The Crimson Blind

By FRED. M. WHITE

CHAPTER XXXV.—(Continued.)

"I love the pictures," she said, "especially the prints. That Rembrandt, 'The Crimson Blind,' for instance. I found a fresh light in it this morning and called Lord Littimer's attention to it before we started. I should lock that up if it were mine."

Merritt's eyes fairly bulged as he listened. Had he not half-suspected some deep "plant" he would have been vastly amused. But then he had got the very picture these people were speaking about close to hand at the very moment.

"Tell you what," he said, suddenly. "I ain't used to swell society ways, but I'm always ready to sacrifice myself to the poor fellows who ain't found the straight path like me. And if you gets up your bazaar, I'll do what I can to 'elp."

"Then you will dine with us to-night?" Chris asked, eagerly. "Don't say no. I met a man once with a past like yours at Lady Roslingham's, and he was so interesting. We will call for you in an hour's time with the waggonette. Then we can settle half our plans before dinner.

Merritt was graciously pleased to be agreeable. Moreover, he was utterly puzzled and absolutely consumed with an overpowering curiosity. It seemed also to him to be a sheer waste of providence to discard such an offer. And the plate at Littimer Castle was superb!

Meanwhile Chris and Bell walked down the street together. "He was puzzled over the Rembrandt," Chris said. "Seeing that he has our picture——"

"No doubt about it. The picture was rolled up and stood on the mantelshelf. I followed Merritt's gaze, knowing perfectly well that it would rest presently on the picture if it was in the room. At the same time, our interesting friend, in chuckling over the way he has deceived us, clean forgot the yellow pawnticket lying on the table."

"Dr. Bell, do you mean to say that——"

"That I know where your diamond star was pledged. Indeed I do. Merritt had probably just turned out his pockets as we entered. The pawnticket was on the table and related to a diamond aigrette pawned by one James Merritt—mark the simple cunning of the man—with. Messrs. Rutter & Co., 117, High street. That in itself is an exceedingly valuable discovery, and one we can afford to keep to ourselves for the present. At the same time I should very much like to know what Rutter & Co. are like. Let me go down to the shop and make some simple purchase."

Rutter & Co. proved to be a very high-class shop indeed, despite the fact that there was a pawnbroking branch of the business. The place was quite worthy of Bond street, the stock was brilliant and substantial, the assistants quite above provincial class. As Bell was turning over some sleeve-links, Chris was examining a case of silver and gold cigarette cases and the like. She picked up a cigar case at length and asked the price. At the mention of fifty guineas she dropped the trifle with a little moue of surprise.

"It looks as if it had been used," she said.

"It is not absolutely new, madam," the assistant admitted, "therefore the price is low. But the gentleman who sold it to us proved that he had only had it for a few days. The doctor had ordered him not to smoke in future, and so——"

Chris turned away to something else. Bell completed his purchase, and together they left the shop. Once outside Chris gripped her companion's arm excitedly.

"Another great discovery," she said. "Did you see me looking at that cigar case—a gun metal one set with diamonds? You recollect that Ruth Gates purchased a case like that for that—that foolishness we thought of in connection with Mr. Steel. The case had a little arrow shaped scratch with the head of the arrow formed of the biggest diamond. Enid told me all this the night before I left Longdean Grange. Dr. Bell, I am absolutely certain that I have had in my hand just now the very case bought by Ruth from Lockhart's in Brighton!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A Brilliant Idea.

Bell was considerably impressed with the importance of Chris' discovery, though at the same time he was not disposed to regard it in the light of a coincidence.

"It's a useful discovery in its way," he said; "but not very remarkable when you come to think of it. Somebody with an eye to damaging Steel changed that cigar case. How the change affected Steel you know as well as I do. But the cigar case purchased by Ruth Gates must be somewhere, and we are as likely to find it near Reginald Henson as anywhere else, seeing that he is at the bottom of the whole business. That change was made either by himself or by somebody at his instigation. Once the change was made he would not bother about the spare cigar case. His ally probably came here to see Henson; the latter as likely as not threw him over, knowing that the fellow would not dare to talk; hence the thing is turned into money. I am merely speculating, of course, under the assumption that you are quite sure of your facts."

"Absolutely," Chris cried, eagerly. "Two long, irregular scratches leading up in arrow-headed scape to the big diamond in the centre. Ruth told Enid all about that the very last time they discussed the matter together."

