

The Yellow Letter



by William Johnston

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SYNOPSIS.

Harding Kent calls on Louise Farris 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 Farris, had talked with Katharine over the telephone just before she shot herself. A torn piece of yellow paper is found at night of which General Farris 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 outcry puzzles the detectives. Kent and Davis search Crandall's room and find an address, Lock Box 17, 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 investigation. He discovers that the woman is Sarah Socket 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 Farris home. Louise again implores Kent to drop the investigation and refuses to give any explanation. Later, Kent sees Crandall and Louise in an automobile. Kent returns to Ardway. Davis announces that he has planned to arrest the missing postmaster and also the master criminal. While seeking the criminals, Kent comes across Louise and Crandall. Pursued by Davis the postmaster jumps out a precipice and is killed. Also, the master criminal is found in a hut in a morphia stupor. Louise tells Kent that she and Crandall had come to get papers from Young which gave him a strange hold over General Farris. It is shown that Crandall's only interest in the case was to help Katharine recover her father's papers. Young is shackled and bound with morphia just out of his reach. In an attempt to make him confess and give up the papers.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)
"If you had seen the name of Andrew Elser in it," said Davis, "would you not have examined it?"
"Was his name there?"
"Yes, and also the names of the Bridgeport victim and Dora Hastings and Henry Eberle. It was Young or Rouser who sent out the yellow letters and checked the list, using just plain, ordinary shorthand for such words as 'Sent,' 'Answered,' 'Five Thousand.' Fortunately, the list shows that while more than five hundred letters were sent out, hardly a dozen had brought responses, and in only three cases had money been received."

"Was General Farris's name on the list?"
"No," answered Davis sleepily, "but I hardly expected to find it there."
"And the letters sent out," I persisted, "were they the yellow letters?"
"Of course."
"What was in them?"
"That's just what I've got to find out from Young," said Davis, and in another minute he was fast asleep.
As I saw Davis lying there a new thought came to me. If he could extract the information he wanted from Young, what was to hinder me from doing it? Surely our prisoner by now had seen the hopelessness of his position and would be ready to talk. At least there would be no harm in trying.

I entered the room where Young was, and, approaching his couch, laid my hand on his shoulder, he had been lying there with his eyes closed, and the mere touch of my hand so jolted his shattered nerves that his whole body bounded to the limit of his bonds. His tightened lips showed how difficult it was for him to suppress a scream.

"Look here, Young," said I, "I've come to you as a friend to tell you just how the land lies. Rouser is dead and the inspector has possession of all his papers. He knows everything about the yellow letters."

"An evil smile was Young's only answer—the cunning leer of the man who scents a trick.
"There are stacks and stacks of evidence against you. We have the list of people to whom Rouser sent letters."

"Damn your evidence!" he sneered. "You may have evidence against that fool Rouser, but you've nothing on me. If the inspector, as you call him, had evidence enough to convict me, do you suppose he'd have me tied up here? He hasn't a bit of evidence against me. He never will have. Reach me that medicine."

He jerked his head in the direction of the morphia that lay so tantalizingly near. There was something in his voice, some indefinable power of persuasiveness that almost influenced me to do what he asked. Involuntarily my hand went out to the bottle containing the solution, but I caught myself in time.

"Go on, hand it to me," he begged. "Can't you see how I need it? Give it to me and I'll tell you anything you want to know."
"Tell me first," said I, "and you shall have it."

"I can't talk, I can't think," he cried, "till I get it. You can see for yourself how shaky I am."

I could see for myself that he was suffering the torture of the damned. Every muscle in his body seemed to be jerking involuntarily, doubling itself into little hungry knots that joined his aching nerves in the shrill clamor for morphia—morphine.

"Give me just one dose," he pleaded, "and I'll tell you anything, everything you want to know. I'll die if I don't get it."

