

SAVED AT THE LAST.

Madge Staunton, the only daughter of the vicar of Ickwell, had two lovers—Harold Garth, and George Leggett. It was plain to all that her choice fell upon the former, a tall, thin, sad-looking man, prematurely gray, who owned his own farm, and, for a wonder, made it pay fairly well, one reason being that it lay by the side of the river Sedge, and was therefore well watered. Yet one August afternoon, in a moment of pique, she rejected Garth, and accepted his rival, a comparatively recent settler in the village, about whose antecedents very little was known. How it happened she scarcely knew afterward. The two men were playing tennis at the vicarage, and Garth said something she didn't like, and Leggett profited by his opportunity. That is the best explanation that can be given of an incident which had unexpected serious results. Garth, unwilling to accept the position, lingered until long after tea-time and Leggett, determined not to leave his rival upon the field of battle, stayed to guard his new acquisition, both of them eventually going away together.

There was a supper that evening at the vicar's house, and they had promised to be present, yet, strangely enough, neither of them did so. Madge, who was one of the party, was greatly perplexed at their absence. She was also much disturbed, for she had already repented of her rash act, and had decided to take the first opportunity of setting matters right. As it turned out, however, the opportunity never arrived. Leggett had vanished, and nobody knew what had become of him.

The vicarage, it should be explained, was half a mile from the village. About half way, at a sharp bend, was a cottage, in which lived a sailor named Andrews and his wife. A little further from the vicarage, the road crossed the river and then divided the left branch going near Garth's farm and the right toward the village, in which Leggett lodged at the post-office.

As far as the bridge, then, the road for the two men, as they returned from the vicarage, was the same; but at that point they would have parted company, unless something unusual had occurred. Had anything occurred? A statement made by Mrs. Andrews was suggestive. She said that between seven and eight o'clock she heard loud voices and, going to the door, she saw Garth and Leggett walking toward the bridge. Evidently they were then on their way back from the vicarage. High waters were passing between them, and she distinctly heard Garth threaten to smash Leggett's head. As it was already known that Madge had that very afternoon promised to marry the latter, the news having been spread by the vicarage servants, a suspicion got about that he had been murdered by Garth.

The suspicion was strengthened by the discovery of a pocket book not very far from the bridge. The actual spot was a clump of chestnut trees in the centre of a meadow belonging to Garth. It was undoubtedly his pocket-book, for it contained his name, and upon it were recent stains of blood. That was the opinion of the police inspector who now took charge of the case. He called upon Garth, and requested an explanation—of course with the usual caution.

"In the first place, Mr. Garth," said he, "how came you to be in that meadow? It is out of the direct line to your house."

"Sit down, inspector," said Garth, much disturbed, "and I'll tell you." The door had been left open, and he went to close it, walking with uncertain strides across the long, narrow, low-lying road, with its queer, old-fashioned furniture and French windows, at which the roses tapped as they waved in the breeze. When he had returned to his seat, he said: "By the morning's post I received an anonymous letter, asking for an interview at the clump of chestnuts at half-past eight in the evening. I could not understand it, and perhaps if I had acted prudently I should have disregarded it. But I was curious to see what would come of it, so I went, only to find nobody there—perhaps because I was rather late."

"That is a strange story," said the inspector, looking at him keenly. "Are you in the habit of receiving anonymous letters?"

"No, indeed. This was the first. If it hadn't been, I daresay I should have put it on the fire."

"But you were expected at the doctor's?"

"Just so. And instead of going there, I went to the meadow."

"Because it was the more important?"

"Because—well, the fact was, something had occurred." He hesitated and, with heightened colour, proceeded: "I had had a little misunderstanding with Miss Staunton, and I thought the letter might refer to her."

"I see," said the inspector, significantly. "She had just promised to marry Mr. Leggett, instead of you, had she not? I have heard a rumor to that effect." As no answer was given, he asked: "May I see the letter please?"

"I burned it."

The inspector looked grave.

"Yes, I know it is awkward," said Garth. "But I had not the smallest notion it would ever be wanted, and when I got back it was so annoyed at having been on a fool's errand that I threw the letter on the fire."

