The Mysterious Monogram

An Absorbing New Novel

By Howard P. Rockey

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CHAPTER I.

A Shock Upon Awakening.

Restlessly, Mr. Carrington paced up and down the luxurious library of Lord Harcourt's mansion on Grosvenor square. He smoked incessantly and looked anxiously at his watch every few minutes. Occasionally he paused before the window to watch the traffic in the street below, and then turned to resume his nervous pacing.

Nearly half an hour later, when Carrington's patience was nearly exhausted, Lord Harcourt appeared in the doorway, his tall figure stopped in a dressing gown of startling hue and his head bandaged in a damp towel. With a half stifled yawn he lifted his monocle to his eye and stared lazily at the guest before him.

"Dick," he asked slowly, "why the deuce don't you sit down and compose yourself?"

"Compose myself!" Carrington almost shouted. "My nerves——"

"Dicky, you haven't any nerves. If you had you wouldn't rave about like this. Moreover, if you had the slightest consideration for me, you wouldn't insist upon seeing me at the unearthly hour of eleven o'clock when you know I never arise before noon."

With a gesture of annoyance, Carrington tossed his cigarette into the fireplace and unfolded a copy of the Times. "Have you seen this?" he asked.

"Certainly not. Do you suppose I read in my sleep?"

"Don't be funny, Jack. Something serious has happened."

"Really?" drawled Harcourt. "Have a drink, Dicky?"

With a shake of his head Carrington declined. "What time did you leave the club last night?" he demanded.

"I'm sure I don't know," Harcourt replied. "If you're really very curious I'll ask Fergus. Why the curiosity?"

"Because, some time between one o'clock last night and daylight this morning, George Towneshend was stabbed to death in the smoking room of the Grill club."

With a glass half raised to his lips, Harcourt paused. "Murdered!" he said. "How annoying. Do they disturb the furniture?"

"Don't be a fool, Jack! Are you made of stone or have you really as brainless as people say you are?"

Harcourt shrugged. "I sometimes wondered myself—sometimes," he said.

"But surely you realize what this means?" Carrington went on hastily. "Towneshend was a guest at your dinner. This morning the servants found him with a knife wound deep in his breast, quite dead—sitting up in a chair as though he had fallen asleep there. His eyes were wide open, though, and when the man went over to awaken him, he saw what had happened and they say the look was the most terrible look on Towneshend's features."

Slowly Harcourt drained his glass. "Now who the devil do you suppose would want to murder Towney?" he asked, wonderingly. "Everybody liked him. Even I did and I can't bear most people."

"That's just what I want talk to you about," Carrington answered. "Kandwahr—the Indian, you know—was with him for quite a little while, but he went away at 1 o'clock. He has said that he believes you were with Towney then."

"I—with Towney?" Harcourt repeated, incredulously. "Lord, I don't know—I may have been."

"Surely, Jack, you must remember. Can't you see——"

"Of course I see, Dickey," Harcourt interrupted. "I know I have the reputation of being an idiot and that because I don't go about with my emotions upon my sleeve in a sort of human automaton, but even my warped intelligence is sufficient to grasp what this means. Surely, though, Dicky, no one can seriously imagine that I did it? What possible motive could I have for stabbing anybody? Every one knows I'm a most peaceable person, and I really like Towney tremendously."

"Of course you didn't do it, Jack, and such an idea will never occur to any one who knows you, but the fact that you don't remember where you were and can't explain what you did last night, is going to make things deucedly awkward. The police are bound to question you. Why, even the papers are full of nasty insinuations. Just listen to this."

