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Holdenhurst Hall



WALTER BLOOMFIELD

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CHAPTER XXIX.

Continued. "Hal and how are you off for money? Got none, I suppose."

"Oh, not quite so bad as that! I have the four thousand two hundred dollars you gave me this morning intact, and the greater part of the thousand dollars which you gave me just before I went to England."

"You are no spendthrift, I am glad to find; but the sums you mention are quite useless to a man to take a wife, for although in your case the wife will be wealthy, there will be many things which must, if only for decency's sake, be paid for by you and by no other."

"With these words my uncle rose from his seat and cast away the end of his cigar, paying not the least attention to the thanks with which I greeted his extraordinary offer."

"I must really smoke less tobacco," he said; "that makes my eighth cigar today, and it is not three o'clock. I have smoked more this week than I generally smoke in a month—I suppose because of the worry I've been subject to."

By the Powers, I wish I knew that that girl was safe!"

As my uncle turned to accompany me downstairs I noticed that the expression of his face betrayed considerable anxiety, and that his general demeanor lacked much of its accustomed buoyancy."

CHAPTER XXX.

UNCLE SAM DOWN. About three weeks after the events related in the last chapter I sat writing in a beautiful room which my uncle had ordered to be specially arranged and set apart for my use for so long as I remained his guest, when Constance unexpectedly entered and smilingly handed me a letter. Having accepted the missive and paid its air carrier with that which among lovers is accounted coin, I moved from the table to a settee near the window; for no one could have too much light who attempted to decipher the calligraphy of the Rev. Mr. Price, which consisted of a series of hastily scrawled symbols without the remotest resemblance to any known letter—in brief, that kind of writing which breeds errors, blinds compositors, maddens proof-readers, and moves the irritable to profanity. I took me at the least ten minutes to acquaint myself with the writer's meaning, and while I was so engaged my faithful Connie sat on the floor at my feet and toyed with three sequins which had recently been attached to my watch-chain—the identical coins alleged to have been found in the room which my uncle occupied the last time he stayed at Holdenhurst Hall.

"Can you make it all out?" asked Connie, looking up.

"All but a few words, dear," I answered; and then proceeded to read the following letter aloud:

N. —, East Fifty-ninth Street, New York City, October 27, 1899. Dear Miss Marsh:—This day, the day of my departure for England, I have received from the worthy Rev. Mr. Silas Fuller, my esteemed friend and former colleague, intelligence of a grave nature that my Christian conscience will not permit me to conceal from you, though in acquainting you herewith I incur a risk of being credited with low and personal motives."

The Rev. Mr. Fuller informs me that on the ————, an old man, who had been for many years in the service of Mr. Robert Truman, died very suddenly, from some unexplained cause, during an altercation with Mr. Ernest Truman. The altercation, which was in part overheard by another servant, is supposed to have related to money. Circumstances attending the burial of the old man are no less suspicious that the manner of his death, interment having taken place by virtue of a certificate given by the local doctor, a personal friend of the Trumans. A few of the more intelligent among the inhabitants of Holdenhurst are asking (not unreasonably, I think) why an inquest was not held, and are hazarding various guesses as to what circumstances the Truman family desired to conceal in avoiding so rightful a course."

"Though to my lasting regret there may never be any love between us, I trust that my respect for your honor and happiness is undiminished; and I earnestly hope you may see fit to assure yourself, ere it be too late, of the character of the man you have engaged to marry, as I am unable to contemplate without the most painful feelings your alliance with a man upon whom rests the suspicion of manslaughter or worse. Believe me, dear Miss Marsh, always your faithful friend, EVAN PRICE."

"What a mean, spiteful fellow Mr. Price is, to be sure!" exclaimed Constance. "I never liked the expression of that man's face, nor his manner, but I am surprised he should write such a letter as that. What good can he hope to get from it?"

"Don't you see, dear, how much he would like to separate us? I have already told you the facts upon which he has based this letter."

"Yes, Ernest, and please don't tell me again. I'm afraid I'm a little tired of speaking and thinking about these things"—aluding to the sequins which she was turning round and round with her delicate white fingers. "But suppose Mr. Price could separate us, how would that benefit him? He knows I would not marry him in any case. I have told him so in plain words many a time."

