

## Plot That Failed; OR, Love That Would Not Be Denied.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Phew!" he said. "But that was tough work! Turn on the light."  
"It is exactly as I imagined it," muttered the captain; "and made for my purpose." Then, after glancing through into the dusty window for a few minutes, he tried to push the lower sash up.

But the window was locked. Without a moment's hesitation the captain tied his handkerchief round his hand, quickly broke the pane nearest the fastening, then he inserted his hand and pushed the catch back.

"Now, Jem," said the captain, "drop in carefully, and when you reach the floor remain motionless until I am by your side. Remember not to move a step until you get the word from me. It is of the greatest importance, as you will see."

Very silently, and with compressed lips as if he were keeping back his fear and horror with great difficulty, Jem dropped into the room, remaining on the spot which his feet had first touched.

The captain followed his example. "Now," he said, in a low, firm whisper, "attend to me and pay particular attention. Walk to that bureau in as few steps as possible. You can stride it in three steps. When you reach the bureau stand with your face toward the lock without moving."

Jem nodded, and, lighted by the lantern which the captain held, he strode to the bureau.

The captain followed him, taking care to tread in the same footprints. "Now," he said, "I will hold the lantern while you try the lock with this bunch of keys. If you can't manage it, it must be picked."

Jem took the bunch and, selecting a skeleton key of the size required, tried it. But the lock was a good one and defied all his efforts.

Then he went on his knees and in a workmanlike manner picked the lock.

Then the captain commenced searching within the bureau.

"I am looking for a secret drawer," he said.

"Why didn't you say so, then?" said Jem. "There it is," and he touched a spring concealed in a part of the beading. "I know where they are, right enough. All these old-fashioned 'uns is much alike. Why, dang it!" he added, with deep disgust, "it's empty!"

But the captain's smile was anything but one of disappointment.

"So it is, Jem, and suppose we put something in it?"

And as he spoke he took the parchment from his pocket and laid it carefully in the drawer.

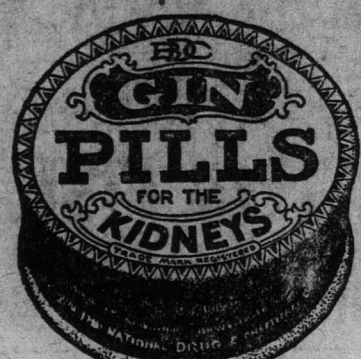
Jem started.

"This is a rum go, capt'n," he said, "to go and take all this 'ere trouble, in risking our necks and a running the chance o' meeting all sorts o' nasty things for the sake of putting a piece of paper in this old concern."

"My good Jem, don't worry yourself about what you cannot understand," retorted the captain. "Now go back, step by step, in the same footprints. Mind, go as slowly as you like, but make no more marks."

Jem obeyed, grumbling and wondering, but he was a little easier when he saw the next step in the captain's movements.

Carefully guarding against step-



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ping into fresh places, he stooped down and shook from his dredger a regular and equal quantity of dust on to the handmarks and footprints which they had made.

Then Jem understood the use of the floor dredger. Spot by spot the captain pursued his task until he had reached the window, against which Jem leaned, stolidly watching him.

"There," whispered the captain, pointing to the polished floor, which presented an unbroken surface of dust. "If you were obliged to swear that the room had not been entered—that the floor had not been walked across for five years, would you have any objection to say so?"

"Not I, capt'n," retorted Jem, quickly. "Not that that signifies, because I'd swear to anything, but it's right enough. Anybody 'ud say this room hadn't been looked at for years. At least," he added, with a shudder, and in a lower voice, "not by human critters. There's other sort I have heard don't make no footprints nor no noise, so they don't count."

The captain smiled. "All right," he said, "I don't care for ghosts, Jem, they only frighten such fools as you. Get up on the sill and shake the dust down on these bare parts."

Jem laid his hand upon the sill and was about to draw himself on to it when he was conscious of a sudden stream of soft blue light in the room. Without turning round he whispered, warningly:

"Don't turn the light on so full, capt'n. Somebody might be about and see it at the window."

"What light?" said the captain, who was bending down with his face to the window, powdering the spots from which their feet had removed the dust. "I have turned no light—hah!"

The exclamation which broke the sentence caused Jem to turn his head with a vague sense of alarm.

