

Marian Mayfield

Or, The Strange Disappearance

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The day of the trial came. It was a bright spring day, and from an early hour in the morning the village was crowded to overflowing with people collected from all parts of the county. The court-room was filled to suffocation. It was with the greatest difficulty that order could be maintained when the prisoner, in the custody of the high sheriff, was brought into court.

The venerable presiding judge was supposed to be unfriendly to the accused, and the State's Attorney was known to be personally, as well as officially, hostile to his interests. So strongly were the minds of the people prejudiced upon one side or the other that it was with much trouble that twelve men could be found who had not made up their opinions as to the prisoner's innocence or guilt. At length, however, a jury was empaneled, and the trial commenced. When the prisoner was placed at the bar, and asked the usual question, "Guilty or not guilty?" some of the old haughtiness curled the lip and flashed from the eye of Thurston Wilcoxen, as though he disdained to answer a charge so base; and he replied in a low, scornful tone, "Not guilty, your honor."

The opening charge of the State's Attorney had been carefully prepared. Mr. Thomson had never in his life had so important a case upon his hands, and he was resolved to make the most of it. His speech was well reasoned, logical, eloquent. To destroy in the minds of the jury every favorable impression left by the late blameless and beneficent life of Mr. Wilcoxen, he did not fail to allude, from olden history, and from later times, every signal instance of depravity, cloaked with hypocrisy, in high places; he enlarged upon wolves in sheeps' clothing—Satan in an angel's garb, and dolefully pointed out how many times the indignant question of—"Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"—had been answered by results in the affirmative. He raked up David's sin from the ashes of ages. Where was the scene of that crime, and who was its perpetrator—in the court of Israel, by the King of Israel—a man after God's own heart. Could the gentlemen of the jury be surprised at the appalling discovery so recently made, as if great crimes in high places were impossible or new things under the sun? He did not fail to draw a touching picture of the victim, the beautiful, young stranger-girl, whom they all remembered and loved—who had come, an angel of mercy, on a mission of mercy, to their shores. Was not her beauty, her genius, her goodness—by which all there had at some time been blessed—sufficient to save her from the knife of the assassin? No! as he should shortly prove. Yet all these years her innocent blood had cried to Heaven in vain; her fate was unavenged, her manes unappeased.

All the women, and all the simple-hearted and unworshipful among the men, were melted into tears, very unpropitious to the fate of Thurston; tears not called up by the eloquence of the prosecuting attorney so much as by the mere allusion to the fate of Marian, once so beloved, and still so fresh in the memories of all.

Thurston heard all this—not in the second-hand style with which I have summed it up—but in the first vital freshness, when it was spoken with a fogic, force, and fire that carried conviction to many a mind. Thurston looked upon the judge—his face was stern and grave. He looked upon the jury—they were all strangers, from distant parts of the county, drawn by idle curiosity to the scene of trial, and arriving quite unprejudiced. They were not his "peers," but, on the contrary, twelve as "steels"-looking brothers as ever decided the fate of a gentleman and scholar. Thence he cast his eyes over the crowd in the court-room.

There were his parishioners! hoary patriarchs and gray-haired matrons, stately men and lovely women, who, from week to week, for many years, had still hung delighted on his discourses, as though his lips had been touched with fire, and all his words inspired! There they were around him again! But oh! how different the relations and the circumstances! There they sat, with stern brows and averted faces, or downcast eyes, or "lips that scarce their scorn forbore." No eye or lip among them responded kindly to his searching gaze, and Thurston turned his face away again; for an instant his soul sunk under the pall of despair that fell darkening upon it. It was not conviction in the court he thought of—he would probably be acquitted by the court—but what should acquit him in public opinion? The evidence that might not be strong enough to doom him to death would still be sufficient to destroy forever his position and his usefulness. No eye, thenceforth, would meet his own in friendly confidence. No hand grasp his in brotherly fellowship.

The State's Attorney was still proceeding with his speech. He was now stating the case, which he promised to prove by competent witnesses—how the prisoner at the bar had long pursued his beautiful but hapless victim—how he had been united to her by a private marriage—that he had corresponded with her from Europe—that upon his

return they had frequently met—that the prisoner, with the treachery that would soon be proved to be a part of his nature, had grown weary of his wife, and transferred his attentions to another and more fortune-favored lady—and finally, that upon the evening of the murder he had deceived the unhappy young lady to the fatal spot, and then and there effected his purpose. The prosecuting attorney made this statement, not with the brevity with which it is here reported, but with a minuteness of detail and warmth of coloring that harrowed up the hearts of all who heard it. He finished by saying that he should call the witnesses in the order of time corresponding with the facts they came to prove.