"If what you say is the truth, Mr. Garth," said the inspector—"and it is not for me to doubt you—circumstances have conspired against you in a very unfortunate manner. Are you aware that your pocket-book has been found in the meadow?"

"I was not," replied Garth, suddenly thrusting his hand into his breast pocket. "I didn't even know I had lost it. I see now I have. I took it out because the letter was in it, and I wanted to satisfy myself that I hadn't made a mistake about the time or place. And it has been found in the meadow! Then it confirms what I said."

"But," said the inspector, speaking very slowly, "there was blood upon it, Mr. Garth."

Garth, who had been hanging forward in his chair, suddenly sat erect, thoroughly startled, his face pale, a look almost of fear in his eyes.

"You don't say so?" he exclaimed. "Blood on the pocket-book! Certainly you were right when you said that circumstances had conspired against me. It looks so bad, yet the explanation is so simple, if only you will believe me. There

is the gate, as you know, on the side of the meadow nearest my house, and instead of going round to it, as I was late, I climbed over the fence. In doing so I slipped, and tore my hand against a bramble. See, there is the scratch," and he held out his hand to show the scratches on the back of it.

"That might be held as evidence of a struggle," said the inspector.

A constable entered the room. He had come in search of the inspector, whom he now addressed.

"We have found the body, sir," he said. "The face is so battered as to be unrecognizable; but the clothes were close by. There was no money in the pockets except an Australian sovereign, and no article of any value, only a gold locket containing a young lady's portrait."

"The clothes close by?" repeated the inspector, who did not live in the neighborhood. "What do you mean?"

"There is a deep pool at the corner of the meadow where the pocket-book was found, and Mr. Leggett was in the habit of bathing there at all hours—sometimes late in the evening, sometimes early in the morning. There are alders round it which screen anyone from observation. As it was a sultry last evening, Mr. Leggett must have gone there to bathe as usual, for his clothes were in a little nook at the bottom of a tree. The body was found about twenty yards lower down the river."

"Any signs of a struggle?"

"Yes, sir," replied the constable, "there are marks on the bank. I should say that the unfortunate gentleman must have been returning to his clothes—half in the water and half out—when he was attacked by some one on the bank above and beaten to death. That's what it looks like to me."

The inspector rose from his chair.

"Well, I'm afraid there's no help for it," he said. "You must consider yourself in custody, Mr. Garth—at any rate, until after the inquest."

Garth only bowed his head.

The inquest lasted two days. Upon the second day the jury returned to a verdict of wilful murder against Harold Garth—the only one open to them under the circumstances—and in consequence he was formally taken into custody, in order to be brought up before the magistrates.

When the first news of this dreadful thing reached the vicarage, Madge was completely prostrated, for she laid upon herself the entire blame for what had happened. Grieved as she was at Leggett's death, she was infinitely more concerned about the awful fate which threatened Garth, whose innocence she never doubted for a moment, and gradually there arose in her the conviction that it was her duty to save him. In vain her father and mother argued with her, urging that such work was not for a girl, and that in any case her interference in a matter which would be in the hands of experienced lawyers would be downright folly. Madge was proof against all arguments. She saw that it was the cause of all the trouble, and that she was therefore bound to put it right. And as her resolution grew, so did her strength to carry it out also.

As a preliminary measure, Madge pored over the evidence given at the inquest, reading it again and again, until she knew every line of it. The fact that made the deepest impression upon her was the discovery of the portrait in Leggett's pocket. There was a rumor that, before coming to reside at Ickwell, he had spent several years in Queensland, and Madge regarded the Australian sovereign 'also found in his pocket' as proof of the rumor. If so, might there not have been some mystery in his life which would give the clue to his death? The locket suggested the idea, not perhaps a very rational one. Madge obtained permission to examine it, and found that the portrait inside represented a very beautiful girl. Underneath was written the word "Emma," evidently an Australian name, and to some extent supporting her theory.

