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MYSTERY OF A HANSOM CAB.

BY FERGUS W. HUME.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. GORBY MAKES FURTHER DISCOVERIES.

When Mr. Gorby left Possum Villa no doubt remained in his mind as to who had committed the murder. The gentleman in the light coat had threatened to murder Whyte, even in the open street—these last words being especially significant—and there was no doubt that he had carried out his threat. What the detective had now to do was to find who the gentleman in the light coat was, where he lived, and, having found out these facts, ascertain his doings on the night of the murder. Mrs. Hableton had described him, but was ignorant of his name, and her very vague description might apply to dozens of young men in Melbourne. There was only one person who, in Mr. Gorby's opinion, could tell the name of the gentleman in the light coat, and that was Moreland, the intimate friend of the dead man. What puzzled the detective was that Moreland should be ignorant of his friend's tragic death, seeing that the papers were full of the murder, and that the reward gave an excellent description of the personal appearance of the deceased. The only way in which Gorby could account for Moreland's extraordinary silence was that he was out of town, and had neither seen the papers nor heard any one talking about the murder. If this was the case he might either stay away for an indefinite time or might come back after a few days. At all events it was worth while going down to St. Kilda in the evening on the chance that Moreland might have returned to town and would call and see his friend. So, after his tea, Mr. Gorby put on his hat and went down to Possum Villa on what he could not help acknowledging to himself was a very slender possibility.

Mrs. Hableton opened the door for him, and in silence led the way into her own sitting room.

They were barely seated when a knock came at the front door, loud and decisive, on hearing which Mrs. Hableton sprang hastily to her feet. "That may be Mr. Moreland," she said. "I never 'ave visitors in the evenin', bein' a lone widder, and if it is 'im I'll bring 'im in 'ere."

She went out, and presently Gorby, who was listening intently, heard a man's voice ask if Mr. Whyte was at home. "No, sir, he ain't," answered the landlady, "but there's a gentleman in his room askin' after 'im. Won't you come in, sir?"

"For a rest, yes," returned the visitor, and immediately afterwards Mrs. Hableton appeared, ushering in the late Oliver Whyte's most intimate friend. He was a tall, slender man, with a pink and white complexion, curly fair hair, and a drooping straw colored mustache—altogether a strikingly aristocratic individual. He was well dressed in a fashionable suit of check, and had a cool, nonchalant air about him.

"And where is Mr. Whyte to-night?" he asked, sinking into a chair, and taking no more notice of the detective than if he had been an article of furniture.

"Haven't you seen him lately?" asked the detective, quickly. Mr. Moreland stared in an insolent manner at his questioner for a few moments, as if he were debating the advisability of answering or not. At last he apparently decided that he would, for slowly pulling off one glove he leaned back in his chair.

"No, I have not," he said, with a yawn. "I have been up the country for a few days, and only arrived back this evening, so I have not seen him for over a week. Why do you ask?"

The detective did not answer, but stood looking at the young man before him in a thoughtful manner.

"I hope," said Moreland, nonchalantly, "I hope you will know me again, my friend; but I didn't know Whyte had started a lunatic asylum during my absence. Who are you?"

Mr. Gorby came forward and stood under the gaslight. "My name is Gorby, sir, and I am a detective," he said quietly.

"Ah! indeed," said Moreland, coolly looking him up and down. "What has Whyte been doing, running away with some one's wife, eh? I know he has little weaknesses of that sort."

Gorby shook his head.

"Do you know where Mr. Whyte is to be found?" he asked cautiously.

Moreland laughed.

"Not I, my friend," said he lightly. "I presume he is somewhere about here, as these are his headquarters. What's he been doing? Nothing that can surprise me, I assure you—he was always an erratic individual, and"——

"He paid reg'ler," interrupted Mrs. Hableton, pursing up her lips.

"A most enviable reputation to possess," answered the other with a sneer, "and one I'm afraid I'll never enjoy. But why all this questioning about Whyte? What's the matter with him?"

"He's dead!" said Gorby, abruptly.

All Moreland's nonchalance vanished on hearing this, and he started up out of his chair.

"Dead," he repeated mechanically. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that Mr. Oliver Whyte was murdered in a hansom cab."

Moreland stared at the detective in a puzzled sort of way, and passed his hand across his forehead.

"Excuse me, my head is in a whirl," he said, as he sat down again. "Whyte murdered! He was all right when I left him nearly two weeks ago."

"Haven't you seen the papers?" asked Gorby.

"Not for the last two weeks," replied Moreland. "I have been up country, and it was only on arriving back in town to-night that I heard about the murder at all, as my landlady gave me a garbled account of it, but I never for a moment connected it with Whyte, and came down here to see him, as I had agreed to do when I left. Poor fellow! poor fellow! poor fellow!" and much overcome, he buried his face in his hands.

Mr. Gorby was touched by his evident distress, and even Mrs. Hableton permitted a small tear to roll down one hard cheek as a tribute of sorrow and sympathy. Presently Moreland raised his head, and spoke to Gorby in a husky tone.

"Tell me all about it," he said, leaning his cheek on his hand. "Everything you know."

He placed his elbows on the table, and buried his face in his hands again, while the detective sat down and related all that he knew about Whyte's murder. When it was done he lifted up his head, and looked sadly at the detective.

"If I had been in town," he said, "this would not have happened, for I was always beside Whyte."

"You knew him very well, sir?" said the detective, in a sympathetic tone.

"We were like brothers," replied Moreland, mournfully. "I came out from England in the same steamer with him, and used to visit him constantly here."

Mrs. Hableton nodded her head to imply that such was the case.

"In fact," said Mr. Moreland, after a moment's thought, "I believe I was with him the night he was murdered."

Mrs. Hableton gave a slight scream, and threw her apron over her face, but the detective sat unmoved, though Moreland's last remark had considerably startled him.

"What's the matter?" said Moreland, turning to Mrs. Hableton. "Don't be afraid; I didn't kill him; no, but I met him last Thursday week, and I left for the country on Friday morning at half-past 6."

"And what time did you meet Whyte on Thursday night?" asked Gorby.

"Let me see," said Moreland, crossing his legs and looking thoughtfully up to the ceiling, "it was about half-past 9 o'clock. I was in the Orient hotel, on Bourke street. We had a drink together and then went up the street to a hotel in Russell street, where we had another. In fact," said Moreland, coolly, "we had several other drinks."

"Yes," said Gorby, placidly. "Go on."

"Well of—it's hardly the thing to confess it," said Moreland, looking from one to the other with a pleasant smile, "but in a case like this, I feel it my duty to throw all social scruples aside. We both got very drunk."

"Ah! Whyte was, as we know, drunk when he got into the cab—and you——?"

"Was not quite so bad as Whyte," answered the other. "I had my senses about me. I fancy he left the hotel some minutes before 1 o'clock on Friday morning."

"And what did you do?"

"I remained in the hotel. He left his overcoat behind him, and I picked it up and followed him shortly afterward to return it. I was too drunk to see what direction he had gone in, and stood leaning against the hotel door in Bourke street with the coat in my hand. Then some one came up, and, snatching the coat out of my hand, made off with it, and the last thing I remember was shouting out, 'Stop, thief!' Then I must have fallen down, for next morning I was in bed with all my clothes on, and they were very muddy. I got up and left town for the country by the 6:30 train, so I knew nothing about the matter until I came back to Melbourne to-night. That's all I know."

"And you had no impression that Whyte was watched that night?"

"No, I had not," answered Moreland, frankly. "He was in pretty good spirits, though he was put out at first."

"What was the cause of his being put out?"

Moreland arose, and, going to a side table, brought Whyte's album, which he laid on the table and opened in silence. The contents were very much the same as the photographs in the room, burlesque actresses and ladies of the ballet predominating; but Mr. Moreland turned over the pages till nearly the end, when he stopped at a large cabinet photograph, and pushed the album toward Mr. Gorby.

"That was the cause," he said.

