The Yellow Letter

by William Johnston

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Illustrations by Y. L. Barnes

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 Elsser, 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 37, 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.

CHAPTER VII.

Two Disappearances.

I looked at my watch and saw that it was nearly noon. I remembered that I had not yet called up Louise as I had intended to do the very first thing that morning. What a laggard lover she must think me! How heartless it must seem to her for me to leave her alone so long in the mansion where here father and sister lay dying, perhaps dead, with the black shadow mystery still hanging over her and them! What must she think of me? Filled with self-reproach I sprang up without a word of apology or explanation to the others and hastened to the telephone booth I had observed in the hall.

"Give me O141 Madison," I demanded of central.

"What's the matter?" she repeated, with surprise in her tone, which struck me peculiarly until I considered that long-distance calls from Ardway must be such a rarity as to surprise even the operator.

"I want long-distance—New York," I explained, enunciating distinctly, "O141 Madison."

"Again," central replied, flippantly, it appeared to me.

I repeated the number, more than annoyed by her response. "Oh, I've got your number all right by this time."

It was a good thing for her that she tried no more jocularity with me, or the rules of the company against profanity would have been shattered. There was a wait of several minutes, filled with the usual false alarms of long-distance telephoning, during which I stood and fumed. At last I heard my dear Louise's voice and hastened eagerly to ask after her welfare. Her voice seemed strong and cheerful, though she admitted that she had slept little the night before. I apologized for not having called up before. She told me that while her father's condition was unchanged, the doctor thought he was in no immediate danger, and that Katharine was much improved. The doctor believed now that she could live. She was conscious, but very weak, and Louise had been forbidden to speak to her and was allowed in the room only for a minute at a time. I hastily sketched for her the events of the morning.

"Oh, Mr. Kent," said Louise's voice—how I wished she would call me by my first name—"who do you suppose called up?"

"Who?"

"Hugh Crandall."

"What's that?" I exclaimed, hardly believing my ears.

"Hugh Crandall," she repeated a little louder and more distinctly. "He asked for Katharine, and the maid called me to the telephone. I told him my sister was ill and could not come to the telephone. He seemed greatly agitated and insisted on knowing what the matter was. He was so agitated and persistent I finally told him she had met with an accident. He was silent for so long I thought he had left the telephone, but all of a sudden he asked, 'Did she shoot herself?' and before I thought I answered 'Yes.' Then he cried out, 'Oh, my God!' or something like that and asked if she was fatally injured. I told him that she was alive but unconscious, and then, Harding, he asked if I had seen anything of a yellow letter. I thought I had better tell him nothing about that, so I answered 'No,' and then he rang off."

"That was right," I said. "Where did he call up from?"

"I have no idea."

"When was it? How long ago?"

"Not very long—within the hour."

Hastily I explained to Louise that a man that I believed was Crandall was here in the hotel with me and that I would find him at once and make him explain the mystery. Before I left the booth I got the Ardway central again and from her learned what I had begun to suspect—that "O141 Madison" had been called from the very booth in which I stood, not over an hour before. There was no longer any doubt about it in my mind—Cook was Crandall. He evidently had gone straight to the telephone booth after slipping out of the room as I had asked the question about the yellow letter. From the questions he put to Louise, he must have been suspecting that Katharine would try suicide. Why else had he asked if she had shot herself? He must have known her motive. He surely could explain the dark mystery that burdened her father and herself.

I resolved to seek him at once and, even if I had to have him arrested on some pretext, or if I had to use physical force, to make him disgorge all he knew. I felt in my pocket to make sure that the revolver Davis had given me was there, and hurried back to the office.

"Have you seen anything of Cook?" I asked, trying to mask the eagerness with which I sought him.

"Not since this morning," the landlord volunteered. "I guess you saw him after I did. The coroner told me you saw him leaving the room during the inquest."

"I seen him," volunteered the clerk.

"Where? When?" I asked excitedly.

"About an hour ago, driving past here lickety-split with the black mare from Jones' livery stable."

"Which direction did he go?" I cried, all excitement at the thought that Crandall was escaping just at the very moment when I, for the first time, had made sure of his identity.

"He must be followed and found at once," I said, turning to the landlord. "Don't his actions look to you like those of a guilty man? The minute he hears me ask about a yellow letter he disappears from the hotel. There is no train by which he can escape. So desperate is he that he hires a horse and tries to get away cross country."

I had hoped by my eagerness to stir in the landlord something of my own feeling in regard to Crandall's guilt, but these country yokels are hard to move.

"What do you suspect him of?" he inquired calmly. "Why should he want to escape from you? Have you got a warrant for him?"

