THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER IX.

Everything thus far has resulted most satisfactorily for Mr. John Hubbard—at least, so it seemed, as seen through his rose-tinted spectacles. His plans had all dovetailed in the most beautiful manner, moving along so smoothly and encouragingly that his temper had scarcely been ruffled throughout the lawsuit involving the Brewster property, during which his manner had been characterized by an urbanity and self-sufficiency which seemed to bespeak a conscience at peace with itself and the world in general because of duty well done.

Then, almost immediately, had followed his marriage with "Miss Anna Brewster," a romantic sequel to the remarkable case, as the papers expressed it, and thus the great fortune for which he had so long been scheming had at last dropped, like a plum fully ripe, directly into his grasp, and he fondly believed that henceforth he would sail over a smooth sea of prosperity, without a fear of even an untoward breeze to ruffle its calm surface.

Mr. John Hubbard had grown young-looking and debonair since his marriage. His barber gave him the nicest possible care, steaming and massaging the wrinkles and crow's feet out of his face so skilfully that the man gradually acquired a habit of smiling fondly at himself whenever he looked in the glass.

His clothing was of the finest material and of the latest cut; his linen immaculate; his one diamond flawless; his gloves and footgear above criticism; consequently, he made a very presentable bridegroom, and his forty years appeared to sit very lightly upon him.

He also seemed to be proportionately proud of, and devoted to, his handsome young wife, who created quite a sensation wherever they went, and thus, of course, increased the importance of here liege lord. Anna Brown had known all her life that she was more than ordinarily good-looking, and she had always chafed sorely against the bondage of her poverty.

Especially had this been the case since her father's death, for that event had made it necessary for her to share the treadmill life of her mother, the combined labor of both being hardly sufficient to keep the wolf from the door; therefore, she had for a long time to forego the gratification of her vanity and taste in matters of dress.

She had a fine form—tall, straight and somewhat inclined toward voluptuousness. She was a clear brunette, with brilliant, wine-brown eyes, dark brown hair and brows, good features, perfect teeth, and vividly scarlet lips.

She had acquired a fair education, having attended a high school until the death of her father, and, being quick-witted and observing, she was thus enabled to make a very good appearance under the changed conditions of her life.

When John Hubbard's proposition had opened out before her the prospect of stepping from a hovel to a palace, from homespun to velvets and diamonds, so to speak, she had grasped for it as eagerly as a drowning person would grasp at a straw, without giving a single thought to the responsibilities of such a position, or the duties which lay before her as a wife. Her one desire was to get away from the intolerable grind of her life, even though that end could only be achieved at the moral expense of aiding and abetting a crime.

Immediately after the maturing of John Hubbard's plans, and while they were awaiting the movements of the court, Mrs. Brown and her daughter had removed to a better locality, where, establishing themselves under the name of Brewster, they had comfortable rooms, plenty to eat, and good and tasteful, though not elegant, clothing to wear, Mr. Hubbard, of course, supplying all the necessary funds for these changes.

Shortly after the Brewster case was decided in their favor, Anna willingly plighted her hand in marriage to her benefactor, when, for the few days that remained previous to their departure for Europe, they all went to live in one of the up-town hotels, where the bride immediately became absorbed in preparing an outfit suitable for her position.

Under the genial influence of a sense of plenty, with all the money that she wanted to spend, to say nothing of costly jewels and laces, which her husband deemed it fitting that she should possess, the girl suddenly bloomed into a real beauty—a woman whom, as far as her personal appearance was concerned, any man might be proud to call his wife.

She grew light-hearted and happy, and, with a feeling of profound gratitude toward the man who had been her deliverer from a galling bondage fresh in her heart, she exerted herself to please him in every way; and thus, to all appearance, they were a very contented and devoted couple, in spite of the palpable difference in their ages.

While on shipboard, they both became very sociable with their fellow voyagers, aiding very materially in the amateur entertainments which were arranged for the amusement of their little, floating world, and thus making many friends among the passengers. Arriving in London, they established themselves at the Langham, when they went everywhere, saw everything, and spent money ad libitum.

They "did" the principal places of interest in England, Scotland, and Ireland; then flitted across the channel to "gay, delightful Paris," where they intended to remain for a couple of months, then go to Rome for the remainder of the winter.

