

Tale of Mystery

CHAPTER X.
THE SHADOW OF THE PAST
(continued)

'I am bound to say, Miss Merion—the Count paused as he mentioned the name, of course, until you compel me to use any other—I am bound to admit, I repeat, that the luck has been against you heavily in this matter—very heavily in fact. I've had it all. I don't know what your philosophy of life is—I should like to know it indeed, because your life, like mine, has been a varied one—but my philosophy is, that it's not a bit of good to fight against one's luck. I used to do it,' he said, airily, 'and to take the bit in my teeth, and used to swear that I'd go my own way, but—'

'Will you please say what concerns me, not what concerns you?' interrupted Desdie, curiously.

'I am not speaking without a purpose, believe me,' he retorted. 'I never do in a thing of this sort; and I'm not wasting time. You've had rather a knockdown blow, there are some to come; and it's no use my beginning to talk seriously till you've quite recovered the full use of your faculties. You've got an ugly corner to turn and a heavy decision to make—and I don't want to tell you the facts till you're quite yourself. Some people may like to take advantage of a girl at the moment when her senses are half numbed by the effects of the first blow. But I don't want that. I want you to think while I'm talking and be ready, when I've done, to take a final answer.'

'I am perfectly ready to listen, and perfectly capable of understanding all you may say,' returned Desdie. 'But I wish you to be as quick as possible.'

'I don't know that there is much for me to say after all,' said de Montal, speaking slowly and meditatively. 'You will understand, of course, that there are certain parts of the narrative in which I have not yet all the details. For instance, I do not know all the contents of your safe at the Safe Deposit Company—but I know you have one there, and that it is in the name—shall I mention it again?'—he stopped abruptly, dropped his voice, having noted her start at the mention of the safe, and glanced about him, as if to suggest that it might be prudent to mention no more details than were necessary, even though they were alone.

DOCTOR ADVISED HOSPITAL

But Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Cured Her.

Upper Sandusky, Ohio.—"Three years ago I was married and went to housekeeping. I was not feeling well and could hardly drag myself along. I had such tired feelings, my back hurt, my sides ached, I had bladder trouble awfully bad, and I could not eat or sleep. I had headaches too, and became almost a nervous wreck. My doctor told me to go to a hospital. I did not like that idea very well, so, when I saw your advertisement in a paper, I wrote to you for advice. I have done as you told me. I have taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Liver Pills, and now I have my health. If sick and ailing women would only know enough to take your medicine, they would get relief."—Mrs. BENJ. H. SNYDER, Route 6, Box 18, Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

If you have mysterious pains, irregularity, headache, extreme nervousness, inflammation, ulceration or displacement in a paper, I wrote to you for advice. I have done as you told me. I have taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Liver Pills, and now I have my health. If sick and ailing women would only know enough to take your medicine, they would get relief."—Mrs. BENJ. H. SNYDER, Route 6, Box 18, Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

Her answer gave him the first clue to the line which she was likely to take.

'You may mention anything and everything,' she said. 'It is quite obvious that whatever has to be told about me must be told in full. Say what you like.'

'I don't agree with you,' he answered, sharply; but her reply shook a little of his confidence. 'You have much to learn yet. Well, then the name in which you rent the safe is Marlow—Dorothy Marlow; by a coincidence, the name from which you were flying that March afternoon five years ago, when passing through Birmingham Station you stole some valuable jewels, very valuable jewels—no others than the Rubies of Rohilkund.'

Desdie moved, as if going to protest, but said nothing.

'The father of Dorothy Marlow was one Anthony Marlow, at one time a man in a good position and reputed wealthy. He was a bank manager until one day two persons called for him, and he stepped straight from the bank parlour into the police cell, passing on to a convict prison to work out his heavy sentence for forgery. He didn't die in prison, as his friends might well have wished him to; but came out to be a curse on his family—a drunkard, a swindler, and a thief of the worst kind. His wife, like a fool, clung to him, and never till his death ceased to believe in the possibility of his repentance. But why go on?—you know the tale, and it only blisters the tongue to tell it now. He made the whole of his family utterly miserable, abandoned, and wretched.'

Desdie had listened with her eyes closed and her fingers clasped rigidly, and when he paused a moment, the room seemed first to grow dark, and then to swim; noises sounded in her ears, and she feared she was going to faint.

He noticed the change in her.

'I would rather say no more,' he said.

'Go on,' she replied, after a minute's struggle for self mastery, the words slipping out between lips all dry and compressed in her pain.

'As you will, His son, who had been placed in a good position by friends, was led away by the man and shot in a burglary affray. His daughters—there were two—with a smothered sob the girl put up her hands and covered her face, pressing it with all her strength—"his daughter took different paths. One stuck by the home and mother, but the elder—No,—" it, he cried excitedly, breaking off. 'I'm not going on with this any further. Enough that I know the whole story. You can see that. With that he got up and went to one of the windows and stood there to give the girl time to recover herself.'

Desdie sat mazed with the pain and sorrow that the scene caused. Everything that she had striven so jealously to hide, every horrible outline of the grim skeleton that she had thought locked safe away in the secrecy of her own heart, was known; and known to this man of all others, who was reserved and eager to use it all solely as his own interests prompted.

