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THE EVENT OF A NIGHT

Through the fog came the sound of scuffling, then a loud report, a groan, and after that retreating footsteps.

Douglas Lesleigh paused and peered around him, uncertain precisely whence the noise had come. Another groan, fainter than the first, caused him to step aside to a spot near the railings, and what he saw made him catch his breath sharply.

A man lay on the pavement—a man wearing evening dress, as Lesleigh was, his covert coat was open, and a portion of the white shirt front was dyed a significant red. The refined, strong-featured face was deathly pale; the eyes were closed. For a moment Lesleigh thought the man was dead.

But the eyes opened and their gaze rested on him.

"What has happened? You are badly injured—I will get a doctor!" The stricken man made a feeble, deprecating gesture.

"I am beyond a doctor's skill, thank all the same. There's something else you can do. There's a leather case in my inner vest pocket; in it you'll find a sealed letter ready stamped and addressed. Send it and the other contents to the person whose name you will see there. Do not mention the matter to anyone. The fog's getting thicker—I can't see, thank awfully—I know I can trust you!"

"No, no!" she answered quickly. "It would be most dangerous to do so. The police are convinced that the man who committed the crime is hiding near here, and if you are seen to come actually out of the house you may be stopped and questioned."

"But why should they suspect me?"

"They have your description. You were seen by a constable on point duty a hundred yards from the gate just two minutes before the discovery was made by another policeman."

"May I ask how you know this, Miss Mentworth?"

"The police have called and asked if anything was seen or heard. They told my uncle the little they knew and they searched the front garden. The other guests know nothing of what has happened, for uncle did not wish the dance to be spoiled. I heard all they said!"

"Why have you taken so much trouble, Miss Mentworth?" Lesleigh asked, after a brief pause.

"Because," she replied deliberately, "I do not wish an innocent man to run a very grave risk!"

"Why are you so certain I am innocent?"

"I am certain because I saw—"

She broke off, catching her breath sharply, obviously annoyed she had said so much.

"You saw the act committed—you saw the murderer?"

"I saw it all!" she said, in a low tone, and then he saw she had become very white and that she was trembling. She gave a little shudder and her eyes closed for a moment, as though to shut out some horrid memory.

"If you know all," he asked after a slight pause, "why should you fear for me, whom you can prove to be innocent?" He looked at her keenly, and saw terror in her eyes.

"Because the person who is guilty must not be caught—there are reasons."

Then it was that he understood much more than had hitherto been possible—she had witnessed the crime, and had some potent reason for desiring to shield the perpetrator; at the same time her instinctive sense of justice and honor forbade her to allow an innocent person to suffer. To deny him—Lesleigh—publicly would entail exposing the guilty party, and she had preferred to secretly save him from danger. Her resource and nerve had been marvellous; now for the first time she revealed the effects of the strain.

But her outward agitation was merely of short duration.

"Believe me, what I suggest is the only way," she said. "We must not wait here any longer." Her hand was on the fluted door-knob.

"I should like to ask just one thing, Miss Mentworth—do you know the victim's name?"

The girl's pale face underwent a swift change, and her eyes shone with angry emotion.

"Yes, I know; and, woman though I am, I say he deserved his fate! I cannot say more now!"

And with these words and a gesture entreating silence she passed into

reached his ears, but he listened in vain for the light footsteps which he now awaited with no little impatience. He had an appointment that evening; it was not really an important one, but he was habitually prompt in the keeping of all engagements. A sense of deep annoyance possessed him, and he was contemplating breaking out of his prison when he heard her footsteps.

A few moments later she stood vaguely outlined in the doorway.

"I am sorry I have kept you a prisoner so long," she said, speaking quickly, "but it was impossible to return without attracting notice. You must get away through the house—it would not be safe to leave the way you came. If anyone sees you leave by the front door, it will be thought you are one of the guests. They are all in the ball-room now. Quick, before you run the chance of being seen by anyone but the servants; they don't matter." And she began to lead the way across the lawn.

"You are very kind, Miss—"

"Mentworth, Miss Mentworth is my name. This is my uncle's house, and there is a dance to-night."

"Mine is Douglas Lesleigh. Don't you think I had better leave at once by the same way you kindly brought me?"

