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The Snake Scotched AND Justice Done.

CHAPTER XXXI.

(Continued.)

Talbot eyed him haughtily. "Go back! You are coming with me! I have need of you—strange as it may seem. You jail-bird! Did you hear what I said?"

Gibbon nodded and leant against the wall, his hands thrust into his pockets, his colourless eyes fixed on Talbot's furious face. Talbot thought he was drunk.

"Oh, yes, I heard!" said Gibbon, coolly. "But I'm not coming. I'm going back to the Court, to Lord Lynborough. I'm going to make a clean breast of it."

"You've been drinking again, my beast!" said Talbot, between his teeth. "You are right; you are not fit to accompany me. Go, get out of my sight! I'll find some means of punishing you!"

Gibbon spat on the ground and looked before him as if he had not heard his dismissal.

"Yes, I'm going to tell them all about it."

"All about what?" demanded Talbot, surprised into the question by the man's audacity.

"The murder," said Gibbon, as coolly as before.

Talbot did not start, was not, indeed, startled.

"What do you know about it?" he said, with a kind of impatient contempt. "What have you got into your head, you besotted fool?"

"I know all about it!" said Gibbon, turning his eyes on his master for the first time.

Gorging Is Suicide

In these words a prominent graduate of Harvard Medical School, E. R. Moras, M.D., calls attention to the habit of "overeating," which is resulting in the shortening of so many useful lives.

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first time. "Why, I was there all the time."

Talbot's hands closed on the edge of the coping, and the blue sky seemed to him to turn a blood red.

"You—were—" He could say no more, for his tongue seemed to have thickened and filled his mouth.

Gibbon nodded.

"Yes," he said, with a twist of the lips that was a hideous travesty of a smile. "I followed you that night. I thought you were up to something, Mr. Talbot. I watched you that evening, as I've watched you often and often before. Oh, I know what you keep in the safe in your room in Charlotte Mansions! I've heard you go out, when you thought I was asleep, and followed you. I know all the places you go to for your card-playing and roulette. But that's of no consequence now; we've got bigger fish to fry. I knew you was up to something by the way you turned up your collar and slouched your hat over your eyes. I thought you were going to meet some girl, perhaps. I little thought of the game you'd got in hand."

He paused a moment or two and spat again. Talbot uttered no word—his tongue was still absurdly large for his mouth—and Gibbon went on: "I shadowed you to where the man was sitting in the wood, and I heard and saw everything that passed. I was so near to you, lying there in the bracken, that you might have heard me breathing if you hadn't been so busy. And that's what I'm going to tell his lordship, the earl, and the police. If you'd listened to me the other day when I asked for the money—not half enough, Mr. Talbot, sir, not half enough—if you'd treated me like a man instead of a dog, I'd have held my tongue, and you'd have been safe; or they say the evidence was strong enough to hang that young gentleman—I mean Lord Denby; but you was a fool. You've always treated me as if I was the dirt beneath your feet—worse! But I'm thinking it's my turn now, Mr. Talbot!"

The man's garrulity had given Talbot time to recover from the shock, to collect his scattered senses. He laughed scornfully.

"My good man, you talk like an idiot who has just awakened from a dream—nightmare! And you thought to frighten me! Bah! Who do you think would believe this cock-and-bull story invented by a jail-bird, a convict, who happened to bear his master a grudge?"

Gibbon appeared unmoved.

"That's right enough," he said; "but I've got some evidence. There was the clothes you told me to brush—I've kept them—they're all over mould and moss—"

"I fell into a ditch," said Talbot quickly, contemptuously. "You might have worn them yourself. Ah, you see!"

Gibbon eyed him with a reflection of the contempt in Talbot's eyes.

"Oh, stow it!" he said, scornfully. "I've got the pocket-book with the certificates!"

Talbot's face grew white and his eyes expanded.

Gibbon nodded.

"Yes. That touches you, Mr. Talbot, doesn't it? I got it out of the man's pocket while you went for the spade. Remember?"

Talbot remembered: was there any detail of that hideous deed that did not haunt him perpetually?

