

Marian Mayfield

Or, The Strange Disappearance

CHAPTER XXXIII.—(Continued).

He was tremendously shaken, more by the vivid memories she recalled than by the astounding charge she made.

"In the name of Heaven, what leads you to imagine such impossible guilt!"

"Good knowledge of the facts—that this month, eight years ago, in the little Methodist chapel of the navy yard, in Washington City, you made Marian Mayfield your wife—that this night seven years since, in such a storm as this, on the beach below Pine Bluff, you met and murdered Marian Wilcoxen! And, moreover, I assure you, that these facts which I tell you now, to-morrow I will lay before a magistrate, together with all the corroborating proof in my possession!"

"And what proof can you have?"

"A gentleman who, unknown and unsuspected, witnessed the private ceremony between yourself and Marian; a packet of French letters, written by yourself from Glasgow, to Marian, in St. Mary's, in the spring of 1823; a note found in the pocket of her dress, appointing the fatal meeting on the beach where she perished. Two physicians, who can testify to your unaccountable absence from the deathbed of your parent on the night of the murder, and also to the distraction of your manner when you returned late the next morning."

"And this," said Thurston, gazing in mournful amazement upon her; "this is the child that I have nourished and brought up in my house! She can believe me guilty of such atrocious crime—she can aim at my honor and my life such a deadly blow!"

"Alas! alas! it is my duty! it is my fate! I cannot escape it! I have bound my soul by a fearful oath! I cannot evade it! I shall not survive it! Oh, all the heaven is black with doom, and all the earth tainted with blood!" cried Miriam, wildly.

"You are insane, poor girl! you are insane!" said Thurston, pityingly.

"Would Heaven I were! would Heaven I were! but I am not! I am not! Too well I remember I have bound my soul by an oath to seek out Marian's destroyer, and deliver him up to death! And I must do it! I must do it! though my heart break—as it will break in the act!"

"And you believe me to be guilty of this awful crime!"

"There stands the fearful evidence! Would Heaven it did not exist! oh! would Heaven it did not!"

"Listen to me, dear Miriam," he said, calmly, for he had now recovered his self-possession. "Listen to me—I am perfectly guiltless of the crime you impute to me. How is it possible that I could be otherwise than guiltless. Hear me explain the circumstances that have come to your knowledge," and he attempted to take her hand to lead her to a seat. But with a slight scream, she snatched her hand away, saying wildly:

"Touch me not! Your touch thrills me to sickness! to faintness! curdles—turns back the current of blood in my veins!"

"You think this hand a blood-stained one?"

"The evidence! the evidence!"

"I can explain that evidence, Miriam, my child, sit down—at any distance from me you please—only let it be near enough for you to hear. Did I believe you quite sane, Miriam, grief and anger might possibly seal my lips upon this subject—but believing you partially deranged—from illness and other causes—I will defend myself to you. Sit down and hear me."

Miriam dropped into the nearest chair, Mr. Wilcoxen took another and commenced:

"You have received some truth, Miriam. How it has been presented to you, I will not ask now, I may presently. I was married, as you have somehow ascertained, to Marian Mayfield, just before going to Europe. I corresponded with her from Glasgow. I did appoint a meeting with her on the beach, upon the fatal evening in question—for what purpose that meeting was appointed it is needless to tell you, since the meeting never took place—for some hours before I should have set out to keep my appointment, my grandfather was stricken with apoplexy. I did not wish to leave his bedside until the arrival of the doctor. But when the evening wore on, and the storm approached, I grew uneasy upon Miriam's account, and sent Melchizedek in the gig to fetch her from the beach to this house—never to leave it. Miriam, the boy reached the sands only to find her dying. Terrified half out of his senses, he hurried back and told me this story. I forgot my dying relative—forgot everything, but that my wife lay wounded and exposed on the beach. I sprung upon horseback, and galloped with all possible haste to the spot. By the time I had got there the storm had reached its height, and the beach was completely covered with the boiling waves. My Marian had been carried away. I spent the wretched night in wandering up and down the bluff above the beach, and calling on her name. In the morning I returned home to find my grandfather dead, and the family and physicians wondering at my strange absence at such a time. That, Miriam, is the story."