So pitiable was his condition that I found myself sympathizing with him in spite of myself. My eyes followed his glance to the chair near the couch, where, beside the hypodermic syringe and the morphia, Davis, as if to accentuate the torture of his fetters, had placed the key that unlocked them. I would not have known how to administer the morphia, even if I had wished to do so, and besides, I had a strong aversion to drugging a fellow-man, but as I saw the key there, I thought of a solution.

"If I unlock the fetters on your arms," said I, "so that you can reach the morphia, will you promise me to answer my question?"

"I'll promise on my word of honor to answer every question you ask," he replied, an eager light coming into his eyes.

"I swear it—on my mother's honor." Thinking how amazed Davis would be when he awoke to learn that I had the prisoner's full confession, I reached for the key. Young turned over as far as he could to permit me to unlock the fetters.

Then, quick as lightning, as the steel fell away from his wrists, his hands shot out and clutched my neck with maniac strength. I felt my eyes bulge, my lungs fill to bursting. I put forth my hands to try to shake off his grip, but I felt my strength fast failing.

Athletically inclined though I have always been, and matched though I was against a drug-weakened wretch with fettered feet, I found myself not equal for his maniacal desperation. Back and forth over the couch we swayed in a silent death-struggle, my cut-off breath all the while pounding unpurified through my bursting lungs, my brain turning weak, and my sight growing dim. I was beaten. I knew I could hold out but a few seconds



I Felt My Eyes Bulge, My Lungs Fill to Bursting.

longer. I saw nothing ahead of me but death—strangled to death by a drug fiend.

There passed through my mind in my struggles a vivid picture of what was about to happen. Young would silently choke me to death. Silently he would hobble with his fettered feet to where Davis lay in the lean-to sound asleep and brain him with a blow. He would cast off his fetters and before the constable would return to find our bodies would make his escape on Rouser's bicycle. The mystery of the yellow letters never would be explained. Poor Louise—
Young's hands fell from my throat and I staggered back gasping for

breath. I thought at first that the strain had been too much for his drug-racked body, but soon I saw what had happened. His muscles had not weakened, but his will. Standing over him was Davis with a revolver pointed at his head. Even before I had recovered myself Davis had the fetters readjusted and the rope passed through them.

Our lives were saved. The mystery might yet be solved, despite my foolhardiness.

As soon as my aching throat would permit me to speak I began making abject apologies for my foolhardy conduct and trying to express my thanks, but he would not listen to me.

"I guess you'll guard him safely enough now," he said, and once more was fast asleep.

With something of the feeling of a chastised school-boy who knows he deserved far more than he got, I sat down beside the couch and for four long hours watched the struggles and heard the curses and listened to the entreaties of the drug-mad prisoner.

But now I had no sympathy left for him.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Forty-Ninth Hour.

Two days—two unforgettable days—we passed there in the hut, Davis and I and our self-tortured prisoner. Each day the constable came and went, the first day to tell us that the inspector's plan for disposing of the postmaster's body had been successful and that no suspicion had been aroused. The second day a pleasant mission brought him to deliver telegrams from Crandall and Louise that all was well, that the general was slowly improving and that Katharine was recovering rapidly.

And all the while Young lay there bound, defying us, now cursing, now pleading, now in brilliant phrases striving to convince us by logical arguments so deft, so forceful, so cunning that a weaker and less wise man than Davis might have been convinced by them.

His logic failing he would turn to merciless invective and ribald threats, his penetrating voice making the whole hut hideous as he prophesied for us both grotesque horrible deaths, brain-breaking punishments in this world and the next. Then, overcome once more by the intensity of his unsatisfied desire for the drug that had long been his master, he would moan and plead and weep for morphia. At times delusions would seize his brain. By the hour he would rave of beautiful cities and wonderfully fair women and pleasant pastimes. Majestic lines of poetry would flow from his fevered lips, to end in a shriek of agony as his quivering, knotted muscles all but tore his nerves apart. Again the weird morphia fantasies would take hold of him and a rush of horrible grotesque ribaldries would foul the air.

