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WHEN LOVE Came Too Late.

CHAPTER XXVI.
"Willful Murder."

The squire looked at him and the decanter; but his gentle nature found some excuse for him.

"My poor fellow!" he said. "But this will not help you," and he pointed to the brandy.

"No, I know; but I'm upset, I'm dreadfully upset. This—this murder business—"

The squire sighed deeply.

"My brain is in a whirl. It was the sudden shock that struck my poor girl down. There is some hideous mistake, some dreadful mystery! It is impossible that he can be guilty!"

"He—he didn't deny it," said Bartley Bradstone, sullenly.

The squire looked at him with sad surprise.

"You do not think him guilty?" he said.

"I? Oh, no; certainly not," was the quick response. "But—but—of course it's a mystery. I—I wish it had happened at some other time. Curse it! It will never be found out."

"Yes, it will be found out," said the squire, solemnly.

He took two or three turns across the room, his hand to his brow; then he stopped suddenly.

"Why, I remember! It must have occurred while you were on your way to The Maples. Did you hear nothing? The glade is not far from the drive."

Bartley Bradstone was putting on his overcoat, and stopped with one arm in the sleeve.

"Who, I?" he exclaimed, indignantly. "What do you mean? What do I know about it?" Then, recalled to himself by the squire's look of astonishment at his tone, he continued, more quietly, "For Heaven's sake

don't get me mixed up in the business; that—that would make it bad for Olivia, you know. I don't know anything about it. I—I cut across the park in the other direction."

"With the carriage?" exclaimed the squire.

"No, no, I didn't take a carriage; didn't I tell you? I thought I should save time by running across the park, and—and I wasn't anywhere near the spot, I'm glad to say. They can't force me to attend the inquest and all that, can they?" he asked, averting his face.

The squire shook his head.

"No, as you know nothing about it," he said.

Bartley Bradstone drew a breath of relief.

"That's all right!" he said. "Olivia would be awfully cut up if I got mixed up in this wretched business. It would make her worse than she is."

"She can scarcely be worse," said the poor squire, sorrowfully.

"She'll get over it," said Bartley Bradstone, putting on his hat. "It's—it's the shock, and all that. I'll go now, I think. Give her my love, and tell her I'll come and see her directly—they'll let me. We'll get away the moment she is strong enough; the change will do her good. If it hadn't been for their dragging that fellow Faradeane here we should have been miles away by this time, confound it!"

He passed into the hall and beckoned to a footman who was passing.

"Let him come with me, will you, squire? It's—it's dark, and I'm upset and nervous. It's enough to drive a fellow out of his mind."

The squire motioned an assent to the servant, who brought his hat and a lantern.

At the hall door Bartley Bradstone paused, and came back to where the squire stood, looking vacantly and sadly out at the silent night.

"Don't—don't tell anybody I walked over to The Maples unless you're obliged," he said, with forced carelessness. "These police fellows are always too ready to get a gentleman mixed up in the business, and they'd make a mountain of a molehill, and want me to appear at the trial, and all that. Good-night. Give my love to—to my wife."

He held out his hand, with his restless, bloodshot eyes fixed on the squire's boots, and as the old man took it, he noticed, in a duff way, how cold and clammy it felt.

The door closed on Mr. Bartley Bradstone and his protector, and the squire went upstairs again.

As he approached the door, he could hear his darling's voice talking wildly and incoherently, and the doctor met him with a grave face.

"She is delirious," he said, gravely. "Has Mr. Bradstone gone?"

They entered the room. Olivia was lying in Bessie's arms, her eyes open and staring, a torrent of words streaming from her feverish lips.

"Bessie! Bessie! Save him! He is not guilty! My love commit—murder! Ha, ha!" and her wild laughter

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rang through the room. "He's so good and gentle! They are mad, mad, mad! Take me to him, father; take me to him! It is my place! I tell you that if all the world pronounced him guilty, I would love—love—love him! He is innocent! Father, don't let him take me away! No! Let me stay! Hide me from him! I hate him! I hate him!"

