Mystery of the Bayou Woods

By WALKER KENNEDY.

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to Franklin. He studied over it for a while. I could see that he rather enjoyed the idea. It would be a rare joke and a rare revenge, but I could see that he hesitated. Doubtless he was a little apprehensive as to what use I would make of his name; so I told him that he could write to Mr. Everett, and that gentleman would stand for my doing nothing that would bring discredit on his name. At last he consented, and at my suggestion he wrote a letter to Col. Franklin stating that he would be in Nilus in a short time. He then made arrangements to depart for San Francisco, where he had some interests demanding his attention. Before I left he placed in my possession all of Col. Franklin's letters to him, as well as copies of his letters to Franklin.

"In order to personate Merivale, a transformation was necessary. I had my hair cut as close as if it had been shaved, and I then purchased a blond wig, which I mutilated and trimmed so that when put on I appeared to be growing bald rapidly. Then I had my beard trimmed and parted, and in his shape I blondined it. With a red lye I brightened my cheeks, and with a pair of cloudy spectacles I dulled my eyes. And so, armed with Franklin's letters and Merivale's name, I came to Nilus as an eastern capitalist and took the best room in the best hotel. Before I relate what happened in Nilus, I will first read the letters that passed between Merivale and Franklin."

CHAPTER XVII.

From Merivale to Franklin:

"I have just learned from Mr. Moses Dennison that there is another claimant to the land about which we have been in correspondence. Of course I expect to have all titles thoroughly examined by my attorneys before I close any bargain with you. What does Dennison mean? What sort of interest has John T. Wright in the land? Answer at once."

To this Franklin replied:

"I cannot learn from Wright the grounds upon which he bases his claim to ownership, unless there is some flaw in the title of which he has taken advantage; or else some miscarriage in the payment of taxes resulting in a sale of the land, of which I know nothing. It is possible that Wright may have some lien upon the land. I will investigate, and if I find that it can be wiped out for a reasonable sum of money, would you be willing to supply the cash?"

To this Mr. Merivale wrote in reply:

"Of course I would. Wipe out the defect at once, whatever it is, no matter what it costs. I am willing to advance any sum necessary, with the understanding that it is to be repaid from the receipts of the mine. Write me at your earliest convenience the exact nature of the defects, and let me know the amount of money you need."

Frank in to Merivale:

"A good many years ago the Colorado tract was sold to a stock company in which I was the principal stockholder. As you know, the land had for a long time been considered practically worthless. I had almost entirely lost sight of it and long considered it a hopelessly wortbless investment. I put my shares of stock away and never looked at them carefully until a few months ago, when I discovered that a considerable proportion of them had been lost, or, as I now suspect, deliberately abstracted. Enough are missing to place me in a minority, and I suspect that Wright, or some one behind him, had engineered a scheme for the purpose of freezing me out; and I strongly suspect that the hand of some Colorado mining speculator is in it. If you will back me up I may be able to buy up some of the innocent stockholders and possibly—with what I already have—get a majority of the existing stock. If I only had the services of some good detectives and some money to collect evidence, I could easily defeat the damnable scheme which has been organized against me."

Merivale replied as follows:

"I am perfectly willing to spend money to get possession of the new land, but if you do not own a majority of the stock I do not see what is to be gained by any further correspondence on the subject. Unless, therefore, you choose to make me a definite proposition showing me how we may get a clear title to the land, I decline to bargain with you any further."

Franklin then made a proposition as follows:

"To get a half interest in the land by purchasing it from other stockholders will cost you somewhere between $3,000,000 and $5,000,000. If you are willing to help me recover the stock stolen from me, which can be done for say $100,000 at the outside, I will share it jointly with you, the entire expenditure we can obtain to give me complete possession. Understand that it is to your interest to help yourself with me. It will be necessary to do some fighting to meet the conditions. At one point will require that I agree to let me have the extent of $100,000, which on my part, I will within six months. Exclusive possession of time you have the $100,000 back."

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for Nilus he induced Merivale to write this letter to Franklin:

"It seems to me that if your stock was stolen from you, the proper way would be to steal it back. Can't you find anyone with nerve enough down your way to do it? The three months having expired, I shall come to Nilus to settle matters at issue between us. If by the time I get there you have, by hook or crook, got possession of the stock, all right. If not, I must have the $100,000 worth of stock."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The flutter that followed the reading of these letters subsided into absolute quiet as the detective cleared his throat, and, at the instigation of Mr. Everett, continued his testimony:

"Franklin's letters were of course ingenious misrepresentations, designed to secure money, with which he hoped to be able to suppress all the testimony against his ownership. I had no trouble in satisfying Merivale that the statements contained in the letters were almost entirely false. I came back to Nilus resolved to play a bold game with Franklin. He, I knew, did not want to see much of Merivale just then, so he had my coming made as public as possible and hinted that I had come to invest money. This of course took me off his hands a great deal, but I managed to see him considerably. In my conversations with him I was impatient over the delay, but he had all sorts of gaudy excuses to offer. After worrying him right smart I said to him one day: 'Franklin, do you know I have found you out?'