But after forty-eight hours of this terrible torture nature would be put off no longer. She demanded rest. Young had sunk into a troubled, uneasy sleep about seven in the morning. Davis and I, having spelled each

one of them will have a so-called head is that their fault? It is the fault of society. It's our fault."

There was a stir on the couch and Young opened his eyes. The fire of the drug-madness and the look of hate seemed to have vanished.

"I give up," he said. "I can't stand the strain any longer. I'll tell you anything you want to know."

He spoke quietly and calmly. Yet there was something in his voice that rang true. I felt that this time he meant what he said. Apparently Davis, too, realized that at last Young's spirit was broken. Without hesitation, he seized the hypodermic



"Take Charge of These and Give Them to Miss Louise or Miss Katharine"

syringe and plunged it into Young's arm. The prisoner breathed a long sigh of relief. The color came back into his face and strength to his voice. His muscles stopped twitching.

"Now," said Davis gently, "where are the yellow letters hid?"
"In a tin-box under a flat stone near the spring," Young replied.

"Which stone?"
"It's the third from the spring coming this way."

Davis was up like a shot and out the door, reappearing quickly with an ordinary document box.

"And the Farris papers—where are they?" he asked sharply.

"They are in the box, too," said Young wearily. "May I have another shot?"

Davis studied his face and felt his pulse and then reached for the syringe.

"Where's the key?" he asked as he finished administering the morphia.

"In my left trousers' pocket," Young answered apathetically.

Quickly Davis possessed himself of the key and opened the box. In the top tray were perhaps fifty letters, type-written on yellow paper, with a blank left for the name to be filled in. Without stopping to read the letters, which seemed to be all after the same form, Davis lifted the tray. In the bottom of the box was a type-written list of names and a bulky sealed legal envelope, marked on the outside "Papers in the Farris case."

"Here, Kent," said Davis, handing me the envelope, "take charge of these and give them to Miss Louise or Miss Katharine. You're entitled to that."

Joyfully I stowed the envelope in my breast pocket, my heart bounding at the thought of the relief the sight of the package would bring to the Farris family. But as yet the whole affair was a blind puzzle to me and I waited eagerly for further developments.

"Now, Young," said the inspector, "tell me all about your scheme."

"If the damn thieves hadn't been such cowards as to go and kill themselves," said Young with a glow of enthusiasm, "I would have been a millionaire within a year. Read one of the letters and you can see for yourself just how good the scheme was."

Lifting the topmost sheet the inspector read the yellow letter aloud:

Lock Box 17,
Ardway, N. J., Feb. 8, 1910.

Dear Sir:
I am writing to you in pursuance of my duty as executor of the late Edwin Green, who died here recently, leaving his entire estate, amounting to some \$300,000, in my hands for what he was pleased to term a "Defaulters' Fund."

I can best explain its purpose by briefly summarizing the founder's life. In his early youth Mr. Green was employed for a short time in a bank in a small city in another state. Becoming involved in speculation he used several hundred dollars of the bank's funds. He had no relatives but a sister, to whom he knew it was useless to apply for aid. As discovery seemed inevitable he was contemplating suicide, seeing nothing but prison and disgrace ahead of him. But an old friend of his father, who entirely by accident learned of his plight, advanced him the money he needed to make good his defalcation, exacting from him a promise that he would help others in similar plight whenever he had opportunity.

His subsequent life was of the highest repute. Though he amassed a fortune he never found opportunity to aid any one in a plight similar to the one in which he once found himself. It became almost a mania with him and resulted in his leaving his entire fortune to aid first offenders in turning back into the right path.

