A Secret

By LOUISE B. CUMMINGS

I was the oldest child in a family of five, I being a girl, the rest boys. My parents were in comfortable circumstances, and, so far as I knew, there was no skeleton in the closet to trouble any one of us.

The day I was eighteen on leaving the house to do some shopping I was accosted by a woman.

"I have been watching for you to leave your home for two or three days," she said. "Please come with me to a lawyer's office in the matter of a legacy."

I went with her to the office where she worked and was ushered into the room of one of the partners. He was a pleasant looking man and quieted what misgivings I had. He asked me to wait while he sent for a person who wished to see me, and I was detained some time, at the end of which an elderly woman came in. She looked at me curiously for a few moments, then began to speak to me.

"I have a communication to make to you which will probably both trouble and please you. You are not the child of your supposed father and mother."

I caught at the arm of the chair in which I was sitting, but presently, mastering my feelings, nodded to the woman to proceed. "Mrs. Worthington, your supposed mother, when first married had trouble with her husband. He left her, and she, thinking that the birth of a child might heal the breach and bring him back, applied at a foundling asylum for a newborn babe. A child had been left at my door, and I had taken steps to have it received at the home at which Mrs. Worthington applied. The result was that she took the baby that had been left at my door. You are that child."

Again I showed signs of collapse, but my impatience to hear more kept me up.

"Several years after this occurred a lady called at my home and told me that she was the mother of the foundling whom she had left at my door. She gave me no information about the matter except that she was the daughter of well to do parents, but had married against their wishes, and her father had for a time disowned her. In reply to her inquiries as to what had become of you I told her of your situation as the supposed oldest daughter of persons of respectability and that if you were claimed it might part a husband and wife, the former not knowing of the deception that had been practiced upon him.

"She left me without telling me what she would do. Two years ago Mr. Harwood, the gentleman who is with us, sent for me and told me that you had received in trust for you property valued at $100,000, which was to be yours when you came of age. He had been charged to see that you were informed of your bequest without any of the Worthington family knowing anything about it. He desired me to keep track of you and when you came to be eighteen years old to take steps that you should be informed of all these facts. Your real mother deposited in this office all the information about you to enable you to claim the property."

She ceased to speak, and both she and the lawyer for a while left me to recover from the shock I had received. They conversed together, but I had no idea what they were talking about so absorbed was I in the information I had received about myself. I was greatly distressed. I loved my supposed father and mother, my brothers and sisters just the same as if I were of the same blood. I now had a secret that only my supposed mother had. But she did not know that I had it. What should I do?

I was permitted to digest the matter as far as I could within a brief period, when Mr. Harwood said to me kindly:

"It is not necessary that you should come now to a decision as to what your future course is to be. I would advise you to think the matter over before action."

"I have decided just what to do. I shall keep this secret to myself."

The lawyer looked somewhat disturbed at this and said that it would be difficult to inherit my property without my identity becoming known. I told him that I would resign the property. I wouldn't have it on any account, since its possession would bring trouble on the family of which I was a member.

I left the office, but did not return home for some time. I telephoned that I would visit a friend with whom I was very intimate. When I met the members of the family again I was prepared to live with them and my secret. It did not make any change in my feelings or my bearing toward my supposed mother, and she never knew that I possessed knowledge that I was not her daughter. From time to time I was asked by the lawyer to whom my property had been left in trust if I would take a receipt for it. I always remied in the negative. When I was married my resolution weakened, but I did not yield. When Mr. and Mrs. Worthington were both dead and only two of the children remained, I, having a family of my own, received my legacy. But it was supposed that it came to me through my husband. At the time I received it I had lived more than twelve years without drawing any of the income which had accumulated, and the property itself had considerably increased in value.

The Chief Obstacle.

The French are not inclined to take things too seriously. Thus, while they love and respect the venerable Frenen academy, they never refrain from making it the subject of a little good natured wit. Even the members themselves, as this entry in Victor Hugo's notebook will show, indulge themselves in occasional sallies against the famous institution.

