

The PRICE By FRANCIS LYNDE ILLUSTRATIONS by C. DRHODES

SYNOPSIS.

Kenneth Griswold, an unsuccessful writer because of socialistic tendencies, holds up Andrew Galbraith, president of the Bayou State Securities...

CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

"It was a man—he was looking in at the window," she returned in low tones. "I thought I saw him once before; but this time I am certain!"

Griswold sprang from his chair, and a moment later was letting himself out noiselessly through the hall door.

"Hello, Mr. Griswold; is that you?" called the cheery one, when he saw a bareheaded man beating the covers in his front yard.

Griswold met his host at the gate and walked up the path with him.

"Miss Charlotte thought she saw someone at one of the front windows," he explained; and a moment afterward the daughter was telling it for herself.

"I saw him twice," she insisted; "once while we were at dinner, and again just now. The first time I thought I might be mistaken, but this time—"

Griswold was laughing silently and inwardly deriding his gifts when, under cover of the doctor's return, he made decent acknowledgments for benefits bestowed and took his departure.

On the pleasant summer-night walk to Upper Shawnee street he was congratulating himself upon

the now quite complete fulfillment of the wishing prophecy.

Miss Farnham was going to prove to be all that the most critical maker of studies from life could ask in a model; a supremely perfect original for the character of Fidella in the book.

How much this might have been modified if he had known that the man whose face Miss Farnham had seen at the window was silently tracking him through the tree-shadowed streets in a matter of conjecture.

HORSE ROUTED BY PHEASANT

Angry Men Almost Blind Animal While Protecting Brood Which Was in No Danger.

Bradford of Center Hall, near Belle Glade, Pa., who has hunted pheasants through the Seven mountains for 29 years, found the latest kind of that species inhabiting the brush in Center county, he believes.

to be presumed that much, if not all, of the complacency would have vanished if he could have been an unseen listener in the Farnham sitting-room, dating from the time when little Miss Gilman pattered off to bed, leaving the father and daughter sitting together under the reading lamp.

At first their talk was entirely of the window apparition, the daughter insisting upon its reality, and the father trying to push it over into the limbo of things imagined.

"We can't have that at all!" he said insistively. "You did your whole duty in that bank matter; and it was a good deal more than most young women would have done. I'm not going to have you persecuted and harassed—not one minute! Where is this fellow stopping?"

The daughter shook her head. "I don't know. He gave me his card, but it has the New Orleans address only."

"Give it to me and I'll look him up tomorrow."

The card changed hands, and for a few minutes neither of them spoke. Then the daughter began again.

"I've had another shock this evening, too," she said, speaking this time in low tones and with eyes downcast.

"This Mr. Griswold—did I understand you to say that he had lost all of his money?"

"Yes; practically all of it," said the father, without losing his hold upon what a certain great London physician was saying through the columns of the English medical journal.

But afterward, long after Charlotte had gone up to her room, he remembered, with a curious little start of half-awakened puzzlement, that someone, no longer ago than yesterday, had told him that young Griswold was rich—or if not rich, at least "well fixed."

CHAPTER XIX.

Pitfalls.

Within a week from the day when Raymer, angrily jubilant, had regained his imperiled stock, it was pretty generally known that Kenneth Griswold, the writing man, had become the fourth member in the close corporation of the Raymer Foundry and Machine works, and Wahaska was eagerly discussing the business affair in all its possible and probable bearings upon the Raymers, the Griswolds and the newly elected directory of the Pineboro railroad.

Of all this buzzing of the gossip bees the person most acutely concerned heard little or nothing. Digging deeply in the inspiration field, Griswold speedily became oblivious to most of his engagements; to all of them, indeed, save those which bore directly upon the beloved task.

When he got well into the swing of it and was turning out a chapter every three or four days, he fell easily into the habit of slipping the last installment into his pocket when he went to Mercedes. Margery Griswold was adding generously to his immense obligation to her; hoping only to find a friendly listener, he found a helpful collaborator.

More than once, when his own imagination was at fault, she was able to open new vistas in the humanities for him, apparently drawing upon a reserve of intuitive conclusions compared with which his own hard-bought store of experimental knowledge was almost puerile.

"I wish you would tell me the secret of your marvelous cleverness," he exclaimed, on one of the June afternoons when he had been reading to her in the cool half-shadows of the Mercedes library.

"There are many things beyond you yet, dear boy; many, many things," was her laughing rejoinder; from which it will be inferred that the episode in the Farmers' and Merchants' burglar-proof had become an episode forgotten—or at least forgiven.

undertoot, as he was always obliged to do in these talks with her. "I should be discouraged if you didn't keep on telling me that the story, as a story, is good."