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the conservatory. He was thinking of the leather case, and debating whether he was bound by the dying man's request not to mention the matter to anyone. It was evident Miss Mentworth knew nothing of this; the incident had but occupied a few moments and it had doubtless escaped her notice. Instinctively he put his hand over his breast-pocket; the case was gone! It must have slipped out when he stumbled on entering the summer house! He no longer hesitated; it was necessary to tell her. He paused as she was about to lead the way past a group of palms.

"The man who was shot handed me a leather case, and asked me to send it to a person whose name was inside," he explained, quickly; "I no longer have it—it must have dropped from my pocket when I stumbled; it must be in the summer-house. I ought to go back; it is a sacred trust to the dead and I must follow his wishes!"

A strange, new light leapt to her eyes.

"No, no!" she said fervently. "There is no time; people will be about who will see you. You must get away at once. I will look for the case and send it to you!"

A fresh thought came to him. Apart from other considerations it would be hard, very hard, never to see this girl again.

"I trust you will pardon me for my apparent boldness, Miss Mentworth," he said, in low, quick tones, "but I wonder whether you could arrange to return it to me yourself? It is a curious idea, perhaps, but I would rather it were not sent through the post. Could you possibly arrange to meet me anywhere?"

"It will be at the New Galleries, Bond Street, on Thursday afternoon, and will bring the case. It would be impossible for me to say to-morrow, as I have an engagement." This was Tuesday.

"You are very kind," he replied; and for a moment his gaze rested on her suddenly shy face in ill-concealed admiration.

By tacit consent they lapsed into silence, and Lesleigh followed Enid Mentworth into the corridor that led to the entrance hall, where, avoiding addressing him by name, she bid him adieu in an easy natural manner.

The fog had thickened, but as he left the premises he was conscious of a keen glance from a man who was strolling along the pavement at the very spot where the crime had taken place. For a moment he was beset by a sense of insecurity, but it swiftly left him.

And as he walked away in the direction where his chambers lay, the music of a soft, sweet voice lingered pleasantly in his ears.

There was a perplexing development at the inquest on the dead man. The post-mortem examination had revealed the strange fact that the bullet that had been the cause of death was of a larger calibre than that which fitted the revolver the alleged murderer had dropped as he darted away through the fog, and to the identity of the owner of which there was no clue. It did not, of course, disprove the inference that the owner had committed the act, since it was quite possible he had carried a second revolver of heavier make. But it was a point in favor of the untraced fugitive, and it was a point that puzzled both Enid Mentworth and Douglas Lesleigh not a little—particularly the former—when they read the account in the papers the following evening.

The next day the girl, true to her promise and looking charming in a neat, tailor-made costume and toque to match, entered the New Galleries with a new excitement shining in her eyes. Lesleigh approached her with a glad ejaculation, and they shook hands like old friends. Then, with a few common-places, he led her to one of the quieter salons and they began their talk.

"You found the pocket-book, Miss Mentworth?" was his first question.

"Yes, Mr. Lesleigh; I found it in the summer-house, and—here it is," she replied, producing the little case from her crocodile satchel. "But I have to make a confession," she added, with a little nervous glance at him; "there was something in it that I removed."

"Something you removed?" he replied, aghast at the statement.

"Yes, and before you can understand my motive there is something I must explain. I will tell you the truth; I feel it is safe with you." She regarded him with a questioning gaze that yet was trustful, and he knew instinctively that her explanation would merit his promise.

"Whatever you say will be absolutely safe with me," he said, very earnestly.

"It is unlikely that you and I will ever meet again after to-day"—Lesleigh started, and a look came into his eyes that made her avert hers—"so after you have heard what I have to tell you I should like you to judge me and say whether you blame me for my silence in regard to what I know and for tampering with the contents of the case."

"Basset Mowbray and my brother Browning were both infatuated by the same woman, a brilliant

member of the diplomatic set in Brussels. Although at first her smiles were bestowed almost equally, it soon became clear that Browning was the more favored of the two. He and Mowbray had hitherto been good friends, and apparently they continued to be so. But secretly Mowbray set about trying to ruin my brother, and contrived by card juggling and the like to get him heavily into his debt.

"A few days ago Mowbray got to know that Browning had been entrusted with a secret mission to Berlin, and that he would be returning direct to London. He obtained leave of absence, came to London, called on Browning, and managed by a trick to drug him and secure the important document he was to deliver the next morning to the chief of his department."