"How came Ruth Gates to remember it so clearly?"

"Well, she did it herself. She was rubbing some specks off the case at the last moment, and the scratches were made accidentally with the stones in one of her rings."

Bell was fain to admit that the discovery was an important one. "We'll leave it for the present," he said. "In a small place like this so valuable an article is likely to remain in stock for some time. I'll call in again to-morrow on the pretence of getting further goods and obtain all the information there is to be gained as to who sold the case and what he was like. There is just time for a little lunch before we take up our reverend friend. Where shall we go?"

Chris would like to see the Lion. There was a marvellous coffee room there with panelled walls and a ceiling by Pugin, and an ingle-nook filled with rare Dutch tiles. They had the beautiful old place to themselves, so that they could talk freely. Chris crumbled her bread and sipped her soup with an air of deep abstraction.

"A great idea is forming itself in my mind," she said.

"What, another one?" Bell smiled. "Is it the air of the place or what? Really, there is a brilliancy about you that is striking."

Chris laughed. She was full of the joy of life to-day.

"It is the freedom," she said. "If you only knew what it is to feel free after the dull, aching, monotonous misery of the last few years. To be constantly on the treadmill, to be in the grasp of a pitiless scoundrel. At first you fight against it passionately, with a longing to be doing something, and gradually you give way to despair. And now the weight is off my shoulders, and I am free to act. Fancy the reward of finding Reginald Henson out!"

"Reginald Henson is the blight upon your house. In what way?"

"Ah, I cannot tell you. It is a secret that we never discuss even among ourselves. But he has the power over us, he has blighted all our lives. But if I could get hold of a certain thing the power would be broken. That is what I am after, what I am working for. And it is in connection with my endeavor that the new idea came to me."

"Can't you give me some general idea of it?" Bell asked.

"Well, I want to make Merritt my friend. I want him to imagine that I am as much of an adventuress as he is an adventurer. I want to let him see that I could send him to prison——"

"So you can by telling the police of the loss of your star."

"And getting Merritt arrested and sent to gaol where I couldn't make use of him? No, no. The thing is pretty vague in my mind at present. I have to work it out as one would a story; as David Steel would work it out, for instance. Ah!"

Chris clapped her hands rapturously, and a little cry of delight escaped her.

"The very thing," she exclaimed, "If I could lay all the facts before Mr. Steel and get him to plan out all the details! His fertile imagination would see a way out at once. But he is far away and there is no time to be lost. Is there no way of getting at him?"

Chris appealed almost imploringly to her companion. She made a pretty picture with the old oak engravings behind her. Bell smiled as he helped himself to asparagus.

"Why not adopt the same method by which you originally introduced yourself to the distinguished novelist?" he asked. "Why not use Littimer's telephone?"

Chris pushed her plate away impetuously.

"I am to excited to eat any more," she said. "I am filled with the new idea. Of course, I could use the telephone to speak to Mr. Steel, and to Enid as well. If the scheme works out as I anticipate, I shall have to hold a long conversation with Enid, a dangerous thing so long as Reginald Henson is about."

"I'll keep Henson out of the way. The best thing is to wait till everybody has gone to bed to-night and call Steel up then. You will be certain to get him after eleven, and there will be no chance of your being cut off at that hour of the night in consequence of somebody else wanting the line. The same remark applies to your sister."

Chris nodded radiantly.

"Thrice blessed telephone," she said. "I can get in all I want without committing myself to paper or moving from the spot where my presence is urgently needed. We will give Mr. Steel a pleasant surprise to-night, and this time I shall get him into no trouble."

The luncheon was finished at length, and an intimation sent to Merritt that his friends were waiting for him at the Lion. As his powerful figure was seen entering the big Norman porch Henson come down the street driving a dog cart at a dangerous rate of speed.

"Our man is going to have his trouble for his pains," Bell chuckled. "He has come to interview Merritt. How pleased he will be to see Merritt at dinner time."

Merritt shambled in awkwardly, obviously suppressing a desire to touch his forelock. There was a sheepish grin on his face, a suppressed triumph in his eyes. He had been recently shaved and his hair cut, but despite this improvements, and despite his clerical garb, he was not exactly the class of man to meet in a dark lane after sunset.