"It is good; it is a big story," she asserted, with kindling enthusiasm. "The plot, so far as you have gone with it, is fine; and that is where you leave me away behind. I don't see how you could ever think it out. And the character drawing is fine, too, some of it. Your Fleming is as far beyond me as your Fidella seems to be beyond you."

"You don't know Fleming yet. Have you ever met Fidella?"

"Not as you have drawn her—no. She is too unutterably fine. If she had a single shred of humanity about her, I should suspect you of meaning to fall in love with her, farther along—to the humiliation and despair of poor Joan, who, as you say, is a mere daughter of men."

"But how about Joan?" he fretted. "Is she out of drawing, too?"

"Yes; you are distorting her the other way—making her too inhumanly worldly and insincere." Then, with an abruptness that was like a slap in the face: "If you didn't spend so many evenings at Doctor Bertie's, you would get both Fidella and Joan in better drawing."

He flushed and drew himself up, with stabbed amour propre prompting him to make some stinging retort contrasting the wells of truth with the



Instantly the Primitive Instinct of Self-Preservation Sprang Alert.

brackish waters of sheer worldliness. Then he saw how inadequate it would be; how utterly impossible it was to meet this charmingly vindictive young person upon any grounds save those of her own choosing.

"That is the first really unkind thing I have ever heard you say," was the mild reproach which was all that the reactionary second thought would sanction.

"(Unkind to whom?—to you, or to Miss Farnham?"

"Ask yourself," he countered weakly, and she laughed at him.

Griswold did not reply to the laugh. He was gathering up the scattered pages of his manuscript and replacing them in order. When he spoke again it was of a matter entirely irrelevant.

"I had an odd experience the other evening," he said. "I had been dining with the Raymers and was walking back to Shawnee street. A little newsboy named Johnnie Ferguson turned up from somewhere at one of the street crossings and tried to sell me a paper—at eleven o'clock at night! I bought one and joked him about being out so late; and from that on I couldn't get rid of him. He went all the way home with me, talking a blue streak and acting as if he were afraid of something or somebody. I remembered afterward that he is the boy who takes care of your boat. Is there anything wrong with him?"

Miss Griswold had left her chair and had gone to stand at one of the windows.

"Nothing that I know of," she said. "He is a bright boy—too bright for his own good. I'm afraid. But I can explain—a little. Johnnie has taken a violent fancy to you for some reason, and he has fallen into the boyish habit of weaving all sorts of romances around you. I think he reads too many exciting stories and tries to make you the hero of them. He told me the other day that he was sure somebody was 'spotting' you."

Griswold looked up quickly. Miss Griswold was still facing the window, and he was glad that she had not seen his nervous start.

"Spotting me?" he laughed. "Where did he get that idea?"

"How should I know? But he had made himself believe it; he even went so far as to describe the man. Oh, I can assure you Johnnie has an imagination; I've tested it in other ways."

"If I knew enough about guns to be able to tell 'em apart, I might buy one," he said, half humorously. And then: "You must've been having a mighty particular customer—to get so many of 'em out."

"It was Mr. Griswold, Mr. Ed Raymer's new partner," said the clerk. And he was pretty particular; wouldn't have anything but these new-fashioned automatics. Said he wanted something that would be quick and sure, and I guess he's got it—I sold him two of 'em."

Broffin played with the stock long enough to convince the clerk that he was only a counter lounge with no intention of buying. "Took two of 'em. He did?—for fear one might make him sick, I reckon," he said, with the half-humorous grin still lurking under the drooping mustaches.

"Automatic thirty-twos, eh? Well, I ain't goin' to try to hold your Mr.—Griscom, did you call him?—up none after this. He might git me."

Whereupon, having found out what he wanted to know, he lounged out again and went back to the hotel to smoke another of the reflective cigars in the porch chair which had come to be his by right of frequent and long-continued occupancy.

Griswold had left the Mercedes library considerably shaken, not in his convictions, to be sure, but in his confidence in his own powers of imaginative analysis. For this cause it required a longer after-dinner stay at the Farnham's than he had been allowing himself, to re-establish the norm of self-assurance.

Charlotte Farnham was never enthusiastic; that, perhaps, would be asking too much of an ideal; but what she lacked in warmth was made up in cool sanity, backed by a moral sense that seemed never to waver. Unerringly she placed her finger upon the human weaknesses in his book people, and unflatteringly she bade him reform them.

For his Fidella, as he described her, she exhibited a gentle affection, tempered by a compassionate pity for her weaknesses and waverings; an attitude, he fatuously told himself, forced upon her because her own standards were so much higher than any he could delineate or conceive. For Joan there was also compassion, but it was mildly contemptuous.

