THE STORY TELLER

WRITTEN IN RED

By CHAS. HOWARD MONTAGUE AND C. W. DYAR

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CHAPTER XIV.—CONTINUED.

"Why, Kingman, where have you kept yourself all this while? Sit down, sit down, and give an account of yourself."

Mr. Thomas parried this impetuous salutation and query with a question of his own.

"An account of myself?" he said, laughing. "Perhaps you think my time's my own. Did you never hear of such a thing as a journalist being sent out of town to do a given bit of work for his paper, John Lamm?"

The detective nodded his head and looked at Thomas in a quizzical sort of a way.

"Oh, yes, Kingman. But they don't generally take a man off a murder mystery case like this and send him out of town on some chance affair; at least they didn't do that when I knew the office routine. Got a new editor down at your place?"

"Nonsense, Lamm," answered Thomas. "Emergencies may arise at any moment in a newspaper office. You know that well enough. I was pulled off the North case for a little while; but they put me back again with lightning-like celerity, as you see, for here I am. Now, what have you got to tell me?"

"First of all, Kingman," the detective said, tipped comfortably back in his chair, "I want to tell you that I'm a little surprised, to put it mildly, that you should have let that young North girl give you the slip that night. How did it happen?"

"The fortune of war," rejoined Thomas, for the moment quite interested in the row of law books on the shelf above Mr. Lamm's desk. "The best of us get beaten sometimes—even you. Of course, you have forgotten—"

"I've forgotten nothing, Kingman," said Mr. Lamm. "Let it pass. The matter can't be helped. Of course I knew it wasn't your fault. And now to another subject."

The detective consulted his little memorandum book and took from its leaves Stackhouse's letter.

"Never mind to whom it is written," he said. "What do you think of it, taken in connection with what we know of this man Stackhouse?"

Thomas read the letter twice before answering.

"Looks as though there might be some conspiracy. I should like to know who this Marie really is."

Mr. Lamm silently acquiesced in this wish, but he said nothing on that point.

"We have talked over our friend Stackhouse considerably, Kingman, first and last," he observed, "and I fancied we agreed pretty well for awhile."

"For awhile?" queried Kingman. "What do you mean?"

"People change their minds sometimes and I have modified my first opinions regarding the man," continued Mr. Lamm, following the pattern of the wall paper opposite his desk with his eye. "A decidedly abler man is this Stackhouse than a good many people give him the credit of being—abler than I thought at first. He is a smart man—a 'slick' man,' as they say up in New Hampshire. The way in which he has managed to keep North & Stackhouse out of bankruptcy all this while shows that he has plenty of nerve and a good deal of skill."

"Not much use without money," was Mr. Thomas' sententious comment. "You know what people say about it. Firm would have gone to smash long ago if it hadn't been bolstered up. And all the financial fellows that I have talked with give the credit for keeping the firm out of deep water for three months past to one man—Richard Fetridge!"

"He's a curious sort of character, that Fetridge," said the detective, contemplatively. "My opinion is that without his money he would amount to but precious little."

"You wouldn't put him down as the Napoleon of State street, then?" hinted Thomas.

"No," replied Mr. Lamm. "Why, the man hasn't half the ability of Thornton Stackhouse. There is a queer streak in the fellow, and it shows itself at every turn. Pig-headed enough, but lacks balance. Really weak-minded, for all his obstinacy in small things. That's my judgment of the man. What do you say about him?"

Mr. Thomas thought a moment.

"Don't know him as you do, Lamm, but it seems to me he must have some good qualities, some little ability, to have got on such a friendly footing with the Norths."

"Do you mean the old man, or the woman?"

"Well, the family generally."

"Oh, pshaw! Paul North only wanted to 'work' him for his money, and I rather think you know that the girls may have been in with the old gentleman in his laudable endeavor."

