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A MYSTERIOUS QUEST.

CHAPTER XIII.

A CHARGE THAT WOULD SHAKE MOST MEN.

At his appearance, both of these persons turned and for once it was the older detective who came the nearer to meeting his eye.

"Mr. Degraw, I believe," said he, "the same," returned the artist. "Will you come in?" And he hastened to unlock the door, from which they had momentarily stepped aside. "No bad news, I hope?" he murmured, as he brushed by Bryd.

But the young detective forbore to reply. He was evidently not in love with his errand and preferred to preserve a non-committal silence. Mr. Gryce, on the contrary, was alert and at his case. He cast admiring glances over the studio and passed before the painting of "A Poet's Dream" with hearty appreciation in every feature. But he lost no time.

"Mr. Degraw," said he "we have come upon a disagreeable errand. I am charged," and his eye left the picture, though it did not travel to the artist's face, "with a warrant for your arrest!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Master of the Situation.

There are some blows that fall with such suddenness that they daze the faculties and make the recipient of them seem unfeeling. Such a one was this. As the detective took from his pocket a folded paper, Mr. Degraw started at him utterly unmoved, and when the document was thrust into his hand, he opened it and surveyed its contents as if he were obeying the beck of a friend in a matter in which he possessed no personal interest. But at the sight of his name with the official signature beneath it, he flushed, and tearing the paper back, cried, hastily:

"This is too much!" and glanced at Bryd, as if still influenced by the idea that it was all a joke at which he had the right to become a trifle impatient.



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"It may prove too much," responded Mr. Gryce. "So serious a charge is not made without proof to back it. You are in the hands of the police. You like to do before going with us?"

"Bryd!" he cried, "what does this mean? What has happened? Is any one dead or am I under the influence of some vile nightmare?"

"Yes," asserted the detective, "some one is dead. A young and innocent girl, who trusted you—"

"Oh!" exclaimed the artist, turning with irrepressible anxiety toward Bryd, "has anything happened to the signorina?"

It was said with so much feeling and with such a frank disregard of appearances, that Mr. Gryce insensibly softened toward the antique lamp he was at that moment considering. As for Mr. Bryd, he flushed and answered gravely:

"I have received no further news from Great Barrington since seeing you this afternoon," and turned away before he had finished speaking, as if he felt it painful even to address the artist.

Mr. Degraw may have noticed this expression of reluctance, but if he did, he did not show it. On the contrary, he immediately burst out:

"Then of whom are you speaking? I know no young girl."

"Do you not know Jenny Rogers?" It was Mr. Gryce who spoke.

The artist shivered. "Jenny Rogers?" he repeated.

"Yes," pursued the other; "she seems to have known you."

The artist looked dazed.

"Not the Jenny Rogers in whom you have professed such deep interest," proceeded the detective, gravely, "but a more defenceless girl, because a more friendless and ignorant one. It is in her regard you are arrested. So much I feel at liberty to say, but no more. As for yourself, you need say nothing. Silence commits no one, but speech is not always so safe."

"But silence is cowardice in an innocent man, and nothing can ever make me keep still over an outrage which has no excuse in fact. I commit murder and upon an innocent girl! Why, your own man Bryd will tell you that it is an accusation too ridiculous to be seriously considered. Even if I knew the girl, which I do not, for I take it for granted that you mean the one who perished in the blind-alley, I have had no reason for injuring her or any one. You might as well arrest the first man you chanced to meet; it would not be any more unreasonable or absurd!"

"There is where you make a mistake," interjected the other. "The first man we chanced to meet would

not in all probability, bear the somewhat unusual and striking name of Hamilton Degraw."

"And what if he did not? What has my name got to do with this matter?"

"A great deal. You had better come with us, Mr. Degraw. Perhaps you can convince the magistrate that you have been arrested under a false charge. If you can, I shall be the first to congratulate you, for you certainly paint some exquisite pictures."

"The magistrate! Well, let us go to the magistrate. I ask nothing more than a sensible man to talk to. Murder! I could be angry if I were not so much astonished at the senseless officiousness of a police who could arrest me on such a charge as this."

Whether Mr. Gryce secretly believed in his victim's innocence, or whether he was disposed to show one of so much talent every consideration of his power, he not only managed to allow him to pass seemingly unattended through the streets, but took him down to police headquarters, instead of to a magistrate, as he had threatened. Here he found the inspector, and bringing the two together, he remarked in excuse:

"Here is Mr. Degraw, sir. He is utterly scornful of the idea of his being in any way answerable to the charge made against him, and is so ready to give any explanation we may require that I have brought him to you instead of to a magistrate. Have I done right, sir?"