"Spiteful and mischievous as the man is, I don't in the least doubt, my dear Connie, but that he loves you so sincerely as his nature allows him to love. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of any man not loving you who has once seen you, and it is the quality of never to entirely despair of achieving its object until that object is irrevocably lost. This letter was written yesterday, so by now Mr. Price is on his way to England. Before he reaches Liverpool you will be my wife, and when he learns that fact perhaps he will cease to interest himself in our affairs. Only six days! Fancy that, don't you?"

"Yes, fancy it! How sudden it has all been! I am in disgrace with my friends for deserting them, and in defending myself I have laid the blame on you for monopolizing my time. I say, Ernest, dear, one of the six girls whom I have asked to be bridesmaid has declined."

"Who is she?" I inquired. "Miss Christian—you know who I mean; the young lady who can't marry without losing her fortune."

"What has happened?" I asked, catching my breath. "Sam learned on arrival at his office that Miss Wolsey had died suddenly in Paris, and the news so upset him that he talked incoherently for a time, and then had some sort of seizure, greatly frightening his clerks; but he is conscious now and Gertrude is with him."

"There are few tasks which the complex relations of humankind impose upon us more painful or difficult than being called to comfort a sorrowful one whose burden presses with equal or greater weight upon ourselves, and I could scarce restrain my own grief while endeavoring to pacify Constance, whose agitation arose entirely from the present circumstances of uncle Sam and aunt Gertrude—circumstances which, though I have no means different to them, were in my case obscured by consideration of the tragedy in Paris. Constance Marsh had never seen Annie Wolsey, nor was it until quite recent days that she had been informed of the existence of that unhappy woman; and not only that, but for other and stronger reasons it would have been absurd to expect that Constance should regard the death otherwise than as the welcome extinction of an unseen but potent power for mischief. While recognizing this to the full, I could not but think of the girl-companion of my childhood; of how after Annie's brothers and sisters had one by one all been laid to rest in the shadow of Holdenhurst church she alone remained, and was the only delight of her widowed father's life; of how, later, she had fled from him who loved her so well, and how tirelessly he had sought her again until at last his efforts were crowned with success, though only to precipitate the needless and awful waste of her young life. I thought also of the cruel effect this disaster must necessarily have upon my grandfather, and wondered if that careworn old man was yet acquainted with it. The fear to which my uncle had several times given expression now being realized, it occurred to me that its ill effects upon my powerful friend, said to be already severe, might possibly be of a permanent character. Something of these troublesome thoughts and speculations must have been apparent in my face to have induced Connie to smile at me through her tears, and to repeat those vows with which we had consoled each other in previous difficulties—that come what might, and we were both alive, nothing should again separate us."

Constance and I quitted the study and returned to my room. When asked to decipher Mr. Price's letter I was engaged in making a fair copy of a list of my future wife's possessions, which uncle Sam had roughly drawn up for my use—a heavy task, to which I had already devoted two whole days. Though not more than three-fourths of my transcript was completed I perceived I was too disturbed to advantage to apply myself to it again that day, and therefore hastily put away my papers and devoted myself to Constance. After nearly an hour had been spent in a profitless exchange of opinions and the venturing of various surmises, we decided to go together to Mills Building and ascertain by actual observation exactly upon what our anxiety was founded."

When we arrived at Mills Building we found my uncle's offices deserted by all but one clerk, and the usual business of the place suspended for the rest of the day. Telegraphic tape was automatically unwinding from a score or more cylinders, and falling unread into the baskets placed to receive it. On my uncle's desk, in an inner private room, lay a pile of correspondence, the greater part unopened. The clerk in charge was bustling his hat preparatory to locking the doors and departing, and had we been a few minutes later we should have found the office closed. From this individual we learned that Mr. Truman had become violently agitated immediately after reading a letter, the envelope of which bore the Paris postmark; that he had rapidly paced up and down his room, incoherently talking to himself meanwhile; and that altogether his behavior had been so extremely different from his usual habit of self-possession that the people about him became alarmed. Mr. Truman's secretary, Mr. Fisk, who enjoyed his employer's confidence more than anybody else, took the letter from Mr. Truman's unresisting hands, and read it to ascertain what had created this disturbance. The letter, which was very brief and couched in affectionate terms, stated that the writer would that night seek oblivion in the waters of the Seine, and that she commended her son to his care. It bore the signature of Annie Wolsey."

