



The Mystery OF Carney-Croft

By JOSEPH BROWN COOKE

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CHAPTER XIII.

Quiet is Restored.

"Now then," said MacArdel, the next morning, as we were comfortably seated in the library, "this mystery is clearing itself up more rapidly than I expected. Have you got those two notes with you? I mean the one you found on your bed the other morning and the one that slipped out of your pocket last night?"

I handed them to him and we spread them out on the table and examined them closely. The first was written in a cramped labored hand which was obviously disguised, while the more recent one had evidently been dashed off hurriedly and with an attempt at masking the chirography of its author. In both instances, however, the English style of writing was so clearly exemplified and there were so many letters having points in common, that it did not require the skill of an expert to perceive that the two notes were the work of the same individual.

"You see," exclaimed MacArdel, "I was right, only I got the cart before the horse. I told you that after we had discovered how the first note was placed on your bed we would have little or no difficulty in tracing its authorship. As matters have turned out, however, we know the author but we don't know how she got the paper into your room. Nevertheless you ought to be satisfied for you remember you said that you cared very little how the letter reached you if you could only find out who wrote it."

"I am not so sure that we know who wrote it even now," I returned, gloomily. "The goings-on in this house are altogether too bewildering to suit my taste."

"Why, it must have been the woman!" cried MacArdel, with emphasis. "You admit that both were written by the same hand, and I hardly think you'll deny that she was responsible for the one we found last night. If she wrote one she must have written the other, too."

"Perhaps she didn't write either," I muttered insistently.

"Oh, rubbish, Ware!" exclaimed MacArdel, impatiently. "What's the use of looking for more mystery when the whole thing is as good as explained! There she was, locked up in that little room across the hall. She couldn't get out, except through the window, and there was only one, which opened on the veranda right beside my chair. But she could look out and see all that was going on, and when we had our little tussle with Jenks, she took it all in from start to finish."

"Now, the widow's no fool, Ware, and as soon as she realized that she and Jenks were completely in our power she wrote this note at the desk in the corner of the room and kept it in her hand until the opportunity came to slip it into your pocket. She wrote hurriedly for she did not know when she would be interrupted and so she had no time to disguise her hand as she did before. She's English the writing's English and I'll warrant the paper in the desk is the same as this she used."

"We crossed the hall to the little reception room, and, as MacArdel had suggested, we found the desk open and some stationery strewn about which exactly matched the paper I held in my hand. Moreover, on the floor near by was a lead pencil which, apparently, had been thrown down carelessly so that it rolled off the desk to the place where we discovered it."

"The note was in pencil, and, undoubtedly, had been written with this pencil or with one of the same quality of lead."

"There seemed to be no room for further argument as to the identity of the author of these remarkable communications, but, while the facts concerning the second were sufficiently plain, much mystery still surrounded the first."

"Hang it all, Mac!" I exclaimed. "I'll have to admit that the widow wrote the notes in spite of myself, but how on earth did she know of my feelings toward Miss Carney? And, what's more, how did she get that letter on my bed?"

"Guessed at it, as far as your first question is concerned," replied MacArdel, cheerfully. "Just used her common sense as to the fitness of the match, and took the chance. That's all there is to it, Ware."

"Even so," I returned, "and I'm hardly willing to admit that your explanation is correct, how did the note get on the bed?"

"Easiest thing in the world," laughed MacArdel. "You were in and out of your room after you made up the bed for the night, weren't you?"

"Why, certainly!" I rejoined. "I fixed it up first and then came down and locked up the house. I must have been out of the room for 15 or 20 minutes after the bed was made."

"Well," he continued, "what more do you want? The woman, or one of her accomplices, evidently has a way of getting in and out of the houses, at pleasure, and while you were fussing around downstairs the note was tucked under a fold of the counterpane with the idea that you would find it when you turned in. As a matter of fact you didn't find it till morning, but you probably slept as well, for all that."

"How about the cigar case?" I asked, with a grin.