I was not yet ready to divulge my reason for wanting Crandall captured. Even if we had him, what definite crime was there of which I could accuse him? I was morally certain that the yellow letter or letters emanated from him, yet how could I prove it? A new thought came to me.

"Where is his baggage?" I asked.

"He only had a hand-satchel with him," said Mr. Williams, "and I guess that is up in his room."

"Suppose we go look for it," I suggested.

"You don't do no such thing as that in my hotel," said the landlord decisively, "not unless you've got a warrant. He's paid for his room for a week in advance, and there ain't no law to prevent his going and coming as he pleases, so long as there ain't no warrant out for him. If he wants to get out of town behind the fastest horses in Jones' stable I ain't a-going to try to stop him, and what's more, if he has left his grip in his room it is going to stay there. Maybe or maybe not there are things in it, but there ain't no prying stranger going to know what's there unless he can show me due warrant of law."

"You may be defeating the ends of justice," I warned him sternly, indignantly resenting his remark, yet seeing no way in which I could successfully dodge his appellation of "prying stranger" without revealing my whole hand, and this I was determined not to do until Davis arrived and I had had an opportunity to consult with him.

"I may be blocking your plans," said the landlord gruffly, "but you'll get no more help out of me unless I know what it is you are after. The right kind of a mystery doesn't hurt the hotel business, but there's things that do, and if you want any help from me, young man, I've got to know what's going on."

"I wish I knew myself," I said mentally, adding aloud: "When I am ready to speak you will hear many things that will astound you. Meanwhile, I tell you that I have every reason to believe that that man who fled from here is a great criminal and that if you do not aid in his apprehension you will be doing a serious wrong to the community. I'll tell you this much, I am convinced that he was responsible for this woman's death and for other deaths."

"Maybe he is and maybe he ain't," said the landlord. "I saw the lady myself, and nobody can persuade me it was anything but a suicide. Why, I cut her down!"

"I am not denying that she committed suicide," I replied with some asperity, "but I am morally certain that if she killed herself she was driven to it by the man who has just fled. I insist on being allowed to examine his baggage."

"Look here, young man," said Mr. Williams, "I have told you once and for all that the baggage of no guest in this house is going to be examined without due process of law. And I want to say right here that it's evident that you yourself know a lot more about this case than you are telling. If you are an officer and can show me a warrant I am ready to give you all the aid and assistance I can, but until you do, I'd advise you to keep your nose out of things that ain't your business and to stay out of places you ain't got a right to be in."

The suspicion crossed my mind that it might be he who had discovered me in the post office the night before. I decided quickly that it could not have been, for he was in the hotel when I arrived. I felt sure it must have been either Crandall or the postmaster. Plainly, though, there was nothing further to be gained by argument with the obtuse Mr. Williams. After all, there ought not to be much difficulty in tracing Crandall by the vehicle in which he had driven away. That could wait until Davis arrived. Meanwhile I pondered on what I could do to throw light on the case, if I had it. I would visit the post office again and see what I could learn about the holder of the lock box from which Davis believed the yellow letters came.

Abruptly leaving the landlord, I strolled out into the street, determined to go boldly to the post office and make inquiries. As I approached the building I saw a little group of villagers gathered in front of it, the faces of some of whom I had noted at the inquest. They seemed to be excitedly discussing some happening. It was not without some trepidation that I came closer. If my visit to the post office had been discovered and there was anyone in the crowd who could identify me, an awkward situation might develop. I put on a bold front, however, and approached closer.

"What's the matter?" I asked, trying to make my inquiry seem casual.

"The postmaster's disappeared," some one explained.

"Where?"

"Don't know," said my informant. "He didn't come to the office at all today. When the people come for their mail after the New York train got in he wasn't here. Hank Rollins always brings it up on the stage, and as he's passing, throws it off on the board walk and the postmaster comes out and gets it. Nobody ever goes for their mail for a few minutes after that, to give him a chance to get it sorted. The first persons who got here today found the mail-sack lying just where the driver had flung it."

"Yes, sir," broke in an old man whom I heard then call "Dad" Hutchinson. "Yes, sir, I was the first to notice it. I was going to the office to see if maybe there was a letter for me from my daughter Mary, who lives up Boston way, and I noticed the sack lying right over there. I went into the office to tell the postmaster about it and kind of have a little fun with him, and bless my soul if there was hide or hair of him to be seen anywhere. Looking through the boxes, I could see that the back door was standing open, and I went around there and looked, and I couldn't see anything of him, either. It didn't seem right for the mail to be lying out there on the sidewalk, 'twas like taking undue liberty with government property, so I dragged the sack around and flung it in the door and went looking for the constable. Then I heard about the suicide and the inquest down to the hotel, so I went down there to fetch him, and all the crowd that had been down to the inquest came trailing along."