The inspector looked at young Degraw, who bore his regard so frankly that he at once inspired confidence. "He will see," he returned. "If Mr. Degraw can answer all our questions satisfactorily, why, it will be a great point gained, of course. But we do not require him to speak at all; we only give him liberty to do so."

"Good," ejaculated the artist. "I am only too ready. First, then, why do you accuse me of murdering a girl whom I never saw, nor of whose existence was I even aware, till I heard of her death here on this very spot at the time I came to see Mr. Bryd on a matter utterly disconnected with this subject?"

"It is a direct question, and I will answer it directly. We charge you with her murder, because you alone of all the men in town, answer to the name and appearance of the person who for the last three months has been hovering about the steps of only this girl, but of others bearing the simple name of Jenny Rogers."

"I do? Impossible!"

"Not at all. You certainly have made the acquaintance of one such person, have you not?"

"The signorina."

"Yes, yes! but she—"

"Oh, I know the story; Bryd, here, has been forced to tell me a very improbable story, but the way, so improbable, that even an old dealer in mysteries like myself has ventured to question its facts, and believe only in your extreme desire to recover traces of the woman who has seemingly fled from you."

Mr. Degraw drew back astonished. "Could his interest in the lovely singer be viewed in this way? He looked at Bryd, and felt relieved to catch a gleam of the old confidence in that officer's friendly eyes.

"But," cried he, "I can substantiate this improbable story, both by written evidence and competent witnesses."

"You can?"

"Yes, but before doing so, let me know what excuse you have for saying that a person of my name and appearance has been seen in connection with these various young girls."

The inspector hesitated, but not long. There was truth in the artist's eye and he was glad to recognize it.

"Mr. Degraw," said he, "it is not usual for us to give so much advantage to a man charged with a crime as to tell him the reasons for his arrest. But I am willing, in consideration of your name, which is rapidly growing illustrious in the art you have chosen, to lay before you these facts. First: the gentleman who haunted the steps of the Miss Rogers who attends Miss Hadden's school

wrote her a letter, which, if not signed by his name, contained a card which revealed it, and that name was yours, 'Hamilton Degraw.' Secondly: lest you would argue that this card carried no weight with it as it might be a stolen one introduced into this communication by the unprincipled author of the same, I will add that some days previous to its receipt this same young lady was walking in the street and saw the gentleman who was supposed to have written this letter drop his cigarette case. As he did not perceive that he had done this, she had the opportunity of picking it up. She did so, and behold! upon one of the cigarettes—case a monogram was inscribed, the letters of which are undeniably an 'H' and a 'D.' Thirdly: we have in our possession another letter, written by a gentleman of this city to a different Jenny Rogers, in which a Mr. Hamilton Degraw is introduced to her notice. And this letter was carried to her by a person of similar characteristics to your own, as was the box of bonbons received by the girl who was supposed to have died from the poison which had been infused into them; but you will say no man can have a monopoly upon any one name, nor are you the only person in the town who can answer to the general description of tall form and easy manners, black mustache and gray eyes. This is true, but it is strange to have them united, and that in the person of one who does not deny that he possesses an intense interest in one of the unfortunates who bear this fatal name."

"It may be strange, but the world is full of strange things. I know a man who went from New York to San Francisco, and there, out of all the women who inhabited that town, made

the acquaintance and married a girl who was by blood his own sister, though he did not know it and never could understand why the announcement of his marriage affected his father to such an extent as to drive him into a speedy grave. Is not that a stranger fact than this?"

"Perhaps, but—"

"I know there is a conspiracy against girls by the name of Jenny Rogers; but how come I to know it? By hearing it spoken of her. Bryd can testify to that."

"And I," spoke up Mr. Gryce.

"The question is: Am I the man who has been seen in connection with these innocent girls? I swear I am not, and I expect to be able to prove it. Have you any specimens of his handwriting here?"

Mr. Gryce produced the letter given him by the Detroit belle.

"Compare it with this memorandum I wrote this morning," urged the artist, tearing a leaf from his notebook and handing it to him.

"There is but little similarity," adjudged the inspector.

"But this letter to Miss Rogers is manifestly in a disguised handwriting," objected Mr. Gryce.

"It is immaterial," quoth Mr. Degraw. "Any witness who saw the writer will at once tell you upon viewing my face that I am not he."

"You are willing to submit to this test?"

"Of course; why else do I insist upon my innocence?"

The smile he gave them was irresistible. They all three showed the influence it had upon them, and the inspector, looking at Mr. Bryd, made a quick and meaning gesture.

To be continued.