Miriam made no comment whatever. Mr. Wilcoxen seemed surprised and grieved at her silence.

"What have you now to say, Miriam?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?" What do you think of my explanation?"

"I think nothing. My mind is in an agony of doubt and conjecture. I must be governed by stern facts—not by my own prepossessions. I must act upon the evidences in my possession—not upon your explanation of them," said Miriam, distractedly, as she arose to leave the room.

"And you will denounce me, Miriam?"

"It is my insupportable duty! it is my fate! my doom! for it will kill me!"

"Yet you will do it!"

"I will."

"Yet, turn, dear Miriam! Look on me once more! take my hand! since you act from necessity, do nothing from anger—turn and take my hand."

She turned and stood—a picture of tearless agony! She met his gentle, compassionate glance—it melted—it subdued her.

"Oh, would Heaven I might die rather than do this thing! Would Heaven I might die! for my heart turns to you, it turns, and I love you so—oh! I love you so! never, never so much as now! my brother! my brother!" and she sank down and seized his hands and wept over them.

"What, Miriam do you love me, believing me to be guilty?"

"To have been guilty—not to be guilty—you have suffered remorse—you have repented, these many long and wretched years. Oh! Surely repentance washes out guilt!"

"And you can now caress and weep over my hands, believing them to have been crimsoned with the life-stream of your first and best friend?"

"Yes! yes! yes! yes! Oh! would these tears, my very heart sobs forth, might wash them pure again! Yes! yes! whether you be guilty or not, my brother! the more I listen to my heart, the more I love you, and I cannot help it!"

"It is because your heart is so much wiser than your head, dear Miriam! Your heart divines the guiltlessness that your reason refuses to credit! Do what you feel that you must, dear Miriam—but, in the meantime, let us still be brother and sister—embrace me once more."

With anguish bordering on insanity, she threw herself into his arms for a moment—was pressed to his heart, and then breaking away, she escaped from the room to her own chamber. And there, with her half-crazed brain and breaking heart—like one acting or forced to act in a ghastly dream, she began to arrange her evidence—collected the letters, the list of witnesses and all preparatory to setting forth upon her fatal mission in the morning.

With the earliest dawn of morning, Miriam left her room. In passing the door of Mr. Wilcoxen's chamber, she suddenly stopped—a spasm seized her heart, and convulsed her features—she clasped her hands to pray, then, as if there were wild mockery in the thought, flung them fiercely apart, and hurried on her way. She felt that she was leaving the house never to return; she thought that she should depart without encountering any of its inmates. She was surprised, therefore, to meet Paul in the front passage. He came up and intercepted her:

"Where are you going so early, Miriam?"

"To Colonel Thornton's."

"What? Before breakfast?"

"Yes."

He took both of her hands and looked into her face—her pallid face—with all the color concentrated in a dark crimson spot upon either cheek—with all the life burning deep down in the contracted pupils of the eyes.

"Miriam, you are not well—come, go to the parlor," he said, and attempted to draw her toward the door.

"No, Paul, no! I must go out," she said, resisting his efforts.

"But why?"

"What is it to you? Let me go."

"It is everything to me, Miriam, because I suspect your errand. Come into the parlor. This madness must not go on."

"Well, perhaps I am mad, and my words and acts may go for nothing. I hope it may be so."

"Miriam, I must talk with you—not here—for we are liable to be interrupted every instant. Come into the parlor, at least for a few moments."

She no longer resisted that slight plea, but suffered him to lead her in. He gave her a seat, and took one beside her, and took her hand in his, and began to urge her to give up her fatal purpose. He appealed to her, through reason, through religion, through all the strongest passions and affections of her soul—through her devotion to her guardian—through the gratitude she owed him—through their mutual love, that must be sacrificed, if her insane purpose should be carried out. To all this she answered:

"I think of nothing concerning myself, Paul—I think only of him; there is the anguish."

"You are insane, Miriam; yet, crazy as you are, you may do a great deal of harm—much to Thurston, but much more to yourself. It is not probable that the evidence you think you have will be considered by any magistrate of sufficient importance to be acted upon against a man of Mr. Wilcoxen's life and character."

"Heaven grant that such may be the case."