It was the portrait of a charmingly pretty girl, dressed in white, with a sailor hat on her fair hair, and holding a lawn tennis racket. She was bending half forward, with a winning smile, and in the background was a mass of some tropical plants. Mrs. Hableton gave a cry of surprise at seeing this.

"Why, it's Miss Frettlby," she said. "How did he know her?"

"Knew her father—letters of introduction, and all that sort of thing," said Mr. Moreland, glibly.

"Ah, indeed!" said Mr. Gorby slowly. "So Mr. Whyte knew Mark Frettlby, the millionaire; but how did he obtain a photograph of the daughter?"

"She gave it to him," said Moreland. "The fact is, Whyte was very much in love with Miss Frettlby."

"And she"——

"Was in love with some one else," finished Moreland.

"Exactly!"

"Yes, she loved a Mr. Brian Fitzgerald, to whom she is now engaged. He was mad on her, and Whyte and he used to quarrel over the young lady desperately."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Gorby. "And do you know this Mr. Fitzgerald?"

"Oh, dear, no!" answered the other, coolly. "Whyte's friends were not mine. He was a rich young man who had good introductions. I am only a poor devil on the outskirts of society, trying to push my way in the world."

"You know his personal appearance, of course?" observed Mr. Gorby.

"Oh, yes, I can tell you that," said Moreland. "In fact, he's not at all unlike me, which I take to be rather a compliment, as he is said to be good looking. He is tall, rather fair, talks in a bored sort of manner, and is altogether what one would call a heavy swell; but you must have seen him," he went on, turning to Mrs. Hableton; "he was here three or four weeks ago, Whyte told me."

"Oh, that was Mr. Fitzgerald, was it?" said Mrs. Hableton, in surprise. "Yes, he was rather like you; and so the lady they quarreled over must have been Miss Frettlby."

"Very likely," said Moreland, rising. "Well, I'm off. Here's my address," putting a card in Gorby's hand. "I'm glad to be of any use to you in this matter, as Whyte was my dearest friend, and I'll do all in my power to help you to find out the murderer."

"I don't think that is a very difficult matter," said Mr. Gorby, slowly.

"Oh, you have suspicions?" said Moreland, looking at him.

"I have."

"Then who do you think murdered Whyte?"

Mr. Gorby paused a moment, and then said deliberately:

"I have an idea—but I am not certain—when I am certain, I'll speak."

"You think Fitzgerald killed my friend," said Moreland. "I see it in your face."

Mr. Gorby smiled. "Perhaps," he said, ambiguously. "Wait till I am certain."

CHAPTER VII.

A WOOL KING.

Mark Frettlby was one of those fortunate individuals who turned everything he touched into gold. His luck was proverbial throughout Australia. If there was any speculation for which Mark Frettlby went in, other men would be sure to follow, and in every case the result turned out as well, and in many cases even better than they expected. He had come out in the early days of the colony with comparatively little money, but his great perseverance and never failing luck had soon changed his hundreds into thousands, and now at the age of 55 he did not himself know the extent of his income. He had large stations scattered all over the colony of Victoria, which brought him in a splendid income; a charming country house, where at certain seasons of the year he dispensed hospitality to his friends, like the lord of an English manor, and a magnificent town house down in St. Kilda, which would not have been unworthy of Park lane.

Nor were his domestic relations less happy. He had a charming wife, who was one of the best known and most popular ladies of Melbourne, and an equally charming daughter, who, being both pretty and an heiress, naturally attracted crowds of suitors. But Madge Frettlby was capricious, and refused innumerable offers. Being an extremely independent young person, with a mind of her own, as she had not yet seen any one she could love, she decided to remain single, and with her mother continued to dispense the hospitality of the mansion at St. Kilda. But the fairy prince comes to every woman, even if she has to wait a hundred years like the Sleeping Beauty, and in this case he arrived at the appointed time. Ah! what a delightful prince he was, tall, handsome and fair haired, who came from Ireland, and answered to the name of Brian Fitzgerald. He had left behind him in the old country a ruined castle and a few acres of barren land, inhabited by discontented tenants who refused to pay the rent, and talked darkly about the Land league and other disagreeable things. Under these circumstances, with no rent coming in, and no prospect of doing anything in the future, Brian had left the castle of his forefathers to the rats and the family banshee, and came out to Australia to make his fortune. He brought letters of introduction to Mark Frettlby, and that gentleman, having taken a fancy to him, assisted him by every means in his power. Under Frettlby's advice Brian bought a station, and, to his astonishment, in a few years found himself growing rich. The Fitzgeralds had always been more famous for spending than for saving, and it was an agreeable surprise to their latest representative to find the money rolling in instead of out. He began to indulge in castles in the air concerning that other castle in Ireland, with the barren acres and discontented tenants. In his mind's eye he saw the old place rise up in all its pristine splendor out of its ruins; he saw the barren acres well cultivated, and the tenants happy and content—he was rather doubtful on this latter point, but, with the rash confidence of eight-and-twenty, determined to do his best to perform even the impossible. Having built and furnished his castle in the air, Brian naturally thought of giving it a mistress, and this time actual appearance took the place of vision. He fell in love with Madge Frettlby, and having decided in his own mind that she and none other was fitted to grace the visionary halls of his renovated castle, he watched his opportunity and declared himself. She, woman like, coquetted with him for some time, but at last, unable to withstand the impetuosity of her Irish lover, confessed in a low voice, with a pretty smile on her face, that she could not live without him. Whereupon—well—lovers being of a conservative turn of mind, and accustomed to observe the traditional forms of wooing, the result can easily be guessed. Brian hunted all over the jewelers' shops in Melbourne with love like assiduity, and having obtained a ring wherein were set some turquois stones as blue as his own eyes, he placed it on her slender finger, and at last felt that his engagement was an accomplished fact. This being satisfactorily arranged, he next proceeded to interview the father, and had just screwed his courage up to the awful ordeal, when something occurred which postponed the interview indefinitely. Mrs. Frettlby was out driving, when the horses took fright and bolted. The coachman and groom both escaped unhurt, but Mrs. Frettlby was thrown out and killed instantaneously. This was the first really great trouble which had fallen on Mark Frettlby, and he seemed to be stunned by it. Shutting himself up in his room he refused to see any one, even his daughter, and appeared at the funeral with a white and haggard face, which shocked every one. When everything was over, and the body of the late Mrs. Frettlby was consigned to the earth with all the pomp and ceremony which money could give, the bereaved husband rode home and resumed his old life. But he was never the same again. His face, which had always been so genial and bright, became stern and sad. He seldom smiled, and when he did it was a faint, wintry smile, which seemed mechanical. His whole heart seemed centered in his daughter. She became the sole mistress of the St. Kilda mansion, and her father idolized her. She seemed to be the one thing left to him which gave him an interest in life, and had it not been for her bright presence constantly near him, Mark Frettlby would have wished himself lying beside his dead wife in the quiet graveyard, where there is no trouble or care. After a time had elapsed Brian again resolved to ask Mr. Frettlby for the hand of his daughter when for the second time fate interposed. This time it was a rival suitor who made his appearance, and Brian's hot Irish temper rose when he saw another Richmond in the field. The gentleman in question was a Mr. Oliver Whyte, who had come out from England a few months previously, and brought a letter of introduction to Mr. Frettlby, who received him hospitably, as was his custom, and Whyte soon made himself perfectly at home in the St. Kilda mansion.