"And how is Mr. Truman now?" I inquired. "Is he better, and has he gone home with Mrs. Truman?" "I think he is better than he was," replied the clerk. "We were afraid he had become crazy and sent for Dr. Herrmann—Dr. Herrmann, who arrived before Mrs. Truman, said that Mr. Truman was suffering from intense excitement, but that with proper treatment there was no cause for alarm. The doctor soon afterwards took his patient to Astor House, where he now is."

To be continued.

The Water Power of Runnig. The water power now running to waste in the rivers of France is calculated by a French engineer named Tavernier to be between 3,000,000 horse power and 5,000,000 horse power, and only 200,000 horse power of the enormous total has yet been utilized.

GOOD ROADS. The Great Highway. Connecticut's Highway Commissioner, James H. Macdonald, who is one of the best informed good roads men in the country, pledges the support of the American Road Makers to any feasible plan for improving the roads of the nation. In his address, read before the recent convention held by the New York and Chicago Road Association and the Erie Chamber of Commerce, at Erie, Pa., he said:

Perhaps there is no section of highway in the United States that is quite so much an important factor as the road proposed from New York City up to and through Poughkeepsie, following the Hudson, with all its historic interests and magnificent scenery, and thence on through the southern tier of New York and out through the Panhandle of Pennsylvania, thence through to Chicago, Ill. Towns, cities and counties are all traversed in a very interesting way; the town and the county are each passed through in their turn. Five States and thirty-three counties, with a total population of nearly twelve millions of people, are assisted in pleasant travel, thus making a great moving panorama of interest when this road has been improved as it is proposed."

The great lakes of Illinois and Michigan, this great neckland of pearls, the millions of tons of freight moving upon their broad and expansive bosoms, represent in no uncertain way the largest commercial interests in the United States. With the introduction and the building of this great \$100,000,000 canal, which has just been successfully inaugurated under the able direction of E. A. Bond, there will be an added impetus to the question of waterways and highways."

For quite a number of years the improvement of railroads, so that it is quite possible to-day to find yourself comfortably seated in a Pullman vestibule car carried along at the rate of a mile a minute. Indeed, we find on the other side a train recently run at the rate of 140 miles an hour, and it is quite frequent that we hear of the 100-mile an hour train. This will satisfy, I think, the most active business mind. We have our ocean steamers crossing the Atlantic in less than six days. With the introduction of this canal, which was superseded originally by railroads, we are now turning our attention to this question of improving the main arteries of our highways throughout the country."

It seems to me that our country occupies one of the most prominent positions to-day of any country in the world, and we only need improved highways to stand first among the nations of the earth. In making an analogy I have in mind the time when I was quite a young man, that grand old man, only myself very busily engaged, but she had all the children of the household busy, making patches and putting those patches into blocks, and after she had got together a large number of blocks, then she put in the strips which united and made a perfect whole or outside covering for the quilt. This country has been sewing together the last 284 years, making the blocks for all lines of business enterprise. Now a perfect connection of all our large interests would be the putting in of man's highway. We have the very best public service in steam and electric roads, and we have no peer on the waters of lake, river or ocean, and I think we are ready to take up this great question of the improvement of the main arteries of the land, the roads of our country."

Chance for an Inventor. The inventor who can discover a cheap process whereby earth and clay of a road-bed could be rendered impervious to water will be a public benefactor. So long as an earth road is smooth, impervious to water and of easy grade, so long it is the most desirable one for travel. In fact, it is an ideal highway for public use so long as it is in that condition.

If it may not be possible to construct and maintain an earth road that shall be in perfect condition at all times, yet any inexpensive method that will shorten the length of the bad periods materially is worthy of consideration. That this may be done so that the lengths of the periods during which the roadbed will be soft may be reduced to one-tenth is now a demonstrated fact. The process whereby this end may be accomplished is very, very simple, and exceedingly inexpensive, costing less than \$5 per mile per annum. Before describing the method of doing this I will outline some of the basic principles that enter into it.

A roadbed saturated with a moisture content of 50 per cent or more becomes safe and non-resistant, the wheels of vehicles and hoofs of horses sink into it; it is a mud road; withdraw the moisture to a 25 per cent saturation and it begins to harden; reduce the moisture to 10 per cent, or 15 per cent, and it becomes hard and firm.

