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Post-Office Bulletin.

Mails Close.

6 00 a m; D & C R R for Points North.
8 10 a m; Q A R R for Points West.
9.45 a m; Q A R R for Points East.
11:45 a m; Steamer for River Points.
1:00 p m; Stage for Preston.
1:00 p m. D & C R R for Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R for Points West.
6:20 p m. Q A R R for Points East.

Mails Arrive.

8:25 a m; Q A R R, from Points East.
10:10 a m; Q A R R, from Points West.
11:00 a m; Stage, from Preston.
11:30 a m; Steamer, from River Points.
11:45 m; D & C R R, from Points North.
3:35 p m; Q A R R, from Points East.
3:34 p m; Q A R R, from Points West.
7:45 p m; D & C R R, from Points North.

GENERAL DIRECTORY.

County Officials.

Judges of the Circuit Court—James A. Pearce, Chief Judge; Edwin H Brown and William R Martin, Associates Terms—jury, 1st Monday in April and October; non-jury, 2d Monday in January, 4th Monday in June.

Clerk of the Circuit Court—Charles W. Hobbs.

County Commissioners—James B. Wright, President; Wesley Jarrell and Daniel J. Zacharias.

Treasurer and Clerk to the Commissioners Charles H. Whitby.

Judges of the Orphans' Court—John A. Sigler, Chief Judge; Thomas L. Day and Jesse T. Dennis Associates.

Register of Wills, Robert J. Jump.

School Commissioners—Thomas W. Jones, President; Henry C. Fisher and Albert W. Sisk.

School Examiner and Secretary—W. S. Crouse.

State's Attorney—Albert G. Towers.

Sheriff—Isaac L. Dukes.

Professional and Business Cards.

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A Knave of Conscience

By FRANCIS LYNDE.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Griswold, a young man of New Orleans, with rank socialistic tendencies, has written a book on the subject and after many weeks of fruitless search for a publisher, has about given up. Downcast and hungry, he meets an old friend, Bainbridge, who offers him a loan. Griswold refuses it, although he frankly says he will turn to stealing if nothing turns up soon.

CHAPTER II.—Bainbridge tells Griffin, a detective and an old friend, the story of Griswold's life, theories and hard luck.

CHAPTER III.—Two days later Griswold boldly forces the president of the Bayou state bank to give him $100,000 upon pain of death.

CHAPTER IV.—He safely leaves the bank, disguises himself as a sailor and eludes capture.

CHAPTER V.—He decides to go to some small town to work among the people and pursue his sociological studies. He goes to the levee and changes places with a laborer on a boat about to leave on a trip up the river. Just as they are about to start, Miss Charlotte Farnham, of Wahaska, Minn., boards the boat. Griswold recognizes her as a young lady who was in the bank when he committed the robbery. Her beauty and evident strength of character greatly impress him and he decides to see and learn more of her by going to her home town.

CHAPTER VI.—Charlotte reads of the bank robbery and recognizes Griswold as the robber. She decides to write to the bank president, telling him of her discovery.

CHAPTER VII.—Griswold fears that he has been recognized and decides to leave the boat.

CHAPTER VIII.—Charlotte cannot bring herself to send the letter telling of her discovery, as she has become interested in Griswold.

CHAPTER IX.—Her conscience greatly troubles her and she is just about to mail the letter when a heroic deed of Griswold's stops her.

CHAPTER X.—Next day they accidentally meet. She tells him of her intentions and he says he does not believe he did wrong. He silently hopes she will inform the authorities to uphold his high opinion of her. She does so and sees him taken away by the police at St. Louis.

CHAPTER XI.—With the assistance of a little of his money he makes his escape.

CHAPTER XII.—He again disguises himself and goes to a hotel.

CHAPTER XIII.—He arranges to go to Wahaska, resume his proper name and settle down. He intends to meet Miss Farnham, with whom he has fallen in love, and prove his theories to her.

CHAPTER XIV.—Margery Grierson, a young and pretty miss, is leader of one faction of Wahaska society. Her father is one of the town's leading citizens. The Raymers and the Farnhams belong to the older and more exclusive set, and Margery is intent on making them recognize her leadership. Griswold becomes seriously sick immediately upon his arrival at Wahaska.

CHAPTER XV.

