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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—Thomas L. Day.

County Commissioners—Wesley Jarrell, Pres.; James B. Wright, Franklin P. Medford.

Judges of the Orphans' Court—John F. Dawson, Chief Judge; J. Olan Clark, Wm. H. Deen, Associates.

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

School Examiner and Secretary—W. S. Crouse.

Register of Wills—Robert J. Jump.

States Attorney—T. Alan Goldsborough.

Sheriff—Wm T. Hignutt, of E.

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MYSTERY OF THE BAYOU WOODS

By WALKER KENNEDY.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Herbert Wright goes to chief of police of Nilus in great agitation and tells him of his discovery of the murdered body of his father, John T. Wright, a wealthy cotton king, from whom he has been estranged, in the Bayou Woods near the town. The chief questions Herbert, whose answers cause former to suspect him of the crime. The chief, with a reporter, Irving Warde, goes to scene of murder.

CHAPTER II.—They find body and examine surroundings but fail to discover any reliable clue.

CHAPTER III.—Warde examines mysterious footprints in the snow and tells Col. Franklin, an old acquaintance of the murdered man, of them. Herbert is arrested on suspicion of being implicated in the murder.

CHAPTER IV.—Col. Franklin is a brilliant lawyer, but says he is unable to solve the mystery.

CHAPTER V.—At coroner's inquest strong circumstantial evidence against Herbert Wright is submitted and the jury charges him with the murder.

CHAPTER VI.—Warde goes to Herbert's sister, Miriam, who believes him innocent, and tells her he will do all in his power to clear her brother. Col. Franklin says he thinks a strong case has been made against Herbert.

CHAPTER VII.—An attempt is made to poison Herbert in jail. Warde deduces that he has a shrewd person to contend with who is trying to prove the charge of murder against the dead man's son, in which he is evidently succeeding.

CHAPTER VIII.—Warde is lured to a questionable resort and an attempt made to murder him, but he is saved by Fenton, a detective.

CHAPTER IX.—When Mrs. Wright's lawyer, Mr. Everett, comes to settle up the dead man's estate it is learned that although he was known to have been a very wealthy man at one time little property or money can be found, and no satisfactory explanation of its disappearance can be discovered. Fenton is discharged for his activity in the case, showing unlimited influence behind the real murderer.

CHAPTER X.—Warde's interest in the case is not altogether for Herbert's sake, but because it gives him opportunities to see Miriam, and their acquaintance has gradually ripened into something stronger than friendship.

CHAPTER XI.—A rich stranger who calls himself Merivale, and a seemingly good friend of Col. Franklin, comes to Nilus. Warde obtains possession of a valuable paper which contains damaging evidence against the murderer.

CHAPTER XII.

Early the next morning when Warde went to his room the landlady informed him that Franklin and a companion had been there at three o'clock in the morning seeking him. He quieted her evident fears for his safety and then admired his sagacity in taking a room at the hotel that night.

Now he began to find the possession of that paper a nightmare. He knew that tremendous pressure and resources, which he could not anticipate, would be brought to bear to wrest it from him, and thus prevent its being used to save the Wright estate; for the perusal of the paper which Hillsman had handed him satisfied him that he held a safeguard against the plot that had been laid to steal a fortune. He began to have an inkling of the nature of the combination which had been formed, and he was much concerned lest the paper which was worth so much to the Wrights should be in some way filched from him. He felt that he was making this fight for Miriam, and he was doubly concerned over the result. He knew that the paper meant home and fortune to her; it meant also perhaps the happiness that had been so long denied her; and it would secure the triumph of justice over deliberate villainy.

Of course plans would be at once laid to recover the paper, and Irving divined the necessity of putting it immediately out of reach of the conspirators.

It was eight o'clock, and Mr. Everett was just sitting down to his breakfast.

Irving reached the house just at this time, and when he was announced the lawyer finished his meal in a hurry and at once led the way to the library. Here the story was soon told and the paper handed over to the lawyer, who locked it up in his safe.

"Now," said he, "I must leave for the courthouse, as I have a case at nine o'clock. Can you come here tonight?"

"Yes."

"Well, come about eight o'clock. And during the day avoid Hillsman if you can, and if you run across Franklin bluff him out. I don't want to see you about my office, either."

"Suppose they should ask me for that paper?"

"Why, remember that you were on a spree last night, and your recollection of anything that happened is very indistinct. You will not be much annoyed by Hillsman today, for it will take him some time to sleep off last night's experience. Be on your guard against Franklin, and do not give him any satisfaction."

As a matter of precaution the two men separated at the gate to prevent if possible anyone from knowing that they had met. Irving took a roundabout way, and as he passed a corner not far from Mr. Everett's residence he observed a man leaning idly against a lamp post. The man's appearance was strangely familiar, even though he wore a patch over his eye. Irving could not stop to dissect his make-up, and it was not until he had got three or four blocks away that his memory responded, bringing back that dreadful experience on the river, and he recalled the powerful physique and cat-like tread of Old Tom. As soon as he made that discovery he retraced his steps, but his antagonist of the river had gone.