"What does it mean?" moaned the squire, piteously.

"It means just nothing," replied the doctor, who had watched beside many a delirious patient, and was as discreet and silent as the grave. "Pay no attention. Who's that?"

It was Aunt Amelia's voice at the door, begging to be admitted.

"Miss Amelia can do no good. Keep her away, please," he said, quietly; and the squire persuaded her, weeping bitterly—for Aunt Amelia's heart was sound, though her head was fighting—to go back to her own room.

All through the night—and how long it seemed!—the three watched beside the fever-stricken girl, listening to her delirious cries; but toward morning they grew less wild, and as the dawn broke they ceased altogether and she lapsed into a deep sleep.

The doctor's grave face cleared.

"Thank God!" he said, with a long breath of relief. "Go and lie down, squire; the worst has passed. We shall only have to fight against the weakness and exhaustion now. But mind," he added, as he gently forced the squire out of the room, "keep Mr. Bradstone out of the way, and don't mention his name before her. There must be no excitement."

The squire asked if he should send to Wainford for a skilled nurse; but the doctor shook his head.

"No," he said, decisively. "You could not get a better than this girl, Bessie, and—nurses talk," he added, under his breath.

The morning came and the long day passed. The hushed household moved about on tiptoe and spoke in whispers. Almost every hour, as he had promised, the squire sent word to Bartley Bradstone; Olivia was lying in the sleep of unconsciousness.

About six o'clock in the evening Bartley Bradstone entered the library, where the squire sat, his head resting in his hands.

"I—I couldn't stop away any longer," he said, sinking into a chair. "How is she now?"

"Just the same," replied the squire, looking at his white face, pityingly. "She lies now like one dead, indeed—"

Bartley Bradstone groaned and wiped his forehead.

"I've spent a wretched night," he said; "wretched. I suppose you've heard the news?" he asked, suddenly. The squire shook his head.

"They've held the inquest and brought in a verdict of willful murder against Faradeane."

The squire sprang to his feet, then dropped down again.

"They must be mad!" he exclaimed, tremulously.

"I don't know anything more than I've heard," said Bartley Bradstone. "My man was there—and told me what passed. They had Faradeane up, and he—he just behaved as he did here. Wouldn't say anything, or give any explanation. What were they to do, under the circumstances?"

The squire let his hand fall upon the table.

"I would stake my life upon his innocence!" he said, solemnly.

Bartley Bradstone eyed him with sullen displeasure.

"That wouldn't save him," he said.

"Things look black against him."

"I care not how black they look," responded the squire. "I know that Faradeane is incapable of such a crime."

As he spoke the door opened.

"A gentleman wishes to see you, sir," said the butler; and as the squire made a motion of assent, a short, commonplace-looking man, dressed like a well-to-do farmer, entered.

"Good-evening, sir," he said, quietly and respectfully. "My name is McAndrew, detective, from Scotland Yard. I've got charge of this case."

The squire waved him to a seat and leaned back wearily.

"Why do you wish to see me?" he asked.

"Yes, we know nothing about it," said Bartley Bradstone.

The detective looked at him as if he had not noticed the presence of a third person, and bowed.

"Certainly not, sir; but I called to pay my respects and to ask a few questions. You've heard how the verdict of the coroner's inquest has gone, sir?" addressing the squire.

"Yes."

"Well, sir, I don't attach too much weight to coroner's verdicts, but this seems reasonable enough. There's the fact of the prisoner's presence on the scene, and the revolver with his name engraved on it being found near the body."

"That's very bad," remarked Bartley Bradstone.

"Yes, sir, very bad, as you say," assented Mr. McAndrew; "but I'm not quite satisfied yet. I've seen the prisoner, and watched him through the inquest. And—I've had a good deal of experience. Mr. Vanley—doesn't look guilty."

