

# ON THE FARM

## TEST YOUR SEED.

If you buy seed of the seed man, demand a guarantee from him of its quality; then test the seed yourself, and find out if he is telling you the truth. Reliable seedsmen will guarantee their seeds, and if they do not do so, don't buy. Also don't grumble at the price of guaranteed seed.

One of the simplest and best methods of testing the germinating power of seed, is as follows: Secure a piece of blotting paper, or flannel cloth, moisten and fold together, after placing a counted number, say 100, of the seed between the folds. Put the blotter of cloth on a plate, and cover with another inverted plate, and place in a warm room. From 10 to 28 or 30 days should be allowed for the test, depending upon the kind of seed. The germinated seed should be counted and removed from day to day and at the end of the test the percentage of good seed may easily be computed. Seed may be tested in soil, but the germinations are likely to be from 10 to 15 per cent. lower than by the foregoing plan. The cloth or blotter plan is simple, and can be carried on during the cold weather, and before the busy season opens.

As to the germinating power of good seed, it should not be lower than 75 or 80 per cent., for the leading grain crops. The United States Department of Agriculture places the standard of germination for clean seed, harvested and preserved under favorable conditions, and not over one year old, for a number of vegetables and grains, as follows: Beans, 90 per cent.; beets, 142 plants from 100 seed balls; cabbage, 90 per cent.; carrots, 80; cauliflower, 80; celery, 60; corn, (fruit and sugar) 87; cucumber, 87; lettuce, 85; musk melon, 87; onion, 80; parsley, 70; parsnip, 70; peas, 93; pumpkin, 87; radish, 90; spinach, 84; squash, 87; tomatoes, 85; turnips, 90, and water melons, 87 per cent. These figures are based upon results secured in a sun testing apparatus, where the conditions of moisture and temperature could be controlled. Under ordinary methods the percentage obtained might not run as high, but would run sufficiently near it to give a good idea of the vitality of the seed.

Testing your seed is advisable, whether you buy your seed or grow it yourself. Unless the germinating power of the seed is known, it is impossible to tell how much seed to sow to the acre. If one is compelled, because of a bad crop, to fall back upon seed that is over a year old, the testing process is necessary.

Some recent French tests have shown that two year old carrot seed gives less leafy plants, and more highly colored roots than fresh seed. With pumpkins, squashes, melons and gherkins, seed two and three years old, proved most satisfactory. In a general way, therefore, it may be stated that while fresh seed gives the best results, there are some exceptions, more particularly in the case of vegetables. Generally speaking, it may be stated that fresh seed should be used, when it is desired to produce a plant with a strong leaf growth, while for plants which it is desired should head or fruit well, like cabbage, melon, cucumber, etc., it is preferable to use two or three years old seed.

## TREATMENT FOR SMUT.

The only way that smut can be eradicated, or lessened, in the grain crop, is to treat the seed before sowing. The two treatments most generally in use for this purpose are the formalin and bluestone methods. The former is gradually replacing the latter method.

For smut in oats put four ounces of formalin into 12 gallons of water. Put the oats in a pile and sprinkle the liquid over them, turning the grain so that all are well wetted; let the oats lie for a short time, and then spread out to dry. This quantity of fluid should be sufficient for treating 25 bushels of seed. This treatment is simple and very effective. Care should be taken to see that all the grain is thoroughly moistened by the solution, and that the seed is well dried afterwards.

Some recent tests made by Prof. Shuff, of the Central Experimental Farm, would indicate that the formalin or formaldehyde solution, should not be prepared until just before it is to be used. If the solution is made and exposed to the air for several days the water in the solution evaporates much more quickly than the formaldehyde, thus leaving it stronger than intended, and more liable to injure the grain.

Another treatment, beside the bluestone, is the hot water treatment. But this is more difficult to manage, entails more labor, and is hardly as effective as the others. The formalin treatment is now considered the simplest, and most reliable, and can be handled by any farmer with little difficulty. Where smut is bad, no seed should be sown without being treated, and, to be on the safe side, all seeds should be so treated.