Chris, however, showed nothing of this in her greeting. Long before Littimer Castle was reached she had succeeded in putting Merritt quite at his ease. He talked of himself and his past exploits, he boasted of his cunning. It was only now and again that he pulled himself up and piously referred to the new life that he was now leading. Bell was studying him carefully; he read the other's mind like an open book. When the waggonette finally pulled up before the castle Littimer strolled up and stood there regarding Merritt quietly.

"So this is the gentleman you were going to bring to dinner?" he said, grimly. "I have seen him before in the company of our dear Reginald. I also——"

Chris shot Littimer an imploring glance. Merritt grinned in friendly fashion. Bell, in his tactful way, piloted the strange guest to the library before Littimer and Chris had reached the hall. The former polished his eyeglass and regarded Chris critically.

"My dear young lady," he said smoothly, "originality is a passion with me, eccentricity draws me as a magnet; but as yet I have refrained from sitting down to table with ticket-of-leave men. Your friend has 'convict' writ large upon his face."

"He has been in gaol, of course," Chris admitted, cheerfully.

"Then let me prophesy, and declare that he will be in gaol again. Why bring him here?"

"Because it is absolutely necessary," Chris said, boldly. 'That man can help me—help us, Lord Littimer. I am not altogether what I seem. There is a scoundrel in your house compared with whom James Merritt is an innocent child. That scoundrel has blighted your life and the lives of your family; he has blighted my life for years. And I am here to expose him, and I am here to right the wrong and bring back the lost happiness of us all. I cannot say more, but I implore you to let me have my own way in this matter."

"Oh!" Littimer said, darkly, "so you are masquerading here?"

"I am. I admit it. Turn me out if you like; refuse to be a party to my scheme. You may think badly of me now, probably you will think worse of me later on. But I swear to you that I am acting with the best and purest motives, and in your interest as much as my own."

"Then you are not entitled even to the name you bear?"

"No, I admit it freely. Consider, I need not have told you anything. Things cannot be any worse than they are. Let my try and make them better. Will you, will you trust me?"

Chris' voice quivered, there were tears in her eyes. With a sudden impulse Littimer laid his hands upon her shoulders and looked long and searchingly into her eyes.

"Very well," he said, with a gentle sigh. "I will trust you. As a matter of fact, I have felt that I could trust you from the first. I won't pry into your schemes, because if they are successful I shall benefit by them. And if you like to bring a cartload of convicts down here, pray do so. It will only puzzle the neighbors, and drive them mad with curiosity, and I love that."

"And you'll back me up in all I say and do?" Chris asked.

"Certainly I will. On the whole, I fancy I am going to have a pleasant evening. I don't think dear Reginald will be pleased to see his friend at dinner. If any of the spoons are missing I shall hold you responsible."

Chris went off to her room well pleased with the turn of events. Brilliant audacity had succeeded where timid policy might have resulted in dismal failure. And Littimer had refrained from asking any awkward questions. From the window she could see Bell and Merritt walking up and down the terrace, the latter talking volubly and worrying at a big cigar as a dog might nuzzle at a bone. Chris saw Littimer join the other two presently and fall in with their conversation. His laugh came to the girl's ear more than once. It was quite evident that the eccentric nobleman was enjoying the ex-convict's society. But Littimer had never been fettered by conventional rules.

The dog cart came up presently and Henson got out. He had an anxious, worried look; there was an ugly frown between his brows. He contrived to be polite as Chris emerged. He wanted to know where Littimer was.

"On the terrace, I fancy," Chris said, demurely. 'I guess he is having a long chat with that parson friend of yours—the brand plucked from the burning, you know."

"Merritt," Henson said, hoarsely. "Do you mean to say that Merritt is here? And I've been looking for—I mean, I have been into Moreton Wells. Why did he come?"

Chris opened her eyes in innocent surprise.

"Why," she said, "I fetched him. I'm deeply interested in brands of that kind."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Another Telephonic Message.

Henson forced a smile to his face and a hand from his side as he approached Merritt and the rest. It was not until the two found themselves alone that the mask was dropped.

"You infernally insolent scoundrel," Henson said, between his teeth. "How dare you come here? You've done your work for the present, and the sooner you go back to your kennel in London the better. If I imagined that you meant any harm I'd crush you altogether."

"I didn't come on my own," Merritt whined. "So keep your 'air on. That young lady came and fetched me—regular gone on me, she is. And there's to be high jinks 'ere—a bazaar for the benefit of pore criminals as can't get no work to do. You 'eard what his lordship said. And I'm goin' to make a speech, like as I used to gull the chaplains. Lor', it's funny, ain't it?"