Brian took a dislike to the new comer the first time he saw him, for Mr. Fitzgerald was a student of Lavater, and prided himself on his reading of character. His opinion of Whyte was anything but flattering to that gentleman, for in spite of his handsome face and suave manners, both Brian and Madge felt the same repulsion toward him as they would have to a snake. Mr. Whyte, however, with true diplomacy, affected not to notice the cold way in which Madge received him, and began to pay marked attention to her, much to Brian's disgust. At last he asked her to be his wife, and notwithstanding her prompt refusal, spoke to Mr. Frettlby on the subject. Much to the daughter's astonishment, that gentleman consented to Whyte's paying his addresses to Madge, and told her that he wished her to consider the young man's proposal favorably. In spite of all Madge could say, he refused to alter his decision, and Whyte, feeling himself safe, began to treat Brian with an insolence which was highly galling to Fitzgerald's proud nature. He called on Whyte at his lodgings, and after a violent quarrel with him had left the house, vowing to kill Whyte should he marry Madge Frettlby. Fitzgerald went alone to Mr. Frettlby that same night, and had an interview with him. He confessed that he loved Madge, and that his love was returned. So, when Madge added her entreaties to Brian's, Mr. Frettlby found himself unable to withstand the combined forces, and gave his consent to their engagement. Whyte was absent in the country for the next few days after his stormy interview with Brian, and it was only on his return that he learnt that Madge was engaged to his rival. He saw Mr. Frettlby on the subject, and having learnt from his own lips that such was the case, he left the house at once, and swore that he would never enter it again. He little knew how prophetic his words were, for on that same night he met his death in a hansom cab. He had passed out of the life of both the lovers, and they, glad that he troubled them no more, never suspected for a moment that the body of the unknown man found in Royston's cab was that of Oliver Whyte.

About two weeks after Whyte's disappearance Mr. Frettlby gave a dinner party in honor of his daughter's birthday. It was a delightful evening, and the wide French windows which led on to the veranda were open, letting in a gentle breeze, blowing with a fresh, salt odor from the ocean. Outside there was a kind of screen of tropical plants, and through the tangle of the boughs the guests, seated at the table, could just see the waters of the bay glittering like silver in the pale moonlight. Brian was seated opposite to Madge, and every now and then he caught a glimpse of her bright face behind the great silver epergne, filled with fruit and flowers, which stood in the center of the table. Mark Frettlby was at the head of the table, and appeared in very good spirits, for his stern features were somewhat relaxed, and he drank more wine than usual. The soup had just been removed when some one who was late entered with apologies and took his seat. Some one in this case was Mr. Felix Rolleston, one of the best known young men in Melbourne. He had an income of his own, scribbled a little for the papers, was to be seen at every house of any pretensions to fashion in Melbourne, and was always bright, happy and full of news. Whenever any scandal occurred Felix Rolleston was sure to know it first, and could tell more about it than any one else. He knew everything that was going on, both at home and abroad. His knowledge, if not very accurate, was at least extensive, and his conversation was piquant and witty. As Calton, one of the leading lawyers of the city, said, "Rolleston put him in mind of what Beaconsfield said of one of his characters in 'Lothair,' 'He wasn't an intellectual Crœsus, but his pockets were always full of sixpences.'" There was a good deal of truth in Calton's remark, and Felix always distributed his sixpences freely. The conversation had been dull for the last few minutes at the Frettlby dinner table; consequently when Felix arrived everybody brightened up, as they felt certain now that the conversation would be amusing.

"So awfully sorry, don't you know," said Felix, as he slipped into a seat by Madge; "but a fellow like me has got to be careful of his time—so many calls on it."

"So many calls in it, you mean," retorted Madge with a disbelieving smile. "Confess, now, you have been paying a round of visits."

"Well, yes," assented Mr. Rolleston; "that's the disadvantage of having a large circle of acquaintances. They give you weak tea and thin bread and butter, whereas"——

"You would rather have a B. and S. and some deviled kidneys," finished Brian.

There was a laugh at this, but Mr. Rolleston disdained to notice the interruption.

"The only advantage of 5 o'clock tea," he went on, "is that it brings people together, and one hears what's going on."

"Ah, yes, Rolleston," said Mr. Frettlby, who was looking at him with an amused smile. "What news have you?"

"Good news, bad news, and such news as you have never heard of," quoted Rolleston gravely. "Yes, I have a bit of news. Haven't you heard it?"

As no one knew what the news was they could not very well say that they had, so Rolleston was happy, having found out that he could make a sensation.

"Well, do you know," he said, gravely fixing in his eyeglass, "they found out the name of the fellow that wat murdered in the hansom cab?"

"Never!" cried every one eagerly.

"Yes," went on Rolleston, "and what's more, you all know him."

"It's never Whyte?" said Brian, in a horrified tone.

"Hang it, how did you know?" said Rolleston, rather annoyed at being forestalled. "Why, I just heard it at the St. Kilda station."

"Oh, easily enough," said Brian, rather confused. "I used to see Whyte constantly, and as I had not set eyes on him for the last two weeks, I thought it might be him."

"How did they find out who it was?" asked Mr. Frettlby, idly toying with his wine glass.

"Oh, one of those detective fellows, you know," answered Felix. "They know every thing."

"I am sorry to hear it," said Frettlby, referring to the fact that Whyte was murdered. "He had a letter of introduction to me, and seemed a clever, pushing young fellow."

"A confounded cad," muttered Felix, under his breath; and Brian, who overheard him, seemed inclined to assent.

For the rest of the meal nothing was talked about but the murder and the mystery in which it was shrouded. When the ladies retired they chatted about it in the drawing room, but finally dropped it for more agreeable subjects. The gentlemen, however, when the cloth had been removed, filled their glasses, and continued their discussion with unabated vigor. Brian alone did not take part in the conversation. He sat moodily staring at his untasted wine, and wrapped in a brown study.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRIAN TAKES A WALK AND A DRIVE.

When the gentlemen entered the drawing room a young lady was engaged in playing one of those detestable pieces of music called morceau de salon, in which an unoffending air is taken and variations embroidered on it till it becomes a perfect agony to distinguish the tune amid the perpetual rattle of quavers and demi-semi-quavers.

Brian quickly found his way to Madge's side. The talk drifted on to the subject of Whyte's death.

"I never did like him," she said, "but it was horrible to think of him dying like that."

"I don't know," answered Brian, gloomily; "from all I can hear, chloroform is a very easy death."

"Death can never be easy," replied Madge, "especially to a young man so full of health and spirits as Mr. Whyte was."

"I believe you are sorry he's dead," said Brian, jealously.

"Aren't you?" she asked in some surprise.

"De mortuis nil nisi bonum," quoted Fitzgerald; "but as I detested him when alive, you can't expect me to regret his end."

Madge did not answer him, but glanced quickly at his face, and for the first time it struck her that he looked ill.

"What is the matter with you, dear?" she asked, placing her hand on his arm. "You are not looking well."

"Nothing—nothing," he answered hurriedly. "I've been a little worried about business lately; but come," he said, rising, "let us go outside, for I see your father has got that girl with the steam whistle voice to sing."

The girl with the steam whistle voice was Julia Featherweight, the sister of Rolleston's inamorata, and Madge stifled a laugh as she went out on the veranda with Fitzgerald.

"What a shame of you," she said, bursting into a laugh when they were safely outside; "she's been taught by the best masters."

"What is the matter with you, dear?"

"How I pity them," retorted Brian, grimly, as Julia wailed out, "Meet me once again," with an ear piercing shrillness. "I'd much rather listen to our ancestral banshee, and as to meet her again, one interview would be more than enough."

Madge did not answer, but leaning lightly over the high rail of the veranda looked out into the beautiful moonlight night. There were a number of people passing along the Esplanade, some of whom stopped and listened to Julia's shrill notes, which being mellowed by distance, must have sounded rather nice. One man in particular seemed to have taste for music, for he persistently stared over the fence at the house. Brian and Madge talked of all sorts of things, but every time Madge looked up she saw the man watching the house.

"What does that man want, Brian?" she asked.

"What man?" asked Brian, starting. "Oh," he went on indifferently, as the man moved away from the gate and crossed the road on to the footpath, "he's taken up with the music, I suppose; that's all."

Madge did not say anything, but could not help thinking there was more in it than the music. Presently Julia ceased, and she proposed to go in.

"Why?" asked Brian, who was lying back in a comfortable seat, smoking a cigarette. "It's nice enough here."

"I must attend to my guests," she answered, rising. "You stop here and finish your cigarette," and with a gay laugh she flitted into the house like a shadow.

