

right hand and pointed to the door.
"Go," he said, bitterly, "before you drive me mad."

"I've told you the plain facts," said the doctor, "so that you may dismiss all this stuff from your mind and have a chance to get well. You had something very like the D.T.'s and you got off uncommon light. Now drop it all; thank heaven for the kind attendance you have had, and for the generosity that refused to prosecute you."

"Prosecute me?" Percy's tone was indifferent. Nothing could surprise him now.

"Arson, man; can't you understand? This kind lady and this good clergyman are going to let you off."

Marshall broke into a harsh laugh. "Alas! unrepentant still," said Mr. Weekes, with deep gravity; "perhaps it might be for his good, doctor, that he should take the full consequences of his actions."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, do. Only leave me in peace."

"I never saw such stubbornness," cried the angry doctor. "My theory is perfect if he would only confess."

"Did I imagine the piece of yellow silk I found?" asked the stubborn one, remembering it in the nick of time.

"I've heard of no silk. Where is it?" said the doctor, sharply.

"In my coat pocket."

The doctor opened the door and instructed the nurse, who was waiting without, to bring up the young man's clothes. When they were brought he searched the pockets, once, twice, three times. There was no piece of silk there.

Marshall was not at all surprised to know this. It would have been strange if anything came right in this hideous nightmare of incidents.

"Did she bring the whisky bottle too?" he asked, sardonically.

But the Vicar received this evidence of hardened guilt with a sigh of deep regret. It was close on to the time for the next train to Herne Bay, and he had not yet got this young invalid into a promising frame of mind. He felt that he could do no more, and rose, saying that his curate should call the next day. He wished to deliver one final word of good advice, but the patient turned his face deliberately to the wall, and closed his eyes; and so the angry clergyman went downstairs armed with the conviction that he had been at the bedside of one who was an absolute "degenerate." Mr. Weekes had been reading a good deal about such people and firmly believed that they existed; and he knew that this degeneracy was sometimes hidden by the most promising exterior.

"Well?" Lady Yatton breathed the word with an impassioned eagerness.

"He would not confess. He is absolutely unrepentant, insolent."

Lady Yatton dropped into a chair, trembling.

"If he does this thing once he may again. The community—"

"We must risk that, Vicar," answered the lady, faintly. "He has suffered enough."

"You have too kind a heart, dear lady," he said, as he bade her farewell. "I pray that he may be led to a more contrite spirit. Douglas shall call to-morrow."

"Leave him in peace. If you cannot convert him, what chance has the curate?"

It was some time before the doctor appeared. Lady Yatton awaited his report with much impatience.

"I've wasted time I can't spare," he said, snapping his watch.

"Yes, now that you are alone you must be busy. Have you heard anything of your assistant?"

"Not a word. I've dressed that



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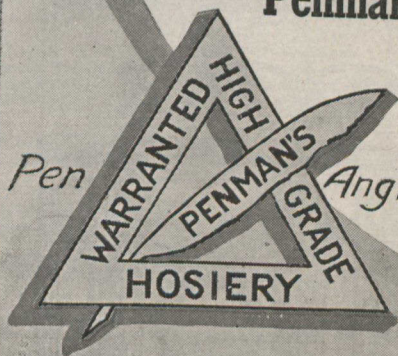
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