

# A Secret

By DONALD CHAMBERLIN

The day I was twenty-one years old I was walking on the street when a gentleman accosted me, saying:

"You are Joseph Stirling, I believe."

"I am," I replied, surprised, for I had no knowledge of the man who was speaking to me.

"If you will call on me at my office you will hear something which you may or may not consider to your advantage. But I warn you to say nothing about this meeting until you have heard what I have to say."

Handing me a card with his name, Francis Doyle, and his address on it, he turned away and was soon lost in the crowd.

I was naturally much disconcerted. I walked about aimlessly for an hour, then went to the address given me.

"Today you come into an inheritance of \$300,000," he said to me.

"What?"

"You don't mean it?"

"But I have something else to tell you that you may not wish to hear."

I paled and waited.

"You are not the son of either of your parents nor the brother of your supposed brothers and sisters."

This was indeed a blow. I dearly loved all of those he had mentioned. I had no heart to ask him to proceed, but he did.

"When your supposed father and mother were first married no children were born to them. This was a great disappointment to your father especially. Friction came between them, and they separated. In time your supposed father, believing that the birth of a child would bring back her husband, took you from your mother when you were born and wrote him that a child had been born to her and him. He returned to her, and a reconciliation was established.

"Those whom you have considered your brothers and sisters came on the real children of Mr. and Mrs. Stirling. Only Mrs. Stirling knows that you are not her son. Your own mother was of good family who made a runaway match with your father. He was unable to take care of her and died, the cause of his death being his poverty. You were born shortly after his death, and at that time it occurred to Mrs. Stirling to offer an adopted son to her husband instead of a real one.

"Your own mother placed with a law firm a record of your birth and the persons who had adopted you. That was twenty-one years ago. I was then a clerk in the employ of the firm and am now the firm myself. Cousins of yours who would have inherited certain property have died, and you are the heir. It has become my duty to notify you of your inheritance. This has involved giving you the other information concerning your birth. If you accept the fortune the secret must come out, for your supposed father must necessarily know whence came your fortune. What change this may make in the present relations between husband and wife is impossible to tell."

He had given me the situation in a nutshell. I was like a ventriloquist in a changing wind—two air currents disputing for the mastery. On the one side there was the possession of \$300,000 on the other the revelation of a secret that would give my dear mother pain—I could not at once consider her as not my mother—make trouble between her and father and make known to my brothers and sisters that I was of a different family.

But all this was not in complete possession of my mind. The shock I had received on learning that I did not really belong to those I loved was up to me. I dreaded the first meeting with them all after the information I had received. I should certainly give away the fact that there was something on my mind, and doubtless mother would suspect what it was. What if she must have led, dreading all ways that her secret would come out?

"Well," said the attorney, "I presume you will take time to recover from the information I have given you and devise some means of softening the blow to Mr. Stirling."

"I will think over what is best to be done in the premises," I replied, "and let you know."

I left him a different man from what I had been when I entered his office. Being to a telephone, I called up my home and informed the household that I was going somewhere with a friend and could not tell just when I would be at home. How I wished I could go to father or mother for advice! This being obliged to settle so important a matter without any one to consult with was, to say the least, trying.

The next day I went home. For the others it was the same home it always had been, but an invisible gulf had come between them and me. Father welcomed me; mother kissed me with her wonted affection.

The same afternoon I gave in my decision to the attorney. My fortune went into a hospital, the name of the donor being kept secret. I signed a lot of papers and departed somewhat relieved. The evening I spent at home trying to analyze the madness I felt. It was not for the loss of a fortune, but for the knowledge that had come to me.

The secret has been kept. Mother does not know that I am aware of it, and she shall never know. We are the same happy family, but I wish that lawyer could have got rid of my patrimony without my knowledge.