"I noticed when I come along here last night that the post office was dark," volunteered another of the crowd. "I don't know just what time it was, but it was just before it began to rain. I remember, now, thinking it kind of funny the office was shut up so early, but I didn't stop to investigate. I'll bet he wasn't here last night, either."

"It's burglars, that's what it is," said an excited youngster. "I saw them at work. I come along here last night and there was a flash, like from a dark lantern. Right in there behind the boxes, it was. They must a been at work then. I'll bet they killed him all he knew and a little more. I took advantage of the furor his story had created to slip around to the rear of the building, where I found a self-appointed committee of citizens and the constable guarding the door.

"Has anything been stolen?" I asked.

"Not as far as we can discover," said the constable. "There ain't no disorder about the place and the safe hasn't been busted, as far as I can see. I ain't made any regular investigation, being as this is government property."

"Has no one any idea where the postmaster is?" I asked.

"That's just what we've been trying to find out. Jim, here, as soon as we found Rouser wasn't here, went up to the Widow Smith's, where he boards. Thought maybe he'd just overslept or something like that, or maybe was sick. But Mrs. Smith went up and looked in his room and come down and said he hadn't been home all night."

"Yes," interrupted Jim, "and what's more, she said it was nothing unusual for him not to come home. There was lots and lots of nights recently when he didn't show up. She had no idea where he spent his nights. She's a woman that minds her own business and don't interfere none with her boarders' goings and comings as long as they pay their money regular."

"What are you going to do about keeping the office open?" I asked, much puzzled over this new mystery. How I wished for Davis! Mystery seemed to be piling on mystery with every step I took. Beyond the one conviction I had that Hugh Crandall was in some way to blame for it all, I saw nothing that would help me in my undertaking.

"We've arranged about that. We've sent for Jennie Cox to come over and take charge. She always takes hold when Charlie Rouser wants to take a day or a half-day off. She knows the combination of the safe and the money-drawer, and has been sworn in as special assistant. She'll know what to do and who to notify."

"It may interest you to know that Post Office Inspector Davis will be out here tonight," I told them. "I left him in New York last night, and he promised to join me here."

Suspicion flashed into the faces of all my auditors.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The Walking Cure.

Doctors are of one mind in advocating walking as one of the best means of keeping the human machine in good working order, and one of New York's foremost medical authorities went as far as to say, in a lecture to young men studying for the profession, that if every adult could be persuaded to make a conscientious habit of walking five miles every day, there would be such a prompt and general improvement in health that doctors would soon have to be looking for other ways of making a living.

"The Postmaster's Disappeared," Some One Explained.

and hid his body and made away with all the money and stamps."

"How many of them were there?"

"Did you see them?"

"What time was it?"

Questions poured thick and fast on the youngster, who evidently had told

Fifty Years in Prisons

Old Englishman Who Had Spent Three-Fourths of His Life Behind the Bars.

An extraordinary spectacle was presented in the dock at the London sessions, the other day—a gray haired, bearded man, 68 years of age, who had spent three parts of his life—half a century—in prison for thefts which today would call forth a comparatively trifling sentence. He was a laborer, named George Lawrence, and was found "guilty" of being an habitual criminal. He also pleaded guilty to having stolen a coat and other articles from an office in Chelsea. The judge, commenting on some of the man's sentences—five years for stealing coats and three terms of ten years for stealing forks, a box, and an overcoat respectively—said that for any one of those offenses he would nowadays probably only receive three months' imprisonment. It was an echo of the brutal system of years ago. "In all I have served nearly 50 years in prison," said the old convict, "and I don't suppose the things I stole were worth £20 altogether. I have never had a chance in my life." The judge at first passed sentence of three years' penal servitude for the theft and five years' preventive detention, saying it was the minimum the law allowed in such a case, but later he decided that the offense was one in which he could, having regard to the past treatment of the prisoner, pass a sentence of 12 months' hard labor, thus avoiding the sentence of preventive detention. When he heard the altered sentence, the old man, bringing his hand up to a military salute, exclaimed, in tones of gratitude: "I will endeavor to make it my very last, sir."

TWO MEN SHOT FOR LOVE OF A GIRL

Both Were Wounded at Same Street Corner After One Wooes the Lass.

HAD BEEN FRIENDS

Vigil at the Bedsides of the Wounded Men Brought Snatches of Story From the Weird Mental Wanderings of Their Delirium.