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Lac La Poudre, Alta., Dec. 18. (Special).—If you have Kidney trouble of any kind, from Backache to Bright's Disease, and don't know how to cure it, ask your neighbors. They'll tell you to use Dodd's Kidney Pills. Such is the experience of Mangus Johnson, a well-known farmer residing near here. In an interview Mr. Johnson says:

"In the year 1907 I took a pain in my back, due to a strain and hard work. I kept getting worse. In the fall of 1908 I was unable to do any hard work, and began to suffer a great deal. I did not know what to do, and told one of my neighbors. He handed me a Dood's Almanac. After reading it I concluded to try Dood's Kidney Pills, and after using five boxes I feel fine and able to do any kind of hard work. Dood's Kidney Pills cured my Kidneys, and I cannot praise them too much."

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A caring, critical, dissatisfied attitude towards life is fatal to popularity. If you want to be liked, you simply must give out liking, kindness, appreciation to other people.

For in this life we get what we give. If we give distrust and criticism, we must be prepared to meet these things directed against ourselves. If we cultivate the good will spirit, the faculty which is in us of finding the best in others, and showing our best side to them, what a difference it makes to the well-being of the whole community! Once cultivate an atmosphere of kindness and appreciation of others for all acts of kindness we receive, and our whole mental attitude is changed for the better.

If people want to be liked, they must give liking to the people they meet. After all, most people have some lovable qualities; but it rests with ourselves whether we bring out what is good and generous, or what is mean and petty.

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Seven Men Found Dead.

Sitting Upright in a Train of Cars in Mine.

Bricville, Tenn., Dec. 11.—Seven men dead were discovered early today sitting upright in a train of nine cars in a cross entry two miles from the mouth of the Cross Mountain mine. This brings the list of known dead from the explosion of Saturday morning up to 16. Eight of the bodies are still in the mine, the other eight having been brought forth and identified by relatives.

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Guarding the Naval Secrets.

The recent appointment of Mr. Winston Churchill to be head of the Admiralty recalls the fact that there is no more jealously-guarded department than that over which he now holds sway. The head of the Navy is the most reticent man in the Cabinet—when question time comes around. Whenever an answer is given you may be quite sure that it doesn't give very much away.

All new ships are built with the greatest possible secrecy. To begin with, every man who is employed, in whatever capacity, on a new warship has to take an oath that he will never reveal anything he may learn. No outsider is allowed anywhere near the building yards. When the first Dreadnought was being built, for instance, the great vessel was guarded so jealously that no one, save those actually employed on her, were allowed within in forty yards. To show how strict this order was carried out, two post-captains of the Navy, in uniform, were turned back by the police and private detectives on guard.

Each workman is detailed off to do his own particular share, and he is not allowed in any other department of the building yards unless he carries a special pass for that purpose. Men who wander into other departments without this permission are dismissed instantaneously.

So closely are the vessels watched that, as a general rule, the various workshops are guarded by special armoured fire-proof doors. The keys of these doors are always in charge of high officials who are responsible for the opening and shutting of them. Whenever the doors are opened an entry is made in a book kept for the purpose, stating who opened the doors, why he opened them, and the time of doing so.

The actual plans of a new battleship are the most carefully guarded of all the Admiralty's secrets. They are kept in rooms which rival any strongrooms of a bank. The draughtsmen never have the whole plans in their possession. Parts are given out at a time to different men, and every draughtsman is carefully watched in order that he can take no copy of the part of the plan in front of him. So well are the complete plans divided up that even if three or four men agreed to act together they would be unable to find out much about England's latest Dreadnought. Whenever the German Emperor visited Gibraltar a few years ago the greatest precautions were quietly taken, in the politest possible way, to prevent members of the Kaiser's suite seeing too much. Sentries were placed at all sorts of odd corners on board all the men-of-war. Every part of the vessels were carefully guarded, and more than one German officer who "wandered" below was politely shown the way up to deck again.—Tit-Bits.

Shifting His Ministers.

One of Wesley's reasons for shifting his preachers every three years was avowedly that they might be able to preach the same sermon over again to different congregations. He knew by experience the difficulty of sermon making. After a few weeks, he said, a preacher cannot find matter evening "noon" will the people come to hear him, whereas if he never stays more than a fortnight in one place he will find plenty of matter, and the people will hear him gladly. I know that were I to preach one whole year in one place I should preach both myself and my congregation to sleep.—London Chronicle.

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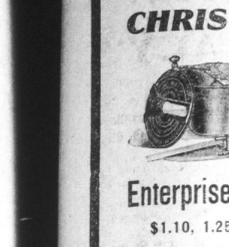
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