Brian sat and smoked, staring out into the moonlight meanwhile. Yes, the man was certainly watching the house, for he sat on one of the seats, and kept his eyes fixed on the brilliantly lighted windows. Brian threw away his cigarette and shivered slightly.

"Could any one have seen me?" he muttered, rising uneasily. "Pshaw! of course not, and the cabman would never recognize me again. Curse Whyte, "I wish I'd never set eyes upon him."

He gave one glance at the dark figure on the seat, and then, with a shiver, passed into the warm, well lighted room. He did not feel easy in his mind, and he would have felt still less so had he known that the man on the seat was one of the cleverest of the Melbourne detectives.

Mr. Gorby had been watching the Frettlby mansion the whole evening, and was getting rather annoyed. Moreland did not know where Fitzgerald lived, and as the detective wanted to find out, he determined to watch Brian's movements and trace him home.

"If he's that pretty girl's lover, I'll wait till he leaves the house," argued Mr. Gorby to himself, when he first took his seat on the Esplanade. "He won't stay long away from her, and once he leaves the house I'll follow him up till I find out where he lives."

When Brian made his appearance early in the evening on his way to Mark Frettlby's mansion, he was in evening dress, with a light coat over it, and also had on a soft hat.

"Well, I'm dashed!" ejaculated Mr. Gorby, when he saw Fitzgerald disappear; "if he isn't a fool I don't know who is, to go about in the very clothes he wore when he polished Whyte off, and think he won't be recognized. Melbourne ain't Paris or London, that he can afford to be so careless, and when I put the darbies on him he will be astonished. Ah, well," he went on, lighting his pipe and taking a seat on the Esplanade, "I suppose I'll have to wait here till he comes out."

Mr. Gorby's patience was pretty severely tried, for hour after hour passed and no one appeared. Then he saw Madge and Brian come out on the veranda, and heard Miss Featherweight's shrill voice singing, which sounded weird and unearthly in the stillness of the night. He saw Madge go in, and then Brian, the latter turning and staring at him for a minute or so.

"Ah!" said Gorby to himself, relighting his pipe, "your conscience is a-smiting you, is it? Wait till you're in jail."

Then the guests came out of the house and disappeared one by one, black figures in the moonlight, after kisses and handshaking. Shortly afterwards Brian came down the path with Frettlby by his side and Madge hanging on to her father's arm. Frettlby opened the gate and held out his hand.

"Good-night, Fitzgerald," he said, in a hearty voice; "come down soon again."

"Good-night, Bryan, dearest," said Madge, kissing him, "and don't forget to-morrow."

Then father and daughter closed the gate, leaving Brian outside, and walked back to the house.

"Ah!" said Gorby to himself, "if you only knew what I know, you wouldn't be so precious kind to him."

Brian walked, strolled along the Esplanade, and then crossing over, passed by Gorby and walked on till he was opposite the Esplanade hotel. Then he lighted a cigarette and walked down the steps on to the pier.

"Suicide, is it?" muttered Mr. Gorby to himself, as he saw the tall, black figure striding resolutely on, a long way ahead. "Not if I can help it." So he lighted his pipe, and strolled down the pier in an apparently aimless manner.

He found Brian leaning over the parapet at the end of the pier, and looking at the glittering waters beneath, which kept rising and falling in a dreamy rhythm, that soothed and charmed the ear. "Poor girl! poor girl!" the detective heard him mutter as he came up. "If she only knew all! If she"——

At this moment he heard the approaching step, and turned round sharply. The detective saw that his face was ghastly pale in the moonlight, and his brows wrinkled angrily.

"What the devil do you want?" he burst out, as Gorby paused. "What do you mean by following me all over the place?"

"Saw me watching the house," said Gorby to himself. "I'm not following you, sir," he said aloud. "I suppose the pier ain't private property. I only came down here for a breath of fresh air."

Fitzgerald did not answer, but turned sharply on his heel, and walked quickly up the pier, leaving Gorby staring after him.

"He's getting frightened," soliloquized the detective to himself, as he strolled easily along, keeping the black figure in front well in view. "I'll have to keep a sharp eye on him or he'll be clearing out of Victoria."

Brian walked quickly up to the St. Kilda station, for on looking at his watch he found he would just have time to catch the last train. He arrived a few minutes before it started, so, getting into the smoking carriage at the near end of the platform, he lit a cigarette, and, leaning back in his seat, watched late comers hurrying into the station. Just as the last bell rang he saw a man rush along, who seemed likely to miss the train. It was the same man who had been watching him the whole evening, and Brian felt confident that he was following him. He comforted himself, however, with the thought that this pertinacious follower would lose the train, and, being in the last carriage himself, he kept a lookout along the platform, expecting to see his friend of the Esplanade standing disappointed on it. There was no appearance of him, however, so Brian, sinking back into his seat, cursed his ill luck in not having shaken off this man who kept him under such strict surveillance.

"D—— him!" he muttered, softly. "I expect he will follow me to East Melbourne, and find out where I live, but he shan't if I can help it."

There was no one in the carriage except himself, on which he felt a sense of relief, for he was in that humor which comes on men sometimes of talking to himself.

"Murdered in a cab," he said, lighting a fresh cigarette, and blowing a cloud of smoke. "A romance in real life, which beats Miss Braddon hollow. There is one thing certain, he won't come between Madge and me again. Poor Madge!" with an impatient sigh. "If she only knew all, there would not be much chance of our marriage; but she can never find out, and I don't suppose any one else ever will."

Here a sudden thought struck him, and rising out of his seat, he walked to the other end of the carriage and threw himself on the cushions, as if desirous of escape from himself.

"What grounds can that man have for suspecting me?" he said aloud. "No one knows I was with Whyte on that night, and the police can't possibly bring forward any evidence to show that I was. Pshaw!" he went on, impatiently buttoning up his coat. "I am like a child, afraid of my shadow—the fellow on the pier is only some one out for a breath of fresh air, as he said himself—I am quite safe."

All the same he did not feel easy in his mind, and when the train arrived at the Melbourne station he stepped out on to the platform with a shiver and a quick look round, as if he expected to feel the detective's hand on his shoulder. He saw no one, however, at all like the man he had met on the St. Kilda pier, and with a sigh of relief, left the station. Mr. Gorby, however, was on the watch, and followed him at a safe distance along the platform. Brian left the station and walked slowly along Flinders street, apparently in deep thought. When he got to Russell street he turned up there, and did not stop until he came close to the Burke and Wills monument, in the very place where the cab had stopped on the night of Whyte's murder.

"Ah!" said the detective to himself, as he stood in the shadow on the opposite side of the street. "You're going to have a look at it, are you? I wouldn't, if I were you—it's dangerous."

Fitzgerald stood for a few minutes at the corner and then walked up Collins street. When he got to the cab stand, opposite the Melbourne club, still suspecting he was followed, he hailed a hansom and drove away in the direction of Spring street. Gorby was rather perplexed at this sudden move, but without delay he hailed another cab and told the driver to follow the first till it stopped.

"Two can play at that game," he said, settling himself back in the cab, "and I'll get the better of you, clever as you are—and you are clever," he went on in a tone of admiration, as he looked round the luxurious hansom, "to choose such a convenient place for a murder; no disturbance and plenty of time for escape after you had finished; it's a pleasure going after a chap like you instead of men who tumble down like ripe fruit, and ain't got any brains to keep their crime quiet."

While the detective thus soliloquized his cab, following on the trail of the other, had turned down Spring street and was being driven rapidly along the Wellington parade in the direction of East Melbourne. It then turned up Powlett street, at which Mr. Gorby exulted.

"Ain't so clever as I thought," he said to himself. "Shows his nest right off, without any attempt to hide it."

The detective, however, had reckoned without his host, for the cab in front kept driving on, through an interminable maze of streets, until it seemed as if Brian was determined never to stop the whole night.