When Margery entered her father's private office after her small triumph at Raymer's expense, her plan of campaign had taken a more definite shape. The president was busy at his desk, but he turned to say: "Want to see me, Maggie?" And when she nodded, he reached for his check-book.

"No, it isn't money this time. Has Mr. Raymer an account with you?"

"Yes."

"Is it an accommodation to you?" Grierson's laugh was of contempt.

"Hardly. The shoe's on the other foot."

"You mean that he has borrowed from you?"

"Not yet, but he wants to."

"What for?"

"To enlarge his plant. He's like all the other fools; ain't content to grow with his capital."

"Are you going to stake him?" Margery waged relentless war with her inclination to lapse into the speech of the mining camps, but she still stumbled now and then.

"I guess not; I've never had much use for him."

"Why haven't you?"

"Oh, I don't know; it's a stand-off. He hasn't much use for me. I offered to incorporate his outfit for him six months ago, and told him I'd take 51 per cent. of the stock myself; but he wouldn't talk about it."

Margery's laugh might have meant anything from applause to derision.

"How singular! But now he is willing to let you help him?"

"Not that way. He wants to borrow money of the bank and give a mortgage on the plant. It's safe enough, but I don't believe I'll do it."

"But I want you to do it."

"BUT I WANT YOU TO DO IT."

"The dickens you do! Say, little girl, do you know you're carrying things with a pretty high hand?"

"I haven't made you lose any money yet, have I?"

"No, I guess not."

"Well, I'm not going to begin now. Lend him what he wants; you say the security is good."

"I'll be hanged if I can see what you're driving at."

"You don't have to see," she said, imperturbably. "But I don't mind telling you. His mother and sister have gone out of their way to put me down."

Grierson's laugh was a guffaw.

"That won't work a little bit, Maggie."

"Why won't it?"

"Because he ain't the man to go to his women when he gets into trouble. They'll go on bluffing you just the same."

She looked at him through narrowing eyelids. "You know a good deal, poppa mine, but you don't know everything. Mr. Raymer's interest in the iron works is only one-fourth. The other three-fourths belong to Mrs. Raymer and Gertrude."

The magnate nodded intelligence, and made a memorandum. "I savez; I'll break the syndicate for you."

"You will do nothing of the kind. You'll let Mr. Raymer get into deep water, and then, when I say the word, you'll pull him out."

"The mischief I will! Do you know how much he wants to borrow?"

"No, and I don't care. The more the better."

Jasper Grierson thought about it for a moment. Then he made a check-mark against the memorandum on the calendar pad.

"All right; go ahead, but you'll have to keep tab yourself, and say when. I can't be bothered keeping the run of your society tea parties."

"I don't want you to. Don't be late to dinner to-night. The Rodneys are coming."

When she was gone Jasper Grierson tilted back in the pivot-chair and lighted a cigar. After a bit his reflections found voice.

"By jing! I believe she thought she was fooling me! But it's too thin. I suppose she does want to make the women kowtow, but that isn't all there is to it, by a jugful. All the same, I'll back her to win."

Accordingly, when Mr. Edward Raymer came out of the banker's office the next morning he was treading upon air, and in his mind's eye there was a picture of a great industry to be builded upon the extension of credit promised by Jasper Grierson.

CHAPTER XVI.

Griswold had landed in Wahaska on the day following his flight from St. Louis, too ill to care much about anything. But he was sane enough to find a bank, to rent a safety deposit box and to lock the treasure into it before he resigned himself to the inevitable, allowing himself to be put to bed in his room at the St. James, with hot water bottles at his feet and a bag of chopped ice on his head.

For a fortnight he hung tremulous on the verge of collapse, and was kept from tumbling in only by a just horror of being seriously ill in a hotel. At the end of the fortnight he made shift to go out and find a boarding place; and the effort, coupled with the conviction that he might safely trust himself in the hands of motherly Mrs. Holcomb, pushed him over the verge.

Here Dr. Farnham found him tossing in delirium, and his verdict was promptly pronounced.

"Typhoid-malaria, Mrs. Holcomb; and a relapse, at that. What are you going to do with him?"

"What should I do but take care of him?" said the motherly one.

"You can't do it alone; it's no woman's job."

"Then we must get a man. There's Sven Oleson; he's out of work."