"When Browning recovered sensibility and found the paper had vanished he knew what had happened, and he also knew that it meant his ruin. His card losses were no secret, and Mowbray would probably cause it to appear that he had sold the document for money to pay his debts, declaring that Browning had paid him; Mowbray was wealthy and could well afford to sacrifice the amount."

"Was it any wonder that Browning was almost mad with rage? A man named Kielberg, who deals in these things—an agent for one of the Continental Powers—lives near my uncle's house; and my brother, guessing that one of Mowbray's first acts would be to negotiate with this person, intercepted him. Mowbray had been too clever to go direct from Browning's chambers, and so there was time to overtake him. I saw Browning a few minutes before, and he told me everything. He did not say he intended to kill Mowbray, but I wanted him to be careful."

"When you told me about the case I guessed that it contained the stolen document, and I did not hesitate, for my brother's sake, to search it. It was there and is now in his hands. You can see for yourself the name of the person to whom Mowbray wished it to be sent; she is the woman I mentioned. I interfered with nothing but Browning's paper. The rest you already know, Mr. Lesleigh. Can you blame me for the way in which I have acted?"

"No, Miss Mentworth; I cannot and do not blame you," was Lesleigh's ardently uttered reply.

"But what did you mean when you said it was unlikely we should ever meet again?" he added.

"Why should that be, when I should so very much like you to honor me by regarding me in the light of a friend?"

"Can you wish to be the friend of a murderer's sister?" she asked. Her tone was a little bitter.

"What can it matter to me what your brother has done? Why should his act stand between our future friendship? What he did was wrong, no doubt, but it was the outcome of great provocation. Let us be friends, Miss Mentworth. Are you willing?"

"Yes, I am willing!" she murmured, in a low tone that was not quite steady.

"Thank you!" he said, very earnestly.

After a short silence they went on to talk about the inquest and the mystery of the bullet.

"Browning tells me he had but one revolver, which was the one they found," Enid said. "He is as much puzzled as I am."

"Did you notice there was a very loud report, almost as though there was an immediate echo, or another report simultaneously?" Lesleigh asked, musingly.

"I did notice it," said the girl.

After a while they talked of other matters.

"Don't you think we had better let your brother into the secret, Miss Mentworth?" Lesleigh suggested. "He could effect a formal introduction, you know, and then—"

He paused and their eyes met. Did they realize in that swift mutual glance that it was fated that theirs were linked lives?

A week later, when it seemed that so far as the public were concerned the mystery of Basset Mowbray's death would have to be relegated to the long list of London's undiscovered mysteries, there was a surprising piece of news.

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MADE IN CANADA

Otto Kielberg, the secret agent of whom Enid Mentworth had spoken, had been suddenly seized with appendicitis in an acute form. Realizing before the operation that there was little hope of his life being saved, he had confessed to having killed Basset Mowbray. His shot had been fired simultaneously with another, and being, as he believed, on the point of death, he felt it his duty to state the facts in case the owner of the revolver that had been found should be traced and accused of the crime. He had shot Mowbray in revenge for some trick he had played him in Berlin several months back.

It was only a few weeks after Kielberg's death that Enid and Douglas Lesleigh—who, on Browning Mentworth's introduction, had quickly become a recognized caller at her father's house—were alone in the dainty drawing-room.

They had seen each other a good deal of late, and something in the girl's manner told Douglas he need not fear to speak.

"Surely it is not necessary for me to keep silence any longer!" he said, very gently, as he took one small hand and held it tenderly.

"I love you and—yes, I see it in your eyes—you love me!"

She did not turn away. Her mouth quivered. In an instant his arms were around her.

"Enid, my dearest, I want you! I think I have loved you from the very first hour we met. Will you be my wife?"

Shyly she raised her radiant eyes to his, and her lips formed the word he was awaiting.

It was scarcely audible, but he knew she was his from that time henceforth.—London Tit-Bits.

"RATS" AND SWITCHES.

Women who resort to "rats," switches and puffs of hair to reinforce nature need not think that they are wearing hair taken from the dead, according to the United States Consul-General at Hong Kong, China. He also contradicts the stories that have been circulated to the effect that much of the hair which goes to make up these "reinforcements" comes from queues that have been cut off. To substantiate this, he says that although thousands of queues have been cut off in Hong Kong during the past few months, the hair has not been sold.