Dropping into a chair before the window Carrington unfolded a newspaper and read: "The murder is believed to have been committed some time following the dinner given in a private room of the club by Lord Harcourt last evening. The affair was given to only a few of Lord Harcourt's intimate friends in honor of the announcement of his engagement to Miss Grace Marston, daughter of Major Sir Thomas Marston, K. C. B., and who is considered one of the most beautiful young women in London. Captain George Towneshend, the murdered man, was a guest at the dinner, and with several other gentlemen lingered in the smoke room after its conclusion. When seen at his apartments after the discovery of the body, His Highness Prince Kirshin Kandwahr, of Delhi and Madras, now visiting here, told Inspector MacBee, of Scotland Yard, that he had talked with Captain Towneshend shortly before his departure from the club at 1 o'clock this morning. At that time the prince said he believes the murdered man was conversing with his host, Lord Harcourt. The gentlemen who attended the dinner say that nothing occurred during the evening to arouse their suspicions, and no motive can as yet be assigned for the crime."

For a time Harcourt sat staring into the fire, pulling at his moustache.

"What do you make of it?" Carrington asked.

"I don't know what to say, Dicky. I must have made a perfect fool of myself, for I honestly can't remember a single thing that happened after we left the table. The whole thing is positively uncanny and the notoriety is going to be unbearable. I don't see why an affair that takes place in a gentleman's club can't be settled quietly among its members without being dragged through all the newspapers. I could stand it myself, but it's simply beyond the pale that it should come just after the announcement of my engagement so that Grace has to be dragged into the infernal mess!"

"It is indeed," Carrington agreed, "but there's no help for it. The whole thing seems almost unbelievable, but it is undoubtedly a clear case of murder, and we'll all have to bear the annoyance of the inquiries. Unless one of the servants did it, Towney was killed by a member of the club, for no outsider could have gained access to that room."

"That is true," said Harcourt. "And does it also occur to you that last night no one was in that part of the house except my guests?"

"Jove! I hadn't thought of that!" Carrington exclaimed. "It is true, though. I can't think of any one there who could have had the slightest cause to dislike Towney, nor of any one who could be guilty of such a thing under any circumstances. Why, with the exception of Cornish and Kandwahr, all the fellows there have known Towney since boyhood, and I don't believe that Cornish ever saw him before. He's only been in England a few days, hasn't he?"

Harcourt nodded and was about to speak, when Fergus, his valet, entered. "I beg pardon, my lord," the man said, "but were you injured last evening, sir?"

"No. Why?" Harcourt asked, looking up in surprise.

"Ah—nothing, sir. I beg your pardon, sir," he said, with a glance at Carrington.

"What is it—why did you ask?" Harcourt insisted. "Do not hesitate to speak before Mr. Carrington."

"Well, sir, it was only this, sir," the man said, reluctantly. "In putting away your evening clothes, I found a dark stain on the right sleeve, sir, and the shirt front was quite covered with blood—"

With an exclamation of astonishment, Carrington sprang to his feet and Harcourt, startled, nervously gripped the arms of his chair. "You say there is blood on my coat?"

"Yes, sir. And in the pocket of your greatcoat, I found this," the man continued, handing Harcourt a long, slender dagger.

In amazement the two men looked at the glittering blade. Taking it from Fergus' hands, Harcourt examined it slowly and carefully. The blade, about eight inches long, was of the finest steel, exquisitely chased in a design of the most curious workmanship, while its ivory hilt formed a unique specimen of the carver's art. Neither of them had ever seen a weapon like it and they shuddered instinctively as they looked at it.

"You found this in my coat pocket?" Harcourt asked at last.

"Yes, my lord."

"Did you ever see it before, Fergus?"

"No, sir. I'm quite sure I never did, sir."

"Nor did I," said Harcourt with conviction, and passed the knife to Carrington. "Fergus, has anyone but Mr. Carrington called this morning?"

"Yes, sir. Several persons who said they were from the newspapers and this gentleman."

"Inspector MacBee, Scotland Yard," Harcourt read from the card the valet handed to him. "What did you tell them all?"

"I told the newspaper men that you never gave interviews, sir, and could not be seen at any hour. The inspector, sir, said that he would not disturb you, but asked if you would wait for him to return before going out."