The doctor smiled. "Nobody but you would ever think of making a nurse out of that great, overgrown child. But maybe he'll do. I'll hunt him up and send him over. Where did you say this young man hails from?"

"New York, he says."

"Humph! that's odd. I should say he has been soaking himself full of malaria in the Yazoo swamps. But how about the expenses? Has he any money?"

"Plenty, I think. He paid a month in advance, and when he went to bed he told me where to find his pocket-book."

"Poor fellow! I guess he was glad enough to find somebody he could trust. Well, we'll do what we can for him, and I'll send Sven."

So it came about that the mild-eyed Swede was installed as Griswold's nurse. Luckily Oleson understood but little English, and the sick man's ravings about the bank robbery meant nothing to him; but Dr. Farnham heard them and wondered. Curiously enough a small thing satisfied the wonder, and that was the mention made by Mrs. Holcomb of his patient's calling.

"H—m; an author, is he? That accounts for his harping so continually upon that bank robbery story. It's a part of his plot."

It was the first of May when Griswold took possession of Mrs. Holcomb's spare bedroom; and it was a full month later when Dr. Farnham pronounced him out of danger and in a fair way to recover if he took care of himself.

During the weeks of convalescence he met many of Mrs. Holcomb's friends and neighbors, and among them the Raymers. The mother and daughter came with dainties for the widow's invalid; and later on they brought Edward, who was bookish enough in his leisure moments to be interested in one who was even a potential writer of books.

That acquaintance ripened into friendship, and Griswold's first outing was a ride in Raymer's buggy to the iron works.

Here the two young men met upon new common ground. Raymer was, or he meant to be, a model employer; and when he found that the convalescent was an enthusiastic student of the vexed problem of master and man, he unbosomed himself freely.

"I've been enlarging, as you see," he explained. "But when I get on my feet and out of debt I'm going to try a plan my father had in mind—profit-sharing with the men."

"Good," said Griswold. "I wish I might be in it with you. I'd like to flail that out with you when I'm fit."

"So you shall, but not yet." They were on the way back to Mrs. Holcomb's, and Raymer asked if the drive had tired him.

"No indeed; I feel better for it."

"Are you equal to an evening out?"

"I guess so, if it's sufficiently mild."

"It'll be mild enough. You know we have a magnate here, Mr. Jasper Grierson?"

"Yes, I've heard of him."

"Well, he has a daughter, and this is her 'evening.' I'm commanded to produce you as soon as you're able."

"I'll go, though I shan't know anyone but your mother and Miss Gertrude."

Raymer laughed, and then blushed. "They won't be there. That is—Oh pshaw! I suppose I may as well tell you first as last. There are two social cliques here, a big one and a little one. Miss Grierson is la dame d'honneur of the first, and my mother and Gertrude affiliate with the other."

"I see," said Griswold. "And you hold an even balance between the two."

"N-o—not exactly. But I'm under obligations to Grierson, and can't afford to be offish. But Miss Margery is a very clever little person, and well worth knowing on her own account. I'll call by for you with the buggy at nine."

"Thank you," said the convalescent; adding, as if it were an afterthought: "Will Miss Farnham be there?"

"Hardly," rejoined Raymer, gathering up the reins. "She is with the minority, too. Queer little world, isn't it? So long, till this evening. Better go in and lie down awhile."

CHAPTER XVII.

On the way to Miss Grierson's "evening" Griswold amused himself by speculating upon the probable barbarism of a country reception. Without suspecting it, he was insular to a degree little short of Britannic; but he meant to be very good-natured and charitable, and to do what one man might toward ameliorating the barbarism.

Wherefore he was properly humiliated when they were met at the door of the Grierson mansion by trained servants and announced in the drawing-room with such pomp and circumstance as was neither countrified nor barbaric. In good truth the revulsion was so great that it was he and not Miss Grierson who was embarrassed when Raymer introduced him.

"How good of you to come to us on your first day out, Mr. Griswold. Let me make you comfortable." She piled the cushions in a corner of the wide divan and made him sit down. "You are just to be an invalid this evening, you know. I'm not going to let anyone bore you.

Griswold gasped once or twice, and grappled manfully with the facts. A young girl was at the piano; there was a pleasant hum of conversation; everybody, himself excepted, seemed quite at ease; the lights were not glaring; the furnishings were not in bad taste; in a word, the keynote was altogether well-mannered and urban and conventional.