"Oliver Murray will take the stand." This, the first witness called, after the usual oath, deposed that he had first seen the prisoner and the deceased together in the Library of Congress; had overheard their conversation, and suspecting some unfairness on the part of the prisoner, had followed the parties to the navy yard, where he had witnessed their marriage ceremony.

"When was the next occasion upon which you saw the prisoner?"

"On the night of the 8th of April, 182—, on the coast, near Pine Bluff. I had landed from a boat, and was going inland when I passed him. I did not see his face distinctly, but recognized him by his size and form, and peculiar air and gait. He was hurrying away, with every mark of terror and agitation."

This portion of Mr. Murray's testimony was so new to all as to excite the greatest degree of surprise, and in no bosom did it arouse more astonishment than in that of Thurston. The witness was strictly cross-questioned by the counsel for the prisoner, but the cross-examination failed to weaken his testimony, or to elicit anything more favorable to the accused. Oliver Murray was then directed to stand aside.

The next witness was Miriam Shields. Deeply veiled and half fainting, the poor girl was led in between Colonel and Miss Thornton, and allowed to sit while giving evidence. When told to look at the prisoner at the bar, she raised her death-like face, and a deep, gasping sob broke from her bosom. But Thurston fixed his eyes kindly and encouragingly upon her—his look said plainly: "Fear nothing, dear Miriam! Be courageous! Do your stern duty, and trust in God."

Miriam then identified the prisoner as the man she had twice seen alone with Marian at night. She further testified that upon the night of April 8th, 182—, Marian had left her home late in the evening to keep an appointment—from which she had never returned. That in the pocket of the dress she had laid off was found the note appointing the meeting upon the beach for the night in question. Here the note was produced. Miriam identified the handwriting as that of Mr. Wilcoxen.

Paul Douglass was next called to the stand, and required to give his testimony in regard to the handwriting. Paul looked at the piece of paper that was placed before him, and he was sorely tempted. How could he swear to the handwriting unless he had actually seen the hand write it? He asked himself. He looked at his brother. But Thurston saw the struggle in his mind, and his countenance was stern and high, and his look authoritative and commanding—it said: "Paul! do not dare to deceive yourself. You know the handwriting. Speak the truth if it kills me." And Paul did so.

The next witness that took the stand was Dr. Brightwell—the good old physician gave his evidence very reluctantly—it went to prove the fact of the prisoner's absence from the deathbed of his grandfather upon the night of the reputed murder, and his distracted appearance when returning late in the morning.

"Why do you say reputed murder?"

"Because, sir, I never consider the fact of a murder established until the body of the victim has been found."

"You may stand down."

Dr. Solomon Weissmann was next called to the stand, and corroborated the testimony of the last witness.

Several other witnesses were then called in succession, whose testimony being only corroborative, was not very important. And the prisoner was remanded, and the court adjourned until ten o'clock the next morning.

"Life will be saved, but position and usefulness in this neighborhood gone forever, Paul," said Thurston, as they went out.

"Evidence very strong—very conclusive to our minds, yet not sufficient to convict him," said one gentleman to another.

"I am of honest Dr. Brightwell's opinion—that the establishment of a murder needs as a starting point the finding of the body; and, moreover, that the conviction of a murderer requires an eye-witness to the deed. The evidence, so far as we have heard it, is strong enough to ruin the man, but not strong enough to hang him," said a third.

"Ay! but we have not heard all, or the most important part of the testimony. The State's Attorney has not fired his great gun yet," said a fourth, as the crowd elbowed, pushed, and struggled out of the court-room.

Those from distant parts of the county



WHO SAID "RATS"?

remained in the village all night—those nearer returned home to come back in the morning.

The second day of the trial, the village was more crowded than before. At ten o'clock the court opened, the prisoner was shortly afterward brought in, and the prosecution renewed its examination of witnesses. The next witness that took the stand was a most important one. John Miles, captain of the schooner Plover. He deposed that in the month of April 182—, he was mate in the schooner Blanch, of which his father was the captain. That in said month the prisoner at the bar had hired his father's vessel to carry off a lady whom the prisoner declared to be his own wife; that they were to take her to the Bermudas. That to effect their object, his father and himself had landed near Pine Bluff; the night was dark, yet he soon discerned the lady walking alone upon the beach. They were bound to wait for the arrival of the prisoner, and a signal from him before approaching the lady. They waited some time, watching from their cover the lady as she paced impatiently up and down the sands. At length they saw the prisoner approaching. He was closely wrapped up in his cloak, and his hat was pulled over his eyes, but they recognized him well by his air and gait. They drew nearer still, keeping in the shadow, waiting for the signal. The lady and the prisoner met—a few words passed between them—of which he, the deponent, only heard "Thurston?" "Yes, Thurston!" and then the prisoner raised his arm and struck, and the lady fell. His father was a cautious man, and when he saw the prisoner rush up the cliff and disappear, when he saw that the lady was dead, and that the storm was beginning to rage violently and the tide was coming in, and fearing, besides, that he should get into trouble, he hurried into the boat and put off and boarded the schooner, and as soon as possible set sail for Bermuda. They had kept away from this coast for years, that is to say, as long as the father lived.

