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"SILENT LIPS,"
By ANNIE O. TIBBITS.

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CHAPTER III.
WHAT HE FOUND UP NORTH.

Was it eight years that had passed? Geoffrey looked round curiously. Nothing had changed. Nothing had altered. Oldcastle was just the same today as it had been eight years ago when he had last stood in the narrow High street and looked back. And yet—there were alterations after all. There were new houses in the place of the shabby Preston Terrace that he used to know, a new pavement in Sheffield street, and a new factory on John street. Oldcastle had grown after all. Priddeau's iron works were bigger and surer blacker than they used to be, and the chemical manufactory surely poured out a bigger flood of yellowish green water than it used to do?

Advertiser
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One or two houses that he remembered were shut up, or pulled down. In particular had vanished altogether. He stood dumb and stupefied before it. Where it had stood there was now a row of shops, and the space beyond, that had once been a meadow and orchard, held brand new villas of bright brick and slate and art tiles.

He turned slowly. On the other side of the road things were not so changed. An old house, dull red, with a long sweep of steps and green shutters, attracted his attention. That surely had not altered? It was just the same as it had been eight years ago. It was there Jackson, the lawyer, had lived. He had been a friend of the Lancasters, a visitor at the castle. It was he who had given him the final push out of Oldcastle eight years ago.

Geoffrey stood irresolute. Jackson would be an old man by now and might not recognize him. Even eight years ago his sight had been bad. He must, somehow or other, find out what had become of Hetty, and old Jackson would be able to give him information better than anyone.

He crossed the road hurriedly and an instant later had rapped sharply on the finely polished brass knocker, and a little later still found himself in a familiar room that was one of the things that had not changed.

He had to wait a little while; then a young man ushered him into another room.

Before an old-fashioned table sat Jackson, the lawyer, just as he had sat eight years ago—just as he would go on sitting to the day of his death. He was older, feebler, blinder, than he had been when Geoffrey had seen him last, and blinked at him through thick glasses, without recognition.

"Mr.—er—Waring?" he asked. Geoffrey nodded.

"I called to ask," he said, "if you could tell me anything about the whereabouts of a Mr. Lancaster who had a church here and of his daughter, Hetty Lancaster."

The lawyer leaned back in his chair and played with his fingers on the arms. "Mr. Lancaster?" he said. "He died some years ago—died rather suddenly—very suddenly—almost mysteriously, in fact."

"Dead!" cried Geoffrey, hoarsely. "And his daughter?"

Mr. Jackson pursed his lips, then slowly shook his head and looked at Geoffrey with sudden curiosity.

"His daughter disappeared," he said. "She went two days before old Mr. Lancaster was discovered dead in the empty house. It was rather strange. There were mysterious circumstances which were never cleared up, and although there was a verdict of 'Death from natural causes,' and it all seemed straight enough, still there were some people who said—who whispered that his daughter ought to be found. The doctors were satisfied, but lawyers are sometimes suspicious. Mr.—er—Waring."

Geoffrey half-started to his feet, and then sank back in his chair. He clenched his hands and leaned forward.

"What—what—could they suspect?" he asked, hoarsely.

The lawyer, old and talkative, joined the tips of his fingers together, and proceeded to revive an interesting scandal. And Geoffrey, white of face, with desperate eyes fixed on the old man, saw nothing, for a girl's face that rose persistently, continually, determinedly, between them.

He leaned forward, and, slowly, steadily, the old man's words beat at his heart and his brain; and two gradually detached themselves from the others, and went round and round in his head until he seemed to be going mad.

They were "Hetty" and "murderess." Geoffrey felt cold, stiffed. The lawyer's face, gray and lifeless like a bit of his own parchment, seemed unnaturally still.

"Tell me what you mean!" Geoffrey cried.

Perhaps the lawyer did not know. Perhaps his legal caution was aroused, for he blinked thoughtfully at Geoffrey for a full minute before he made any reply, and then it was not to answer his question.

