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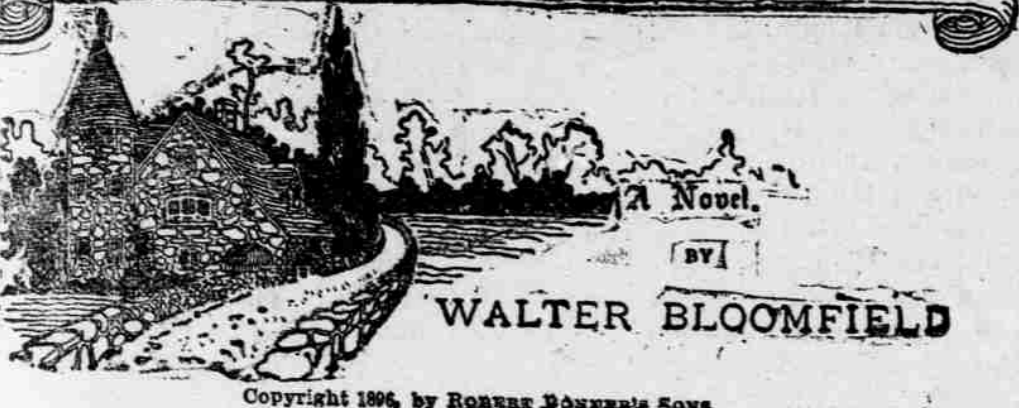
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Holdenhurst Hall



WALTER BLOOMFIELD

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CRYPT.

The human mind, though bustling when exchanging ideas in conversation with others, dives deepest in solitude.

I experienced this truth when—having retired to my room, set down the lantern, and exchanged my boots for slippers—I placed my elbows on the mantelpiece and my head on my hands, and stood so for I know not how long.

I had emptied my pockets, and all the money I possessed—six sovereigns and some odd shillings—lay before me on the mantelpiece.

The light from my lantern, feeble though it was, caused my form to cast an enormously exaggerated shadow on the floor and wall of the corridor.

The carpenter had been removed from the corridor and stairs, circumstances I had not considered, and despite my soft slippers and careful tread, a distinctly audible and weird creaking pro-

ceeded to examine my surroundings. At the end of the recess stood the black chests which I had noticed from the outside, orderly disposed in three rows, three chests in a row—one chest less than I had expected to find.

Looking about me more particularly, I beheld with dismay the tenth chest nearly in the middle of the apartment, with a half-burned candle protruding from the neck of a bottle and an ordinary up-to-date box of matches standing upon it.

At this moment I was not unprovided for such an emergency, as, being a smoker, it was my custom to carry matches. I soon extricated my lantern from among the bricks which had fallen with it, and having relit it, proceeded to examine my surroundings.

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high powers? But for my love of Constance Marsh the question whether there exists a hidden treasure in our house or not would only languidly interest me.

"Who's there?" "It's only me, Master Ernest," replied the feeble voice of John Adams.

"What do you want?" I asked, flinging the door wide open. "Are you ill? Is there anything I can do for you?" inquired the old man.

"No, I am not ill, and there is nothing you can do for me. Why do you trouble me with such an absurd inquiry?" "I thought I heard you talking about, and that I saw a light in your room."

"Why, I have not moved off the hearth-rug these two hours or more, and the only light here is that taper on the mantelpiece."

"You are not angry with me, Master Ernest?" pleaded the old man. "No, no; why should I be? You are very attentive. Go to bed at once."

I watched the old man as he slowly walked away along the corridor carrying a lighted candle in one hand, and shading its flame with the other, and did not re-enter my room until after I had heard his door close.

This simple incident abated much of my courage, and caused me to postpone my visit to the crypt for a full hour. I was very anxious and nervous, but not to be deterred from carrying out my resolve.

