

Mystery in a Box

By HOPE DARING

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As Roger Wayne passed along the hotel corridor on his way down to dinner a door on his right opened. A girl of 20 stepped into the corridor and advanced straight to Roger's side, holding out to him a black box, six inches square and two inches high.

"Will you do me a great favor?" she asked in a clear, musical voice. "Please throw this into the bay to-night. And you are not to open it. Will you do it—for me?"

There was a slight pause before the last two words. Roger took the box, staring blankly at the girl. She was well dressed, petite, with frank gray eyes and masses of dead-black hair.

"But I do not understand." "Do you need to understand? Tell me that you will do what I ask."

"Of course I will do it, and—" "Thank you! Thank you!" She turned and re-entered the room from which she had emerged.

Roger thrust the box into his pocket and went slowly down the stairs. He had arrived at Pine Bay, a summer resort on one of the great lakes, but two hours before. Thus far he had met no one at the hotel whom he knew. What was the meaning of the girl's strange errand?

He had hardly finished his dinner when she entered the dining room. With her was a pretty blonde maiden of about her own age, a hatched-faced chaperon and a genial, middle-aged man whom Roger was positive he had seen before. From the greeting that the girls received it was evident that they were well known and social favorites.

When Roger had finished eating he left the house and sauntered leisurely down to the shore. A wharf ran far out into the bay, affording a stopping place for the steamers that touched at the tiny village. The young man stopped down and gathered his hands full of flat stones that covered the beach. As he walked along the dock



"Please Throw This Into the Bay To-night."

he threw one stone after another into the water. At last he drew the box from his pocket, and after a searching glance at it, sent it flying after the stones.

"It is tin, painted black, and there is something in it that rattles," he said to himself. "I feel like the villain in a melodrama. Now I am going to make it the occupation of my vacation to form the acquaintance of the girl who was so anxious to dispose of this box."

Fate favored him. As he ascended the steps leading to the hotel veranda, where a large party was gathered watching the sunset flush the sky and water with crimson, he heard his name called. The speaker was Bobby Green, and by his side stood the mysterious girl.

"Glad to see you, old fellow," Bobby cried heartily. "Ladies and gentlemen, I want you all to be good to this lad. He is Roger Wayne, the magazine writer whose work you all know."

Then Bobby proceeded to individual introductions. The girl of the box was Audrey Fuller, and the blonde was her cousin Mildred. When Roger heard the name he understood why their male companion at dinner had looked so familiar. The man was Thomas Fuller, the wealthy mine owner, and the girls were his daughter and niece.

The group on the veranda chatted away merrily until the sunset's afterglow had faded from the sky and a cool breeze swept in from the bay. As they adjourned to the parlor, Roger fell into step with Audrey Fuller.

"Did you see, Miss Fuller, that I obeyed your command?"

"Eh? What do you mean? Oh, you refer to your accepting the invitation to go sailing with us in the morning. You will never regret it, for the bay is beautiful."

It was evident that she had no intention of gratifying his curiosity.

Roger compressed his lips; he would be patient but persistent.

The next morning he managed to secure a place at the table with the Fullers. Before the meal was finished the landlord entered the dining room to announce that a bold robbery had been committed the afternoon before. A small tin box containing valuable jewels had been taken from the room of Mrs. Darrow, a Chicago woman. Already a detective had arrived at the hotel, and the landlord hoped that the guests would patiently submit to any questioning that seemed necessary, as the detection of the thief would be a protection to them all.

"Oh, papa! Let's go home!" Audrey cried.

Roger stared when he saw how pale she was. Mr. Fuller laughed.

"Now, don't be frightened, puss. You know that I insisted that you and Mildred should leave your jewelry in the safe. Why, Audrey, how white you are! You are not really frightened?"

She tried to smile, but it was easy to see that she was nervous. Her breakfast was untouched, while the discussion of the robbery went on around her.

A reward was offered for the apprehension of the thief, but he was not found. For several days an officer haunted the hotel corridors, and his presence, or even the mention of his errand, was enough to drive the color from Audrey's cheeks. At first she avoided Roger. He strove to make her feel that he was her friend, and gradually she came to trust him. The affair of the box was never mentioned between them, but the passage of time only strengthened Roger's determination to solve the mystery.

"She is the victim of some one's wrongdoing," was his decision. "It is not curiosity alone that prompts me; I will set her free from the fear that so often looks from her eyes."

At last Audrey recovered her usual gay spirits. The hotel was very gay. The throng of young people picknicked, danced, sailed over the bay, explored the pine woods and sped the summer hours with joy and laughter.