"You are a stranger to me, I presume," he said, "since I do not seem to recognize either your name or your face. Have you any interest in the lady? Do you know where she is now?"

"Ah, yes, some time since," said Jackson. "The property belongs to Lord Fanshawe, and after Mr. Lancaster's death he had it cut up into building lots. He had to wait a year or two for that, as there was still a little time to run on the lease, and Miss Lancaster could not be found. But, as you see, it lapsed, and in place of Mr. Lancaster's house and grounds his lordship has erected a fine row of shops and villas."

Jackson rose as he spoke and moved across the room, his short-sighted eyes peering curiously into Geoffrey's face. Geoffrey shrank a little into the shadow with something of the cold dread upon him. Jackson must not suspect his identity. He had not been a friend eight years ago. It had been he who had walked with him through the narrow streets of Oldcastle on that last day of his life. He had seen him in cold, gray morning, he who had paid his passage to Australia, who had seen him on board the boat, who had pushed him off into the world friendless and alone. Hard and pitiless he had been then, and hard and pitiless he would be now.

He sat rigid in his chair, with questions that he dared not ask burning on his lips, with a passionate cry in his heart for Hetty—for the little bright-eyed girl whose face had shone before him like stars these years.

"But Miss Lancaster," he said hoarsely, "can you tell me nothing of her; did she disappear utterly?"

The lawyer nodded.

"She left no trace," he replied, "and she has not communicated with any one since. She went, as I said, two days before Mr. Lancaster's death. It was said, the servants said at the inquest, that they had quarreled, and there were traces of poison in the house and proofs that Hetty had purchased it, and altogether it seemed most unlikely that Mr. Lancaster had met his death naturally. Every one expected a verdict of murder against Hetty Lancaster, and no doubt we should have had it if it had not been for Dr. North."

"For Dr. North!"

Geoffrey's struggle had been hard. The thought of what he had undergone would have broken his mother's heart if she had been alive to see it; but at 17 had come a change. By a stroke of luck he had saved the life of the Earl of Oldcastle's son, Lord Fanshawe, and Lady Oldcastle, in a passion of grati-

seemed to have grown old and tired and careworn.

As the door closed he hurried into his head clerk's room, and across to the window.

"Barker," he said, "who did that man remind you of? I have seen his face before—where? Look at him now."

Barker rose and stood before him in front of the window. Geoffrey was slowly crossing the road and standing to look with blind, unseeing eyes at the row of shops and the villas beyond them that occupied the spot where eight years ago had stood the old white house and garden that had belonged to Mr. Lancaster.

"Who does he remind you of, Barker?" Jackson said.

The clerk shook his head. But a queer cunning had grown in his eyes since Geoffrey walked slowly out of sight. How she years ago had seen his moustache, apparently in deep thought for some minutes after he had disappeared.

CHAPTER IV.
WHAT WENT BEFORE.

Geoffrey—when a boy from the old town up the slight hill toward the castle. It seemed to frown down upon the blackened country beneath. It seemed to be watching, as it had always done, from its thick belt of trees, the busy life that went on below.

How it all came back to Geoffrey as he looked! How the years fell away from him as he stood at the top of the hill, looking up at the old castle!

Eight years! Was it only eight years since he had last walked through the great gates? It seemed like a lifetime, and he stood looking back across the years as a man might look at his own shadow.

Geoffrey's struggle had been hard. The thought of what he had undergone would have broken his mother's heart if she had been alive to see it; but at 17 had come a change. By a stroke of luck he had saved the life of the Earl of Oldcastle's son, Lord Fanshawe, and Lady Oldcastle, in a passion of grati-



Was it really he, Geoffrey Clavering of Oldcastle, who stood there listening? Was it of him and his work that the king spoke?

"He had been attending Mr. Lancaster for some time, and at the inquest stated that he had prescribed a certain long for him and Lord Fanshawe to become close friends, and five years later, although Lady Oldcastle was dead, Geoffrey Clavering was as sure of his footing in the earl's household as though he had been one of his sons."

