

And when millions like it better it must be so.

"SALADA" TEA

'Fresh from the gardens'



CHAPTER XX.—(Cont'd.)

"The announcement at breakfast went well. After the golfing party had gone off, we had the morning in which to complete our arrangements. What I was chiefly concerned about was to establish as completely as possible the identity of Robert. For this reason I suggested to Mark that, when dressed, he should go out by the secret passage to the bowling green, and come back by the drive, taking care to enter into conversation with the lodge-keeper.

"In this way I would have two more witnesses of Robert's arrival—first the lodge-keeper, and secondly one of the gardeners whom I would have working on the front lawn. Mark, of course, was willing enough. He could practice his Australian accent on the lodge-keeper. It was really amusing to see how readily he fell into every suggestion which I made. Never was a killing more carefully planned by its victim.

"He changed into Robert's clothes in the office bedroom. This was the safest way—for both of us. When he was ready, he called me in, and I inspected him. It was extraordinary how well he looked the part. I suppose that the signs of his dissipation had already marked themselves on his face, but had been concealed hitherto



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by his mustache and beard; for now that he was clean-shaven they lay open to the world from which we had so carefully hidden them, and he was indeed the wretch which he was pretending to be.

"Wonderful," I said to myself. "Nobody could possibly guess."

"I peered into the hall. It was empty. We hurried across to the library; he got into the passage and made off. I went back to the bedroom, collected all his discarded clothes, did them up in a bundle and returned with them to the passage. Then I sat down in the hall and waited.

"You heard the evidence of Stevens, the maid. As soon as she was on her way to the Temple in search of Mark, I stopped into the office. My hand was in my side-pocket, and in my hand was the revolver.

"He began at once in his character of Robert—some rignarole about working his passage over from Australia; a little private performance for my edification. Then in his natural voice, gloating over his well-planned retaliation on Miss Norris, he burst out, 'It's my turn now. You wait.' It was this which Elsie heard. She had no business to be there and she might have ruined everything, but as it turned out it was the luckiest thing which could have happened. For it was the one piece of evidence which I wanted; evidence other than my own that Mark and Robert were in the room together.

"I said nothing. I was not going to take the risk of being heard to speak in that room. I just smiled at the poor little fool, and took out my revolver and shot him. Then I went back into the library and waited—just as I said in my evidence.

"Can you imagine, Mr. Gillingham, the shock which your sudden appearance gave me? Can you imagine the feelings of a 'murderer' who has (as he thinks) planned for every possibility, and is then confronted suddenly with an utterly new problem? What difference would your coming make? I didn't know. Perhaps none; perhaps all. And I had forgotten to open the window!

"I don't know whether you will think my plan for killing Mark a clever one. Perhaps not. But if I do deserve any praise in the matter, I think I deserve it for the way I pulled myself together in the face of the unexpected catastrophe of your arrival. Yes, I got a window open, Mr. Gillingham, under your very nose; the right window, too, you were kind enough to say. And the keys—yes, that was clever of you, but I think I was cleverer.

"I deceived you over the keys, Mr. Gillingham, as I learnt when I took the liberty of listening to a conversation on the bowling-green between you and your friend Beverley. Where was I? Ah, you must have a look for that secret passage, Mr. Gillingham.

"But what am I saying? Did I deceive you at all? You have found out

the secret—that Robert was Mark—and that is all that matters. How have you found out? I shall never know now. Where did I go wrong? Perhaps you have been deceiving me all the time. Perhaps you know about the keys, about the window, even about the secret passage. You are a clever man, Mr. Gillingham.

"I had Mark's clothes on my hands. I might have left them in the passage, but the secret of this passage was now out. Miss Norris knew it. That was the weak point of my plan, perhaps, that Miss Norris had to know it. So I hid them in the pond, the inspector having obligingly dragged it for me first. A couple of keys joined them, but I kept the revolver. Fortunately, wasn't it, Mr. Gillingham?

"Goodbye, Mr. Gillingham. I'm sorry that your stay with us was not of a pleasanter nature, but you understand the difficulties in which I was placed. Don't let Bill think too badly of me. He is a good fellow; look after him. He will be surprised. And thank you for letting me end my own way. I expect you did sympathize a little, you know. We might have been friends in another world—yeh and I, and I and she. Tell her what you like. Everything or nothing. You will know what is best. Good-bye, Mr. Gillingham.

"MATTHEW CAYLEY.

"I am lonely tonight without Mark. That's funny, isn't it?"

CHAPTER XXI.

"Good Lord!" said Bill, as he put down the letter. "What did you write to him? Was that last night? After I'd gone into Stanton?"

"Yes."