On Dec. 17, 1846, Victor Hugo, himself one of the forty "immortals" members of the academy, wrote in his notebook "Today, Thursday, in the academy. I spoke there with Dupin, the elder about Balzac and of his chances of election to the academy. Thunder! Dupin interrupted me. 'So you really believe that, without any more to do, Balzac will be chosen the first time he comes up for election.

"'You quote examples where that has occurred, but those prove nothing. Think of it! Balzac, at the first presentation of his name! You have thought the matter over carefully? Good! But you have forgotten one reason why it is quite impossible that Balzac should be elected to the academy—he deserves it!'"

"To Keep Young."

Youth is what we all love to have and to hold, and since Ponce de Leon's time many a way of conserving it has been prescribed—douche, drinking sour milk, systems of exercise, bathing, rubbing. Any one of these things may help the individual, but not every individual. And let us not forget that youth is in great measure a gift of the spirit. Children are young because for them life abounds. They find springs of energy within and stores of refreshment without. Wonder, curiosity, the enjoyment of ten thousand trifles, a short memory for punishment and pain—all these things make for youth. Quarrels, resentfulness, suspicion, worry, grouchiness—these bring harder lines around the mouth, hardened arteries, old age. Nothing is too small to delight a child, given the right conditions; nothing too big to darken for very long the spangled sky. That is the secret of youth. Draw the curtain. Master Manager! On with the human comedy.—Collier's Weekly.

Japanese Flower Etiquette.

To order a dozen or two of roses or carnations indiscriminately over the telephone, to be delivered in a pasteboard box by a florist's boy, as a gift to a friend would mean a lack of refinement to a Japanese, writes Grace H. Ingley in Suburban Life. In fact, ignorance of flower lore might result in disastrous blunder. If, for example, you sent a purple wisteria, however exquisite in itself, to a bride she would hardly forgive you, since purple is a color of a bad omen, never to be used on felicitous occasions. On the other hand, you would convey a delicate compliment by sending chrysanthemums, because, on account of their long period of blooming, they signify long life. A peony sent to a friend is a flattering recognition of his distinction, as it is suitable only for those of high rank.

The Comparison Held.

A lecturer went to Yonkers with a letter to a Yonkers citizen from a man in New Rochelle and succeeded in getting an engagement. His three hour lecture proved dull, dry and quinter esting. Next day Mr. Yonkers met Mr. New Rochelle.

"What did you mean," asked Yonkers, "by recommending that lemon lecturer?"

"I didn't recommend him."

"Well, I just guess you did. I've your letter right here in my pocket."

"Better read it over again—carefully."

Mr. Yonkers did. It was noncommittal:

"I have heard Mr. B.'s lecture. It is as interesting as it is instructive."

"And it wasn't either," said Yonkers. "Then the comparison holds," said New Rochelle.—New York World.

A Queer Question.

"I have come to consult you," she said to the prominent lawyer.

"What is the trouble?"

"I have received three proposals of marriage, and I do not know which to accept."

"Which man has the most money?"

"Do you imagine" she asked, "that if I knew I would consult you or any other lawyer?"—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Open to Conviction.

"Some of your constituents are disagreeing with you," said the trusted Lieutenant.

"Well, keep tab on them," replied Senator Sorghum, "when enough disagree with me to constitute a reliable majority I'm going to turn around and agree with them."—Washington Star.

A Wise Child.

"Willie," sadly said a father to his young son "I did not know till today that last week you were whipped by your teacher for bad behavior."

"Didn't you, father?" Willie answered cheerfully. "Why I knew it all the time."—Woman's Home Companion.

Then She'll Tell You.

"Tell me," said the lovesick youth "what's the best way to find out what a woman thinks of you."

"Marry her," replied Peckham promptly.—Philadelphia Press.

Mean Inference.

Dix—My wife is never happy when I am out of her sight. Dix—My wife doesn't trust me, either.—Yonkers Statesman.

He goeth better that escapeth in his way than he that runneth out of his way.—St. Augustine.

A WIDOW'S RUSE

By MARGARET C. DEVEREAUX

In antebellum days there lived in Georgia on a large plantation, which he owned, one David Dupont. His wife bore him one child, a son, and when the baby was but a year old the father died, leaving his property to his wife in trust for his son. But Dupont's affairs had always been in the hands of one John Coulter, in whose business ability and integrity the planter had every confidence. He therefore left the management of the estate to Coulter as executor.