## Norway and Trotting Horses.

From tales of travel and other sources of information it appears that Norway was one of the first countries to develop speed in the trotting horse, which centuries ago seems to have been common to the nations of northern Europe. Sigfried Petersen says that as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century there were informal trotting races in Christiania. The principal name in the history of the sport is that of Jacob Meyer, chief of the royal mounted militia, who was born in 1781. He owned the noted horse Slejner Varg that on March 15, 1820, trotted an English mile in 2:37 and repeated in the same time. This was faster than any horse had then trotted in America, so far as is known. In Sweden, and in Finland the sport of trotting horses dates back, it is said, to prehistoric times. With long winters and nothing else to do the people raced their horses to sleighs on the ice. Sunday morning was the great occasion, men and horses coming from miles around to take part in or witness the sport.—New York Herald

## Her Early Life in Germany.

In her book entitled "Scenes and Memories" Walburga Lady Paget has this to say of her early life in Germany: "We ran about without shoes or stockings in the grass, we wore a minimum of clothes; in summer we were plunged into the river, a wide and rushing mountain stream; in winter we had to break the ice in our tubs and our nurses dashed basins of icy water over our backs. I can still feel the thin bits of ice mixed with the water alluring down over me. A fire in our bedrooms was never thought of, and the schoolroom was never more than 9 degrees Fahrenheit (52 F.). I was fourteen or fifteen before I knew what it was to have something to drink at breakfast, as I did not like milk bread, with a little butter, was all I ever had. An egg for a child, if it was not ill, was considered quite absurd. Between meals we were given abundance of fruit."

## Romance of a Picture.

Half a century ago a medical student looking in London was gratified himself, in the eyes of his landlady, that on his departure for Hobart to practice he asked him to accept a son of his London home, and he took a picture which had been in his sitting room. This picture remained in his house for upward of forty years, without attracting any particular notice, but then its hour struck, for a visitor detected merit in it and advised the owner to forward a description of it to London. He did so, and the picture, which turned out to be a Romney, fetched 3,500 guineas. The best of the story is that the Tasmanian editor who printed an account of the matter gave the price as 350 guineas, saying that he did so because he did not believe that any picture could be worth the larger sum.—London Sphere

## Crime and Penalty.

When Mrs. Willes recently netted out punishment to her son George Willes with a carpet beater that young gentleman gave vent to such weeping and wailing that the lady next door was constrained to peek over her own back yard fence and inquire what was the matter.

"Got about a couple o' undred feet o' gas inside him, that's wot's the matter," Mrs. Willes replied.

"Couple o' undred feet o' gas!" echoed the lady somewhat incredulously. "Wot on earth's he been doin', takin' the gas pipe for a feedin' bottle?"

"No, 'e ain't," snapped Mrs. Willes. "'E's been swallowin' the shillin' wot I laid by for the gas meter."—London Tit-Bits

## Alpine Egg Dance.

A curious eastern custom has been observed for many centuries in the western Alps. One hundred eggs are distributed over a level space covered with sand and the young men and women perform a dance around them. If a couple are fortunate enough to finish the dance without breaking an egg it is taken as a token of the compatibility of their temperaments and they are betrothed.

## Breaking It Gently.

Maid—Thieves got into a house in this street last night and stole all the silver. Mistress—What stupid people to leave things unlocked! Whose house was it? Maid—It was No. 7. Mistress—Why, that is our house! Maid—Yes, ma'am, but I did not want to frighten you.—Judge

## Always Too Late.

"Old chap, didn't your better judgment tell you not to make that investment?"

"No; my better judgment never tells me anything until after I've gone and made a confounded fool of myself."—Chicago Tribune

## He'll Get the Time Though.

"I suppose you're going to Dr. Mason's funeral, grandpa?"

"Oh," snorted the infirm old man, "don't talk to me about other people's funerals. It's as much as I shall be able to do to get to my own."—London Answers

## Odd Case.

"The man they ejected from the hall was burning with rage."

"Yes, and strange to say, he was full of fire after they put him out."—Baltimore American

## Just Where He Stopped.

Some don't see any sense under the carpet? Janitor—Yes; I always sweep everything under the carpet.—The Record

# His Little Boy's Pistol

By THOMAS R. DUNN

This happened some thirty years ago. Manners in the far west are better now than they were then. Indeed, they are as civilized there as anywhere else.