Before the case came before the magistrates, Madge communicated her ideas to Mr. Newling, the cautious, gray-haired solicitor who was engaged to defend Garth. Mr. Newling was rather amused at Madge's visit to his office on such an errand, and he was disposed to treat lightly the theories which she expounded with extraordinary earnestness. Suppose, he said, Leggett had at one time been in Australia, and upon he had fallen in love with a pretty girl out there—what then? Wasn't that a very slender basis for her elaborate theories?

"Mr. Newling," burst out the desperate girl, faint from disappointment, "if you disregard what I have told you, I shall have to my dying day, and if the magistrates don't release Mr. Garth, his blood be upon your head." And with these words she left him.

As she feared, Garth was shortly afterwards committed for trial, and for that act she held the old lawyer responsible, and true to her word, hated him as she had never hated any one before. Mingled with that feeling was a consuming dread, for the time that remained was so short—only three weeks—and what could she do? This sense of helplessness was terrible. She could do nothing but run to and fro, searching for she knew not what, hoping against hope, gradually giving way to despair.

Out of this she was roused by an interview with Mrs. Andrews, whose evidence with regard to the quarrel was the most damaging of all, supplying as it did the link between the motive and the crime itself. For this reason Madge hated her almost as much as she did Mr. Newling, and she had hitherto kept away from her. But in her extremity, ready to clutch at any straw, she now prevailed upon herself to visit the cottage.

Mrs. Andrews, a stout, red-faced woman, stood at the wash-tub up to her elbows in soap-suds. Ignorant of any feeling against herself, she received her visitor without embarrassment, and when told what was wanted of her, talked freely, repeating over and over again the words which she had heard spoken by Garth to Leggett.

"Were you alone in the cottage at the time?" asked Madge.

"Yes, miss; quite alone."

"Where was your husband?"

"That's just what I'd like to know myself. He's a nice fellow to dilly and dally tomorrow, and never telling me where he's going, though sometimes he does write me to say he's got a ship; and since that morning I've never seen him. If he'd been at the door, likely enough he'd have heard more than I did. Not that he had any feeling against poor Mr. Leggett at all,

only I've heard him say when he's been drinking he could tell some queer things about him if he chose."

"Queer things?" said Madge, eagerly.

"What sort of things?"

"Well, it was something that happened out in Australia, Melbourne. But I've never repeated it to anybody, and perhaps—"

"Go on," said Madge, eagerly.

"Mr. Leggett used to live in Melbourne—and my man has been there several voyages, and he says, though I can't rightly believe it, especially considering what I've heard lately, Miss—she looked significantly over the wash-tub at Madge—"that Mr. Leggett married a young lady out there and deserted her. But it doesn't seem a thing a gentleman would do, now, does it?"

Madge's breath came fast and thick.

"Had the young lady a relative—perhaps a brother?" she almost panted. "Did you hear that? And was he coming over here—over here in search of Mr. Leggett? And did Mr. Leggett know it? And did the relative come here and—kill him for what he had done? Speak, Mrs. Andrews. Don't you see I'm waiting?"

Mrs. Andrews was standing up, staring, her great round eyes open to their widest extent.

"Lor, miss," she said. "Jim didn't tell me that at all. It wasn't Mr. Garth that done it, then? I thought all the time it had been."

With a sudden effort, Madge rose to her feet.

"Where is Andrews?" she asked. "I must speak to him at once."

"Didn't I say, miss, I hadn't set eyes on him since that afternoon? He's off somewhere, no doubt; but where it's to—whether it's a voyage to China or to the moon—he never thinks of telling his wife. He's not bad about sending home money—I'll say that much for him. If only—"

"The London docks, I suppose."

Madge did not wait to hear another word. She hurried away without saying even good-bye, the astonished woman following her to the door and staring after her.

Firmly convinced of the idea that Andrews possessed of information which would go far to establish Garth's innocence—inclined even to connect his possession of this information with his sudden departure from Ickwell—Madge was bent on finding him at all costs. The fact that she could not discover any trace of a stranger in the neighborhood did not in the least shake her resolution. Nor did the arguments of her parents, and as she could not be allowed to go alone, her mother decided to accompany her. So these two delicately nurtured women, utterly ignorant of the great world outside their little country parish, started off on their search—the forlornest of forlorn hopes—to find a particular sailor at the London docks.