At half-past one o'clock I quietly emerged from my room, closing the door behind me as noiselessly as possible. In one hand I carried a lantern—lighted, but with the wick turned so low that it emitted only a feeble gleam—and in the other a riding whip without a thong, on the butt of which a heavy hammer was mounted—an instrument used by my sporting forefathers for opening obstinate five-barred gates.

I tried to persuade myself that I carried this weapon solely to assist in removing any lumber or other inauspicious obstruction which might lie between me and the object of my search, and not for defense—an ingenious but unsuccessful attempt at self-deception.

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cular—terrestrial and celestial globes, telescopes, retorts, crucibles, and strange instruments of which I did not know the names, doubtless the whole of them long ago rendered worthless by modern and improved means of scientific investigation.

My spirits were greatly elated, for indeed it was scarcely possible that I should now be disappointed, my greatest fear—that the workmen employed about the house had been into this crypt to use it as a store for their tools and materials—being dispelled, for no sign of them or their belongings was anywhere to be seen.

In this mood I reached the Abbot's Cell, and, having turned up the wick of my lantern, stood before it and considered it. Yes, there it was; and its aspect was the same as when my attention was first called to it by aunt Gertrude.

And now, how was I to remove so much of this brick screen as would enable me to get through to where the treasure chests were concealed? I observed with joy that the mortar between the bricks, from age and want of timely repair, was nearly all crumbled and gone.

I could have drawn a few of the bricks out of their places, with the aid of my hammer, I refrained from doing so for fear of the upper bricks falling upon me, which from their loose appearance seemed more than probable.

To get a couple of boxes, stand them on end one upon the other and mount to the top, was the work only of a few minutes. I then applied my hammer as a lever to force up one of the topmost bricks, and was surprised to find that it was merely laid in its place and not attached in any way to its fellows.

This was the case with another, and yet another. Why, all the bricks were perfectly loose—merely piled one upon another as a child builds houses with wooden blocks.

I removed more than a hundred bricks which formed the upper rows by simply lifting them one by one and laying them aside upon the floor. When a sufficient number had been removed to enable me to see what was within, I stood my lantern on what was now the top of the wall and, with feelings of intense satisfaction and delight, beheld seven square black chests at the end of the recess.

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Agricultural.

Injury to Fruit Tree by Mice. The Horticultural Section of the Iowa Experiment Station is in receipt of numerous reports from various sections of the State conveying the information that during the period last winter in which the ground was covered with snow, many fruit trees were badly girdled by field mice.

Fertile Eggs. To decide whether eggs are fertile or not hold them between the thumb and forefinger, with one end toward the thumb and finger, in a horizontal position, having a strong light in front of you.

Novelties in Vegetables. Do not be tempted to abandon the old reliable varieties of vegetables for novelties, but first test the novelties as experiments. Some of them may be excellent, but all varieties depend for success upon climate and soil.

Successful Combination. Seven years ago I built my first combined hotbed, coldframe and winter storage pit. It is the only successful combination I know for such uses.

Hog Cholera—A Preventive. Some time ago I heard a friend wonder if there was such a thing as a specific for hog cholera.

Hogs We Prefer the Poland-Chinas. While they do not produce as large litters as some other breeds, they are large hogs and of a dignified appearance.

Red Raspberry Culture. It costs more to grow red raspberries than it does to grow black raspberries. Red raspberries should be planted for nearly twice the price of the black.

Growing of Corn. One of the best ways of killing the weeds in the corn field is to destroy them before the corn comes up.

Puss in China. Cats in China are regarded as very precious animals. Severe retribution will follow any cruelty to poor puss.

Custard Fudding—This may be baked in little cups. A good recipe is as follows: Put in a basin a quantity of a pound of granulated sugar and the yolks of five eggs.

Milk Sherbet—One quart of milk, one pint of sugar, juice of three lemons; put sugar and milk together in freezer and mix thoroughly.

Date Pudding—Beat the yolks of four eggs and three tablespoonsful of powdered sugar to a cream.