Henson failed to see the humor of the situation. He was uneasy and suspicious. Moreover, he was puzzled by this American girl, and he hated to be puzzled. She had social aspirations, of course; she cared nothing for decayed or reformed criminals, and this silly bazaar was only designed so that the ambitious girl could find her way into the county set. Then she would choose a husband, and nothing more would be heard of Merritt & Co. Henson had a vague notion that all American girls are on the look-out for English husbands of the titled order.

"Littimer must be made," he muttered. 'I can't understand Littimer; I can't understand anything. Which reminds me that I have a crow to pluck with you. Why didn't you do as I told you last night?"

"Did," said Merritt, curtly. "Got the picture and took it home with me."

"You liar! The picture is in the corridor at the present time."

"Liar yourself! I've got the picture on my mantelshelf in my sitting-room rolled up as you told me to roll it up and tied with a piece of cotton. It was your own idea as the thing was to be left about casual-like as being less calculated to excite suspicion. And there it is at the present moment, and I'll take my hoath to it."

Henson fairly gasped. He had been inside that said sitting-room not two hours before, and he had not failed to notice a roll of paper on the mantleshelf. And obviously Merritt was telling the truth. And equally obviously the Rembrandt was hanging in the corridor at the present moment. Henson had solved and evolved many ingenious puzzles in his time, but this one was utterly beyond him.

"Some trick of Bell's, perhaps," Merritt suggested.

"Bell suspects nothing. He is absolutely friendly to me. He could not disguise his feelings like that. Upon my word I was never so utterly at sea before in all my life. And as for Littimer, why, he has just made a fresh will more in my favor than the old one. But I'll find out. I'll get to the bottom of this business if it costs me a fortune."

He frowned moodily at his boots; he turned the thing over in his mind until his brain was dazed and muddled. The Rembrandt had been stolen, and yet there was the Rembrandt in its place. Was anything more amazing and puzzling? And nobody else seemed in the least troubled about it. Henson was more than puzzled; deep down in his heart he was frightened.

"I must keep my eyes open," he said. "I must watch night and day. Do you suppose Miss Lee noticed anything when she called to-day?"

"Not a bit of it," said Merritt, confidently. "She came to see me; she had no eyes for anybody but your humble servant. Where did she get my address from? Why, didn't you introduce me to the lady yourself, and didn't I tell her I was staying at Moreton Wells for a time? I'm goin' to live in clover for a bit, my pippin. Cigars and champagne, wine and all the rest of it."

"I wish you were at the bottom of the sea before you came here," Henson growled. "You mind and be careful what your're doing with the champagne. They don't drink by the tumbler in the society you are in now, remember. Just one or two glasses and no more. If you take too much and let your tongue run you will find your stay here pretty short."

Apparently the hint was not lost on Merritt, for dinner found him in a chastened mood. His natural audacity was depressed by the splendor and luxury around him; the moral atmosphere held him down. There were so many knives and forks and glasses on the table, such a deal of food that was absolutely strange to him. The butler behind made him shiver. Hitherto in Merritt's investigations into great houses he had fought particularly shy of butlers and coachmen and upper servants of that kind. The butler's sniff and his cold suggestion as to hock slightly raised Merritt's combative spirit. And the champagne was poor, thin stuff after all. A jorum of gin and water, or a mug of beer, was what Merritt's soul longed for.

And what a lot of plate there was on the table and sideboard! Some of it was gold, too. Merritt's greedy professional eye appraised the collection at some hundreds of pounds—hundreds of pounds—that is, after the stuff had been disposed of. In imagination he had already drugged the butler and was stuffing the plate into his bag.

Henson said very little. He was too busily engaged in watching his confederate. He wished from the bottom of his heart now that Chris had never seen Merritt. She was smiling at him now and apparently hanging on every word. Henson had seen society ladies doing this kind of thing before with well-concealed contempt. So long as people liked to play his game for him he had no objection. But this was quite different. Merritt had warmed a little under the influence of his fifth glass of champagne, but his eye looked lovingly and longingly in the direction of a silver spirit-stand on the sideboard.

The dinner came to an end at length, to Henson's great relief, and presently the whole party wandered out to the terrace. Bell dropped behind with Chris.