"Perhaps you've seen and heard more about the Norths than I," he said, a little uncomfortably. "But it didn't seem to me—"

"Oh, the girls? Well, they may not have had much to do but to smile sweetly on Fetridge and keep him in the firm's traces," continued the detective, with a covert glance at his ally's face; "and, of course, this Fetridge was no fool to be caught by the bare hook. He isn't possessed of any great amount of brains, but his experience in the business world makes up for some of his natural shortcomings. However, perhaps this failure will bring out the facts about Stackhouse. I hope so. It's a bad break, and a great many people have gone down with North & Stackhouse. But I think Thornton Stackhouse himself has saved nothing out of the crash."

"The Norths have gone under, of course?"

"Yes. Not a dollar, so far as I can see, will be left to them. There's no telling, though, what those girls may have managed to pick up and hide all this while. That young creature, now, who went off—"

"You mean—Miss Stella?" There was a dangerous look in Thomas' eyes.

"Certainly. She's a hardened little baggage, I'll be bound. Why, man, she was shrewd enough to throw you off the scent, and a girl of 18 who can trick Kingman F. Thomas when he's on the watch is an abnormally clever sort of creature."

Mr. Thomas abruptly arose and looked out of the little window.

"How do you imagine she got away from you, Kingman?" pursued Mr. Lamm.

"A piece of bad luck," the reporter returned, curtly. "We all have that sort of happenings sometimes. I suppose the girl watched her chance and stole away. Nothing very calculating about that, it seems to me. It was her good fortune."

"Just so, just so," assented Mr. Lamm. "It's a sore spot with you, old fellow, eh? Well, never mind. We know, of course, who the guilty party is in this affair. Never mind Fetridge now. Flight is confession, and you can take ample revenge by helping to bring

MR. LAMM PLACED HIMSELF BEHIND A SHELTERING CHIMNEY, CAUTIOUSLY PEERED INTO THE WINDOWS OF THE NEIGHBORING BUILDING.

that large-eyed maiden who gave you the slip to justice. You see the point, Kingman?"

"No, I don't," said Mr. Thomas, turning upon the ingenious Mr. Lamm in great heat. "What morbid state of mind has come over you? What's the matter with you that you go on maundering like this?"

"Maundering?" Mr. Lamm's face wore a look of cleverly assumed astonishment.

"Yes. Maundering is what I said, and I meant it, too. Come! You don't mean to look me in the face and tell me that you think that a timid, shrinking girl like Stella North would ever have the courage to murder her father, even if she had the heart to do it?"

"But she ran away—"

There was a tell-tale twitching at the corners of the detective's mouth despite his efforts to the contrary, observing which Mr. Thomas gave a little start, pulled up his shirt collar, relaxed his features, laughed, though rather constrainedly, and clapped Mr. Lamm on the shoulder.

"Have done with your 'kidding,' old man," he said. "I'm not one of the Central Office crowd."

Mr. Lamm coughed behind his hand.

"You can't make me believe any of your foolishness," continued the reporter. "Now talk straight for a moment. Stackhouse or Fetridge—whom shall I watch, now?"

"No use to try to cheat you, Kingman," retorted Mr. Lamm, with an expansive smile. "Well, in the present uncertain state of affairs, both must be watched. We ought to be here, both of us, to look after matters; but I am suddenly called away and this is why I am so glad you came in."

"Called away?"

"Yes; old Jobson, the clerk at North & Stackhouse, has just told me in his innocent way all about a certain suspicious character that occasionally came to see North, and lives in New York. I am going to look the man up there, and for a day or two you must watch the Boston end for both of us."

Mr. Lamm, after advising Thomas to still watch Swampscott, and promising to bring in a man or two to help cover the city points, bade the reporter a friendly "good by" and went from his office directly toward the Albany station.

But the protuberance on his valise, which marked the sojourning place of the very rigid hair brush which was Mr. Lamm's constant traveling companion, soon pointed north instead of south. It was Mr. Thomas whom the detective followed. Seeing him enter the office of his newspaper, Mr. Lamm turned back, deposited his valise in his office, and betook himself to Court square.

"Nowak, how are you?"

Thus hailed the detective a tall, well-built, well-dressed young man who was crossing the pavement at a brisk pace.

"Hello, Lamm, how goes everything?" the reporter said.