Cheating a Bargain in China. When you engage a servant or make a bargain in China it is not considered binding until the "fastening penny" has been paid.

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Newspaper Reporting in Japan

"Newspaper reporting in Japan is by no means an unattractive business," said Masanao Hanahara, third secretary of the Japanese legation, who was himself at one time on the local staff of a Tokio newspaper.

"I remember the time," continued Mr. Hanahara, "when there were objections to reporting as a profession, but that was in the days when the government had a strict supervision of the newspapers.

"How are we handling the war news? Well, in very much the same fashion, I suppose, as an American paper would handle it. Nearly every one of the Japanese journals has a corps of special correspondents at the front, and they hurry the news back to the central office as fast as they can.

"The duties of a Japanese newspaper staff are much the same rules as would be expected of a newspaper man in this country.

"Several men, of course, are assigned to the various executive and municipal offices, but of late the greatest feature has been the political reporting in which prominent statesmen and leaders in the nation's affairs are interviewed.

"In handling social news, our newspapers are not as profuse as your American press, but in gatherings of State importance the names of those present are always given, and a special column is reserved for events of this kind.

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HOUSEHOLD MATTERS

Cleaning White Satin. To clean white satin dry clean broad-crimbs, pass through a sieve and mix with an equal quantity of pulverized blue.

The Test of a Canteleop. The best test for a canteleop is to break a little piece from the stem end with a little file, if it smells spicy when broken, it is quite sure to be good.

The Clothes Closet. Even tidy housekeepers who insist upon a daily airing of their rooms seldom extend this attention to their closets.

As to Pepper Mills. A pepper mill is pieces of silver not often seen on tables nowadays.

Egg Powders. It should be generally known that "egg powders" have nothing in common with eggs or the color.

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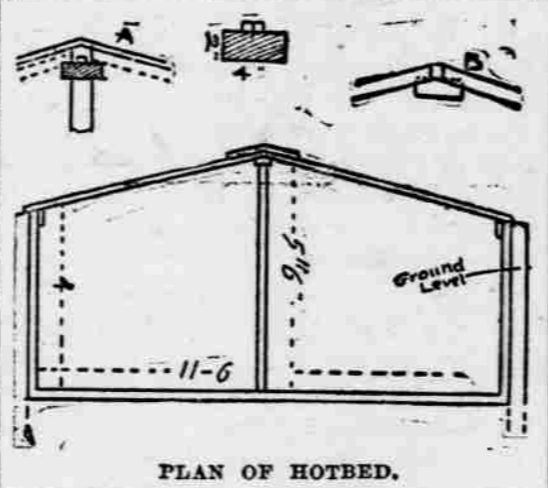
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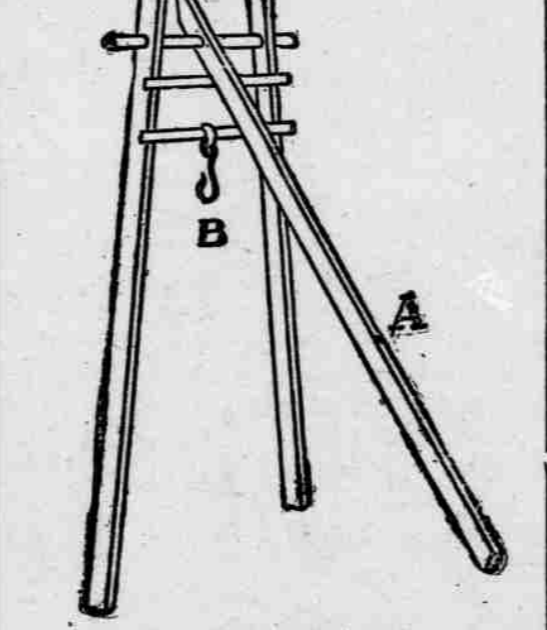
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PLAN OF HOTBED.



A HANGER FOR HOGS.