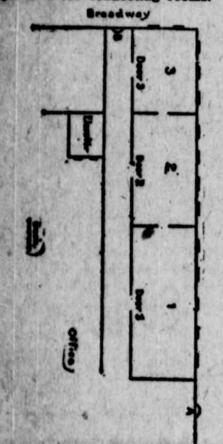


"I'd you follow Mr. Ransom when be walked through those rooms?" "No, sir; I stayed in the hall." "Ind the lady hobble when she slid

thus mysteriously out of sight?" "A little. Not so much as when she came in. But she wasn't at her ease. dr. Her shoes were certainly too

"I think I will take a peep at those sess now," Gerridge remarked to the

Mr. Loomis bowed, and together g crossed the office to the recepseroom door. The diagram of this tion of the hotel will give you an of these connecting rooms.



There are three of them, as you rill see, all reception-rooms. Mr. m had passed through them all oking for his wife. In No. 1 he d several ladies sitting and standall strangers. He encountered one in No. 2, and in No. 3 just one waiting for some one. To this he had addressed himself, ask-If she had seen any one pass that the moment before. Her reply a decided "No;" that she had waiting in that same room for ral minutes and had seen no one. als staggered him. It was as if his the had dissolved into thin air. True, might have eluded him by slipping into the hall by means of door two at the moment he entered door e: and alert to this possibility, he sed back into the hall to look her. But she was nowhere visible. a had she been observed leaving building by the man stationed at rance A. But there was another that of B. Had she gone out that way? Mr. Ransom had taken to inquire and had been assured The man in charge that no lady had by that door during the last ten es. This he had insisted on, when Mr. Loomis and the detectwo came in their turn to question on this point he insisted on it the mystery seemed com-.- at least to the manager. But detective was not quite satisfied. , before or after Mrs. Ransom's pearance, he had swung the door for a lady who walked lame. The answer was decisive. "Yes; one o walked as if her shoes were

Oh a little while after the gentlem asked his questions."

"Was she dressed in brown?" That he didn't know. He didn't sek at ladies' dresses unless they ere something special.

But she walked lame and she ne from Room 3?"

Yes. He remembered that much. Gerridge, with a nod to the mansent of the whirling door. "I'm off," said he. "Expect to hear from me two hours."

At twenty minutes to ten Mr. Ranwas called up on the telephone. "One question, Mr. Ransom."

"Hello, who are you?" "Gerridge."

"All right, go ahead."

"Did you see the face of the woman pou spoke to in Room No. 3?" "Of course. She was looking direct-

You remember it? Could identify

at if you saw it again?" Yes; that is-"That's all, good-by."

The circuit was cut off.

Another intolerable wait. Then there came a knock on the door and Gerridge entered. He held a photograph in his hand which he had evidently taken from his pocket on his

"Look at this," said he. "Do you recognize the face?" "The lady-

n no one come into No. 3 on the first floor."

Mr. Ransom's expression of surwied inquiry was sufficient answer. "Well, it's a pity you didn't look at ber gloves instead of at her face. You might bave had some dim idea of hav. has simplified matters very much. By by seen them before. It was she who it you have been able to identify the roce to the hotel with you; not your | wor an who attempted to mislead you



Mr. Ransom staggered against the table. wife. The vell was wound around her face for a far deeper purpose than to ward off rice."

Mr. Ransom staggered back against the table before which he had been standing. The blow was an overwhelming one.

"Who is this woman?" he demand-"She came from Mr. Fulton's house. More than that, from my wife's room. What is her name and what did she mean by such an outrage?"

"Her name is Bella Burton, and she is your wife's confidential maid. As for the meaning of this outrage, it will take more than two hours to ferret out that. I can only give you the single fact I've mentioned."

"She left the house at the same moment you did; you and Miss Burton. Only she went by the basement door." "She? She?"

"And Mrs. Ransom?"

"Dressed in her maid's clothes. Oh, you'll have to hear worse things than that before we're out of this muddle. If you won't mind a bit of advice from a man of experience, I would suggest that you take things easy. It's the only way."

Shocked into silence by this coldblooded philosophy, Mr. Ransom controlled both his anger and his humiliation; but he could not control his surprise.