And his hostess. Griswold had met beautiful women, but none to compare with her. She shone upon and dazzled him. The charm was purely sensuous, and he knew it, but he basked in it like a lizard in the sun. But he was forgetting to thank her.

"Forgive me, Miss Grierson; I'm not usually tongue-tied. But it is all so charmingly homelike; so vastly—"

She supplied the word with a silvery little laugh.

"Different. I know. You thought we were barbarians, and so we used to be. But we're improving. I wish you could have known the old Wahaska."

"I can imagine it," he said.

"I wonder if you can. They used to sit around the edges of the room and behave themselves just as hard as they could, and bore each other to death."

"It's a miracle," he said, giving her full credit. "I'd like to know how you did it."

She laughed lightly and did not deny her handiwork. "It was simple enough. When we came here I found a lot of good people who had fallen into a way of boring one another, and a few who hadn't; but these last held aloof. We opened our house to the many and tried to show them that a church sociable wasn't exactly the acme of social enjoyment."

Griswold saw in his mind's eye a sharply etched picture of the rise of a village magnate. Verily, Miss Grierson had imagination.

"It is all very grateful and delightful to me," he said. "I have been out of the social running for a long time, but I must confess that I am shamelessly epicurean by nature, and only an ascetic of necessity."

"I know," she assented, with quick appreciation. "An author has to be both, hasn't he?—keen to enjoy and hardened to endure."

"I'm not an author," he corrected, with vanity struggling to muzzle the protest. "I have written but one book, and that has not yet seen the light."

"But it will," she asserted, confidently. "Tell me about it."

Now, Griswold was no babbler, but the charm of her personality was upon him, and before he knew what he was about he was telling her of the dead book, its purpose and its failure.

"But you are not going to give it up," she said, when he had made an end.

"No; it's my message, and I shall yet deliver it."

"Bravo! That is the spirit that wins always. And when you get blue and discouraged, you must come here and let me cheer you. Cheering people is my mission, if I have any."

Griswold's pale face flushed, and his finger-tips tingled again. "You are very kind; kind and charitable. I think sympathy has been an unknown quantity in my equation. May I really come to see you as a friend?"

"Haven't I said it?" she asked; and she might have emphasized it had not Raymer come to take Griswold home.

Raymer's sorrel had covered half the distance from the lake edge to Mrs. Holcomb's before its owner said:

"Well, how near do we come to aping the manners of the effete east?"

"I'm no authority," said Griswold; adding as a salve: "I enjoyed it."

"Then you weren't bored?"

"I fancy Miss Grierson doesn't often bore people, does she?"

"No; she has a knack of stroking you the right way. It takes her father to do the other thing."

"The magnate? I thought you said he was a public benefactor."

"Did I? We've told ourselves that till we've come to believe it. But he's principally for Jasper Grierson at bottom."

"Naturally. Greed is the Juggernaut of this end of the century."

"Bah! That's a sheer platitude in your mouth, Griswold. You don't know anything about it, you men of letters and leisure. It's simply a savage fight for survival, and the man with the money wins."

"Yes? I believe I've said some such thing myself. But I've been hoping you'd manage to escape."

"I might have escaped. I was doing well enough, but I couldn't stand it to see the town growing away from me. So I borrowed money and spread myself; and now

"YOU SHALL HAVE IT ALL."

I'm fighting for dear life with the rest of them."

Griswold's comment was brief and to the point. "Tell me about it," he said.

"It's a short horse and soon curried," said the iron master, bitterly. "Two months ago I borrowed $95,000 of Jasper Grierson's bank. I gave him a 60-day note and a mortgage, with the verbal understanding that I was to have my own time for payment. The 60 days will be up Tuesday, and he has notified me that I must lift a third of the indebtedness on that day."

"A third!"

"Yes. Of course it's preposterous. He knew all the circumstances at the time; that the loan was a building fund which couldn't bear fruit until it was planted."

Griswold shook his head. "You certainly took terrific chances."

"Didn't I? It proves what a man will do when he is greed-bitten. And the worst of it is that three-fourths of the original capital belong to my mother and sister, and they were both distrustful of the spread-eagle move with Grierson as a backer."

Griswold was silent while the sorrel was measuring a full square. Then he said: "What is Grierson's object?"