"Quietly, quietly. How are the boys in the Globe office? I hardly ever see them nowadays, not even Kingman, whom I used to run across so often."

"Kingman?" said Mr. Nowak. "Oh, he's busy on the North mystery. Doesn't do anything else. Has his own time, and flits in and out of the office at all sorts of odd hours. Sometimes he's in a dozen times a day. And then, again, the editor may not see him for 24 hours or more. But Kingman is a privileged character, you know. He never wastes his time when he is on a job."

Mr. Lamm nodded his head emphatically. "You're right, Nowak. The word shirk is not in Kingman F. Thomas' vocabulary. You are quite positive that he has not had any other work but the North case?"

"Oh, sure. They wouldn't take him off of it under any circumstances, now, when the facts are liable to come out any hour."

"I hope he isn't wasting his time and energy. It's a queer case, isn't it?"

"Deuced queer."

With a friendly hand-grasp the two parted. Mr. Lamm proceeding to a drug store close at hand, consulted the chained directory, and found in a minute a certain address desired. Boarding a car, he journeyed southward.

Where the streets began to show bits of garden in front of the houses, and every brick wall was not a party wall, Mr. Lamm alighted, and walked up a pleasant-looking avenue.

A new apartment house, not far from the corner, appeared to have particular interest for John Lamm. In its neighborhood, indeed, he passed the better part of an hour. Without apparent effort, Mr. Lamm entered into an easy conversation with several people there and thereabouts, and, as a result thereof, there was a sudden transfer of especial interest from the family hotel to the building next door.

Mr. Molon's modest dwelling was by no means equal in height to its neighbor. But its graveled roof, nevertheless, offered certain facilities that the detective greatly desired. A brief colloquy was all that proved necessary to gain the desired permission.

Once upon the roof, Mr. Lamm placed himself behind a sheltering chimney, and cautiously peered into the windows of the neighboring building that overlooked the place.

All the curtains were up, and the light, streaming cheerfully into what was evidently a sitting-room, brought into relief the face of a motherly-looking old lady, busied with her knitting.

Presently she looked up; and soon the sight of another face rewarded John Lamm's watch. It was the face of a short, rather thick-set young man, whose dark-brown, kindly eyes had looked into his own not many hours before.

The detective noted them carefully as they stood talking together earnestly. He saw them turn quickly, and as the rays of the setting sun shone through the glass, another form came into full view.

It was a woman's figure.

John Lamm looked with all his eyes. There was no mistake; no room for error. It was as he thought and hoped, and a smile of absolute satisfaction played about his lips unconsciously.

Suddenly he drew back. The thick-set young man in the room opposite was just turning around. Before he could peer out of the window, in his turn, the form was out of view. When the sidelong glance was next directed outwards the blinds were drawn over the tell-tale window. But the precaution came too late. The next moment Lamm found his way down the stairs, thanked Mr. Molon behind the counter kindly for his courtesy, walked up the street and took a car citywards.

"Ah, my black-haired friend," he thought, exultingly, "a very clever scheme of yours. But walls have eyes for John Lamm once in awhile, Kingman, and though you've kept your secret well from the crowd, you couldn't conceal it from your partner. What would Applebee say, what would Stackhouse say, for that matter, if they knew that Kingman F. Thomas had a pretty guest, none other than the strangely missing Stella North?"

CHAPTER XV.

THE THING HAS A DARK LOOK.

"Come in, Kingman. You are prompt. I'm obliged to you."

Wednesday morning, and Detective Lamm at the threshold of his office was welcoming his friend, the reporter.

"Yes," said Thomas, unaware of the peculiar expression with which his associate regarded him. "Your note, left at the office, seemed to be urgent."

"You are right. It was urgent. Sit down."

John Lamm locked the door and put the key in his pocket. And standing with his back against it, said, seriously:

"Thomas, I have always considered you as an excellent detective. I have changed my mind."

"Well, what now?" asked Thomas, uneasily, glancing keenly at his friend, and thereafter avoiding his gaze.