"Oh, bother the cigar case!" exclaimed MacArdel. "That was only an incident in this whole plot to scare people away from here. It looks queer, I know, but so did the other things, for a time. We'll find out how it was worked, sooner or later, and even if we don't, I can't see that it makes any great difference. We know the leaders in this business and we've got them pretty well subdued. All you have to do is to go ahead and open up the place. There won't be any more nonsense when they realize that you don't care a snap of your finger for them or their doings. Just get your servants here all at the same time. Have the house cleared and aired from top to bottom and keep lights burning in the halls all night. Fill the stable with horses as you told me you intended to do, and see that all the servants' cottages on the place are occupied."

"You won't have any trouble, Ware, if you will only take the precaution to have all these people come at the same time, and transform the place into one of bustling activity within a few hours. All you have to do to stamp out this ghost business is to overwhelm it entirely, and there won't be any more of it, I promise you, as soon as the place is running full blast."

MacArdel's idea seemed to be the most practical one that presented itself, and within a few days, the house was filled with workmen and their

we keep a sharp lookout. I almost wish they had cut up a row over it at the beginning, rather than have them go on like this. They are nursing their rancor all this while and some day they will try to get their revenge."

A telegram announcing the sailing of Miss Carney and Miss Weston spurred us on to greater efforts and, when at last we were ready to leave for town that I might meet the travelers at the pier, we were both satisfied that our labor had not been in vain.

Carney-Croft looked like its old-time self in its happiest days. The lawns had been cut and sodded, the roads and paths graded and repaired, the shrubs and hedges trimmed, and the flower beds filled with rare and well chosen plants.

Within the house had been cleaned and renovated from garret to cellar and the corps of servants from house-keeper down to kitchen maid, were reliable, capable, and of thoroughly attested respectability, while the stable, with its new horses and trustworthy men, was nowise behind in point of complete reorganization and equipment.

"You've done a great bit of work in the last few weeks," said MacArdel, as we were speeding toward town in the fast express.

"Well," I replied, "my heart was in it, Mac. That accounts for it, I suppose."

The idiotic grin with which he received this remark caused me to blush like a schoolboy, and I turned away from him to the window and watched the ever changing panorama that glided past as we rushed on toward the city.

CHAPTER XIV.

Return of the Wanderers.

Miss Carney came down the gang-plank followed closely by Miss Weston, and greeted me in a way that was plainly sincere.



"How Did the Note Get on the Bed?"

helpers, while the retinue of carefully chosen servants was imported from town, and gave to the establishment an air of permanent occupancy. As many men from the village as could be persuaded to work on the place at all were assigned to the roads and lawns, and every effort was made to beautify and render attractive the entire estate.

I had no hesitancy in authorizing the lavish expenditures which were necessitated by such wholesale rehabilitation of the property, for not only was I assured that anything I might do would meet with the full approval of Miss Carney, but, from my position as her trustee, I knew that the income of the estate would warrant the steps I was taking toward its improvement.

There were no further uncanny manifestations or mysterious happenings of any kind, and Jenks and the widow continued to follow their usual vocations as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred, so that we were forced to believe that they were living up to the spirit as well as to the letter of their oath.

MacArdel who had remained with me as my guest and companion while this work was in progress, did not half like this submissive behavior on the part of Jenks and the Bruce woman and his suspicions were greatly increased when I ordered the widow out of her cottage to make room for the golf links that Miss Carney wanted laid out.

"Keep an eye on her, Ware," said MacArdel, when I told him how promptly and willingly she had acquiesced in my wishes, and with what seeming gratitude she had accepted the new quarters in which I had installed her. "Watch her carefully, old man," he continued. "She'll be up to some deviltry yet, you may be sure. Neither she nor Jenks has breathed a word, even to you or me, about that business the other night, but they haven't forgotten it by any means, and we'll hear from them when we least expect to, unless

"Oh! I am so glad to be home again!" she exclaimed joyously, and her face lighted up with pleasure as she glanced about at the crowd of expectant people that choked up the pier.