"I don't know. To break me or to own me, I suppose."

"There may be an alternative; what was it you told me this morning about the little social melee?"

Raymer pulled the sorrel up short.

"Heavens! you don't suppose she has put him up to it for that!"

"I suppose nothing that involves Miss Grierson. But isn't it possible that her father may be resentful for her? I believe if you could persuade your mother and Miss Gertrude to call—"

Raymer's laugh was not mirthful.

"You would be the last man in the world to act upon a suggestion of that sort yourself, Griswold."

"Oh, I don't know. If it is only a little social friction—"

"It's more than that; though why it should be I don't know. I believe my mother and Gerty would face beggary cheerfully before they would pay that price. Anyway, I shant' ask them."

"What will you do?"

"If I knew I shouldn't be unloading my grief on you."

They had reached Mrs. Holcomb's gate and Raymer cramped the buggy at the curb. But Griswold did not get out. Instead he put one hand on Raymer's knee and said: "Have you ever thought of taking a partner?"

Raymer's smile was a mere grimace.

"It begins to look as if I should have to take one that I don't want."

"It needn't come to that. I have some money which I want to invest where it will do the most good to the greatest number. You spoke this morning of some plans you had in view for the betterment of your workmen. If you will carry them out, and let me help, we can arrange a little surprise for Mr. Grierson."

Raymer was stupefied, as he had a good right to be. But he managed to ask how.

"In the simplest way imaginable. Come to me to-morrow morning and I will give you the money to take up your note and the mortgage."

"You? But, Griswold, man, you didn't understand me. It's ninety—five—thousand dollars!" He said it slowly, so that the misunderstanding might be removed.

Griswold climbed out of the buggy carefully, as befitted his weakness. But when he turned to say good night his grasp was the grasp of an athlete.

"I understand you perfectly, my dear fellow. You shall have it all, and a little more, if you need it. And when you're broken the Grierson grip we'll talk about the partnership. Good night."

CHAPTER XVIII.

After all, it was Raymer who was responsible for Griswold's introduction to Charlotte and her aunt. It was after the partnership—a silent partnership by Griswold's express condition—had been formed and Griswold had been taken into the Raymer household as well as into the Raymer firm.

It was thus that he found himself included in a family invitation to the doctor's, and it was thus that Raymer became his sponsor. Not that a sponsor was greatly needed. The good doctor had come to know and to love his some-time patient, and the invitation to Griswold in his proper person had not been lacking.

It was inevitable that he should meet Miss Farnham with some degree of restraint, and that the entire evening should scarcely suffice for its effacement. As a matter of fact it was not properly effaced until the time came for an adjournment to the broad veranda, and the darkness of the starlit night helped him. He fancied, and assured himself a hundred times that it was only fancy, that he could now and then surprise a vague question in the cool gray eyes; and with the eyes in abeyance he felt more at ease.

"You are new to our northern summers, aren't you, Mr. Griswold?" she asked, when they were comfortably established out of doors and the general talk had subsided sufficiently to admit of dialogue.

"Altogether new; and they are very delightful, if this is an earnest. What a charming prospect you have here with the lake for a vista. But for that matter, Wahaska is an ideal place."

Her laugh had not in it the tinkle of silver bells, like Miss Grierson's, but it was as honest as the gray eyes.

"Ideal?—after New York?"

"After any great city. I firmly believe the time will come when none but the sordid ones will live in the great centers."

"That would be ideal, surely. But I can't argue with you. I don't know any of the cities, to really know them. Passing through isn't even a speaking acquaintance."

"No; and yet they impress one even at sight."

"Yes. And after all, their units are the units of humanity, and humanity is the same. For instance, I imagine one could go over there and get a very good idea of the human side of New Orleans." She pointed to the summer resort hotel on the point beyond the Grierson mansion which had been opened within the week.

"I presume so," he assented; and then he asked if they ever met any of the summer people.

"Not intentionally," she laughed. "They bring their own social atmosphere with them and ask little of us. We did meet one young man last summer; a Mr. Lucius Bainbridge."

"Bainbridge?" echoed Griswold. "Why, I know—that is—er—I used to know some Bainbridges in New York."

"Did you? Mr. Lucius Bainbridge was from New York originally, I believe. He is a newspaper man in New Orleans."

