Mystery of the Bayou Woods

By WALKER KENNEDY.

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Fenton's testimony was the sensation of the trial, and it furnished for many days to come the material for instructive editorials in the press of the city. The cotton magnates looked a little foolish when they found that they had been spending their money on a detective instead of a great capitalist, but they soon put aside their crestfallen air in the admiration they felt for a man who could do such clever work as Fenton had accomplished. Some of the officers who had been unwittingly lending themselves to the concealment of a great crime kept very quiet for a while, and a timid moral lesson was drawn from the revelations concerning bossism in politics.

In the general excitement people forgot to watch the countenance of Franklin, upon which a deathly pallor had settled. But the keen eyes were full of fire. It was the supreme moment of his life when, the gaze of the court room being attracted toward him, he faced it with diabolical fury.

At this stage of the proceedings those dispassionate individuals who liked to analyze testimony expressed the opinion that while it had been well established that Franklin was a very handy, all-round scoundrel, it had not been proved that Herbert Wright was innocent of his father's murder; or rather, there were a number of apparently damning circumstances connecting Wright with the crime which had not been explained. It was true it had been shown very conclusively that Franklin had conceived a gigantic scheme of robbery with incidental murder and other crimes for the purpose of getting his hands on a great fortune. His various denials had been amply disproved, so no attempt had been made to account for the fact that Herbert Wright had pawned the evidences of his guilt the very day of his father's murder. How came he by those articles? Unless he could give a reasonable explanation of that the case against him was hardly impaired by the fact that Franklin was a villain.

Before concluding his evidence with the statement of Herbert Wright, Mr. Everett introduced a gunsmith who testified that he sold Col. Franklin such a pistol as that which was in evidence. He was then asked to compare the ball taken from Wright's brain and say whether it was the proper size, and he replied in the affirmative.

The prisoner at the bar now took the stand amid a dead silence. He was pale, but self-possessed. He spoke clearly and to the point:

"On the day before my father was killed I called upon him for help. My wife and child were in an almost starving condition, and I could not get employment. It was a hard wrench to my pride to beg from him, but I did so, and—was roughly repulsed. The following day I had been to town to make another attempt to get work and had failed. Uncle Dick Norris had always been very friendly to me, so in my extremity I concluded to go to him and see if he could not let me have a bit of bread and some game, of which he usually had a supply in the house. On the way back I was cold, hungry, cynical



"WE SILENTLY FACED EACH OTHER LIKE TWO MEN WHO HAD AGREED ON A DUEL TO THE DEATH."

and desperate. It seemed to me that the whole world was against me, that such a thing as a kindly heart did not exist, and that the bad and the unjust only managed to thrive. My father's strict orders prevented my mother and sister from doing anything for me and mine. An idea formed itself dimly in my mind that I was an Ismael, and that henceforth my hand should be lifted against every other man. I was half delirious with hunger and cold. The snow whipped me cruelly in the face as I plowed along. I was friendless and miserable, and haunted by visions of a pale wife and a starving child at my cheerless home.

"So absorbed was I in these miserable reflections that I did not see a figure approaching through the thickening snowflakes and the darkened woods. Evidently the person did not see me, either, until we suddenly confronted each other. He was a large man in a heavy overcoat, and he was muffled up about the face so that it was impossible to tell who he was. I had the sensation of a man who unexpectedly meets a wild animal in a jungle. Two eyes of deep and murderous malignity were fixed upon me. In his hand was a heavy stick which he held as if he intended to make an attack. I have no doubt that Franklin—for it was he—was even more startled at my appearance than I was at his. In the light of subsequent discoveries I am satisfied that having committed the crime of murder, he was terribly excited to run thus unexpectedly against the son of the man whom he had just killed. Whatever his thoughts were, it was my impression at the time that the person before me wanted to kill me, and I fancied that he was about to make the assault—for the light of murder still lingered in his [illegible] must [illegible] had a somewh[illegible] feel[illegible] about me; [illegible] ed [illegible] the [illegible] ct [illegible] a stout cudgel in my hand and I was desperate anyhow. This condition of mind gave me strength and agility. I did not wait for an attack, but rushed at once upon him. My decision had been prompter than his, for he was unquestionably unnerved. My first blow landed fairly on his head, and, to my astonishment, the tall and vigorous looking stranger lay senseless at my feet. Further blows were unnecessary. As he fell something dropped from one of his overcoat pockets. I picked it up and found it to be a watch. This put an idea into my head—put it there strongly, burningly, and when I discovered who it was that I had knocked down, I did not stop to debate against the thought. I had always regarded Col. Franklin as an enemy of the family rather than a friend. I had been satisfied for some time that he grew rich off my father's unfortunate crime, and that it was he who kept alive my father's resentment against me. I cannot say that I reasoned all this out at that time, but I felt that I had felled an enemy and somehow I was entitled to the spoils. In plain English, I determined to rob the man whom I had thus vanquished. In one of his overcoat pockets I found a knife and the cuff buttons which have since been identified as my father's; in his vest pocket was the watch which has here been identified as Franklin's; and in his shirt bosom was the diamond pin which has figured in this case. These articles I quickly appropriated. A pair of handsome sleeve buttons which he wore attracted my attention, but they were fastened so firmly in as to resist my hurried efforts, so I tore the cuffs promptly from the shirt. I noticed that they had dark spots on them, which afterward proved to be blood. In one of the overcoat pockets I found a pistol, but I decided not to take it. It was just about such a weapon as that displayed here, but I would not like to swear it was the same. He also had a heavy stick, which being useless to me I did not take. Having secured all the valuables on his person, and satisfying myself he would soon come to consciousness, I hurried back to town to pawn the articles I had obtained. This I did, never stopping to think of the danger to myself afterward, and then hastened homeward over the short path. That evening we had something of a feast at home, I having made up a yarn to my wife to account for the food I bought. I have here the blood-stained cuffs with the buttons in them, which I did not pawn. You will see that Col. Franklin's initials are written on the linen in India ink."