They were both in excellent spirits. Mr. Hubbard was especially contented with his lot, for he was really becoming quite fond and proud of his stylish and pretty wife, and mentally asserted to himself that he had never realized what it was to live until now, when, with more money than he really knew what to do with, with not a care in the world but to live luxuriously, dress becomingly and gratify every caprice of his own and the smiling woman beside him, he could roam withersoever he pleased, and fear no man.

One fine day in November they bowled along the smooth, beautiful roads in their elegant, noiselessly rolling carriage, behind a pair of fleet-footed, coal-black horses, in gold-mounted harness, chatting socially and enjoying every moment, until they finally drove ostentatiously into the courtyard of their hotel, where obsequious servants sprang forward to open the carriage door, relieve "madame" of her wraps and pretty trifles—trophies of her outing—and follow in her train as she entered the gorgeous vestibule and passed on to the elevator, to be taken to her apartments.

As they swept through the wide entrance, John Hubbard observed a quiet, gentlemanly appearing man, in a tourist's suit of dark gray, standing beside one of the imposing pillars. He gave him but a casual glance in passing, but that was sufficient to assure him that the stranger was one of his own countrymen.

After attending his wife to their rooms, his curiosity prompted him to go below again to the office, and glance at the hotel register. Yes, it was as he had thought, for there, among the arrivals of the afternoon he found the name of "A. A. Nichols, New York City, U. S. A.."

"Humph! I wonder just who A. A. Nichols may be?" he muttered thoughtfully, as he turned away from the desk and strolled into the reading-room for another look at the newcomer, if he should be so fortunate as to find him there.

He espied the stranger almost opposite him as he entered the apartment, sitting by a window, quietly reading a New York paper. Placing himself in a convenient position, where he could have a good view of the man, Mr. Hubbard drew forth the London Times from his pocket, and, using this as a screen, proceeded to watch the object of his curiosity from behind it.

But he saw nothing to interest him particularly or reward him for his trouble; for, after half an hour of apparently diligent reading, Mr. A. A. Nichols methodically folded his paper, put it carefully in his pocket; then, rising, strolled leisurely from the place, as if wholly unconscious of having been observed. Some time later, when John Hubbard was returning to his rooms, he met the American coming down the stairs.

They glanced casually at each other, and passed; then the lawyer went indifferently on, simply telling himself that "the fellow looked like a common newspaper correspondent, or, perhaps, a writer of articles for some magazine." Entering his own domains, he found Mrs. Hubbard just putting the finishing touches to a ravishing toilet, preparatory to going down to the table d'hote.

"That's a fine gown, Anna," said the admiring husband, as he paused before her, and shot an appreciative glance over the brilliant-looking woman of whose beauty he was every day becoming more and more proud; "you do manage to get yourself up in the most stunning fashion."

"Thank you; you are getting to be quite a flatterer, Mr. Hubbard," Anna retorted, as she merrily swept him a curtsy of acknowledgment. "But where have you been all this time?" she added curiously.

"Down in the reading-room. There is a newly arrived American in the house—a Mr. A. A. Nichols."

"Ah! Where is he from?"

"New York."

"Is he young, or old?"

"About thirty-five, I should judge; but why do you always ask about the age of people, Anna?" Mr. Hubbard inquired, his face clouding a trifle.

"I do not know," she replied flushing slightly. "I suppose it is the natural curiosity of my sex cropping out," she added, laughing lightly.

He stood looking at her for a moment.

"Do you long for young company, Anna? Are you beginning to be a little sorry that you have not a younger husband?" he then queried, a tinge of anxiety in his tone.

The girl bit her lip with vexation at the turn their conversation had taken.

"I am very well satisfied with my husband, thank you," she said gaily, and yet there was a note in her voice that, to him, did not ring quite true.

"Are you sure?" he gravely asked.

"Why shouldn't I be satisfied?" she cried, as she suddenly stretched out her jeweled hands before her, and glanced fondly at them, then down at her shimmering dress; "do I not have everything I want? Do you not do everything to make me happy?"

"I try to, surely; but are you really happy, Anna?"

There was the slightest possible pause before she replied. Then she burst forth impetuously!"

"I never was so happy in my life!"

And she spoke only truth, for she was reveling in luxury such as she had never dreamed of in those not very remote days when she and her mother had toiled early and late at making jackets for twenty-five cents apiece.