## THE METHOD.

"He loves me" or "He loves me not," The question great to settle The maiden takes a daisy fair And amputates each petal. Perhaps her mind is set at rest And is no longer hazy. But all observers will agree It's tough upon the daisy.

# A House of Mystery

## OR, THE GIRL IN BLUE

### CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

I at last found the entrance to the adjoining room, but the door was closed. I tried the handle. It was locked.

This sudden check to my investigations caused me to pause. That a woman had been first struck down by a cowardly blow appeared evident, but of her identity I had no knowledge. The loud agonized shriek which had emanated from that inner room was, I felt convinced, that of the tender, sweet-voiced woman who had administered to my wants. It seemed, now that I recollected, as though she had been seated at the piano when the fatal blow was struck. The scream and the cessation of the music had occurred simultaneously.

Yet so confused had been the sounds of that extraordinary tragedy that I stood perplexed, utterly at a loss how to act.

The theory impressed itself upon me that a woman was responsible for both crimes. There was no disguising the fact that it was a woman who had stood panting near me, who had noiselessly tested me to ascertain whether I could distinguish objects about me, and who had afterwards left the house. My blindness had, no doubt, saved my life.

Before leaving she had for some unknown reason locked the communicating door and taken the key. But upon the air, after she had gone, there lingered the subtle fragrance of peau d'Espagne, the same perfume used by the woman whose cool palm had soothed my brow. Nevertheless, it seemed impossible that a woman could thus commit a double crime so swiftly and with such force as to drive a knife to the heart of a man and fling him back upon me—all in silence, without the utterance of one single word.

It seemed absolutely incredible. With my eyes only a void of blackness, this mystery was bewildering, and rendered the more tantalizing by my inability to gaze about me. I had been present at the enactment of a terrible drama, but had not witnessed it, and could not, therefore, recognize either culprit or victims.

Again I searched the great handsome room, in order to rivet all its details upon my memory. I had three long windows opening down to the floor, which showed that it was situated in the back of the house, otherwise they must have opened upon the street. In one corner was a pedestal, whereon stood a marble bust of a dancing woman, like those I had seen in the sculptor's at Pisa before the days of my darkness. There were tables, too, with glass tops whereon, I supposed, were curios and bric-a-brac, and before the great fireplace was stretched a tiger-skin, with the paws preserved.

While groping there, however, my hand came into contact with something which I found was a narrow, three-edged knife, so sharp that I cut my finger while feeling it. It had a cross-hilt, and the blade was thin and triangular, tapering to a point. The shape I knew to be Italian, one of those Florentine stiletos used long ago in the Middle Ages, a wound from which was almost certain to be fatal. The Italians have long ago brought the use of the knife to a fine art, and even to-day, murders by stabbing are the most usual occurrences reported in their newspapers. The blade of this antique weapon was about nine inches long, and the handle velvet-covered and bound with wire, probably either gold or silver. The point was sharp as a needle.

My first impulse was to take possession of it; but, on reflection, I saw that if I did so grave suspicion might possibly fall upon me. I might even be charged with the murder, especially as I had already in my pocket the dead man's stud and pencil-case. This thought caused me to throw down the stiletto, and, continuing my search, I at length found the door which gave egress to the place.

I opened it and stood in the hall to listen. There was no sound. The stillness of the night remained quite unbroken, and I crept myself alone with the dead. By coughing, the echo of my voice showed that the hall and staircase were wide and spacious. Then it struck me that I had no stick, without which I feared to walk; but, groping about, I found an umbrella stand, and took therefrom a stout thorn, the handle of which seemed smooth-worn by long usage.

What was my best course? Should I go forth secretly, return home and await the discovery of the terrible affair, which would no doubt be fully reported in those evening newspapers which revel in crime? Or should I go out and inform the first constable I met? The latter, I saw, was my duty, and even though I had no desire to mix myself up in such a mysterious and sensational affair, I resolved to go at once and state all that I heard.