"What does it mean?" he murmured to himself. "What does it all mean?"

#### CHAPTER III. "He Knows the Word."

HE next moment the doubt natural to the occasion asserted itself.

"How do you kn w all this? You state the impossible. Explain yourself."

Gerridge was only too willing to do

"I have just come from Mr. Fulton's house," said he. "Inquiries there elicited the facts which have so startled you. Neither Mr. Fulton nor his wife meant to deceive you. They knew nothing, suspected nothing of what took place, and you have no cause to blame them. It was all a plot between the two women."

"But how-why-"

"You see, I had a fact to go upon. You had noticed that your so-called bride's gloves did not fit her; the boy below, that her shoes were so tight she hobbled. That set me thinking. A woman of Mrs. Ransom's experience and judgment would not be apt to make a mistake in two such important particulars; which taken with the veil and the promise she exacted from you not to address or touch her during your short ride to the hotel, led me to point my inquiries so that I soon found out that your wife had had the assistance of another woman in getting ready for her journey and that this woman was her own maid who had been with her for a long time, and had always given evidence of an especial attachment for her. Asking about this girl's height and general apearance (for the possibility of a substitution was already in my mind), I found that she was of slight figure and good carriage, and that her age was not far removed from that of her young mistress. This made the substitution I have mentioned feasible, and when I was told that she was seen taking ber hat and bonnet into the bride's room, and, though not expected to leave till the next merning, had slid away from the house by the basement door at the same moment her mistress appeared on the front steps, my suspicions became so confirmed that I asked how "Just so; the one who said she had this girl looked, in the hope that you would be able to recognize her. through the description, as the wonan you had seen sitting in Receptionroom No. 3. But to my surprise. Mrs. Fulton had what was better than any description, the girl's picture. This

in the reception-room, and I the person who rode here with you from Mr. Fulton's house. Wasn't she dressed in brown? Didn't you notice a similarity in her appearance to that of the very lady you were then seeking?"

"I did not observe. Her face was all I saw. She was looking directly at me as I stepped into the room."

"I see. She had taken off her veil and trusted to your attention being caught by her strange features,-as it was. But that dress was brown; I'm sure of it. She was the very woman. Otherwise the mystery is impenetrable.' A deep plot, Mr. Ransom; one that should prove to you that Mrs. Ransom's motive in leaving you was of a very serious character. Do you wish that motive probed to the bottom? I cannot do it without publicity. Are you willing to incur that publicity?"

"I must." Mr. Ransom had risen in great excitement. "Nothing can hide the fact that my bride left me on our wedding-day. It only remains now to show that she did it under an influence which robbed her of her own will; an influence from which she shrank even while succumbing to it. I can show her no greater kindness, and I am not afraid of the result. I have perfect confidence in her integrity"-he hesitated, then added with strong conviction-"and in her love."

The detective hid his surprise. He could not understand this confidence. But then he knew nothing of the memories which lay back of it.

"Very well," he said. "You still want me to find her. I will do my best, sir; but first, cannot you help me with a suggestion or two?"

"There must be some clew to so sudden a freak on the part of a young and beautiful woman, who, I have taken pains to learn, has not only a clean record but a reputation for good sense. The Fultons cannot supply it. She has lived a seemingly open and happy life in their house, and the mystery is as great to them as to you. But you, as her lover and now her husband, must have been favored with confidences not given to others. Cannot you recall one likely to put us on the right track? Some fact prior to the events of to-day, I mean; some fact connected with her past life; before she went to live with the Fultons?"

"No. Yet let me think; let me think." Mr. Ransom dropped his face into his hands and sat for a moment silent. When he looked up again, the detective perceived that the affair was hopeless so far as he was concerned. "No," he repeated, this time with unmistakable emphasis, "she has always appeared buoyant and untrammeled. But then I have only known her six

"Tell me her history so far as you know it. What do you know of her life previous to your meeting her?" 'It was a very simple one. She had a country bringing up, having been born in a small village in Connecticut. She was one of three children and the only one who has survived; her sister, who was her twin, died when she was a small child, and a brother some five years ago. Her fortune was willed her, as I have aiready told you, by a great-uncle. It is entirely in her own hards. Left an orphan early she lived first with her brother; then when he died, with one relative after another, till lastly she settled down with the Fultons. I know of no secret in her life, no entanglement, not even of any prior engagements. Yet that man with the twisted jaw was not unknown to her, and if he is a relative, as she said, you should have no diffi-

culty in locating him." "I have a man on his track," Gerridge replied. "And one on the girl's too; I mean, of course, Bella Burton's. They will report here up to twelve o'clock to-night. It is now half-past past eleven. We should hear from one or the other soon." "And my wife?"

