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

CHAPTER XI.

Ah, if she had only had the means, how she would have left no stone unturned to reach the truth! But she was powerless. An appeal to her father met a grave and firm refusal; she believed Frank guilty, and sternly bade his daughter dismiss all thought of him from her mind. A similar entreaty to Lawyer Greville had resulted in a similar reply, and Sidney felt powerless and lonely and desolate.

But Sidney's extremity was Stephen Daunt's opportunity. The deep love he had felt for her for so long was only deepened and intensified by her sorrow and depression, and by the unhappiness of her home. And one fair spring day, when the lilac and hibernum in the old-fashioned garden were in bloom, he asked her very gently, very tenderly to be his wife. He said no word of his long hopeless love; he thought she had no love to give him in return; but he could offer her a great deal of that which makes life happy; and, though at first the girl shrank back, trembling and pale as death, finally she yielded, putting both her hands in his with quivering lips and dim eyes.

And it was the news of this engagement which had brought Christine Greville to the Gray House full of anger and pain, half demented (as it were, by the long suffering she had endured, which had reached its climax now in the desertion of the only friend left to her—the friend who had shared her grief and misery, who had hoped and feared and fought blindly with her against those who thought Frank guilty, and who had believed in his innocence through all.

The awful trouble which had fallen on Christine Greville had changed her from a gentle yielding girl to a resentful, despairing sorrowful woman. She had been passionately attached to her brother, and her only hope of ever proving his innocence lay in Sidney. She herself was powerless, for her father's mandate had been spoken with a decision and a firmness against which she dared not appeal. On returning home after the coroner's inquest, he had called his household together, forbidding them ever to mention his son's name under his roof, and repeating in the most solemn man-

ner the oath he had sworn after the inquest, to do all in his power to bring the criminal to justice. And Christine was selfish in her sorrow; she had no thought for Sidney; all her sympathy was with her brother; his suffering had obliterated all other from her mind. Night and day she pictured him hunted, hiding, penniless, starving, until her brain reeled and her heart ached to anguish. She did not remember that Sidney also had been haunted by their sorrow, and that it would be well, since all their sorrow was unavailing, that she should forget, if possible.

"Sidney," she said, gently, coming to her side and kneeling down with her eager, pleading, tearful face raised to hers, "have you forgotten all the happy days we had together—you and I and Frank? Have you forgotten when we were children, how he loved you, how you were always his first thought, how he always tried to please you, how he once saved your life? Have you forgotten that he always, even as a child, called you his little wife? Have you forgotten that you promised to be his wife? Will you break your word now?"

"I have forgotten nothing," Sidney answered, with a passionate gesture of pain. "How can I forget? Would I heaven I could! But although I shall always remember, what can I do? Am I not powerless? How can I help him?"

"Ah," Christine cried out, suddenly, and feared and fought blindly with her against those who thought Frank guilty, and who had believed in his innocence through all.

"Hush, for pity's sake!" Sidney said, faintly, shrinking back, trembling in every limb as the hasty intemperate words fell upon her ears. "Don't say that, Christine; it is not true—it is not true!"

"It is true—you never loved him!" repeated Christine, wildly. "You will not help him!"

Sidney turned at the words, like a wounded deer at bay.

"If I did not love him, I am ready to help him," she said passionately; "and while I am powerless as I am, my marriage with Stephen Daunt will give me the means I need to help Frank! Can't you—won't you understand?"

She paused abruptly, struck by a sudden change on the face of her companion, and turned to see that Stephen Daunt had entered the room, and was standing near the door, his face so pale as the spring sunshine fell upon it that Sidney knew, and felt a great pang at her heart at the knowledge, that he had overheard the words she had spoken and would believe that they had been meant. In the momentary silence which followed, it seemed to Sidney that her heart died within her breast.

CHAPTER XII.

"I beg your pardon," Stephen Daunt said, gravely, as he entered the room where Miss Arnold and Christine Greville were conversing; "I am afraid I interrupted you. But Bessie told me you were alone, Sidney. How do you do, Miss Greville?" he added. "You are better?"

"Yes, I am better," Christine answered, ungraciously, as Sidney turned to the fire again, trying hard to regain her calmness but shivering and trembling in her excessive agitation.

"Your father is well, I hope? What charming weather, is it not?" Stephen continued, speaking with his usual easy grace, anxious to set Sidney at

her ease, although his own color had not returned, and his voice was just a trifle unsteady. "Dolly wants you to come over and spend the day with her, Sidney," he added, his tone softening perceptibly as he spoke to his fiancée, who stood, a slender, drooping figure in her soft, gray dress, not daring to lift her eyes to his. "Her cold is very bad to-day, and Dr. Elliot has forbidden her to show the tip of her nose out of doors. Can you come, dear? Have you any other engagements?"

"No," she answered, faintly. "And you will come? That is right. That little sister of mine is never happy when you are out of her sight. I think. Are you going, Miss Greville? I hope I am not driving you away?"

"Oh, no!" Christine said, huskily. "I have been here some time, and we have had a long talk, and I must go. Good-bye, Sidney."

"Good-bye," Sidney answered, putting out her hand, but pretending not to see the cheek Christine offered for her kiss; and Stephen noticed how heavily her hand fell to her side when the other girl released it.

"Do not ring; I will see Miss Greville to the door," said Stephen, hastily, interrupting Sidney's movement toward the bell; and, as the door closed after them, the young girl threw up her hands with a passionate gesture of despair.

What would he think of her? she thought, bitterly. How he would despise and condemn her! Of course all would be over between them now, and she must live out her lonely life, alone, unloved, unloving, unprotected, unsheltered by his care.

