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Happiness At Last, OR Loyalty Recompensed.

CHAPTER XXXI.
"It is dreadful to think, to suggest, that Decima is mixed up in this!" he said. "She can not possibly know anything about it. Oh, let me see her!"

"You may see her," said Lady Pauline, "but you can not learn anything from her. She is quite unconscious. Here is the doctor."

"She heard his step coming down the stairs, and called him in."
"Miss Deane is ill, very ill," he said, quietly. "She may remain unconscious for some time, possibly for days. You may see her, yes; you can do no harm."

Bobby went up, and stood, and gazed at the white face with the staring eyes, then he came down again and looked helplessly round him.

"We may as well go, sir," said the detective. "Lady Pauline will let us know when Miss Deane is well enough to be asked any questions."

They returned to Prince's Mansions, and the detective made his report to the inspector. He nodded, gravely, and drew Bobby aside.

"Miss Deane will be an important witness," he said. "I may as well tell you, Mr. Deane—mind, I don't speak officially—that we do not suspect Miss Deane."

"Suspect!" exclaimed Bobby, indignantly.

The inspector raised his eyebrows. "Well, she was here, you see, and any one present in these rooms last night might fall under suspicion; but it seems to me that the case against Lord Gaunt is clear as noonday."

"Lord Gaunt!" said Bobby, chokingly. "He is incapable of it!"

The inspector shrugged his shoulders. "That's what one so often thinks," he said. "However, we shall soon see. Our man will have overtaken him by this time, I should think."

They had removed the body, but Morgan Thorpe had still lingered. The shock—and the brandy he had consumed—had rendered him a pitiable spectacle.

"Come—come home with me! Don't leave me alone, Deane, for God's sake!" he said, clutching at Bobby's arm, and quite forgetting his recent plot to rob him.

A Stubborn Cough Loosens Right Up

This home-made remedy is a wonder for quick results. Easily and cheaply made.

Here is a home-made syrup which millions of people have found to be the most dependable means of breaking up stubborn coughs. It is cheap and simple, but very prompt in action. Under its healing, soothing influence, chest soreness goes, phlegm loosens, breathing becomes easier, tickling in throat stops and you get a good night's restful sleep. The usual throat and chest colds are conquered by it in 24 hours or less. Nothing better for bronchitis, hoarseness, croup, throat tickle, bronchial asthma or winter coughs.

To make this splendid cough syrup, pour 2 1/2 ounces of Pinex into a 16-oz. bottle and fill the bottle with plain granulated sugar syrup and shake thoroughly. If you prefer, use clarified molasses, honey, or corn syrup, instead of sugar syrup. Either way, you get 14 ounces—a family supply—of much better cough syrup than you could buy ready-made for \$2.50. Keeps perfectly and children love its pleasant taste.

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"I will see you home," said Bobby, passing his hand across his brow. "I don't know what to do, where to turn. I ought to go home and tell my father of all this—not that it would be of any use—but I can't leave my sister. Yes, I will go home with you."

They went to Cardigan Terrace, and Bobby looked round the familiar room with a shudder; he could almost see the small, exquisitely dressed figure sitting at the piano.

There was a letter on the mantel shelf, and Morgan Thorpe took it up and opened the envelope with shaking fingers. But he was incapable of reading it, and he held it out to Bobby. "Read it, Deane," he said; and he made for the liquor-stand on the side-board.

"It is from Trevor," said Bobby; and he read the note aloud:

"Dear Thorpe—I feel very seedy, and shall run over to the Continent for a change; may stay some time. I was sorry to hear that Mrs. Dalton had a bad headache when I called to say good-bye. I am starting in half an hour. I packed this morning. Always do things suddenly, don't? Remember me to Deane and all the rest."

Yours, RALPH TREVOR.
Thorpe moaned in a maulin way. "Poor old Trevor! He will be awfully cut up when he hears of it. He was very fond of her, Deane. My poor Laura!" He drew the hand which held the tumbler of brandy and soda across his eyes. "I can't realize it yet. What a loss for me! She was so—so clever. I shall never get on without her. So Trevor's gone! It seems as if everybody had gone. You'll stand by me, Deane? You—you may hear all sorts of things about me, but you—won't believe them, Deane? I always had a liking for you, my dear boy, always—"

"Better not drink any more," said Bobby; but Thorpe shook his head. "It's the only thing that will keep me up. To think that Laura's dead, butchered, and by that beast Gaunt. I always hated him. A stuck-up, sneering beast! Yes, I always hated him, and so did she."

"And they were married?" said Bobby, with a sharp pang of remorse for his own folly.
Thorpe nodded.
"Yes; don't bear any malice because I kept it from you, dear boy. It was her secret, not mine, and she was sensitive. My poor Laura! But she shall hang for it! He shall hang for it!" Bobby shuddered.

"I don't believe he did it!" he said. "I know Gaunt. As I've said a score of times, he isn't capable of it. It's just that such things are impossible to some men, and—murder is impossible to Lord Gaunt!"

