

vices supplemented by a modicum of private influence. He had run up to London for a couple of days at his club, but had been telegraphed for before Mr. Grylls went out to the scene of the crime. He came bustling in a few minutes later.

"Polgleaze the second wiped out, eh, Grylls?" he began noisily. "Good riddance, from all accounts, but none the less it's up to us to catch the chap who did it. Probably the same—what? Just run through the facts like a good fellow, and we'll retrieve the laurels we lost over old Jacob, eh?"

THE Superintendent detailed the facts so far as they were known, repeated the opinion of the doctor that the deceased had been killed by being pulled off his car, and having his throat cut after slowing down to turn a dangerous corner, and finished by half reluctantly passing over the letter which had so interested him.

"That seems to reopen the theory we worked on in the case of Mr. Polgleaze, senior," he said, scanning with respectful scrutiny the face of his superior as he read.

The Chief Constable perused the letter quickly and handed it back. "Take care of that, Grylls," he said. "It's our clue, and a sure one. Lance Pengarvan, eh? But no! 'The Lodestar' isn't due back for a month or two."

"She came in the harbour yesterday, sir," replied Grylls significantly. "I am sorry, but things seem to point to him. I needn't tell you that I've been busy collecting evidence. I find that he was discharged from the service of the firm on arrival, and that after calling at the office, and demanding to see Mr. Polgleaze, who had left for the day, he hired a motor-cycle and went out to The Tower. He must have passed along the road where the body was found, beyond St. Enoch's." "Have you traced the movements of the deceased?"

"There has been no time to verify statements, but it seems Polgleaze, who was in his car, called at The Turk's Head on his way out of the town, and told several people in the bar that he was bound for St. Runan's. He was a bit lively, and hinted that he was going courting."

"The swine!" was the Chief Constable's comment. "If he meant to insinuate that The Tower was his destination he would have got a cool reception from Miss Carlyon if he had reached it. But that's neither here nor there. Even in these democratic days people must not murder vulgar upstarts, eh, Grylls? Well, there's no doubt, I suppose. Either Polgleaze caught Pengarvan up, or the other way about—that will have to be straightened out later—and then Pengarvan did the trick. Can you make anything else of it?"

Major Considine was well aware of his own limitations and always preferred to rely on the matured judgment of his second in command. But the Superintendent hesitated before committing himself. Unconsciously his pencil traced fantastic shapes on his blotting-pad before he replied, and when he looked up at last his eyes were troubled.

"I am afraid you're right, sir," he said. "But, as I remarked just now, I'm sorry, and I'm sorry for more reasons than one. With a little working up the evidence as it stands will convict Captain Pengarvan of both murders, but it also makes me look a fool."

"Feel one, perhaps, Grylls, but not look one," his chief reassured him. "You couldn't do that under any circumstances. What's your meaning?"

The Superintendent was again slow to reply, but when his answer came it was sufficiently startling.

"The event of last night, Major, knocks the bottom out of a notion that I've been cuddling for the last three months," he said—"a kind of an instinct, not much more, that it was Wilson himself who sent old Jacob where he's gone. My reasons? They ain't reasons such as would stand up for five minutes against a judge and jury. But he fed me with little scraps of information from time to time, some

only the other day, and all pointing to Lance Pengarvan. I formed the suspicion, knocked on the head now, that he might be trying to shunt the guilt on to Pengarvan because the skipper of 'The Lodestar' had punched his head. There isn't any doubt that they fell out at The Tower the night after the steamer left port."

"I know," said Considine. "We came to the conclusion that there had been some hanky-panky over some secret shipment. It didn't seem to bear on Jacob's murder at the time, but this letter over the old man's signature shows we were wrong. Have you seen any of the crew?"

"They are dumb to a man. Not quite that, perhaps, but willing to take their 'davies,' as they call them, that the steamer sailed straight down channel and never stopped off St. Runan's at all. That doesn't count. Lance Pengarvan is a popular captain and they won't give him away."

"I wonder why he did not show you that letter before. Only just found it, I suppose?"

"I am not so sure of that," Grylls replied thoughtfully. "The last time I saw him he hinted that he might have some fresh evidence to give us. It is on the cards that he may have had the letter all the time, and that he has been keeping it back for some purpose of his own. Why was he taking it out to St. Runan's? He wasn't carrying any other letters about with him. Do you see what I mean, Major?"

"Good Lord, yes!" was the disgusted ejaculation. "The sweep must have meant to hold it over Miss Carlyon in his precious courting, save the mark. But blackguarding the dead won't whitewash the living, Grylls. It's a clear case for a warrant. You had better rake up one of the great unpaid to do the needful, while I go and hire a roomy car."

"Shall you make the arrest yourself, sir?" asked the Superintendent with a brisk hope that was doomed to instant disappointment.

"Not for half a year's salary," Major Considine replied firmly. "I couldn't face that proud girl at The Tower on such business, taking her lover, if rumours are true, away to hang him. No, I'm Irish, and by the same token a coward when it comes to ruffling the women, Grylls. It needs a hard, old veteran like yourself to do a job of this kind, and you will have to do it, my friend. I mentioned a roomy car, because you had better take a couple of constables along, and there'll be the prisoner to bring back."

As they separated, each on his own errand, Mr. Grylls wished that he too could plead the same blithe excuse for shirking the most detestable duty that had fallen to him in a long career. Under his bluff exterior he was as soft-hearted as the "cowardly Irishman" who had won his "V.C." at Paardeburg. The prospect of wounding the Lady of The Tower lay on him like lead.

But the kindly officer found his task less irksome than he had expected. When the car swept into the neglected grounds of the old mansion on the cliff, Hilda, Mrs. Pengarvan and Lance were snipping off the dead blooms of the climbing roses that straggled up the grey walls by the front door. Haltingly the Superintendent explained his business, Hilda regarding him gravely but with no enmity. As for Lance, he broke into a cheery laugh.

"Right you are, Grylls," he said. "Don't pull such a long face about it. I'll go quietly, as the saying is, provided you let me pack up a toothbrush and a change of linen."

#### CHAPTER XXI.

#### Dark Days.

VANCE was brought before the magistrates on the following day, when only evidence of arrest was given and he was remanded for a week. Mr. Hinton, the family solicitor of the Carlyons, appeared for the defence, but the prisoner being charged with murder he did not even ask for bail.

The inquest was opened on the afternoon of the same day, at the village inn at St. Enoch's, but here again the

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