In that bitter moment Sidney realized how unspokeably precious Stephen's affection had been to her, realized what happiness—subdued certainly, but none the less intense—had crept into her dreary life at the thought of the future passed by his side. Even if he did not love her, he cared for her a little, she had thought yearningly; and she would be so good a wife, so gentle, so patient, so devoted, that she would win his love in time and then they would be so happy. But now all that was over; it was not likely that he would overlook the words he had overheard, words which had been spoken in the passion and pain of the moment, with a deep trust in Stephen's nobility, which would not refuse her his help in this matter that was so near her heart. Now—what a horrible thought!—he would think that she had meant to marry him only to use his wealth to clear her former lover. She felt bowed down to the earth with shame. How should she meet him again? Whither could she go to escape the reproach in the dark eyes she loved so well? How should she bear the scorn she deserved? Ah,

there was the sound of his step in the hall, his hand upon the door! Flight was impossible now; as she had sworn she must reap.

Her heart was throbbing to suffocation as Stephen Daunt entered the room and came up to the rug upon which she was standing, and she dared not raise her eyes. Had she done so, she might have fathomed the depth of his great love for her, and all the misery which followed might have been averted.

For a few moments they stood opposite to each other in silence, the young man looking down compassionately at the shrinking drooping figure, so graceful even in its humiliation, the lovely little face so beautiful in its pallor and shame, the little hands clasped tightly before her in her pain as she stood before him like a culprit before her judge. At length, when the silence had grown so oppressive that Sidney felt she could bear the uncertainty no longer, she unclasped the little hands, removed from her fourth finger the great blazing diamond hoop which Stephen had placed there, and held it out to him with little trembling fingers which shook like the leaves of the aspen tree.

Stephen put out his strong hand and took into his warm clasp not the ring only, but the little trembling fingers which held it.

"What is that for, Sidney?" he said, gently, smiling a little and speaking in a tone that he might have adopted to a child whom he was foolishly half chiding for some foolish action. "Does it not fit properly? I got it loose on purpose, you know, dear, because I hoped to see these tiny fingers a little plumper by and by."

(To be continued.)



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(To be continued.)

Public Resentment Against Noise

It is impossible to deny that the average motor cycle is more unpopular with the general public on account of the noise it makes than on any other score. This may be looking at things from a pessimistic angle, but it is useless for manufacturers and motor cyclists to shut their eyes to the fact that mechanical two-wheelers are under a cloud, and that the noise they make is always a concrete ground for public objection.

One has only to choose an arterial road any fine week-end, pick a vantage point, and wait, to realize and appreciate—however enthusiastic a motor cyclist one may be—the excuse a non-motor cyclist has for looking with distavour on the whole movement. The most objectionable machines from the noise point of view are the low-capacity, high-efficiency four-strokes, low geared and depending upon high revolutions for their power. Two-strokes generally, big singles, and the great majority of twin-cylinder machines are inoffensive unless they have been "doctored" under the misapprehension that speed varies in direct proportion to the volume of noise emitted from the exhaust pipe.

It is difficult for keen young riders to curb a natural desire to create an impression by "opening out" in crowded places, but every rider must be made to realize that the very existence of the motor cycle movement is threatened by the score of noise. Manufacturers would do well to make a genuine move to silence their 1926 products to such an extent that some form of guarantee against police action can be given their customers, thus shifting the responsibility for noisy machines on to owners who tamper with the silencing arrangements of their machines after purchase. No sympathy could then be extended to the victims of police court proceedings on the score of noise. Manufacturers who make the silence of their machines a talking point at Olympia will do a real service to the movement.—Motor Cycle.



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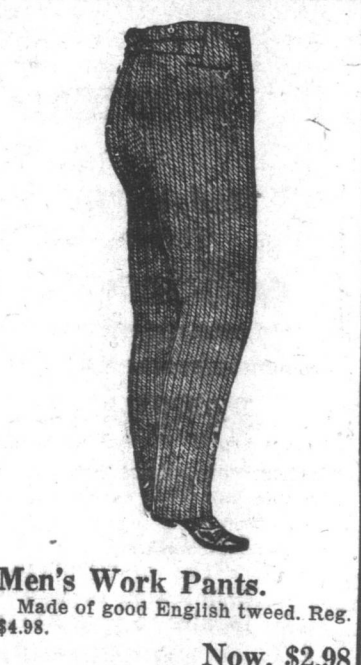
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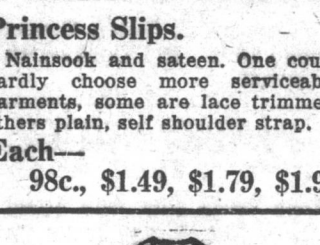
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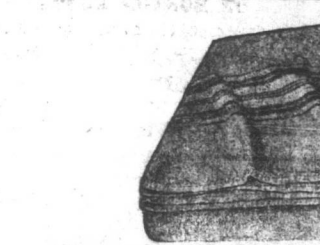
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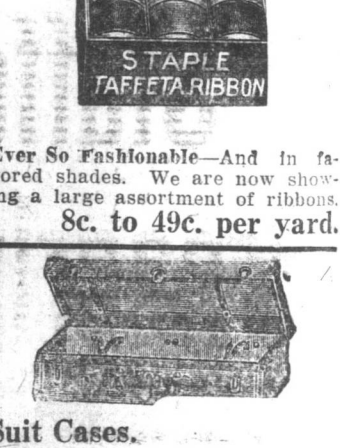
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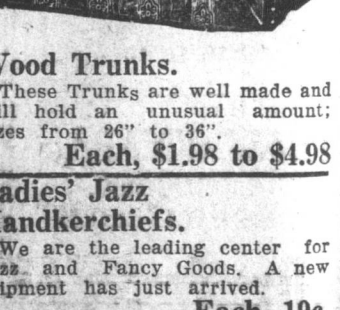
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