"Then who did it?" demanded Thorpe, with a hiccup. "Tell me that. Isn't the evidence against him as strong as it can be?"

Bobby shook his head. The evidence might be as strong as it could be, and yet it did not convince him. After he had seen Thorpe led away to bed—speechlessly drunk—he left the house. The subtle, familiar perfume in the room seemed to follow him, and the dead woman's face and voice haunted him.

"On his way to Lady Pauline's, he bought the second edition of an evening paper—no evening paper ever owns to a first edition—and, while he waited in the drawing-room, read the account. 'The Tragedy at Prince's Mansions!' It was headed, and there were 'scare-lines' at intervals of the report.

"His heart sunk as he read the smooth and yet graphic statement. The murdered woman was, as it set forth, the wife of Lord Gaunt. Here followed all his names and titles. He had married her with a suppression of his rank, and had very soon after the ceremony, which had taken place in Switzerland, separated from her, going on the travels which had made him, with a certain section of the people, famous. The deceased lady had gone to his rooms—whether by appointment or not, the report could not say—and it was proved by the statement of the servants that she had met Lord Gaunt in these rooms. Lord Gaunt had been seen to leave them without his overcoat; and the murdered woman had been found lying dead on the couch covered by this same overcoat. The antique dagger with which the deed had been committed had been found lying near the body. Lord Gaunt had disappeared. This, in brief—the account took a whole page, for it was the dull season, and the murder—and such a murder!—was an editorial godsend—was the substance of the account.

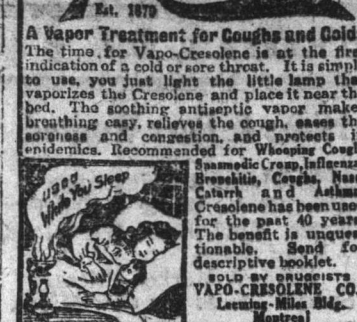
"Well, might Bobby's heart sink as he read it. His own name, and—alas! and alas!—Decima's occurred several times.

He stifled a groan and crammed the paper into his pocket as Lady Pauline entered.
"Decima is still unconscious," she said. She was calm and self-possessed, with the calmness and self-possession of Christian fortitude. "The doctor says she may—may live; but that it will be some time before she will be able to tell us anything. Is there any later news?"

Bobby produced the paper.
"Yes; I have read it. I know—or, rather, I know of—Lord Gaunt. I am not surprised to hear that he is married; nothing I could hear of him, would surprise me; but I do not think that he is guilty."

"He is not—he is not!" said Bobby.

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Lady Pauline regarded him coldly. "And you knew this unfortunate woman?" she said.

Bobby hung his head. "I will not reproach you; but if I may say a word in season—"

"There is no use," said Bobby. "I'm punished bad enough as it is. All my thoughts are of Decima. To think that she is mixed up in this!"

"Lady Pauline inclined her head gravely.
"Who is Mr. Mershon?" she asked.
Bobby started.
"Mr. Mershon? He is the man Decima is engaged to," he said.

"Please write and tell him that I wish to see him," said Lady Pauline. "You would like to see her? She will not know you; she is quite unconscious."

Bobby went up to Decima's room and gazed at her piteously as he had done before.

As he left the house, the special editions of the evening papers were being howled through the street, and the raucous voices of the newspaper boys were shouting: "Orrible murder! Tragedy in 'igh life!'"

All England was ringing with the news of the murder, and the consternation and excitement in Leamshire, and round about Leamore especially, were intense. Crowds gathered round the gates of Leamore and stared up the avenue—Heaven alone knows why—as if they expected to draw something of the grim tragedy from a glimpse of the house.

Bobby had wired to Bright, and he had dashed off with the news to Mershon, to beg him to help break it to Mr. Deane.

Mershon was startled, but more indignant at Decima's connection with the affair than horrified at the tragedy itself.

"Always thought there was something queer about Lord Gaunt," he said. "Yes; he's just the man to stab his wife if he didn't like her. I beg your pardon—for Bright had reddened, and exclaimed, indignantly. "Of course you think he is innocent?"

"How could I think otherwise?" said Bright, warmly. "Lord Gaunt is not guilty!"

"All right," said Mershon, grimly, and with a shrug of his shoulders. "To tell the truth, I don't very much care whether he is or whether he isn't. Of course I hope he isn't. What I'm thinking about is Decima—Miss Deane. What I want to know is, why did she go round to his rooms?"

"Miss Deane went to see her brother, I imagine," said Bright. "She could not know that Lord Gaunt would be there, that he was in London. None of us—not even I—have known anything of his movements. It is terrible that Miss Deane's name should appear in the affair."

"I should think so!" said Mershon, moodily. "It's jolly hard on me, I know."

"I am going round to Mr. Deane to tell him," said Bright. "Will you come with me? I shall go straight from there to London, of course. Lord Gaunt will want me; and if he did not—"

(to be continued.)

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