John Miles was cross-examined by Mr. Romford, but without effect. This testimony bore fatally upon the prisoner's cause—the silence of consternation reigned through the crowd. Thurston Wilcoxen, when he heard this astonishing evidence, first thought that the witness was perjured, but when he looked closely upon his open, honest face, and fearless eye and free bearing, he saw that no consciousness of falsehood was there and he could but grant that the witness, naturally deceived by "foregone conclusions," had inevitably mistaken the real murderer for himself.

Darker and darker the awful pall of fate over him—the awful stillness of the court was oppressive, was suffocating; a deadly faintness came upon him, for now, for the first time, he fully realized the awful doom that threatened him. Not long his nature bowed under the burden—his spirit rose to throw it off, and once more the fine head was proudly raised, nor did it once sink again. The last witness for the prosecution was now called and took the stand, and deposed that he lived ten miles down the coast in an isolated, obscure place; that on the first of May, 182—, the body of a woman had been found at low tide upon the beach, that it had the appearance of having been very long in the water—the clothing was respectable, the dress was dark blue stuff, but was faded in spots—there was a ring on the finger, but the hand was so swollen that it could not be got off. His poor neighbors of the coast assembled. They made an effort to get the coroner, but he could not be found. And the state of the body demanded immediate burial. When cross-questioned by Lawyer Romford, the witness said that they had not then heard of any missing or murdered lady, but had believed the body to be that of a shipwrecked passenger, until they heard of Miss Mayfield's fate.

Miriam was next recalled. She came in as before, supported between Colonel and Miss Thornton. Everyone who saw the poor girl, said that she was dying. When examined, she deposed that Marian, when she left home, had worn a blue merino dress—and, yes, she always wore a little locket ring on her finger. Drooping and fainting as she was, Miriam was allowed to leave the court-room. This closed the evidence of the prosecution.

The defense was taken up and conducted with a great deal of skill. Mr. Romford enlarged upon the noble character his client had ever maintained from childhood to the present time—they all knew him—he had been born and had ever lived among them—what man or woman of them all would have dared to suspect him of such a crime? He spoke warmly of his truth, fidelity, Christian zeal, benevolence, philanthropy and great public benefits.

(To be continued.)

He who is away from home most of the time dodges a lot of domestic trouble.

About the Farm

BROOD SOWS AND PIGS.

Feed the sow lightly for a few days before and after farrowing. A purely grain-fed hog is never comfortable. The stomach and bowels must be reasonably distended by bulky food, given along with a nutritious ration. Turnips or roots of any kind are a valuable food for the sow during the winter. They produce an active condition and this is especially important for the brood sow. Do not keep her on a corn diet. Corn should form only a very small part, at the most, of her ration. A small amount can be fed in conjunction with middlings or bran to supply heat.

The sow about to farrow must have a shallow bed of finely cut straw or chaff. Pigs are often caught in the hollow of a deep bed or become tangled in the straw and are crushed by the mother. It is well to place a fender in the sow's stall so that she cannot crush the pigs against the wall. Care should be taken that the sow is not placed where there is much noise or excitement or she is liable to kill the pigs in trying to protect them.

Do not keep the little pigs confined on a board floor. They will become crooked legged and deformed if thus treated. Let them run out of doors on pleasant days. Get them out of the nest and make them run about, for if they do not get exercise they will become too fat.

When feeding a trough that is low enough for them to get their noses in and drink with the sow for in this way they will soon learn to get their own living. Do not place their corn in a trough, for they will eat too fast and will not chew it. It is better to scatter the grain around on the floor where they will have to pick it up and thus take more time.

If pigs are fed in this way, they are getting about two-thirds of their living from the feed trough by the time they are old enough to wean, and instead of weaning being a revolution it will be an evolution.

Wean the pigs when eight or ten weeks old. Place in a pen that is not close to the sow, for they will forget her sooner if they cannot hear her squealing. Give extra care so as to avoid any check in growth. Give skim milk and middlings, a little at a time, and often, as the pigs have been used to taking their food at will.

