

The Yellow Letter



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SYNOPSIS.

Harding Kent calls on Louise Farrish to propose marriage and finds the house in great excitement over the attempted suicide of her sister Katharine. Kent starts an investigation and finds that Hugh Crandall, suitor for Katharine, who had been forbidden the house by General Farrish, had talked with Katharine over the telephone just before she shot herself. A torn piece of yellow paper is found, at sight of which General Farrish is stricken with paralysis. Kent discovers that Crandall has left town hurriedly. Andrew Elser, an aged banker, commits suicide about the same time as Katharine attempted her life. A yellow envelope is found in Elser's room. Post Office Inspector Davis, Kent's friend, takes up the case. Kent is convinced that Crandall is at the bottom of the mystery. Katharine's strange entry puzzles the detectives. Kent and Davis search Crandall's room and find an address. Lock Box 11, Ardway, N. J. Kent goes to Ardway to investigate and becomes suspicious of a "Henry Cook." A woman commits suicide at the Ardway Hotel. A yellow letter also figures in this case. Kent calls Louise on the long distance telephone and finds that she had just been called by Crandall from the same booth. "Cook" disappears. The Ardway postmaster is missing. Inspector Davis arrives at Ardway and takes up the investigation. He discovers that the dead woman is Sarah Sacket of Bridgeport. Louise telephones Kent imploring him to drop the investigation. Kent returns to New York to get an explanation from Louise. He finds the body of a woman in Central Park and more yellow letters. He sees Crandall, whom he recognizes as "Cook," enter the Farrish home. Louise again implores Kent to drop the investigation and refuses to give any explanation. Later Kent and Louise are in an automobile. Kent returns to Ardway. Davis announces that he has planned to arrest the missing postmaster and also the master criminal.

CHAPTER XII—(Continued).

"Wait a minute," said Davis, and the constable checked the horse. Jumping out quickly the inspector seized the lantern and dropping back a few paces began making what appeared to be a minute examination of the road. "That much of a road," the constable whispered to me while we waited. "It's only used for logging, though when we come up here this afternoon there was automobile tracks both going and coming." "Any idea who made them?" I asked. "None, but I guess he knows," with a gesture in the direction of the lantern light. Just then Davis rejoined us, hanging the lantern over the dashboard again. Instead of resuming his seat, he knelt on the floor of the buckboard, peering down at the road as it was dimly revealed by the lantern. "Go ahead slowly," he ordered. As Dodds clucked to the horse I leaned down beside Davis and asked: "What did you find?" "Just what I expected. The automobile is somewhere ahead of us." "Whose is it?" "I don't know yet." My curiosity would be denied no longer. Hitherto I had kept silent, hoping that Davis would confide in me the object of our strange journey. "Whom are we coming out here after?" I asked. "The postmaster and his accomplice, of course." "Who is his accomplice?" "I'm afraid I misstated the case," said Davis with a grim chuckle. "The postmaster is the accomplice. The other is the master criminal." "Who is the other?" I persisted. "Is it Hugh Crandall?" He was silent for a moment before answering. I attributed it to hesitation in admitting that he had been wrong and I right, and it was with considerable satisfaction that I finally heard him answer: "I should not be surprised if we found Crandall somewhere in the vicinity." He continued to peer down into the road as the horse struggled up the hill till we came to a comparatively level plateau. "Stop here," he called out authoritatively. "The deserted cottage is at least a mile farther on," volunteered the constable. "We'll walk it," said Davis. "We cannot take any chances of the wheels being heard." Dodds pulled off the road and fastened the horse to a tree. Again taking the lantern Davis made a search of the road, finally returning the lantern to its place, after carefully extinguishing it. "Come on this way, as quietly as you can," he directed. "I've got this," I said, showing him the little pocket electric light with which I had explored the post office. "Do you want it?" "Keep it in your pocket. We may need it, but it is better not to show a light if we can avoid it." I put it back in my pocket and took the precaution of placing the revolver. Davis had given me in the side-pocket of my coat where it would be more easily available. Davis moved off soundlessly through the clearing with the constable, I close at his heels. "This ain't the direction of the cottage," whispered Dodds. "I know. I want to find something else first," Davis explained, keeping straight on through the darkness, like a bound on a fresh scent. He moved rapidly forward for a hun-

