He had a large family, but lost his wife and all his children except one before he was fifty. Disliking the home where he had suffered so much about five years ago he determined to settle in New Zealand, and we have had the farm he used to occupy still waiting for a tenant. He wrote to my father to inform us of his late arrival there, but he has never written since, and my father's letters to him have been returned by the post-office as undeliverable."

"And what about his remaining child?"

"To be continued."

"I am glad," said Willie's mamma proudly, "to hear that my little boy chose to apologize rather than to fight."

"Sure," replied Willie. "The other fellow was a good deal bigger than me."

LITTLE THINGS Worth Knowing

In Egypt dogs are never permitted to enter the dwelling of a Mohammedan, and if one is found in a mosque it is immediately killed.

On exposure to the light the emerald improves in color. When pearls are kept in the dark they lose their lustre, but regain it in the sunlight.

At Manchester, N. H., the earthquake drove the rats from their haunts. They must have thought it was the Pied Piper come to town.

Lloyd Conway, of Baltimore, Md., has issued a challenge for a talking contest, open to the world. He says he is the champion talker, and he insists that he can speak 65,040 words in an hour.

A small boy, whose father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Kerchew, were staying with him at a Chicago (Ill.) hotel, became lost. When found he had forgotten his name, but remembered it when he heard a man sneeze, and was restored to his parents.

Why He Jumped.

"Speaking of the curious explanations that are made in courts of justice, and the resourcefulness of men who are confronted by the rather unpleasant prospect of a sentence of a long or short duration, reminds me of a rather novel case which came under my observation some time ago," said a man who frequents the courts of this city, "and the particular case I have in mind shows how desperately resourceful a man may sometimes be. The charge against him is of no particular moment. The act he had committed was to plunge headlong into Bayou St. John, that romantic stream which winds a rather sluggish way into the lake in the lower part of the city. He was pulled out, and before he could thoroughly realize what was happening to him he was dripping all over a public highway with a robust policeman swinging on to his arm. He was lodged in jail and it became necessary for him to make some sort of explanation to go on one of the city records, and this is where the funny part of the business comes in. The Recorder put the question to him bluntly: 'Why did you jump into the bayou?' The fellow hesitated a second or so. 'Well, Judge,' he finally said, 'with no confidence than you can imagine, I just wanted to find out what was at the bottom of the bayou.' The explanation was clever, and even original, but the Recorder was not inclined to accept it, so he entered a small fine against the man."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The Missing Negret.

A very amusing and characteristic story of the late Princess Mathilde is going the rounds. The Princess was dining at the house of M. and Mme. Gaudan with some of her most devoted friends. At the hour set for dinner one of the guests, Gerome, the great painter, had not arrived. They waited a long time, and then suddenly the Princess cried:

"By the way, I received a telegram to-day from Gerome, who is in Cadix, asking me to give him the apologies for not being able to come to-night."

"But, Princess," exclaimed Mme. Gaudan, "why did you not tell us about it earlier?"

"Why, my dear," returned the Princess, "I am just beginning to feel hungry."

About Ginseng.

If this Russo-Japanese war solves the long unsettled problem of ginseng it will do something for the mental relief of the world. For ages the question has rattled down the corridors of time—"What do the Chinese find of therapeutic value in ginseng?" They have most implicit confidence in its virtues all the rest of the universe knows. Americans have begun its cultivation on an extensive scale, and enormous profits are made. The wild ginseng of Manchuria is in great demand, and of extraordinary value. A single plant, fifty years old, is worth \$810.—Victor Smith, in the New York Press.

Nice Present.

"To-morrow, Maria, will be your birthday, and I want to give you some appropriate present. What shall it be?"

"Whatever your kind heart may suggest, John."

(Next day). "Maria, you know how your poor back has suffered from pulling off my boots in the evening? It will not suffer any more, my love. See! I have brought you a nice new boot-jack, which I can use hereafter instead."

Not in Love Because She Blushes.

You may know if a girl likes you by the way she behaves when you meet her. Don't be taken in by the mere fact that she changes color. Girls do that from a thousand different causes, and there is no reason why she should be in love with you merely because she blushes.—Health.



FOR THE HOUSEWIFE

Cheese Custard.
Grate three or four ounces of cheese, beat three level tablespoons of butter to a cream, beat two eggs, mix the cheese and butter together, then add the beaten eggs and one tablespoon of milk; beat these all thoroughly, then into a buttered dish and bake in a quick oven until firm in the centre; serve as soon as removed from the oven.

Meat Souffle.

Put two level tablespoons of butter in a frying pan; when it is hot add two tablespoons of flour; stir this until smooth; then add gradually one cup of cold milk; stir this over the fire until boiling; then add a tablespoon of salt, a little pepper and one cup of any chopped cooked meat or chicken, and the beaten yolks of two eggs; let this cook for one minute; put it away until cool; then beat the whites of the eggs and add them carefully to the meat mixture; turn this into a buttered dish and bake in a moderate oven twenty-five minutes; if chicken is used a little grated nutmeg is an improvement.

Devilled Salmon.