"I did not know that you are incapable of doing such a thing, I might wonder if you are not drawing your Joan from life, Mr. Griswold," she said, a little coldly, on this same evening of rehabilitations.

"Since such characters are to be found in real life, I suppose they may have a place in a book. But you must not commit the unparagonable sin of making your readers condone the evil in her for the sake of the good. Please forget what I have said about your Fidella and—and your Joan. You are trying to make them human, and that is as it should be."

Griswold could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses. He told himself fiercely that he would never believe, without the conviction of fact, that the ideal could step down from its pedestal.

"You are meaning to be kind to me now, at the expense of your convictions, Miss Charlotte," he protested warmly.

"No," she denied gravely. "Listen, and you shall judge. Once, only a short time ago, I was brought face to face with one of these terrible compromises. In a single instant, and by no fault of my own, the dreadful shears of fate were thrust into my hands, and conscience—what I have been taught to call the Christian conscience—told me that with them I must snip the thread of a man's life. And then chance threw us together. A new world was opened to me in those few moments. I had thought that there could be no possible question between simple right and wrong, but almost in his first word the man convinced me that, whatever I might think or the world might say, his conscience had fully and freely acquitted him. And he proved it; proved it so that I can never doubt it as long as I live. He made me do what my conscience had been telling me I ought to do—just as your Fleming makes Fidella do."

"And he was taken?" he said, and he strove desperately to make the saying completely colorless.

"He was; but he made his escape again, almost at once. He is still a free man."

Instantly the primitive instinct of self-preservation, the instinct of the hunted fugitive, sprang alert in the listener.

"How can you be sure of that?" he asked, and in his own ears his voice sounded like the clang of an alarm bell.

Again a silence fell, surcharged, this one, with all the old frightful possibilities. Once more the loathsome fever quickened the pulses of the man at bay, and the curious needlelike pricking of the skin came to signal the return of the homicidal fear-frenzy. The reaction to the normal racked him like the passing of a mortal sickness when his accusing angel said in her most matter-of-fact tone:

"I know he is free; I have it on the best possible authority. The detectives who are searching for him have been here to see me—or, at least, one of them has."

The hunted one laid hold of the partial reprieve with a mighty grip and drew himself out of the reactionary whirlpool.

"It is an outrage! I hope it is an annoyance, at least."

His companion leaned forward in her chair and cautiously parted the leafy vine screen.

"Look across the street—under those trees at the water's edge: do you see him?"

Griswold looked and was reasonably sure that he could make out the shadowy figure of a man leaning against one of the trees.

"That is my shadow," she said, lowering her voice; "Mr. Matthew Broffin of the Colburne Detective Agency, in New Orleans. He has a foolish idea that I am in communication with the man he is searching for, and he was brutal enough to tell me so. What he expects to accomplish by keeping an absurd watch upon our house and dogging everybody who comes and goes, I can't imagine."

"You have told your father?" said Griswold, anxious to learn how far this new alarm fire had spread.

"Certainly; and he has made his protest. But it doesn't do any good; the man keeps on spying, as you see. But we have wandered a long way from your book. I've been trying to prove to you that I am not fit to criticize it."

"No; you mustn't mistake me. I haven't been coming to you for criticism," was Griswold's rather incoherent reply; and when the talk threatened to lapse into the commonplaces, he took his leave. Oddly enough, as he thought, when he was unlatching the gate and had shifted one of the newly purchased automatic pistols from his hip pocket to an outside pocket of the light top-coat he was wearing, the shadowy figure under the lake-shading trees had disappeared.

It was only a few minutes after the lingering dinner guest had gone when the doctor came out on the porch, bringing his long-stemmed pipe for a bedtime whiff in the open air.

"You are losing your beauty sleep, little girl," he said, dropping into the chair lately occupied by the guest. "Did you find out anything more tonight?"

The daughter did not reply at once, and when she did there was a note of freshly summoned hardihood in her voice.

"We were both mistaken," she affirmed. "Coincidences are always likely to be misleading. I am sorry I told you about them. He has certainly been a present help in time of need to Edward."

As before, the good little doctor had recourse to his pipe, and it was not until his daughter got up to go in that he said gently: "One other word, Charlotte, girl: are you altogether sure that the wish isn't father to the thought—about Griswold?"

"Don't be absurd, papa!" she said scornfully, passing swiftly behind his chair to reach the door; and with that answer he was obliged to be content.

CHAPTER XX.

Broken Links.

It was on the second day after the pistol-buying incident in Simmons & Kleifurt's that Broffin, wishing for solitude and a chance to think in perspective, took to the woods.

