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The Mystery of Rutledge Hall
OR
"The Cloud With a Silver Lining"

CHAPTER XXXVI

"Go!" he repeated, in puzzled tones. "Why should I go? If—if you wished to escape annoyance, you should have stayed in Brighton; they would not have troubled you there; and indeed I do not know why they should trouble you now. You know nothing of the matter, you can throw no light upon the subject."

At the coldness, almost harshness, of his voice she raised her head, and at the sight of her face, so pale and wan, so full of horror and misery, his own softened slightly.

"Forgive my impatience," he said, hurriedly. "This subject is one so full of pain to me that I cannot think of it patiently. What is it you wish done, Sidney? If it be in my power, I will help you."

"Stephen, don't you understand," she asked, breathlessly—"don't you understand?"

"I understand nothing," he said, at

most impatiently, "but that you are, as you have ever been, anxious for Frank Greville's safety, and I fail to see how I am to relieve your anxiety."

She shrank from him as she knelt, trembling and aghast. Did he not yet understand that the real culprit had been discovered? How could she make him understand? She could not put it into plain words; she could not say to her husband:

"I know you are guilty. I know you killed the unfortunate Squire; and it is for your safety, and not Frank's, that I am so anxious."

The train slackened speed a little, and Sidney mechanically rose to her feet. They were entering the station where the second and last change of trains on the way to Ashford was to take place, and there was still a chance of escape if she could prevail upon Stephen not to continue his

journey. But she felt stupid and dazed and confused, and in silence allowed her husband to assist her to leave the carriage, moving more like an automaton than a living and breathing woman.

Not could she find words to speak to him as they stood together on the little platform. Stephen had drawn her hand through his arm and held it there, and had turned with her to the little waiting-room; but she shrank back a little, and he had taken the movement for a wish to remain in the fresh air, and had acquiesced, although the wind was blowing keenly along the station, carrying with it some of the snow which lay thickly over the surrounding country.

"We have only five minutes to wait here," he said, bending his head over the slender shrinking form by his side; and, as he spoke, he raised his face and looked up at him with a world of pitiful entreaty in her dark lustrous eyes.

"Stephen," she said faintly—"Stephen, do not go home—do not go home!"

"For Heaven's sake, explain yourself more clearly!" he cried, almost angrily. "Where am I to take you, if not home? We shall be there in an hour, and it would be impossible for you to undertake the journey back to Brighton this evening."

"But, if you go home," she faltered, brokenly, after a long pause—"if you go home?"

"Well," he asked, looking down at her, "what will happen if I go home?"

"They—they—Stephen, you will not understand me—and yet—"

"I am only too anxious to do so," he said, in a gentler tone. "But here is our train, Sidney."

"Oh, no!" she said piteously, as he led her forward.

The guard, who had recognized Stephen, was holding open the door of a first-class compartment, and Sidney was lifted in, passive and unresisting now. Stephen followed, the guard closed the door with a sharp bang, the train moved on slowly, Sidney burst into a despairing passion of tears.

Stephen waited in silence until the nervous paroxysm was over; then he moved to a seat beside his wife, and said gravely and somewhat coldly, but still with much kindness in his voice:

"Sidney, you will spare me much anxiety, and yourself some pain, if you will be more explicit, and tell me what you fear."

It had come at last, Sidney thought bitterly—the time when she must tell her husband all she knew, when she must accuse him of murder, and of

a cruel cowardly deception which was as base a crime. Since it was the only way to save him, she dared keep silence no longer; since he would not understand her, she must put her fears into plain words.

"Stephen," she said, in a low voice, which she kept steady by one last effort of self-control, "I told you that the Rutledge mystery would be soon solved, that the police were on the track of the—of the—the word would not come, she could not force her lips to its utterance—and—it is not Frank Greville they mean—they—oh, Stephen, they know all—they know that you— Oh, if you go home, they will take—you—"

Her voice failed her; but she stretched out her hands to him in piteous, passionate pleading; and in the dim light of the railway carriage he saw in the horror and pain on her face what she believed.

For a moment he sat looking at her in silence, his face growing pale as death as he realized what she meant, what her belief was; and then, as by a lightning-flash, all was made clear to him—her propped slight, her shrinking terror, the cause of her illness, and the terrible agitation and dread she had evinced.

For a time he could not speak, stunned by the pain of the thought that his wife, the woman whom he had loved with the one deep love of his lifetime, for whom he would have counted no sacrifice too great, should think him not only a murderer, but a treacherous coward, who had allowed another man to suffer for his crime, while he himself had been free and unstained.

And Sidney, cowering in her corner of the compartment, her face hidden in her trembling hands, felt the contempt and anger in the look she dared not meet, and wished with all her heart that she had died before she let him see that she believed in his guilt. But when at last the silence was broken, it was not by the angry, contemptuous words she expected to hear.

"You believe that!" he said, in a tone of incredulous horror. "Good Heaven, how terrible!"

