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HIGHEST AWARD ST. LOUIS, 1904.

The House of a Thousand Candles

BY MEREDITH NICHOLSON. [Copyright, 1905, by Bobbs-Merrill Co.]

As he spoke his glance fell upon the broken wall and open door. The light of Larry's lantern struck full upon him. Amusement, and, I thought, a certain satisfaction, were marked upon his countenance.

"Run along, Jack—I'll be up a little later," said Larry. "If the fellow has come in daylight with the sheriff he is not dangerous. It's his friends that are in the dark that give us the trouble."

I crawled out and stood upright. Bates, staring at the opening, seemed reluctant to leave the spot.

"You seem to have found it, sir," he said—I thought a little chokingly. His interest in the matter nettled me; for my first business was to go above for an interview with the executor, and the value of our discovery was secondary.

"Of course, we have found it!" I ejaculated, brushing the dust from my clothes. "Is Mr. Stoddard in the library?"

"Oh, yes; I left him entertaining the gentlemen."

"Their visit is certainly most inopportune," said Larry. "Give them my compliments and tell them I'll be up as soon as I've articulated the bones of my friend's ancestors."

Bates strode on ahead of me with his lantern, and I left Larry crawling through the new-found door as I hurried toward the house. I knew him well enough to be sure he would not leave the spot until he had found what lay behind the door of bewilderment.

"You didn't tell the callers where you expected to find me, did you?" I asked

Bates, as he brushed me off in the kitchen.

"No, sir. Mr. Stoddard received the gentlemen. He rang the bell for me, and when I went into the library he was saying, 'Mr. Glenarm is at his studies. Bates—he says—kindly tell Mr. Glenarm that I'm sorry to interrupt him, but won't he please come down?' I thought it rather neat, sir, considering his clerical office. I knew you were below somewhere, sir; the trap door was open and I found you easily enough."

Bates' eyes were brighter than I had ever seen them. A certain buoyant note gave an entirely new tone to his voice. He walked ahead of me to the library door, threw it open, and stood aside.

"Here you are, Glenarm," said Stoddard. Pickingering and a stranger stood near the fireplace in their overcoats.

Pickingering advanced and offered his hand, but I turned away from him, without taking it. His companion, a burly countryman, stood staring, a paper in his hand.

"The sheriff," Pickingering exclaimed, "and our business is rather personal."

He glanced at Stoddard, who looked at me.

"Mr. Stoddard will do me the kindness to remain," I said, and took my stand beside the chaplain.

"Oh!" Pickingering ejaculated, scornfully. "I didn't understand that you had established relations with the neighboring clergy. Your taste is improving, Glenarm."

"Mr. Glenarm is a friend of mine," remarked Stoddard quietly. "A very particular friend," he added.

"I congratulate you—both."

I laughed. Pickingering was surveying the room as he spoke, and Stoddard suddenly stepped toward him, merely, I think, to draw up a chair for the sheriff, but Pickingering, not hearing Stoddard's step on the soft rug, until the clergyman was close beside him, started perceptibly and reddened.

It was certainly ludicrous, and when Stoddard faced me again he was biting his lip.

"Pardon me!" he murmured. "Now, gentlemen, will you kindly state your business? My own affairs press me."

Pickingering was studying the cartridge boxes on the library table. The sheriff, too, was viewing those effects with interest, not, I think, unmixed with awe.

"Glenarm, I don't like to invoke the law to eject you from this property, but I am left with no alternative. I can't stay out here indefinitely, and I want to know what I'm to expect."

"That is a fair question," I replied. "If it were merely a matter of following the terms of the will I should not hesitate or be here now. But it isn't the will or my grandfather that keeps me. It's the determination to give you all the annoyance possible—to make it hard and mighty for you to get hold of this house until I have found out why you are so much interested in it."

"You always had a grand way in money matters. As I told you before you came out here, it's a poor stake. The assets consist wholly of this land and this house, whose quality you have had an excellent opportunity to test. You have doubtless heard that the country people believe there is money concealed here—but I dare say you have exhausted the possibilities. This is not the first time a rich man has died, leaving precious little behind him."

"You seem very anxious to get possession of a property that you call a poor stake," I said. "A few acres of land, a half-finished house and an uncertain claim upon a school teacher!"

"I had no idea you would understand it," he replied. "The fact that a man may be under oath to perform the solemn duties imposed upon him by the law would hardly appeal to you. But I haven't come here to debate this question. When are you going to leave?"

"Not till I'm ready—thanks!"

"Mr. Sheriff, will you serve your writ?" he said, and I looked to Stoddard for any hint from him as to what I should do.