"This," said Lamm, measuring his words; "the man who allows himself to be side-tracked in an important case by a pretty face and a pair of blue eyes has a cardinal weakness that sooner or later is sure to tell against him in business."

Thomas started, flushed, but controlled himself.

"Did you go clear to New York to find that out?"

"I have not been to New York," said Lamm, quietly. "I have been here in Boston, hard at work upon the latest and most curious feature of the North case."

"Come," said Thomas, desperately, "say what you mean. Don't talk in riddles."

"I mean that I know all about it, Thomas. I know that Kingman F. Thomas, who has done in his day as excellent detective work as anybody in the state, has at last fallen into the snare of the siren, and forgotten his duty. In other words, he is in love with one of the principals. Instead of arresting her he guards her. While the police are searching everywhere for her, he has her secretly hidden in his own house, right under their very noses, and comes to his best friend with a coolness that might (if he were a little less wary) have ruined his work on the case."

"John, you presume on your friendship," said Thomas, hotly. He had been nervously fingering his watch charm, and alternating between white and red, throughout Lamm's quiet speech but he now started up and faced the detective squarely. "You have no right to assume that there is any sentiment in the matter. You go too far when you charge me with letting my personal feelings run away with my sense of duty. You don't know what my object was—is."

"Ah, but pardon me, Kingman; I assume that I do. If it had been in the ordinary course of your professional business, you would have come to me with it for advice or assistance, just as you have always done when we have associated ourselves on a case before. There is only one reason why you didn't come; you were more than afraid that I would never approve of so rash a proceeding on your part, and you were resolved upon taking the step at all hazards. In other words, Kingman, you were a little ashamed."

Thomas had regained control of himself. He drew himself up.

[To Be Continued.]

IMPORTANCE OF CARBON.

Without It or Its Equivalent We Would Be Without the Arc-Light.

The electric arc-light, as now so commonly used is produced by the passage of a powerful electric current between the slightly separated ends of a pair of carbon rods, or "carbons," about 12 inches long and from three-eighths to one-half inch in diameter, placed vertically end to end in the lamp, writes Charles F. Brush, in "The Arc-Light," in Century. The lamp mechanism is so constructed that when no current is passing, the upper carbon, which is always made the positive one, rests upon the lower by the action of gravity; but as soon as the electric current is established, the carbons are automatically separated about an eighth of an inch, thus forming a gap of high resistance in the electric circuit, across which the current is forced, resulting in the production of intense heat. The ends of the carbons are quickly heated to brilliant incandescence, and by the burning action of the air are maintained in the form of blunt points. As the carbons burn away, the lamp mechanism feeds the upper one downward just fast enough to maintain the proper separation.

The carbons are not heated equally, the upper, or positive one, being much more the hottest. A small cup-shaped cavity, or "crater," ordinarily less than an eighth of an inch in diameter, is formed in its end, the glowing concave surface of which emits the greater part of the total light. In lights of the usual size, something like half a horse-power of energy is concentrated in this little crater, and its temperature is limited only by the vaporization of the carbon. Carbon being the most refractory substance known, the temperature of the crater is the highest yet produced artificially, and ranks next to that of the sun. It is fortunate that nature has provided us with such a substance as carbon, combining, as it does, the highest resistance to heat with the necessary electrical conductivity. Without carbon, or an equivalent—and none is known—we could have no arc-light.

An Ungrateful Servant.

The entire Sampson family were thrifty, and as the boasted, "forehanded" in all the matters of this world. They were eminently sane and practical, and had small understanding of the natures of people who, as they said, "gave way to sentiment."

"Has our old Jane actually left us after all these years?" said Grandma Sampson, repeating the words of an old friend who had come to pay a visit. "Yes, she's gone to a flighty young couple over in Nashua. I think perhaps she was getting too old for our work, but I did think she'd stay after the inducement I offered her.

"I said to her one day, when she complained of feeling tired, 'Jane, if you stay with us until I die I will leave orders that when you go you are to be put in our family lot; and if you die first I will see to it myself.'

"If you'll believe me, Jane began to cry, and the next day she told Charlie's wife that it made her feel so lonesome to look at me she couldn't stand it!"—Youth's Companion.