Water must enter the roadbed either by impact upon the surface, as when rain falls upon it, or by capillary action from beneath. Now if by any process in the construction or treatment of the roadbed we can prevent the entrance of water beyond a 15 per cent saturation, it is evident the roadway will remain solid. Water enters the road by percolation or by capillary through the interstices or pores between the particles of earth composing it. Hence the proposition is if possible to so close these pores or interstices by compaction that the water will not find access.

Good Roads Magazine.

Humor of Today. Not They. There was a young lady from Ipswich Who had two large moles on her lips which Prevented all chaps Save the veriest yaps From kissing this lady from Ipswich.

Yes, Indeed. Mr. Staylate—"After all, society is a deuced bore, don't you know?" Miss Weary (grawling)—"Yes, some people's society."—Philadelphia Public Ledger

Would Be Prepared. She—"Suppose, dear, I find you haven't given me money enough?" He—"Then telegraph for more." She—"Have you a telegraph blank?"—Detroit Free Press.

Couldn't Have Beer. "I have always been a prominent figure," boasted the self-made man. "Then you were never a sweet boy graduate or a bridegroom," replied his listener.—Houston Post.

Defective. "Ma, I don't like our new cook!" exclaimed Willie disappointedly. "What's the matter with her, dear?" "She doesn't fry any holes in the fried cakes!"—Detroit Free Press.

Supplied by the Neighbors. "Do you keep any cats?" asked the caller from the city. "Yes," replied the suburbanite. "The ground in the barnyard is pretty well filled with 'em."—Chicago Tribune.

His Worldly Goods. De Fly—"Were you ever held up?" Blazaway—"Well, I was relieved of all I had."

De Fly—"Where was it?" Blazaway—"At the altar."—Detroit Free Press.

Stopped at His "Uncle's". Green (looking for a trade)—"How long have you owned that watch?" Brown—"About two years." Green—"Does it gain or lose?" Brown—"Well, it lost thirty days not long ago."—Chicago News.

Woman's Way. Percy—"Young Rapidgait had hard luck. He was disinherited recently." Harold—"Cut off with a dollar, eh?" Percy—"No; his mother did the disinheriting. He was cut off with ninety-eight cents."—Houston Chronicle.

Using lofty Language. Bystander—"I expected to see you shoot that Boston man when he gave you the lie." Georgian—"He didn't give me the lie. He only said that in his judgment I was habitually untruthful."—Somerville Journal.

That's Always Attractive. "Well," remarked the man who was fond of uttering platitudes, "there's certainly nothing attractive in poverty."

"Oh, I don't know," replied Burman, "there's a 'v' in it."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Too Costly Aspiration. Godfrey—"I am sorry to hear that Squalop is in a bad way financially. What is the cause of it?" Scorgie—"As nearly as I can learn, he has been trying to maintain an automobile position in society on a bicycle income."—Chicago Tribune.

Stern Parent. "Yes," said Parker, "it's leap year. Did Estelle propose to you?" "No," sighed young Larkner. "But I heard you say, 'This is so sudden.'"

"Yes, that was when her father made his appearance with a club."—Chicago News.

Perennial Blossom. That! Papa—"Your mother tells me you haven't been a very good boy to-day, Johnny."

Johnny—"Between us, pa, I think she's a little prejudiced against me. It was only the other day she told Aunt Kate I was just like you."—Boston Transcript.

Improvident Man. "My husband is the most extravagant man," wailed little Mrs. Bargainbunt.

"Yes?" said the sympathetic friend. "Yes. He paid \$2 for a hat, when by looking around for a day or two he could probably have gotten one for \$1.98."—Pittsburg Post.

What He Said. Tess—"Yes, he was an old flame of mine. Did you tell him I was engaged to Jack Hanson?" Jess—"Oh, yes."

Tess—"I suppose he wondered how soon I would be married to him." Jess—"No; not 'how soon,' but 'how long.'"—Philadelphia Press.

Ferdily. She—"Jack played an awfully heartless trick on Flossie." He—"How's that?" She—"Why, they were engaged, you know, and last night, at the ball masque, Jack made up so that Flossie didn't know him. He proposed and was accepted again!"—Puck.

The Young Paps. "Poppy's baby is beginning to talk now." "Has he been boring you with some stories about it?" "No; but I sat next to him at the lunch counter to-day, and I heard him say, absent-mindedly, to the waiter: 'Dimme a jink o' water, please.'"—Philadelphia Press.

