

THE LEAVENWORTH CASE.

By A. K. Green.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—Continued.

"Don't you? Not when you consider that by it we seem to be deprived of all opportunity of tracing this sheet back to the quire of paper from which it was taken?"

"No."

"Humph! then you are more of an amateur than I thought you. Don't you see that as Hannah could have had no motive for concealing where the paper came from on which she wrote her dying words, this sheet must have been prepared by someone else?"

"No," said I, "I cannot say I see all that."

"Can't! Well, then, answer me this. Why should Hannah, a girl about to commit suicide, care whether any clue was furnished in her confession, to the actual desk, drawer, or paper from which the sheet was taken on which she writes it?"

"She wouldn't."

"Yet especial pains have been taken to destroy that clue. Then there is another thing. Read the confession itself, Mr. Raymond, and tell me what you gather from it."

"Why," said I, after complying, "that the girl, worn out with constant apprehension, has made up her mind to do away with herself, and that Henry Clavering—"

"Ah, I didn't know that Mr. Clavering's name was mentioned there; excuse me."

"His name is not mentioned, but a description is given so strikingly in accordance—"

Here Mr. Gryce interrupted me. "Does it not seem to you a little surprising, that a girl like Hannah should have stopped to describe a man she knew by name?"

I started; it was unnatural, surely. "You believe Mrs. Belden's story, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Must believe, then, that Hannah, the go-between, was acquainted with Mr. Clavering, and with his name?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then why didn't she use it? If her intention was as she here professes, to save Eleanore Leavenworth, she would naturally take the most direct method of doing it. But that is not all. Mrs. Belden, according to you, maintains that Hannah told her upon entering the house, that Mary Leavenworth sent her here. But in this document, she declares it to have been the work of Black Mustache."

"I know, but could they not have both been parties to the transaction?"

"Yes," said he; "yet it is always a suspicious circumstance when there is any discrepancy between the written and spoken declaration of a person. But why do we stand here fooling, when a few words from Mrs. Belden will probably settle the whole matter! Fetch her in, Mr. Raymond."

Mr. Gryce received Mrs. Belden with just that show of respectful courtesy likely to impress a woman as dependent as she upon the good opinion of others.

"Ah! and this is the lady in whose house this very disagreeable event has occurred," exclaimed he. But perhaps we can right matters. This sudden death ought to be easily explainable. You say you have had no poison in the house?"

"No, sir."

"And that the girl never went out?"

"Never, sir."

"And that no one has ever been here to see her?"

"No one, sir."

"So that she could not have procured any such thing if she had wished?"

"No, sir."

"Unless," he added suavely, "she had it with her when she came here?"

"That couldn't have been, sir. She brought no baggage; and I know everything there was in her pocket, for I looked."

"And what did you find there?"

"Some money in bills, more than you would have expected such a girl to have, some loose pennies, and a handkerchief."

"Well, then, it is proved that the girl didn't die of poison, there being none in the house."



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"That is just what I have been telling Mr. Raymond."

"Must have been heart disease," he went on. "You say she was well yesterday?"

"Yes, sir; or seemed so."

"Though not cheerful?"

"I did not say that; she was, sir very."

"What, ma'am, this girl? I don't understand that. I should think her anxiety about those she had left behind her in the city would have been enough to keep her from being very cheerful."

"So you would," returned Mrs. Belden; "but it wasn't so. On the contrary, she never seemed to worry about them at all."

"What!" cried he, "not about Eleanore, who, according to the papers, stands in so cruel a position before the world? But perhaps she didn't know

anything about that—Miss Leavenworth's position, I mean?"

"Yes, she did, for I told her. I was so astonished I could not keep it to myself. I went to Hannah and read the article aloud and watched her face to see how she took it."

"And how did she?"

"She looked as if she didn't understand; asked me why I read such things to her, and told me she didn't want to hear any more."

"Humph! and what else?"

"Nothing else. She put her hand over her ears and frowned in such a sullen way I left the room."

"That was when?"

"About three weeks ago."

"She has, however, mentioned the subject since?"

"No, sir; not once."

"She has shown, however, that some-

thing was preying on her mind—fear, remorse, or anxiety?"

"No, sir; on the contrary, she has often appeared like one secretly elated."

"But," exclaimed Mr. Gryce, "that was very strange and unnatural; I cannot account for it."

(To be continued.)

The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties.

Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry.

Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonored, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep. Amen.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

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