

THE ARNCLIFFE PUZZLE,

BY GORDON HOLMES

Author of "A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE."

(Continued.)

"Well that would be less cowardly than marrying Miss Holt, just for the sake of her money," retorted May, softening a little, nevertheless, at the horrid picture of her lover stretched stark with a bullet in his back. "But why need you marry Miss Holt, even if you are in difficulties? I am sure, with a languishing look, 'I would be willing to share a crust with you.'"

Warren's ideas on diet inclined toward the staid old rather than the dinner of herbs, and he received this last suggestion without any marked enthusiasm. "You don't understand, dear," he said. "It is not that I have any idea of actually marrying Miss Holt. But, if it could be announced that I was engaged to her, I might secure time to find some way out of my troubles, and then it would be easy enough to break the whole thing off. You surely don't think I would give up my little reason for all the Edith Holts in the world?"

The little reason did not seem to be entirely convinced, though she was half ready to be befogged again. "I don't care what reports you spread, provided they are really necessary to get you out of your difficulties. But, mark my words, Harry, if you don't act honorably by me, you will live to repent it."

Despite repeated rebuffs, Warren even yet regarded marriage with Edith as a matter which required only a little skillful engineering for its accomplishment. The various village beauties had succumbed so easily to his fascinations, he could not prove the possibility that he should go through anything but irresistible to Edith. He was incapable of appreciating the refinement of a well-bred woman, and he attributed Edith's coolness partly to maiden timidity, but in the main to pique on account of his various flirtations; for they had been good friends in the past, and he failed to realize how utterly he had disgusted her of late. So he gave May Manning's arm a squeeze, telling himself the while that let him once come to an understanding with the heiress, all his rustic flames, May included, might go long.

"Oh, Harry, don't," whispered the girl coaxingly, "why don't you give up that horrid betting? I am sure it is the cause of all your troubles."

"What do you mean?" he demanded imperatively. His tone was so harsh that May drew back in alarm. She had introduced another specter, and a more affrighting one than liquor.

"Why," she faltered, "Wilson said that Higgins the bookmaker—"

Warren turned upon her with a burst of uncontrollable fury. He could be brave with a woman, and had regained much of his wonted truculence since Angier's recovery became assured.

"So you have been discussing me with your friend the groom, have you?" he shouted, "plotting to ruin me!" He poured forth a volley of abuse. His intent was now so clear that the girl shrank away agast, with her hands in her ears.

"Oh, Harry!" she gasped, "oh, Harry!"

"Now, listen to me, my fine lady," he went on, his voice taking a feminine note of sheer passion. "I have told you that unless I make up to Edith Holt I am ruined, and—"

The girl laid her hand over his mouth and dragged him quickly into the shadows. Not far away, on the side of the road, the red glow of a cigar shone out from the dusk, wavering with each forward movement of the smoker.

Warren stepped back still farther into the shrubbery. He gripped his companion's arm to enjoin silence, silently revelling the sudden passion which had betrayed him into the indiscretion of raising his voice.

They waited, and the glow of the cigar grew gradually brighter and brighter, until it passed them and disappeared. Warren breathed a sigh of relief. It must have been a long way off, after all, judging by the time it took to reach them. He could not be certain as to who had passed. The figure was too slight for that of Lester, but it might have been Lord Arncliffe's American nephew—the latter, most likely, judging by the aroma the cigar left behind it. Anyway, the man was evidently too distant to distinguish the words, and, thus reassured, Warren softened his tone toward the trembling girl. Presently, with a few honeyed falsehoods, he bade her farewell.

Alas! he foolishly believed to be more important but knew that he was sending Edith had offered a reward of five hundred pounds for the discovery of Angier's assailant, and Leigh the poacher, as a natural sequence, had respectfully requested the loan of a few wounds. Warren knew well enough that the man being blackmailed, that he might be executed at any moment. But there was always the hope of staying things off until he raised a sufficient sum to tempt Leigh's cupidity. Once in possession of the books which alone could convict him, he was safe.

Meanwhile, the American, for Warren was right in his final surmise as to the identity of the person who came unheeded and so inopportunely, walked on with the calmness of one engaged in the peaceful contemplation of nature.

But Warren was mistaken in supposing Bradshaw to be too far away to overhear his conversation. When a man shouts in a rage, it naturally excites attention, and when Bradshaw heard some one exclaim that "nothing save a marriage with Edith Holt can save me from ruin," he began to take an interest in the proceedings.