dered and fifty yards and then brought us up short with a sharp "Hist." As we strained our eyes into blackness we made out the shape of an automobile just ahead. Its lights had been extinguished and its engine was dead. "Wait here," Davis again commanded as he crept silently toward it to make sure that the tonneau was unoccupied. He was back with us in a minute. "Let me have that lamp of yours, Kent," he whispered, at the same time lighting a cigarette. "Is that safe?" I exclaimed in surprise, amazed that he would dare to smoke when he had been taking such precautions against our being discovered. "Sure," he replied laconically. "Whoever was in that automobile is at least half a mile away by now. The glass on the front lamps is nearly cold. I want to see the number, though. We may find it useful." Taking my little electric lamp he advanced toward the machine again, flashing the light for a second on the number, and then peering by its light into the tonneau, exclaiming as he straightened up: "I thought so." "If it was safe for him to smoke, the constable and I felt that it was safe for us, too, to relax our precautions, and together we had advanced until we were beside him." "What did you find?" I asked, wondering at his exclamation. "What I expected," he replied enigmatically. The manner of his answer provoked me and I determined then and there to have it out with him. "Look here, Davis," I said; "I brought you into this case and I do not like the way you have acted about it. I have freely told you everything I have discovered and have aided you in every way I can. Before I go a step farther on this trip I want to know more about it." "What is it you wish to know?" he asked. The constable edged nearer for fear he might miss something of our conversation. "First, where are we going?" "To what is known as the deserted cottage, about a half mile farther on, at the edge of this clearing, a shack that was built for a shelter for lumbermen or quarrymen—which was it, Dodds?" "Built for one and used by 'other," the constable replied, "but 'tain't been used by either, so far as I know, for a dozen years." "How do you know the missing postmaster is there?" "Traced him." "How?" "Bicycle tracks," he answered with a chuckle. "You were not the only person who discovered that Rouser, when he disappeared, went on bicycle. In fact, Kent, you are a little slow as a detective. By the time you had ascertained that much, I ascertained where the bicycle tracks led to and had even gone so far as to have Dodds get warrants for Rouser and his accomplice." "I still do not see how you got evidence enough to get a warrant for Crandall. Did you find him out here with the missing postmaster?" "I didn't say I had a warrant for Crandall," replied the inspector sharply. "Did you ever hear of a John Doe warrant?" "How do you know they are out here now?" I asked. "We'll soon find out. Come on," he answered, starting across the clearing almost at a dog-trot. There were many more questions I wanted to put to him, but there was no opportunity, and, besides, I doubted much if he would have answered them. At first he made little effort to move quietly, but after we had gone a quarter of a mile or more he called back in a whisper, "Quietly now." We had come to a path which led us through a short thick growth of underbrush. As noiselessly as Indians following a trail we felt our way along, the silence broken now and then by the sound of a bough bent back, or a rustling leaf. Soon the path brought us out on some rising ground. Not fifty yards ahead of us appeared the deserted cottage. "That's it," whispered Dodds. "Shh!" answered Davis. "Wait here!" We stopped there just at the edge of the underbrush, peering into the darkness, straining our eyes to see and our ears to hear. From the one window in the side of the one-story log hut a dim light shone, proving that the place was either occupied or had been very recently. As we became more and more accustomed to the darkness I could see that there were apparently two paths, the one on which we were standing and another leading off at about right angle. As we looked and listened I heard a sharp crack, like the breaking of a twig that had been stepped on. The sound, so far as I could judge, came from the other path, apparently a hundred feet away from the cottage. I turned toward Davis and saw that