"Then ring him up and say that I am ready to see him as soon as he can come here," Harcourt directed. "Ask if he can conveniently come at once."

The valent withdrew and the two men stared in silence at the dagger that Carrington had placed upon the table, reluctant to hold it in his hands.

"Now what do you think, Dicky?" Harcourt asked.

"It's more puzzling than ever," said Carrington. "The blood on your clothes—and this thing—"

"I'm sure I can't explain it," Harcourt admitted in perplexity. "Did you ever see a more wicked looking thing? It isn't mine and I'm positive that I never laid eyes upon it until now. Yet if the thing was in my pocket, I must have had it." He paused and gazed silently at the dagger, then his horrified eyes met Carrington's. "Dicky," he whispered nervously, "Do you suppose I could——"

"Nonsense!" Carrington broke in. "The thing has unnerved you. Don't get all upset. There is some explanation of course, but if I were you I'd see my solicitors before talking with Inspector MacBee."

Harcourt shook his head. "Look here, Dicky," he said, slowly. "The idea is so utterly absurd that I can't and won't believe that I could have been in a state where I could do such a thing as this. It's utterly foreign to my nature—beyond all range of poss bility—yet the thing that worries me is that I don't know!"

"But it will come to you gradually," Carrington assured him. "You'll begin to recall later—to piece things together and give a satisfactory account of yourself."

"No, Dicky, I won't," Harcourt insisted. "I've notice lately that when I've been drinking, well, more than I should, I don't remember a thing that happens. My mind is an utter blank, and it seems just like so much time gone out of my life. I don't remember where I've been—what I've said—what I've done—anything. Why, I recently forgot a gambling debt and had to be reminded of it!"

"But what has all this—"

"Perhaps you can't understand what I mean," Harcourt explained, "but there's a damned unpleasant feeling that I can't seem to shake off. I don't think I'm a coward although I've never had any opportunity to prove that I'm not until now. I don't quite figure out how a man would feel if he had deliberately committed a crime and feared that he would be found out, but I can readily believe that the thought that one might have done such a thing, not to be sure of it, could drive one mad!"

"Luck!" Carrington broke it. "Don't talk like that! You're simply upset. Take a drink and brace up before this fool mood knocks you out entirely. It is simply impossible that you could have killed Towney and you know it. I know it, and so does every man who was there last night. And, what's more, every man of us will stand by you no matter what happens—remember that."

"Thanks, Dicky," said Harcourt with a smile. "I appreciate that and it's handsome of you to say it. Honestly, if the thing wasn't so serious it would be a joke. It is funny, the idea of the Earl of Harcourt being a murderer—a sort of Jekyll and Hyde transformation from an idle and worthless young aristocrat into a murderous demon!"

The telephone rang and Harcourt turned to answer it.

"Be careful what you say to anyone," Carrington cautioned.

"Don't worry," Harcourt assured him. "This is a private wire that only my most intimate friends use." He took off the receiver and his expression softened as he began to talk. Carrington watched him with a look of pity, and guessing who the caller was, turned away into the alcove out of earshot.

For several minutes Harcourt listened. Then he began to speak into the phone in reassuring tones. "You really mustn't be alarmed," he said quite cheerfully. "Everything is all right, and we'll soon have things straightened out. What? Nervous? Of course not—did you ever know me to be nervous? I'm sorry—more than sorry that your name has been mixed up in the affair, but there's not the slightest reason for anxiety."

He was listening again, and a smile crossed his features, but he shook his head as the sound came over the wire. "I will keep me busy most of the day, of course," he answered. "I'm afraid I can't come until after five—but if you'll be at home then, I'll try to call. Yes—good-bye."

As he hung up, Carrington turned towards him. "How's she taking it?" he asked.

"Like a little trooper!" said Harcourt. "She's just as brave and loyal as she can be!"

"I knew it—or that I was one," said Harcourt slowly. "But our engagement must be broken—at once. I can't marry her with a thing like this hanging over my head."

CHAPTER II.

The Haunting Doubt.

