



The Mystery OF Carney-Croft

By
JOSEPH BROWN COOKE

Copyright, 1907, by Story-Press Corporation.

CHAPTER XVI.—Continued.

She leaned forward weeping bitterly, and I said nothing until she began to control herself once more and choke down her sobs in an effort to speak again. Then I said gently:

"Don't say anything more about it now, Miss Weston. I am sure you will do what is best, and though I am utterly at a loss to know what you mean, I am, of course, willing to wait a reasonable time until you are able to tell me. I will trust you without question, and in every way, but you will understand that we both owe it to Miss Carney to do away with all this mystery as soon as we can. It is spoiling her pleasure in life and ruining her property, too, and, as her friends, we must not let it continue if we can possibly put a stop to it."

"Oh, yes, I know," she said, "but we mustn't stop it now. It's too soon, Mr. Ware, and if Florence should learn the truth now it would break her heart."

"Why, what do you mean?" I exclaimed. "You surely do not expect me to believe that this affair could affect Miss Carney in any way, do you?"

"Yes," she moaned, rocking back and forth in her seat and speaking with difficulty. "It would affect her and all of us here, but me, most of all, Mr. Ware; me, most of all. When the time comes it will be easier for everybody, but nothing can be done now, or things will be even worse than they are. Oh, I do wish I could tell you what little I know about it, Mr. Ware, but I cannot, and I know that you will trust me for a few days anyway."

I walked slowly with her back to the house, and, when dinner time came and she sent down her excuses, I learned that no one in the house was aware that she had been out during the day.

Miss Carney looked pale and careworn and said that she had spent the best part of the afternoon lying down and nursing a severe headache. Mrs. Randolph seemed reticent and depressed and the meal passed off slowly and without incident.

When we rose from the table I had formulated a plan which, I thought, might relieve the situation somewhat and, apprising no one of my purpose, I set out in the direction of the Widow Bruce's cottage. It was my intention to put the matter squarely before her and ask her, not necessarily an explanation of affairs, but a friendly cooperation with me in putting an end to the annoyances she had been causing.

I had not formed a bad opinion of the woman from her appearance, and the new turn things had taken made me wonder if she, like Miss Weston, might not have been drawn into this business unwillingly and in all innocence. Moreover, I was convinced that matters were far from being as tragic as Miss Weston, in her hysterical emotion, would have me believe, for I could not conceive how a staid, respectable place like Carney-Croft could, by any possibility, be drawn into an affair that might not be satisfactorily explained in one way or another.

In a word, I had no doubt that a quiet, good-natured talk with Mrs. Bruce would accomplish all that I could wish, and I was prepared to offer her money or any other inducement that she might name if she would let the matter drop. I confess that my curiosity was greatly excited, but I was willing to forego all knowledge of the underlying facts in the case if the Bruce woman and the rest of them would only depart and leave us in peace.

I approached the cottage from the rear, coming down by a short cut through the fields, and as I turned the corner of the house by the open sitting-room windows I heard a woman's voice sob out:

"Oh, I must! I must, Mrs. Bruce! I cannot live unless I do!"

Mrs. Bruce made some reply in a gentle, soothing tone of wonderful sweetness, and then she emerged from the door of the cottage with her arm affectionately around the waist of Annie Weston, who was weeping as if her heart would break. The two passed on down the little gravel walk toward the gate, while Mrs. Bruce continued to pour words of comfort into the ear of the agonized girl; and I turned and retraced my steps to the house that I might be there before Miss Weston arrived.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Vale of Tears.

By walking rapidly and taking the short path over the hill, I was able to reach the house several minutes before Miss Weston, and just in time to see Miss Carney come out of the door and peer into the darkness in a timid, hesitating way.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Ware," she exclaimed, with a nervous little laugh. "I am so glad. I couldn't see who it

was at first, and I'm in such a fidgety state to-night that I am almost ready to start at my own shadow."

She came down the steps and stood by my side, while the light from the open doorway streamed out and touched her face so softly that it poised in the surrounding darkness like some faint, angelic picture idealized by a master's hand.

"I came out to try and find Annie," she went on, "she does not answer when I rap at her door and I thought she might be here. My! what was that?" she gasped, coming closer to me and grasping my arm.

It was only an owl far away in the timberland and, when I told her, she laughed quietly but almost hysterically, and still clung to my side while we listened to the weird, unearthly sound that was wafted again and again to our ears from out of the blackness of the opposite river bank.