"Look 'ere, sir!" cried Gorby's cabman looking through his trapdoor in the roof of the hansom, "'ow long's this 'ere game a-goin' to larst? My 'oss is knocked up, 'e is, and 'is blessed old legs a-givin' away under 'im!"

"Go on! go on!" answered the detective, impatiently; "I'll pay you well."

The cabman's spirits were raised by this, and by dint of coaxing and a liberal use of the silk, he managed to get his jaded horse up to a pretty good pace. They were in Fitzroy by this time, and then both cabs turned out of Gertrude street into Nicholson street, thence passed on to Evelyn street and along Spring street, until Brian's cab stopped at the corner of Collins street, and Gorby saw him alight and dismiss his cabman. He then walked down the street and disappeared into the Treasury gardens.

"Confound it," said the detective, as he got out and paid his fare, which was not by any means a light one, but over which he had no time to argue, "we've come in a circle, and I do believe he lives in Powlett street, after all."

He went into the gardens, and saw Brian some distance ahead of him, walking rapidly. It was bright moonlight, and he could easily distinguish Fitzgerald by his light coat. He left the gardens by the end gate. Then he went along the Wellington parade, and turned up Powlett street, where he stopped at a house near Cairns' Memorial church, much to Mr. Gorby's relief, who, being, like Hamlet, "fat and scant of breath," found himself rather exhausted. He kept well in the shadow, however, and saw Fitzgerald give one final look around before he disappeared into the house. Then Mr. Gorby, like the Robber Captain in "Ali Baba," took careful stock of the house, and fixed its locality and appearance well in his mind, as he intended to call at it on the morrow.

"What I'm going to do," he said, as he walked slowly back to Melbourne, "is to see his landlady when he's out, and find out what time he came in on the night of the murder. If it fits into the time he got out of Rankin's cab I'll get out a warrant, and arrest him straight off."

CHAPTER IX.

MR. GORBY IS SATISFIED AT LAST.

In spite of his long walk and still longer drive Brian did not sleep well that night. He kept tossing and turning, or else lying on his back wide awake, looking into the darkness and thinking of Whyte. Toward dawn, when the first faint glimmer of morning came through the Venetian blinds, he fell into a sort of uneasy doze, haunted by horrible dreams. He thought he was driving in a hansom, when suddenly he found Whyte by his side, clad in white cerements, grinning and gibbering at him with ghastly merriment. Then the cab went over a precipice, and he fell from a great height down, down, with the mocking laughter still sounding in his ears, until he woke with a loud cry and found it was broad daylight, and that drops of perspiration were standing on his brow. It was no good trying to sleep any longer, so, with a weary sigh, he arose and went for his tub, feeling jaded and worn out by worry and want of sleep. His bath did him some good, as the cold water brightened him up and pulled him together. Still he could not help giving a start of surprise when he saw his face looking at him from the mirror, old and haggard looking, with dark circles round the eyes.

"A pleasant life I'm going to have of it if this sort of thing goes on," he said bitterly; "I wish to G— I had never seen or heard of Whyte."

He dressed himself carefully, however, for Brian was a man who never neglected his toilet, however worried and out of sorts he might feel. Yet, notwithstanding his efforts to throw off his gloom and feel cheerful, his landlady was startled when she saw how haggard and wan his handsome face looked in the searching morning light.

She was a small, dried up little woman, with a wrinkled, yellow face, and looked so parched and brittle that strangers could not help thinking it would do her good if she were soaked in water for a year, in order to soften her a little. Whenever she moved she crackled, and one was in constant dread of seeing one of her wizen looking limbs break off short, like the branch of a dead tree. When she spoke it was in a hard, shrill voice, like a cricket; and being dressed in a faded brown silk, what with her voice and attenuated body, she was not unlike that noisy insect. She crackled into Brian's sitting room with The Argus and coffee, and a look of dismay came over her stony face as she saw his altered looks.

"Dear me, sir," she chirped out in her shrill voice, as she placed her burden on the table, "are you took bad?"

Brian shook his head.

"Want of sleep, that's all, Mrs. Sampson," he answered, unfolding The Argus.

"Ah! that's because ye ain't got enough blood in yer 'ead," said Mrs. Sampson, wisely, for she had her own ideas on the subject of health. "If you ain't got blood you ain't got sleep."

Brian looked at her as she said this, for there seemed such an obvious want of blood in her veins that he wondered if she had ever slept in all her life.

However, he said nothing, but merely intimated that if she would leave the room he would take his breakfast.

"An' if you wants anythin' else, Mr. Fitzgerald," she said, going to the door, "you knows your way to the bell as easily as I do to the kitchen," and, with a final chirrup, she crackled out of the room.

Brian drank his coffee, but pushed away the food which was before him, and then looked through The Argus to see the latest reports about the murder case. What he read made his cheek turn even paler than it was, and he could feel his heart beating loudly.

"They've found a clew, have they?" he muttered, rising and pacing restlessly up and down. "I wonder what it can be! I threw that man off the scent last night, but if he suspects me there will be no difficulty in him finding out where I live. Bah! What nonsense I am talking. I am the victim of my own morbid imagination. There is nothing to connect me with the crime, so I need not be afraid of my shadow. I've a good mind to leave town for a time, but if I am suspected that would excite suspicion. Oh, Madge! my darling," he cried, passionately, "if you only knew what I suffer, I know that you would pity me—but you must never know the truth—'Never! Never!'" and, sinking into a chair by the window, he covered his face with his hands. After remaining in this position for some minutes, occupied with his own gloomy thoughts, he arose and rang the bell. A faint crackle in the distance announced that Mrs. Sampson had heard, and she soon came into the room, looking more like a cricket than ever. Brian had gone into his bedroom and called out to her from there:

"I am going down to St. Kilda, Mrs. Sampson," he said, "and, probably, will not be back all day."

"Which I 'opes it 'ull do you good," answered the cricket, "for you've eaten nethin', an' the sea breezes is miraculous for makin' you take to your victuals. My mother's brother, bein' a sailor, an' wonderful for 'is stomach, which, when 'e 'ad done a meal, the table looked as if a low cuss 'ad gone over it."

"A what?" asked Fitzgerald, buttoning his gloves.

"A low cuss!" replied the landlady, in surprise at his ignorance, "as I've read in 'Oly Writ, as 'ow John the Baptist was partial to 'em, not that I think they'd be very fillin', tho', to be sure, 'e 'ad a sweet tooth, and ate 'oney with 'em."

"Oh! you mean locusts," said Brian, now enlightened.

"An' what else?" asked Mrs. Sampson, indignantly; "which, tho' not bein' a scholard, I speaks English I 'opes, my mother's second cousin avin' 'ad first prize at a spellin' bee, tho' 'e died early through brain fever, 'avin' crowded 'is 'ead over much with the dictionary."

"Dear me!" answered Brian mechanically. "How unfortunate." He was not listening to Mrs. Sampson's remarks, but was thinking of an arrangement which Madge had made, and which he had forgotten till now.

"Mrs. Sampson," he said, turning round at the door, "I am going to bring Mr. Frettlby and his daughter to have a cup of afternoon tea here, so you might have some ready."

"You 'ave only to ask and to 'ave," answered Mrs. Sampson, hospitably, with a crackle of all her joints. "I'll make the tea, sir, an' also some of my own pertickler cakes, bein' a special kind I 'ave, which my mother showed me 'ow to make, 'avin' been taught by a lady as she nussed thro' the scarlet fever, tho' bein' of a weak constitootion, she died soon arter, bein' in the 'abit of contractin' any disease she might chance on."

As soon as Fitzgerald had gone Mrs. S. went over to the window and watched him as he walked slowly down the street—a tall, handsome man, of whom any woman would be proud.

"What an awful thing it are to think 'e'll be a corpse some day," she chirped cheerily to herself, "tho' of course bein' a great swell in 'is own place, 'e'll 'ave a nice airy vault, which ud be far more comfortable than a close, stuffy grave, even tho' it 'as a tombstone an' vi'lets over it. Ah, now! Who are you, impertinence?" she broke off, as a stout man in a light suit of clothes crossed the road and rang the bell, "a pullin' at the bell as if it were a pump 'andle."