A stagecoach drew up in front of a tavern in a small town where gun law was the only law on the statute book. But even that was an unwritten law, for there was no statute books to write it in. A young man, dressed in the ordinary business costume of New York or Chicago or Philadelphia or any other eastern city, got out of the coach with the other passengers and went into the tavern. He asked if there were any letters for him. The landlord handed him one. He read it and hunted through his pockets for his cigar case. Not finding it at once, he took out seven articles while making the search, among them a small pistol.

Several men, denizens of the country, were lounging about, among them a red faced man with a stubble beard and as many scars on his face as a German student member of a duelling corps. This man caught sight of the new arrival's pistol, and it at once excited his interest.

"Lemme see that, stranger," he said.

The young man handed him the pistol, and he looked it over with evident pleasure and amusement.

"Purty, isn't it?" he remarked.

He continued to examine it, cocking and uncocking it. Meanwhile the stranger found his cigar case and, leaning a chair up on his hind legs against the wall, sat down on it, resting his heels on the front round and lighting a cigar, smoked.

"What do you do with it?" inquired the red-faced man.

The stranger smoked on without making any reply. His sang froid excited the attention of the bystanders, who commenced to move uneasily.

"The man who asked the question was Scar Joe, so-called from the traces of his own fights. He was not used to asking questions and receiving no reply. He cast a single glance at the stranger and went on cocking and uncocking the revolver.

"Goin' to make a birthday gift of it to your little boy?" he asked.

"Will it shoot?" persisted Scar Joe.

"This third question eliciting no reply, the westerner took a quick aim at the stranger's cigar and fired, and cigar and sparks left the smoker's lips.

He didn't turn pale. He didn't look at Scar Joe reproachfully or fearfully or any other way. He didn't look at him at all. He simply took out another cigar, lighted it and went on smoking.

"Does shoot, don't it? Shoots purty straight, don't it? I wonder if I could do it again!"

He fired a second shot with like results. The stranger remained as imperturbable as before, taking out another cigar and lighting it with as little apparent objection to this waste of cigars as if he were loaded down with them. Again Scar Joe sent it flying amid a shower of sparks.

"Stranger," said the smoker in a soft voice, "you're one of the best shots I ever saw. That pistol I've brought from the east as a present for my wife. I've got another for my little girl that'll bet you can't hit a silver dollar with at ten yards."

"Lemme see it."

The stranger thrust his right hand into his trousers pocket and grasped something that he drew out so clutched in his fist that it was not easy to discern what it was. One of the lookers on, with better or quicker sight than the others, seemed to get on to something about to happen, for he ducked under a table. The stranger reached the thing out to his tormentor. It exploded, and Scar Joe staggered backward, at the same time putting his hand to his hip. The something in the stranger's fist exploded again, and the westerner fell dead.

One would naturally suppose that those present would be chiefly interested in the fallen man. So they were till they were convinced that he had received his last scar. Then all of a sudden their minds concentrated on the thing in the stranger's hands that had done the work. All eyes turned toward him curiously. He had returned the explosive thing to his pocket.

"Landlord," he said, "I'd like something to eat before I go. My wife writes me that she'll send a team for me to be here at 2. It's now 1. I've just time for dinner."

"I say, stranger," said one present, "would you mind lettin' us see what that was you shot him with?"

"I know what it is," said the man who had sought safety under the table. "It's a bulldog. I seen 'em before. They're the ugliest weapon at short range they is got."

The stranger took out a short, thick pistol with a very stocky barrel and allowed the party to examine it.

"Was father one really a gift for your wife?" asked one.

"Certainly. When I was called east she asked me to bring her a revolver, suitable for a woman."

While the stranger was dining the body of his victim was being removed. When his team arrived and he was driving away one of the crowd who had gathered to see him off cried out:

"Much obliged for gettin' rid of Scar Joe. He was gittin' to be a nuisance."

On the identical spot where this episode happened there is now a handsome hotel, lighted by electricity and having all the modern improvements.