In this weary, heart-breaking work more than a fortnight was consumed, and the day of Garth's trial drew near—so near that Madge, with all her courage, had scarcely the strength to go on. She was worn to a shadow of her former self. And what wonder? From one end of the docks to the other she had searched, not once, but many times. She had tramped in the most impossible places, and had put questions to every one she met—such strange questions, asked in such a strange way, that many had thought her mad. And perhaps her brain was giving way a little; the strain upon it was terrible.

Upon the day of her trial she was as far from the object of her search as she was when she started. That morning her father came to see her and to induce her to return home. At first, knowing what was taking place elsewhere, and borne down by the hopelessness of her task, she seemed inclined to consent, but her spirit was not yet quite broken, and opposition giving her fresh strength, she declined to quit the scene of her search.

Her mother being too fatigued to leave the lodgings which they had engaged, her father went with her, and, as usual, she set her face eastward, towards the docks.

On the way she met a constable, and, as he was her habit, stopped and questioned him.

"Andrews?" he said—"I seem to know the name. Why, yes, there was a man of that name—though I don't think he was a sailor—wounded in a brawl somewhere down Shadwell way last night. At first he refused to give any name, but afterward he said it was Andrews. He's in the hospital now."

"Which hospital?" gasped Madge, convinced that this was the man she sought—as if the world contained only one Andrews.

When he had told her, she added: "Father, call a cab—at once."

Father and daughter were accordingly driven to the hospital, and, after some waiting, were conducted by a nurse into a long, narrow ward, in which were many beds, each with its suffering occupant. At one of the beds the nurse stopped.

"This is Andrews," she said.

Madge looked at the man who lay there, and when she saw his face every particle of color left her cheeks, and with a sort of hysterical sob she cried:

"Mr. Leggett!"

The spot of that discovery proved too much for her. She fainted, and had not she been caught in her father's arms would have fallen to the ground.

When she recovered her senses, she was in a small square room, containing only her father and the nurse. She looked around her in a dazed and frightened way, and said: "Oh, father, was it all a dream? It can't have been a dream."

"No, dear, no," said the vicar; "it was no dream. That misguided man Leggett is still alive, though his hours are numbered."

"Then Harold—Mr. Garth—is innocent! Oh, father, go to him. Don't lose a moment. No, never mind me. Think what he is suffering!"

Her father wished to remain with her until she felt strong enough to move, but she insisted upon him going at once. He left her with the less reluctance as the matter was not urgent, indeed it was doubtful whether he would ever reach Eastham, where the case was being tried, before it was actually concluded. Madge stayed with the nurse, and from her learned the explanation of the mystery.

It appeared that the body found by the police was really Andrews'. Possession of the knowledge that Leggett, having one wife in Australia, contemplated marrying another in England, he had used this knowledge for the purpose of extorting blackmail. It was he who had sent the anonymous

letter to Garth, his idea being to have two markets for his wares; but before that interview came off—while he was on his way to it—he had stayed to bathe in the pool by the alders, and at the hands of Leggett, driven to desperation, had met his death. After the commission of the crime, Leggett had purposely rendered the body unrecognizable, and taking Andrew's clothes, which were on the bank, and leaving his own instead, had made his escape to London, panic-stricken now that the murder was really committed, sheltering the night in common lodging houses, to die in the end by the knife of a drunken Lascar.

It was this story that Madge heard from the nurse in the hospital, and with this story that the vicar hurried as fast as train and cab could carry him, to Eastham. When he entered the court he found that the case was practically at an end.

The jury had retired to consider their verdict, and the judge, evidently not expecting their absence to be long, was awaiting their return. In the dock sat Garth, his head sunk upon his breast, apparently unconscious of what was taking place around him.

The vicar hastened to Mr. Newling, who sat at the table, and whispered in his ear. At the same moment the jury returned, and with downcast faces took their places in the dock.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the clerk, "are you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We are," said the foreman, with a face so white that already everybody in court knew what it was.

But here Garth's counsel sprang to his feet, the news having been told him by the sexton.