Mrs. Dupont had always distrusted Coulter, but so great was his influence over her husband that she dared not speak her mind.

One day she set out from the plantation to visit a friend. Her trunks were taken to the station by the negroes, but the widow carried in her hand what in those days was called a handbox made of pasteboard, intended for the carrying of women's bonnets or men's hats. This box she would trust to no other hands than her own. She told all of the household that her baby was to remain in the hands of Chloe, his mammy, and no one else was to have anything to do with him.

Mrs. Dupont had been away from the plantation but a few days when Chole's husband, Sampson, appeared to inform her that little Archie, her son, was very ill. She hurried home and, going to the sickroom, shut herself up there, giving orders that no one except the doctor, who had been the family physician for years, was to be admitted. The doctor came and went, but when asked how the baby was getting on always hurried away without giving any satisfaction. One day when he came out of the sickroom he said:

"It's all over."

Two days later Simpson carried a little coffin from the house, followed by the widow, the boy's mammy and all the negroes on the plantation. There were wails from the dusky mourners, but none wailed so loud as the dead boy's mammy. The coffin was carried to the family cemetery, where it was placed in a grave that had been prepared for it.

John Coulter during Archie's sickness, death and burial was away on business. When he returned he found his plans seriously interfered with. There was a provision in David Dupont's will that if his son died before his widow, the estate should be hers instead of in trust for the boy. The widow at once claimed the property and told Coulter that he must turn it over to her.

The executor was in a hole. He had partly accomplished his plans to get possession of the property and had it not been for the child's death would doubtless soon have got it into a position where he would appear to be the rightful owner. As it was, he could only undo what he had done and turn the estate over to the widow. He was a long while doing it, and she was obliged on several occasions to threaten him with a charge of misappropriation to force him to disgorge. When he had done so she dismissed him, hoping that he would leave the neighborhood. But in the service of the Dupont family he had accumulated some money, with which he bought a small plantation in an adjoining county, where he settled.

Some eight or nine years after Archie Dupont's death the widow brought to the plantation a boy whose age was given as twelve years and adopted him. George Etheridge was the boy's name, and he soon became a favorite with all the household. Chloe and Mrs. Dupont both seemed to have transferred to him their love for little Archie. George grew up a fine fellow and, thanks to his mother by adoption, was well educated.

When Etheridge was about to become of age Mrs. Dupont granted him a celebration of the event. The planters from round about were invited to the fete, and, strange to say, John Coulter, who had continued to prosper and had become a prominent citizen, received an invitation. Surprise was manifested at the extent of the preparations, and some persons who remembered the boy's age as given out when he came to the plantation declared that he had come of age a year or two before.

However, there was a fine gathering in honor of the event. On the birthday when the clock struck 12 the guests were gathered on a lawn near the house. Mrs. Dupont was there with George Etheridge, old Chloe and all the household negroes.

"My friends," said the widow, "and Mr. Coulter, this is my son, Archibald Dupont. When he was a year old I gave out that he was dead. This I did in order to get possession of my property, which was passing into the hands of the executor of the estate. I took my baby away in a handbox, Chloe, as I had arranged with her, sent me word of his illness, and I returned to bury a wax doll. When he grew old enough not to be known for himself I brought him here. These precautions are no longer necessary, for by his father's will his property is to be paid him today.

All were surprised except young Dupont, who had known the facts for several years, and Chloe, who had always known them.

While Mrs. Dupont was speaking her eyes were fixed on John Coulter. Not being a sensitive man, his mind was occupied with the manner in which he had been beaten by a woman.

China's Province Iron Mine.