"I believe Mr. Glenarm is quite willing to hear whatever the sheriff has to say to him," said Stoddard. He stepped nearer to me, as though to emphasize the fact that he belonged to my side of the controversy, and the sheriff read an order of the Wabana County Circuit Court directing me, immediately, to deliver the house and grounds into the keeping of the executor of the will of the estate of John Marshall Glenarm.

The sheriff rather enjoyed holding the center of the stage, and I listened eagerly to the unfamiliar phraseology. Before he had quite finished I heard a step in the hall and Larry appeared at the door, pipe in mouth. Pickingering turned toward him frowning, but Larry paid not the slightest attention to the executor, leaning against the door with his usual tranquil unconcern.

"I advise you not to trifle with the law, Glenarm," said Pickingering, angrily. "You have absolutely no right whatever to be here. And these other gentlemen—your guests, I suppose—are equally trespassers under the law."

He stared at Larry, who crossed his legs for greater ease in adjusting his lean frame to the door.

"Well, Mr. Pickingering, what is the next step?" asked the sheriff, with an importance that had been increased by

the legal phrases he had been reading.

"Mr. Pickingering," said Larry, straightening up and taking the pipe from his mouth, "I'm Mr. Glenarm's counsel. If you will do me the kindness to ask the sheriff to retire for a moment I should like to say a few words to you that you might prefer to keep between ourselves."

I had usually found it wise to take any cue Larry threw me, and I said: "Pickingering, this is Mr. Donovan, who has every authority to act for me in the matter."

"You seem to have the guns, the ammunition and the numbers on your side," he observed drily.

"The sheriff may wait within call," said Larry, and at a word from Pickingering the man left the room.

"Now, Mr. Pickingering," Larry spoke slowly, "as my friend has explained the case to me, the assets of his grandfather's estate are all accounted for—the land, the house, the ten thousand dollars in securities, and a somewhat vague claim against a lady, known as Sister Theresa, who conducts St. Agatha's School. Is that correct?"

"I don't ask you to take my word for it, sir," rejoined Pickingering, nodding. "I have filed an inventory of the estate, so far as found, with the proper authorities."

"Certainly. But I merely wish to be sure of my facts for the purpose of this interview, to save me the trouble of going to the records. And, moreover, I am somewhat unfamiliar with your procedure in this country. I am a member of the Irish bar, sir, Pickingering, but I repeat my case."

"I have made oath—that, I trust, is sufficient even for a member of the Irish bar."

"Quite so, Mr. Pickingering," said Larry, nodding his head gravely.

He was not, to be sure, a presentable member of any bar, for a single dejected considerably from the appearance of one side of his face, his clothes were rumpled, and covered with black dust, and his hands were black. But I had rarely seen him so calm. He crossed his legs, peered into the bowl of his pipe for a moment, then asked, as quietly as though he were soliciting an opinion of the weather.

"Will you tell me, Mr. Pickingering, whether you yourself are a debtor of John Marshall Glenarm's estate?"

Pickingering's face grew white and his eyes stared, and when he tried suddenly to speak his jaw twitched. The room was so still that the breaking of a blazing log on the andirons was a pleasant relief. We stood, the three of us, with our eyes on Pickingering, and in my own case I must say that my heart was pounding my ribs at an uncomfortable speed, for I knew Larry was not sparing for time.

The blood rushed into Pickingering's face and he turned toward Larry stormily.

"This is an unwarrantable and infamous move! My relations with Mr. Glenarm are none of your business. When you remember that after being deserted by his own flesh and blood he appealed to me, going so far as to intrust all his affairs to my care at his death, your reflection is an outrageous insult. I am not accountable to you or anyone else."

"Really, there's a good deal in all that," said Larry. "We don't pretend to any judicial functions. We are perfectly willing to submit the whole business and all my client's acts to the authorities."

"I would give much if I could reproduce some hint of the beauty of that word authorities as it rolled from Larry's tongue!"

"Then, in God's name, do it, you blackguards!" roared Pickingering.

Stoddard, sitting on a table, knocked his heels together gently. Larry crossed his legs and blew a cloud of smoke. Then, after a quarter of a minute in which he gazed at the ceiling with his quiet blue eyes, he said:

"Yes; certainly, there are always the authorities. And as I have a tremendous respect for your American institutions I shall at once act on your suggestion. Mr. Pickingering, the estate is richer than you thought it was. It holds, or will hold, your notes given to the decedent for three hundred and twenty thousand dollars."

He drew from his pocket a brown envelope, walked to where I stood and placed it in my hands.

At the same time Stoddard's big figure grew active, and before I realized that Pickingering had leaped toward the packet, the executor was sitting in a chair, where the chaplain had thrown him. He rallied promptly, stuffing his necktie into his waistcoat; he even laughed a little.

