THE MYSTERIOUS KEY

OR, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

CHAPTER X.—(Cont'd)

'Can I have a few moments' conversation with you?" he inquired

"Certainly, Mr. Nichols," replied the lawyer, glancing, for form's sake, at the card. "Step inside, if you please. You are an American, I perceive—it struck me as I passed you on the stairs before dinner that you must be one of my own countrymen."

"Yes, I arrived in Paris this afternoon," quietly observed the stranger, as he slipped into the room, a quick, though repressed, breath of relief escaping him as the door closed behind him.

"Allow me to present you to my wife," said Mr. Hubbard, turning with pardonable pride, to the brilliant vision standing in the centre of the room. "Mrs. Hubbard, Mr. Nichols, of New York City."

The lady bowed with formal politeness. Somehow, the appearance of this stranger at that inopportune moment sent a cold chill creeping over her. Mr. Nichols courteously returned her greeting; then stepping quickly between John Hubbard and the door, he touched him on the shoulder, remarking with continued politeness, but authoritatively:

"I am sorry to interfere with your arrangements, as you appear to be on the point of going out, but my duty compels me to tell you that you are my prisoner!"

John Hubbard shrank back as from the sting of a lash.

"Your prisoner! What do you mean?" he demanded, with sudden anger, while his wife seemed like one who had been instantly transformed to marble, so white and rigid did she become at the sound of that word, "prisoner."

"I mean that I arrest you here and now in accordance with the authority vested in me by the United States of America, and in compliance with the international laws pertaining to extradition."

And throwing back the lapel of his vest, he revealed his official badge to confirm his statements.

"Upon what charge?" demanded John Hubbard, with a ghastly face.

The officer glanced pityingly at the beautiful vision in the background as he replied in a somewhat subdued tone:

"Forgery, conspiracy and embezzlement."

"Forgery!" whispered Anna Hubbard, with white lips; a shudder shaking her from head to foot as she realized all that the word implied.

Her husband was stricken dumb for the moment. He did not open his mouth. He tottered feebly to a chair and sat down. The blow had almost paralyzed him, coming as it did, so like a thunderbolt, when he seemed to be at the very zenith of the enjoyment of his stolen fortune.

But he was not a man to yield weakly to an emergency, and making a mighty effort to regain his composure and still the terrible throbbing in his temples, he turned again to the officer.

"Pardon me," he said urbanely, "but I am so astonished I find it difficult to believe in the reality of the situation. Of course, this is all an absurd mistake, and you have unwittingly arrested the wrong man."

"Oh, no, sir, there is no mistake; you are the man I want," coolly responded Mr. Nichols.

"You have stated that the charge is forgery," sternly observed Mr. Hubbard; "what is the nature of the document, or documents, forged?"

"I am not authorized to enter minutely into the particulars of the case, but the crime is said to be associated with your administration of the Brewster estate," was the calm reply.

There was a quick, sharp cry from Anna Hubbard.

"Do not be alarmed, Anna," said her husband reassuringly, and turning to her; "it is all a wretched blunder which I am sure will very shortly be rectified. Perhaps you had better withdraw while I talk the matter over with Mr. Nichols——"

"I am very sorry to seem precipitate, but we have no time to talk anything over," the officer interposed. "I am here simply to obey orders, which are to make this arrest and then start immediately for America with you. A train leaves Paris at nine o'clock for Calais, and I have made arrangements to take that. You will have ample time to pack your trunks and settle your indebtedness here before that hour——"

"Never!" almost shouted John Hubbard, as he sprang to his feet in a towering passion. "Do you imagine for a moment that I——"

"It will be utterly useless for you to make any resistance, sir," interposed Mr. Nichols, as he coolly whipped out a revolver and cocked it. "I am prepared for any emergency, as you perceive, and I also have two assistants waiting in the hall outside, in case they should be needed."

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Hubbard saw at once that resistance would be useless; that he must submit to the inevitable.

"Who prefers this charge?" he questioned weakly, as he wiped the moisture from his face and then began to remove his gloves.

"Richard Lyttleton, of New York."

"Aha!"—with a start—"in whose behalf!"

"The nearest of kin," was the non-committal reply of Mr. Nichols, who added: "Now, I can't answer any more questions, and you will have to hustle if you wish to take your baggage with you. A carriage has been engaged to take us to the station, our tickets are purchased, and a section chartered for our especial accommodation. Everything will be conducted quietly and without any publicity or annoyance to either yourself or Mrs. Hubbard, unless you see fit to make a rumpus."