"A description of the clothing she wore has gone out. We may hear from it. But I doubt if we do to-night unless she has rejoined her maid or the man with a scar. Somehow I think she will join the girl. But it's hard to tell yet."

Mr. Ransom could hardly control his impatience. "And I must sit helpless here!" he exclaimed. "I who have so much at stake!"

The detective evidently thought the occasion called for whatever comfort it was in his power to bestow.

"Yes," said he. "For it is here she will seek you if she takes a notion to return. But woman is an uncertain quantity," he dryly added.

Voices here rose in the hall, and a man was ushered in, whom Gerridge immediately introduced as Mr. Sims. A runner-and with news! Mr. Ransom, summoning up his courage, waited for the inevitable question and



"Have you found the man?"

"What have you got? Have you found the man?"

"Yes. And the lady's been to see him; that is, if the description of her togs was correct."

"He means Mrs. Ransom," explained Gerridge. Then, as he marked his client's struggle for composure, he quietly asked, "A lady in a dark green suit with yellowish furs and a blue veil over her hat?"

"That's the ticket!" "The clothes worn by the woman

who went out of the basement door. Mr. Ransom."

The latter turned sharply aside. The shame of the thing was becoming in-

"And this woman wearing those yellow furs and the blue veil visited the man of the broken jaw?" inquired Gerridge.

"Yes, sir." "When?" "About six this afternoon." "And where?"

"At the hotel St. Denis, where I have since tracked him." "How long did she stay?"

"About an hour." "In the parlor or-" "In the parlor. They had a great

deal to say. More than one noticed them, but no one heard anything. They talked very low but they meant business."

'Where is this man now?" "At the same place. He has engaged a room there." "The man with the twisted jaw?"

"Yes." "Under what name?"

"Hugh Porter. "Ah, it was Hazen only five hours

ago," muttered Ransom. "Porter, did you say? I'll have a talk with this Porter at once."

"I think not to-night," put in the detective, with the mingled authority and deference natural to one of his kind. "To-morrow, perhaps, but tonight it would only provoke scandal." This was certainly true, but Mr. Ransom was not an easy man to domi-

"I must see him before I sleep," he insisted. "A single word may solve this mystery. He has the word. I'd be a fool to let the night go by-Ah! what's that?"

The telephone bell had rung again. A message from the office this time. A note had just been handed in for Mr. Ransom; should they send it up? Gerridge was at the 'phone.

"Instantly," he shouted down, "and be sure you hold the messenger. It may be from your lady," he remarked to Mr. Ransom. "Stranger things than that have happened."

Mr. Ransom reeled to the door, opened it and stood waiting. The two detectives exchanged glances. What might not that note contain!

Mr. Ransom opened it in the hall. When he came back into the room, his hand was shaking and his face looked drawn and pale. But he showed no further disposition to go out. Instead, he sank into a chair, with a motion of dismissal to the two detectives.

"Question the boy who brought this," said he. "It is from Mrs. Ransom; written, as you see, at the St. Denis. She bids me farewell for a time, but does not favor me with any explanations. She cannot do differently, she says, and asks me to trust her and wait. Not very encouraging to sleep on; but it's something. She has not entirely forsaken me."

Gerridge with a shrug turned sharply towards the door. "I take it that you wouldn't object to knowing all the messenger can tell you?"

"No, no. Question him. Find out whether she gave this to him with her own hand."

Gerridge obeyed this injunction, but was told in reply that the note had been given him to deliver by a clerk in the hotel lobby. He could tell nothing about the lady.