The hotel guests were at lunch one dull, rainy day when a telegram was brought in for Roger. An exclamation of dismay broke from his lips as he read it. Bobby looked across the table, genuine concern on his good-humored face.

"Not bad news, old man?" "Only that I am summoned to the city on a matter of business. I must leave on the evening train."

"You will return, will you not?" Mildred Fuller asked, carelessly. "Not for a fortnight, at least, and by that time the season at Pine Bay will be over."

There were many expressions of regret. Lunch over, Roger went up to his room. He had begun his packing when, glancing from the window, he saw Audrey pacing back and forth on the wharf, unmindful of the rain. He hastened out to join her. She did not see him until he called softly:

"Audrey!" A cry broke from her lips. The face she lifted to him was wet, not with raindrops, but with tears. He took her hand, drawing it through his arm.

"Little girl, I love you." "But the box! Roger, it stands between us," she cried, a note of terror in her voice.

"I threw it into the bay. Let things between us be as if the box had never existed."

"But, Roger! How can you be sure that I am not a thief? Remember Mrs. Darrow's jewels?"

"You are the woman I love. I trust you. Never mention the box again; I do not care what it contained, or why you wished to get rid of it."

She let her hand slip down into his, laughing gleefully. "If you feel that way, I can tell you, but it was so dreadfully silly! Mildred and I saw you when you arrived and recognized you as the famous author. We talked of your stories. There is always a mystery in them, and we wondered how you thought them out. Mildred dared me to give you the box."

"What was there in it?" "Pennies and thumb tacks. We thought we would give you a mystery at first hand. Then, next morning, there was that robbery, and I thought—O Roger! If some one should be looking out of the hotel windows!"

Might Call Later.

Ghosts and weird apparitions were said to appear in the empty house, and they were not an inducement to possible tenants, so the agent had it elaborately done up and decorated, and by way of a tempting bait he had some expensive gas fittings put up in all the rooms.

The next week he heard that some bold man had been after the house.

His heart leaped with hope and expectation, and he rushed off in frantic excitement to the housekeeper of the haunted mansion.

"This is splendid!" he gasped. "Someone has taken the house, hasn't he?"

"I don't know, sir, I'm sure. Perhaps he'll come back for the house. He's taken all the gas fittings."

TAR HEEL PUBLIC TALK

Cream of Current County Events
Clipped and Condensed
in a Column.

FREE TO GRAIN GROWERS.

Preventive Treatment For Oat and Wheat Smut Trouble.

Bulletin 212 of the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station by Dr. F. L. Stevens gives full directions for preventing the various smuts of oats and wheat. These are due to little living parasitic plants which grow within the wheat and oat plants. They cause large loss, cutting down the yield of grain often as much as 20 per cent or even 30 per cent, while the stinking smut of wheat does much greater damage by injuring the milling quality of the grain. The formalin treatment which is thoroughly effective and costs almost nothing, is described and recommended for oat smut. The same treatment is even more effective than the ordinary blue-stone treatment for the stinking smut in wheat. The loose smut of wheat can be prevented by a modified hot water treatment coupled with separate growth of seed in a protected seed plot. Director C. B. Williams, West Raleigh, states that these diseases cause thousands upon thousands of dollars of loss every year to the oat and wheat crops of the State and that this bulletin was prepared especially to give farmers at this time the latest and most effective means of combating these diseases. He states that a copy of this bulletin may be secured by any resident of North Carolina free of cost upon application to him.

NOT GUILTY OF FRAUD.

Uncle Sam Frees a Man Who Sold Whiskey Recipe.

Charged with the fraudulent use of the United States mails Edmund Rogers of Horse Shoe, in Henderson county, was found not guilty in the United States district court. Operating as the E. Rogers Supply Company, he was charged with having widely advertised a recipe for the manufacture of whiskey from chemicals, the product being guaranteed to be as good as the genuine. The recipe was contained in a small pamphlet costing about 8 cents apiece, and was sold at 82 each. A great number of people answered the advertisements, according to the correspondence read in court.

STATE FARM SUCCESS.

Directors Will Sell 500 Bales of Cotton for 15 Cents.

Directors of the State penitentiary adopted a resolution authorizing the management to sell 500 bales of this year's crop of cotton on the prison farm, at this time provided 15 cents per pound can be gotten for it. The crop this year will round up 1,200 bales.