He recognized Warren's voice instantly. The words were startling enough to one who was bound up in the strange events at Arncliffe. It was no part of his mission to let the agent know that he had betrayed himself. And so, when the sudden flash of the strenuous times showed that his approach had been detected, the American promptly marked time in military fashion, making it appear that he had been far more distant than he was in reality.

"So," he mused, "that curly skunk Warren is likely to be ruined if he doesn't marry Miss Holt? Well, as I don't think he will marry Miss Holt, I will bet dollars to cents he is ruined all right."

CHAPTER XII.

HOBSON BECOMES VERY ANGRY.

George Lester sat at his bedroom window, smoking a peaceful pipe and idly watching the life of the village. He looked out on a scene with hundreds of duplicates in England: A patch of green whereon a few urchins, their coats set up for wickets, were playing the national game and playing it rather well; the quaint inn, given a fictitious importance by its detached sign-post and wide carriage way, relics of the old posting days; three or four tiny shops, whose owners, judged by the dressing of the latticed windows, derived their support solely from the sale of balls of string and those delectable confections known as bull-eyes, of glorious memory; for the rest, a double row of cottages; with

here and there women knitting and gossiping at their doors; and, a little in the distance, an old-fashioned house of worship, whose churchyard, with its time-scathed headstones, gave a soothing touch of solemn dignity to the scene.

One of the string and sweet-stuff emporia stood out more prominently than the rest. It was the post-office, and its front was resplendent with the glory of a red-painted letter-box. This shop was a little to the left of the "Fisherman's Rest," and on the opposite side from Lester's room the obtained an oblique view of it when his glance wandered in that direction.

To a man whose recollections of swamp and jungle were yet vivid, the rustic picture was delightful. The peaceful atmosphere harmonized with his thoughts, which were of the character associated with spring time and youthful fancy. Your true lover is generally said to suffer from extreme despondency, but Lester by no means despaired of ultimate success. Edith's manner showed that at least she regarded him as a trusted friend, despite their brief acquaintance; and Lester, in his indomitable will, made up his mind to win.

His thoughts wandered back to that first meeting on the banks of the trout-stream, and in imagination he saw Edith as she had appeared on that day, her cheeks flushed with health, and in her blue eyes the brightness of innocent joy in the sunshine and flowers and all the beautiful world.

Poor girl! What a difference a few short weeks had made! The delicate bloom had fled from cheeks now wan and sunken. The tender mouth had taken a nervous downward curve. Eyes made for happiness had now an expression of entreaty, of unconscious reproach, though they never faltered in their steadfast purity. Yet those things which were sapping her of happiness and health—the veiled sneers of so-called friends, the open insolence of those acquaintances who cut her dead in the village—were precisely the things from which no one could protect her. If she would only give him the right, Lester told himself now, he would so fence her round with love that never a spiteful glance or envenomed shaft of slander should reach her.

He roused himself from his reverie and looked out on the village green again. Presently, his eyes turned toward the post-office. There was nobody about. The cricket players had gone home, the knitters were vanished, for it was tea-time in the village, so, when a solitary figure approached, Lester looked at it with eyes of recognition. It was Detective Inspector Hobson, and he had letters to send, for he made straight toward the letter-box. His movements, however, did not support this reasonable inference. He threw a quick glance round him, and then bent close to the box as though to read the printed regulations thereon. He took something from his vest pocket and fumbled at the slot with both hands, developing at the same time a remarkable interest in the string and bull-eyes of the window.

It was all done in a moment, and then Hobson walked over to the inn; but from Lester's position it appeared that the detective had adjusted something. Certainly he had posted no letter.

"I think," murmured Lester to himself, "that there is a situation worth watching." Drawing back a little behind a curtain, he settled himself patiently to await developments.

Nothing happened for some considerable time. The good people of Arncliffe were not given much to letter-writing, since about ninety-five per cent. of the adult population understood spades and dolly-sticks better than pens. Lester, however, had learned patience in a good school. He had interviewed African chiefs who made it a rigid point of etiquette to sit in dignified silence for at least half an hour before discussing any business, however important. He had dealt with native bearers who procrastinated with a fervor almost religious. And he had waited hours in a malarious jungle for a specimen or a photograph, rarely missing his aim in the end, whether the shot was with rifle or with camera. One thing which determined him to see the thing through was that Hobson had not quitted the inn. Evidently he, too, was awaiting developments, and Lester did not like Hobson.