"Now is your time," he whispered. "Henson dare not lose sight of Merritt before he goes to bed, and I'll keep the latter out here for a good long spell. I've muffled the striker of the telephone so that the bell will make no noise when you get your call back from Brighton, so that you must be near enough to the instrument to hear the click of the striker. Make haste."

Chris dropped back to the library and rapidly fluttered over the leaves of the "Telephone Directory." She found what she wanted at length and asked to be put on to Brighton. Then she sat down in an arm chair in the darkness close under the telephone, prepared to wait patiently. She could just see the men on the terrace, could catch the dull glow red of their cigars.

Her patience was not unduly tried. At the end of a quarter of an hour the striker clicked furiously. Chris reached the receiver and lay back comfortably in her chair with the diaphragm to her ear. "Are you there?" she asked, quietly. "Is that you, Mr. Steel?"

To her great relief the answering voice was Steel's own. He seemed to be a little puzzled as to who his questioner was.

"Can't you guess?" Chris replied. "This is not the first time I have had you called. You have not forgotten 218, Brunswick square, yet?"

Chris smiled as she heard Steel's sudden exclamation.

"So you are my fair friend whom I saw in the dark?" he said. "Yes, I recognize your voice now. You are Miss Chris—well, I won't mention the name aloud, because people might ask what a well-regulated corpse meant by rousing respectable people up at midnight. I hope you are not going to get me into trouble again."

"No, but I am going to ask your advice and assistance. I want you to be so good as to give me the plot of a story after I have told you the details. And you are to scheme the thing out at once, please, because delay is dangerous. Dr. Bell——"

"What's that? Will you tell me where you are speaking from?"

"I am at present located at Littimer Castle. Yes, Dr. Bell is here. Do you want him?"

"I should think so," Steel exclaimed. 'Please tell him at once that the man who was found here half dead—you know the man I mean—got up and dressed himself in the absence of the nurse and walked out of the hospital this morning. Since then he has not been seen or heard of. I have been looking up Bell everywhere. Will you tell him this at once? I'll tell the telephone people not to cut us off till I ring. Please go at once."

The voice was urgent, not to say imperative. Chris dropped the receiver into its space and crept into the darkness in the direction of the terrace.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A Little Fiction.

Bell seemed to know by intuition that Chris required him, or perhaps he caught a glimpse of her white dress from the terrace. Anyway, he strolled leisurely in her direction.

"Something has happened?" he whispered, as he came up.

"Well, yes," Chris replied, "though I should like to know how you guessed that. I had no difficulty in getting Mr. Steel on the telephone, but he would say nothing directly he heard that you were here beyond a peremptory request that you were to be told at once that Van Sneck has gone."

"Gone!" Bell echoed, blankly. "What do you mean by that?"

"He has disappeared from the hospital at Brighton to-day. Mr. Steel thinks they were extra busy, or something of that kind. Anyway, Van Sneck got up and dressed himself and left the hospital without being observed. It seems extraordinary to me."

"And yet quite possible," Bell said, thoughtfully. "Van Sneck had practically recovered from the flesh wounds; it was the injury to his head that was the worst part. He resembled an irresponsible lunatic more than anything else. Steel wants me, of course?"

"He suggests that you should go down to Brighton without delay."

"All right, I'll make some excuse to take the first train in the morning. We've got a fine start of Henson, and that's a good thing. If Van Sneck comes within his net we shall have a deal of trouble. I had hoped to get permission to operate on Van Sneck, and relied upon him to solve the mystery. And now you had better go back to your telephone."

Chris hurried back again. A whispered word satisfied her that Steel was still at the other end.

Dr. Bell starts as early as possible to-morrow," she said. "If you will listen carefully I will give you a brief outline of all that has happened since I have been here."

Chris proceeded to tell her story succinctly and briefly. From little sounds and signs she could tell that Steel was greatly interested. The story of the man with the thumb fascinated him. It appealed to his professional instincts.

"And what do you want to do with him?" Steel asked.

"Well, you see, I have him in my power," Chris explained. "We can get the other Rembrandt any time we like now, but that is quite a minor consideration. What I want is for Merritt to know that I can have him arrested at any time for stealing my star. It's Enid's star, as a matter of fact; but that is a detail."

"An important one, surely," Steel's voice came thin and clear. "Suppose that our dear friend chances to recognise it?. . . No, don't ring off yet."