Whether the street door was situated to right or left I knew not, but trying the right first, I found that the door was at that end of the hall. Opening it, I passed out, and having closed it again noiselessly went down the five wide steps into the deserted street. There were iron railings in front of the house, and before the door was a big stone portico. My hands told me both these details.

I turned to the left, and after walking some little distance crossed a road and kept on down a long road which, although it did not appear to be a main thoroughfare, seemed to run straight as an arrow. For fully a quarter of an hour I walked on without meeting a soul. The only noise that broke the quiet was the dismal howl of a dog, and now and then the distant shriek and low roar of trains. Suddenly I found myself in quite a labyrinth of crooked streets, and after several turns emerged into what I presumed to be one of the great arteries of London.

I stood listening. The air was fresh, and it seemed to me that dawn was spreading. A far I could hear the measured, heavy tread of a police constable, and hurried in his direction. As I did so I put out my stick and it struck some iron railings. A few minutes later, in hot haste, I overtook the man of heavy tread, and addressing him, said—

"Tell me, please, are you a constable?"

"Well, I believe I am," answered a rough voice, pleasantly withal. "But can't you see?"

"No, unfortunately I can't," I replied.

"Where am I?"

"On 's'ide the Museum."

"The British Museum?" I inquired in surprise.

"No. The South Kensington. Where do you want to go?"

"I want you to come with me," I said.

"With you. What's up?"

"I've been present at a terrible tragedy," I blurted forth. "Two people have been murdered."

"Two people?" exclaimed the voice, quickly interested. "Where?"

"In—a house," I faltered, for not until that instant did the appalling truth occur to me. I had wandered away from the place, and had no idea of its outward appearance, or in what road it was situated!

"Well, double murders don't often take place in the street, sunny. But—"

and the voice hesitated. "Why, there's blood on your clothes, I see! Tell me all about it. Where's the house?"

"I confess that I've been foolishly stupid, for I've left it, and I could never find my way back again. I'm blind, you see, and I've no idea of its exterior appearance."

"At any rate you've been near enough to the affair to get yourself in a pretty mess," the rough voice said, somewhat suspiciously. "Surely you have some idea of where the affair took place?"

The situation was certainly the most curious in which any man could be placed, for with only one thought in my mind, namely to raise the alarm, I had gone forth from the house of mystery and failed to mark it. This negligence of mine might, I reflected, result in the affair being hushed up for ever. London is a big place in which to search for the scene of a murder upon which my eyes had never gazed, and the details of which I only knew by my sense of touch. How many thousands of houses there are in the West End, each with its smoke-blackened portico and little piece of area railing!

"No," I responded to the officer's inquiry. "I was so bent upon giving information that I forgot to place any mark upon the house by which to know it again."

"Well, I've heard a good many funny stories while I've been on night-duty in these eighteen years, but your yarn is about the rummest of the lot," he said bluntly.

"I only know that the house is a large one, very well furnished, and has a portico and railings in front—a double house, with hall in the centre, and rooms on either side."

"That don't help us very much, sonny," the voice observed. "What's the good of running after me with a yarn like this if you can't take me to the spot? To judge from the state of your clothes, though, you've been in some scrape or another. If your coat was not covered with blood as it is, I'd be inclined to put you down as a chap with a screw loose."

"I'm not demented, I tell you," I cried warmly. "There's a terrible crime been committed, and I have sought your assistance."

"And I'd go and have a look at the premises with you, if you could only tell me where they are. But as you can't—well, what are we to do, sonny?"

### CHAPTER IV.

"Take me at once to the police-station," I said firmly. "I must make a statement to your inspector on duty."

"Not much good is it, if you can't tell us where the affair took place?" queried the man, impatiently.

"It is my duty to make the report, and the duty of the police to investigate it," I answered, annoyed, for it seemed as though he doubted me.