"So is Annie, too!" she laughed, laying a hand on Miss Weston's arm and patting it playfully. "She was dreadfully ill all the way across and scarcely left her room until we reached Quarantine this morning. I don't know what sea-sickness is, myself, and I simply lived on deck. Why, how do you do, Mrs. Randolph! I am so glad to see you!"

Mrs. Randolph, who proved to be Miss Weston's aunt, kissed both young women affectionately and then I was introduced in due form.

"Mrs. Randolph is to be our chaperon," Miss Carney explained, "and is going to Carney-Croft with us as soon as the place is ready. I was wishing this morning that you knew her, for I was sure she would be here and you could have been company for each other while you were waiting for the ship to come up. We used to say, when we lived here, that there seemed to be a fate that kept you two people from meeting one another."

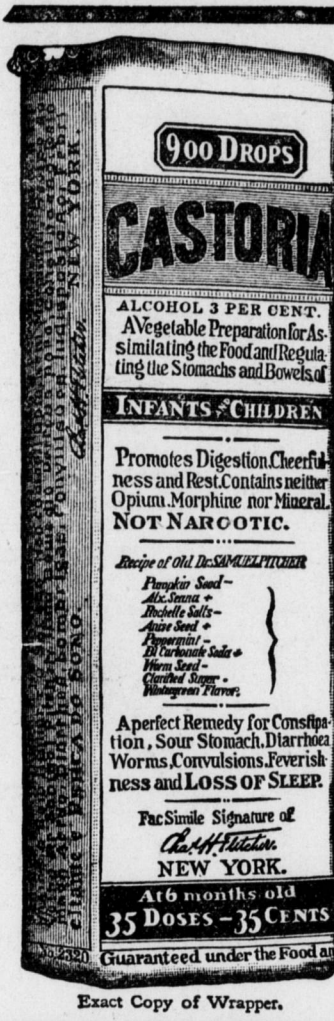
"You had a pleasant trip, I hope?" I asked, solicitously, after expressing my regret that I had missed the pleasure of Mrs. Randolph's acquaintance.

"Delightful, every minute of it!" she rejoined. "If it hadn't been for Annie's seasickness and—"

"And the parson's!" interrupted her friend, with a laugh.

"Yes, the parson's," continued Miss Carney, flushing faintly as a smile flitted across her face. "They were going to some kind of a convention and they were everywhere; in the forecastle, praying with the sailors; in the smoking room casting horrified glances at less sanctified passengers who ventured to drink or play; at the table before the places were fairly laid; and—"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



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Australia to Have Own Navy.

It is stated officially in London that the government has acceded to the wish of Australia to rescind her annual contribution of \$1,000,000 to a rapid decline owing to the immense area of ground being acquired by dredging companies. One company alone has purchased nearly all the placer ground on the three principal creeks, namely: Bonanza, Eldorado and Hunter, and has bonded considerably more on Dominion and other creeks for various reasons. Where formerly hundreds of miners were working for wages or working their own ground, thus creating a demand for provisions, clothing, machinery, hardware, etc., and the transportation from Dawson to the different mining operations, now dredges are either operating or in course of construction.—Consular Reports.

How's This?

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Cheapens and Improves Coal.

Consul General W. R. Holloway, of Halifax, says that the Canadian commercial agent at Manchester, England, reports an invention at that place for depriving soft coal of its most objectionable feature by abstracting the oils said to produce smoke, and calling the resulting article "coalite," which is something like coke in appearance and which can be furnished at one-third the present cost of coal. Five acres of land near Manchester have been purchased, and large works will be erected for its production.—United States Consul Reports.

The Human Shield.

The advent of Decoration day caused Admiral Dewey, at a recent dinner, to praise the bravery of the American troops during the civil war.

"Both sides alike were brave," he said. "North and south, soldiers and sailors. And the bravery of the raw recruit was a thing to be seen to be believed."

"There used to be circulated, though, a good story about a Connecticut recruit. This young man, after he had gotten initiated, fought heroically; but in his first engagement he was very nervous."