"What did you say? That you'd discovered that Mark was Robert?"

"Yes. At least I said that this morning I should probably telegraph to Mr. Cartwright of Wimpole Street, and ask him to identify the body."

Bill nodded thoughtfully and went back again to the letter.

"I see. And you told Cayley that you were telegraphing to Mark's dentist?"

"Yes. And then of course it was all up for him. Once we knew that Robert was Mark we knew everything."

"How did you know?"

Anthony got up from the breakfast table and began to fill his pipe.

"Well, let's see if I can go through my own mind again, and tell you how I guessed it. First of all, the clothes."

"Yes?"

"To Cayley the clothes seemed an enormously important clue. I felt certain that, in that case, the absence



"I took out my revolver and shot him."

of the collar was unintentional. In collecting the clothes he had overlooked the collar. Why?"

"It was the one in the linen-basket?"

"Yes. It seemed probable. Why had Cayley put it there. The obvious answer was that he hadn't. Mark had put it there."

"Go on," said Bill eagerly.

"Well, why had Mark changed down there instead of in his bedroom? The only answer was that the fact of his changing had to be kept secret. When did he change? The only possible time was between lunch (when he would be seen by the servants) and the moment of Robert's arrival. And when did Cayley collect the clothes in a bundle? Again, the only answer was 'Before Robert's arrival.' So another x was wanted—to fit those three conditions."

"And the answer was that a murder was intended, even before Robert arrived?"

"Yes. Well now, it wasn't possible a murder could be intended without any more preparation than the changing into a different suit in which to escape. The thing was too childish. Also, if Robert was to be murdered, why go out of the way to announce his existence to you all? I began to feel now that Robert was an incident only; that the plot was a plot of Cayley's against Mark—either to get him to kill his brother, or to get his brother to kill him—and that for some inexplicable reason Mark seemed to be lending himself to the plot." He was silent for a little, and then said, almost to himself, 'I had seen the empty brandy bottles in that cupboard.'

"You never said anything about them," complained Bill.

"I only saw them afterward. I was looking for the collar, you remember. They came back to me afterward; I knew how Cayley would feel about it . . . Poor devil!"

"Go on," said Bill.

"Well, then, we had the inquest, and of course I noticed the curious fact that Robert had asked his way at the second lodge and not at the first. So

into the park between the first and second lodges. Robert, then, had been in the house; it was a put-up job between Robert and Sayley. But how could Robert be there without Mark knowing? Obviously, Mark knew too. What did it all mean?"

"When was this?" interrupted Bill.

"Just after the inquest—after you'd seen Amos and Parsons, of course?"

"Yes. I got up and left them, and came to look for you. I'd got back to the clothes then. Why did Mark change his clothes so secretly? Disguise? But then what about his face? That was much more important than clothes. His face, his beard—he'd have to shave off his beard—and then—oh, idiot! I saw you looking at that poster. Mark acting, Mark made up, Mark disguised. Oh, priceless idiot! Mark was Robert . . . Matches, please."

"Yes," said Bill thoughtfully. "Yes . . . But wait a moment. What about the 'Plough and Horses'?"

Anthony looked comically at him.

"You'll never forgive me, Bill," he said.

"What do you mean?"

Anthony sighed.

"It was a fake, Watson. I wanted you out of the way. I wanted to be alone. So—" he smiled and added, "Well, I knew you wanted a drink."

(THE END.)

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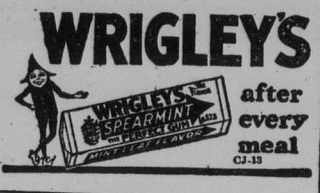
Joan was at her friend's party, and had received from Mother strict instructions not to say "Yes" when asked if she would like a second piece of birthday cake. "Will you have another piece of cake, Joan?" asked her hostess. "Thank you very much," said Joan. "The idea is not repugnant to me."

"The Duke of Wellington once slept in that bed," volunteered the landlord. "Um." "And sat in that very chair you are now sitting in." "And refused to eat this ham sandwich, I s'pose," interposed the tourist. "Well, I don't think I want it, either."



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I talked to Amos and Parsons. That made it more curious. Amos told me that Robert had gone out of his way to speak to him.

"Parsons told me that his wife was out in their little garden at the first lodge all the afternoon, and was certain that Robert had never come past it. He also told me that Cayley had put him on to a job on the front lawn that afternoon. To I had another guess. Robert had used the secret passage—the passage which comes out

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into the park between the first and second lodges. Robert, then, had been in the house; it was a put-up job between Robert and Sayley. But how could Robert be there without Mark knowing? Obviously, Mark knew too. What did it all mean?"

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