An hour later Harcourt sauntered slowly down the front steps of his house and entered his electric brougham. Dressed with more than usual care, his stick hanging carelessly over his arm, and a cigarette between his lips, he seemed to the curious little throng on the sidewalk the most unconcerned man in the world. Yet, for the first time in his life, John Harcourt faced real mental anguish, and was experiencing an emotion stronger than any that had ever come to him.

A little knot of newspaper men gathered near the house railing, hurried forward, hoping for a word with him, but the brougham door with its emblazoned arms, was slammed quickly shut, and the motor moved off swiftly.

By this time the whole city had heard of Towneshend's death, and every club, cafe and fashionable house in London was eagerly discussing it. The mystery of the affair coupled with the prominence of those concerned in it, made the murder the topic of the hour, and the news of its developments was being eagerly awaited. In fact, at that very moment in Buckingham palace, a minister was relating to the king such details as had been gathered by Scotland Yard.

In a brief talk with Inspector MacBee, Harcourt had learned everything the police knew about the murder, and the fact that as yet nothing had been discovered to give the slightest possible clues as to a motive. He had at once offered to give himself into the custody of the inspector, but that official stated that no arrests would be made until the following day unless additional evidence should be secured. To Harcourt's relief, MacBee had been courtesy itself, and, owing to the position of the men implicated, had merely asked them to keep Scotland Yard advised of their whereabout until they heard further from him. In doing this, MacBee had his own purpose, for his operatives were secretly observing every movement of those concerned and he hoped vaguely that the very liberty he apparently allowed them all might help him solve the problem the case presented.

Carrington left shortly after the detective took his leave, and Major Marston had telephoned a few minutes later to say that there would be a special meeting of the governors of the Grill club at 1 o'clock, to take action in the matter. Being on the governing board, Harcourt at once dressed and started for the club.

Acting upon Carrington's advice he had said nothing of the blood found upon his coat and had carefully avoided any mention of the knife Fergus had found. A vague sense of uneasiness had seized him, but he had himself well in hand and to all outward appearances at least, he was the same cold, deliberate figure that fashionable London had known so intimately since his succession to the title and vast holdings of the Harcourt family.

After the detective's departure, Fergus had carefully removed the telltale blood stains from his master's clothing and Harcourt had personally placed the dagger safely under lock and key in his study.

Sitting back against the cushions of the brougham, he thought over the situation. In spite of his strange sense of uneasiness he felt relieved when he thought of the aid his position and wealth would give him in the battle he might have to fight to establish his innocence, if innocent he was.

The more he attempted to reason out the truth of the matter the more perplexing every circumstance seemed to become. A hundred times he asked himself if it could be possible for him to have slain Towneshend his death blow, and as many times he put the idea away as too absurd for consideration. At any rate he meant to leave no stone unturned to get at the truth of the matter. He firmly resolved that whatever the outcome might be, he would not endeavor to evade the consequences if he became satisfied of his own guilt. On the other hand he was determined to fight to the finish with all the resources at his command to satisfy both the world and himself that he was not guilty of this crime, if such circumstances seemed now to fix so firmly upon him.

Determined to state his position clearly and frankly before his fellow governors, he leaned forward and, looking into the mirror of the brougham, carefully adjusted his monocle as the motor drew up before the club.

It was an imposing building, and its roster was even more imposing than the structure itself. Founded by a prince of the blood royal, it was, after 200 years, a guarantee of wealth and position to all who were fortunate enough to be selected to membership. And the very exclusiveness of the organization made this murder within its walls all the more sensational.

As Harcourt entered with quiet dignity, the doorman bowed obsequiously, and another servant hastened to take his hat and stick. For the first time in his life, Harcourt felt unpleasantly conscious of their attentions, and as a third servant slipped a card bearing his name into the hallrack, Harcourt experienced the distasteful sensation of being curiously observed.