She shivered slightly and I said: "You are cold, Miss Carney. Let me get you a wrap, and then, won't you take a little walk? There's a chill in the air to-night and the exercise will do you good."

She made no reply, but looked at me gratefully, as if I had done her some great service. There was a warm woolen golf cape just inside the door, and, snatching it up, I hastened back and threw it over her shoulders, clasping it myself at her throat while she drew her hands under it and nestled comfortably in its generous folds.

We turned and walked slowly down the path under the stars, away from the house and with our backs to the road along which I knew Miss Weston would pass in another minute.

After a few moments' silence, broken only by the drowsy splashing of the river and the cheerful, friendly hum of the insect bands that make half the charm of an October night, Miss Carney said, with a contented little shrug:



Walked Miles and Miles.

"Oh, how delightfully warm and comfortable this cloak is, Mr. Ware. You always seem to know exactly what I need, for I am not nervous any more and I really believe it was nothing but the cold after all. We mustn't go far, for I ought to be looking for Annie this very minute. We can turn at the tennis court, can't we?"

"Whenever you wish," I said, with an effort, for I was becoming intoxicated with the glory of her presence and her slightest hint served me as a command.

"I really must not stay a minute longer," she murmured, almost apologetically. "Annie has had such a hard day of it and I must see if there is anything she wants. I suppose she is asleep and did not hear me tap, for I've looked everywhere for her and was just going back to her room when I saw you come out of the night like a—like—a—Oh! I mustn't say ghost, Mr. Ware! It's no longer a joke, is it?"

We had stopped at a little rustic arbor by the side of the walk and my hand rested on the trellis in front of Miss Carney. She did not speak, and I thought she was laughing softly to herself when suddenly she leaned forward and a hot tear fell on my wrist and was followed by another and another as she gave up entirely and choked with convulsive sobs.

"Why, you mustn't do this!" I exclaimed, solicitously, laying my hand instinctively on her arm and then drawing it away in a guilty fashion. "You are completely unstrung, Miss Carney. The day has been too much for you, and you need rest and quiet. Shall we go back into the house?"

"Not yet," she sobbed. "Not yet, Mr. Ware. I must not go until I have control of myself again. Oh, it is awful—awful! I don't know what I shall do!"

"Why, what is it?" I asked anxiously, as I stood helplessly by her side. "You surely haven't let this little af-

fair of the morning take such a hold of you?"

"Oh, no—no—no—" she moaned. "I am going to tell you in a moment, just as soon as I can talk coherently. You will forgive me, won't you, Mr. Ware, but there is no one else to whom I can go, and yet I seem to do nothing but take up your time with my trials and worries."

I led her out into the path again, thinking she would grow calmer as we walked, and she said no more until we were nearing the house, when she resumed in a plaintive tone, broken occasionally by a half-suppressed sob:

"It's about Annie, Mr. Ware, and I did not tell you at first, for I thought I could see her myself and find out what it all meant. Ever since this morning she has been walking up and down her room crying and sobbing, and this afternoon I heard her say such dreadful things that I almost feared for her reason."

"What did she say?" I asked gently. "Oh, I hardly know," she went on, "but she seemed to be calling upon heaven to forgive her for some dreadful sin that she had committed, and she was so wrapped up in her anguish that even my knocks at the door made no impression upon her. Then she would grow more calm and only sob and moan for a time, but soon those awful words would come again and it seemed as if she would go mad. She has always been subject to occasional attacks of melancholy and when I would try to learn the cause of her trouble she would put it off as a mere fit of the blues."

"You don't mind my telling you all this, do you, Mr. Ware, for you have always helped me out of every difficulty, and it is second nature for me to turn to you now. At first I thought I could straighten it out myself, but she wouldn't even let me see her, and then, Mr. Ware, since dinner I have not heard a sound from her room and



Walked Miles and Miles.

can get no response when I rap. D. you know," she whispered, touching my arm in a frightened way and shuddering as she spoke, "I can hardly bring myself to say it, but I—I—almost fear she has taken her life!"

Her eyes filled with tears again, and I lost no time in saying, reassuringly:

"You mustn't take such a gloomy view of it, Miss Carney. There's nothing to worry about, I am sure, and as to Miss Weston's having taken her life I can promise you most positively that she not only has done nothing of the sort, but that no such idea has ever entered her mind."