"I've got 'em here, sir," said Gibbon, striking his breast coat-pocket. "They will help the young gentleman get his rights as well as hang you, Mr. Denby."

Talbot stood as if turned to stone; then suddenly he said:

"My man, you have overreached yourself! Do you know—but of course you do not—that if I committed—if I—his tongue bothered him again—" "I was guilty, you, too, are in danger. You concealed the thing; you are, as they call it, an accessory after the fact."

Gibbon moved his lips into a smile.

"Yes, I know," he said, coolly; "but I'm going to make my bargain with his lordship, the earl, and the police. I'm going to turn King's evidence; ever heard of that, Mr. Talbot? Oh, I may be a dog, and a jail-bird, but I'm not so ignorant as you think!"

As he spoke he seated himself on the edge of the low wall and swung his legs, and eyed his master with an air of gloating triumph.



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Talbot looked over the man's head with an absent gaze, with eyes that saw nothing—but what? Was it a scaffold, a tall figure, hideously like himself, with a white cap drawn over the face? He shuddered and passed his hand over his eyes.

"See here, Gibbon," he said, in a low voice. "You have been a faithful servant to me—"

"You bound," you drunken beast, you jail-bird," murmured Gibbon, his eyes lighting up vindictively.

"—A faithful servant, and I do not think you would do me an injury," Gibbon drew his thin lips into a grin.

"The least injury I would do you is to hang you," he said. "And I will."

"I think not!" said Talbot. "You are not such a fool as to tell this story produce that pocket-book when, holding your tongue—just holding your tongue, as you have done—giving me the book, you can earn a couple of thousand pounds."

To his amazement, his terror, Gibbon laughed.

"Too late!" he said, coolly; "you weren't in court to the end—they told me how you bolted—and didn't hear Miss Veronica swear that she saw you that night; you don't know that Miss Selby—ah, he's a sharp 'un, he is!—has got his suspicions."

While he had been speaking, slowly tauntingly, as if he were enjoying every word as he sent it home, Talbot's quick brain was working.

And this was the line it was taking with that swiftness, that marvellous precision which is as miraculous as the coming of spring, the growth of a grain of corn, the flowering of the lily. The man, this man-fend who was torturing him, was in the possession of the pocket-book. If he were found—dead, say—with that book in his pocket, who would doubt that he was the murderer? Still more swiftly, acutely, the trained brain worked.

The man was sitting on the wall; he felt—Talbot could say that the man had confessed the murder, had tried to make terms, that he, Talbot, struggled with him.

With a low cry, the guttural cry of a tiger springing on his prey, Talbot lunged himself on him. But quick as he attack had been, Gibbon had been warned by the murderous flash of his eyes, and he stiffened himself and lunged out his arms threw them around Talbot. But he, Gibbon, had been taken unawares and he could only manage, with every bit of his strength exerted, to keep his back straight; he could not get his feet to the ground.

Talbot seized the advantage and pressed with all his force until Gibbon's back was nearly broken by the terrible strain. Then, with the suddenness born of despair, Gibbon hoisted

ed his assailant on to the level with himself. They swayed for a moment—a terrible moment—on the top of the wall, then, with an awful cry, which seemed to rise from both lips at the same instant, they fell over, locked in each other's arms, to the peaceful valley beneath.

(To be continued.)

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(To be continued.)

Nurses Turn Nose on Director, Mistaking Him For an Alderman

Prince Albert, Sask., Sept. 11.—At a meeting last night of the board of directors of the Victoria hospital to inquire into the charges of mismanagement and unseemly actions on the part of the staff, Alderman T. E. Baker, who laid specific charges in writing, was held up in leaving the building by nurses and efforts made to force him to sign an apology.

He refused and then the woman endeavored to turn the hose on him. At this moment F. E. Armitage, one of the directors, hurried out, just in time to receive the water intended for Alderman Baker.

This is the sequel to the recent fracas in the council chamber when the aldermen came to blows. The board threatened the serious charges lightly, however, and only reaffirms its confidence in the matron and staff. The nurses threatened to quit unless exonerated.

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