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never for a moment obtruded itself. Another reason for this negligence was the secrecy of the investigation. Out-side the searchers there was no one who possessed more than the most vague idea that a search was being made. One day one of the girls at the ribbon counter laughingly asked Christine if she was a foundling, adding that foundlings seemed to be at a premium now-a-days, for she had heard that someone was looking for a missing heiress. Christine had replied lightly that she was nothing so interesting, and it so happened that Mr. and Mrs. Flynn, the only two now in the Stores who might have contradicted her, heard

might have contradicted her, heard nothing at all of the investigation, for the simple reason that they had no children to investigate.

Meanwhile, the offer of the reward for information as to the person who had brought the letter had also ended in a blind alley. The letter-bringer might have been invisible for all the trace that had been left to guide anyone. that had been left to guide anyone. Barefaced efforts to obtain the money by false information were, of course, by false information were, of course, frequent, but of any real clue there was not a vestige. And as days went by without result, another anxiety was added by the non-appearance of Mark. This could have been explained quite simply, for, as Mark's impatience had insisted upon starting the "Shuswap" on her voyage before the schedule time, and as the Misses Macgregor were not in town, the telegram was still following the travelers.

It must have been a fortnight after Christine's return to the Stores that the most promising clue was unearthed. It was found that in Mr. Torrance's own store there had been employed, until within a couple of months, a young girl of sixteen or thereabouts who was known to have been adopted under peculiar circumstances. The girl's name was Alma Stone. Her adopted parents were dead, and the girl had supported herself for some litle time. No one knew where she was now, and the enquiry seemed to be threatened with another blank, until someone remembered that if anyone would know anything about Alma Stone that person would be Miss Celia Brown. Christine, on being questioned, remembered having heard her sister mention the girl's name, and stated that Celia was so far better that it would do her no harm to be interro-

It must be said that the detective was rather surprised at the eagerness with which Mr. Torrance elected to visit the Misses Brown. He would have pre-ferred to have attended to this prom-ising clue himself, but as employers' wishes are paramount he had to be contented with providing the interviewer with as full a list of questions as his professional mind could compass.

It was a dreary day that had been

It was a dreary day that had been chosen for an interview. The glory of the autumn was almost dead and vicious, slanting rain pelted the dying leaves from the trees, and the heavy feet of passers-by printed their frail ghosts upon the muddy pavement. Brook Street, under such conditions, was not lovely. The rain seemed never to clean anything here, but only to add to the dirt and dreariness. Even the children looked dirtier and less cheerful and Ada's garden was more than ever an abomination of desolation.

Celia, who had been warned of the

Celia, who had been warned of the Celia, who had been warned of the coming visitor, was lying, propped with pillows, upon the couch, her tired eyes watching the steady beating of the rain. Celia did not get well as rapidly as they had hoped. There were times when they almost feared to realize how slow her progress was. "Want of recuperations of the couperage of her progress was. "Want of recuperative power," said the doctor; but, after all, that is only another way of saying want of the will to live. People who feel that life has cheated them are chary of taking up the cards again. They would often rather slip out of the game.

To Mr. Torrance the little room seemed a haven of peace. So little do we see into each other's lives that he mistook Celia's despair for the lassitude of convalescence and envied her her quiet sofa and the soft ministra-tions of the blind girl. How lovely Ada Brown was, he thought again. Impossible to believe that those beautiful eyes were sightless. As he watched her eager pleasure in the flowers he had brought, a sense of relief to which he had long been a stranger came over him.

Celia, who for sixteen years had wondered so often what Mr. Torrance might be like, now looked at him without interest. He was part of life. But he only saw the quiet courtesy of her greeting, noticed that she still seemed very weak, and hoped that his questions would not tire her. would not tire her.

(To be continued)



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