Mr. Hubbard saw that there was no alternative but to submit quietly to his fate, and accordingly began to make preparations for their departure. In a little more than an hour they left the hotel, not a soul in the house suspecting the real reason for their sudden flitting.

"Bad news from home by cable," was the explanation given to the proprietor, when John Hubbard went down to the office to settle his bill—who was profuse in his regrets over the misfortune which called the "princely monsieur and the beautiful madame" back to their country before their tour was completed.

Two days later found this luckles couple again crossing the broad Atlantic. Mr John Hubbard and his bride were two very different people during their homeward bound voyage from what they had been going over.

The man was grave, moody, taciturn. Several times he had made an effort to worm himself into the good graces of Mr. Nichols, and "pump" him regarding the proceedings which had been instituted against him. But the officer, although gentlemanly and affable, and willing to converse freely upon all other subjects, was very noncommittal upon this topic.

He frankly said that he was simply acting under orders—it was his business to make the arrest upon the charges specified in the warrant; but he was not disposed to enter into any explanations regarding the attitude of the plaintiff, even if he had been posted regarding the recent evidence acquired, and which had led to an application for a reopening of the Brewster case.

Thus, with an almost intolerable suspense hanging over him, it is not strange that the man should have been deeply depressed. His wife was also very much exercised over the situation, and day after day she would question him upon the subject.

"Have you any idea who is the prime mover in this matter?" she inquired upon one occasion.

"Oh, I suppose those Mannings are at the bottom of it—there are no other relatives that I know of," her husband replied, with some impatience.

"But I thought they exhausted themselves during the other trial. Do you imagine that they can have secured any important evidence against you?" Anna questioned anxiously.

"Of course, I do not know what to think, Anna—Nichols is so loyally mum I can't get a single point. The only thing they could possibly base a suspicion of fraud upon are those records in New Haven, and unless some one who knows about that first marriage has unexpectedly turned up with incontestible proofs, I would defy any one to prove that Adam Brewster did not marry Louise Simpson."

And yet, even as he asserted it so confidently, a thrill of fear shot through him as a sudden suspicion flashed into his mind.

"But I thought that you presented a certified copy of those records, and it was accepted as evidence," said his wife.

"That is true, and that work was all so cleverly done I have never had a fear that it would ever be detected. There is only one man living whom I should shrink from having examine those records," said John Hubbard, with an ugly frown.

"And who is he?" eagerly inquired Anna.

"His name is Thomas Plum — a devilish little expert, who once before balked me on a case. But," with a muttered oath, "I'll make a hot fight for them, and spend a big pile of the Brewster money before I get through with them."

"But I suppose, even if you have to give it up in the end, you will have something handsome of your own left," said his wife, with evident nervousness.

"Oh! it's money you're thinking of, is it, Anna?" the man snarled, growing very white. "You don't seem to be troubled by a thought of the consequences to me if the charge of forgery is proved."

"Oh, yes, I do, John," she answered, addressing him thus for the first time since their marriage; "but perhaps my woman's wit might help you to escape if that should happen; then, if you have money enough, we could go to some other country, change our names, and snap our fingers at bolts and bars."

"Don't flatter yourself, child, that your woman's wit will avail me anything if I am found guilty," he said, with a bitter laugh; yet he spoke more gently than before, for her thoughtfulness had touched him. "A twenty-year sentence will be the result, and I shall have to serve it—if I live. But I have no fortune of my own—I haven't ten thousand dollars to my name——"

"But I thought you were very rich, even before you came into the Brewster fortune," she gasped.

"Yes, and others have thought the same; but the truth is, for a good many years I have only made a big bluff at being rich. If people think you're making a big pile, it keeps your credit good, and many a sharper has won a rich wife in that way."

"And that was your object?"

"Yes. You may as well know the truth about me, Anna," said the man, a sullen look on his face. "I have lived by my wits all my life. After I got in with Brewster, I had a chance to pull the wool over a good many persons' eyes to my own advantage, and if that man had lived I would have fleeced him pretty thoroughly before I got through with him. I had inveigled him into one or two transactions which, if they could have been carried out, would have so placed him in my power that I could have made almost any terms with him, for he was a great stickler about honor and an irreproachable name, etc. But he died before I could clinch matters. Then I made up my mind that I'd play a desperate game for his whole fortune. I had every chance in the world, for I drew up the man's will, and fixed it so that I should be sole administrator of the estate and guardian to the girl. I meant to marry her——"

"Marry her?" interposed his wife aghast, this being the first intimation she had had of the project.