I know of no way of reaching the persons he intended to aid. I am sending out this letter to persons employed in banks and positions of trust, hoping that you or others who receive it may know of some man, young or old, who has made the first misstep and is wrongfully using funds belonging to others, but is desirous of making good his peculations. If you should know of any such I will gladly make good his defalcation and endeavor to save him from exposure, disgrace and imprisonment, asking only his word that he will not err again, for Mr. Green, in the deed of trust, expressly specifies that this is the only security to be exacted. I am, sir,

Very truly yours,
HENRY MALCOLM STEWART
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ERADICATE HOG LOUSE

Vigorous and Patient Treatment is Required.

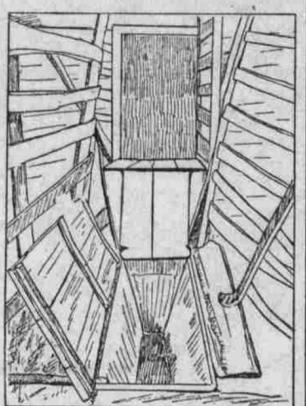
Blood-Sucking Parasites Cause Much Irritation of Skin—In Dipping Creoline is Better Than Lime and Sulphur.

(By N. S. MAYO.)

The hog louse is a common parasitic pest on swine and one that requires vigorous and patient treatment to eradicate. The hog louse is one of the largest of the lice that attacks domestic animals. They are readily seen traveling about on the bristles, usually on the neck, back of the ears, moving with a peculiar sliding motion. The eggs or "nits" are small, white, oval bodies attached to the bristles. Hog lice may be found on almost any part of the animal's body, but are most common about the neck, ears and back of the elbow.

These are blood-sucking parasites and, by biting the hog and abstracting blood, they cause a good deal of irritation of the skin. The animal rubs on posts and other objects and the coat looks rough and harsh. The parasite and eggs are easily found upon examination. The parasites are transmitted from one animal to another by contact, or by contact with infected bedding or quarters.

Dipping the animals three or four times at intervals of ten days will usually free them from these parasites,



Vat for Dipping Hogs.

provided the sleeping quarters are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. In dipping to kill lice, the coal-tar dips of the creoline type are better than lime and sulphur. If the hog wallows are kept well filled with water, to which some of the creoline dips are added every ten days, the swine will usually free themselves from the lice. Another good way of combating the parasites is to tie gunnysacks or other coarse cloths around rubbing posts and keep these cloths saturated with crude petroleum.

There are many coal-tar "dips" on the market. They are made from the products of the distillation of coal tar and have a variety of trade names. Creoline is one of these preparations. They are all dark-colored liquids with a strong coal-tar odor and when mixed with water form a milky white or slightly brownish emulsion. We have tried several kinds with excellent results. Practically all druggists have these dips, but we would advise using a dip made by a well-known and reliable firm. These dips should be used at the strength of one part of the dip to forty or fifty parts of water. If rain water is obtainable it is preferred to "hard" water. These dips should be used warm. There should be a dipping vat on every hog farm. They may be made of wood, galvanized iron or cement. They are set in the ground at a convenient place so that there is good surface drainage away from the vat. A good size for a large vat is ten feet long on top, eight feet long on the bottom, and two feet wide on top. The end where the hogs enter should be perpendicular and the other end inclined, with cleats, so that the hogs can emerge after swimming through. The entrance should be by a slide. Such a tank is very useful wherever hogs are kept in numbers, as frequent dipping tends to keep the hogs healthy and free from parasites.

Incubator No Miracle Worker.

Do not expect your incubator, no matter of what make or of what cost, to perform impossibilities. Then see that your eggs to fill are fresh and have been well handled. Eggs should be from stock that is strong and vigorous, and free from disease. One cannot expect good hatches from eggs laid by hens that have been weakened by roup or kindred troubles.

Charcoal From Cobs.

Charcoal is a health promoter for the fowls. If you will put some ears of corn in a hot oven and let them burn quite black and feed when the grain gets cold enough you will perhaps be astonished to see how greedily the poultry will partake of the charred corn. Give such a feed every two weeks.

Seeds From Alaska.