## Japanese Food Boxes.

"Japanese dishes fail to satisfy American cravings," says an officer in the United States army. "Imagine a diet without milk, bread, butter, jam, coffee, salad or any sufficient quantity of nicely cooked vegetables without pudding, stewed fruit and with comparatively little fresh fruit. The European vegetarian will find as much difficulty in making anything out of it as the ordinary meat eater. Along the main railroad artery neat little boxes of Japanese food (bento) are offered for sale at the principal stations at a cost of 7 1/2 cents; also pots of tea, including teapot and earthen teacup, for 2 cents. The bento may contain in neat separate compartments prawn fish, chicken, rice, preserved ginger, Johnnycake, omelette, a broiled mushroom, a slice of radish, glazed beans, kind of sweet pickle, tripe, a slice of cooked chestnut, licorice, etc. The bento is given to the eye, is furnished in green, is neatly wrapped and the contents varied as the resources of the locality admit."—New York Mail

## A Famous Window.

York minister, in addition to its many other notable features, contains one of the most remarkable windows in the world—the east window, which is the largest in England, except that in Gloucester cathedral. It is seventy-five feet high and thirty-five feet broad. The window is divided into 200 compartments, all of which illustrate leading events in sacred history. Each pane of glass is three feet square, the figures measuring two feet four inches high. The upper part is filled with beautiful tracery and is divided from the lower by the narrow stone gallery which runs across. John Thornton of Coventry began the window in the year 1405. The ancient glazing, all of which he executed with his own hands, stands unequalled to the present day, and for this enormous task he received as wages 4 shillings a week for three years and £10 on completing his work to the satisfaction of the cathedral authorities.—London Graphic

## When Photography Was New.

When photography first began they used wet plates and a sitting required eight or nine minutes. A man once went to be taken, and the photographer put in his wet plate, demanded perfect immobility and took off the cap.

During the long exposure the photographer left the room a moment. On his return everything seemed to be going all right. But when the exposure ended and he rushed to his closet to develop the wet plate there was nothing on it but a blur.

Very much disgusted, he showed this blur to the sitter.

"You must have moved," he said.

The sitter looked at the spoiled plate and laughed in amazement.

"Well, I declare," he said, "who'd have thought that just running over to the window for a minute to see a drunken man would have done all that? I sat right down again."—Minneapolis Journal

## Baldness.

Men get bald more frequently than women, according to Dr. Guelpa of Paris, because they wear hard, heavy hats; they cut their hair too short and they eat more than women. Dr. Guelpa says the scalp is like soil and the hair like the vegetation that grows upon it. When the scalp is neglected the hair does not grow and its roots die, just as grass dies when the soil is poor. A heavy, hard hat constricts the blood vessels that nourish the scalp. Clipping the hair short leaves its tender roots at the mercy of cold, heat and dust. The oil that exudes from around the roots of the hairs and keeps them nourished is conglobated by the cold and chokes up the matrix in which the hair is formed.—New York World

## Cautious Courtship.

A Scottish farmer's son had the misfortune to fall in love with two young ladies at once. The one was a tall, strapping girl, while the other was small and slim. The puzzled lover at last asked his father's advice. "Well," said his father, "there's a sue muckle machinery used in farmin' nowadays that a big, active wife is no' o' muckle use, so I advise ye to tak' the little one. She'll eat less, anyway!"

## Paragon of Parrots.

Customer—But is he a good bird? I mean, I hope he doesn't use dreadful language. Dealer—Es a saint, lady; sings 'Yann beautiful. I had some parrots but used to swear something awful, but if you'll believe me, lady, this 'ere bird converted the lot.—London Bystander

## Consentious.

McAllister—"Tis threepence I'm owing ye, meenister. The fact is, I'm a conscientious man, and I pit naethin' in the plate on Sunday. The smallest I had w' me was a sixpence, and I didn't think the salrman was up to it."—Dundee Advertiser

## Defining an Epigram.

"Father," said the small boy, "what is an epigram?"