Chicago.—At 7 o'clock the other night John F. Carroll was shot through the back at Wentworth avenue and Twenty-second street as he was going to his home, 2817 Union avenue. The would-be assassin escaped. Carroll was taken to the People's hospital.

A few days before William Buckley was shot at the same corner while on the way to his home, 238 West Twenty-ninth place. His assailant escaped. He was taken to the People's hospital, where he remained in a five days' delirium.

The police of the Twenty-second street station got far enough into the mystery to find that both men are friends, both shot with pistols of the same caliber, both shot at the same corner, after dark in both instances, and stopped.

They could get no farther because both men were unconscious. No witnesses could be found. A reporter found a clew to the mystery. A two hour vigil at the bedsides of the wounded men brought snatches of the story from the weird mental wanderings of their delirium.

Buckley, who had been shot through the lung, talked almost constantly, covering a myriad of subjects. Carroll, whose abdomen had been penetrated, dwelt more on the actual tragedy.

The story, pieced from delirium, is this: Both men are friends. Sunday night they went together to a dance hall at Twenty-second street and Wentworth avenue.

Buckley and Carroll were about the only Irishmen at the dance, the majority of the others being Italians and Austrians. Buckley was smitten with a young Italian girl. Although she had a companion of her own nativity she seemed to prefer Buckley. Carroll danced with the girl, too. At one time while they were dancing Buckley said to the girl:

"Why don't you marry a white man?"

The girl indignantly left him and told her escort. When Buckley and Carroll left the hall together two men appeared. Buckley recognized one of them as the suitor of the girl he had affronted. The two men seized him. Carroll pulled one of them off just as the other fired a revolver. All three fled, leaving Buckley in the street.

Carroll kept away from the police, but set out on a hunt for his friend's assailant on his own account. After

Was Shot Through the Back.

several nights' vain search, he wandered to the same corner where his friend was shot. There was a flash, an explosion, and he fell. He did not see the would-be assassin. He crawled and staggered fully half a mile before he became unconscious. There the police found him.

MRS. ASTOR IN COUNTRY

Widow of Titanic Hero Nurses Baby at Father's Rural Home and Both Do Well.

Bernardsville, N. J. — Mrs. John Jacob Astor, who has been staying at her father's country place here, has found the outdoor life so beneficial and enjoyable, both to herself and to her 2-month-old baby, that she will postpone her return to New York for several weeks.

The youthful John Jacob Astor is said to be a model baby. He has increased rapidly in weight since his arrival here.

Mrs. Astor promptly vetoed the suggestion that the infant should be brought up as a bottle-fed baby, and expects to devote herself entirely to his care for at least a year.

Fined for Dancing "Turkey Trot."

Tarrytown, N. Y.—For dancing the "turkey trot" on John D. Archbold's sidewalk in front of the Catholic church here at 7 o'clock in the morning, Violet Munroe of New York and George Miller were fined $10.

Not Responsible for Fire.

New York.—A cat catching a mouse in the home of Gustave Schoen upset a lamp and set the house on fire and started a panic in the neighborhood which caused injury to three persons and a loss of $5,000.

No Broken Parts.

During the progress of the morning bath of a few months old infant a lite the neighbor girl came into the room carrying a doll and stood watching the operation for some time. The little girl's doll was much the worse for hard usage, being minus an arm and a leg. Finally she said to the mother of the child:

"How long have you had your baby?"

The child was informed, and, looking from her doll to the baby, she said:

"My, but you have kept it nice."—National Monthly.

DANDRUFF COVERED SCALP

2002 Cass St., St. Louis, Mo.—"For five years I suffered with itching of my body and scalp. My trouble began with a rash on my lower limbs which was very annoying, and my scalp was literally covered with dandruff. My hair used to come out by the handfuls and the itching of my body and scalp was terrible. I had used almost all the skin remedies on the market with no results, when I wrote for a little Cuticura Soap and Ointment and it gave me instant relief. Within one month's use of the Cuticura Soap and Ointment I was entirely cured. I cannot discover one strand of my hair coming out and I have not lost a minute of sleep since using the Cuticura Soap and Ointment, which entirely cured me of itching of my body and scalp in its worst form. I also find the Cuticura Soap a benefit in shaving." (Signed) Charles Judlin, Dec. 8, 1911.

Cuticura Soap and Ointment sold throughout the world. Sample of each free, with 32-p. Skin Book. Address post-card "Cuticura, Dept. L, Boston." Adv.

Too Much of a Good Thing.

"I was very happy," said the professor, "when for years of wooing, she finally said 'Yes.'"

"But why did you break the engagement so soon after?" asked his friend.

"Man, it was she that dissolved it." "Really?" said the friend. "How did that happen?"