Passing on a step he paused for a moment to read the simple notice of the death of a member, "Capt. George Towneshend, V. C., of His Majesty's Army in India, While On Furlough." Then, calmly lighting a fresh cigaret, he walked quietly into the library. The spacious room was nearly full, and with one accord the men standing by the doorway turned to greet him, while several others arose from their leather chairs and came forward.

Foremost among them was Prince Kirshin Kandwahr, who advanced with outstretched hand. "Lord Harcourt," he said in his queer purring Eastern voice, "I trust that you will give me this opportunity of making an explanation regarding the statements credited to me in the newspapers of this morning."

Harcourt observed him coolly, and there was a hush in the room as those standing about listened to the Indian's words.

"My mention of your name to the inspectors," Kandwahr went on, "was made with the natural understanding that what occurred in this club concerned only its members, its guests, like myself—and at such an unfortunate time as this, the police. I had no thought that my words might result in your name being brought out more prominently in this affair than the names of the rest of us, and I only mentioned the circumstance at all because I felt it my duty to give all the information in my power."

"Please don't think of it, old fellow," said Harcourt quickly. "You did quite right. I'm sure I don't relish this beastly business any more than you do, but we must all bear out part in it."

"Thank you," said Kandwahr, with evident relief, "but you do not take my hand."

"Really! I beg your pardon," Harcourt answered quietly. "So I didn't. But please don't think anything of it. I never shake hands. It seems to me such an unutterably silly custom—and I positively hate to touch people."

Those who overheard the low remark smiled faintly, but there was an ugly flash in Kandwahr's eyes. "My lord, I do not quite understand—" he began.

"You will when you know me better," said Harcourt. "Meanwhile I beg of you, overlook my seeming discourtesy and believe that it is with no thought of personal dislike that I ask to be excused."

With a smile, Kandwahr bowed, and Harcourt turned abruptly to the others. "Are we all here now?" he asked.

"Yes, now that you have arrived," said Sir Thomas Marston, coming forward. "The others are in the board room. Shall we go up?"

Harcourt nodded, and arm in arm, went up the stairs with the father of his fiancee. As the two men entered, the men gathered about the governor's table ceased their conversation abruptly, and the president of the club, the Duke of Hertford, rapped with his gavel for order.

"Gentlemen," he began, when all were seated in their places. "You are all aware of the reason for this gathering and it is quite unnecessary to recite any of the details of what happened within our walls. The disgrace and publicity of this affair are such that I am sure every one of us would have given anything to avoid it. While it seems incredible to me that such could be the case, circumstances appear to point to one of our members as being—shall I say, sirs, a—murderer?"

He paused and there was absolute silence in the room.

"It is, therefore, all the more incumbent upon us," the Duke resumed, "to give every possible aid to the officials of Scotland Yard in unravelling this mystery, and in bringing the guilty party to justice. Let me hear your opinions, if you please."

No one stirred as he sat down, and the great clock in the corner ticked loudly as the men about the table looked down uncomfortably at its polished surface.

"I suppose the servants have been questioned fully?" It was Sir Thomas who spoke.

"They were all examined by the inspectors this morning," the Duke answered. "As you know, gentlemen, the club closes its doors at 2 o'clock, at which time the servants are free to go home. Only the watchman and the caretakers remain. All of the other employes are known to have left the building before half-after 2 o'clock.

"At what time was the body discovered?" asked Sir Harry Farndale.

"About an hour and a half later," said the Duke. "Perkins, one of the caretakers, then entered the room to clean it, and found Capt. Towneshend sitting upright in one of the big easy chairs by the reading table. The man says that Capt. Towneshend's head was hanging down over his breast and that at first sight he thought him to be asleep. Upon going over to awaken him, however, Perkins discovered blood upon his shirt front and a slit about two inches long just over the heart. You see, gentlemen, the lights are switched off from the steward's office on the first floor, and there was, consequently, no occasion for any of the servants to enter the room before Perkins did so.