"That's a nasty cut on your hand," he remarked. "How did you get it?"

"I cut myself by accident with the knife."

"What knife?"

"The knife with which the murders were committed."

"And what were you doing with it?" inquired the constable, utterly regardless of the strict police regulation which forbids an officer to put any such questions.

"I found it," I replied.

"Where?"

"On the floor of the room, while I was searching about."

The man grunted dubiously.

I was well aware of the suspicion which must fall upon me, for I knew there was blood upon my clothes, and that my story possessed a distinct air of improbability.

"Who injured your head like that?" he asked.

In response, I told him how, in crossing a road, I had been knocked down and rendered insensible by a cab, and how, on regaining consciousness, I had found myself under the care of some woman unknown.

He gave vent to a short harsh laugh, as though discrediting my statements.

"You don't believe me," I blurted forth hastily. "Take me to your inspector. We must lose no time."

"Well, you know," observed the man, "your story, you'll admit, is a very extraordinary one. You say that a terrible affair has happened in a house somewhere about here, yet you can't direct us to it. The whole story is so curious that I'm afraid you'll have a difficulty in persuading anybody to believe you."

"If you don't, somebody else will," I snapped. "Come, take me to the police-station."

Thus ordered, the man rather reluctantly took my arm, and crossing the wide main-road, we traversed a number of short crooked thoroughfares.

"You don't seem a very good walker, mister," the constable observed presently. "I see a cab in the distance. Would you like to take it?"

"Yes. Call it," I said, for I felt very weak and ill after my terrible night's adventure.

A few minutes later we were sitting together in the hansom, driving towards the address he had given, namely, College Place Police Station.

On the way I explained to him the whole of the facts as far as I could recollect them. He listened attentively to my curious narrative until I had concluded, then said—

"Well, sir, it's certainly a most mysterious affair, and the only fear I have is that everybody will look upon it with disbelief. I know what I should do if I were a gentleman in your place."

"What would you do?"

"Well, I should keep my knowledge to myself, say nothing about it, and leave the revelation of the crime to chance."

"I am compelled to make a report of it, because I was present at the tragedy," I said. "It is my duty, in the interests of justice."

"Of course, that's all very well. I quite agree that your duty as a citizen is to make a statement to my inspector, but if I may be permitted to say so, my private opinion is, that to preserve a discreet silence is better than making a fool of one's self."

"You're certainly plain-spoken," I said, smiling.

"Oh, well, you'll excuse me, sir," the man said, half apologetically. "I mean no offence, you know. I only tell you how I myself would act. Now, if you could give any real information, I value the detectives, there would be some reason for making the statement, but as you can't, well, you'll only give yourself no end of bother for nothing."

"But surely, man, you don't think that with the knowledge of this terrible affair in my mind I'm going to preserve silence and allow the assassin to escape, do you?"

"Well, it seems that the assassin has escaped already, in any case," the man laughed. "You take it from me that they were a cute lot in that house, whoever they were. The wonder is that they didn't kill you."

An exactly similar thought had crossed my mind. The drive seemed a long one, but at length the cab stopped, and we alighted.

I heard the conveyance turn and go off, as together we ascended the steps of the station. One thing struck me as curious, namely, that the air was filled with a strong odor of turpentine.

"The station is a long way from your beat," I remarked.

"Yes. A fair way, but we're used to it, and don't notice the distance."

"And this is College Place—is it?"

"Yes," he responded, conducting me down a long passage. The length of the corridor surprised me, and I humorously remarked—

"You're not going to put me in the cells, I hope?"

"Scarcely," he laughed. "But if we did the darkness wouldn't trouble you very much, I fear. Blindness must be an awful affliction."

He had scarcely uttered these words ere we ascended a couple of steps and entered what seemed to be a spacious place, the charge-room of the police station.

There was the sound of heavy tramp-

ing over bare boards, and suddenly a rather gruff voice inquired—

"Well, four-six-eight? What is it?"