"He is not guilty!" said the squire, earnestly.

Mr. McAndrew nodded respectfully. "He's a friend of yours, sir?"

"He is," assented the squire; "a very dear friend."

Bartley Bradstone shot a glance of jealousy at the sad, worn face.

"Just so, sir; then you can tell me something about him—who he is and so on."

The squire passed his hand across his brow.

"I—I'm afraid I cannot," he replied. "I know nothing about Mr. Faradeane, excepting that he came here, to a cottage called The Dell, a few months ago—"

"When, sir?"

"In May; and that he is distinctly a gentleman, and incapable of the crime laid to his charge."

"That's it, sir," said the detective; "Mr. Faradeane is a gentleman, as you say, and I've never in all my experience known a real, genuine gentleman commit a crime of this kind. In the heat of the moment—in a sudden fit of jealousy, for instance—a gentleman might do it. But this was premeditated."

"How do you know that?" said Bartley Bradstone, sharply.

(To be Continued.)

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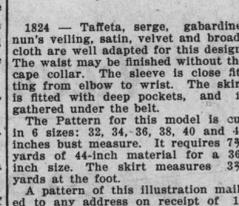
1824

1824—Taffeta, serge, gabardine, nun's veiling, satin, velvet and broadcloth are well adapted for this design. The waist may be finished without the cape collar. The sleeve is close fitting from elbow to wrist. The skirt is fitted with deep pockets, and is gathered under the belt.

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Interesting From West

Rev. Dr. Ridout

When crossing these lines in Colorado, one of those charming West States, made famous by its canyons, mountains, peaks, waterfalls and mines. The altitude here is 3,500 feet above sea level; the air is pure; the breezes are freighted with ozone of the country round about one stretch of ranches and farms to which countless thousands of cattle are being raised.

In a world so full of the noise, bloody conflict and Europe bleed at every pore it would seem that America was providentially chosen to be a house of refuge for the distressed, a land of liberty and plenty for the oppressed, the hungry, and the sad; and no doubt after the war, teeming multitudes will be crossing the seas for the United States and Canada—the lands of freedom and the homes of the brave.

Strange it may appear, but it is singularly true that the West has always been the land far off toward which all the ideals of Mythology, Romance and Poetry have turned. Homer sang of the Elysian Fields, the abode of supreme happiness assigned in the West—out there in the land of the unsetting sun, where Apollo stabled his horses at eventide. Odysseus went to talk with the spirits of the departed, and Virgil led Eneas out into the West to see the spirit of the dead heroes basking in eternal sunshine; and the Norsemen in the legends tell of the long ship which they laid the body of the dead chieftain and they hoisted the great sail and mid flaming torches sent the ship out upon the trackless ocean, and find its harbor where Odin waiting to welcome the spirit of the warrior.

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In the Western States there are some wonderful developments taking place and prosperity, energy, expansion and wealth are to be seen on all hands.

The thing possibly that led to the hosts Westward in the long ago was the "gold diggings" of California in 1849. The finding of gold there came about in many unusual ways. The stories which come up from that time are amazing. A gold digger died of starvation; his partner in digging the grave turned up a nugget of pure gold worth \$40,000. A tramp unable to pay his fare was put off one of the wagon trains; he wandered across the fields and stumbled over a nugget of gold worth \$2,500. A man died in a pauper the other day in one of the Colorado cities who discovered gold which brought him \$100,000. He squandered it all, and one of the most valuable gold mining claims in the Colorado Springs the original owner sold for a few dollars and some whisky.

The United States just now are engaged in a most intense Presidential political campaign. The issue is between Wilson the Democrat, and Hughes the Republican. The men are so singularly alike in nature, sufficient Christian manhood and character that it is hard to make a choice. I have had the good fortune of knowing and meeting President Wilson personally. He was Governor of the State of New Jersey with the State

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