As the gentleman at the door, who was none other than Mr. Gorby, did not hear her, he, of course, did not reply, so she hurried down the stairs, crackling with anger at the rough usage her bell had received.

Mr. Gorby had seen Brian go out, and deeming it a good opportunity to prosecute inquiries, had lost no time in making a start.

"You nearly tored the bell down," said the fiery cricket, as she presented her thin body and wrinkled face to the view of the detective.

"You nearly tored the bell down."

"I'm very sorry," answered Gorby, meekly. "I'll knock next time."

"Oh, no you won't," said the landlady, tossing her head, "me not 'avin' a knocker, an' your 'and a-scratchin' the paint off the door, which it ain't been done over six months by my sister-in-law's cousin, which 'e is a painter, with a shop in Fitzroy, an' a wonderful heye to color."

"Does Mr. Fitzgerald live here?" asked Mr. Gorby quietly.

"He do," replied Mrs. Sampson, "but 'e's gone out, an' won't be back till the arternoon, which any messidge 'ull be delivered to 'im punctual on 'is arrival."

"I'm glad he's not in," said Mr. Gorby. "Would you allow me to have a few moments' conversation?"

"What is it?" asked the cricket, her curiosity being roused.

"I'll tell you when we get inside," answered Mr. Gorby.

The cricket looked at him with her sharp little eyes, and seeing nothing disreputable in him, led the way upstairs, crackling loudly the whole time. This so astonished Mr. Gorby that he cast about in his own mind for an explanation of the phenomena.

"Wants oiling about the joints," was his conclusion, "but I never heard anything like it, and she looks as if she'd snap in two, she's that brittle."

Mrs. Sampson took Gorby into Brian's sitting, and, having closed the door, sat down and prepared to hear what he had to say for himself.

"I 'ope it ain't bills," she said. "Mr. Fitzgerald 'avin' money in the bank, and everythin' respectable like a gentleman as 'e is, tho', to be sure, your bill might come down on him unbeknown, 'e not 'avin' kept it in mind, which it ain't everybody as 'ave sich a good memory as my aunt on my mother's side, she 'avin' bin famous for 'er dates like a 'istory, not to speak of 'er multiplication tables and the numbers of people's 'ouses."

"I am an insurance agent," he said rapidly, so as to prevent any interruption by the cricket; "and Mr. Fitzgerald wants to insure his life in our company. Before doing so I want to find out if he is a good life to insure; does he live temperately? keep early hours? and, in fact, all about him."

"I shall be 'appy to answer any inquiries which may be of use to you, sir," replied Mrs. Sampson; "knowin' as I do 'ow good a insurance is to a family should the 'ead of it be taken off unexpected, leavin' a widder, which, as I know, Mr. Fitzgerald is a goin' to be married soon, an' I 'opes 'e'll be 'appy, tho' thro' it I loses a lodger as 'as allays paid regler, an' be'aved like a gentleman."

"Does he keep good hours?" said Mr. Gorby.

"Allays in afore the clock strikes twelve," answered the landlady; "tho' to be sure, I uses it as a figger of speech, none of the clocks in the 'ouse strikin' but one, which is bein' mended, 'avin' broke through overwindin'."

"Is he always in before 12?" asked Mr. Gorby, keenly disappointed at this answer.

Mrs. Sampson eyed him waggishly, and a smile crept over her wrinkled little face.

"Young men, not bein' old men," she replied, cautiously, "and sinners not bein' saints, it's not nattral as latch keys should be made for ornament instead of use, and Mr. Fitzgerald bein' one of the 'andsomest men in Melbourne, it ain't to be expected as 'e should let 's latch key git rusty, tho', 'avin' a good moral character, 'e uses it with moderation."

"But I suppose you are generally asleep when he comes in late?" said the detective; "so you can't tell what hour he comes home?"

"Not as a rule," assented Mrs. Sampson; "bein' a 'eavy sleeper, and much disposed for bed, but I 'ave 'eard 'im come in arter 12, the last time bein' Thursday week."

"Ah!" Mr. Gorby drew a long breath, for Thursday week was the night when the murder was committed.

"Bein' troubled with my 'ead," said Mrs. Sampson, "thro' 'avin' been out in the sun all day a-washin', I did not feel so partial to my bed that night as in general, so went down to the kitchen with the intent of getting a linseed poultice to put at the back of my 'ead, it being calculated to remove pain, as was told to me, when a nuss, by a doctor in the horspital, 'e now being in business for hisself, at Geelong, with a large family, 'avin' married early. Just as I was leavin' the kitchen I 'eard Mr. Fitzgerald a-comin' in, and, turnin' round, looked at the clock, that 'avin' been my custom when my late 'usband came in the early mornin', I bein' a preparin' 'is meal."

"And the time was?" asked Mr. Gorby, breathlessly.

"Five minutes to 2 o'clock," replied Mrs. Sampson.

Mr. Gorby thought for a moment.

Cab was hailed at 1 o'clock—started for St. Kilda about ten minutes past—reached grammar school, say at twenty-five minutes past—Fitzgerald talks five minutes to cabman, making it half-past—say, he waited ten minutes for other cab to turn up, makes it twenty minutes to 2—it would take another twenty minutes to get to East Melbourne—and five minutes to walk up here—that makes it five minutes past 2 instead of before—confound it! "Was your clock in the kitchen right?" he asked, aloud.

"Well, I think so," answered Mrs. Sampson. "It does get a little slow sometimes, not 'avin' bin cleaned for some time, which my nevy bein' a watchmaker I allays 'ands it over to 'im."

"Of course it was slow on that night," said Gorby, triumphantly. "He must have come in at five minutes past 2—which makes it right."

"Makes what right?" asked the landlady, sharply. "And 'ow do you know my clock was ten minutes wrong?"

"Oh, it was, was it?" asked Gorby, eagerly.

"I'm not denyin' that it wasn't," replied Mrs. Sampson; "clocks ain't allays to be relied on more than men an' women; but it won't be anythin' agin 'is insurance, will it, as in general 'e's in afore 12?"

"Oh, all that will be quite safe," answered the detective, delighted at having obtained the required information. "Is this Mr. Fitzgerald's room?"

"Yes, it is," replied the landlady; "but 'e furnished it 'imself, bein' of a luxurus turn of mind, not but what 'is taste is good, tho' far be it from me to deny I 'elped 'im to select; but 'avin' another room of the same to let, any friends as you might 'ave in search of a 'ome 'ud be well looked arter, my references bein' very 'igh an' my cookin' tasty, an' if"——

Here a ring at the front door bell called Mrs. Sampson away, so with a hurried word to Gorby she crackled down stairs. Left to himself, Mr. Gorby arose and looked around the room. It was excellently furnished, and the pictures on the wall were all in good taste. There was a writing table at one end of the room under the window, which was covered with papers.

"It's no good looking for the papers he took out of Whyte's pocket, I suppose," said the detective to himself, as he turned over some letters, "as I don't know what they are, and couldn't tell them if I saw them; but I'd like to find that missing glove and the bottle that held the chloroform—unless he's done away with them. There doesn't seem any sign of them here, so I'll have a look in his bedroom."

There was no time to lose, as Mrs. Sampson might return at any moment, so Mr. Gorby walked quickly into the bedroom, which opened off the sitting room. The first thing that caught the detective's eye was a large photograph of Madge Frettlby in a plush frame, which stood on the dressing table. It was the same kind he had already seen in Whyte's album, and he took it up with a laugh.

"You're a pretty girl," he said, apostrophizing the picture, "but you give your photograph to two young men, both in love with you, and both hot tempered. The result is that one is dead, and the other won't survive him long. That's what you've done."

He put it down again, and looking round the room, caught sight of a light covert coat hanging behind the door, and also a soft hat.