Cotton, peas and corn on the State farm are all especially good this year. Fine progress is being made in the construction of immense dikes along the Roanoke river to reclaim the 3,000 acres of farm lands flooded some years ago by the washing away of the old dikes. The dike will cost about \$20,000 and will be 20 feet high in some places.

Democrats Make Clean Sweep.

The Democratic party made a clean sweep in North Carolina, with approximately 50,000 majority, an increase of 10,000 over two years ago. In the State Senate the Democrats gain six members and in the House four. Ten Democrat Congressmen are elected, the Fifth, Eighth and Tenth districts having been Republican.

Hard to Get the Girl.

C. M. Gaddy, of Wadesboro, drove to the home of Mr. J. E. Adams and persuaded Mr. Adams' daughter, Miss Bessie, aged about 22, to elope with him. Mr. Adams and two of his sons discovered what was up and started in pursuit, overtaking the couple about half way between the home of Mr. Adams and Wadesboro. The father and brothers gave Mr. Gaddy to understand that he must give the young lady up, which he did.

White Man May Be Electrocuted.

The Supreme Court has affirmed the conviction of Charles B. Plyler, who was tried at Monroe early in August for the murder of Carter Parks, his brother-in-law. Plyler was tried with two negroes, George Mayhew and John McManus, and the jury returned a verdict of murder in the first degree against Plyler and Mayhew, and not guilty as to McManus. Plyler was sentenced to death in the electric chair on September 15.

False Arrest Cost \$500.

A Wake superior court jury returned a verdict for \$500 damages against the Seaboard Air Line in favor of C. W. Reed of Elizabeth City, who sued for \$25,000 damages for false arrest, in that he was arrested at Johnston street station at Raleigh by Watchman Graton charged with attempting to steal a ride on a train and was held in jail all night only to be released next morning by a magistrate. The trial required two days.

MILL MEN TO MEET

Seventh Session of Southern Textile Association, Charlotte, N. C., Saturday, Nov. 26th—All Superintendents, Overseers and Heads of Departments in the Cotton Mills Cordially Invited to Attend and Become Members.

Preparations for the big meeting of the Southern Textile Association to be held in Charlotte on the 26th inst. are now well under way and the prospects seem favorable for making this a pleasant and profitable occasion for those who attend.

This association was organized at a meeting of a few mill men in Charlotte two years ago, and has since held profitable sessions at Greenville, Spartanburg, and Columbia, S. C., Raleigh, N. C., and Augusta, Ga., with a constantly increasing membership, the attendance at Augusta last July being over four hundred; and there is reason to believe there will be still more at the Charlotte meeting, as this is a "home coming" to a point more convenient for a large number of the members.

The various committees have taken hold of the work with a good degree of interest, and everything possible will be done by those in charge of the arrangements to make the meeting a grand success. As already announced a committee consisting of Messrs. H. H. Boyd, A. B. Sanders and C. A. Hamilton of this city are looking after the finances and at last report were making good progress in the collection of the necessary funds to defray the incidental expenses, and besides this we are informed that some of the machinery and supply men will take an active part in the entertainment of the visiting members "on the side."

The program committee together with the committee of arrangements have practically agreed upon the following order of exercise which, of course, may yet be slightly modified and changed before the time of the meeting:

11 a. m.—Call to order and address of welcome by Mayor Hawkins and response by Supt. J. M. Davis, of Newberry, S. C.

Address by President W. P. Hamrick, of Columbia, S. C.

Address or paper by Mr. L. P. Hollis, of Greenville, S. C., on "Industrial Education"; by Supt. E. C. Gwaltney, of Wingo, S. C., on "Slashing and Warp Preparation and Sizing Cotton Warps" and Mr. Wm. P. Bear, of Charlotte, on "The Care of Electrical Machinery in the Cotton Mill."

1 p. m.—Adjournment for dinner. 2:30 p. m.—Paper on the Card Room by R. L. Biggs, of Rockingham, followed by a discussion on "Card Settings" to be led by Messrs. T. B. Wallace, of Laurens, S. C., and W. P. Hurt, of Concord, N. C., in which all Carders present, whether members of the Association or not, will be invited to participate.

There will also be an opportunity at this session for discussions on other practical subjects of interest to mill men, ending with a brief business meeting at which the time and place of next meeting will be considered; and towns and cities wishing to be represented in this matter should be prompt in getting up the necessary data in regard to hotel accommodations, etc.

8 p. m.—There will be an address by Mr. R. M. Miller, of Charlotte, former President of the American Cotton Manufacturers' Association, followed by a paper by Mr. W. A. Graham, Clerk of the United States Department of Commerce and Labor on "Cotton Manufacturing in South America," after which will be a smoker with light refreshments and short talks by members and others.