"An epigram," replied Mr. Growcher, "is usually a brief but commonplace remark made by somebody who has been well advertised."—Washington Star

## Judging a Man by His Clothes.

"What a mistake it is to judge men by their clothes!"

"Yes, I know a self-made millionaire who dresses as well as any of the clerks in his establishment."—Judge

Make your environment but your environment makes you.

# Heroic Treatment

By F. TOWNSEND SMITH

My friend Rogers was forty years old and a bachelor. He had no taste for society, and his life was solitary in the extreme.

I had been to his room occasionally, and his landlady knew my name. One day Rogers had worked himself up to such a condition that she feared he was going to commit suicide. They hunted my name in the telephone register and called me up to say that she wished I would come round and take charge of him. I went to his room and found him walking the floor, with a desperate look in his eye. I took him out with me for dinner, after which we went to the theater, and he spent the night in my rooms. Before going to bed I said to him:

"Rogers, the thing for you to do is to get married."

"Who would marry me?"

"I know several young women who would be glad to get you. I'll introduce you to the one that I think would be the most likely to suit you if you like."

"Anything to relieve me of myself."

The young person to whom I introduced Rogers was twenty-seven years old. Not having thus far fulfilled the condition for which she was made—a wife and mother—she was beginning to get dissatisfied with herself and those about her. I told her of Rogers' case, and she confessed that it was much like her own. She, too, said "anything but the life of an old maid." It was understood when I brought them together that it was for the purpose of matrimony, and they didn't pretend to what they did not feel—that they were in that detrium commonly called love. They made short work of the preliminaries and, being very much pleased with each other, became engaged and were married.

I think their honeymoon was as happy as it is with married couples usually. Both seemed to have taken laughing gas. There was no attention too great or too trivial for Rogers to pay his wife, and she seemed disposed to suffer any inconvenience rather than put him to the slightest discomfort.

I called on them soon after their marriage. Then I did not see them again for six months. I met Rogers again, grasping him by the hand, said: "How are you, old man? How goes married life?"

"Oh, married life is well enough, I suppose."

"Well enough? Why, I thought at first you considered it delightful."

"That was in the beginning, when we hadn't really settled down to the business of married life. I find double harness pretty hard to work in some times."

"Have any company?"

"All we want."

"Well, I'm coming round to see you pretty soon."

When I called Rogers had been detained at business, and I was entertained by his wife. Being an old friend of mine, I did not hesitate to ask her how married life suited her.

"Oh, I don't suppose," she said, "that Ed is any harder to live with than most men?"

"He isn't somber, is he?"

"Oh, no; he is cheerful enough, but I surprise him every now and then by not being what he has always supposed a woman to be, and if all men are what he is sometimes they must be."

While we were talking in came Ed. He saw by his wife's expression that she had been pouring her troubles into my ear, and he didn't like it. He set down with a very ugly look on his face.

"Well," he said to me, "I suppose my wife's been making me out a pretty hard nut."

"See here," I said, faring up, "I did the best I could for you two in bringing you together. If you want to quarrel I would prefer that you leave me out."

"Who's drawing you in?" asked the husband, with a snarl.

"He's drawn himself in," snapped the wife. "He tried to pump you when he met you the other day, then came around here to pump me."

"Pump you!—What interest have I in whether you get on or don't get on together? I bid you both good evening."

I seized my hat and got out of the house as quickly as I could, followed by more caustic remarks from both of them and making to myself more caustic remarks still.

"What a fool I was to try to do anything with a bachelor and an incipient old maid! One might as well try to make a crooked tree grow straight. I catch me trying to help any one that way again."

When we do a kindness we don't know whether it will turn out such an injury. I thought I knew that in this case I had done the latter. But I was mistaken. The two needed heroic measures to bring them together and heroic measures to get them fused. After the heyday of wedlock had passed they needed a blowpipe. I was that blowpipe. When they both turned and fought me they found a common vent for their irritation, and its flow upon each other was directed in another channel.

Rogers came to see me, apologized for himself and his wife and begged me to dine with them the next Sunday. I went, and we have been excellent friends ever since.