"'What do you mean?' asked he, turning a bit pale.

"'You have deceived me from the start in this matter,' said I, 'and by so doing you have lost my assistance. If you had let me entirely into your confidence from the first, we would have been operating those mines together by this time; but by your cursed dilatory policy, your scruples of fear or conscience, you allowed things to drag along, and all the while the millions were slipping between our fingers. You are entirely too squeamish to suit me.'

"He smiled at the idea of being squeamish, as if I did not know him.

"'I have picked up,' I continued, 'some of the threads of the case, and you might as well tell me the whole truth and let us work together.'

"He was skittish of me at first, and wanted to learn how much I knew, so I startled him with a few facts, and then he frankly admitted that he had been scheming to get possession of the agreement. To test me he asked my advice as to the best way to get possession. I replied that there was only one way, and that was to take it.

"'How would you take it?' said he.

"'In the good old way,' replied I. 'Pay some handy ruffian to do it for you.'

"He smiled and said: 'That is what I shall do if I do not succeed in getting it from the person who now has it.'

"I pretended to have handled several little difficulties like this and intimated that if we were out west it would not be difficult to get rid of such an obstacle as a human life. I persuaded him that I was willing to commit any crime, even murder, in order to secure my object; and emboldened by finding me a congenial spirit, he grew more confidential. He told me that he had hired Morris to steal the agreement from Wright's safe. I wormed from him all the details of his association with Old Tom, Bob Padgett and him of the red flannel shirt. I also managed to become acquainted with them and learned how and where to find them when I wanted them. I convinced Franklin that I was such a cold-blooded scoundrel that he took me completely into his affections and made me his confidante. He was charmed with my affable villainy, and he spoke with a good deal of pride of his scheme to—but the mouth of Herbert Wright and his little arrangement for the removal of Irving Warde. One day I told him that I had the ingenious theory that he made away with John T. Wright. He looked scared at that and changed the subject. I tried to appeal to his pride in his criminal achievements, but on this one subject—while he never made any positive denial—he was entirely uncommunicative. The intimate association I had with him leads me to believe that there is no sort of cowardly crime which James Franklin would not commit provided his personal safety was assured.

"One of the hardest jobs I undertook was to win over the three ruffians whom Franklin had employed so often to our side of the case, or rather to induce them to tell the truth. I suggested to Mr. Everett that he should call upon the mayor and tell him plainly that by the action in dismissing me from the force and giving Peter's Rest immunity he had played into the hands of the real murderer of John T. Wright by preventing the arrest of three very suspicious characters who were doubtless implicated in the murder. I also suggested that he should hint to the mayor that this sort of thing if continued would not look very well when brought out in court. Mr. Everett adopted my suggestion and carried it out so well that on the day upon which this trial was begun these three men were all quietly arrested by the mayor's orders and taken to jail, where the jailer was told to place them in separate cells and allow no one to see them except such persons as he should designate. The jailer was given to understand that they were witnesses in a very important case and that it was imperative that they should not be allowed to communicate with each other. I knew that the first thing these rascals would do would be to try to send word to Franklin. Permission was secured for me to visit them, and I did so, casually as it were. I was strolling in the corridor, and each of them recognized me and called to me. Each of them separately asked me to tell Franklin of his arrest so that he could get out—for they never doubted their chief's ability to free them. They did not know what they had been arrested for. I let them infer that I would give their messages to Franklin and then left. Satisfied that they had no communication with each other. The next day I returned, and again conversed with them separately. I told them that Franklin was displeased with them for some reason—in short, that he washed his hands of them entirely and said that they might get out as best they could. I told Tom and his partner that I thought the charge against them was two-fold, the attempted murder of Irving Warde, and participation in the murder of John T. Wright; and that I thought Franklin saw in their arrest a way to have his crimes shoved off on them, and that he would deny all association with them. I told the red flannel shirt man that it had been discovered that he had placed in young Wright's house the pistol with which the older Wright was killed; and that there was a strong case of circumstantial evidence against him as the suspected murderer. I told him also that Franklin washed his hands of the case, and was very well pleased to have the crime fastened on him. even intimated that the colonel would probably be the attorney to prosecute them. I assumed considerable indignation over the way they had been treated by their associate and leader in crime, and told them that I had lost all confidence in Franklin, and would never again undertake any transaction with him. Each asked my advice as to what he should do, and I told them that the truth was not so bad as the case suspected against them; I advised them to tell the truth and in this way to get even with the man who had so shamefully deserted them. I told Old Tom and his pal that I had no idea Irving Warde would try to prosecute them if they made a clean breast of it; and I easily persuaded the other rascal that the truth was his safest course. I believe that is all of my story."

concluded next week.