"A chum of his was in the line ahead of him, and when the bullets began to fly, the chum began to dodge."

"Thereupon the recruit shouted excitedly: 'Hey, Jim, don't duck. I'm behind ye.'"

AN OLD EDITOR

Found \$2000 Worth of Food.

The editor of a paper out in Okla., said: "Yes, it is true when I got hold of Grape-Nuts food, it was worth more than a \$2000 doctor bill to me, for it made me a well man. I have gained 25 pounds in weight, my strength has returned tenfold, my brain power has been given back to me, and that is an absolute essential, for I am an editor and have been for 35 years."

"My pen shall always be ready to speak a good word for this powerful nutritive food. I had of course often read the advertisements regarding Grape-Nuts, but never thought to apply the food to my own use, until, in my extremity and sickness the thought came to me that it might fit my case. The statements in regard to the food are absolutely correct, as I have proven in my own case. One very fortunate thing about the food is that while it is the most scientifically made and highly nourishing, concentrated food I have ever known, it has so delicious a taste that it wins and holds friends."

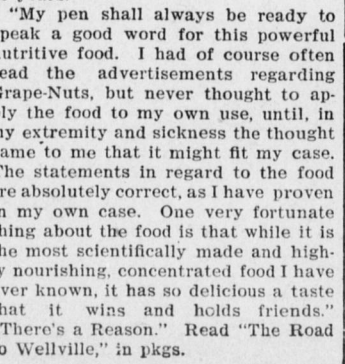
"There's a Reason." Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

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Krause's Cold Cure.

For cold in head, throat, chest or back. Best remedy for La Grippe. Druggists, 25c.

Most men like to be jollied and are willing to pay for it.



Corporations Oust Miners.

The Klondike proper—that is, that portion of the Yukon territory in the vicinity of Dawson—as far as the individual miner is concerned, is on a rapid decline owing to the immense area of ground being acquired by dredging companies. One company alone has purchased nearly all the placer ground on the three principal creeks, namely: Bonanza, Eldorado and Hunter, and has bonded considerably more on Dominion and other creeks for various reasons. Where formerly hundreds of miners were working for wages or working their own ground, thus creating a demand for provisions, clothing, machinery, hardware, etc., and the transportation from Dawson to the different mining operations, now dredges are either operating or in course of construction.—Consular Reports.

This is the argument put forward by scientists to-day, and is causing no little alarm, because practically all the leading men who have made the subject a careful study and test are united on the statement and agree that a great per cent. of all cattle in the U. S. have Bovine Tuberculosis. In Denmark 50% of all Cattle are infected. Recently The Mutual Mercantile Co., Cleveland, O., have issued a free booklet showing how it is wrong to kill so many thousands of our Dairy Cows when a few cents worth of Rasawa purchased at any Drug Store will positively prevent Tuberculosis. The claim is made that it is a germicide and renders the cow immune. Ask your dealer or the above company for a free book.

Our Queer Sense of Humor.

"Americans have a strange sense of humor, don't you know," began the Englishman. "The othah day, for example, I went into a restaurant with a friend and he awksed for sinkahs. I was surprised to see them bring him three biscuit of some sort or othah. Again at another time I dined with him at a table d'hot cafe. He said to the waiter, 'Bring us a couple of bottles of pink ink.' What the waiter brought him, don't you know, was two bottles of red wine."

"Really, it is very strange, the American sense of humor. You catch onto my meaning?"—N. Y. Press.

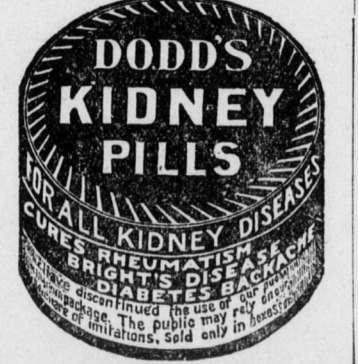
The Same Species.

"Did you ship that load of elephants' ears to the florist on the suburban express?"

"No; I thought it would be more in order to send them on the trunk line."

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