Ten minutes more, and Lester saw Edith approaching. For an instant he forgot all about Hobson and the letter-box. He had a wild idea of intercepting her and meeting her accidentally. And of course he could offer his escort back to the Hall, and—

Edith stopped at the post-office and dropped something into the box. Lester pulled himself together with a jerk. He had never thought of Hobson's curious trap being possibly directed against Edith. Now the situation took a new significance; and the delightful possibility of a stroll with the lady of his heart was relinquished at once. Edith, her correspondence posted, retraced her steps, stopping a moment to speak to a pretty, curly-headed maid at one of the cottage gates. Then the mother, a bloated stammer, came out, and Lester, in a white heat of fury, saw her snatch the child away.

The stammer girl accompanying the action was insubstantial, but Edith's shrinking, as though from a blow, the haughty poise of her head as she walked on, told the whole story. That a villager should dare to be rude to the woman who owned the manor of Arncliffe was an amazing thing. What deadly venom was it that some one was instilling into the public mind? And what object was served thereby?

This incident did not tend to improve matters for Hobson. Lester was already burning to avenge Edith's wrongs, and it boded ill for anyone who might offer the least whipping-block.

In the management of his own business, the detective acted judiciously. He allowed another ten minutes to elapse before sauntering over to the post-office with an ostentatious letter in his hand. This he dropped into the box, and then again developed that remarkable interest in the commonplace contents of the shop window.

But Lester saw his hands busy near the slot again. Here, then, was the opportunity. He had already suspected that the young doctor was in love with Miss Holt, and a touch of jealousy might transform the implausible enemy into a useful ally. Hobson was an astute judge of every human nature, but he fell into the error of deeming all men base.

"Likely enough," he went on, assuming a tone of paternal benevolence, "the young lady has fallen into the hands of some scamp. It will be doing her a kindness to find out who he is and put a stop to his doings. To tell you the truth, sir, I have a particular reason for believing that letter to be important. Now, if we just have a peep at it—"

(To be continued.)

Travellers Guide

TRAINS DEPART FROM ST. JOHN.

6.00 a. m.—Express for Pt. du Chene, Halifax, Sydney, etc.
6.25 a. m.—Express for Boston, Fredericton, Quebec, etc.
7.45 a. m.—Mixed for Moncton, etc.
8.25 a. m.—Express for Pt. du Chene, Halifax, Quebec, Moncton, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
11.00 a. m.—Express for Pt. du Chene, Halifax, Quebec, Moncton, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
11.45 a. m.—Express for Pt. du Chene, Halifax, Quebec, Moncton, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
1.10 p. m.—Suburban for Weyford, etc.
1.15 p. m.—Suburban for Hampton, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
5.05 p. m.—Suburban for Weyford, etc.
5.15 p. m.—Express for Boston, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
5.40 p. m.—Express for Montreal and coast. Fredericton and St. Andrews.
5.55 p. m.—Express for Boston, etc.
6.15 p. m.—Express for Fredericton, etc.
7.00 p. m.—Suburban for Hampton, etc.
10.30 p. m.—Suburban for Weyford, etc.
11.25 p. m.—Express for Moncton, Halifax and Sydney.

TRAINS ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN.

6.25 a. m.—Express from Sydney and Halifax, etc.
7.45 a. m.—Suburban from Hampton, etc.
7.50 a. m.—Suburban from Weyford, etc.
8.55 a. m.—Express from Fredericton, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
10.40 a. m.—Express from Boston, etc.
11.20 a. m.—Express from Montreal, Fredericton, etc.
12.10 p. m.—Suburban from Weyford, etc.
12.50 p. m.—Express from Montreal, Quebec, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
3.30 p. m.—Suburban from Hampton, etc.
3.35 p. m.—Suburban from Weyford, etc.
4.30 p. m.—Mixed from Moncton, etc.
5.05 p. m.—Express from Boston, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
5.15 p. m.—Express from Halifax, Moncton, etc. (Connections with Ocean Limited).
9.30 p. m.—Express from Moncton, etc.
10.10 p. m.—Express from Weyford, etc.
11.00 p. m.—Express from Boston, etc.
1.40 a. m.—(Sunday only) Express Sydney and Halifax.

RIVER STEAMERS.

DEPARTURES.

8.00 a. m.—May Queen leaves Indiantown for Chipman, Gagetown, and Grand Lake Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.
8.30 a. m.—Victoria or Majestic, for Fredericton and intermediate landings, daily, Sunday excepted.
9.00 a. m.—Hampton, for Hampton, Clifton, Kennebec, etc., Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
10.00 a. m.—Crystal Steam, for Cole's Island, the Narrows and landings on the Washademoak, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
12 noon—Champion, for the Belisle.
3.00 p. m.—Hampton, for Hampton, Mondays and Saturdays.