Wright took from his pocket a small paper, which he opened, and displayed the cuffs, which were given to the jury to examine.

The prosecuting attorney examined him at considerable length, but could not shake his testimony.

It was not possible to doubt the young man's evidence, for it was corroborated by a number of minor circumstances, and besides, it was a complete explanation of the mystery. Franklin had shot Wright from behind, had perhaps in a sort of murderous fury beaten him about the head with his stick and had then robbed him in order to create the impression that robbery was the motive for the crime; then while hurrying away from the scene of the murder he himself had been knocked in the head and robbed. The testimony showed that he had been in the Bayou Woods with Wright, that he had a wound in his head, that his watch and pin had been pawned, that Wright had secured the cuff buttons and the cuffs, that the pistol with which the murder had been committed was probably his and the ball fitted it.

There was clearly no case against Herbert Wright, and the prosecuting attorney himself moved that he be discharged from custody and that the court order the arrest of James Franklin on the charge of murder until his case could be investigated by the grand jury.

And so when Herbert Wright left the court room with the congratulations of his friends he passed by Franklin, closely guarded by the sheriff.

* * * * * * *

The trial of James Franklin took place a few weeks later and he was found guilty of murder in the first degree and sentenced to be hanged. Persistent efforts were made to overturn the judgment of the court and the governor was appealed to, but both the supreme court and the chief executive declined to interfere and Franklin expiated his crime on the gallows.

CHAPTER XIX.

The people of Nilus were naturally much interested in knowing the actual value of the Colorado mine which had been the exciting germ of an elaborate conspiracy, but it was sold to Frederick Merivale for a sum which was entirely acceptable to the Wright family, but was never accurately made public.

Of course the memory of the tragic events herein set forth left its trace upon all those connected with them, and Mrs. Wright, Miriam and Herbert decided upon an extensive trip to Europe, where they hoped to blot out the incidents of the ghastly past. For many months a terrible strain had been upon them, and only when all their trouble was over did they realize how great it had been. Amid peaceful scenes of the Old World, and in quiet nooks unadvertised by the indefatigable tourist, they passed an eventful year, and the record of an unhappy past became dim and unobtrusive.

Irving Warde in the meantime remained in this country, and waited confidently, but with some impatience, for Miriam's return. The interval of absence was brightened by regular letters, in which the wonders of the Old World were not the sole topic of consideration, but were indeed rather overshadowed by the wonders of love, which kept two distant hearts as warm as summer days. It was, from one point of view, an unfruitful year for Warde, though he made steady progress upward in his profession; but he stifled as well as he could his selfish feelings, and whenever he grew despondent he took out Miriam's letters and dreamed of the happy days to come.

And Miriam came back radiant with what she had seen and experienced, with bright eyes and browned, clear cheeks, but unchanged in heart so far as Warde was concerned, and it was not long before she consented to name the day for the marriage, and that happy event followed in due course of time.

Fenton drifted away to one of the large cities. His work in the Wright case had won him fame far beyond his own state, and he was recognized as a bright man in police circles elsewhere; and so it was not long before he was snapped up by a superintendent on the alert for good material, and he became a famous detective.

If anyone has some curiosity on the subject, and will pass along Madison street inspecting the signs of the Nilus lawyers that swing out over the sidewalk, he will find one that is old and dingy, but still bearing the faint lettering:

JOHN W. EVERETT,
Attorney-at-Law.

THE END.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson in the International Series for April 3, 1904—Jesus Visits Tyre and Sidon.

THE LESSON TEXT.
(Mark 7:24-37.)

24. And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it; but He could not be hid.

25. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet.

26. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27. But Jesus said unto her: Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28. And she answered and said unto Him: Yes, Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29. And He said unto her: For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30. And when she was come to her house she found the . . . devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32. And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put His hand upon him.

33. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue;

34. And looking up to Heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him: Ephphatha, that is, be opened.

35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36. And He charged them that they should tell no man; but the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

37. And were beyond measure astonished, saying: He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Without faith it is impossible to please Him.—Heb. 11:6.