he, too, had heard it. He was standing with his whole body tense, his head bent forward a little as if ready to spring at any instant. As we listened, another sound came to our ears. At first indistinct, it quickly took the rhythm of footsteps hurrying along the path, a man walking rapidly, I decided. The hurrying footsteps came nearer and nearer. Davis now was crouching like a runner about to make a hundred-yard dash. It was only a minute of suspense and yet the effect on my nerves was indescribable. I wanted to scream like a hysterical girl; I wanted to run, forward or back, it made no difference; I wanted to do something, anything—anything but stand there and wait in the darkness. All of a sudden the form of a man hurrying along the other path became visible. He seemed to be carrying something. Davis took two or three noiseless steps forward and stopped abruptly. From the shadows, from nowhere it seemed, the figure of another man appeared directly in the path of the oncomer. "Hold on here!" it said, or something like that. With a curse the first man dropped whatever he was carrying and started to run. The second man started after him. With not more than ten paces between them the pursued man suddenly wheeled. A revolver flashed and the pursuer with a muttered curse fell headlong in the path. The hunted man turned and, with headlong speed, plunged down the path. At the revolver shot Davis had leaped forward, and, needless to say, Dodds and I were not far behind him. Fast as the fugitive was vanishing Davis was even faster. With the movement of a trained runner he, the wiry inspector, quickly outdistanced Dodds and myself and was close on the heels of his man. As I ran breathless behind him, hoping to arrive in time to help him in his capture, I saw the man ahead halt and turn. Instinctively I knew he was about to shoot again, and, raising the revolver I had been carrying all the while, without even trying to aim, I fired in his direction just as I saw the flash from his revolver. There was hardly a second between the two reports and then— A woman shrieked. I turned sick with horror. There could be no mistaking it. It was the voice of Louise Farrish. With overwhelming dismay it came to me that I had shot the woman I loved. Too stunned to move I stood there. My whole body seemed turned to stone. My arms hung helpless at my sides. My legs refused to move. My mouth was fever-dry and my tongue lay lifeless. Yet my vision, I recall, seemed clear and strong, penetrating the darkness as if it had been

ground and sprang after him. I found him bending over an unconscious form on the ground. Just as I reached the spot he had lighted a match. He lifted it to see my face, and as he did so I saw that the woman lying there apparently lifeless was indeed my Louise. Overwhelmed with anguish and remorse, I flung myself beside her, entreating her forgiveness. The other man shoved me roughly aside. "Don't be a fool," he exclaimed. "She has only fainted." "She's shot! She's killed!" I cried. "I shot her!" "I tell you she has only fainted," he cried angrily. "Help me carry her over there by the window." Together we lifted her and bore her gently to the side of the cottage, where we laid her on the ground. Joy surged in my heart as I saw and heard that she was still breathing, joy that was not even abated when I saw by the window light that my companion was none other than Hugh Crandall. But just then all other thoughts were driven out of my head by the sight of a thin stream of blood trickling down the sleeve of Louise's automobile coat. "I tell you she is shot. See," I cried, all my anguish coming back anew. With trembling hands I helped Crandall cut away her sleeve, dreading all the time to see and know the worst. "It's only a scratch," said Crandall, with a sigh of relief. Across her rounded arm was a red-dening gash where the bullet had cut its way through the tender flesh. While my head told me that Crandall was right, that it was only a flesh wound and not in the least dangerous, in my heart I still felt little better than a murderer. Three inches to the right, and the bullet from my revolver would have stilled her heart for ever. She opened her eyes and stared at us in a puzzled way. "Why, Harding, dear," she said in feeble surprise, "are you here—here with Mr. Crandall?" For answer I bent and kissed her. What mattered it if Hugh Crandall was the criminal? What mattered it if the chain of mystery was still un-solved? What mattered it if the author of the yellow letters had escaped from the inspector? Louise lived! She loved me! Davis and the constable came running up the path, panting from their chase, but empty-handed. "Is she hurt?" asked Davis as he saw the three of us grouped under the window. "A flesh wound, not at all dangerous," Crandall answered, while I knelt there caressing Louise's hair and whispering softly to her. "How about you?" asked Davis. "He didn't hit me," Crandall answered with a short laugh. "I tumbled



"A Flesh Wound, Not at All Dangerous," Crandall Answered. broad day. I seemed to see, as if the sight belonged to some one else, some one outside myself. I saw the inspector and constable, both apparently unhurt by the shots, dash on in pursuit. I saw a man's figure rise up from the path. I seemed to hear him call out: "Louise, Louise, where are you? Are you hurt?" There was no answer. Almost I had persuaded myself that the strain on my nerves, the horror of the night and the shock of the shooting had given me a hallucination, that the woman's shriek I had heard was but a phantom of a fevered brain, when the figure I had seen rise from the path, dashed into the thicket, repeating its agonized cry of "Louise, Louise, where are you?" At the sound, life came again into me. I dashed my revolver to the

HAZERS GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER

ORANGE COUNTY JURY RETURNS VERDICT AFTER THREE HOURS DELIBERATION.