ARRIVALS.

5.00 p. m.—Elsine, for Queensdown and intermediate landings, Saturday 5.00 p. m. for Gagetown.
5.30 p. m.—Majestic, for Hampton and intermediate landings, on Saturdays.
8.00 a. m.—Majestic, from Hampton every Monday.
8.00 a. m.—Hampton, from Hampton daily.
10.00 a. m.—Elsine, from Weyford daily.
1.30 p. m.—Crystal Steam, from the Washademoak, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
12.30 p. m.—Champion, from Belisle, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
3.30 p. m.—Victoria or Majestic, from Fredericton daily.
4.00 p. m.—May Queen, from Chipman and Grand Lake, Mondays and Thursdays.

FERRY STEAMERS.

Ferry steamers cross the harbor from the foot of Prince street, east side, to Robb's wharf, west side, every 20 minutes, commencing at 6 a. m., the last boat leaving the east side at 11.30 p. m. On Sundays the first trip is from the west side at 8 a. m., and the last trip from the east side at 11.10 p. m. On Saturday evenings only, boat leaves west side at 11.45 and St. John at 12. The E. Ross, from Indiantown to Milford makes three trips an hour, daily (Sunday excepted), from 6.15 a. m. till 10 p. m. and Saturdays till 10.40 p. m. On Sunday from 8 a. m. till 9 p. m.

The Maggie Miller between Millville, Summerville, Kennebecasis Island and Baywater:

Leaves Baywater at 6.00, 7.30 and 10.30 a. m., and 2.45 and 5.15 p. m.
Leaves Summerville at 6.50, 7.30, 7.45, and 10.45 a. m., and 4.00, 6.00 and 8.00 p. m.
Leaves Millville at 6.15 and 9.30 a. m. and 2.00, 4.00 and 7.00 p. m.
Boat will leave Millville every Monday morning at 6.00 o'clock.

SATURDAY.

Leaves Baywater at 6.30, 7.00 and 10.30 a. m., and 2.45, 5.45, and 7.45 p. m.
Leaves Summerville at 6.50, 7.30, 7.45, and 10.45 a. m., and 4.00, 6.00 and 8.00 p. m.
Leaves Millville at 6.15 and 9.30 a. m. and 2.00, 4.00 and 7.00 p. m.

SUNDAY.

Leaves Millville at 9.00 and 10.30 a. m. and 2.30 and 6.15 p. m.
Leaves Baywater at 9.45 and 11.15 a. m. and 6.00 and 7.00 p. m.
Leaves Summerville at 10.00 and 11.30 a. m. and 6.30 and 7.30 p. m.

Commencing July 1, steamers leave St. John at 6 a. m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for Lunenburg, Portland and Boston. For Boston direct on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 6.30 p. m.
Returning from Boston via Portland, Passport and Lunenburg, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 9 a. m. From Boston direct Mondays and Saturdays at 12 noon.

Steamer Prince Rupert for Digby leaves her wharf daily at 7.45 a. m., connections for Halifax and Yarmouth returning arrives about 4.30 p. m.

Steamer Sancho sails Thursday evenings at 6 o'clock from Red's Point wharf, for Yarmouth, Barrington, Salsburgh, Rockport, Liverpool, Lunenburg and Halifax. She arrives in St. John Wednesday evenings at 6 o'clock.

Steamer Westport III. leaves Knox's wharf every Friday at 12 noon for Westport, Yarmouth, Yarmouth, etc. She arrives in St. John Thursdays.

Steamer Aurora, for Grand Manan, Campbellton, Westport, etc., leaves Tuesdays at 10 a. m. and arrives Mondays at 2.30 p. m. at Morris's wharf.

Steamer Granville, for Lower Grandville, Annapolis, etc., leaves Tuesdays at 12 noon and arrives Mondays at 1 C. R. pier.

Steamer Brunswick, for Spencer's Island, Canning, Wolfville, etc., leaves Tuesday evenings and arrives Mondays at Thorne's Wharf.

Steamer Beaver, for Harvey, Albert, Hillsboro, etc., leaves Thursdays and arrives Wednesdays at Thorne's wharf.

"Do you think I look well in this dress?" she asked. "Um," her husband replied, "who made it?" "I did, but I'm afraid—" "My dear, I never saw you have a more becoming gown than that one is. By Jove! you look so slim and graceful and young that I can hardly realize that we've been married seven years." "Oh, Alfred, do you really mean that? I believe I'll always make my clothes after this." As soon as he could decently get away Alfred went out and treated himself to several of the best cigars he could find.—Chicago Record Herald.

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