This was unsatisfactory enough: but the man who had influenced her to this step had been placed under surveillance. To-morrow they would question him; the mystery was not without a promise of solution. So Gerridge felt: but not Mr. Ransom: for at the end of the lines whose purport he had just communicated to the detective were those few, significant

"Make no move to find me. If you love me well enough to wait in silence for developments, happiness may yet be ours."

### CHAPTER IV. Mr. Ransom Waits.

ERRIDGE rose early, primed, G as he said to himself, for business. But to his great disappointment he found Mr. Ransom in a frame of mind which precluded action. Indeed, that gentleman looked greatly changed. He not only gave evidence of a sleepless night but showed none of the spirit of the previous evening, and hesitated quite painfully when Gerridge asked him if he did not intend to go ahead with the interview they had promised themselves.

"That's as it may be," was the hesitating reply. "I hardly think that I shall visit the man you mean this morning. He interests me and I hope that none of his movements will esto him. I prefer to wait a little; to and the founding of New England. give my wife a chance. I should feel tter, and have less to forget."

"Just as you say," returned the detective stiffly. "He's under our thumb at present, I can't tell when he may wriggle out." "Not while your eye's on him. And

your eye won't leave him as long as you have confidence in the reward I've promised you."

out of me. Last night you were too hot; this morning you are too cold. But it's not for me to complain. You know where to find me when you want me." And without more ado the de-

tective went out. Mr. Ransom remained alone and in no enviable frame of mind. He was distrustful of himself, distrustful of the man who had made al this trou- me nickets for this?" ble, and distrustful of her, though he would not acknowledge it. Every baser instinct in him drove him to the meeting he declined. To see the man-to force from him the truth, seemed the only rational thing to do. But the final words of his wife's letter stood in his way. She had advised patience. Yes, he would give her a day. That was time enough for a man suffering on the rack of such

an intolerable suspense-one day. But even that day did not pass without breaks in his mood and more than one walk in the direction of the St. Denis Hotel. In the evening it was the same, but the next morning he remained steadfastly at his hotel. He had laid out his future course in these words: "I will extend the timeto three days; then if I do not hear from her I will get that wry-necked fellow by the throat and twist an explanation from him." But the three days passed and he found the situation unchanged. Then he set as his limit the end of the week, but before the full time had elapsed he was advised by Gerridge that he himself was

being followed in his turn by a couple of private detectives; and while still under the agitation of this discovery was further disconcerted by having the following communication thrust into his hand in the open street by a young woman who succeeded in losing herself in the crowd before he had You can judge of his amazement as he read the few lines it contained.

Read the papers to-night and forget the stranger at the St.

That was all. But the writing was hers. The hours passed slowly till the papers were cried in the street. What Mr. Ransom read in them increased his astonishment, I might say his anxiety. It was a paragraph about his wife, an almost incredible one, running thus:

A strange explanation is given

of the disappearance of Mrs. Ransom on her wedding-day. As our readers will remember, she accompanied her husband to the hotel, but managed to slip away and leave the house while he still stood at the desk. This act, for which nothing in her previous conduct has in any way prepared her friends, is now said to have been due to the shock of hearing. some time during her weddingday, that a sister whom she had supposed dead was really alive and in circumstances of almost degrading poverty. As this sister had been her own twin the effect upon her mind was very serious. To find and rescue this sister she left her newly made husband in the surreptitious manner already recorded in the papers. That she is not fully herself is shown by her continued secrecy as to her whereabouts. All that she has been willing to admit to the two persons she has so far taken into her confidence-her husband and the agent who conducts her affairs -is that she has found her sister and cannot leave her. Why, she does not state. The case is certainly a curious one and Mr. Ransom has the sympathy of all his

Confused, and in a state of mind bordering on frenzy, Mr. Ransom returned to the hotel and sought refuse in his own room. He put no confidence in what he had just read; he regarded it as a newspaper story and a great fake; but she had bid him read it, and this fact in itself was very disturbing. For how could she have known about it if she had not West is explanatory: been its author, and if she was its author, what purpose had she expected it to serve?

He was still debating this question when he reached his own room. Ca the floor, a little way from the sill, lay a letter. It had been thrust under the door during his absence. Lifting it in some trepidation, he cast a glance at into the nearest chair, asking himself if he had the courage to open and read it. For the handwriting, like that of the note handed him in the street, was Georgian's, and he felt himself in a maze concerning her which made everything in her connection seem dreamlike and unreal. It was not long, however, before he had mastered its contents. They were strange enough, as this transcription of them will show.