No sooner had he done so than he fell to the ground in a paroxysm of fear.

There, on his knees, motionless as a statue, and his dark face upturned, was the captain, staring at a misty blue light which seemed growing out of the side of the room.

Jem uttered a groan of dismay and horror as there slipped, or rather floated into the room the dreadful figure which he had seen at the oriel window.

It was the White Nun!

Slowly, and with a floating, gliding motion, the figure advanced.

Then it seemed to see them, for it moved its skull slightly in the direction of the men and stopped.

The captain, shaking off the horrible influence of dread, sprang to his feet.

He was about to advance to the horrid thing, but the blue light suddenly disappeared, the figure glided out of the stream of light flowing from the lantern, and all the captain saw was the fiery eyes and the dull gleam of the white, ghostly drapery.

"Ghost or no ghost," he hissed, "you shall not escape me!" and he sprang forward.

But before he could clutch the apparition it drew back with a gliding motion, and seemed to vanish through the wall!

With a bewildered and daunted air the captain glared around.

The two human beings were once more alone.

White and trembling, the guilty schemer turned to the window and grasped Jem's arm.

"Come," he said, hoarsely. "We've been dreaming."

Without a word, and trembling in every limb, the pair descended one after the other, the captain remaining last, and shudderingly expecting to feel the ghostly hand of bone upon his throat.

But the vision did not appear again, and, exhausted with exertion and horror, the two men stood in their own room staring at each other's white faces.

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour at which he had retired to rest, the captain was up early in the morning and, with his cheroot in his mouth strolling round the Park.

Whistling his favorite air, he leaped the old fence which divided the neatly kept rosary of the modern garden from the cold, waste little courtyard of the ruined chapel, and with cautious feet and watchful eyes, entered the broken and crumbling cloisters in the search for more evidence of the apparition which had so startled him on the preceding evening.

Next the cloisters was the chapel, or what remained of it. The captain stumbled to the middle of it and looked up through its roofless height to the sky above.

In the centre of the facade was the large oriel window. A portion of the old organ-loft hung to it, and was lost on either side in a mass of ruined, moss-covered stone, which was the remains of a flight of stone steps.

"No one but a ghost," muttered the captain, "could walk along there."

With an emphatic exclamation he turned his attention to the wall next the house.

He fancied that he could distinguish the dark outline of a door, but by the aid of a small opera-glass which he had brought with him, he made out that the ivy had grown over it to such an extent that egress or exit by it was impossible.

He did not believe in ghosts, and yet if the figure he had seen were a human being and alive how did it reach the deserted room?

While he pondered a footstep sounded behind him—so suddenly that he turned face to face with Leicester Dodson.

The meeting was so unexpected that both men were, so to speak, off their guard.

For a moment only was the captain's face naked, the next he had resumed his mask, and held out his hand.

"Good-morning; you startled me! This is a place for ghastly meetings, and though the hour is inappropriate, a little surprise is allowable."

All this with a genial smile. Leicester just touched his hand and nodded.

"I am glad I met you this morning, and so early, Captain Murpint," he said, in his grave, clear voice, "for I have some unpleasant information for you."

"Indeed!" said the captain, glancing up at his face for a moment, then raising the opera-glass to his eyes.

"Indeed, I am sorry for that. Of what nature?"

"It concerns your man," said Leicester. "I found him eavesdropping near the laurels by the terrace last night."

"No!" exclaimed the captain, with a look of shocked indignation. "The villain! I hope you thrashed him."

"Well," said Leicester, "I am sorry to say that I did strike him. I regret it, though I think it may prove a salutary chastisement."

"The villain!" said the captain, with grave displeasure. "I will discharge him this morning! I'll pack him off! Drunk or not he shall go. I could not have a fellow about me whom I could not implicitly trust."

"Well," said Leicester, "you must do as you think fit; yet I hope you will let the man plead his defence. There are two sides to everything."



The captain shook his head angrily. "No, he shall go, the rogue," he said, and as he spoke he rose, with a light in his eyes which would have proclaimed to any one who knew him that he had scored a point in his game. "No; he shall go, rest assured. I would not keep him for the world after what you have told me. Are you going on to the Park?"

"No," said Leicester, "if you will make my excuses. Good-morning."