FOUR MONTHS IN PRISON

Attorney Bryant, Counsel For the University Sophomores Thanks Judge Peebles For Humane Judgment.—Fathers Offer No Complaint.

Hillsboro.—Ralph W. Oldham, William L. Merriam and Aubrey C. Hatch University of North Carolina students, convicted for manslaughter in connection with the death of Isaac Rand, a fellow student, and sentenced to four months in jail, were released by order of the Orange county commissioners. In pronouncing sentence Judge Peebles instructed the county commissioners to hire the prisoners out "to whomsoever they please in the state." The fathers of each of the students were permitted to pay \$175 to the commissioners and secure the discharge of their sons. This amount would have been obtained if the prisoners had been hired to other persons in the state. Discharge under this arrangement leaves the students without citizenship. A movement was started at Raleigh, however, to petition Governor Locke Craig for their pardon. Establishing a precedent in the annals of this state a verdict of guilty of manslaughter was returned by the jury in the trial of Ralph W. Oldham of Raleigh, William L. Merriam of Wilmington and Aubrey C. Hatch of Mount Olive, the three University of North Carolina students indicted in connection with the death of Isaac W. Rand in a hazing escapade at Chapel Hill, September 12, 1912. There is no record of a hazing escapade being threshed out previously in the courts of this state. Judge Peebles sentenced each of the prisoners to four months in the county jail beginning April 8, next. Each of the defendants was ordered to give \$100 bonds for his appearance before the county commissioners, who shall in their discretion hire them out to whomsoever they please in the state. The fathers of the defendants were in the court when the minimum sentence for manslaughter was pronounced. No evidence of emotion was displayed by them nor by the prisoners. An array of counsel represented the defendants in the proceeding. As a result of the tragedy which preceded the trial, 26 students in the University of North Carolina were suspended or expelled after a sweeping investigation into the practice of hazing.

An Aggressive Campaign.
L. B. Padgett, field secretary of the Laymen's Missionary Movement in this state, is in Asheville planning an aggressive campaign to work up interest of the convention of the Western North Carolina laymen, which is to be held here April 20 and 21. It is planned to make the meeting of the laymen of this section of the state the most successful which has yet been held in North Carolina.

Only One Collector of Customs.
Beginning July 1, this year, North Carolina is to have but one collector of customs for the entire state. This change, radical in that it is the first change in the custom service in more than 100 years, is the reorganization of the whole customs service put through in the closing hours of President Taft's administration.

To Revive Guilford County Fair.
A meeting has been called for the near future by County Superintendent of Education Poust for the purpose of reviving the Guilford county agricultural association and placing it on such a footing as to make possible an enlarged work in the agricultural development of Guilford county.

Postponed County Commencement.
The county commencement scheduled for several days ago was postponed on account of the very bad weather. County Superintendent Vann says that there are 105 graduates in the class. They will receive diplomas showing that they have completed the work of the seventh grade in the public schools of Davidson county. These diplomas will be signed by Governor Craig, State Superintendent Joyner and County Superintendent P. S. Vann. The commencement will be held in the near future.

In All Absorbing Question Future.
The proposition to build dykes on Roanoke river and drain the low grounds is the all-absorbing question among the people around Scotland Neck and one hears but little else. Many people declare it is the greatest proposition ever offered the owners of the property along the river, and if carried to completion will do more to enhance the value of the lands than anything that could be done. Already it is said that the value of the lands embraced in the territory has advanced considerably.

Explosion Causes Excitement.
The principal topic of conversation in Statesville was the tremendous explosion which jarred buildings and caused much excitement throughout this section recently. Explosion is said, because that is what it sounded like. Just what it was is the debatable question. The great noise and subsequent quiver of the atmosphere came just prior to the breaking of the storm which lasted throughout the night and while some believe it was a freak of nature, others contend that it was a local explosion of dynamite.