"Yes; that would have been the easiest way to accomplish my purpose," he went on stoically; "but when I found that she was likely to kick over the traces, I planned to have another string to my bow. So when I discovered that Allison had never been formally adopted, I worked up this scheme to make it appear that Adam Brewster had a wife and own child living."

"Well, you have been a tough customer," was Mrs. Hubbard's complimentary comment as her husband paused. "And so all the money you have in the world — if you lose this fortune—is ten thousand dollars," she added, looking pale and distressed.

"I should think that is about a fair estimate," he replied.

"And if you lose this case, it will be likely to take it all to pay your own costs?"

"Yes; for I intend to make a big fight, as I told you."

"What, then, will become of me if the worst comes? Oh! shall I have to go back to that dreadful old grind?" and the girl's voice was full of anguish and dread.

"It would be hard on you, dear, that's a fact," returned her husband, giving a regretful glance at the stylish but dejected-looking figure opposite him. "I'm deuced sorry, for we were having a jolly good time together. However, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have been at the top of the ladder for a little while ;no one can take away from you the memory of the experience and pleasure of the last few months," he concluded philosophically.

"Ah! it has been like a fairy dream of delight; I have been afraid that it was too beautiful to last," said the igrl, choking back a sob of despair; "and now to have to go back to the slums will be unendurable. The memory of my good times will only make my torture so much harder to bear."

John Hubbard's face was ghastly as he listened to this wail of bitterness. He had really become quite fond of his dashing young wife, in spite of his previous love for Allison. Se had been more congenial and after his own style, because she was less conscientious and refined, and had thrown herself heartily into all his plans and pursuits, and thus his regret for her temporarily overbalanced his fear for his own fate.

"Well," he moodily observed, after a few moments of silence, during which he had been absorbed in thought, "you may think yourself lucky that a felon's fate does not stare you in the face—you will escape that, at all events."

"But how about my mother?" cried Anna in a breathless voice; for it had only just occurred to her that her mother, having been an accomplice of her husband, might have to share his punishment, if the worst was proved against him.

"I am hoping that she cannot be found," Mr. Hubbard replied, "and you must discover some means of communicating with her secretly as soon as we land and get her into some safe hiding-place, or it may go hard with her also. And now let me give you a little good advice while we have a chance to talk by ourselves. You have your jewels, and they are very valuable, for I have bought you none but the finest. If fate should turn against us, you can take them to Tiffany, where they were purchased, and turn them into money, which will make quite a respectable nest-egg, with which you can establish yourself in some well-paying little business—such as millinery, small wares, or something of that nature—and thus get a good living without having to work, as you used to."

He elaborately considerably upon this suggestion, giving her many ideas which afterward proved very valuable to her; but, although it was very good advice, it did not have a very cheering effect upon either of them, and it was with very heavy hearts that they finally landed in New York, where the depressing news of "Mrs. Brewster's" arrest awaited them, and, of course, added to their gloom.

(To be continued.)

TOMMY ATKINS'S UNIFORM.

Trousers Most Costly Item—New Rules for His Kit.

It will astonish most people to be told that the British Government in addition to being a maker of laws is the greatest tailor in the world, says London Tit-Bits. The army clothing factory at Pimlico's is the biggest tailor's shop in England. Last year Tommy Atkins' tailor's bill amounted to £355,375. During the Boer war the clothing of the army cost nearly £5,000,000.

Trousers are the most costly item in the soldier's wardrobe, and for their nether garments last year the nation had to pay no less a sum than £73,278. This recalls the fact that it is less than ninety years since the British army first put on its trousers—that the British infantry soldier, that is, first substituted trousers for the old fashioned knee breeches.

The British soldier will be clothed on an entirely different system to what has prevailed for so many years, and the innovation will probably be a great deal more satisfactory to the rank and file. Every man will receive his free outfit on enlistment as heretofore, but he will be requirel to prove his personal clothing and necessaries out of an allowance credited to him quarterly in advance. Instead of his present kit allowance of twopence a day after six months service he will receive at the end of his first year a lump sum equivalent to the accumulated twopences, in addition to the separate clothing allowance.