Griswold was struck dumb with this fresh proof of the extreme narrowness of the world, and wondered what would happen if Bainbridge should perchance come again and find him in Wahaska. He changed the subject with a violent wrench, and said:

"The new opera house is to be opened next week. I wonder if the company will be worth going to see?"

"You surprise me," she said. "Haven't you heard that Mr. Grierson is to import it especially for this occasion?"

"I hadn't heard. Is your aunt able to go out in the evening?"

"Not to anything as prolonged as an opera sitting."

"Oh; I'm sorry." He turned to Mrs. Raymer. "Mrs. Raymer, could you be induced to chaperon a theater party next Monday evening?"

"You're too late," was the reply. "We are all going, and you are included."

Griswold turned quickly to Charlotte.

"May I call for you and your father?" She gave him permission, and after that the tete-a-tete passed to other things; to a gay party steaming past in a lighted launch, for one.

"Is that the hotel launch?" he asked.

"No, indeed; you are quite behind the times. That is Mr. Grierson's boat with a party from Mereside."

The Farnham lawn sloped quickly to the waterside, and the launch was steaming slowly along within a stone's throw of the group on the veranda. The little steamer carried its own dynamo, and was ablaze with electric lights. Griswold saw the party as it passed in review; saw Miss Grierson at the wheel in the bow, and saw the banker lounging in the stern sheets. With the exception of her father and one other Miss Grierson's guests were all young people; but Griswold caught his breath when he recognized the portly figure sitting erect beside the banker. Truly, he had seen the clean-shaven face with its long upper lip but once, but that once was enough. It was Mr. Andrew Galbraith.

CHAPTER XIX.

The robbery of the Bayou bank was already an old story when Detective Griffin returned to New Orleans from his voyage to Guatemala. He was a successful man in his calling, and he took up the case of the bank robbery at once; not only for the reward, but because he was willing to try if he could not send the shaft home after his St. Louis colleagues had sped their arrow and missed the mark.

He did not begin where the St. Louis officers had left off. He saw at once that the real identity of the robber had not been established by the anonymous letter describing one John Gavitt. He suspected that the name was a mere mask, and the proof of this was shortly clinched by evidence easily procured that the real John Gavitt had died in the little Iowa river town which was his home, a short fortnight after the date of the robbery.

Hence it followed that Gavitt had been impersonated in the Belle Julie's crew by the escaping culprit, and with President Galbraith's description of the man for a starting point, Griffin first searched the "Rogues' Gallery" for a face which might stand for the original. This search, though it was made as carefully as if he fully expected to find the man's portrait in the criminal records, was as barren of results as he expected it would be.

"It is just about as I put it up," he said, at the end of the photograph inspection. "The fellow isn't a professional at all; he is some hare-brained crank, and this is his first break."

This point established, there were two courses open; to try to trace the man in New Orleans, and so to determine his identity; or to take up the lost clew in St. Louis. Since it asked for less time, Griffin did the latter first, and succeeded in besting the St. Louis officers by one move. For them the fugitive had disappeared, handcuffed, in the runaway carriage; for Griffin he reappeared a little later at Mr. Abram Sonneschein's emporium, but was lost again when he left with his purchases.

Griffin went back to New Orleans, baffled but not discouraged. As before, the case turned upon the pivot of identity. When he should have learned the man's name and place in the world it would be an easy matter to track him down.

Accordingly he went to the bank and asked again for the anonymous letter.

"You have tried every means to place the writer of this, Mr. Galbraith?" he queried.

"Everything we could think of. It might be any one of the hundred transient customers we served that day."

"It is a woman," hazarded Griffin, at a venture.

"Doubtless."

"Was there a woman in the bank when you went with the fellow to cash the check?"

"There was. She was at the teller's window."

"Did you notice her particularly?"

"Not well enough to be able to describe her. I had other things to think of just then."

"Sure enough. What was she doing?"

"Getting a draft cashed, I presume."

"Where would that draft be now?"

"In the possession of the issuing bank, and probably cancelled long since. It couldn't be traced or identified. We've been over all that."

"Of course; but I was hoping we might stumble upon something that had been overlooked. May I use the 'phone?"

"Certainly."

Griffin shut himself into the 'phone-box and called up the wharf-master's office on the levee.