"I knew you would cheer me up as you have always done," she exclaimed gratefully, "but how can you be so certain about Annie, Mr. Ware? Remember, you don't know her as well as I do."

"Look!" I replied, pointing to a window of Miss Weston's room, and there, in the full glow of the lamp within, she sat at a table writing rapidly.

Miss Carney gave a glad little cry and started away toward the house, but turned in an instant and extended her hand, saying:

"You have cheered me up, Mr. Ware, just as I knew you would. Thank you so much, and—good night."

As her hand lay in mine she turned it until its back was uppermost and then raised it slightly. I had already been sorely tempted, but this was more than I could bear, and, bending forward, I touched it lightly and reverently with my lips.

"Good night," she repeated, softly, "and thank you again."

I watched her until she had disappeared into the house and then I turned and walked miles and miles over the deserted country roads, my head bowed down and my mind nearly dazed. When I returned to the house the cold gray morning light was breaking in the eastern sky.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MADE A NEW FASHION.

Good Joke Played in Old Days on Would-Be Fashionable.

Old Camden, in his "Remains," tells a good story of a trick played by a knight upon a would-be fashionable shoemaker. Sir Philip Calthrop purged John Drakes, the shoemaker of Norwich in the time of King Henry VIII, of the proud humor which our people have to be of the gentlemen's cut. This knight bought as much fine French tawny cloth as should make him a gown, and sent it to the tailor's to be made. John Drakes, a shoemaker, coming to this tailor's and seeing the knight's gown cloth lying there, bid the tailor buy cloth of the same price and pattern and make it of the same fashion as the knight's. Not long after the knight, coming in to the tailor to be measured for his gown, and perceiving the like cloth lying there, asked whose it was. "John Drakes," the shoemaker, who will have it made of the self-same fashion that yours is made of." "Then make mine as full of cuts as the shears will make it!" John Drakes had no time to go for his gown till Christmas day, when he meant to wear it. Perceiving the same to be full of cuts, he began to swear at the tailor. "I have done naught but what you bid me," quoth the tailor, "for as Sir Philip Calthrop's garment is, even so have I made yours." "By my lather!" quoth John Drakes, "I will never wear gentlemen's fashions again!"—London T. P.'s Weekly.

LIFE INSURANCE A SACRED TRUST.

Responsibilities of Officers and Directors.

Evidently President Kingsley of the New York Life Insurance company has learned the great lesson of the times with respect to the responsibility and duty of directors of corporations. Speaking to the new board of trustees, on the occasion of his election to the presidency, he emphasized the fact that "life insurance is more than a private business, that life insurance trustees are public servants, charged at once with the obligations of public service and with the responsibilities that attach to a going business which at the same time must be administered as a trust."

He also realizes that similar responsibilities rest upon the officers of the company. "I understand," he says, "your anxiety in selecting the men who are day by day to carry this burden for you, who are to discharge this trust in your behalf, who are to administer for the benefit of the people involved the multitudinous and exacting details to which it is impossible for you to give personal attention. My long connection with the New York Life—covering nearly twenty years—my service in about every branch of the company's working organization, gives me, as I believe, a profound appreciation, not merely of the heavy burden you have placed on my shoulders, but of the standards of efficiency, the standards of faith, the standards of integrity, which must be maintained at all times by the man who serves you and the policyholders in this high office."

Best of all, perhaps, he feels that words are cheap, and that the public will be satisfied with nothing short of performance. "My thanks, therefore," he continues, "for an honor which outranks any distinction within the reach of my ambition, cannot be expressed in words; they must be read out of the record I make day by day."

"Soap Bubble Hanging from a Reed."

Our life is but a soap bubble hanging from a reed; it is formed, expands to its full size, clothes itself with the loveliest colors of the prism, and even escapes at moments from the law of gravitation; but soon the black speck appears in it and the globe of emerald and gold vanishes into space, leaving behind it nothing but a simple drop of turbid water. All the poets have made this comparison, it is so striking and so true. To appear, to shine, to disappear; to be born, to suffer and to die; is it not the whole sum of life, for a butterfly, for a nation, for a star?—Henry Frederic Amiel.

The Psychological Moment.

The fact that Priam was closeted with the adjuster did not prevent Cassandra from dropping in to say that she had told him just how it would be.