Alaska will some day provide farmers in lower altitudes with grain seeds superior to what they grow at home.

Wheat Map of World.

The wheat map of the world is an exact map of the highest civilization of the world.

WATER REQUIRED FOR SHEEP

Animals With Bountiful Supply Produce More Mutton Than Those That Are Deprived of It.

Experiments carried on with cattle showed that cattle given plenty of water with their pasture contained more moisture and less dry matter than did the carcasses of cattle given pasture but no additional moisture. It is a generally accepted principle of feeding that it costs more and more to produce meat as the moisture decreases and the dry matter increases. From this we are able to deduce the fact that it costs less to grow the steers that had plenty of water, and so made watery carcasses, than it did to grow the steers that had no water other than that in their food and reproduced a dry carcass.

What is true in the case of steers would hold equally true in the case of sheep. Sheep given plenty of water will produce mutton more cheaply than will those deprived of it. Muscle expansion will be more active in the one case than in the other, and that is another reason why mutton production would be cheaper.

There is considerable water in any of the pasture crops that sheep eat, and they get still more moisture from the dew that collects on the grass blades in early morning and late evening; but from these two sources, while it gets enough water to keep it alive, a sheep still does not get enough water to keep it in the very best growing condition nor to keep all its bodily processes going on in the most effective manner possible.

There is not an organ in the body that can function properly without water to aid it. Being one of the chief constituents of blood, water is carried to every part of the system, and not alone helps it in getting its nourishment, but also in ridding it of its impurities. It is obvious that a large amount of water must be necessary to keep the sheep doing well. Enough is not gotten with the food, even in summer, and this amount should be supplemented by all that the sheep will drink when given constant access to it.

CULL OUT UNDESIRABLE HENS

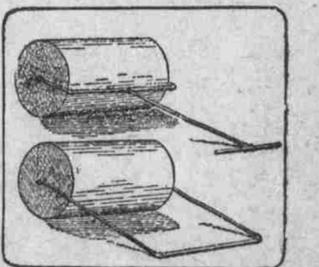
All Fowls That Have Passed Their Term of Usefulness Should Be Marketed at Once.

It is always reasonable to cull out the undesirable birds from a flock, says the Poultry Journal. All hens that have passed their term of usefulness should be marketed. While culling should be continued throughout the entire year, the most heroic work should be done in the fall. What we call yearlings in poultry are those which were hatched the year before the pullets. They are nearer two years old than one, and make excellent breeders. After breeding pick out of this flock such as are considered unprofitable. What we call the two-year-olds are the ones that are going into their second molt. Very often some excellent layers are found among these, and it pays to keep such, but at that age the closer we cull the better will be our profits. This culling, however, can only be successful by close watching. No matter how valuable a hen may be, if she proves to be a feather puller or an egg eater, she, too, should be sent with the lot of culls to market.

HOMEMADE LAWN ROLLER

Practical and Substantial Implement Will Keep Grass in Fine Shape and Discourage Moles.

Frequent rolling with a heavy roller keeps the lawn in fine shape and helps to discourage moles from working in it, says the Farm and Home. A practical and substantial roller for this purpose may be made of cement with gaspipe axle and handle. It should weigh about 200 pounds and should



Home-Made Lawn Roller.

be about two feet long. A piece of 15-inch salt-glazed sewer tile makes a good form. Forms can also be made of wood from narrow slats or galvanized iron. In the latter case the form may be left on the roller.

Do Not Feed Moldy Corn.

Moldy corn will produce blind staggers in horses, and it should never be fed to them. Every year there is considerable trouble with this disease in the west, and in almost every case the cause is moldy corn. If this corn does not produce blind staggers, it will tend to injure the physical condition of the animal. So don't feed it, and be careful about pasturing the horses in stalk fields where there is moldy corn.

Using More Brains.

In live stock and dairying, brains are more used today than brawn.

Corn Alone Unprofitable.

Hogs cannot be raised profitably on corn alone.