So he had thought—so in his blind folly he had dreamed—until the awakening had come.

As he walked slowly past the great gates now he had lived through it all again. He had loved Hetty Lancaster ever since he had been a boy of 12, when his mother had died, and Hetty's father had taken him home to the vicarage for a night or two before he got employment for him in the mill at which he had worked. He had loved her ever since he saw her then, a laughing child of 8, until this very hour when he stood remembering it all again. He had loved her from the very time when he had been a broken-hearted, motherless boy, and she had tried to comfort him in his dark hour, until now. And now the question beat up sharply in his hungry heart—where and how was she now?

He seemed to see her face again now as he stood, to hear her voice ring in his ear again as it had rung then, eight years ago.

O Geoffrey! It isn't true, it isn't true," she had cried, "even though it reads as though it were."

She was holding a paper, and Geoffrey noticed that her hands shook as she spread it out. He took it and read the words she pointed to.

"It is rumored that a marriage has been arranged and will shortly be publicly announced between Lord Fanshawe, the Earl of Oldcastle's only son, and Evelyn Fanny, only child of Sir Arthur Walter."

"This alliance between the earl's son and the daughter of one of our biggest ironmasters is one that cannot fail to be popular with the whole country. Sir Arthur, M. P. for Oldcastle now for the second time, began life humbly as an iron roller in one of the works which now belong to

him. He is proud, as he well may be, of the success of his life; and his daughter's marriage will, no doubt, prove a further triumph."

"It isn't true," Hetty repeated with white lips. "You—you know it isn't true! O Geoffrey, say you know it isn't!"

How her eyes had shone into his on that gray, chilly morning. How giddy he had been as he had looked into them and saw in them what he had refused to believe until then. It had seemed impossible—even though true! O Geoffrey, say you know it isn't!"

"Say—I know! Hetty, you love Fanshawe!" he cried at last. "Look at me, child. You know you can trust me—you know you must know, that I love you as I never can love another woman in my life again, and because I love you so feel I have the right to ask you—has he asked you to be his wife?"

She turned away her head so that he could not see her face, and with sudden sharpness he caught her hand in his and swung her round.

"Has he, Hetty—has he?" he cried. "If he has not, he has played tricks with you, if he has deceived you, if he ever deceives you, if he ever injures a hair of your head, he shall answer to me, so I swear! And if he has not asked you to marry him, I—I—"

She clenched her fingers suddenly on his.

"Hush! Hush, Geoffrey! He has asked me, and that is why I am here now. We—we have been secretly engaged for some time, and I have come to see him now, and I want you to tell him that I am waiting for him in the old place. Oh, he must come! He won't fail me. I must see him. Oh, I can bear anything as long as I know that he is true. I—I can stand the secrecy and all that, but this paragraph in the paper breaks my heart, and he must deny it. Oh, he will surely deny it, Geoffrey!"

She looked wildly, helplessly into his face, and a strange, faint sickness swept over him.

"Hetty, he shall deny it! It is a mistake, of course, and I'll see him at once, directly I get to the castle, and send him to you. You know how weak and careless he is. I daresay he flirts a little, perhaps, with Miss Walter, and some stupid reporter got hold of it."

She nodded helplessly.

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Tuesday Morning, 9 a.m.

Choose from a big selection of dainty silks. Fancy White Jap Wash Silks in neat self-figured designs. Navy Jap Silk with polkadot surface, also Black prettied up with dots. Black and White Stripes. Silk Crepe de Chine in soft Dresden effects. These have previously sold regularly at 50c and 65c yard. Two dress lengths of Fancy Silk Eolienne, in reseda and old rose, sold regularly at \$1.00 yard, will be thrown in for heaping good measure. The entire lot on sale Tuesday at the astonishingly low price of, yard **38c**

Tussore Silk
A highly finished Pongee. Special Tuesday at.....**42c**

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The designs are the unique kind so attractive for kimonos and dressing sacks **60c**

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One piece only, regular \$1 yard. Tuesday, special at.....**78c**

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