From new canned salmon remove all the skin and bones. Make a cream sauce of one tablespoonful of butter, one heaping tablespoonful of flour and a cupful of cream. Add to this sauce half a teaspoonful of salt, a dash of cayenne and a grating of nutmeg. Stir it until smooth and thick. Draw toward the back of the stove and add the yolks of three hard boiled eggs that have been well mashed. Take from the fire and add one teaspoonful of lemon juice, one tablespoonful of chopped parsley, and then the flesh, broken into small flakes. Add a little more seasoning if desired (it should be highly seasoned) and turn it into a buttered baking dish or into individual shells. Sprinkle with buttered bread crumbs and bake in a quick oven until quite brown. This fish can be served cold with a cucumber sauce made as follows: Grate a peeled cucumber after scraping out the seeds; squeeze it in a cloth bag to strain out all the juice possible. Then mix the pulp remaining with a cupful of mayonnaise. This should not be done until just before it is served, or it will thin the mayonnaise too much. Serve it in a little gravy bowl with the fish.

HINTS FOR THE HOUSEKEEPER

When making a pudding, don't forget to make a pleat in the cloth at the top of your basin, so as to allow the pudding to swell.

When making soup or stew with old vegetables, add one teaspoonful of sugar, which will sweeten them and make them taste like new.

To clean tinware, first wash the tin thoroughly with hot soapsuds, wipe it thoroughly dry, and then scour with flour and well crumpled newspaper.

The hands can be cleaned better with warm water than with cold, but they should always be rinsed afterwards with cold water, as this keeps them in a better condition.

A good polish for stoves is made of one tablespoonful of powdered alum mixed with the stove polish. The brilliancy that this polish will give to a stove will last for a long time.

To keep sponges soft and white wash them in water with a little tartaric acid in it, then rinse in plenty of cold water. Take care not to put in too much tartaric acid, or the sponges will be spoiled.

Stains may be taken off an enameled bath if it is rubbed well with rough sand moistened with vinegar. This will always clean enameled pots and pans, no matter how burnt or discolored they may be.

When a spoonful of borax is put into the last water in which white clothes are rinsed, it has the effect of whitening them. Before it is added to the rinsing water, the borax should be dissolved in a little hot water.

Borax is a useful thing to have in the kitchen. Add a little to the water when boiling out enameled saucepans, and it will help to cleanse them. If added to the water dish cloths are washed in it will help to keep them a nice color.

Peanuts, almonds, English walnuts or pecans may be used for these nut-bars. Prepare the nuts by removing the inner covering and chopping them. Grease the bottom and sides of a broad shallow tin pan with fresh butter, and put the nuts into it, spreading them evenly. Put one pound of granulated sugar, with half a teaspoonful of water and a pinch of cream of tartar, into a kettle and boil until thick, but not too brittle. Pour the syrup over the nuts and set aside to cool. When slightly stiff mark off into wide bars with a sharp knife, and let stand several days, when it will become soft and delicious.

Humor Today

In Wall Street.
In modern speculation
Your language you must choose
It's an investment if you win,
But gambling if you lose.
—Washington Star.

Measure of Wealth.
"How rich is he?"
"Well, he's rich enough to have appendicitis."—Chicago Post.

Without Any Question.
"Was his failure absolute?"
"Absolute! Why, he tried suicide without success!"—Town Topics.

Mean.
"So they eloped in an automobile?"
"Yes; and the Justice who married them fined them for scorching."—Motor.

The Important One.
"Did she consult the groom in fixing the date for the wedding?"
"Oh, no; only the dressmaker."—Chicago Post.

One Out of Ten.
She—"Professor Henpeck, of Yale-Vard College, speaks ten languages."
He—"He hardly gets a chance to speak one at home."—Chicago Tribune.

Vivid Imagination.
She—"So you are a professional humorist? How delightful it must be to earn a living writing jokes?"
He—"Yes—er—I always imagined it would be."—Chicago News.

A Poor Show.
"How did you like the matinee yesterday?"
"Not a bit. The girl I went with talked so fast I couldn't get a word in edgewise."—Houston Post.

Too Surprised.

Mamma—"Uncle Hiram has given you this nickel, Willie. Now, what do you say?"

Willie—"I'm too surprised to say anything."—New York American.

Educated.

Crawford—"Newrich and his butler look so much alike I can never tell them apart. How do you distinguish them?"

Crabshaw—"The one that acts like a gentleman is the butler."—Indianapolis Sentinel.

A Jump.

His Sister's Caller—"And you say your sister is skittish and nervous? I suppose she would jump at a mouse."

Willie—"I don't know 'bout her jumping at a mouse, but I heard her tell me that she would jump at a proposal—whatever that is."—Indianapolis Sentinel.

Perennial.

"I suppose Lizzie Oleitiner is glad it is leap year," said the soft-spoken Heloise.

"I don't suppose it makes much difference to her," replied the mellow-voiced Irene. "She has been jumping at every chance she saw for fifteen years."—Judge.

Days of the Week.

"What are the days of the week?" asked the teacher.

The little girl pondered deeply for a moment.

"Big dinner day, washing day, ironing day, baking day, the girl's out day, last school day and play day," she answered finally.—Chicago Post.