The hair shipped from the Chinese Empire is the comings from well-to-do people, mostly women, says the Consul-General. Comings that formerly were thrown away, he adds, now are saved and sold to the barbers by Chinese maids. Barbers also obtain considerable hair while plying their trade, selling it to hair exporters. Much of the Chinese product is sent to Paris, and is exported from there to Canada and the United States as French hair.

OPERATES UPON HIMSELF.

M. Alexander Fzaicon, a 26-year-old Roumanian surgeon in Paris, France, is the talk of Paris for an act of cool heroism of a unique character.

He has been studying a new anesthetic, the action of which he calls rachistrychno-stovainisation. It leaves the patient lucid, but suppresses all sensibility, and M. Fzaicon intends to make his discovery the subject of the medical essay which he will present at his final examination, which he is to pass in a few weeks.

M. Fzaicon had been suffering from hernia, and an operation became necessary. He determined to try his new anesthetic on himself. The anesthetic was administered and the young doctor sat down at the operating table, and, after calmly performing the operation, stitched up the wound and went to bed. The operation took an hour to perform. He is now in a fair way to recovery.

Don't go too fast, young man, even if the road is smooth.

All the trains for Misfortune run express.

HEALTH APOSTLES IN A VAN.

English Women on a Gypsying Crusade Against Tuberculosis.

A novel way of fighting tuberculosis has been introduced in England by the Women's Imperial Health Association. Two caravans, as they call the luxurious vans in which high-bred folks go gypsying around the country, have been sent out by this society to spread a knowledge of hygiene among the ignorant classes.

"The van was supplied with every thing that sufficed for the daily needs of an ordinary mortal," says a writer in the Gentlewoman in describing one of these tours, "though everything was of course as much as possible in tabloid form. A typical day was as follows: By 6 o'clock we were breakfasting in front of the caravan, our meal consisting of bacon, eggs, tea or coffee, bread and butter and marmalade."

"From 9 to 11.30 we washed-up breakfast things, tidied up caravan and prepared midday meal and supper. Eleven-thirty to one was spent in shopping, business calls and for the arrangement of future meetings. Our midday meal occupied us for an hour, including clearing away and washing up."

"From 2.30 to 4 we probably either held a meeting in some parish room illustrated by moving pictures and lantern slides and then distributed literature or held a reception at the caravan for people who cared to come and inspect and find out all about it. From 5 to 7 we wrote up reports of afternoon meetings and attended to our business correspondence generally."

"Supper occupied us until 8, when a large organized lecture by some special doctor was held in a public hall, the audience varying from 300 to 1,000."

SHOOTING BY H.M.S. NEPTUNE.

At Five Miles Shell From Big Gun. Cut Down Flag Pole.

Service circles are keenly interested in the progress of the gunnery experiments now being carried on in the Mediterranean by H.M.S. Neptune. The conditions under which the experiments are being conducted provide as severe a test, as possible. The idea is new, H.M.S. Neptune is new, the ship's company is new, and therefore has not shaken down, as will be the case in a month or two.

On February 13 a flagstaff thirty feet high and four inches broad was dropped at a distance of nine thousand yards, or just over five miles from the ship. The flagstaff was invisible to the naked eyes of any one on board the Neptune. When the button was touched by the control aloft five 12-inch shot went straight as a die to the target more than five miles off. The five shot fell in a space of a hundred and fifty yards. Such a volley would have crippled any Dreadnought afloat.

The trials on February 13 were only the beginning of the experimental gunnery course, and it is expected within a few days that the big guns of the Neptune in a minute as any previous Dreadnought has done before.

CHINESE MARRIAGE SOLEMN.

No Levity and Much Weeping in Ceremony.

A Chinese marriage is all ceremony—no talk, no levity and much crying. The solemnity of a funeral prevails. After the exchange of presents the bride is spread upon a table, to which the blushing bride is led by five of her best female friends. They are seated at the table, but no one eats, says the London Globe. The utmost silence prevails, when finally he mother leads off in a cry, the maids follow, and the bride echoes in the chorus. Then all the bridesmaids leave the table, and the disconsolate mother takes a seat beside the chair of state where the bride sits. The bridegroom now enters with four of his best men. The men pick up the throne on which the bride sits and, in procession and walk around the room or into an adjoining parlor, signifying that he is carrying her away to his own home. The guests then throw rice at the happy couple.