The smart of having the old wounds torn open with this cruel hand was mingled now with the recognition of her own helplessness and overthrown, and the two together seemed to turn every vein in her body into a throbbing course of racking torture, leaving no sense active save that of suffering.

After a long interval of silence she said: 'I am ready to listen again. I accept that you know much. What do you intend to do with your knowledge?'

'I am sick of this scene,' he said. 'I will make a bargain with you—secrecy for secrecy. You harbour a number of altogether unfounded suspicions against me; I know the truth about you. I will hold my tongue if you agree to put aside as impossible

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your suspicions, and, of course, make reparation.

'Reparation? Why do you mean?' 'The jewels that were stolen in Birmingham were stolen from me in the first instance. They must be restored, of course.'

'How did you get them?' asked Desdie, with an instinct of suspicion. 'You had better not ask,' was the reply. 'The story will not make pleasant hearing for anyone—for you especially.'

Desdie looked at him quickly. She feared him more than ever. The knowledge of her history which he had already shown that he possessed made her view the insinuation in his words with a fresh and sickening dread. To her he had become a man whose threats were never empty ones, and whose acts were only sure to be more deadly than his words.

She sat and thought as connectedly as the intense agitation would permit; but she could only see her way to the course.

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A TRIAL WILL CONVINCING YOU.

'I can do nothing by myself now,' she said, after a long pause. 'I told you this morning that Mr. Cheriton would be here to day and that I should tell him everything. That determination is strengthened by what you have said. I thought he would have been here now.'

As she was speaking a knock at the door interrupted her, and a servant came in with a telegram.

'A telegram for you, Miss,' said the man. Desdie took it, and with fingers still trembling tore it open, the man waiting to see if any reply was to be sent.

'There is no answer,' she said; and the Count de Montal, who was watching and listening with every nerve at full tension, detected in the voice and manner a tone of disappointment.

Nerves Are Exhausted

And nervous prostration or paralysis is creeping steadily upon you.

You hear of people suddenly falling victims of nervous prostration or some form of paralysis. But when you get all the facts of the case you find that they have had months or years of warning.

They haven't slept well. There has been frequent attacks of nervous headache. Digestion has failed. They have been irritable, easily worried and excited and have found memory and concentration failing.

Had they but known that these symptoms tell of exhausted nerves or had they realized their danger they would have restored the feeble, wasted nerves by use of such treatment as Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

While the servant went out and closed the door behind him Desdie made a big fight for self-control, but couldn't get it. The whole world seemed to have deserted her, and though she would have given all she was worth to have it hidden her emotion from the man who was watching her and waiting for her to speak she could not repress the evidence of her trouble that made her lips tremble and her voice falter.

'Mr. Cheriton is—detained, and cannot come to me till—till to-morrow. I can, therefore do nothing—till then. And now excuse me. I am upset.'

She was hurrying out of the room when the door was opened, this time quickly, and Mrs. Markham came hurrying in.

'Oh, Godefroi, I am so sorry to be so late,' she began, but seeing Desdie's white face and agitated look she stopped and cried, 'Whatever's the matter? Desdie, what is it? Have you two been quarrelling?'

Evening Telegram Fashion Plates.

The Home Dressmaker should keep a Catalogue Scrap Book of our Pattern Cuts. These will be found very useful to refer to from time to time.

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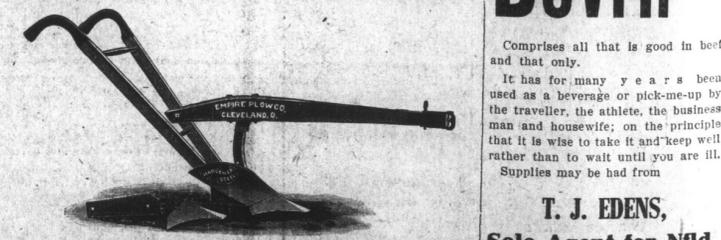
A Adams, Esau, South Side. Adams, Kittie, West Mount. Adams, John, care Gen'l Delivery. Adams, Annie, card. Adams, J., Queen's Road. Andrews, (C. B. retd.) Ackerman, W. H., retd.	B Brazil, Miss, card. Barrett, Miss Annie, care Gen'l Delivery. Bailey, E. F., Pleasant Street. Brady, Mr., Merrymeeting Rd. Bassie, Mrs. Eddy, Cabot Street. Braithwaite, Miss Evelyn, care Gen'l Delivery. Barnes, Harvey, Flower Hill. Bannister, Miss P., late Hospital. Ball, Albert, retd. Brady, Michael, Gen'l Delivery. Best, Miss, retd. Bennett, F. P., retd. Benson, Elijah, Cabot St. Beddescombe, Mr., Allandale Rd. Bennett, Herbert, care G. P. O. Brien, Michael, retd. Breene, M. J., retd. Brown, Patrick, late Sound Island. Brown, Martin, late Botwood. Butler, E. J., Meri Scho Rd. Butt, Miss Margaret, Carter's Hill. Budden, Miss L., Gower St. Butler, George, Long Pond Road. Brushett, Miss Teresa, New Gower Street. Bussey, Albert, care Nathaniel Froud. 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