"I do not believe you ever were," said John Hubbard, a smile of satisfaction wreathing his lips as he passed on to his own dressing-room.

CHAPTER X.

When they entered the brilliantly lighted dining-room, and sought their accustomed places, the newly arrived American was already seated at an adjoining table, quite near them.

Mrs. Hubbard shot one comprehensive glance at him as her husband directed her attention to the unobtrusive individual, then remarking, with her French shrug, that he "did not appear to be particularly interesting," she paid no further attention to him. They had planned to go that evening to the opera, to hear Nordica, as Marguerite, in "Faust," and both being exceedingly fond of music, they were anticipating a rare treat.

Anna Hubbard, on returning to her rooms, had just tied a ravishing little hat of costly lace and plumes upon her brown head with this pleasure in view, and her husband was in the act of buttoning his gloves, when there came a rap upon their door. John Hubbard opened it, to find, to his astonishment, the "newly arrived American," Mr. A. A. Nichols, standing outside.

"Have I the honor of addressing Mr. John Hubbard, of New York City?" blandly inquired the gentleman, as he removed his hat and bowed politely.

"That is my name," somewhat stiffly responded Mr. Hubbard, whose dignity was rather offended because an advance courier had not been sent to solicit an interview. Mr. Nichols immediately presented his card, with an air of deference which at once smoothed the ruffled plumage of the newly rich man before him.

(To be continued.)

FARM NOTES.

Too much importance has been attached to the reduction in railroad freights and too little to the possibilities of an immense reduction in the cost of hauling the same freight to the railroads.

The young weeds should be destroyed before they reach the light. The soil has been stirred for planting; but within a week it should be stirred again to kill the young sprouting weeds. With small, tender plants, the small harrow or cultivator may be passed between the rows of field crops; with large, strong rooted plants, like corn, the slant-tooth harrow may be passed over the whole broadcast, pulverizing and destroying the small sprouting weeds, but doing no harm to the strong corn plants, whether before or after they have reached the light. In the garden, the steel rake may do the same work in the narrow bed, as the horse harrow performs in the field.

GOD'S NIGHTMARE SHRI[illegible]

Weird Places Where Burmese [illegible] Buddha for Worship.

Burman can show the oldest [illegible] places of worship to be fo[illegible] where in the world. So[illegible] out of Moulmein, in the [illegible] great plain, stands a lone rock so peculiar in form as never to be forgotten when once seen, and ages ago the caves which honeycomb this fortress were transformed from the habitats of bats and wild animals into places for devotions. Thousands of images of Buddha are carved upon the walls, and in every chamber bronze, stone or wooden gods are standing, sitting, or reclining in endless silence. No one can compute how many millions of feet have pressed the earthen floors of these sacred caverns. Almost as remarkable is a Burmese shrine built by a rich man as an offering to his favorite god, which was erected on the very apex of a "balancing rock," so formidable in appearance as to strike terror to the heart before one can carry out the resolution to make the difficult ascent. The material was transported to the rock on the backs of men and pulled to the top with hand-power by means of a rope. To reach the top requires stout limbs and stady nerves, for only tiny steps have been cut in an almost perpendicular wall, and a slip means a fall to certain injury, and perhaps death.

LANGUAGES, DIALECTS 3,064.

Writer on Subject of Languages Reckons Above Number.

The least learned are aware that there are many languages in the world, but the actual number is probably beyond the dreams of ordinary people.

The geographer Balbi, enumerated 860 which are entitled to be considered as distinct languages, and 5.000 which may be regarded as dialects.

Another modern writer on this subject reckons up 3,064 languages and dialects existing, and which have existed.

Even after we have allowed either of these as the number of languages we must acknowledge the existence of many minor diversities, for almost every province has a tongue more or les peculiar, and this we may well believe to be the case throughout the wolrd at large.

Of the 860 distinct languages enumerated by Balbi, 53 belong to Europe, 114 to Africa, 123 to Asia, 417 to America and 11[illegible] to Oceania.

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THE CANADIAN ORDER OF FORESTERS

THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL SESSION OF HIGH COURT.

The Year 1908 Was the Most Prosperous in the History of the Order—A Large Delegation in Attendance.