Do not feed the sow rich food until the milk flow has been checked. It is always best to let her depend on pasture and water alone for food. And if given good pasture and plenty of fresh water she will soon regain her lost flesh and will need no extra food.

PUSHING EARLY LAMBS.

It is an excellent plan to have some small pens in or near the shed. As fast as the lambs come, they can be removed with the mother, to these pens, where they can be cared for much better than if compelled to remain with the flock. An old-fashioned teapot, with a round spout, on which one can put a rubber nipple, is convenient to carry milk from cows that have recently freshened, and feed the little lambs, as they seem to require more than they are getting from the mother. The teapot is also very convenient to set on the stove, or hold in hot water, to heat the milk for immediate use. Care and attention must be given all the little details.

Fix a little creep that the lambs can go through. As fast as they are large enough to take out of the pens and put with the flock with their mothers, they can be allowed to go into an adjoining pen, or room, where they can be fed some grain. Bran and fine middlings, that has been sweetened a little with granulated sugar, are excellent.

As soon as they begin to eat, leave out the sugar and add oats to the other feeds. Feed only as much as they will eat each half day and clean the trough each time before putting in a new supply. Lambs are very fastidious and will not eat if there is the least bit of dirt in or near the feed. Put some clover hay where they can pick it over. Change that which has been picked over for a fresh supply often.



MORE THAN THREE MINUTES FAST.

The Cook—"Will you an' th' Master toime yer own eggs th' mornin', plaze ma'am? The clock I do be havin' in the kitchen is fast."

Continue to feed both lambs and ewes grain as long as they are retained in the sheds. If a regular and reasonable supply of roots can be given the ewes, it will help them to give a larger amount of milk and consequently push the lambs along faster. After the sheep are turned out to grass and are brought in at night it is a good plan to keep up the grain feeding, leaving out the middlings, if necessary, and feed the bran and oats.

If it is desirable to market the lambs early they can be crowded right along until they have attained the weights that the market requires. To one who has not followed this practice the results will be surprising. I know instances where lambs have gained a pound per day, after the first month to the time of marketing.

FINISHING STEERS.

After being fed all winter on dry foods, which to a certain extent become monotonous to the fattening animal, steers will frequently eat but little else when turned suddenly upon fresh pasture. Unless they are kept off the grass for all but brief periods during the first weeks, there will be a checking of growth due to the fact that the succulent grass has disordered the digestion of the animals. At the same time they will consume more of the fresh palatable grass, and will not eat enough of strong nitrogenous or fat producing foods.

This calls for careful regulation of the diet of the growing steer when first put upon green pasture. They should be allowed enough palatable mixed feed to take the edge from their appetites, so they will not feed heavily upon the grass when turned out. It has been found that a good feed of mixed grain, early in the morning, followed by some dry roughage will serve this purpose best. If the steers are then turned upon the pasture they will not overfeed on the green forage. At this time the concentrated meals and ground grains are not as good as properly mixed whole grains, for the reason that if these are fed in addition to the already extremely laxative fresh grass, the animals will be checked in growth.

A balanced ration cannot be said to be furnished by early spring grass alone. This early growth is largely succulent grass containing practically no nitrogen or any fat producing matter. For this reason considerable corn with some dry alfalfa hay or some of the small grains, should form a part of the morning ration. The well mixed feed composed of grain, such as oats, barley, rye and corn, is, at this time, to be preferred above one formed chiefly of corn.

PREPARING TEAMS FOR WORK.

Horses just taken up after a long rest do not need much grain at first, but the quantity should be increased, little by little, as time advances and amount of labor increases. We should remember that the system is not in a condition to digest and assimilate much feed at first, but that the capabilities will increase, gradually, as the system requires, to maintain it under the increased effort required to perform the extra amount of labor. Increase in capabilities in feeding and capabilities for labor can be developed slowly at the same time under judicious management; but a horse that has been idle any great length of time cannot be transformed suddenly from the soft, flabby condition to a hardened condition capable of sustained effort and endurance.

The man who really has a love for his horses and seeks to give them a chance to perform their part without injury to themselves, as well as in a manner that will be a profit to himself, will study their needs under varying conditions, as well as the character of each individual horse so as to be able to meet the different requirements as they present themselves. Such a man is alert, never allowing the harness to gall, or for lack of proper adjustment. He will not worry one horse or put him to a disadvantage beside the other. It is too often the case that the owner and driver of the horses need educating and training first. When failures and losses are met with, many find the man behind the team is responsible.

The Eagle—I have one great advantage over you. I don't need to keep dodging automobiles all the time. The Cow—No; but just wait till they get these airships going.