Who May Become Members?

Section 20 of the constitution and by-laws of the association reads as follows: Persons eligible for active membership shall be qualified superintendents, assistant superintendents, overseers of the various departments, master mechanics, chief engineers, electricians, representatives of textile papers and instructors in textile schools.

Sec. 21 provides for the issuance of certificates for "associate members" who may be entitled to be present at all social meetings but not at business meetings; and it may be explained that this was intended to open the doors to the manufacturers and salesmen of mill machinery and supplies, and any others who are sufficiently interested to attend and pay their membership fee.

Cost of Membership.

The dues have been fixed for the present at \$1.00 per annum and blanks will be mailed promptly to those desiring to become members on application to G. S. Escott, secretary, Charlotte, N. C., who will also be pleased to answer any further requests for information.

Those expecting to attend are requested to report to him at their earliest convenience so that due notice may be given to the local committee about how many people they will need to provide for.

It is hoped that a large number of new members will be enrolled at this meeting and it will be best for all who expect to attend to send in their applications at least ten days before the meeting so as to be enrolled on the roll book to be distributed at the meeting which will show the name of each member.

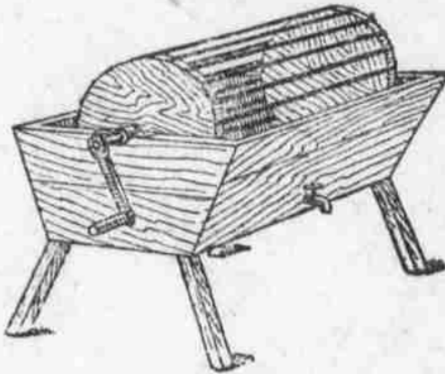


VEGETABLE WASHER IS BEST

Quite a Job to Do This Work by Hand—Machine Does It Easily and Rapidly.

Vegetables bring a much better price if they are clean when offered for sale. It is quite a job to do this work by hand but if a machine like the one shown in the drawing is constructed it can be done very easily and rapidly, writes J. J. Tulare in Farm and Home.

A cylinder made of two round board



Easily Operated Potato Cleaner.

ends connected by heavy wires is mounted in a water tight box. This cylinder is run by a small handle.

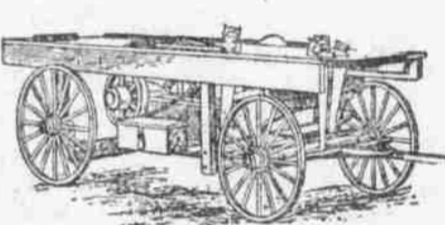
The vegetables are put inside the cylinder and the tank filled with water. The handle is turned and the dirt is very quickly washed off.

The cylinder is made so as to be easily removed from the tank for cleaning. Two or three of the wires must be so arranged that they can be loosened easily for putting the vegetables in and taking them out.

PUTS WORKBENCH ON WHEELS

Can Be Drawn by Horse or Hitched to Another Vehicle—Gasoline Engine is Attached.

The accompanying sketch shows how I made a handy workbench on wheels, which can be drawn by a horse or hitched on behind another vehicle and taken out on a job of work, says a writer in Popular Mechanics. A small gasoline engine hung on supports beneath the bench runs a circular saw.



Workbench on Wheels.

A place is provided for all tools necessary to be used on any one job.

CARE OF FARM WORK HORSES

Animals Should Be Pampered and Fed Generously to Sustain Vigor and Good Spirits.

Horses employed for farm work should be pampered and should be fed generously so as to sustain vigor and good spirits. A team ill-fed and consequently in poor condition and feeble will not accomplish much real hard work and it is a waste of time to hire an expensive hand to drive such a team.

The harness, and particularly the collar, should be accurately adjusted to the horse. If the collar is either too tight or too loose it galls him and seriously affects his breathing.

The work horses should be fed early in the morning and they should have a liberal feeding. The comfort and rest of the team will be vastly promoted if the harness is entirely removed at noon while they are feeding. Allow them plenty of time for a good meal and partial digestion before they are put to work for the afternoon. It is poor policy to put them to work right after eating a hearty meal or upon a full stomach.

If we would allow the teams more rest at noon we would accomplish more work than when they are only allowed time to swallow their food. At evening let them be well groomed and their legs and bellies relieved of mud and filth.

The practise of many farmers of driving a team through cold water to wash the filth off their feet and legs is dangerous, as it causes many diseases that they are subject to.