"Good-morning," said the captain, and he shook hands impressively, looking after Leicester's tall, stalwart figure as it passed under the ruined arches, with a pleasant smile.

"Oh, yes, he shall go, Mr. Dodson, and all the world shall know that Captain Murpint discharged his man Jem at the instigation of Mr. Leicester Dodson!"

After breakfast he caught Jem as he was slowly mounting the stairs.

"Go into my room," he whispered. Jem obeyed, and the captain, following, closed the door.

"Jem," he said, "don't be surprised at anything that happens and remember that I have promised not to throw you over. I am going to discharge you this morning."

Jem started and turned pale. "Not really, you stupid fellow! only in pretence, Leicester Dodson—at that name Jem scowled—"Leicester Dodson has made formal complaint and I cannot do anything else but get rid of you. I shall blackguard you well and pack you off before the servants. Of course you won't leave the village and equally of course I will continue you your salary to enable you to keep there. What you must do is to take a room at the inn—say you are going to enjoy yourself on the savings of your salary."

Half an hour afterward every soul in the village knew that Leicester Dodson had got Mr. Starling discharged from his situation.

(To be Continued.)

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## Evening Telegram Fashion Plates.

The Home Dressmaker should keep a Catalogue Scrap Book of our Pattern Cuts. These will be found very useful to refer to from time to time.

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**St. Andrew's Annual.**

Last night the annual meeting of St. Andrew's Society took place and was largely attended. The reports submitted showed the institution to be in a flourishing condition, financially and otherwise. Election of officers for the ensuing year, resulted thus:—

President—John Browning, re-elected.

1st Vice-President—T. McNeil, elected.

2nd Vice-President—A. Macpherson, elected.

Secretary-Treasurer—Malcolm Parsons, re-elected.

Librarian—T. Anderson, re-elected.

Anderson, W. A. Munn, H. Crawford, A. G. Gibb, Ira S. Kennedy, A. K. Lumsden, D. M. McFarlane, J. C. Heppburn, Colin Campbell and Thos. Curran.

Sports' Committee—T. McNeil, convener; R. McD. Little, A. Howard, Ira Kennedy, C. Henderson, J. A. Carmichael.

Social Committee—A. G. Gibb, convener; D. McIntosh, L. Munn, D. Hurchell, J. M. Brown, J. R. Nicol, T. A. McNab, D. G. Grant.

Cardroom Committee—John Gunn, W. B. Eadie, D. Forsyth and L. Frew. Mr. P. K. McLeod presented to the Society a bust of Sir Walter Scott.

An impromptu smoking concert followed and the rendition of Auld Lang Syne and the National Anthem brought the evening to a close.

**Doctors and Gas Fires**

In an article which recently appeared in the London "Evening News," Mr. W. G. Faulkner stated: "In making my inquiries I discovered one significant fact. This was that one company—the Gas Light and Coke Company—had among their consumers 2,500 doctors who had gas fires installed in their houses, some as many as ten or a dozen; that 1,500 of these doctors had become users of gas during the past three years; and that not one had ever given them up."

Professor C. V. Boys F.R.S., says, in the "Standard": "Sentiment and inertia are the only obstacles against the general adoption of gas fires as a cooking appliance." Wonderful strides have been made, in spite of deep-rooted prejudice. A gas fire, burning with a blue, is an admirable agent for heating a room; and as a scientist, I fail to understand how such a gas fire dries the air in a room more than any other fire."—Nov 17, 11

**Stephano Off.**

The S. S. Stephano sailed to-day for Halifax and New York. The following passengers went in saloon:—

John Dix, Miss H. Power, A. T. Wood, Miss Keegan, Mrs. G. Miller and infant, Miss Gosling, S. P. Kesner, Hon. M. P. and Mrs. Cashin, A. Hiltz and ten second class.

**Russian Sailor**

Was "Beached."

On board the schr. Waterwitch, which arrived here Sunday from Pernambuco is a Russian sailor, who was "beached" from a German ship. The sailor was found "beached" at Brazilian port by Capt. Moore, who kindly took him on board and gave him a job before the mast.

**Morwenna Gone.**

The S. S. Morwenna left port last evening for Halifax to load freight for here. At present there is a large amount of freight at Halifax awaiting shipment to this port. The latest movements of the Morwenna are not yet known.

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