"Stop!" he said. "My lord, I beg your pardon; but before the verdict is given, I must speak. We have been engaged in a trial for murder—for the murder of George Leggett—yet George Leggett is actually alive at this moment, if your lordship will allow me, I will put a witness in the box—the vicar of Ickwell—who has seen him and heard his confession."

Great was the sensation in court, nobody was more astonished at this extraordinary turn of events than the jury, who had just agreed upon a verdict which would have resulted in the condemnation of Garth to death. They, at least, had had a lucky escape. As for Garth, he was too dazed to know what had happened, and when he was set free, he had to be led out of court by Mr. Newling like a blind man.

"You have to thank Miss Staunton for this," said the lawyer, enthusiastically. "She's a wonderful girl. From the very first she picked out an apparently trifling incident, and she has followed it up with almost incredible persistence until—until—well, here you are, not by my efforts, but by hers."

"Where is she?" asked Garth, a little light coming into his dull, gray eyes.

He would have gone to her instantly had it been possible, but the strength had been drained out of him. He was ill for weeks afterward, during which times Leggett died in the hospital, and Madge was so ill, too, so it was not for a couple of months that they met. And within a year they were married.

Brereton, N. B. Aug. 18, by Rev. Father Carson, Mattia Carto to Teresa Howard.

Frederickton, Aug. 18, by Rev. F. D. Crowley, Jonah Packer to Mrs. Brunswick Allen.

Campbellton, Aug. 22, by Rev. F. Carr, James A. Wood to Phoebe Armstrong.

Frederickton, Aug. 14, by Rev. F. D. Crowley, E. A. Packer to Mrs. Brunswick Allen.

Blackville, N. B. Aug. 16, by Rev. G. T. Johnston, Max Storey to Bertha McKinley.

St. John, Aug. 28, by Rev. G. M. Campbell, Oscar G. Ritchie to Maggie J. Lindsay.

Kentville, Aug. 22, by Rev. S. R. Ackman, Abraham Melvin to Mrs. Lavinia Cain.

Tatamagouche, Aug. 24, by Rev. E. R. Simmonds, Lewis Jackson to Mary A. Smyth.

Lower Argyle, Aug. 17, by Rev. J. L. Smith, Seward N. Sawyer to Ella C. Spinyer.

Frederickton, Aug. 19, by Rev. F. D. Crowley, Gregory E. Lobb to Lida B. Dow.

Tracadie, N. B. Aug. 13, by Rev. J. A. Babiner, Peter Archer to Mary E. Lavigne.

Springhill, N. S. Aug. 16, by Rev. E. E. England, Simon Lasser to Annie Lewis.

Greenwich, N. B. Aug. 23, by Rev. D. W. Pickett, Hudson Belyea to Barbara Sutton.

Hibernia, Aug. 20, by Rev. C. B. Lewis, Geo. T. Flewelling to Mrs. Annie McQueen.

Springhill, N. S. Aug. 16, by Rev. E. E. England, Albert E. Monroe to Flora T. Ferris.

Truro, Aug. 17, by Rev. A. Logan Goggin, Alexander McHardy to Isabella D. Fraser.

River John, N. S. Aug. 19, by Rev. G. S. Gordon, James S. Chisholm to Mary J. Rogers.

Frederickton, Aug. 22, by Rev. D. Crowley, Frederic G. Burpee to Miss U. Everett.

Florenceville, Aug. 23, by Rev. A. H. Hawley, Isaac Lewis Newton to Sarah Duggett.

Ashland, N. B. Aug. 19, by Rev. T. S. VanWart, Woodford C. Craig to Rebecca McCallum.

Grand Harbor, N. B. Aug. 18, by Rev. Irvin Harlow, Isaac Lewis Newton to Sarah Duggett.

East River, N. B. Aug. 16, by Rev. J. D. McFarlane, Eben McE. Archibald to Lena Gunn.

Glenville, N. B. Aug. 22, by Rev. Geo. Millar, A. Ellis McAllister to Marion E. Weatherly.

Boisdale, C. B. Aug. 16, by Rev. A. F. McGillivray, Daniel McDonald to Kate McIntyre.