WING SHEE, THE SUICIDE

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

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ALL HIS life had Wing Shee been happy; little Wing Shee, of the 20-odd years—all his life until now. To be sure, there had been no reason why he should not be happy. For ever since the time when he had left the Street of the Seven Waxen Fuchias, he had been successful, as the world goes. He had been good; he had prayed to all his gods with his little spit-ball prayers with all his might. Especially had he shown his intense devotion to that great American god, the Dol-Lar. So he had prospered. But he had prospered, to this time, alone—he and his collars and cuffs and his flat irons, and his sign that had Wing Shee, Laundry, on it, and swung fitfully with the passing breeze.

But, now, the great god of Unrest was at him, night and day. And no wonder. For the diminutive Yo King had arrived. When or how he knew not. But there she was, Yo King, laughing and nodding at him with sheer good nature from a window just across the way. Wing Shee, it is true, had never seen Yo King before; nor had she seen him—but Wing Shee knew that his time had come. He had seen many beautiful women both in the old Street of the Seven Waxen Fuchias, and upon the thoroughfare of the marvelous Broad Way, but never had he seen aught like Yo King. He smiled at her and waved his hand and showed his teeth.

"Yeh, yeh," he exclaimed, riotously, though, of course, she was too far away to hear him. He picked up a bit of silk ribbon and stuck it in his blouse. American fashion. She laughed and placed a flower in her hair. Then Wing Shee bent to his work and ironed furiously away, singing a quavering little love song all the while. This was the beginning of it all. This was the time that the great god of Unrest laughed in his ample sleeve.

It was love at first sight; Wing Shee knew it; and so did Yo King. They met and gabbled, each in a coy, embarrassed way—and then they had made their little vows, and had told each other that the world was as bright as though 12 great suns were shining all at once. They little knew.

For Wing Shee was not the only one of his kind who had seen the little Yo King and caught the glamour of her eye. If Yo King had had her own way there would have been no glamour in her eye, save when Wing Shee looked on; but the gods had made her beautiful and there were other of her countrymen who recognized that fact.

One of these was big Fang Ho, he of the tea store and the big yellow teeth. He was rich and powerful—he was a bachelor. He took Yo King's old guardian out to the Chinese chop-house and filled him up with good things to eat, and with rice wine to drink, and told him, that he, Fang Ho, must marry Yo King. Yo King's uncle, a kindly, but weak old man, nodded his head and blinked his eyes and agreed that it must be so.

But Yo King would not have it so. In a moment when the gods had ceased to favor her she told the reason why—she loved Wing Shee. Fang Ho heard of this, and nodded darkly. He had a way to fix all that.

Behind Fang Ho was the Big Six Tong. It was the Big Six Tong that served on Wing Shee, one morning, its terrible summons—a summons that must be obeyed. This summons held this message:

"Go to San Francisco, to the council of the Tong, or, go back to China. Or, die. This do, at once."

Wing Shee knew too well what it all meant. He groaned aloud. Then he began to plan. He wondered if he could get the little Yo King and steal away with her in the darkness. He dared not go near her in the light. He tried to make some sign. But it was no use. He must flee until it was safe to come back. He went.

He crept aboard a ferry boat; once upon it he watched all who came aboard. He was sure he was safe. The boat pulled out and as it reached the middle of the stream two dark figures sprang up from a corner—it was night—and approached Wing Shee. Wing trembled. He knew who these were—Fang Ho and Wou Sing, another member of the Tong.

"Where bound for?" asked Fang Ho.

"San Francisco," answered Wing Shee.

"No," said Fang Ho, "you lie."

"Yeh," responded Wing Shee, "to China."

"No," hissed Fang Ho; "eat this." It was a small, round pellet. Wing Shee trembled, but he took it. Up to this time he had had hope. But now hope forsook him—the doom of Unrest was upon him. He knew that he could not escape. The eye of Fang Ho—of the Big Six Tong, was upon him.

"Swallow it," commanded Fang Ho. He obeyed. And then, without warning, little Wing Shee, with a despairing wail, sprang away from the two men, leaped upon the taffrail, and jumped into the great black water underneath the boat. Then there was a commotion. Other men, one here and one there, had seen the leap. Fang Ho and Wou Sing crept inside a cabin and took a seat. They were undisturbed. The people outside shouted.