"She was all I saved," murmured the burnt-out monarch, jerking his thumb at the retreating prophetess.

"Say no more," rejoined the other. "We'll call the loss total, and if I could make it any more than that, old man, I'd do it, under the circumstances."

This incident shows the value of a word spoken at the right time.—Puck.

Full Particulars Wanted.

When the nurse brought the cheering news to Toperton recently that he had just become the father of triplets, he betrayed no particular satisfaction. "Boys?" he growlingly queried.

"Only one boy, sir."

"Well," said Toperton, "go on; don't keep me in suspense. One boy—what are the others?"—Sketchy Bits.

Parental Advice.

"Father, I am thinking of getting married."

"All right, my son, but remember that love is not everything. Take care to select a wife who will support you in the style to which you have always been accustomed, or you run the risk of being very unhappy and may-day of having to go to work yourself."

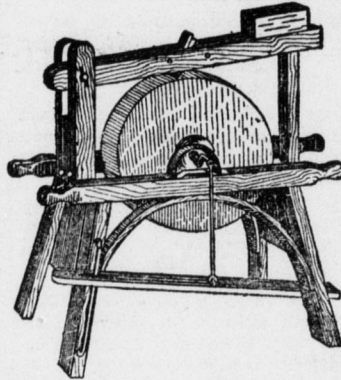
It takes almost as many tailors to make a man as it takes collectors to induce him to pay for the job.



CARE OF THE GRINDSTONE.

A Good Way to True It Before Sharpening the Tools.

Every farmer knows that a grindstone will wear unevenly. In sharpening mower knives, the edges are liable to be worn down and unless the stone is of first class quality, it will also wear like the eccentric on an engine. Comparatively few grindstones are in good working order. A new stone, while it may be of good quality, is frequently hung so it will not run "true" so that the longer it is used the worse it gets. When a stone gets this way it can be made perfectly circular by trimming it down with a burr



Rig for Making a Grindstone True.

pick or even a good cold-chisel will do. It is very difficult to do by hand, but a device, such as is shown in the accompanying illustration, will be found very convenient for this use. A little post can be fixed to the end of the grindstone with a slit in the upper part, into which a piece of hardwood is fastened, long enough to reach to the other end of the frame. This should be made of two-inch stuff, a little wider than the stone. An opening is made in this piece, the width of the stone, to insert the cold chisel or mill pick which is wedged in the same way that a plane chisel is set. At the opposite end of the frame, explains The Farmer, another post is bolted on that has a series of holes so that it can be raised or lowered according to the unevenness of the stone. It would be well to put a rivet at each side of the chisel to prevent it from splitting out. A weight of some kind, fastened to the piece back of the chisel so as to make it bear on the stone, will be all that is needed. The stone can then be turned slowly until the uneven parts are cut away. Water should be used on the stone while it is being turned.

POINTS FOR THE FARMER.

Turn a few shotes into that old orchard and let them cultivate it.

Spray the melon, cucumber and tomato vines thoroughly every ten days with bordeaux mixture to prevent blight and rot.

Oat hay cannot be made haphazard. There is a time when oats may be cut so that the straw and grain together make a valuable feed. In fertilizing the orchard aim to use a manure not too rich in nitrogen. When an excess of nitrogen is used you obtain a vigorous succulent growth that is easily injured.

If your barn cellar has been smelling bad this winter, now is the time to clean it. Let it dry out thoroughly this summer and provide drains so that it will be kept from becoming wet again.

When meadows yield only a small amount of hay it frequently pays to turn them up and cultivate them for two or three years. Manuring sometimes does not help matters. The soil needs turning up, so that the sunlight can sweeten it.

On land too wet for cultivation alsike clover will often make fine crops. Plow it when in good condition, sow about four pounds of seed per acre and harrow lightly both ways to cover the seed and smooth the ground. Alsike clover will stand a good deal of moisture.

Function of Phosphorus.

Phosphorus, in the form of phosphates, is found in all parts of the plant, but tends to accumulate in the upper parts of the stem and leaves, and particularly in the seed. Its function is apparently to aid in the production and transportation of the protein. It also seems to aid the assimilation of the other plant food elements. An insufficient supply of phosphoric acid always results in a poorly developed plant and particularly in a poor yield of shrunken grain. Nitrogen forces leaf and stem growth and phosphoric acid hastens maturity.—Prof. R. Harcourt.