China's famous iron mine, the Tayeh, the foremost in the far east, is remarkable for the ease with which it is worked. It stands peerless in the world in this respect, excavation requiring no machine power. The work is done by hand by the Chinese coolies. The mine is reported to be inexhaustible in its ore. In the days of the "three kingdoms" the locality formed a theater of bloody fighting, and the vicinity abounds in relics of that memorable period in Chinese history. It is about 3,650 Chinese miles from Peking overland and about 4,000 Chinese miles by water. Tayehsien is traversed by ranges of hills and mountains, the valleys of which abound in innumerable lakes of all sizes, with water course facilities. Consequently the locality is rich in scenery of great beauty, and the Chinese poets from olden times have never tired of singing of the "eight views" of Tayeh. In the neighborhood of the Tayeh iron mine are found the ruins of ancient iron foundries, probably 1,000 years old. Millions of tons of slag lie in heaps.

Settled the Question.

In Regensburg, in the middle ages, the headsman died and three applicants presented themselves for the post. A test of their skill would settle the matter. Accordingly three criminals were brought forth for slaughter.

The first headsman made with his sword a tiny nick in the first criminal's neck. "I'll lop him off just there," he said, and, swinging his sword round with a great swishing sound, lo! he did as he had said he would.

The second headsman tied a string round his criminal's neck. "I'll cut off his head and bisect the string," he said. And he did as he had promised.

These two first headsmen now began to study and ponder the neck of the third criminal, asking what proof of skill the third headsman should undertake, when the latter with one vast and splendid sword sweep cut off all three heads, thus finishing the criminal and his rivals together and winning the headsmanship of Regensburg amid the applause of all.

Harvard's First Building.

No man now living can describe as an eyewitness the erudities of Harvard's first building, where the ground floor was devoted to academic uses, religious and literary exercises and the purposes of refectory, kitchen and buttery, while above were students' quarters, mere cells of the rudest sort.

The building was far from weatherproof, and more air than light was admitted by the windows, which were only partly glazed, oiled paper serving elsewhere to let in a few of the sun's rays and keep out the "coarsest of the cold," as Artemus Ward said when he hung an old hoopskirt over his chamber window at the country hostelry in midwinter.

Not even the most rudimentary of table equipment was supplied at the college eating room. His own knife and fork were carried by each student when he went to dinner, and after he had finished he wiped them on the tablecloth.—Dial.

Wasp Waisted Cretans.

In describing the civil guards at Canea, Mr. Trevor-Battye in "Camping In Crete," alludes to the slender waists of the Cretan men:

One point about the figures of these men, he says, as of all the mountain villagers, is the extreme smallness of their waists, which in some cases are almost wasplike. It is interesting to observe that this has always been a Cretan characteristic, for the figures on the frescoes and vases in the Minoan section of the museum in Candia (e. g., the famous "Cup Bearer") have the same remarkable slenderness of waist.

He is not sure whether this slim waist is natural or whether produced by tight belting.

A Lesson in Morals.

Mother—Now, Willie, you told me a falsehood. Do you know what happens to little boys who tell falsehoods?

Willie (sheepishly)—No, ma'am.

Mother—Why, a big black man with only one eye in the center of his forehead comes along and flies with him up to the moon and makes him pick sticks for the balance of his life. Now you will never tell a falsehood again will you? It is awfully wicked.—Puck.

Reason For His Popularity.

Stranger—The whole town seems to be turning out to this funeral. The deceased must have been very popular. Native—Stranger, he was one man in a million. After he bought his car he gave everybody a ride that he had promised to.—Judge.

Wine Tasters.

When wine tasters are employed in their professional duties they never swallow the wine they taste. They merely hold a sip of the beverage in the mouth for a few moments and breathe through the nostrils.—Exchange.

An Alternative.

Passenger—Do I have to change cars in Chicago? Excessively Polite Conductor—Not necessarily, madam. You can go back to New York if you want to.—Life.

Koreans and Chinese.

While the Chinese do not care for alcoholic drinks, but are addicted to opium, the Koreans like strong drink and do not care for opium.

The Box Was Good.

Wife—Charles, wasn't that a good box of cigars I gave you on your birthday? Husband—I never saw a better box, my dear.

A Story of the Great Blizzard of 1888

By CHARLES CRAIG

What a terrible storm was that which occurred in March, 1888! How the snow whirled! How deep it became! How many persons were caught, bewildered, and went down within reach of safety, yet never arrive alive!