A Benefactor.

"Scribbler ought to get rich out of that novel he has written."

"Is it so good?"

"No, but it will supply a great demand. There seems to be a tremendous wave of insomnia passing over the country, and less than two chapters of it ought to put to sleep the most obstinate case on record."—Detroit Free Press.

Natural Progression.

Mrs. Ascum—"How about your servant girl? The last time I was here, you know, you complained about her being so very slow."

Mrs. Hiram Offen—"Oh, she's progressing."

Mrs. Ascum—"Yes?"

Mrs. Hiram Offen—"Yes; she's getting slower and slower."—Philadelphia Press.

A Cynical Suggestion.

"So that young woman has jilted you?" said Miss Cayenne.

"Yes," answered the confiding young man.

"And you are suffering acutely from regret?"

"I am."

"Well, cheer up. If she had accepted you it might have become a chronic attack of regret."—Washington Star.

POPULAR SCIENCE

Transparent umbrellas are a late novelty in London. The substance of which they are made has the color of ivory, and its constitution is a secret of the inventor. Collisions are thus rendered unlikely.

The most obvious changes on the sun are those marked by spots, and it has been long understood that the cycle of eleven years in which these spots occur, corresponds to a similar cycle in rainfall on the earth. More recent study of solar influences, says Lockyer, show that for the most part the intensity of the spots that are chiefly associated with atmospheric and magnetic disturbances on the earth.

Meteorite is the name given to the new metal of W. Rubel, a German chemist, which is said to be aluminum hardened by a chemical process. The specific gravity is practically the same as that of aluminum; the metal is not affected by weak acids, the atmosphere or sea water; it can cast like iron, and has eight per cent greater tensile strength than cast iron; and it can be recast indefinitely. It can be rolled cold, is nearly as conductive as copper, retains a high polish, and can be plated.

Olonia, the textile of Hawaii, is found to have promising qualities. The plant belongs to the nettle family, it resembles ramie without the troublesome resin of the latter, and it flourishes in tropical forests at a height of 2000 feet. The fibre proves to be extraordinarily fine, light, strong and durable. A rope of ordinary size appears like silk and has the strength of a ship's hawser, and strands no heavier than twine are as strong as wire. Nets and fish lines resist the action of salt water, having been used for scores of years without loss of strength. Garments from the fibre have the delicate texture of silk, are practically indestructible, and may last a lifetime.

THE DAY OF HIS YOUTH.

A Glance at an Early Photograph Killed His Conceit.

When Mr. Porson, the prosperous dry goods merchant, went to see his New Hampshire relatives on his way to the White Mountains, many things which amused and pleased him were shown to him.

"Why I haven't seen a wreath of pressed autumn leaves or a bunch of wax flowers for thirty-five years," he said, genially. "I'd forgotten them were such things. And if here isn't the family album with gilt clasps!"

"I guess there are some folks in that album you'll remember," said his cousin Lavinia, opening the book and laying it on his knee while she bent over his shoulder to act as showman.

"Recollect that first face?"

"That's Aunt Lucy," shouted the visitor, "and that's your next to her, with those corkscrew curls!"

"They were natural," said Miss Lavinia, sharply.

"And there's Cousin Abijah, as stiff as a ramrod," continued the city man, "and William! Now, I'll leave it to you, Lavinia, if you ever saw anything greener than William in that picture unless it's Sam here in his Sunday clothes?"

"There's one picture I've always considered about the greenest of the lot," said Miss Lavinia, as with unerring fingers she turned to the faded photograph of a thin, sharp-featured boy with bulging eyes, and a pair of enormous hands dangling at his sides.

The dry-goods merchant looked at the features of this discouraging youth, and a slight color grew and spread over his usually self-satisfied countenance.

"Lavinia," he said, closing the album with a snap that nearly caught his cousin's finger, "I think I'll go out and see the cows."

The Good Boy.

"Now, children," said the teacher, as she distributed the flower seeds among the little ones, "I want you to plant these in pots, and when they begin to grow don't fail to tell me. I'll give a prize to the one who reports first."

At 5 o'clock one morning a few weeks later the family with whom the teacher boarded was aroused by a loud ringing at the door bell.

The man of the house got out of bed, thrust his feet into a pair of slippers and went to the front door.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"Tommy Tucker."

"What do you want?"

"I want to see Miss Adair."

"What's the matter? What do you want of her?"

"I want to tell 'er something."

"Won't it keep till daylight? Can't I tell her myself?"

"No. It's something she wanted to know just as soon as it happened, and nobody else can't do it."

Tommy was admitted and shown into the parlor.

Miss Adair was awakened and informed that a boy wanted to see her on business that admitted of no delay.

She dressed herself hurriedly and came down.

"Why, Tommy?" she said, "what on earth brings you here so early? What has happened?"

"Teacher, mine's growed,"—Chicago Tribune.

Smallest Soldier.

The smallest conscript at the latest drawing for service in the French army was Joannes Chabaud, of Verpilliere. His height is two feet eleven inches, and he weighs sixty-seven and a half pounds. His age is twenty-one.