He Escaped.

Wife (angrily)—I expected you two hours ago. Where have you been, pray?

Husband—At the club. Somehow, I got into a dispute with Jinks, and—and—

Wife (impatiently)—Well?

Husband—Oh, I did him up all right. He contended there wasn't a woman with a decent temper in all the world, and I said I knew one with the temper of an angel. Is it necessary to add, dear, I meant you?—Brooklyn Life.

Defined.

Freddie—What's a dry goods store, dad?

Dad—Oh, that's a place where they sell popular novels.—The Little Sister.

"LITTLE PITCHERS"

GROWN-UPS OFTEN UNWISE IN TALK BEFORE CHILDREN.

"Little Pitchers Have Big Ears" and Parents Should Be Careful About Discussing Neighbors in Their Hearing—Object Lessons in Lying—The Incompetent Nurse—Burdens Upon Childish Minds—Copying Parents' Faults.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

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Nothing stamps a home more surely as sweet and refined than entire confidence between parents and children. Still, in every household matters come up which should not be discussed in the presence of juniors. This is especially true when, as sometimes happens, the older ones are talking over questions that concern outsiders, either neighbors or friends. If, unfortunately, something comes to light about a family in the community, which that family would naturally prefer to keep to itself, it is to the last degree unkind as well as unwise to make any allusion to the subject in the hearing of children. The difference between children, so far as curiosity is concerned, is very marked. An inquisitive child who is also secretive, will linger about, quietly observant, hanging eagerly on the conversation of father and mother, only half understanding what she hears, and perhaps without knowing the extent of the mischief she makes, will repeat scraps that she has heard to the undoing of the parents. No one can be other than mortified if her friends are told things that she has said at home, which were never meant for the public ear.

The little pitcher is often a little critic. One of these children said to me: "I cannot understand mother. She saw Mrs. —— coming down the street, and she said to Aunt Charlotte: 'There is that old cat. I am afraid she is coming here. She always chooses the most inconvenient time, and I can't bear her anyway.' "I expected," went on the child, "to see her treat Mrs. —— very coldly, but she was just as polite as she could be. She said: 'Dear Mrs. ——, how glad I am to see you,' and a great deal more. If I tell stories, I am punished. But what can I think of mother?"

What, indeed? If you are going to be a social hypocrite you would better keep your little pitchers in the nursery out of sight and hearing of your deceit. All the precept in the world will not make children truthful if they have object lessons in lying set before their eyes.

Not a great while ago, a beautiful golden-haired little boy, scarcely four, startled his mother by calmly uttering an oath in the middle of his play. "Why, Harry!" exclaimed the mother, in dismay. "Where did you hear such a word? Do you not know that it is very, very wicked to use such words as that?"

"Why," said the child, with honest eyes fixed on her face, "it can't be so very wrong. Father and Uncle Fred often speak in that way."

Children are creatures of imitation. The words they hear they repeat. Evil is not evolved from the recesses of their own hearts. It comes upon them as part of the stain and soil of the world in which they live.

* * * * * *

A great deal of harm is done to children when they are left in the care of irresponsible and incompetent hirelings. A mother careful of every breath her child draws, sometimes seeks for it a nurse who is foreign-born, with the very laudable desire to accustom the child's ear and tongue to French, or German, or Italian, so that it may acquire the other language side by side with its native English. Unless the mother obtains for the child a nurse who is pure-minded and sufficiently well educated to speak her own tongue with precision, she may be doing the child a great injury. It is no advantage to infancy to learn a corrupt and barbarous patois, instead of a pure and elegant language. If, in addition, the nurse be rough and untutored, and without scruples of a conscientious order, the little pitcher will very probably be filled to the brim with ideas and thoughts that are anything but clean and wholesome.