CHAPTER XXXVII

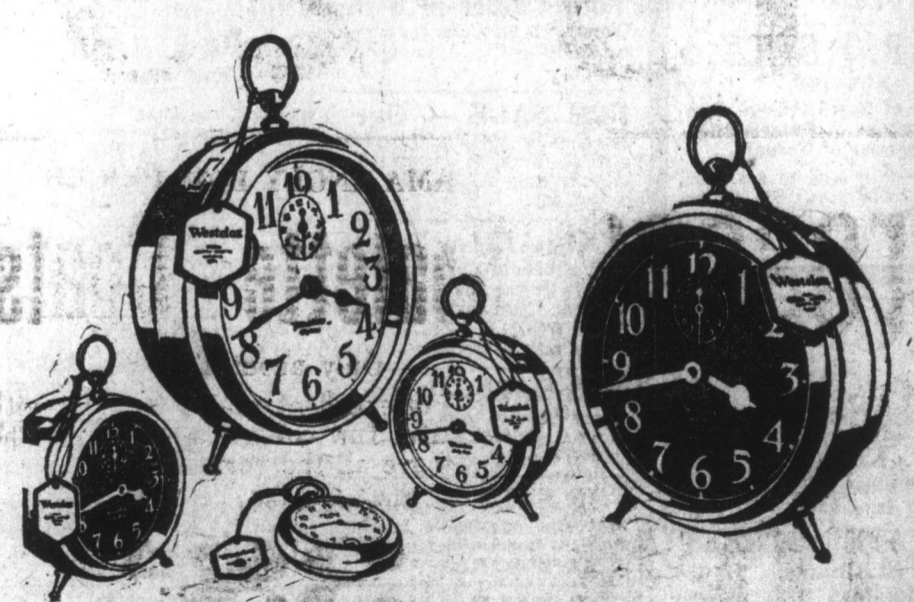
In the library at Easthorpe the lamps were burning softly, and the heavy Oriental curtains were drawn, shutting out the wintry night, with its keen winds and falling snow. The room looked thoroughly comfortable and artistically beautiful, with its handsome carvings and curiously stamped leather, and its rows of soberly yet richly bound volumes, and the only incongruous thing present was a dainty afternoon tea-service of Sevres, which stood on a table near the blazing wood-fire; its delicate coloring, the glittering silver of its appointments, seemed more suitable for the drawing-room or Sidney's boudoir than for the somber magnificence of the library.

Husband and wife were there alone, in the first half hour after their return to Easthorpe. Sidney was leaning, or rather lying, back in a great arm-chair by the fire. Stephen sat opposite to her, his elbow resting upon the table, his head leaning upon his hand, and a look on his face which Sidney had never seen there before—a look so stern, so contemptuous, so intensely reproachful and sad that she dared not cast a second look upon his face; she dared not meet a glance from the dark reproachful eyes.

The brougham had been waiting for Stephen at the station on the arrival of the train at Ashford; and husband and wife had driven home in silence, even as the latter part of their journey had been performed. No word had passed between them after Stephen Daunt's exclamation of horror; he had not spoken. Sidney was literally incapable of doing so. In utter silence he had assisted her into the brougham, and in silence, too, he had half led, half carried her into the library on their arrival at Easthorpe—for she was quite incapable of walking without assistance. He had ordered some tea to be brought, and had himself poured out some for her; but it stood untroubled by her side, as she crouched in the great arm-chair, her forehead upon her face, so wan, so pale, so terror-stricken, that it had lost all its beauty, even as it had lost it on the night when she had overheard Christine Greville say that Stephen Daunt was guilty.

(To be continued.)

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A bright Tea Kettle of Aluminum in the kitchen will surely add to the joy of housekeeping. Strongly made for long years of faithful service.
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Made of high grade Enamel and will give you a full measure of service for the money.
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Enamelled Water Pails.
Here's a whooping big bargain. Throngs of folks will respond to this advertisement. These splendid full size enamelware pails, seamless construction with strong handles, are worth much more than the price we are marking them.
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Aluminum Dish Pans.
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Enamelled Cullenders.
So useful in the kitchen. These are very well made and the price is special for this occasion.
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High grade, highly polished convex paneled, strong wire ball, wood handle, domed polished cover. A preserving time necessity that is useful the year round.
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Double Roasters.
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How to Keep Fit
AVOID SLOPPY MILK FOODS.
Professor Collingwood, lecturer on physiology in the London University, addressing a meeting held under the auspices of the People's League of Health at the Polytechnic, Regent-street, W., said that in no way did Nature indicate that milk was a natural food for adults.
If grown-ups took milk, it had to be filtered from the cells and in its effect it was the cause of a large proportion of the ill to which the body was falsely said to be liable. To keep free from indigestion and constipation all fine foods, such as white bread and sloppy milk food, should be avoided. Coarse foods rich in cellulose, wholemeal bread, coarse oatmeal, salads, fruits (eaten with the skin left on), and green vegetables should be taken. A plentiful supply of water was also needed.
"To sit on an office stool all day and to feed on the white bread and to drink milk is asking for trouble," added Professor Collingwood.

The War-Dogs!
"Many people are like children playing around a dust-bin; they are liable at any time to catch some contagion or other. The remedy immediately suggested is their removal from its neighbourhood, falling which the dust-bin must be given a new location. One of these disease-breeders is the war notion. We all thought that the events of 1914-18 had, to continue the dust-bin simile, 'put the lid on it,' but is it asks the War Cry.
"Subtle influences, unfettered are again at work; the war-dog already howling and, in some cases, in many ways, the stage is set. There is trouble manifest in China, and in Morocco, France, Spain are involved, while the problem possesses sufficient force to produce a clash of arms."
A very important note about fall silhouette is the moulding from the shoulder to below the line.

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Queen Alexandra
When the Queen Declares a Matter of Dispute London

Queen Alexandra
Dowager Queen of King George, after heart attack, recovered. The Queen died on December 11, 1925. Her to-day's official London to expect her advanced age.

IMMEDIATE
The British cabinet announced that Queen Alexandra had died on December 11, 1925. She had been suffering from a heart attack since she left London to visit the King in Wales. Her death was a great loss to the British people.

The War-Dogs!
A long blouse of violet velvet with narrow braided leather and worn with a skirt of red woolen.