The maintenance of kit and clothing will be a matter between the soldier and his commanding officer. It is intended that the present arbitrary periods of wear allotted to each garment shall be abolished. Under the old system a pair of trousers might be serviceable today and "time expired" to-morrow.

Even in the piping times of peace Tommy Atkins's tailor's bill would make a millionaire poor in a year. Roughly speaking, it costs £1,000,000 every year to clothe the British army. The headgear of the troops, embracing everything from a simple cap to a bearskin helmet, exhausts nearly £50,000, and boots, shoes and leggings, which are purchased ready made, cost nearly £250,000. The cost of a soldier's uniform varies from just over £10 10s. to less than £3, according to the regiment in which he may be serving. For instance, the annual tailor's bill for the rank and file in the Life Guards is just over £7 while in the infantry of the line it is under £3.

THE GLASSY STARE.

In a recent railway accident an old Irishman was severely injured. For some time after the accident he was left unattended to, but at last some sympathetic lookers-on picked him up and carried him to the station waiting-room until the arrival of the doctors to officially pronounce on his condition. By and by a surgeon bustled in, looked at his prostrate form and pallid face, and then exclaimed, "That poor fellow is done for, I'm afraid." Then he knelt down, lifted up an eyelid, and saw a dull, expressionless orb. "Very sad. He's as dead as a door-nail. Take the poor old fellow away," exclaimed the medico. No sooner had he spoken, however, than the supposed corpse began to move his lips. The startled doctor listened, and this is what he heard: "Bedad, doctor, that was me glass eye ye was looking at."

Mother Bird: "Run along and play now; but be careful you don't get run over by any of those flying machines."

FROM BONNIE SCOTLAND

NOTES OF INTEREST FROM HER BANKS AND BRAES.

What is Going On in the Highlands and Lowlands of Auld Scotia.

The Dalhousie sword for Archery at Edinburgh has been gained by Dr. J. C. Dunlop.

Last month there were 36 cases of whooping cough notified at Greenock, 11 of which proved fatal.

Coatbridge has lost by death one of its oldest inhabitants in the person of Mr. David Young, of Garthsherrie.

A meeting held recently in favor of Presbyterian reunion was one of the largest of the kind ever held in Edinburgh.

A fine capture of fox cubs was made by Mr. Rankine, keeper on the Birnock hills, on the farm of Wandel, Douglas estate.

The magistrates have resolved to offer the honorary freedom of Glasgow to the Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, M.P., Prime Minister.

"White glove" days are getting so common at Alloa Burgh Court that it is becoming unfashionable to provide the white gloves.

It is claimed that Greenock is the only town in Scotland which has no branch of the Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis.

Mr. J. T. Morrison, of the County Council Office, Hamilton, has been appointed Chamberlain of Coatbridge. He is a native of Airdrie.

Plans have been submitted to the King for the erection of a Chapel of the Order of the Thistle at the southeast corner of St. Giles, Edinburgh.

The Greenock and Grangemouth Dockyard Company have booked an order for a cargo steamer of 7,500 tons deadweight capacity for Belgian owners.

Free overshoes for the players on Glasgow Corporation bowling greens is the latest demand made by several who desire the country to be really free.

Mr. Will C. Smith, K.C., the chairman of the East and North of Scotland Unionist Association, is spoken of as the Unionist candidate for Linlithgowshire.

Mr. Macgregor Henderson, the well-known Scottish singer and entertainer, died at his residence, East Mayfield Terrace, Edinburgh.

A banquet to commemorate the completion of fifty years of volunteering was held in Edinburgh, and was attended by a large company of old volunteers.

On the railway journey between Glasgow and Wemyss Bay, Marion Cunningham, a Bute farm servant, alone in a carriage, gave birth to a baby boy.

Princess Alexandra, elder daughter of the Princess Royal and the Duke of Fife, made her debut at Lady Farquhar's Royal Ball on the night of Derby Day.

Dr. Neil Munro, the novelist, had the freedom of Inverary conferred upon him for a second time last week. The first occasion was on his birth, about 45 years ago.

A party of 63 cripple children, all from the Townhead centre of the Crippled Children's League, enjoyed a drive to Hamilton and picnic at Staneacre recently.

Messrs. William Hamilton and Co., Port Glasgow, have contracted to build for English owners a steamer on the Isherwood principle, of 8,000 tons deadweight carrying capacity.

The Brandon Bridge Company, Motherwell, have got the first contract for steel-work for the new naval base at Rosyth. It is expected to keep the works running night and day for a year.