"Gentleman, sir—wants to report a tragedy. He's blind, sir."

"Bring him a chair," said the inspector's voice, authoritatively.

(To be continued.)

## POINTS OUT MILK PERIL.

U. S. Surgeon-General Submits Starting Report to Congress.

A "Report on milk in its relation to public health," was submitted to Secretary of the Treasury Cortelyou, by Surgeon-General Walter Wyman of the Public Health Service on the United States.

The report is the result of an investigation ordered by President Roosevelt and conducted by Federal experts under the direction of Prof. M. J. Rosenau, of the Hygienic Laboratory. It is one of the most thorough studies of the milk problem yet produced.

Dr. Wyman declares that the ideal milk, drawn from a cow with a healthy udder and preserved from contamination, is not the milk of commerce, and he cites the fact that samples of market milk in New York showed 35,200,000 bacteria to the cubic centimetre, London, 31,888,000; Washington, 23,134,000, and he calls attention to the evidence presented in the report which is given as proof that 500 epidemics of typhoid fever, scarlet fever and diphtheria were caused by infected milk. He also refers to the evidence adduced that 11 per cent. of the samples of Washington milk contained tubercle germs.

Past Assistant Surgeon-General John W. Trask has tabulated the data of five hundred epidemics that were definitely traced to the milk supplies, including 317 typhoid epidemics, 123 scarlet fever, 317 diphtheria and seven of pseudo-diphtheria, or epidemic sore-throat.

Dr. Trask gives figures to show the amazing rapidity with which typhoid and diphtheria germs increase in milk. Seventy-eight typhoid germs in a cubic centimetre of milk increased in seven days to 440,000,000. In the same time thirty-nine diphtheria germs increased to 10,000,000.

Quoting Health Commissioner Darlington's statement that the milk supply of New York City is derived from 35,000 farms and shipped from 700 creameries situated in six States, Dr. Lumsden says:

"It is easy to appreciate how difficult and expensive it would be to keep up a sufficiently thorough supervision of the multiple sources of the city's milk supply."

## THE JAPANESE WAY.

Rules for a Mass Meeting to Protest Against Higher Taxes.

The Japanese governing idea has sometimes a directness of application which is only equaled by its simplicity. The same spirit which prompts a Japanese citizen to build the front door of his house so low that a possible burglar could not get through it with a bundle of plunder on his back leads the Japanese official to specify in an emergency just what shall constitute a crime, so that the unruly may know when he transgresses.

A short time ago a new holiday, Constitution Day, was decreed in Japan, with the idea that the common people could go along all together to some park and hold exercises in glorification of the event which made Japan nominally a free government. But the restless politicians of Tokio, ever on the alert to stir up trouble, planned a monster mass meeting in Hibiya Park to protest against the alarming increase in taxation, instead of to give banquets for the constitution.

The police authorities remembered the three days of street fighting that followed the announcement of the Portsmouth peace treaty in the fall of 1905. On that occasion all the uproar was started by the barring of the gates to Hibiya Park by police order, and within three hours the house of the Home Minister, across the street, was burned, and people were being cut down in the broad avenue facing the park by the swords of the mounted gendarmes.

With all these circumstances in mind the police authorities posted the following notice in prominent places about the city on the day that the mass meeting was to be held:

No arms shall be carried by those who attend the meeting.

No kerosene oil or matches shall be carried.

No electric car shall be burnt.

The Diet buildings shall not be destroyed by fire.

No members of the Diet who supported the tax increase bills shall be assaulted.

Happily the police prohibitions specifying what should constitute something more than a nuisance had their effect. There was no riot.

## FILLING.

Seedy Willie (to bar-keeper)—"Your refusal, sir, to trust me to a paltry drink of whiskey fills me with astonishment and indignation."

Bar-keeper—"All right, sir; you can fill yourself up with astonishment and indignation, and it don't cost you a copper, but if you want to fill yourself with whiskey you will have to pay cash."