During the day I, rebelling against remaining longer imprisoned, started out to walk to the village, a mile distant. How I got as far as I did I don't know, though I didn't get very far. Between my home and the town was an old brick house that had been built 150 years. It had been occupied for six months before, when the tenant left it, shutting it up with all the high post bedsteads and other old fashioned furniture. Seeing this house and realizing that I was battling a storm that was too much for me, I made for it, climbed the fence—the snow would not admit of opening the gate—and after struggling over a hundred feet up to the porch sank down at the front door in a stupor.

Things were vague after that. I seemed to have forgotten that the house was unoccupied, and, making an effort, I pulled myself up to reach the brass knocker and rapped. The door was opened by a gentleman, and, strange to say, he wore the uniform of the Continental army. I saw many persons moving about in the room and heard the strains of music.

"Bad night, sir," said the gentleman. "Come in and warm yourself."

"I certainly will," I replied. "I feel very queer. I am certainly benumbed."

"Fortunately some hot punch is just being served. It is just what you require."

He put his arm through mine and supported me to a room with a sideboard, on it on which was an enormous bowl, from which a negro was ladling out a steaming beverage. My conductor took one of the cups and handed it to me. I put it to my lips, but somehow I couldn't taste anything. It was like drinking air.

"I shall be happy to present you to my friends," said the man who had admitted me. "We are having a dance here tonight in honor of the officers commanding the troops just arrived and who are to be quartered in the neighborhood."

All this seemed natural enough. It didn't strike me that there was anything remarkable about it. I was taken up and introduced to ladies with enormous wigs and queer cut dresses. I tried to say something, but somehow I couldn't talk. There were a lot of men in Continental uniform and a few in citizens' dress, the latter with a yard or more of white stuff wrapped around their throats, and ruffles standing out from their bosoms.

"A bad night for our boys at Valley Forge," remarked a tall man, who as I looked at him seemed to resolve himself into General Washington.

"I should say so," I replied. "I'm cold myself here in these warm rooms. What must be the condition of those fellows living in huts or tents without sufficient blankets?"

One conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a young man, who approached Washington and whom the general received with marked favor.

"Who is that?" I asked of a guest.

"The Marquis de Lafayette."

The next thing I remember was seeing the general dancing the minuet and I wondered how he could be dancing when his troops were freezing. I say nothing of starving.

While he was engaged in the dance I heard a colored servant standing at the door announce in a loud voice:

"General Arnold!"

I looked at the man who entered and recognized—from portraits I had seen—Benedict Arnold. He went straight up to Washington and tapped him on the shoulder. Washington turned and the look of contempt and loathing on his face was terrible to see. While I was looking at it the view dissolved before me, and there was a blank. Then I was in a room in which Washington was talking and gesticulating with an officer against whom he seemed to have a very bitter feeling. I asked who this man was and was informed that he was General Charles Lee, who deliberately disobeyed Washington's orders at the battle of Trenton. There were high words between the two till Washington slapped Lee's face.

The sound of the slap dissolved into a voice that sounded in my ear.

"Hello! Wake up!"

I was violently shaken and slowly came to a realizing sense that I was on the porch of the deserted house, thoroughly benumbed. Two men were trying to arouse me. They shook me, hammered me, lifted me to my feet. Yes, I know they are. First hold me and hold me there in spite of my desire to sink down again.

I had been at the door but a few minutes. Two men who had walked behind me saw me turn into the deserted house and, realizing that it would be unsafe to leave me there, had followed me on to the porch. As soon as they had restored me—I don't one of them found a loose window sash which he opened, and we went inside. My rescuers had matches, and we found some lamps, also plenty of wood to make a blaze in one of the big fireplaces. We were forced to remain there, there being in the house during the night and in the morning had a hard time getting anywhere else.

I never miss the house, but I think of it as a [illegible] of the strange events I dreamed while passing.—Boys' Evening.

The Greatest Invention.