"I'm not. Oh, you are speaking to the Exchange people. . . Yes,, yes; we shall be a long time yet. . . . . Are you there? Well, Henson has never seen the star. Enid bought it just before the great trouble came, and afterwards she never had the heart to wear it."

"I understand. You want Merritt to know this?"

"Well, I do and I don't." Chris explained. "I am anxious not to frighten the man. I want to get him in my power, and I want to prove to him that it would be to his advantage for him to come over to my side. Suppose that Enid gave it out that the star had been stolen? And suppose that I could save him at the critical moment? I shouldn't mind him thinking that I had stolen the star in the first place. That is why I am asking you as a novelist to help me."

"You would have made an excellent novelist yourself," David said, admiringly. "Give me five minutes. . . . Are you there? I fancy I have it. Can't you hear me? That's better. I'll see Miss Gates the first thing in the morning and get her to go over to Longdean and see your sister. . . . . Confound it, don't cut us off yet. What does it matter so long as the messages are for an hour more. . . Are you there? Very sorry; it's the fault of the post office people. Here is the plot in a nutshell. Your sister has lost a diamand star. She gives a minute description of it to the police, and drops a hint to the effect that she believes it was taken away by mistake—in other words, was stolen—from her in London by a chance acquaintance called Christabel Lee——"

"Ah," Chris cried, "how clever you are!"

"I have long suspected it," the thin voice went on, drily. "The full description of the star will be printed in the Police Gazette, a copy of which every respectable pawnbroker always gets regularly. I suppose the people where the star was pawned are respectable?"

"Highly so. They have quite a Bond street establishment attached."

"So much the better. They will see the advertisement, and they will communicate with the police. The Reverend James Merritt will be arrested——"

"I don't quite like that," Chris suggested.

"Oh, it's necessary. He will be arrested at the castle. Knowing his antecedents, the police will not stand upon any ceremony with him. You will be filled with remorse. You have plunged back into a career of crime again a being who was slowly climbing into the straight path once more. You take the blame upon yourself—it was at your instigation that Merritt pawned the star."

"But, really, Mr. Steel——"

"Oh, I know. But the end justices the means. You save Mr. Meritt, there is a bond of sympathy between you, he will regard you as a great light in his interesting profession. You saved him because you had appropriated the star yourself."

"And go to jail instead of Mr. Merritt?"

"Not a bit of it. The star you deemed to be yours. You had one very like it when you saw Miss Henson, when you were staying in London at the same hotel. By some means the jewels got mixed. You are confident that an exchange has been made. Also you are confident that if Miss Henson will search her jewel case she will find a valuable star that does not belong to her. Miss Henson does so, she is distressed beyond measure, she offers all kinds of apologies. Exit the police. You need not tell Merritt how you get out of the difficulty, and thus you increase his respect for you. There, that would make a very ingenious and plausible magazine story. It should be more convincing in real life."

"Capital!" Chris murmured. "What an advantage it is to have a novelist to advise one! Many, many thanks for all your kindness. Good-night!"

Chris rang off with acertain sense of relief. It was some time later before she had a chance of conveying to Bell what had happened. He listened gravely to all that Chris had to say.

"Just the sort of feathered-brained idea that would occur to a novelist," he said. "For my part, I should prefer to confront Merritt with his theft, and keep the upper hand of him that way."

"And he would mistrust me and betray me at the first opportunity. Besides, in that case, he would know at once that I wanted to get to the bottom of his connection with Reginald Henson. Mr. Steel's plan may be bizarre, but it is safe."

"I never thought of that," Bell admitted. "I begin to imagine that you are more astute that I gave you credit for, which is saying a great deal."

Chris was down early the following morning, only to find Bell at breakfast with every sign of making an early departure. He was very sorry, he explained, gravely, to his host and Chris, but his letters gave him no option. He would come back in a day or two if he might. A moment later Henson came into the room, ostentatiously studying a Bradshaw.

"And where are you going?" Littimer asked. "Why do you all abandon me? Reginald, do you mean to say that you are going to refuse me the light of your countenance?"

"Is Dr. Bell going, too?" Henson asked, with just a suggestion of uneasiness. "I mean—er——"

"Business," Bell said. "I came here at great personal inconvenience. And you?"

'London," Henson replied. "A meeting to-day that I cannot get out of. A couple of letters by this morning's post have decided me."