"Attend! collect your thoughts—the evidence you produce will probably be considered unimportant and quite unworthy of attention; but what will be

thought of you who volunteer to offer it?"

"I had reflected upon that—and now you mention it, I do not care."

"And, if, on the other hand, the testimony which you have to offer be considered ground for indictment, and Thurston is brought to trial, and acquitted, as he surely would be—"

"Ah! Heaven send it!"

"And the whole affair blown all over the country—how would you appear?"

"I know not, and care not, so he is cleared; Heaven grant I may be the only sufferer! I am willing to take the infamy."

"You would be held up before the world as an ingrate, a domestic traitress, and unnatural monster. You would be hated of all—your name and history become a tradition of almost impossible wickedness."

"Ha! why, do you think that in such an hour as this I care for myself? No, no! no! Heaven grant that it may be as you say—that my brother be acquitted, and I only may suffer! I am willing to suffer shame and death for him whom I denounce! Let me go, Paul; I have lost too much time here."

"Will nothing induce you to abandon this wicked purpose?"

"Nothing on earth, Paul!"

"Nothing?"

"Not so help me Heaven! Give way—let me go, Paul."

"You must not go, Miriam."

"I must! and will—and that directly. Stand aside."

"Then you shall not go."

"Shall not?"

"I said 'shall not.'"

"Who will prevent me?"

"I will! You are a maniac, Miriam, and must be restrained from going abroad, and setting the county in a conflagration."

"You will have to guard me very close for the whole of my life, then."

At that moment the door was quietly opened, and Mr. Wilcoxen entered.

Miriam's countenance changed fearfully, but she wrung her hand from the clasp of Paul's, and hastened toward the door.

Paul sprang forward and intercepted her.

"What does this mean?" asked Mr. Wilcoxen, stepping up to them.

"It means that she is mad, and will do herself or somebody else much mischief," cried Paul, sharply.

"For shame, Paul! Release her instantly," said Thurston, authoritatively.

"Would you release a lunatic, bent upon setting the house on fire?" expostulated the young man, still holding her.

"She is no lunatic; let her go instantly, sir."

Paul, with a groan, complied.

Miriam hastened onward, cast one look of anguish back to Thurston's face, rushed back, and threw herself upon her knees at his feet, clasped his hands, and cried:

"I do not ask you to pardon me—I dare not! But God deliver you! if it brand me and my accusation with infamy! and God forever bless you!" Then rising, she fled from the room.

The brothers looked at each other.

"Thurston, do you know where she has gone? What she intends to do?"

"Yes."

"You do?"

"Assuredly."

"And you would not prevent her?"

"Most certainly not."

Paul was gazing into his brother's eyes, and, as he gazed, every vestige of doubt and suspicion vanished from his mind; it was like the sudden clearing up of the sky, and shining forth of the sun; he grasped his brother's hands with cordial joy.

"God bless you, Thurston! I echo her prayer. God forever bless you! But, Thurston, would it not have been wiser to prevent her going out?"

"How? Would you have used force with Miriam—restrained her personal liberty?"

"Yes! I would have done so!"

"That would have been not only wrong, but useless; if her strong affections for us were powerless to restrain her, be sure that physical means would fail; she would make herself heard in some way, and thus make our cause much worse. Besides, I should loathe, for myself, to resort to any such expedients."

"But she may do so much harm. And you?"

"I am prepared to meet what comes!"

"Strange infatuation! that she should believe you to be—I will not wrong you by finishing the sentence."

"She does not at heart believe me guilty—her mind is in a storm. She is bound by her oath to act upon the evidence rather than upon her own feelings, and that evidence is much stronger against me, Paul, than you have any idea of. Come into my study, and I will tell you the whole story."

And Paul followed him thither.

(To be continued.)

THE WIFE'S DAY OFF.

"No one seems to have thought that wives should have a day off—a whole day to herself," says a married man of many years' standing. "It dawned upon me after I had been married twelve years that everyone in my household had a day off except my wife. I always had Sundays, the children had Saturdays and Sundays free from school, and the servants had Thursdays. One day it came into my mind that in an otherwise justly managed household my wife did not have a whole day, or a part of a day, which she could call her very own. So I sat down and talked it all over with her, and after a good deal of argument on her part, for she is a much domesticated woman, we decided that once every week the family should fish for itself while my wife went shopping or visiting, or anything she wanted to do, without bothering her head about the dinner or the children at home. The plan works like a charm. We have lots of fun, too, trying to show her how much better we can run things without her."