The greatest human needs are found below the waist line, in the sole of the foot, and the greatest invention, the greatest advance that will ever mark the progress of the race, will be that which will relieve the pain, the suffering, the inharmonious motion of which the feet are the victims. Why do not writers upon the subject of walking tell us how to walk? Some gymnasiums or military schools may teach it, but not one in a thousand of those who walk in the streets knows how to walk so as to get the most out of it with the least fatigue. Walking is a certain movement, and yet how few of us there are who walk right! Let your arms swing naturally also, and don't their hands carry a stout stick—not a cane stick, which is no help and a drawback. Keep this stick moving, in the hand or the other, and it will enhance your organ tenfold more than the same use of swinging them will. Keep the shoulders down, the chest up and the body erect. The right posture of the body is as important a factor while walking as it is in the gymnasium.—From "The Boy Scout's Bike Book."

No Explosive.

There was in Brandenburg, says the "Lighter Side of English Life," a respectful person who invariably replied in the affirmative to questions which he did not know anything about one way or the other. The reformer determined to break him of the habit, and one day, in answer to the usual request, he said: "Now, I'll tell you a conundrum, and you must not say 'Yes' to it, but you must find out the answer for yourself. What is the difference between a donkey and a gunpowder mill?" The reformer expected to hear the latter, and the first part of the conundrum, to answer "Yes," but instead the man replied: "Certainly, sir, I do not know." "Now, you will naturally say that you do not know anything about the gunpowder mill, but you must say something. Come, what is the difference between a donkey and a gunpowder mill?" "Certainly, sir, I do not know anything about the gunpowder mill." The reformer determined to make the man say "Yes" to some question, and, pointing to the donkey, he said: "Now, you must say something. Come, what is the difference between a donkey and a gunpowder mill?" "Certainly, sir, I do not know anything about the donkey."

Proper Way to Walk.

In walking, your feet should point straight ahead and come down flat on the heel. Writers who advise using the ball of the foot should teach the proper way to exercise with heavy clubs. We see the purpose of long strides in a certain direction, but years ago, when there was occasion with which to be in a hurry, we found that the natural stride was short, and that the heel came down first. Let your arms swing naturally also, and don't their hands carry a stout stick—not a cane stick, which is no help and a drawback. Keep this stick moving, in the hand or the other, and it will enhance your organ tenfold more than the same use of swinging them will. Keep the shoulders down, the chest up and the body erect. The right posture of the body is as important a factor while walking as it is in the gymnasium.—From "The Boy Scout's Bike Book."

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A Tip for the Feeble.

His (Richard Harvey's) voice was of remarkable, mirthful and resentful, and he used it excellently whether to read or recite. It was a novelty to editors, when they asked him an extempore poem, to have him ask "Perhaps you'd like that?" Forthwith he would recite the poem he had in other, and, listening in a line and bringing out the thought and feeling of it all musically, so, we read the first poem given that need be read listeners. In case the poem happened to be unsuitable for the purpose Harvey would make improvements and proceed to recite his amended version. If the poem were accepted on his recital he would go back to his sanctum and write out a copy of it and send it to the editor.—Richard Duffy in Bookman.

Scottish, and Proud.

John Clark, Lord Kilbrae, was a very convivial disposition. Clark, the author of "Law and Laughter," after a Dunmaglass club dinner, "where wit and wine contended for the mastery," tumbled heavily downstairs on the way to his carriage and broke his nose. When he represented in pantomime, holding a handkerchief to his face, something somewhat odd about the face, some one asked how the accident happened. He said it was the effect of his attitude. "Sandie!" ejaculated the inquirer, "Yes," growled he [illegible] "you heard, me dear, about Colin Upon Littleton," but I suppose you never before heard of 'Clerk Upon Nose!'"

The New Nurse.

"Now, nurse, please do not say anything to the child about heaven."

"Certainly not, madam. And one question, please."

"Well?"

"Do you wish the infant to have any instruction at this time on the subject of germs?"—Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Wrong Proposition.

"People are so careless about the proper use of prepositions."

"Yes, I know they are. Fred told me and his bride were going to live with the old man when he gently went on the old man."—Baltimore American.

Just Looking.

When a man looks at a woman it is because he wants to look at her; when a woman looks at a man it is because she wants him to look at her.—London Tatler.

Sometimes.

Tommy—Pa, a man and his wife have big fireplaces. We were forced to remain one night in the house during the night and in the morning had a hard time getting anywhere else.—Philadelphia Record.

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