Chris said nothing; she appeared to be quite indifferent until she had a chance to speak to Bell alone. She looked a little anxious.

"He has found out about Van Sneck," she said. "Truly he is a marvellous man! And he had no letters this morning. I opened the post bag personally. But I'm glad he's going, because I shall have James Merritt all to myself."

(To be continued.)

WORDS OF PRAISE WELL MERITED

BY A WELL KNOWN ARTICLE.

So much has been written by the standard medicial authorities, of all the several schools of practice, in praise of the native, or American, medicinal plants which enter into the composition of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, that in attempting to quote from the various works on *Materia Medica* one hardly knows where to commence, since they are so voluminous that only the briefest and most imperfect reference can be presented in a short article like this.

Briefly then let us say that the "Golden Medical Discovery" was named from the sturdy little plant Golden Seal, the root of which enters largely into its composition. Besides this most valuable ingredient, it contains glyceric extracts of Stone root, Queen's root, Black Cherrybark, Bloodroot and Mandrake root.

Finley Ellingwood, M. D., an eminent practitioner of Chicago and Professor of *Materia Medica* in the Bennett Medical College of that city, in his recently published work on Therapeutics, says of Golden Seal root: "It is the most natural of stimulants to the normal functions of digestion. Its influence upon the mucous surfaces renders it most important in catarrhal gastritis (inflammation of stomach) and gastric (stomach) ulceration."

Many other authorities as well as Dr. Ellingwood extol the Hydrastis (Golden Seal), as a remedy for catarrhal diseases of the nasal passages, stomach, bronchia, gall ducts, kidneys, intestines and bladder. Among these, we may mention Prof. John King, M. D., author of the American Dispensatory; Prof. J. M. Scudder, M. D., in his "Specific Medication"; Dr. Hale of the Hahnemann Med. College of Chicago; Grover Coe, M. D., of New York, in his "Organic Medicines," Dr. Bartholow of Jefferson Med. College and scores of other leading medical writers and teachers.

All the foregoing eminent authorities extol the curative virtues of Golden Seal in cases of stomach, liver and intestinal weakness, torpor and ulceration of bowels. Dr. Ellingwood recommends it most highly, "In those cases of atonic dyspepsia when the entire apparatus, including the liver, is stagnant and inoperative." He also extols it most highly in the many weaknesses and derangements peculiar to women and says, "It is a most important remedy in many disorders of the womb." Golden Seal root (Hydrastis), is an important ingredient of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription for weak, nervous, "rundown" women.

But to return to the "Golden Medical Discovery" it may be said that its curative properties are not wholly dependent upon Golden Seal, valuable as it is, as other equally potant ingredients add greatly to its value and in fact are not less important than the Hydrastis, or Golden Seal.

In all bronchial, throat, lung and kindred ailments, Stone root, Black Cherrybark, Queen's root and Bloodroot, each plays as important a part in effecting the phenominal cures of "Golden Medical Discovery" as does Golden Seal. All these ingredients have the endorsement of prominent practitioners of all schools of medicine for the cure of diseases of the bronchia, throat and lungs.

Of Queen's root, Prof. King says: "An alterative (blood purifier) unsurpassed by few if any other of the known alteratives. Most successful in skin and scrofulous affections; beneficial in bronchial affections; permanently cures bronchitis; relieves irritations; an important cough remedy; coughs of years' standing being cured; aids in blood-making and nutrition and may be taken with out harm for long periods."

Queen's root, Golden Seal root, Stone root, Black Cherrybark and Bloodroot, all articles extolled by leading practitioners of all the schools, as the very best of cough medicines, are made especially valuable when combined with chemically pure glycerine which greatly enhances the curative action of all these ingredients in all bronchial, throat and lung affections, severe coughs and kindred ailments.

Who can doubt the efficacy of such a compound, when scientifically made up, as in Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery? Who can doubt that it is a most effective remedy for the several diseases for which its ingredients are so highly recommended by the formost writers on *Materia Medica*?

It is in the cure of the more chronic or lingering, persistent, and obstinate cases of bronchial, laryngial and lung affections, attended by hoarseness and severe cough, which if neglected or badly treated would generally have run into consumption, that "Golden Medical Discovery" has won the highest praise from all who have observed its marvelous control over these and kindred affections. It is no cheap compound made-up of trashy ingredients for free distribution, that curious people may experiment upon themselves as with the many fake nostrums so commonly sent out as "trial bottles." It has a forty year record, embracing many thousands of cures behind it, is sold at a reasonable price and may be found in all drug and medicine stores in this and many foreign countries.