A baby took up the case where I left it.

## A Strong Argument.

Plano on the installment principle was his theme. You pay \$3 a week and torture the neighbors.

As he knocked gently at one door he suddenly remembered he had been here before and received a curt refusal. This time it was different, says the New York Mail.

"Oh, it's you again, is it?" asked the housewife cordially. "Come in, won't you?"

Full of hope he entered and followed her down a dimly lighted hall. She threw open a door and he walked in, to hear the key click sharply in the lock behind him.

He was locked in a room with five children, all howling, who beat even their own records at the sight of a stranger.

And the woman resumed her washing.

An hour later she came to his rescue.

"Now," she said sweetly, "if you still think I need more music in this house I am ready to listen to you."

But he had gone before she had finished.

## On What Happiness Depends.

A little thought will show you how vastly your own happiness depends on the way other people bear themselves toward you. The looks and tones at your breakfast table, the conduct of your fellow workers or employers, the faithful or unreliable men you deal with, what people say to you on the street, the way your cook and housemaid do their work, the letters you get, the friends or foes you meet—these things make up very much of the pleasure or misery of your day. Turn the idea around and remember that just so much are you adding to the pleasure or misery of other people's days. And this is the half of the matter which you can control. Whether any particular day shall bring to you more of happiness or of suffering is largely beyond your power to determine. Whether each day of your life shall give happiness or suffering rests with yourself.—George S. Merriam

## The Beautiful Lyre Bird.

The largest and handsomest of all the song birds is the lyre bird. Its home is in Australia, where its song is heard morning and evening. It is heard oftener in winter than in summer. The chief beauty of the lyre bird is in the plumage of its tail, which is elegant and in the form of an ancient lyre. While singing the lyre bird spreads its tail over its head like a peacock and droops its wings to the ground. This bird is not only a fine songster, but can imitate the songs of all birds. One living near a wood lawyer's but even imitated the sound of the filing of saws. The crowing of cocks, the cackling of hens, the barking of dogs and the mewling of cats are within its range. Its own song is also different from that of other birds, being a louder and fuller tone.

## Causes of Cancer.

"Constant irritation," says a cancer hospital physician, "is one of the principal causes of cancer, and if a person has a wart or lump on his skin which is constantly scratched, it is likely to be converted into a cancer. If there is a tear which is not attended to and causes irritation, it may give rise to a cancerous growth. The sharp edge of a tooth or an injury to the internal organs may also give rise to cancerous tissues."

The doctor emphasized the remarkable vitality of cancer tissue and its power of growth. He said he had in his laboratory a mouse on which are growing cancer cells that were alive in another mouse thirteen years ago.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat

## The English Yeoman.

"Yeoman" is a good old English word, the meaning of which should be carefully cherished. Any country laborer or farmer is not a yeoman. A yeoman is a man who cultivates his own freehold, who farms his own land. He is no man's servant and may hold his head as high as the squire. There are still yeomen of ancient blood in England who would sniff at the offer of a title. One of the finest men I ever knew was a Dorset yeoman, and his ancestors had farmed the same land for three centuries.—London Globe

## The Boy and the Bee.

Bee Master (to pupil who has just brushed off bee which stung him)—Ah, you shouldn't do that! The bee will die now. You should have helped her to extract her sting, which is spirally barbed, by gently turning her round and round. Pupil—All very well for you, but how do I know which way she uncrews?—London Punch

## Music Without Sound.

The fundamental evil in music is the necessity of reproduction of its artistic creations by performance. Were it as easy to learn to read music as words the sonatas of Beethoven would have the popularity of the poems of Schiller.—F. Hiller

## Inclined, but Declined.

Miss A.—I thought Mr. Homeleigh was matrimonially inclined. Miss B.—He was, but he's been declined so often, poor man, that he's got over it.—Boston Transcript

## Paradoxical.

Willie (ready for school)—Mamma, they are hoisting up a safe down the street. Mother—Well, be careful not to walk on the safe side.—Boston Transcript

Life is altogether too short to dwell on failures. Push on to a new success.