About the Farm

WINTERING YOUNG CATTLE.

Four things are necessary to insure fair growth and good condition in young cattle during the winter, writes Mr. John Begg. These are all within the power and reach of every one to obtain if he so desires. First, shelter. Since our timber has been taken away live stock cannot be left out in open lots as in former years without suffering serious loss and discomfort. Where the owner has not sufficient barn room and is not able to build it, good shelter can be had by making straw sheds for them with but trifling expense. Or, in the absence of straw, warm sheds may be made by using fodder for sides and roof and this can be fed in late spring where the danger of cold rain or snows is past. At any rate, sheds can, and should be provided for them so they may have protection in bad weather.

Then they should have plenty of pure, clean water. Many farmers entertain the idea that stock cattle will not drink much in cold weather. This is a mistake. They are eating dry fodder, hay or straw, as the case may be, and they must have plenty of water to assist nature in dissolving these dry foods. And they should have it at will. By this means they will not be so likely to fill themselves full of cold water sufficiently so to chill their entire system and make what should be a source of comfort to them a source of discomfort. They should also be fed plenty of forage either fodder or hay, clover or mixed preferred, and straw about all they will consume, with a small ration of grain once or twice a day.

This grain may be fed in the shape of corn in the shock if any is grown on the farm small enough that they can readily masticate it, if not larger corn may be husked and chopped into small pieces with hatchet or corn knife so that the yearling steer can readily take hold of and eat it. Some farmers shell corn, others prefer grinding corn, cob and all and feeding in that way. This latter method requires more careful equipment and greater care in feeding than either of the two other methods. For calves, however, we prefer shelling corn and mixing one part oats to two parts corn. The young animal will do better and make better growth with part ration of oats than where corn alone is fed. There is more protein in oats and the growing animal needs more of that. However, if clover hay is used, the protein in that will even up the corn and fodder and make better rations.

My son is feeding at this time ten head of nice 800-pound yearlings in this way, giving them a small ration of shock corn morning and evening with fodder all they want and clover hay occasionally. They also have all the straw they desire. Their corn ration consists of about one bushel a day to the head. This would give each only about 5½ pounds shelled corn a day in addition to the rough feed they get. The gain is not large nor would we expect it to be, but their condition is good, they are doing well and making fair growth. About April 1, the grain ration for these cattle will be increased, probably doubled, and by the time grass comes they will be in fine condition to grow and take on flesh during the spring and summer months.

When this method of disposing of the forage crops of the farms is practised all rough feeds, such as fodder, hay and straw, is worked up into manure and put back upon the land from whence it came. And we believe that young cattle, sheep or colts carried through the winter on rough feeds mainly, do not pay large profits for feeding, yet the incidental profits coming from the business increased fertility and consequently larger yields of other crops, makes the feeding of forage consuming animals on the farms almost a necessity rather than a choice. And in these days of close competition and small profits in business farmers are compelled to practise such methods as will give them maximum results at minimum cost of producing them.

FEEDING HORSES FOR PROFIT.

It is a singular fact that exact data regarding the best method of feeding horses is far less common than for feeding other classes of live stock. From one point of view this is not surprising, since the horse is used mainly for work or pleasure, while cows, beef, cattle, sheep, hogs or poultry are fed for their products. Therefore, it is relatively much easier to determine the effect of various rations upon other stock than upon horses.

If a horse keeps in ordinarily good condition, the feeder is apt to conclude that his feed is all right in every respect.

that it is best to leave well enough alone. It may be, however, that such a feed cost from 25 to 50 per cent. more than would a different ration that might give as good or better results.

The above conditions partly explain why there are so few mixed feeds on the market that are particularly designed for horses. One of the best of these feeds, whose merit has been thoroughly demonstrated by careful use, contains a liberal proportion of barley. The economy of this feed is evidently due in part to the barley it contains.