The thirtieth annual session of the High Court of the Canadian Order of Foresters opened in the city of London on Tuesday, June 8th, with a large number in attendance, including High Court officers and delegates representing Subordinate Courts of every Province of the Dominion. It is just twenty years since the Order last met in this city, and the event is an important one, not only on that account, but also owing to the fact that in this city just thirty years ago the society first saw the light of day. Here it received the name of Canadian Order of Foresters. Its founders were fortunate in the choice of a name, at once euphonious and patriotic. Since then the Order has steadily grown in importance, until its interests are now firmly established in every Province of the Dominion, and its record a splendid testimony of what can be accomplished by Canadians in Canada.

After the usual opening ceremonies and the appointment of the several standing committees, the High Court officers submitted their reports, which showed the Order to be in the most flourishing condition.

The High Chief Ranger, J. A. Stewart, of Perth, Ont., after extending a hearty welcome to the representatives present, submitted his report, which was replete with facts and figures relating to the growth and extension of the Order during the last year.

The year closed with a membership of 70,757. The increase in the Insurance Reserve during the year amounted to $302,249.67. On January 1, 1908, the amount on hand in this branch was $2,426,690.87, and at the close of the year $2,728,940.54. There were 391 death claims paid, amounting to $396,881.82.

The Sick and Funeral Benefit department is also in a flourishing condition. During the year no less a sum than $134,371.88, covering 5,836 claims, was paid in this branch. The amount to the credit of this fund at the close of the year was $142,806.70.

The High Chief Ranger, in concluding his address expressed the hope that the meeting would be a pleasant one for the members and a profitable one for the Order, and felt that if ever there was a time in the history of the Order when the members should all feel inspired with hope and confidence in the future of Canadian Forestry, that time was the present. In an inspiring address he urged upon the representatives to do all that in them lay to make 1909 the banner year of the Order.

The report of Geo. Faulkner, High Secretary, covering the general work of the society was next in order, and sh[illegible] detail the large vol[illegible] acted throu[illegible]

The Sick and Funeral Benefit branch of the Order also showed a marked advance. The amount of fees received during the year was $159,139.61, and interest earned $5,174.49. The total receipts, therefore, amounted to $164,314.10. There were 5,836 Sick and Funeral Benefit claims paid, amounting to $134,371.88, leaving $29,942.22 to carry to the Reserve Fund, which at the close of the year amounted to $142,806.70.

There were 70,757 members in good standing at the close of the year, carrying $71,175,500 of insurance, and the membership in the Sick and Funeral Benefit branch was 43,654.

There were issued from the High Secretary's office 6,758 insurance certificates, and 6,047 membership certificates, or a total of 12,805, and in addition there were endorsements made on 1,388 insurance certificates.

The report of Robt. Elliott, High Treasurer, showed the funds of the Order to be in a most satisfactory condition. The receipts in the several funds were: Insurance, 699,131.49; Sick and Funeral Benefit Fund, $164,314.10; General Fund, $91,948.27. Total receipts, $955,394.56. The total expenditure in these funds amounted to $625,897.29. The surplus income over expenditure amounted to $329,497.27

The surplus Insurance funds are invested as follows:

Municipal and school debentures	$2,538,169 05
Dominion of Canada Stock	150,000 00
Deposits in chartered banks	20,000 00
Current accounts in chartered banks	20,771 49
Total	$2,728,940 54

The total assets of the Order amounted to $2,928,399.39, and its liabilities $38,660.59. Assets over liabilities, $2,889,738.80.

The report of Dr. U. M. Stanley, who has been Chairman of the Medical Board since the inception of the Order, shows that the death rate during the past year was only 5.55 in the thousand. The average death rate for thirty years is but 5.12 in the thousand. There were submitted to the Medical Board during the year 7,886 applications, of which 7,237 were accepted, and the remaining 649 rejected.

The report of W. G. Strong, Superintendent of Organization, showed that during the year there were 6,597 initiations. There were 37 new courts instituted, with a membership of 732.

At the close of the year there were 1,047 courts in the Order, representing a membership of 70,757. There were 490 courts in the Province of Ontario, 178 in Quebec, 58 in Nova Scotia, 70 in New Brunswick, 19 in Prince Edward Island, 121 in Manitoba, 63 in Saskatchewan, 36 in Alberta, and 16 in British Columbia.