A warm or overheated team should not be put in a cold, airy place, but first exercised and then blanketed and put in a warm stable and after the blankets are removed they should be wiped dry with straw or cloths.

When a team has been exposed to rains they should not be left to become dry, but should be rubbed dry, as chills, fevers and other ailments often result from allowing them to dry by the evaporation of the moisture from their bodies.

Grass Lands in Grain.

Humus-making crops are such grasses as timothy, clover, blue grass, bromegrass and alfalfa. It has been found grass land plowed is under better conditions of moisture and freer from weeds than land that has grown grain continuously.

LOSS IN HANDLING MANURE

Much of Good Qualities Lost by Exposure to Elements for Period of Four Months.

(By ANTON C. WAGNER.)

One of our experimental stations has shown by careful investigation that when the stable manure is piled up and left exposed to the rains the loss from leaching of the fertile elements is very large. The New Jersey station finds that manure exposed for 100 days lost over one-half of the nitrogen, one-half of the phosphoric acid, the same proportion of the potassium had been lost. More than one-half of the constituents had been lost by an exposure of less than four months. Work from other experiment stations confirms this.

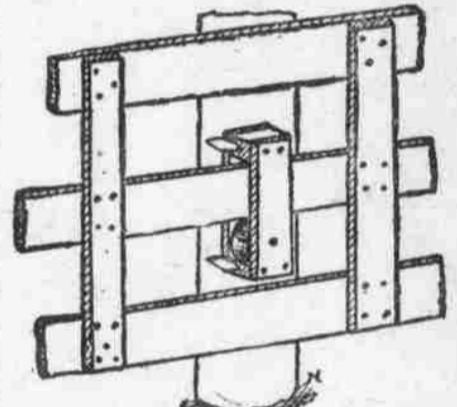
A great deal of valuable manure is also lost in badly arranged stables, where there are poor facilities for recovering the manure. The valuable liquid manure is lost by drainage.

The best way to save all the fertile elements in manure is to haul it on the fields and meadows and spread it evenly over the land. Washed into the soil it is preserved for the next crop.

EASY WORKING GATE HANGER

Discarded Wheel From Cultivator or Pulley May Be Utilized—Simple of Construction.

Any old pulley or cultivator wheel may be utilized as an easy working hanger for your farm gates, with but a few moments' time to construct. The two sides of hanger are cut long enough so they will allow ample space for the two ends of hanger, the wheel and the one board of gate, as shown in illustration. Make the two ends



The Gate Hanger.

or spreaders the width of the pulley or wheel, and after boring holes for the bolt to hold pulley in place in the sides of hanger nail together as illustrated. Fasten same to the gate post with two strap hinges at ends of hanger, which allow the gate to be swung to one side, as well as pushed back.

The gate is hung by leaving off the center board and placing it through hanger, then nailing to the cross-pieces of gate.

Saving the Value of Manure.

Hauling manure directly to the field as soon as made and scattering it is the safest method of handling. By this method nothing is lost by fermentation and very little by bleaching. When the manure is plowed under the fermentation takes place slowly, and no nitrogen is lost. The carbon dioxide and acids produced unite with the other elements in the soil and result in more plant food being made available. All the organic matter is saved for humus in the soil.

Making Mulch of Litter.

Don't burn up any kind of coarse litter that accumulates around the feedyard, but save to mulch different plants in the garden. If some manure is mixed with the litter, so much the better. Such mulch will make melons, cucumbers and many other plants bear more heavily and will save cultivation after they are well started.



FARM NOTES

Don't depend upon the frost-bitten pasture; there is nothing in it. A little neglect at this time of year may start a long winter of loss.

The pinch of a frosty night will make a big hole in the pocketbook.

Store the ladders under cover, but give them a good coat of paint first.

A bolt through a weak tree-crotch may save a split tree—if applied in time.

A piece of zinc put on the live coals in the stove will clean out the stove-pipe.

A hard collar is not as hard upon the shoulders of a horse as one that is unevenly padded.

An extra feed increases growth, if of a suitable kind, and makes larger animals at maturity.

Banana oil, applied to any metal surface with a soft brush, is an excellent rust preventive.

Bring the cultivator in when the first row has been cleaned out. No time like the now-time for that.

Fall plowing helps to destroy the grasshopper broods that otherwise would do damage another season.

As soon as the late frosts have killed all the plants, take them up and burn them to destroy as many insects as possible.

The value of any fertilizer depends upon what it is made of. It cannot furnish food to crops unless it has the food to furnish.