



"The light of home's a wondrous light,
Through life it follows, seeming,
Yet when with age the hair is white,
Clear in the front 'tis gleaming;
It shines from where our loved ones
are,
Oh, this is love's divining!
And through the gates of heaven ajar
At last we see it shining!"

THE LEAVENWORTH CASE

By A. K. Green.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

"Miss Leavenworth, according to your evidence, your uncle came to his death not very long after Mr. Harwell left him. If your door was open, you ought to have heard if any one went to his room or any pistol shot was fired. Now, did you hear anything?"

"I heard no confusion, no, sir."

"Did you hear anything?"

"Nor any pistol shot."

"Miss Leavenworth, excuse my persistence, but did you hear anything?"

"I heard a door close."

"What door?"

"The library door."

"When?"

"I do not know." She clasped her hands hysterically. "I cannot say. Why do you ask me so many questions?"

"I leaped to my feet; she was swaying, almost fainting. But before I could reach her she had drawn herself up again, and resumed her former demeanor. 'Excuse me,' said she, 'I am not myself this morning. I beg your pardon,' and she turned steadily to the coroner. 'What was it you asked?'"

"I asked," and his voice grew thin and high—evidently her manner was beginning to tell against her—"when it was you heard the library door shut?"

"I cannot fix the precise time, but it was after Mr. Harwell came up and before I closed my own."

"And you heard no pistol-shot?"

"No, sir."

The coroner cast a look at the jury, who almost to a man dropped their eyes as he did so.

"Miss Leavenworth, we are told that Hannah, one of the servants, started for your room late last night after some medicine. Did she come there?"

"No, sir."

"When did you first learn of her remarkable disappearance from this house during the night?"

"This morning before breakfast. Molly met me in the hall, and asked how Hannah was. I thought the enquiry a strange one, and so questioned her. A moment's talk made the conclusion plain that the girl was gone."

"What did you think when you became assured of this fact?"

"I did not know what to think."

"No suspicion of foul play crossed your mind?"

"No, sir."

"You did not connect the fact with your uncle's murder?"

"I did not know of this murder then."

"And afterward?"

"Oh, some thought of the possibility of her knowing something about it may have crossed my mind, I cannot say."

"Can you tell us anything of the girl's past history?"

"I can tell you no more in regard to it than my cousin has done."

"Do you know what made her so sad nights?"

Her cheek flushed angrily; was it at his tone or at the question itself? "No,

sir; she never confided her secrets to my keeping."

"Then you cannot tell us where she would be likely to go upon leaving this house?"

"Certainly not."

"Miss Leavenworth, we are obliged to put another question to you. We are told that you were the one who ordered your uncle's body to be removed from where it was found into the next room."

She bowed her head.

"Didn't you know that it is not proper to disturb the body of a person found dead, except in the presence and under the authority of the proper officer?"

"I did not consult my knowledge, sir, in regard to the subject; only my feelings."

"Then I suppose it was your feelings that prompted you to remain standing by the table at which he was murdered, instead of following the body in and seeing it properly deposited? Or perhaps," he went on with relentless sarcasm, "you were too much interested just then in the piece of paper you took away to think much of the proprieties of the occasion?"

"Paper?" lifting her head with determination. "Who says that I took a piece of paper from the table? I am sure I have not."

"One witness has sworn that he saw you bending over the table upon which there were lying several papers; another, that when she met you a few minutes later in the hall, you were in the act of putting a piece of paper in your pocket. The inference follows, Miss Leavenworth."

"This was a home thrust, and we looked to see some show of agitation, but her haughty lip never quivered."

"You have drawn the inference, and you must prove the fact."

The answer was stateliness itself, and we were not surprised to see the coroner look a trifle baffled; but recovering himself, he said:

"Miss Leavenworth, I must ask you again, whether you did or did not take anything from that table?"

She folded her arms. "I decline answering that question," she said, quietly.

"Pardon me," he rejoined, "it is necessary that you should."

Her lip took a still more determined curve. "When any suspicious paper is found in my possession, it will be time enough then far me to explain how I came by it."

This defiance seemed to quite stagger the coroner. "Do you realize to what this refusal is liable to subject you?"

She dropped her head. "I am afraid that I do; yes, sir."

Mr. Gryce lifted his hand and softly twirled the tassel of the window-curtain.

"And you still persist?"

She absolutely disdained to reply.

The coroner did not press it further.

It had now become evident to all that Eleanore Leavenworth not only stood upon her defence, but was perfectly aware of her position and prepared to maintain it. Even her cousin, who until now had preserved some sort of composure, began to show signs of strong and uncontrollable agitation, as if she found it one thing to utter an accusation herself, and quite another to see it working its way to light in the countenances of the men about her.

"Miss Leavenworth, the coroner continued, changing the lines of attack, 'you have always had free access to your uncle's apartments, have you not?'"

"Yes, sir."

"Might even have entered his room

late at night, crossed it and stood at his side, without disturbing him sufficiently to cause him to turn his head?"

"Yes," her hands pressing themselves painfully together.