Among those in attendance were the following:—J. A. Stewart, High Chief Ranger, Perth; Thos. W. Gibson, High Vice-Chief Ranger, Toronto; Geo. Faulkner, High Secretary, Brantford; Robt. Elliot, High Treasurer, Brantford; Dr. U. M. Stanley, Chairman Medical Board, Brantford; C. E. Britton, P.H.C.R., Gananoque; L. P. D. Tilley, St. John; J. A. A. Brodeur, Montreal; A. P. VanSomeren, McLeod, Alta; W. M. Couper, Montreal; members of the Executive Committee, W. L. Rogers, High Auditor, Brantford; W. Walker, High Registrar, Montreal; Rev. W. J. West, High Chaplain, Bluevale; W. G. Strong, Superintendent of Organization, Brantford; Lyman Lee, High Court Solicitor, Hamilton; J. B. O'Regan, Chief Agent, Province of Quebec, Quebec; D. E. McKinnon, District High Secretary, Winnipeg; F. H. Davidson, D.H.C.R., Winnipeg, and W. D. Dunbar, P.H.C.R., Napinka, Man.

PERSONAL POINTERS.

Gossip About Some of the World's Leading People.

The most beautiful and at the same time the most valuable handkerchief in the world is said to belong to the Queen of Italy. The handkerchief in question is an example of the earliest Venetian point lace, dating towards the end of the fifteenth century. The piece is in perfect preservation, and it is valued at $20,000, although it is stated that two American millionaires have offered three times that sum for it.

Americans declare that there is no "side" about Mr. James Bryce, the British Ambassador at Washington. A visitor called on him one Sunday morning, and Mr. Bryce met him in the hall and begged him to "come this way, where we can talk undisturbed." He led the way to the library, and the first thing he did was to take out a well-worn tobacco pouch and blackened briar pipe, which he proceeded to fill and smoke. The caller realized that this was what the Ambassador wished to be "undisturbed" about.

Sir Oliver Lodge was, apparently, not the best of boys at school. When he was eight years of age he was sent to a boarding-school where the master "kept the cane in his boot, except when he flung it at the class and caned the boy who picked it up, and returned it to him. He was always caning somebody, but never severel[illegible] was by no means dislike[illegible] nicknamed Dicky [illegible] the second.

[illegible] very [illegible] nd do [illegible] t good [illegible] y[illegible] [illegible] his herds [illegible] his beautiful Essex home [illegible] live in London to take the milk to his London shops. The success of his lordship's dairy business may be estimated from the fact that his employes invest their money in the same at a guaranteed four per cent. interest and a share of the profits beyond the margin.

The fact that Madame Emma Calve recently sang at the bedside of a doctor who was ill and had expressed a desire to hear her magnificent voice recalls a similar incident in the career of another famous prima donna, Madame Albani. Some years ago, when she was on a visit to Norwich, England, an old gentleman, who had formerly heard her sing "The Last Rose of Summer," wrote to ask if he might hear it again just once more before he died. Although he was a total stranger, Madame Albani was so touched at his request that she went straight to the bedside of the invalid and cheered his last moments with her wonderful rendering of the beautiful song.

Sir Frederick Treves is popularly supposed to have invented appendicitis, and it will be remembered that he operated on the King for that complaint in 1902. An interesting story, by the way, is told in the 'Pall Mall Magazine' concerning a curious tip which Sir Frederick once received. A sailor from Norway had been operated on by Sir Frederick in hospital. His life had been saved, and he had gone his way with the hundreds of others, who as a rule never call even to inquire who was the surgeon who "did the thing." Late one evening a timind knock brought Sir Frederick himself at that unusual hour to his door in Wimpole Street. A tall, gaunt sailor in thread-bare attire asked if this was where "Mr. Treves lives." At his earnest request, though somewhat under protest, he was allowed to enter. He at once proceeded to get out a jack-knife, and from the lining of the belt of his trousers he cut out a small gold piece and offered it to Sir Frederick. He had tramped all the way from the docks to Wimpole Street with his thankoffering.

BIGGER YET.

"That," said Blinkers, as he gazed in astonishment at his wife's new hat, "is the biggest thing I ever saw."

"Oh, that's nothing," rejoined Mrs. B. "Just wait till you get the bill for it."