"Hello! Is this Robertson? Say, Dick, where is the Belle Julie now? Up-river, you say? All right; I am coming down to get you to wire Capt. Mayfield for me."

The "wire" sent a little later from the wharf-master's office asked for a list of the Belle Julie's lady passengers on that voyage which began on the day of the robbery. Griffin was not above swearing a little when the answer came. It was a string of twenty-odd names, and to have speech with these twenty-odd women meant weeks of continuous travel for the detective.

That being the next move in the game, however, he set about making it methodically, beginning with those most accessible, and working through the list from name to name; and at the end of weeks he had interviewed every woman on the list save two. These two lived in a small inland city in Minnesota, and when he turned his face northward to try the final cast of the die he was weary enough to be disheartened, if disheartenment had been admissible.

It was evening when he reached Wahaska, and since it was too late to do anything he promised himself that he would smoke but a single cigar and go to bed. But when the cigar was alight he left the hotel to smoke it in the open. There was an unusual stir in the streets, and a question asked of a chance passer-by evoked the reason. The new Grierson opera house was to be opened that night by a company imported from Chicago for the occasion, and everybody was going to the theater.

Griffin strolled listlessly with the crowd, and presently found himself in front of the new playhouse. It was early, but the "first-nighters" were already thronging the vestibule. He stood aside to look on, honestly wishing he could rid himself of the Bayou bank mystery long enough to go in and enjoy himself with the pleasurers.

Now it chanced that in stepping back out of the sidewalk throng he got in the way of the carriage contingent, and a moment later a voice at his elbow said:

"Excuse me; will you let the ladies alight?"

Griffin gave place, and saw a young man with a clean-cut, eager face hand two young women from the carriage. They were followed by an elderly gentleman with eye-glasses; and on the sidewalk the group fell into pairs. Griffin could not well help hearing the colloquy.

"I think the others will be here in a few minutes, doctor. Shall we wait and go in with them?"

Thus spoke the young man with the clean-cut face; and at the older man's negative he spoke again.

"Just as you please. If you will take Miss Raymer and let me take Miss Farnham, that will divide us equally. The seats are all near to gether, but I couldn't get them all in the same row."

Griffin stared hard at the speaker's companion as the parti carre moved away.

"So that is Miss Charlotte Farnham, and my last chance," he mused, turning back toward the hotel. "There is one grain of comfort in it for me; if her face doesn't belie her, she will tell me the truth. By Jove! but that young lawyer, or whatever he is, has an eye for good looks. I've never seen her equal in all my ups and downs, and that's saying a good deal."

So he went his way to the St. James and presently to bed, without so much as suspecting that he had actually touched elbows with the man whose identity he was vainly trying to establish.

CHAPTER XX.

It was the early morning of a flawless northern summer's day, and the lake sparkled like a sheet of hammered silver under the windows of the Farnham sitting-room. The shades had been drawn when Griffin entered, but he had taken the liberty to run them up before Miss Farnham came in. And since he was finding it necessary to read much between the lines of her guarded answers to his questions, he did not regret the precaution.

"You say he admitted his guilt to you, Miss Farnham, before the boat reached St. Louis?"

"Yes."

"May I ask how he came to do that?"

"I—must I answer that?" she faltered.

"I need hardly say there is no 'must' about it. I am an officer of the law, and I am anxious to find the man. I am sure you will tell me everything which might help me, and I don't ask to know more."

She considered it for a moment, and then took counsel of frankness.

"He admitted it because I asked him."

Griffin smiled, and then explained the smile.

"Pardon me," he said. "I was thinking that no one but a woman would ever have thought of doing such a thing as that. I fancy you surprised the admission out of him."

"No, I do not think I did. He admitted the fact very willingly, though he would not admit that it was wrong."

"Ah; that helps more than you might imagine. They have all been

"YOU HAVE HELPED MORE THAN YOU KNOW."

looking for a seasoned criminal, you know."

"He wasn't that," she said, with an air of conviction. "Apart from this one great wrong which he had done, he seemed to be a gentleman. It may seem incredible to you, but he fairly insisted upon my writing to Mr. Galbraith."

Griffin smiled again and nodded reassuringly. What she was telling him fitted in admirably with the only

(Continued on Fourth Page.)

Mother

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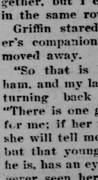

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