"Miss Leavenworth, the key of the library door is missing."

She made no answer.

"It has been testified to that, previous to the actual discovery of the murder, you visited the door of the library alone. Will you tell us if the key was then in the lock?"

"It was not."

"Are you certain?"

"I am."

"Now, was there anything peculiar about this key, either in size or shape?"

She strove to repress the sudden terror which this question produced, glanced carelessly around at the group of servants stationed at her back, and trembled.

"It was a little different from the others," she murmured at last.

"In what respect?"

"The handle was broken."

"Ah, gentlemen, the handle was broken," the coroner observed, looking toward the jury.

Mr. Gryce seemed to take this information to himself, for he gave another of his quick nods.

"You would then recognize this key, Miss Leavenworth, if you should see it?"

She cast a startled look at him, as if she expected to behold it in his hand, but seeming to gather courage at not finding it produced, replied quite easily:

"I think I should, sir."

"Very well, then," said he, waving his hand in dismissal, "that is all. Gentlemen," continued he, looking at the jury, "you have heard the testimony of the members of the household, and—"

But here Mr. Gryce, quietly advancing, touched him on the arm. "One moment," said he, and stooping, he whispered a few words in the coroner's ear, then recovering himself, stood with his right hand in his breast pocket, and his eye upon the chandelier.

I scarcely dared to breathe. Had he repeated to the coroner the words he had inadvertently overheard in the hall above? But a glance at the latter's face satisfied me that nothing so important as that had transpired. He looked not only tired, but a trifle annoyed.

"Miss Leavenworth," said he, turning again in her direction, "you have declared that you were not with your uncle last evening, did not visit his room. Do you repeat that assertion?"

"I do."

He glanced at Mr. Gryce, who immediately drew from his breast a handkerchief curiously soiled. "It is strange, then," remarked he, "that this handkerchief of yours in the hands of the officer should have been found this morning in that room."

The girl uttered a cry; then while Mary's face hardened into a sort of strong despair, Eleanore tightened her lips, and coldly replied: "I do not see that it is so very strange. I was in that room early this morning."

"And you dropped it then?"

A distressed blush crossed her face; she did not reply.

"Soiled in this way?" he went on.

"I know nothing about the soil. What is it? Let me see."

"In a moment; what we now wish is to know how it came to be in your uncle's apartment."

"There are many ways. I might have left it there days ago. I have told you that I was in the habit of visiting his room. But first, let me see if it is my handkerchief." And she held out her hand.

"I presume so, as I am told it has your initials embroidered in the corner," he returned, as Mr. Gryce passed it to her.

But she with horrified voice interrupted him. "These dirty spots! what are they? they look like—"

"Like what they are," said the coroner. "If you have ever cleaned a pistol you must know what they are, Miss Leavenworth."

She let the handkerchief fall conclusively from her hand, and stood staring at it lying before her on the floor. "I know nothing about it, gentlemen," she said. "It is my handkerchief, but—"

For some cause she did not finish her sentence, but again repeated, "indeed, gentlemen, I know nothing about it."

This concluded her testimony.

Kate, the cook, was now recalled and asked to tell when she last washed the handkerchief.

"This, sir, this handkerchief? Oh, some time this week, sir," throwing a deprecatory glance at her mistress.

"What day?"

"Well, I wish I could forget, Miss Eleanore, but I can't. It is the only one like it in the house. I washed it day before yesterday."

"When did you iron it?"

"Yesterday morning," half choking over her words.

"And when did you take it to her room?"

The cook threw her apron over her head. "Yesterday afternoon with the rest of the clothes, just before dinner. Indeed, I could not help it, Miss Eleanore," whispered she, "it was the truth."

Eleanore Leavenworth frowned. This somewhat contradictory evidence had very sensibly affected her; and when a moment later, the coroner having dismissed the witness, turned toward her, and enquired if she had anything further to say in regard to this matter in the way of explanation or otherwise, she threw her hands up almost spasmodically, slowly shook her head, and without word or warning, fainted quietly away in her chair.

A commotion, of course, followed, during which I noticed that Mary did not hasten to her cousin, but left it for Molly and Kate to do what they could toward her resuscitation. In a few moments this was in so far accomplished that they were enabled to lead her from the room. As they did so I observed a tall man rise and follow her out.

A momentary silence ensued, soon broken, however, by an impatient stir as our little juryman rose and proposed that the jury should now adjourn for the day. This seeming to fall in with the coroner's views, he announced that the inquest would stand adjourned till three o'clock the next day, when he trusted all the jurors would be present.

A general rush followed, that in a few minutes emptied the room of all but Miss Leavenworth, Mr. Gryce and myself.

(To be continued.)

The neighbor had been requested by Eddie's mother to no longer furnish him with candy, as had been her custom. So it happened that on the occasion of the next neighborly call Eddie's disappointment was great.

At last he remarked: "It seems to me I smell candy."

Importuned so indirectly, Mrs. A. presented him with a diminutive portion.

Looking at it long and earnestly, Eddie was heard to say, "Could it be possible I smelled so small a piece?"