At the office he found a note from Franklin requesting him to call upon him as soon as he received it. To this Irving at first concluded that he would pay no attention, but he thought better of it and went directly to Franklin. He found that gentleman engaged with Merivale at the time, but he was cordially invited in.

"What I wanted to see you about," said Franklin, "was a paper which that fool Hillsman stole from this office. Last night when I met you——"

"Met me?" said Irving, in blank amazement.

"Well, perhaps you don't remember it," said the colonel, smiling, "for I must confess you were very happy last night when I saw you. But, at any rate, I demanded the paper of Hillsman. He denied having it at first, but I think I scared him pretty badly, and after you had gone he said he had given it to you. Have you got the paper?"

"I have not. What was the nature of it?"

"It is of no importance, the nature of it. You have not seen the paper?"

"Possibly I have seen it, but as you have not told me what it is——"

"I thought at the time that fellow was lying, and that he thought of you as a shield for himself."

"Is this all you wanted to see me about?" said Irving, with apparent disappointment.

"Oh, by the way, you did not spend the night at your rooms?"

"No," said Irving, indifferently.

"How was that?"

"See here, colonel, doesn't it occur to you that you are taking a vast deal of interest in my affairs?"

"Well, you see, I like you, Warde."

"Thanks."

"And you might find it to your interest to know something about the paper."

"It is valuable, then?"

"Are you sure you don't know anything about the paper?"

"Bother the paper! Why, if I had it in my pocket now, do you suppose that I would give it to you without having a description of it?"

"I'm sorry that you can't help me about it, as it is of great importance to some friends of mine."

"By the way," said Irving, "is there any news in the Wright case?"

The colonel looked at him penetratingly for a moment and then replied: "Why do you ask? I am out of the case."

"I thought you took a deep interest in it on account of the family."

"I think I ought to ask you the news about it."

"It's a trifle stale, now, but I suppose the people will wake up when the trial begins. Have you any idea what the line of defense will be?"

"None whatever. In fact other business of a very important character has occupied all my attention of late."

During this conversation Merivale yawned repeatedly and looked immensely bored, as if he wished Warde would go and give him an opportunity to resume business with Franklin. He toyed with a newspaper for a while impatiently, and somehow Irving received the impression that this impatience was largely assumed for the occasion.

At last Warde left the two men alone. They looked at each other in silence. Then Merivale spoke with a sneering laugh: "That young man has outwitted you completely, Franklin. He has your paper put away safe; probably it is in Everett's possession. And there is another thing that is perfectly apparent—that young fellow was as sober last night as you are this minute. It is now ten o'clock. We know that he was in his room at eight, and at Everett's shortly after, and there is not the faintest sign of dissipation about him. I'm surprised that you have allowed yourself to be so easily deceived. Well, I have advanced considerable money to you to carry out this enterprise, and have asked no questions regarding the way it was expended; but I tell you now I must have some results."

"But we are on the very brink of success, and if you throw it up now you will lose everything. Nothing but a series of unfortunate events could have prevented the accomplishments of our designs. If you desert me now I am simply ruined."

"Well, I'll stick to you a few months longer, not because I care anything about you. I have no time for sympathy with individuals; besides it isn't business. I only care for the success of movements. If your scheme could be carried through it would save me several millions; that would be a clear pick-up. If you fail I shall try a scheme of my own. One thing is sure, Warde must be got away from here. I'll try and get him an opening in New York."

Late that afternoon Warde ran across Hillsman, who had just got up. The debauch of the night before had told plainly upon him, his flushed face and bloodshot eyes bearing conclusive evidence against him. He did not allude at all to the meeting of the previous evening, and it was evident that dissipation had drawn a veil over all that had happened and left in his mind merely a blank. Warde was considerably relieved on this score, for at present he did not care to complicate matters by having to consider Frank as an element in them.

At eight o'clock Warde and Mr. Everett were again closeted together, and the paper that had caused such a vast amount of trouble was taken from the safe and carefully read. It was dated 20 years before the time of this story. The handwriting was bold and plain. The following were the contents in full:

AGREEMENT BETWEEN JOHN T. WRIGHT AND JAMES FRANKLIN.

John T. Wright has this day made the following transfers of property with the subjoined understanding with James Franklin: The Wright homestead, 500 acres, all improvements. The Magnolia plantation, 2,000 acres, in —— parish, Louisiana. The Coahoma plantation, 8,-670 acres, in Mississippi. The Queen City plantation, 11,380 acres, in Arkansas. A lot on Maine and Boulevard in the city of Nilus, 50 by 150 feet. A lot on Linden street, near the Bayou, 100 by 200 feet. A lot on Front row, near Madison, 40 by 150 feet, with improvements. All to the Shelby Real Estate and Investment company. A tract of land in Young county, Texas, 6,567 acres, to the Shelby County Real Estate and Investment company. A tract of land in —— county, Colorado, 5,000 acres. To the Diamond Mining company of Denver, Col.