It will be seen from the above brief extracts how well "Golden Medical Discovery" is adapted for the cure of all blood diseases, as, scrofulous and skin affections, eruptions, blotches, pimples and kindred ailments; also that it is equally good in all Catarrhal affections no matter where seated, and for all cases of indigestion, or dyspepsia, torpid liver, or biliousness and as a tonic and invigorator in all manner of weaknesses, and in nervous debility and prostration the above extracts amply show.

Much further information as to the properties and uses of "Golden Medical Discovery" and Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription for weak women, will be found in a little booklet of extracts from standard medical books which will be mailed *free* to any address on request, by letter or postal card, sent to Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

All the several ingredients of Dr. Pierce's medicines will be found, from the reading of this little booklet, to have the strongest possible professional endorsements and recommendations for the cure of all the diseases for which these medicines are recommended. No other medicines for like purposes have any such endorsement. They are non-alcoholic, non-secret, safe and reliable.

SOUTH SAANICH LIBERALS.

Meeting of the Association Held on Saturday Last.

A meeting of the South Saanich Liberal Association was held at Royal Oak school house on Saturday at 8 p. m., Mr. Strachan, the vice-president, in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read by the secretary, adopted and progress reported. The president regretted that death had robbed us of one of our great supporters, our honorable president, Mr. Chandler, and requested that a letter of condolence be sent to Mrs. Chandler.

The following officers were then elected for the ensuing year: President, B. B. Moore, of Cedar Hill; vice-president, D. Pointer, of Boleskine road; secretary-treasurer, C. B. Jones, of Colquitz; executive, Messrs. Tanner, Shelline, Strachan, Sear and Sea. H. E. Tanner, M. P. P., was then called upon to address his constituents, and in a few well chosen words spoke upon the inconsistencies of the School Act and its jumble of amendments. Continuing, he said that he would be pleased to introduce John Oliver, M. P. P., of the Delta.

Mr. Oliver took the platform and great applause from the well filled seats, and was not long in getting down to fighting form, and in his usual forcible style strongly criticized the government over the Bay on the school question, timber and land grants, Kaien Island scandal and the mistakes of the Assessment Act.

Messrs. Munro and Brown then followed with stirring speeches in the advancement of Liberalism. It was resolved that this meeting disapproves of any politics whatsoever being introduced in the municipality election.

The meeting then adjourned with a vote of thanks to the speakers.

MUTINEERS CONDEMNED.

Lieut. Shmidt and Three Others Sentenced to Death—Have Entered an Appeal.

Odessa, Russia, March 3.—Lieut. Shmidt, who headed the naval mutiny in Just last at Sebastopol, was to-day sentenced to be hanged. Three other mutineers were condemned to be shot and 27 others were sent for terms to prisons. Ten of the accused were acquitted. The condemned men have appealed to the court of cassation. The executions are fixed for March 6th.

THE KING AND EMPEROR.

His Majesty's Letter to the Kaiser Has Given Great Satisfaction in German Circles.

New York, March 3.—A Berlin dispatch to the Herald says that satisfaction reigns in high circles there because King Edward has written a most gratifying letter to the Emperor on the occasion of his silver wedding. King Edward addressed his nephew as "My Dear Wilhelm," wishes him and the Empress every happiness, and hopes they may live to celebrate their golden wedding. He also announced that he has sent the Emperor a silver punch bowl of the Georgian period, so much prized by collectors.

WORRIED MOTHERS.

Much of the worry which every mother of young children undergoes, would be spared if the mother kept Baby's Own Tablets on hand, and gave an occasional dose when the child was fretful, cross or feverish. Nearly all the ailments of childhood can be traced to the stomach, bowels or teething. For these troubles no medicine can equal Baby's Own Tablets, and the mother has the guarantee of a government analyst that this medicine is absolutely safe. Mrs. Kenneth McInnes, Lakefield, Ont., says: "Baby's Own Tablets are perfect medicine in every way. There will be no sickly children in the homes where they are used." Sold by all medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box by writing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

CARNEGIE'S VISIT.

Toronto, March 2.—Andrew Carnegie will come to Toronto on April 28th and 29th the guest of the Canadian club.