ANALYSIS OF SCRIPTURE SECTION.
Jesus Walking on the Water..Mark 6:45-52
Jesus Healing Many.....Mark 6:53-56
Discourse on Eating with Unwashed Hands.....Mark 7: 1-23
Healing Woman's Daughter...Mark 7:24-30
Healing Deaf and Dumb Man..Mark 7:31-37
Read also parallel passage: Matt. 14:22-15:31.

TIME.—Late in the summer of A. D. 29.

PLACE.—The region of Tyre and Sidon; a foreign country.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

"From thence:" From Capernaum. "The borders of Tyre," etc.:: That is, Phoenicia. Jesus and his disciples were now in the land of foreigners. They were there for several reasons. (1) They could not stay where they were. His followers had many of them left Him, and popular feeling against Him was running high in Galilee. It was a reaction. (2) He had had a controversy with the Pharisees from Jerusalem, in which He had talked to them with a plainness they had probably never heard before, calling them hypocrites; of course, making their opposition to Him more bitter. Further work in Galilee at this time was out of the question. (3) A foreign country was chosen because of its distance from the scene of the trouble and because its people were not likely to know or care about the contention between Jesus and the Pharisees. "He entered. . . . would have no man know it:" This was not a preaching tour, but a much-needed respite from a wearing ministry. Safety, rest and the training of the disciples were sought. "An unclean spirit:" Probably epilepsy. A very distressing disease and one which Jesus frequently met. In those days it was supposed, like fevers and insanity, to be caused by demons. The symptoms were intense suffering, falling (Matt. 17: 15-18), sudden paroxysms, dumbness, foaming at the mouth and other accompaniments of what we call epilepsy (Mark 9: 17, 18). "A Greek:" That is, a Gentile, or as a Jew would be apt to say a "dog." The Jews were an arrogant race and almost always had uncomplimentary names for foreigners. "A Syrophoenician:" Or a Syrian Phoenician. "Let the children first be filled," etc.: A sentence which we say at first does not sound like Jesus. Compare Matthew's account. By the children Jesus meant the Jews. The dogs He used in the common way for Gentiles. It was not harsh as it would be to call a person a dog to-day. He did not think the Gentiles of less importance than the Jews, or care less for their sufferings, but in planning the great work of salvation He had to begin somewhere. The plan must be the wisest one possible, and then He must stick to it. The plan was to begin the conquest of the world at home, with his own people.

"They bring unto Him:" After He reached Galilee again. "Took Him aside . . . privately:" It is not an easy thing to communicate with one who is practically deaf and dumb. Jesus might have healed him offhanded in the crowd, but He wanted to make a spiritual impression on him as well. See how the Master uses the sign language in dealing with this man—touches his ears and his tongue; He spat; saliva was supposed to have healing power; the man received an idea. Then he looked up to Heaven and signed; the man's idea was enlarged; God came into the transaction, and Jesus spoke the word, and he was healed, and had learned the most impressive lesson of his life as well.

Grapes from Canaan.

God has some blessing to heal every bane.

The religion of the Son of Man will surely be manly.

The Word that does not heal must harden.

The pearls of truth lie deep in the sea of patience.

Love never joins in the chorus when malice sings.

The man who is willing to work is not kept waiting.

There can be no sympathy where there is suspicion.

Idleness and riches furnish time and tide for the devil's ships.—Ram's Horn.

The Chief Thing.

With all thy getting get character.—United Presbyterian.

JEMIMY'S POINT OF VIEW.

Was'e in the kitchen meks want in de house.

You don' allers have tuh speak out tuh tell a lie.

'Tain't no sorter fun tuh spen' money when you got plenty uv hit.

No mattuh how blin' Luv is, Matermony's got de spex what'll fit hit.

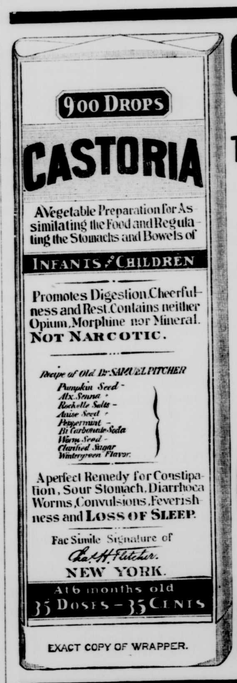
Seems lak de ugher a 'oman are de mo' comfote she git outer huh lookin' glass.

Tuh mos' men luv is a switch-off f'om de main track; tuh mos' wimmin hits de eend uv de line.

De gal dat don't know how tuh do nothin' is de gal what walk on moss en rose leabes all huh life.

Wimmin kin swaller flatt'ry by de teaspoonful, but hit teks a whole ladleful tuh give a man a good tas'e.

Dat man ain't livin' dat don' know how tuh manage his wife; he jes' don' keer 'bout doin' hit, dat's all.—N. Y. Times.



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1800 Prizes— 5.00 " 9,000.00
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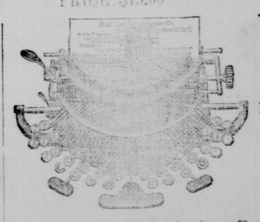
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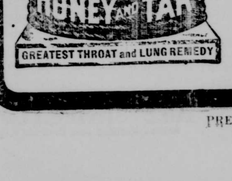
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