These transfers are made to protect the said John T. Wright from sundry suits at law, which threaten to grow out of the difficulty that terminated in the death of Jeremiah Baxter at the hands of the said Wright. Regretting as he does the necessity of taking human life, the said Wright is not willing that his estate shall be sacrificed and the welfare of his family jeopardied, and these transfers are made with the distinct understanding that whenever the said Wright desires to revest these various properties in his own name the said James Franklin will take steps to at once turn over all the papers with which he is intrusted, and that he will at once secure said Wright in the possession of his property. The consideration alleged in these various deeds was never paid over. James Franklin binds himself as a man of honor and a friend of John T. Wright to faithfully fulfill the terms of this agreement whenever the said Wright so desires.

JOHN T. WRIGHT.
JAMES FRANKLIN.

"That is certainly one of the most remarkable documents that it has ever been my fortune to consider," said the lawyer, his keen eyes snapping with relish for a novelty in legal literature. "Have you any idea what the paper is worth?"

"I should say two or three hundred thousand dollars," said Irving.

"It is nearer ten or twelve millions," declared the lawyer.

Irving's eyes betrayed a dazed surprise as he gaspingly repeated the words after Mr. Everett. The latter smiled and said: "I haven't the slightest doubt that Frederick Merivale would give at least $1,000,000 for the rights secured in the Wright estate by this paper."

"But—how can it be?" asked Irving in a whisper.

"Before I explain this part, let me tell you this; that the Shelby County Real Estate & Investment company and the Diamond Mining company of Colorado are virtually and practically James Franklin. These facts were discovered by Fenton, who at my suggestion has examined the records in the register's office, and learned the exact state of the case. It was easy sailing about the real estate company, but the facts concerning the mining company were harder to get at. It became necessary to have a thorough investigation, and with this end in view Fenton went to Colorado and there he soon learned that the local incorporators in the Diamond Mining company were dummies, and that James Franklin owned a large proportion of the stock. These two companies were evidently created by Wright and Franklin for the purpose of more thoroughly concealing the real nature of the transfers made. Fenton paid a visit to the Colorado tract of land, and it proved to be in the heart of a rich mining section. Originally Wright had bought it for a song and had looked upon it as a very indifferent speculation; but in 20 years great changes have been wrought, mines of vast richness have been worked, and now it turns out that the eyes of all the gold diggers in Colorado are turned greedily toward this tract of land situated among the hills. To the northeast of the tract a very successful mine has been conducted for a number of years. Recently the vein of ore became richer and richer until finally it ran dead against a tremendous wall of solid sandstone, which some upheaval of nature had thrust into the precious vein. For days and days the miners sought to discover the broken thread, but in vain, until an old fellow who owned a "dog" came along. The "dog" is some kind of mystic apparatus which will indicate the whereabouts of gold, just as the witch-hazel is said to point out a subterranean stream of water. Well, this old fellow climbed over the great wall of sandstone into a rocky reach of land; and as he was going about with his "dog" he soon discovered violent symptoms, as it were, of gold. The vein was continued with apparently double richness on the other side of the intervening sandstone. Fenton was fortunate enough to meet an old fellow out there who had gone west from this section of the country and who had bought that tract of land for Wright; and as soon as he learned of its possibilities he wrote to Wright telling him that he probably had a large fortune in it, if he had continued to hold it. Wright wrote back that the land was still his, and that the taxes had been paid upon it regularly. This letter has been secured. Of course the news of the discovery of this valuable vein on Wright's land created intense excitement, and Frederick Merivale, the largest stockholder in the adjacent mine, at once placed himself in correspondence with James Franklin.

continued on page four.

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The price of The New York Tribune-Farmer is $1.00 a year, and THE AMERICAN UNION is $1.00 a year, but both papers will be sent for a full year if you forward $1.25 to THE AMERICAN UNION, Denton, Md.

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Any subscriber to this newspaper may use five or six lines in this column without cost. Sign name or give P. O. box number, in all exchange propositions.

What have you to offer for a new Iver Johnson revolver 32 calibre, is a repeater, self-shell extractor, address, Box 102, Denton Md.

Would like to exchange a one horse wagon for a light covered hack; address, X. Y. Z., AMERICAN UNION office.

Autoharp to exchange. What have you to offer? Address 636 AMERICAN UNION office.

I have a single barrel breech loading Cresent shot gun. What do yo offer for it? Address, Box 102.

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Butter,	20c lb
Eggs,	16c
Live Chickens,	10c to 11c lb
White Potatoes,	40c bus
Onions,	65c bus
Cabbage,	2@5c head
Side Meat,	12c lb
Lard,	12c lb
Beeswax,	30c lb
White Beans,	$2.25 bu
Sweet Potatoes,	30 to 35c bus
Apples,	30 to 35c bus
Dried Apples,	6c lb
Turnips,	15 bus

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