"Ah," said the detective, going up to the door, "here is the very coat you wore when you killed that poor fellow. I wonder what you have in the pockets," and he plunged his hand into them in turn. There was an' old theatre programme and a pair of brown gloves in one, but in the second pocket Mr. Gorby made a discovery—none other than that of the missing glove. There it was—a soiled white glove for the right hand, with black bands down the back; and the detective smiled in a gratified manner as he put it carefully in his pocket.

"My morning has not been wasted," he said to himself. "I've found out that he came in at a time which corresponds to all his movements after 1 o'clock on Thursday night, and this is the missing glove, which clearly belonged to Whyte. If I could only get hold of the chloroform bottle I'd be satisfied."

But the chloroform bottle was not to be found, though he searched most carefully for it. At last, hearing Mrs. Sampson coming up stairs again, he desisted from his search and came back to the sitting room.

"Threw it away, I expect," he said, as he sat down in his old place; "but it doesn't matter. I think I can form a chain of evidence, from what I have discovered, which will be sufficient to convict him. Besides, I expect when he is arrested he will confess everything; he seems to have such a lot of remorse for what he has done."

The door opened and Mrs. Sampson crackled into the room.

"Did I understand you to say, Mrs. Sampson," he went on, "that Mr. Fitzgerald would be at home this afternoon?"

"Oh, yes, sir, 'e will," answered Mrs. Sampson, "a drinkin' tea with his young lady, who is Miss Frettlby, and 'as got no end of money—not but what I mightn't 'ave 'ad the same 'ad I been born in a higher spear."

"You need not tell Mr. Fitzgerald I have been here," said Gorby, closing the gate; "I'll probably call and see him myself this afternoon."

"What a stout person 'e are," said Mrs. Sampson to herself, as the detective walked away, "just like my late father, who was always fleshy, being a great eater and fond of 'is glass, but I took arter my mother's family, they bein' thin like, and proud of keeping 'emselves so, as the vinegar they drank could testify, not that I indulge in it myself."

She shut the door and went up stairs to take away the breakfast things, while Gorby was being driven along at a good pace to the police office, in order to get a warrant for Brian's arrest on a charge of willful murder.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

IF YOU WAN'T TO BE LOVED.—Don't find fault.

Don't contradict people, even if you're sure you are right.

Don't be inquisitive about the affairs of even your most intimate friend.

Don't underrate anything because you don't possess it.

Don't believe that everybody in the world is happier than you.

Don't conclude that you have never had any opportunities in life.

Don't repeat all the evil you hear.

Don't repeat gossip, even if it does interest a crowd.

Don't go untidy on the plea that everybody knows you.

Don't be rude to your inferiors in social position.

Don't over or under dress.

Don't express a positive opinion unless you perfectly understand what you are talking about.

Don't get in the habit of vulgarizing life by making light of the sentiment of it.

Don't jeer at anybody's religious belief.

Don't try to be anything else but a gentlewoman—and that means a woman who has consideration for the whole world and whose life is governed by the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would be done by.—[Ladies' Home Journal.

AN ALLIGATOR'S NEST.—Alligators' nests resemble haycocks more than anything else to which they can be compared. They average about four feet in height and about five feet in diameter, and are constructed of grass and herbage. First the mother 'gator deposits one layer of eggs on a mortar like floor, and having covered this with a stratum of mud and herbage about eight inches thick, lays another set of eggs upon that, and so on to the top, there being commonly from 100 to 200 eggs in a nest. With their tails the parents then beat down the tall grass and weeds to prevent the approach of unseen enemies. The female watches her eggs until they are hatched by the heat of the sun, and then takes her brood under her own care, defending them and providing for their subsistence. Dr. Lutzemberg, of New Orleans, once packed one of these nests for shipment to St. Petersburg, but the young hatched out before they were started on the long voyage, and were kept about the doctor's premises, running all over the premises, up and down stairs, whining like young puppies.

THE MOON INFLUENCING SLEEP.—"The most singular case of insomnia of which I ever heard," said a physician, "is that of a friend of mine in a neighboring town, a lady of middle age. With the exception of her peculiar insomnia she is in robust health. She is an uncommonly sound sleeper in the 'dark of the moon,' but as the new moon approaches its first quarter, she is attacked by wakefulness. She can sleep only at long intervals during the night, and only a few minutes at a time. The sleeplessness increases with the fulling of the moon, and by the time that stage in the moon's course is reached, she is unable to attain even the slightest slumber. She remains in a state of utter wakefulness until the moon begins to wane, when she gradually grows sleepy again, and is able to sleep longer and sounder as the moon disappears. When the period of dark moon arrives she resumes her unbroken slumber. This condition has prevailed for more than ten years."—[N. Y. Sun.

Miscellaneous Reading.

WONDERFUL ALUMINUM.

Aluminum, aside from its lightness and strength, is malleable, ductile, does not rust, is as beautiful as silver, and is much more abundant in its native state than any metal in use. Coyolite, or Iceland spar, is the mineral from which it has been mostly obtained, but it is a constituent of clay and of other earths, and prevails almost everywhere. The statement has been made that it composes more than a twentieth part of the crust of the globe. The difficulty is to secure it in a pure state at a moderate cost. Much has yet to be learned also as to the methods of using it, and there remains some doubts as to its adaptation to certain important uses. But within the last half century its cost has been reduced from over $30 a pound to less than $3, and it is now being put to practical use as alloy. Recently a series of tests to determine the virtue of aluminum bronze was made by government naval officers at the Watertown (Mass.) arsenal. A tensile strength of 90,000 pounds to the square inch was shown, which is largely in excess of anything before developed. The transverse strength of the composite metal was found to be 6,600 pounds to the square inch—a result that has only been equaled by the finest quality of crucible steel.

There are busy brains and hands constantly at work to reduce the expense of manufacturing the pure metal; and as the incentive to success is very powerful, their labors are not likely to be discontinued. Its capabilities, sooner or later, are very sure to be exhaustively tested. If they prove as satisfactory as there is reason to hope they will, and the laboratory processes give way to mill production at low cost, a wonderful evolution in works of construction will have been entered upon. How far in the future the desired end may be there is no telling.

Remove two-thirds of its own weight, without diminution of strength, from the vast structure that connects New York and Brooklyn, and its effectiveness for service, provided room was supplied, would be correspondingly increased. Bridges of aluminum—supposing always its qualities are truly represented—could be thrown across streams and ravines to span which is now impossible. The capacity of steamships would be similarly enlarged. Not only would cargoes take the place of the lessened weight of the body of the vessels, but also that of their machinery. Enough coal could be stored to indefinitely lengthen voyages without fresh supplies. The cost of transportation would be lowered in many ways, foreseen, and unforeseen, and speed and safety increased as well. The calculations of a competent engineer as to the advantages to be gained would produce a showing difficult of belief at first. The Eiffel tower, as a constructive feat, would sink into insignificance. The field for architectural advance would be all but unlimited. Air navigation would leap forward with a bound—if feasible at all—when its great desideratum, a material combining strength and lightness in a degree never known before, or even approximated, had been secured. Street cars, wagons, carriages, etc., would be improved, and save immensely in draught power and wear and tear. Machines and instruments would partake in the benefits of the change, and new ones invented that are now unthought of. These are but suggestions which experts in each particular branch of mechanics can seize the meaning of and amplify. Should the reasonable hopes of the aluminum-workers be realized, mankind would seem to have been emancipated from the burden of heavy material which it had been wrestling with for ages, and posterity would talk of the unspeakable waste of human energy that had been involved in the use of iron.

There is an æsthetic side to the prospect as well a material one. Aluminum not only does not rust, either in air or water, but is easily polished. Transform in imagination the elevated roadways of New York, the railings and balconies before the houses, or even the houses themselves, the lamp posts, the roofs, spires and domes, the Brooklyn and other bridges, to be burnished silver, and a glimpse may be had of the coming effect of aluminum in our cities indicated by the qualities now claimed for it. The like has not been pictured since St. John spoke of the golden streets and the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem.—[Harper's Weekly.

THE TRUE POSITION IN SLEEP.