Timothy Soil.

Timothy does best on rich loams, with a moderate supply of moisture. It is a mistake to sow timothy on low, wet lands, where red-top or meadow foxtail would do better. Meadow lands need cultivating. Use a sharp tooth harrow or disc early in the spring and go at it as if you intended to seed the field fresh. Then seed lightly and harrow well. That is all the cultivation necessary, but it will do wonders in increasing the hay crop.

THE BEST HE COULD GET.

Amateur Gardener Could Not Understand Why Seeds Did Not Sprout.

The woes of the amateur gardener are very amusing to others, but decidedly real to the man who has spoiled a suit of clothes, blistered his hands and lost his temper in his efforts to make things grow.

A young man, recently married, early in the spring secured a suburban place, mainly with the idea of "fresh, home-grown vegetables." Every evening he would hurry through his supper and rush out to his garden, where he displayed more energy than skill. But, alas! When many little green things began to break the ground in his neighbors' gardens, his own remained as bare as the Sahara.

"It certainly has got me beat," he confided to a friend at his office one day. "I can't understand why not a blessed thing has come up. I planted peas and corn and tomatoes."

"Perhaps the seed were defective," the friend suggested.

"I hardly think it was that," the gardener replied, "for I got the very best—paid 15 cents a can for them."

THERE IS A REASON.

The Medical Times Explains Why Doctors Oppose Patent Medicines.

The Medical Times for April in a moment of frankness explains the whole opposition of physicians to "patent" medicines which are taken without a prescription, in the following words:

"We will hardly repeat here the specific statement to the effect that in one year \$62,000,000 has been expended on patent medicines in the United States. Enough to give every practitioner in the country a yearly income of \$2,000. In the face of such facts as these, all talk of love of humanity, altruism, self-abnegation and the like becomes cheap and nauseating. It appears to us that such buncombe should give place to homely common sense."

Reliable authority states that the gross amount of the "patent" medicine business is about \$40,000,000 instead of \$62,000,000 but taking the Medical Times' figures as correct they represent an outlay of considerably less than \$1 per capita for home medication. The cost of doctors' fees exclusive of medicines except such as are dispensed for the same period, probably was approximately \$230,000,000. This is reached by allowing an average income of \$2,000 to each of the 115,000 physicians in the United States. Even allowing that a gross business of \$62,000,000 is to be divided between 115,000 physicians the income of each would not be increased more than \$540.

PRIVILEGES OF A GENTLEMAN.

Youngster Probably Will Change Ideas in Course of Time.

There is a small boy in this town, says the Baltimore American, the son of a rather distinguished lawyer, who has decided opinions on what constitutes true aristocracy. One day recently a friend called upon his mother, and, while waiting for the hostess, was entertained by the small boy.

"What are you going to do when you grow up?" was the stereotyped question she propounded in the effort to start the conversation.

"Oh, I am going to smoke."

"Yes?"

"And chew."

"Oh!"

"And gamble."

"Indeed!"

"And swear."

"Really!"

"And drink corn whisky."

"And why are you going to do such things?" asked the visitor aghast.

"Oh, all southern gentlemen do them."

Collieries Under the Sea.

At Cape Breton there are immense collieries being worked under the ocean. These submarine mines cover a thousand acres, and are being increased steadily. The mines are entered at the shore, and the operators follow the vein beneath the water for more than a mile. It might be expected that the weight of the water would force its way into the mine. The bed of the ocean is as tight as a cement cistern. A sort of fireclay lines the submarine roof of the mine, and the sediment above is held in place and packed down by the water pressure until there is not a crevice nor a drop of water from overhead.

The Royal Road.

Struggling Author—Why, De Poesy, how prosperous you look! Was your last book of poems a success?

De Poesy—No, can't say that it was.

"Published a popular novel, perhaps?"

"No."

"Ah, then you have written a play. I have always held that play writing, while not the highest form of art, was nevertheless—"

"I have written no play."

"You haven't? Where did these fine clothes come from? How did you pay for that handsome turnout?"

"I have abandoned literature and am peddling clams."—N. Y. Weekly.

Why "Kangaroo."

"Kangaroo" is a queer word. It means "I don't understand" in the tongue of the Australian aborigines. When this strange animal was first beheld by Europeans they inquired of the aborigines "What is its name?" And the puzzled reply gave the animal its name.