"It was due to my accursed absent-mindedness. When, a few days later, I called at her home, I again asked her to marry me."—Youth's Companion.

No Scabs.

Blushing Bride—What was that our friends stuck all over our suit cases, dearest?

The Groom—Honey, love, that was a union label.

A CLERGYMAN'S TESTIMONY.

The Rev. Edmund Heslop of Wigton, Pa., suffered from Dropsy for a year. His limbs and feet were swollen and puffed. He had heart fluttering, was dizzy and exhausted at the least exertion. Hands and feet were cold and he had such a dragging sensation across the loins that it was difficult to move. After using 5 boxes of Dodds Kidney Pills the swelling disappeared and he felt himself again. He says he has been benefited and blessed by the use of Dodds Kidney Pills. Several months later he wrote: I have not changed my faith in your remedy since the above statement was authorized. Correspond with Rev. E. Heslop about this wonderful remedy.

Rev. E. Heslop.

Dodds Kidney Pills, 50c. per box at your dealer or Dodds Medicine Co., Buffalo, N. Y. Write for Household Hints, also music of National Anthem (English and German words) and recipes for dainty dishes. All 3 sent free. Adv.

At the Prison.

"What are you in for, my poor fellow?"

"I'm afraid it's for keeps."

Old Foes.

"How was the labor strike defeated?"

"It was done by capital management."

Contrary Causes.

"Why did Jinks break up housekeeping?"

"Because his wife broke down."

One Better.

"I've got a tireless cooker in my house."

"That's nothing. I've got a motionless husband in mine."

Cough, Cold Sore Throat

Sloan's Liniment gives quick relief for cough, cold, hoarseness, sore throat, croup, asthma, hay fever and bronchitis.

HERE'S PROOF.

MR. ALBERT W. FRICKE, Pawnee, Kan., writes: "We use Sloan's Liniment in the family and find it an excellent relief for colds and hay fever attacks. It stops coughing and allows us almost to sleep."

SLOAN'S LINIMENT

RELIEVED SORE THROAT.

MRS. L. BREWER, of Medulla, Fla., writes: "I bought one bottle of your Liniment and found it just the good in the world. My throat was very sore, and it cured me of my trouble."

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MR. W. H. STRAUSS, 270 Blackwell Avenue, Chicago, Ill., writes: "A little boy who I don't know was sick. I gave the mother Sloan's Liniment to try. She gave him three doses in half an hour, before going to bed, and he got up without the croup in the morning."

Price, 25c., 50c., $1.00

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that upon your physical condition depends your comfort and usefulness—that your condition will be bettered, your vigor increased—when your bowels are regulated, your liver stimulated and your digestion made sound by

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GILT EDGE, the only "gilt edge" shoe dressing that positively contains Oil. Blacks and Preserves sailors' and children's boots, leather and canvas without rubbing. 25c. "French Glossy" Blacks STAR combination for all shoes, 10c. "Dandy" size 5c. Kinds of razors or tan shoes, 10c. "Dandy" size 5c.

HARD ELITE enamel for patent leather, produces a gloss in having their shoes look like new. Restores colour and lustre to all black shoes. Brilliant with no brush or cloth. 25 cents. "Elite" size 25 cents.

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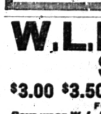

IF THERE is a time above all times when a woman should be in perfect physical condition it is the time previous to the coming of her baby.

During this period many women suffer from headache, sleeplessness, pains of various descriptions, poor appetite, and a host of other ailments which should receive careful attention in justice to the new life about to be ushered into this world.

DR. PIERCE'S FAVORITE PRESCRIPTION

is a scientific medicine carefully compounded by an experienced and skillful physician, and adapted to the needs and requirements of the female system. It has been recommended for over forty years as a remedy for those peculiar ailments which make their appearance in the female at the critical period. Motherhood is made easier by its use. Thousands of women have been benefited by this great medicine.

Your druggist can supply you in liquid or tablet form, or you can send 50 one-cent stamps for a trial box of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription Tablets, to Dr. Pierce, at Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, Buffalo.

It is your privilege to write to Dr. Pierce for advice, and it will be gladly given free of charge. Of course all communications are confidential.

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Boys wear W. L. Douglas $2.00, $2.50 & $3.00 School Shoes, because one pair will positively outwear two pairs of ordinary shoes, using an inferior leather.

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Ask your dealer to show you W. L. Douglas latest fashions for fall and winter wear, notice the *short vamps* which make the foot look smaller, points in shoe particularly desired by young men. Also the *conservative styles* which have made W. L. Douglas shoes a household word everywhere.

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