"But how is it that the doorman, knowing as he must have known, that Capt. Towneshend had not left the club, did not send someone to search for him when the building was closed for the night?" Sir Thomas queried.

"That I have been unable to learn," the Duke replied. "Dodson, who is, as you all know, an old servant of the club, was in attendance at the door last night. He has not been here as yet today, but I believe the inspectors have secured his address and have gone to his home to question him."

"And have the other servants been placed under arrest?"

"No. Perkins' statement is vouched for by two others who were directly behind him when he entered the smoking room and the inspectors have merely detained here in the club, all those who were in the house after its closing last night."

"Is there any likelihood of any of these men being charged with the crime?"

It was Harcourt's drawl that asked the question, and instantly all eyes were turned upon him.

"That is quite possible, of course," the Duke admitted.

"I do not believe that any of them are guilty," said Harcourt. "These men are known to us from long service, and it is extremely unlikely that any of them could have had any cause to quarrel with Capt. Towneshend."

"Unless the motive could have been robbery," someone suggested.

"Nonsense," Harcourt broke in quickly. "A man would not commit murder for whatever sum Towneshend would have been likely to have in his pockets last night."

"Lord Harcourt is quite right," said the Duke. "In fact the Captain's watch, his wallet, and all of his jewelry, were found upon the body. Robbery could have been no incentive to the assailant."

"From my understanding of the case," Sir Thomas broke in, "it is quite apparent that someone quarrelled with him and that the blow was struck in anger."

"On the contrary," Harcourt objected. "The fact that he was found sitting upright in a chair makes it seem to me that the thing was deliberately planned out. Either the murderer struck him from behind as he sat there—perhaps a little the worse for liquor—or else the body was placed there after death, to deceive anyone who might happen to pass through the room, and thus delay discovery of the crime."

"That is possible," said the Duke, "but it suggests devilish cunning that I can hardly credit amid such surroundings."

"But the weapon," said the Duke. "The inspectors say the wound was made with a stiletto or some similar sharp instrument. The smoking room was locked up immediately after the finding of the body, and a most thorough search has been made, but no trace of such a knife has been discovered."

"Then I cannot see how we can do anything further in the matter now," said Sir Thomas finally. "It is for the police to ferret out. If we give them every aid possible, and place ourselves at their absolute disposal, our duty is certainly done."

"I think not," It was Harcourt who spoke after a minute's silence.

"What do you suggest, my Lord?"

"This," said Harcourt, looking slowly about the circle. "It is possible that Captain Towneshend's friends have been killed by one of our members—even by someone who now sits about this board."

All eyes were turned upon him and an air of nervous expectancy came over the group.

"If we do our full duty," Harcourt continued, "we cannot stop when we have merely questioned the servants of the club and have given our pledge that they shall be here as well as we when the police may so desire. What right have we to stand by and say to the police 'discover the man.' Gentlemen, we are all well known to each other, and I think you will not misunderstand what I am about to say."

He paused, and taking a cigarette from his case, reached deliberately for a match.

"Go on," someone said in annoyance.

"All of you in this room were my guests at dinner last evening. The others were Mr. Henry Cornish, an American acquaintance of Sir Thomas Marston, and Prince Kirshin Kandwahr, a guest of this club, introduced, I believe, by Captain Towneshend at whose request I invited the Prince to my dinner."

"Was Towneshend in Madras when you served there, Sir Thomas?" Farndale asked quickly.

"No. He did not go out until after my retirement," Sir Thomas answered. "Why?"

"I was wondering if you knew Prince—"

"One moment, please," cautioned he Duke sternly. "We are not here to jump at conclusions nor to investigate the strangers who were with us. What is your suggestion, Lord Harcourt?"

"If—as seems extremely probable—the murder was committed by a member of this club, that member is unquestionably one of those who attended my dinner last evening," said Harcourt. "I would suggest, therefore, that Prince Kandwahr and Mr. Cornish, who are both downstairs now, be asked to come into the room with us, and that you, sir, put flatly to each of us upon our honor as gentlemen, the question of our individual innocence or guilt."