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The imperative cry of childhood is for something to do. Therefore, so soon as the little one emerges from the dawning mists of babyhood and becomes an independent personage, with exactions and demands that are to be met, the kindergarten should open for it a new world. In the multiform plays and tasks of the kindergarten, with the little tables where clay may be molded and beads may be strung, and patterns pricked into paper with pins, a child steps into a fascinating realm of its own. Children who are carefully taught in a kindergarten and who are allowed plenty of time for outdoor play, who are healthfully active all day and who go to bed early at night, are not in much danger of becoming objectionable little pitchers.

For the children's own sake, they should not too early have burdens laid upon them that they cannot bear. A woman who has children of her own told me that when she was a little girl of six she was in the room when her parents were somewhat exercised over the payment of a large bill. "I have absolutely no money to meet it," declared the father. For days thereafter the child shuddered whenever she saw a strange man turn in at the gate, and she was afraid that some dreadful thing was about to happen to her home long after her light-hearted father and mother had forgotten all about their transient embarrassment.

The whole business of bringing up children bristles with difficulty. If only we could be perfect beings ourselves the undertaking would not be so arduous. But we make so many blunders, we are so ready to leave undone what we ought to do, and to do what we ought not to do, that our children have a pretty hard time in their turn. Somehow they scramble up in spite of our mistakes. Heredity has a good deal to do with their success or failure. It is a great thing for a child to have had worthy grandparents. Training tells, too, but only as we train ourselves do we ever succeed in training our successors aright. Little Lilly and Josephine may be told all day long that it makes no difference how they look if only they behave well, but if mamma be vain and inconsiderate they will probably copy her rather than obey her precepts. Jack and Horace will not have finer ideals of honor than their father. I have heard the father of five sons, between the ages of four and 14, relate with positive glee, a story of gains that he had made through overreaching another in a business transaction. The little pitchers had big ears. They drank in the shameful tale. It would be too much to expect that later on they should go forth into life with a noble standard and a high ideal of integrity.

"I don't care what sort of men my boys make, so long as they learn to make money and keep it," said another father in the hearing of his sons. Not one of those boys turned out even decently, when he arrived at manhood. To make money and to keep it is too low an ideal to be set before a growing youth.

Look out for the little pitchers. It is worth while.

FROCK FOR A LITTLE GIRL.

Suitable for Child from Seven to Nine Years—The Material a Striped Cream Wool.

Our model is in a creamy-white woolen material woven with dark blue lines to form a small plaid. It makes a very becoming dress for a little girl. The front of the dress is arranged in three deeply-set pleats each side, leaving the center front plain, which simulates a wide box-pleat. The pleats are stitched from the shoulders to just below the bust, where they are ornamented with three dark blue velvet-covered buttons. A belt of the same material is worn below the waist-line; it crosses and buttons in front, and is held in position by stitching firmly to the center of back.

Materials required: 2½ yards 40 inches wide, one-quarter yard velvet.

A NEAT DRESS.

A CORRECT LUNCHEON.

Hour Is Somewhere Near One and Course Meal Somewhat Like Following Is Served.

The question is asked how to give a correct luncheon, the hour, courses, etc. One or half after is the accepted time; the shades are drawn, and artificial lights used as for an evening dinner. There is usually a centerpiece of flowers, although a fruit piece is sometimes substituted. Candles with shades to match the color scheme are used, and place cards, elaborate or simple, according to the taste and purse of the hostess.

In serving a good rule to follow is a fruit, bouillon or light soup, a lamb chop, a chicken, oyster or sweetbread patty, potato or rice croquettes, olives, jelly, or celery, radishes, a salad with wafers and a dessert followed by coffee, cheese and crackers. Many hostesses now serve some one of the popular cordials in tiny glasses, holding barely a thimbleful.

Pretty, light gowns are worn, high neck and elbow sleeves.—Madame Merri.

Care of the Hands.

Soft, tepid water, pure soap, and careful drying whenever bathed will help greatly to keep the hands soft and white. Skin food and massage will keep them well rounded and skin smooth. Well-shaped, polished nails, with well-kept cuticle and immaculate cleanliness is an imperative law.

Still the Style.

All-over lace, trimmed with medallions of batiste embroidery, is an exact reversal of the lace-trimmed allover embroideries of a year ago, which, by the way, are still in favor.