Little River, N. B. Aug. 16, by Rev. John Hawley, A. Ellis McAllister to Marion E. Weatherly.

Charlottetown, P. E. I. Aug. 16, by Rev. W. W. Brewer, Hammond J. Kelly to Edith L. Stumblers.

Westport, N. S. Aug. 13, by Rev. H. E. Cooke, assisted by V. C. C. Rowlinson, Herbert Outhouse to Viole Clark.

Halifax, Aug. 28, Maggie Hunt, 9.

St. John, Aug. 20, John Boyd, 73.

Kentville, Aug. 24, Oscar J. Reid.

St. John, Aug. 27, Jane Russell, 80.

Charlton, Aug. 26, Henry Mace, 69.

St. John, Aug. 23, Wm. Purdy, 75.

Frederickton, Aug. 16, James Duffie, 37.

Brookville, Aug. 23, Jane MacBeth, 73.

Oak Bay, Aug. 20, William Preston, 73.

Halifax, Aug. 20, S. Avery Mulhal, 23.

St. John, Aug. 20, Louis B. Clarke, 67.

Sussex, N. B. Aug. 23, Hugh Brown, 67.

Mira, C. B. Aug. 19, John McDonald, 73.

Halifax, Aug. 5, Alexander McLellan, 61.

St. John, Aug. 20, Rev. David B. Parshur, Antigonish, Aug. 13, Daniel McDonald, 56.

Charlottetown, Aug. 23, Libbie Handrahan, 22.

Halifax, Charlotte, widow of late Arthur Wear.

Halifax, Aug. 23, of paralysis, Elizabeth Crosty, Cheggogin, N. S. Aug. 23, Nelson Corning, 87.

Mabou Mines, C. B. Aug. 13, Angus Beaton, 76.

North River, N. S. Aug. 3, John H. McNutt, 60.

Riverton, N. S. Aug. 19, Robert McLaughlin, 22.

Mc Hanley, N. S. Aug. 14, Mrs. Gilbert Hayes, 77.

St. John, Aug. 23, Sarah, wife of James M. Kerr, 25.

West River, N. S. Aug. 14, John D. McKenna, 73.

Dartmouth, Aug. 24, widow of late Geo. Shurtz, 73.

Pictou, Aug. 15, Sophia, widow of late John Grant, 91.

St. John, Aug. 26, of paralysis, James Cummins, 62.

St. John, Aug. 25, Mary A., wife of James Howard, 80.

St. Margaret's Bay, Aug. 23, Clarence B. Pierce, 42.

Port Elgin, Aug. 23, James Eldridge, son of G. E. Munro.

Halifax, Aug. 24, Harry F. W. son of W. H. Brown, 1.

Boylston, Aug. 14, Margaret, widow of late Joseph Shrum, 78.

Dartmouth, Aug. 24, Mary A., widow of late George Shrum, 78.

Pugwash, Aug. 23, Julia Fulton, wife of Milledge A. son.

Charlottetown, Aug. 11, Teresa J., wife of Hugh Fraser, 37.

St. John, Aug. 26, Julia, widow of late Michael McCreary, 40.

Richmond, N. S. Aug. 28, son of John and Margaret Fleming, 33.

Lincoln, N. S. Rebecca, widow of late John McCreary, 82.

North Sydney, Aug. 19, Jane, wife of Captain J. P. Angrove, 62.

West Bay, P. E. I. Aug. 11, John Vall, of St. John, N. B. 73.

Clifton, Aug. 22, Margaret C., widow of the late James Morrison, 4 months.

West Caledonia, N. S. Aug. 23, Ellen Mary, wife of John Conway, 38.

St. John, Aug. 24, Gertrude Maude, daughter of Andrew Morrison, 4 months.

Shibburne, Aug. 18, Mary Eva, daughter of Augustus Swansburg, 10.

Wawel, N. B. Aug. 18, Addie, daughter of late Andrew Morrison, 4 months.

St. John, Aug. 28, Francis Joseph, son of Francis J. Gorman, 4 months.

Sainton River, N. S. Aug. 14, Margaret O'Neill, wife of Richard Condon, 4 months.