A murmur of protest greeted the conclusion of his sentence, and for a brief moment the Duke looked at him in astonishment. "You mean, then, Harcourt that you have reason to suspect one of us of this thing?" he demanded.

"I do."

The answer came with quiet conviction, more startling than his suggestion had been.

"Good Lord, Jack!" Marston exclaimed. "What on earth—"

"I do not think my suggestion unreasonable, gentlemen," Harcourt protested. If innocent, no one of us can object to declaring the fact openly upon his honor, before us all. I am willing to be asked and to answer such a question myself, and I earnestly urge all of you to do likewise."

"But why—" Farndale began, only to be silenced by a gesture from Harcourt.

"It has been stated that I was the last man seen with Captain Towneshend," he explained. "This being true a certain amount of suspicion naturally points to me. If I do not hesitate to answer such a question under these circumstances, why should you decline to do so? Your Grace, I ask that this be done, and I shall feel much relieved if the board will consent to it."

"Since you feel that way about it, I will submit your suggestion if you make it as a motion," said the Duke.

Harcourt nodded and the vote was called. There was a moment's hesitancy when the ayes were called for. Then twelve men gave their consent, and a servant was instructed to request the attendance of Kandwahr and Cornish.

When the man had gone, Harcourt lit his cigarette, and staring at the ceiling, smoked in silence. There was an awkward lull in the conversation and now and then someone shifted nervously in his seat. Again the ticking of the great clock sounded through the room. Several of the governors looked at their watches quite consciously and compared them with it. A little whirring noise, followed by a sharp click and he chimes struck the quarter hour before twelve, a little start ran through the company. Just about twelve hours before Captain Towneshend had died in the room above them, died in the room above them.

(To be Continued.)

Which Is Not So Still.

(New York American.)

"I'm still for the uplift," says Murphy. So is the Democratic Club.

BURBANK ON PERFECT MAN

Hope is for Social Progress and Those Opposing Will Be Discarded.

Santa Rosa, Cal.—Luther Burbank, world-famous plant wizard, has turned hermit.

His job of aiding nature improve plants for man's food supply and flowers for his enjoyment extracts twenty hours of his day.

He is deliberately shortening his life, foregoing pleasure that he may lighten his neighbor's struggle for existence.

"Let's talk about moulding men toward a better species," he suggested. "That is the greatest promise my forty years of experimenting holds out—for the ways of plants are the ways of man.

"Folks used to say my work was sacrilegious; that I was trying to improve on the works of creation. As if that were a cardinal sin."

"A clergyman once invited me to his church, seated me in the front pew, and then arraigned me unmercifully for trying to tell the Creator his business."

"I always contended that the man who helped the creator perfect any living thing by doing in a few years what nature would require several hundred was a benefactor, deserving of smiles rather than frowns. And if he did it for the human species all the better.

"The impious man is he who retards creations which refuse to respond to the growth of the human plant, whose doctrine is to let well enough alone.'

"Nature ruthlessly weeds out those which do not strive in a new environment. They are in the way.

"In the same manner human beings who hinder social progress and who retard the welfare of the many will have to be pushed aside as undesirable. They are in the way."

Burbank stooped over a bed of lilies. On some he tied white rag slips, a sign of the reaper that they be saved. The weak, the scrawny, the laggards he discarded.

It was a day of judgment in the garden.

"The man who dulls his senses and clogs his physical structure through vices, and he who debauches his moral nature by stealing, lying and cheating, holds back his race immeasurably. He cuts off the tendrils that are rearing toward a more refined and perfect individual and social life, shackling his progeny to grossness.

"I don't tie the white slips of preservation about plants of that kind. They go into the bonfire unlit."

Stops Train and Kills Bear

Smith Falls, Canada—When George Miskelly, a Can. Pac. conductor, saw a bear beside the track, he stopped the train and killed the bear with an ax.