Concerning the natural position of the body in sleep, Dr. Charles O. Files has this to say: Complete relaxation of the entire muscular system is the first great essential of sound, healthful sleep. The limbs should be slightly flexed or bent, and the body should be so disposed that every muscle will be in an easy, comfortable position. The body itself should rest on the right side, with a slight inclination forward rather than backward.

It is not well to sleep either on the back or directly on the chest. In neither position can the limbs be properly flexed. Sleeping on the chest and face, with mouth and nostrils obstructed in the least by the pillows, is very injurious. During sleep the free ingress of air to the lungs should be an object of the greatest solicitude.

The objections to sleeping on the left side may be clearly apprehended by calling to mind the relative position of the stomach and liver. The greater portion of the liver is to the right of the median line of the body. The greater pouch of the stomach is on the median line, while the pyloric end is on the left side of the body. The weight of the liver is about four and one-half pounds, or about 1-32 of the weight of the body. If the stomach contains much food when one is lying on the left side, the weight of the liver resting on the stomach, and compressing more or less on the solar plexus, is apt to cause uneasy slumber. This weight at least will interfere considerably with the process of digestion.

Very great care should be exercised in placing the body in such position that the movements of the chest may be perfectly free. The shoulders should be thrown back, and the left arm should be placed on the left hip or partly behind the body. It should never be allowed to rest on the chest. I have noticed that there is a tendency among those of feeble constitution, and especially those having affections of the lungs, to sleep with the lungs compressed by the arms, and the mouth and nostrils covered with the bedclothes.

THE TEMPER OF ARAB CHIEFS.

There dwelt upon the river Euphrates, near the great city of Bassory, two Arab tribes deadly hostile to each other. The enmity was so proverbial and well known, that when one man spoke of the enmity of another toward a foe, he would say, "he hates him as an Anizze hates a Montifee. It fell out that the pacha of Bagdad being apprehensive of the invasion of the Kurds, from Kurdistan, send out an order to the chief of the Anizees to send him forthwith twenty thousand men. The order was obeyed. The pacha, not placing the same reliance upon the promptness of the Montifee chief, resolved to lay a plan to take him by stratagem, and then demand of him the aid of his tribe. He succeeded in obtaining the attendance of the chief, and he was brought into the presence of the Turk.

"I have taken you prisoner," said the pacha, "fearing that I might not otherwise have obtained the assistance of your tribes against the Kurds. If you now command that ten thousand of your men shall come to my assistance, your chains shall be struck off, you may return safe and uninjured to your tribe; but if you do not comply, your head shall roll at my feet."

The chief looked the pacha sternly in the face, and replied:

"Your ignorance of the Arab character has led you into this error. Had you sent to me for ten thousand of my tribe when I was free, I know not what answer I should have returned; but, as it is, my reply cannot but be negative. If you order my head to roll at your feet, be it so; there are many more in my tribe equal to mine. Shed one drop of my blood, and every one will become its avenger. The Arab may be treated with when free, but when a prisoner—never!"

The haughty pacha looked upon him for a moment with surprise; then turning to his soldiers, he ordered them to sever his head from his body. The chief stood calm and collected while the drawn saber gleamed aloft in the air. At this moment, the noise of a horse galloping in the paved court yard of the palace attracted the attention of the pacha. At every bound he struck the fire from the stones, and seemed to be striving to outstrip the wind. In a moment the rider vaulted from his horse, and almost in the same breath stood in the presence of the pacha. It was the chief of the Anizees.

"I am come," said he, "to strike off the chains from my enemy. Had he been taken in an open conflict I should not interpose, but as he has been taken by treachery, though my enemy, yet will I be the first to strike off his chains. There are twenty thousand lances under my command glancing yonder in your defense; but if you release not immediately my enemy, every one of them shall be directed against you as a foe."

The Turk was forced to yield, and the two chiefs retired together. The chief of the Anizees conducted his brother chief, though his deadliest enemy, to his own tribe, and then said:

"We are now again enemies; we have only acted as Arabs should act to each other; but you are now safe, and with your own tribe, and our ancient hostilities are renewed."

With this they parted, and the chief of the Anizees returned to the defense of the pacha.

A QUESTION OF SNUFFERS.—A "moderate" minister called upon a Scotch Free church elder, and met with a cold reception. At length he drew his snuff-box from his pocket, and invited the elder to make trial of its contents. A decided thaw set in immediately.

"O ye tak' snuff, do ye?" said the Free Kirk man, yielding to a gentle smile.

"O yes!" replied the visitor, somewhat afraid lest the admission might lead him into trouble. "I take snuff, but what of that?"

"Weel," said the elder, with a look of satisfaction to which probably the excellent snuff contributed its full share, "that's the first sign o' grace I've seen aboot ye."

"Sign of grace?" rejoined the minister, with no little surprise, but glad that a promising vein of conversation had at length been opened. "How do you make out that the habit of taking snuff is a sign of grace?"

"Nothing easier," said the elder, with a knowing twinkle in his eye. "Don't you remember that in the temple of old the snuffers were of gold, which denotes the best of all qualities?"

A BAFFLED MISER.—A miser, having lost a hundred pounds, promised ten pounds reward to any one who would bring it to him. An honest poor man, who found it, brought it to the old gentleman, demanding the ten pounds. But the miser, to baffle him, alleged that that there were a hundred and ten pounds in the bag when lost. The poor man was advised to sue for the money; and when the case came on to be tried, it appearing that the seal had not been broken nor the bag ripped, the judge said to the defendant's counsel:

"The bag you lost had one hundred and ten pounds in it, you say?"

"Yes, my lord," he replied.

"Then, said the judge, "according to the evidence given in the court, this bag of money cannot be your property, for inside there was but a hundred pounds. Therefore the plaintiff must keep it until the true owner appears and proves his claim."

THEY WERE IN A LOVE-DESERT. Within the last month a clergyman in the southern part of New Jersey has been deposed by his parishioners, and last week he delivered his farewell discourse to the people of his church, says The New York Tribune. It is a remarkable production, both in its brevity and quaint pointedness. Here is all there is of it:

"Dearly Beloved: Our parting does not seem hard to me for three reasons: You do not love me, you do not love each other, and the Lord does not love you. If you loved me you would have paid me for my services during the past two years; you do not love each other, otherwise I should have more marriages to celebrate; and, in conclusion, the Lord does not love you, for otherwise He would call more of you to Him, and I should have more funeral services to conduct."

The ministers is reported as still waiting for his back salary.

STEEL PENS.—The millions of steel pens used in the world are all made by very few firms. Three are in this country, three in great Britain, and one each in France, Germany and Italy; and all these manufacturers purchase the raw material, which is sheet steel finely rolled, from a single establishment in Sheffield, Eng. To make this crude stuff into a finished pen, it has to be passed through fourteen different processes, after which each pen is examined and tested by an expert. Little does the school-boy who handles a pen realize the work it takes to make one of these indispensable articles. Gillott's steel pens, which are widely used, are made in Birmingham, Eng.; but in this industry, and especially in the making of golds pens, Americans are coming to equal, if not excel, the artisans abroad.

☞ The question is asked, "Where is Heaven?"

We answer, go out on the first pleasant evening and look up at the heavenly constellations—millions of worlds as we have reason to believe, far greater than our own—and you will feel that in God's universe there is plenty of room for every soul He has created.

Has not the creator of human souls power to continue their duration in any part of His universe?

Is not the power that controls the universe a wise one?

Is it not on the whole a good one?

Have we not reason to believe that sooner or later in the ages exact justice will be done?

☞ Some men in Belfast, Me., thought to puzzle a local jockey by bringing out two sorry looking equines, one considerably larger than the other, and asking him which was the better one. But he was not caught napping. He looked each carefully over, examining the feet of each, and then rendered judgment as follows: "One's worth just as much as t'other." "How's that?" asked the crowd. "Well, the big one has got more hide and bones than the smaller one, but the latter has got the best shoes on which makes it about an even thing."