"So much old paper! You gentlemen are perfectly welcome to it!"

"Thank you!" jerked Larry.

"Mr. Glenarm and I had many transactions together, and he must have forgotten to destroy those papers."

"Quite likely," I remarked. "It is interesting to know that Sister Theresa wasn't his only debtor."

Pickingering stepped to the door and called the sheriff.

"I shall give you until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock to vacate the premises. The court understands this situation perfectly. These claims are utterly worthless, as I am ready to prove."

"Perfectly, perfectly," repeated the sheriff.

"I believe that is all," said Larry, pointing to the door with his pipe.

The sheriff was regarding him with particular attention.

"What did I understand your name to be?" he demanded.

"Laurence Donovan," Larry replied coolly.

Pickingering seemed to notice the name now and his eyes lighted disagreeably.

"I think I have heard of your friend before," he said, turning to me. "I congratulate you on the international reputation of your counsel. He's esteemed so highly in Ireland that they offer a large reward for his return. Sheriff, I think we have finished our business for today."

He seemed anxious to get the man away, and we gave them escort to the outer gate where a horse and buggy were waiting.

"Now, I'm in for it," said Larry, as I locked the gate. "We've spooked one of his guns, but I've given him a new one to use against myself. But, come, and I will show you the Door of Bewilderment before I skip."

To be Continued.

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LOST AT THE ALTAR

Young Man Finds Successful Rival in Returned Sailor.

Indianapolis, Ind., Aug. 15. — Capt. Henry Huggins, of the United States signal corps, appeared here after an absence of five years on the sea just in time to find that his old sweetheart, Miss Bessie Thompson, was to be married in a few hours to W. H. Connette. She immediately telephoned to Connette that she would not marry him, and arrangements with the returned lover began.

Believing that the young woman was not serious in her announcement, Connette obtained a license and informed his sweetheart of the fact shortly after noon, less than three hours before the ceremony was to have taken place. The young woman was steadfast in her determination to break the engagement even at that late hour, however, and the word "void" was written in large letters upon one page of the marriage license book at the court house.

It seems that a lovers' quarrel separated Capt. Huggins and Miss Thompson several years ago. The boy declared that he would leave Indianapolis and when he returned, if he ever did return, it would be with another girl as his bride. He enlisted in the navy as an apprentice and was assigned to service in northwestern waters.

Absence made the heart grow fonder and a correspondence soon began. Miss Thompson admits that she wrote the first letter. After many exchanges of tender missives, their correspondence suddenly lagged and at this stage of Cupid's intricate game, Connette appeared on the scene. Then began the conflict in the young woman's heart. Should she wed Connette while she might care for another?

The wedding was postponed from time to time and then set definitely for last night.

EVELYN WILL TESTIFY

Harry Thaw's Wife to Take the Stand in His Behalf.

New York, Aug. 15. — Evelyn Nesbit Thaw will take the witness stand in her husband's defense. That decision was reached yesterday by counsel for Harry Kendall Thaw.

Young Mrs. Thaw has always been willing to testify, but Clifford W. Hart, chief counsel for her husband, has repeatedly stated that it would be unnecessary. She talked the matter over with Mrs. William Thaw, however, in a long conference at the George Lauder Carnegie place, at Roslyn, on Sunday, and the two women who will do most to save Thaw, one with her millions and the other by her story, came to an agreement that resulted in yesterday's decision.

Thaw's wife will not spare herself in the ordeal that she must face, but will reveal the inmost secrets of the circle in which Stanford White was one of the shining lights, and of which she herself was a victim. Her testimony will be the keystone of the Thaw defense, and it is believed that upon the strength of her story will depend the fate of her husband.

Most important of all, Mrs. Thaw's testimony will reveal the incidents of the day of the tragedy. She is expected to testify that Stanford White sent her a basket of roses on the late afternoon of that day, accompanied by a note in which he expressed his desire to see her at once. This note, it is said, is now in the possession of the Thaw defense, and will be produced at the trial.

Young Mrs. Thaw had a long talk with her husband in the Tombs yesterday. When asked concerning her husband's condition, she said:

"Poor Harry is in much better spirits today than he was on Saturday."

Mrs. William Thaw is expected to come in from Roslyn today.

The explosion of a radium tube reported by a German investigator gives an idea of the force the emitted gas may store up when confined. A small tube of a glass a fifth of an inch thick contained half a grain of the purest radium bromide, and it had been placed in a bath of liquid air. Three minutes after it was removed the tube burst. The glass and the radium were scattered about, the particles of the latter shining like dark like a starry sky, and it is estimated that a pressure of 20 atmospheres was exerted.

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