



Neither Sir Jeffrey nor Beryl dared to look at each other during this description, and at the close neither said a word. Both knew the dagger only too well. Like the bracelet, it had been bought when on the wedding tour in America, and the fellow to it had been given by Sir Jeffrey to Beryl's father, and it was at the present moment in the collection of arms at Lester Court.

"I must go. There's a lot to do. I thought I'd better bring those two things here," he said, pointing to the bit of lace and the little gold trinket, "and I'd have had the other if it hadn't been that it would have been sent to me. I'll keep this bit of lace. I shall want that, and you'd better say nothing about it. I suppose you want me to go on with the matter, Sir Jeffrey?" And he looked up as if waiting for instructions.

"Yes, you must go through with it. Sit it to the bottom." "There's not much to sift now. The man who put his hand on the owner of that dagger and that little handle there and that scrap of lace won't have any difficulty in finding the murderer of the Frenchman."

"His two hearers shuddered at the words. 'I'm not at all sure that you're right,' said Sir Jeffrey, 'but I must find out at any cost. Of course,' he added, with some hesitation, 'you understand that you are acting privately for me, and you have no need to tell anything of what you find out to any one else. Your face will be paid for me. The man's eyes gleamed in an instant with a sort of restrained aversion. 'I have done my best, Sir Jeffrey. I know the extreme pain and trouble which may often be saved by a little science. If you will excuse me now, I will go. You know all so far. I had better be out and get on with my work. I make such mistakes at times.'"

"understand, dear," answered Beryl soothingly. "Do you know Jeffrey's thoughts? He fears that Lola has for the use gone out of her mind." "No; it is not that," said the old lady decisively. "You don't think that I am sure. She has deceived him. She is had, Beryl—bad to the core. She comes of a bad stock and is had herself. That Frenchman was mixed up in this in some way. I never liked him—always suspected him, with his handsome face and his fine tongue."

"She loved Jeffrey," began Beryl, when Lady Walcott burst in bitterly. "Yes, as DeLila's loved Sennon or Jacl Sierra and as Cleo used to love the fools she turned to swine. Women don't drop from those they love and with those they hate, do they? You sense, child! When you've lived as long in the world as I have, you'll learn to know falsehood when you see it and lies when you hear them. She never loved Jeffrey, never."

"No, you are quite wrong," answered Beryl in a firm, clear tone, "and some day you'll be the first to own it." "I don't see why you should take her part." "The day will come when you will do the same, dear," answered Beryl sweetly, smiling and stroking the woman's hand, "for I have never known a heart in trouble to turn to you for sympathy in vain."

"I have no sympathy for the woman who wrongs and shame's my son," was the angry reply. "You have no strength to close your heart against the pains of genuine and desolate misery." Lady Walcott shook her head and made as if to reply again sternly, but meeting Beryl's eyes, said nothing and contented herself with the unspoken assertion of her sternness, which was the only reply.

"I will not tell her more than is necessary, but if there is to be any real trouble through this, of course she will have to be told. I am afraid for her, and she will feel it the more keenly and brood on it so much because she is alone." "My father is much better. If you like, I will stay with her tonight and much of tomorrow, but I must drive back first and tell papa."

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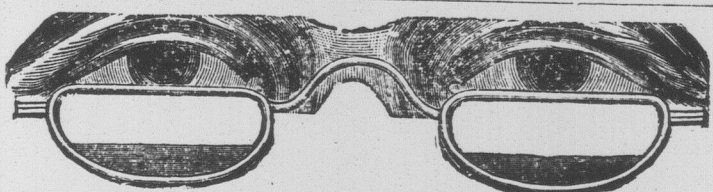
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