A letter from the New Orleans office had reopened the account of the Bayou State Security robbery. The mail communication was significant but inconclusive. One Patrick Sheehan, a St. Louis cab driver, dying, had made confession to his priest. For a bribe of two hundred dollars he had aided and abetted the escape of a criminal on a day and date corresponding to the mid-April arrival of the steamer Belle Julie at St. Louis. Afterward he had driven the man to an up-town hotel (name not given). He could not recall the man's name. But the destination address, "Wahaska, Minnesota," was submitted with the confession.

Broffin felt himself short-sighted from the very nearness of things. The single necessity now was for absolute and unshakable identification. To establish this, three witnesses, and three only, could be called upon. Of the three, two had failed signally—Miss Farnham because she had her own reasons for blocking the game, and President Galbraith. That was another chapter in the book of failure. Broffin had learned that the president was stopping at the De Soto Inn, and he had maneuvered to bring Mr. Galbraith face to face with Griswold in the Grierson bank on the day after the pistol-buying. To his astonishment and disgust the president had shaken his head irritably, adding a rebuke: "Na, na, man; your trade makes ye over-suspicious. That's Mr. Griswold, the writer-man and a friend of the Griersons. Miss Madge was telling me about him last week. He's no more like the robber than you are. Haven't I told ye the man was bearded like a tyke?"

With two of the three eye-witnesses refusing to testify, there remained only Johnson, the paying teller of the Bayou State Security. Broffin was considering the advisability of wiring for Johnson when he passed the last of the houses on the lakeside drive and struck into the country road which led by cool and shaded forest windings to the resort hotel at the head of the southern bay. Presently a vehicle overtook and passed him. It was Miss Grierson's trap, drawn by the big English trap-horse, with Miss Grierson herself holding the reins and Raymer lounging comfortably in the spare seat.

Half an hour later Broffin had followed the huge hoof-prints of the great English trap-horse to the driveway portal of the De Soto grounds where they were lost on the pebbled carriage approach. Strolling on through the grounds into the lake-fronting lobby of the inn, he went in search of Miss Grierson. He found her on the broad veranda, alone, and for the moment unoccupied. How to make the attack so direct and so overwhelming that it could not be withstood was the only remaining question; and Broffin had answered it to his own satisfaction, and was advancing through an open French window

directly behind Miss Grierson's chair to put the answer into effect, when the opportunity was snatched away. Raymer, his business apparently concluded, came down the veranda and took the chair next to Miss Grierson's.

Broffin dropped back into the writing-room alcove for which the open French window was the outlet and sat down to bide his time.

"It's a shame to make you wait this way, Miss Madge. McMurtry said he had an appointment with Mr. Galbraith for three o'clock, and he had to go to keep it. But he ought to be down again by this time. Don't wait for me if you want to go back to town. I can get a lift from somebody."

"That would be nice, wouldn't it?" was the good-natured retort. "To make you tie up your own horse in town and then leave you stranded away out here three miles from nowhere! I think I see myself doing such a thing! Besides, I haven't a thing to do but wait."

Broffin shifted the extinct cigar he was chewing from one corner of his mouth to the other and pulled his soft hat lower over his eyes. He, too, could wait. There was a little stir on the veranda; a rustling of silk petticoats and the click of small heels on the hardwood floor. Broffin could not forbear the peering peep around the sheltering window draperies. Miss Grierson had left her seat and was pacing a slow march up and down. That she had not seen him became a fact sufficiently well-assured when she sat down again and began to speak to Griswold.

"How is the new partnership going, by this time?" she asked, after the manner of one who rewinnows the chaff of the commonplaces in the hope of finding grain enough for the immediate need.

"So far as Griswold is concerned, you wouldn't notice that there is a partnership," laughed the iron-founder. "I can't make him galvanize an atom of interest in his investment. All I can get out of him is, 'Don't bother me; I'm busy.'"

"Mr. Griswold is in a class by himself, don't you think?" was the questioning comment.

"He is all kinds of a good fellow; that's all I know, and all I ask to know," answered Raymer loyally.

"I believe that—now," said his companion, with the faintest possible emphasis upon the time-word.

Broffin marked the emphasis and the pause that preceded it, and leaned forward to miss no word.

"Meaning that there was a time when you didn't believe it?" Raymer asked.

"Meaning that there was a time when he had me scared half to death," confessed the one who seemed always to say the confidential thing as if it were the most trivial. "Do you remember one day in the library, when you found me looking over the file of the newspapers for the story of the robbery of the Bayou State Security bank in New Orleans?"