Moreover, the barley being finely ground, and also the corn and oats in the feed being ground with equal fineness, makes a mixture each particle of which is so small and so broken up that the whole can be thoroughly digested. This is an extremely important point in feeding horses, as everyone who keeps horses realizes that a considerable part of whatever whole grain is fed is evacuated in an undigested condition. This serious waste seems to be largely prevented by the use of a properly balanced ration of finely ground grains.

The horse naturally consumes hay or coarse fodder to furnish the roughage required for the best operation of the horse's digestive apparatus. It is not necessary, therefore, to feed whole grain when hay or straw is used, either whole or cut. The fact that an increasing number of farmers and horse breeders are proving the truth of the above statements by their results with fine ground feed for horses, is also emphasized by numerous city stables where large numbers of horses are cared for. This point is an important one, since the economy of fine ground feeds proves to be so great as to make it profitable to use such feeds instead of feeding horses on whole grain as is usually done.

BUTTER FOR PRIVATE TRADE.

The milk is run through a hand separator morning and night, directly after milking, writes Mrs. F. R. B. The cream is set away in the cellar, care being taken to have it properly cooled before turning in with other cream. Unless this is done white flakes will appear in the butter. In warm weather we can churn every other day in the summer, not churning any cream that has been separated within 24 hours, keeping that in another cream pail, toward the next churning. We use a barrel churn, have the temperature of the cream about 60 degrees, also use a little butter color.

The churn is stopped as soon as the butter comes in small granules. The buttermilk is drawn off. The butter is washed in two waters, then taken up in a bowl and salted to suit our customers. Some like an ounce of salt to a pound of butter, but more prefer an ounce and a half. The butter is worked just enough to distribute the salt. It is then set away for two or three hours, when it is worked a very little and packed in five and ten-pound jars.

The crocks are covered with white cheesecloth and then with wrapping paper neatly tied over them. They are now ready to be delivered to our customers. We do not use ice. Very cold well water and a good cellar prevent our having soft butter as we did in former days when we worked in the old way.

THE ONLY BORN KING.

There is a fact about King Alfonso well worth knowing. Of all the kings who have ever lived, with the sole exception of Jean I. of France, who lived but a few hours, he is the only one to be a king from the moment of his first breath—a veritable 'born king.' And since he is much spoken of these days it is not amiss to know his name, which is His Most Catholic Majesty Don Alfonso XIII., King of Spain, of Castile, of Leon, of Aragon, of the two Sicilies, of Jerusalem, of Navarre, of Gibraltar, of the Western and Eastern Indies, of the Oceanic continent, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, of Brabant and Milan, Count of Hapsburg, of Flanders, of the Tyrol, and Grand Master of the Golden Fleece. This is not really all, but it is a good deal to live up to, even for a king.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY OVERLAND.

Comparison of overland and oversea transmission of wireless messages has shown that the surface of the ground exercises an important influence upon the propagation of long electro-magnetic waves. Recent experiments by J. S. Sachs in Germany demonstrate that the earth's surface is strongly absorbent and weakly reflective for waves of 31 meters in length. He concludes that for both senders and receivers for overland transmission should be insulated rather than connected with earth. It is desirable to install the apparatus as high above the ground as possible.

Never judge a man's feet by the slippers his wife makes for him.

The art of cross-examination is to get the truth out of a witness, even though the truth is not in him!

Grand Prize Competition

A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY COURSE, A TRIP AROUND THE WORLD, OF \$1,000 IN CASH.

A choice of which we offer to the individual securing the largest number of subscriptions during 1906 to

The Busy Man's Magazine

In addition to these prizes there are many others. Every competitor can win on for his or her work.

THE BUSY MAN'S MAGAZINE is unlike any other, its contents are a careful selection from the best that appears in the leading publications of the world. It is published by the proprietors of The Canadian Grocer, Hardware and Metal, Canadian Machinery, The Dry Goods Review and other successful papers—and who are Canada's leading publishers.

Subscriptions are not hard to secure—a bank clerk in Ontario took 25 in one week by writing to his friends.

"THE BUSY MAN'S MAGAZINE is the best I have ever had the pleasure of reading." S. W. WYNN, Editor Yorkton Enterprise.

Send postal for particulars of competition to our nearest office. DO IT NOW. It may be a glorious change in your career.

THE MACLEAN PUBLISHING CO., Limited, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, or London, Eng.