APPOINTS FOUR NEW JUDGES

Governor Has So Far Only Received Acceptance From One of Men Ten to the Judgeship.

Raleigh.—Governor Craig has received from Thos. J. Shaw of Greensboro the latter's acceptance of appointment as superior court judge for the new eleventh district. The governor tendered the judgeship of the eighth district to George Rountree of Wilmington and has received a reply from Mr. Rountree to the effect that he is giving the matter careful consideration but desires time to reach a conclusion in the matter.

Another of the new judgeships created in the re-districting is tendered to Cameron Morrison of Charlotte, from whom the governor has not heard since he offered the judgeship to him. Report has it that he will not accept. The remaining judges may not be appointed for a week or two yet. The governor says a number of excellent men are being urged and he has by no means made up his mind. Those mentioned are Speaker George W. Connor, Wilson; A. A. Gaylord, Plymouth; T. T. Thorne and Jacob Battle, Rocky Mount; G. M. T. Fountain and John L. Bridgers, Tarboro. A big delegation is scheduled for a hearing before the governor in the interest of Mr. Thorne.

North Carolina New Enterprises.

Four charters, one for a new railroad, were issued. They are: The Commercial Realty Company, of Durham, was chartered with an authorized capital of \$100,000, and \$3,000 subscribed for by B. K. Kronheimer, S. W. Sparger and S. B. Pierce. The King Drug Company, of High Point, reduces its capital from \$12,000 to \$10,000. W. L. Jones is president. The Thermalarm Company, of Charlotte, amends its charter so that the board of directors may be divided into three classes. A. L. Newell is secretary. The Warrenton and Norlina Railway Company was chartered to build a railroad from Warrenton to Norlina a distance of five miles. The principal office is at Warrenton, and the authorized capital is \$50,000, with \$5,000 paid in by J. P. Scoggins; W. H. Burroughs and W. E. Twitty of Warrenton; A. C. House, of Weldon; J. K. Plummer, Jr., of Raleigh, and J. E. Bowers of Scotland Neck.

More Tar-Heels After Jobs.

Not content to sit idly by and watch other states pluck off near-cabinet positions, the North Carolina delegation besides pushing Colonel Osborne for commissioner of internal revenue, have several other Tar Heels, who they consider near-cabinet material and will urge them for heads of bureaus in government departments. As soon as an appointment can be made with Secretary of Agriculture Houston, Congressman Webb and Senator Simmons will ask him to appoint Dan W. Adams of Ashe county as chief of the forestry bureau. They will also urge Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo to name John W. Ragland of Elk Park, a prominent lawyer, as assistant solicitor under the treasury department.

New Drink Causes A Stir.

Quite a stir has been created at Goldsboro by a new drink that one of the drug stores is said to be serving at its fountain. Officers noticed the large number of customers at the fountain. A United States deputy marshal came along and bought one of the drinks. He went out saying, "If that is not whiskey, it is a mighty close neighbor to it," and since that time the officers have been busy trying to find out what the drink really is.

Yadkin To Have Commencement.

Yadkin is to have a county commencement this year. The date set is Easter Monday, March 24. There will be a parade of the committeemen, teachers and pupils of all the schools in the county arranged by townships. The parade will form at the Yadkinville normal school and march through the principal streets of Yadkinville to the courthouse.

Raleigh.—Gilbert C. White of Charlotte and B. M. Hall of Atlanta are two of three arbitrators to pass on the purchase-price Raleigh must pay the Wake Water Company for the city waterworks.

Supervisor of Teacher Training.

Hon. J. Y. Joyner, state superintendent of public instruction, announces the appointment of E. E. Sams as supervisor of teacher training, to succeed the late J. A. Bivins, who died recently. Mr. Sams has been chief clerk in the state department of education. Mr. Joyner has tendered the chief clerkship to some one, but will not announce an appointment to this vacancy until he has an acceptance on hand. As supervisor of the teacher training Mr. Sams will have charge of the teachers' institute work.