IN WOMAN'S REALM. A Poet's Party. When the ser- makes it seem delightful to be again indoors, girls often like to have suggestions for methods of making their meetings attractive—something besides the usual "talk and refreshments"—what some eminent man of letters in a waggish way described as "ziggle, gabble, gobble and git."

A series of little meetings, each in celebration of some poet's birthday or other anniversary, would be an excuse for making some interesting additions to the usual program. Thus there could be no great difficulty in arranging a Shakespeare party or a Milton party, in which quotations from the works of either poet were used in invitations, dinner cards, bills of fare and so on. Or an American poet might be chosen. Oliver Wendell Holmes would furnish lines of a cheering nature fit for mild festivities; or you might introduce your guests to some of the beautiful poems of Celia Thaxter, or of Jean Ingelow. If you do not mind going outside of our own land.—From Books and Authors in St. Nicholas.

There is one bit of good fortune in this season's furs; they are fashionable all lengths, and both loose and tight fitting. You are in the style whether your coat is a reefer, blouse or basque, and your sleeves may have fullness at the shoulder, or a trifle at the elbow, and the stole effect of last winter is quite gone out.

Nearly all coats, plain as well as fancy, have light linings this season, satin-brocade, damasce and broche silk and plain light twilled taffeta. As this was somewhat the vogue in 1904, many women will unpack their furs with a sense of dismay over the soiled conditions of their pretty coat linings. But there is no need to worry, for a soiled lining that is still in good condition otherwise can be made as good as new by the right sort of home cleaning.

Linings for fur coats are fitted in after the coat is quite finished and may be removed without any ripping beyond brush with a velvet whisk, then regularly wash in a luke warm soda of castile soap and borax, two teaspoonfuls of borax and a handful of soap shavings to a bowl of water, and let drip in the wind. When almost dry roll over a curtain pole, pull taut and pin, stand near the fire. Unroll the next morning and you will find all intents and purposes a new coat lining.

If the lining is in a pale tint, soak in cold borax water, two teaspoonfuls to a basin of water, for half an hour before washing.

It is not impossible for the amateur dressmaker to do over her own furs, with a hint or two about the work. Use always a seamless pattern; place it on the leather side, tack with pins, then cut without any seam allowance, using a sharp pen knife. The seams are overhanded with fine stitches. It is wise to first cut a cambric pattern, see that it fits perfectly and make a stiff paper pattern from that, as any wrong cutting in fur work is serious. In piecing, make sure that the nap of the fur runs in the same direction and that your colors are what furriers call "cross."

FRILLS FASHION. For evening wear the palest tints are chosen.

There will be a perfect craze for Irish lace and fur combined.

Silks will no doubt continue popular, but they will be of a heavier quality.

Satins and cashmeres will be the most popular materials for both young and old.

Black will not be worn to any extent, excepting, possibly, the all-black evening gown.

Leather enters conspicuously into the fashionable "motor" outfit both for coats and headgear.

The envelope bag, so eagerly heralded by the shops, has found scant favor with femininity.

Close fitting turbans of suede trimmed, with quills or a harness buckle are also good style.

In handles the tendency is away from braids and straps and toward plain stiff handles, preferably flat.

The new style of hairdressing is not confined to one particular coiffure, but greatly depends on the becomingness.

Brown, green, dark blue or black leather tam-o'-shanters with patent leather visor are both smart and practical.

Little change purses of pigskin are on vogue, with long handles of the same length and variety as are seen on the "Peggy from Paris" bag.

Gloves of heavy kid, some with gannets, others loose at the wrist, with strap and buckle to adjust them, are among the essentials of a motor outfit.



When furs are not combined, any one fur may be trimmed with suede leather, or for dressy occasions with embroidery. This use of leather is new, and you have an idea what a smart touch it gives an old coat put over collar, cuffs or set in a double breasted tailor vest.

It comes in all the dull vegetable dyes, in hunting green, gof red, mahogany, blue, navy blue and every conceivable shade of brown, light and dark. Sometimes it is embroidered with outline work in gold thread or silk.

The embroideries most in vogue for fur trimmings are straps from old Chinese silk petticoats, to be found in any Chinese shop, bands from Persian towels, strips of Russian or Hungarian peasant work and all the rich Turkish, India and Japanese hand embroideries. The colors are selected to match the color scheme of fur and lining as closely as possible. It would be very easy for a clever girl to imitate Russian or Japanese embroidery and make her own trimming just to match her coat.

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