## (To Be Continued.)

Disaster will follow, however, just as soon as an aeroplane driver complicates matters by taking on a load of alcohol as well as of gasoline --Chicago News.

Boston has launched a project for a great world's fair in 1920, to commemorate the three hundredth annicape you. But I'm not ready to talk | versary of the landing of the Pilgilms

> Cecil Broom, a young white man who is wanted in Lancaster County on the charge of attempted criminal assault on a young lady, has been arrested in Atlanta.

Collins Judge, colored, was shot and killed at Rock Hill by Cal Barber. "Perhaps not; but you take the life who made his escape.

#### ANOTHER'S MISSION.

#### By W. T. Childs,

A little messenger boy, dripping with perspiration and covered with dust, stepped up to the paying teller's windows at one of the largest banks in the city, and said: "Please, sir, give

The teller simply raised his eyes and pushed back the \$10 bill. The messenger boy thought he had not leen heard and repeated his request.

"No!" snapped the paying teller. The messenger boy was so frightened that he almost forgot his mis-

sion. He meekly picked up the \$10

bill from the counter and returned to

his employer's office. "Well, where are the nickels?" his employer asked.

"He wouldn't give them to me!" answered the boy.

In less time than it takes to tell, the employer heard the whole story-He was a very heavy depositor in the bank and also one of its directors, and he lost no time in making an in-

vestigation of the affair. "I didn't think he needed the nickels," the paying teller sought to excuse his action.

"Of course he did not," answered the employer, "but did it not occur to you that he was on another's mis-

The paying teller could say nothing He acknowledged that he was inexcusably wrong. If the employer had not been such a magnanimous man he would have exerted his influence as a heavy depositor and director of the bank to punish the paying teller, got so much as a good look at her. but he was willing to forgive when the paying teller assured him that it would never occur again.

"Ah, young man," said the employer, "you should remember that the message is often greater than the messenger."-Home Herald.

#### He Is the Trust.

Hartwell Ayer in the Florence Times says "A committee of friends waited on The Times editor to know whether the editor was the whiskey trust or just one of the hirelings." Now Brother Ayer confess, are you not the whiskey trust itself? If not; where did you get that immense girth you are hauling around Florence? And too where did those diamonds come from that you sported around in the legislature. You cannot throw dust in the eyes of the people of Florence any longer, by saying there is nothing about you that looks like the rich and powerful trust. Fool who? We delight in exposing Editor Ayer, by charging him, not with being one of the hirelings of the whiskey trust, but the whole thing himself.

We are looking for the headquarters of this trust, and everywhere we look the signs point to the mail order concerns, who are very much alive in their interest to have South Carolina as dry as a bone. We have heard it intimated that the mail order concerns contribute liberally to the cause of financing prohibition, but we cannot get hold of convicting evidence, nevertheless there is as much probability of the one as the other. All the same it does not prove that Hartwell Ayer of the Florence Times is not the thing, octopus, or the whiskey trust.-Manning Times.

# DISPENSARIES CLOSE MONBAY.

Labor Day to be Observed by County

Rum Shops. Columbia, Sept. 3 .- All of the dispensaries in the State will be closed on Monday, that day being Labor Day, a holiday. The following letter addressed by Dispensary Auditor

"Dr. W. J. Dunn, Chairman, Cam-

"Dear Sir: In response to your inquiry over the 'phone this morning, I beg to say that after conferring with the Attorney General it is my opinion that counties having voted against the sale of whiskey, etc., will be governits inscription and sank staggering ed by the same law as heretofore in the matter of observing all legal holidays. You will, therefore, keep the dispensaries closed on Monday, as that day will be observed as Labor Day, which is a legal holiday in this State.

> Yours truly, "W. B. West. (Signed) "Auditor."

A family tree is of no use to the lumber dealer.

#### \$100 Reward, \$100. \*The readers of this paper will be

pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength y building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of testimonials.

Address: F. J. CHENEY & CO., Sold by Druggists, 75c.

Take Hall's Family Pills for constipa-