THE MORNING GROUCH

How do you rise in the morning?
Gloomy and sad and dour,
Or glad for the rest that was given you
And brave for the battle hour?
Do you rise from your couch at daybreak
With a smile for your loved ones true?
Come, tell me, now, is a churlish frown
The best that they get from you?

Do you rise in the morning merry,
Or gloomy and cross and sad?
Do you growl and snarl at your morning meal
Because the coffee is bad?
Don't do it, for life has troubles,
Ah, many, and greater, too,
For the simple things in the morning hours
To bother a man like you.

Get up with a smile and whistle,
Get up with a cheery word:
For a morning grouch, when you think of it,
My brother, is so absurd.
Reserve your growls and your bitter words
For the time when a real grief frets you;
What chance have you in life's big affairs
If a trifling thing upsets you?

"Does Mrs. P.'s husband command a good salary?" "He earns a good salary. She commands it."

About the Farm

PASTURING HOGS IN SUMMER.

Feeding hogs these days is a very important matter, grain is high and so is every other feed, and as a consequence farmers are looking more and more to the hog pasture for relief.

All pasture grasses are not of equal value. The poorest kinds are much better than none, but the benefits received from any depends largely on the management of both hogs and pasture. Alfalfa stands at the head of the list, June clover a close second, with white clover, June grass and timothy in the order named.

If allowed to roam at will over a large field the hogs will soil and waste a considerable amount of feed. They will eat only the sweetest and freshest and will trample on and leave the balance to get tough and ripe, after which time they will not eat it at all. Dividing off a small patch at a time with hurdles or movable fence works well, providing the hogs can be sheltered from the hot sunshine in the middle of the day.

It is a mistake to compel the hogs to depend entirely upon the grass alone, even though the prices of grain and mill feeds are high. The stomach of the pig is not like that of the sheep or cow and cannot be used as a repository for a large amount of coarse feed at one time.

It has been found by experience and experiment that hogs fed a half ration of cornmeal while running to clover will make as rapid gains as they will if confined and fed a whole ration, and that, too, of a better quality of meat than that made wholly from corn. The grass bulks up the mass in the stomach, enabling the gastric juices to circulate more freely through it, and digestion is more completely accomplished than if grain constitutes the entire ration. And, further, the clover contains the elements that promote the growth of bone and muscle, which helps to make up a pretty well balanced ration.

Just as quickly as the soil is thoroughly warmed through, sow a patch of rape, and it will be ready for the hogs when the pasture is pretty well played out.

BEST WAY WITH POULTRY.

The farmer should give his mind as far as circumstances will possibly allow, to a continuous egg supply all the year round. He should endeavor to select a breed, or breeds, or crosses of breeds, best suited not only to general egg production, but to his individual circumstances and conditions. He should so regulate the various ages of his layers as to ensure not only the aforesaid continuous supply, but the greatest possible number of eggs in the winter months, when they are scarce and dear, and to do this he must produce pullets of various ages, and also select possibly different breeds for winter and summer laying. He must also study the food supply, and endeavor to fit it to suit seasons and circumstances.

All these little items make a difference in the number of eggs produced, and in the consequent profit, to say nothing of the care necessary to ensure the possession of a good laying strain—which is an even more important factor than breed. To produce table fowls at a profit when they have to be put on the market in the ordinary way (with perhaps the exception of a few very early spring chickens) requires practically the art of a professional. Every farmer can with comparative ease, market a large number of new laid eggs every week in the year, with great pecuniary advantage to himself and also with benefit to the community at large, for there are always more wanted than can be procured.

FARM NOTES.

The farmer should plan to make his farm a little better each year. It may be done by making the soil a little more productive, draining some wet place, improving the buildings, or even by setting out some trees.

Cultivation of corn should always be shallow, at least after the plant has obtained any considerable size. As the roots begin to reach out in search of food they should be protected, and instead of deep cultivation to cut off and lacerate them, they should be fostered and protected, and induced to grow by shallow work to make a fine mulch of the top soil. This will keep moisture near the warm surface.

In this day it is highly important that the farmer be a trained man of business. He is beset on all sides by sharpers, who are trying, on one pretext or another, to get his money, and he is constantly tempted to make outlays on the farm which are of doubtful expediency. We should put back into our business no more than will add to its efficiency, and that is a point which calls for deliberation and wise judgment; and it is a questsion in which the good wife should have her say, for in [illegible] cases out of 100 her judgment is sound.