Raymer remembered it very well and admitted it.

"Yes; I remember it all very clearly. Also I recollect how the second newspaper notice told how the robber escaped from the officers at St. Louis. But you haven't told me how you were scared," Raymer suggested.

"It is well to disinfect all dwellings at the conclusion of the disease with both formaldehyde, gas and sulphur sulphur to insure destruction of life; and, if stabiles are near, to have them disinfected thoroughly and put in sanitary condition. Damp houses should be dried out thoroughly by heat."

Unsafe Building's Owner Sued.

Acting for the State Fire Marshal Department, Attorney General Brown brought suit against C. D. Saylor, Ohio Pipe, Fayette county, for the recovery of \$450, alleged to be due the State in penalties for failure to move or repair a building pronounced by the Fire Marshal to be a fire trap and dangerous to the community. Penalties amount to \$25 a day, covering the period from July 30 to September 4. Saylor is said not to have paid any attention to the warnings of the State officials. This is the first suit of the kind brought.

Organization of State Insurance Fund.

State Treasurer Young, Commissioner of Labor Jackson and Insurance Commissioner Johnson conferred with Albert L. Allen, assistant manager of the New York State Workmen's Compensation Fund, regarding the organization of the Pennsylvania State Insurance Fund. Arrangements were made for the framing of a schedule and other details.

Inspectors in New Typhoid Epidemic.

State health inspectors were detailed to go to Cannonsburg by Commissioner Dixon to investigate an outbreak of typhoid fever. Eight cases and number of suspected cases were reported. The Health Department was informed that there are 100 cases of typhoid at Danville State Hospital, an increase of two.

Almshouse Betterment.

The State Board of Public Charities directed that notices be sent to the authorities of several counties to improve conditions at jails and almshouses. They include Washington, Northampton, Cumberland and Allegheny, York, Butler, Cumberland and Fayette, Bradford, Huntingdon and Susquehanna. The Executive Committee will meet this week in Philadelphia to hear reports on conditions at others whose officials have been given notice to better conditions.

State Will Get Mexican Quail.

Dr. Joseph Kalbfus, secretary of the State Game Commission, has arranged with the national government for a mission to this State, under proper inspection, of quail from Mexico for the stocking of State preserves this fall and winter. The commission has been endeavoring to secure quail in other States, but has found all of them disposed to the birds being taken away; it is improbable any Cuban quail will be bought, as experiments with them did not prove successful.

Mr. Gloom's Lack of Enthusiasm. Braggington (who has just purchased a rattle)—Now, there's a car that is a car! J. Fuller Gloom—Ah, yes! What did you suppose I'd think it was?

STARTS PROBE OF PARALYSIS AT ERIE

Outbreak Of Infantile Disease Investigated by Health Commissioner Dixon.

Harrisburg. — Commissioner Health Dixon arranged for an extended investigation on the part of the State into the outbreak of infantile paralysis at Erie by Dr. Herbert Peppercorn, director of the Pepper Research Laboratory, and Dr. Damasco Rivas, a expert pathologist of the University of Pennsylvania. They will make thorough study of the outbreak, establish a branch laboratory at Erie State and local health authorities having been instructed to aid them every way possible in determining the source of the disease.

Child Paralysis Very Infectious.

Commissioner of Health Samuel Dixon, asked regarding the present epidemic of infantile paralysis at Erie which is alarming the residents of the city, issued the following statement: "Polomyelitis has been known in the medical profession since 1840 in America since 1896. Epidemics of considerable size have been reported at varying intervals throughout the North Temperate Zone from 1871 to the present time, the first great outbreak in this country occurring in Vermont in 1894. Pennsylvania had an epidemic of nearly 200 cases in the vicinity of Dubois, Eaucalire, Ridge and Oil City in 1907, a small outbreak in the vicinity of Gettysburg in 1910 and a State-wide outbreak in 1911, including a total of more than 100 cases."

"The disease is sudden and insidious in onset, accompanied by digestive disturbances, slight fever and often considerable stupor, a red rash appears in some instances. The average case only is diagnosed about four or five days before paralysis occurs."

"The causative factor is so small that it will pass readily through the best of filters and may be found with dark field microscopes of gross magnification. In the department's search laboratories we often have transmitted infection from monkey to monkey. How it is transmitted from man to man still is in doubt, although much evidence has accumulated which would point the finger of suspicion toward biting insects."

"It is well to disinfect all dwellings at the conclusion of the disease with both formaldehyde, gas and sulphur sulphur to insure destruction of life; and, if stabiles are near, to have them disinfected thoroughly and put in sanitary condition. Damp houses should be dried out thoroughly by heat."

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