"We know nothing of it," said Fang Ho, to inquirers. "We saw nothing." To Wou Sing he said: "If the wet does not drown him the pill will kill him. It is well."

When the ferry people handed to the hospital surgeon the wet, limp form of Wing Shee the surgeon laughed. "Suicide, eh," he said; "queer thing. He's the first chink who ever tried it in this country. At least to my knowledge. And he won't die. We'll pull him around."

They did pull him around. In an hour Wing Shee had revived. But he was so unnerved that they had to keep him at the hospital for awhile. They said they would let him go in the morning. He nodded somewhat drowsily. "All light," he said. He fell asleep, did Wing Shee and woke from time to time, with starts and twitches. It may have been because he thought the Big Six were at his heels.

In the morning he was dead. "By George," said the surgeon, "he holds the record. He's the only Chinese suicide, all right, over here." In due time they bundled Wing Shee into a pine box and it so happened that the god of Unrest, in the shape of a few drinks, presided over the man who screwed down the lid, to such an extent that he did not screw it down. Off drove the cart and Wing Shee's bones rattled so much inside of the box that suddenly, from being dead, he came to life. The deadening effect of that pill had worn away Wing Shee, much to his surprise, found



HE SAT UP AND LOOKED ABOUT.

himself much cramped. He pushed and the lid fell off. He sat up and looked about. He was traveling through a lonely street. The driver had his eye upon a far distant saloon. Wing Shee put one leg over the side of the box, then another; then he cautiously and stiffly jumped to the street below and disappeared.

Over in New York the yellow journals were telling about the "ONLY CHINESE SUICIDE. WING SHEE JUMPS TO CERTAIN DEATH." For the report of his demise had gone out from the hospital.

One evening, about dusk, the great Fang Ho was gliding down the street toward the home of little Yo King. He placed his hand upon the door knob, when suddenly, out of the gloom, a weird figure stepped, and placed his hand upon Fang Ho's arm. Fang Ho gave one look, and then fled shrieking up the street once more.

"Hi ki," he wailed, shaking with apprehension, "ki yi hi." He had seen a ghost—the ghost of the young Wing Shee. The ghost of Wing Shee was not disturbed; it laughed gently in its oriental way and then stepped into Yo King's home. Inside was the sound of weeping. It was the diminutive Yo King mourning for the death of the young Wing Shee. Wing Shee looked into a room. She was alone. He glided in, placed a very material arm about her and raised her head. She gave one startled glance and would have cried out but for the fact that Wing Shee was stuffing a paper napkin in her mouth. "Come, little Yo King," he whispered, "I am alive and not dead. Come—come with me." And they disappeared into the night.

The yellow journals, which heralded the first Chinese suicide, now proclaimed what seemed to be a second one. For little Yo King went and she never came back. Where is she now? No one knows. But Mrs. Wing Shee, the diminutive, may possibly be able to tell.

FEMALE WEAKNESS

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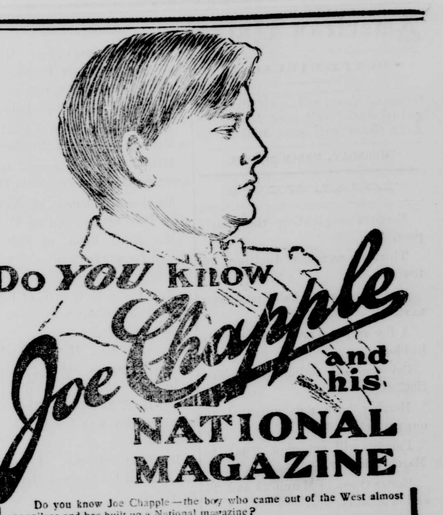
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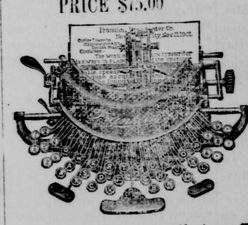
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CONSUMPTION THREATENED

C. Unger, 211 Maple St., Champaign, Ill., writes: "I was troubled with a hacking cough for a year and I thought I had consumption. I tried a great many remedies and I was under the care of physicians for several months. I used one bottle of FOLEY'S HONEY AND TAR. It cured me, and I have not been troubled since."

HAD BRONCHITIS FOR TWENTY YEARS AND THOUGHT HE WAS INCURABLE

Henry Livingstone, Babylon, N. Y., writes: "I had been a sufferer with Bronchitis for twenty years and tried a great many with poor results until I used FOLEY'S HONEY AND TAR which cured me of my Bronchitis which I supposed was incurable."

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