POOR DOCUMENT

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SILENT LIPS

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CHAPTER XXIII—(Continued.)

"But after two days by herself she couldn't stand any more, and crept back, that horrible night, to beg forgiveness of her father. And there she found him, the beast!—slippin' poison in the old man's glass!"

Her breath choked in her throat, and she threw back her head. She looked now, with her black eyes blazing and her face flushed, and her dark hair tossed about her forehead, like a vivandiere of the French revolution.

"He'd gone," she went on, wildly, "while Barker was there, and went 'round to the window same as he used to do when Hetty and her father sat there of a night together. And you can guess why he poisoned him? 'Cos o' John Andrews as drowned himself. Mr. Lancaster had found it out, and meant exposin' Lord Fanshawe and making him clear the dead man's name. And Lord Fanshawe poisoned him. He took a friendly glass o' wine with him and murdered him, like the blackguard he was. And there's only one to prove it now, and that is Fred Barker, who knew what he meant doin'. He could prove it if he liked, and he's the only one to do it. Hetty can prove nothing, for she is Lord Fanshawe's lawful wife, and she can't give evidence against her husband, even if she would. And I never dreamt of all this till tonight.

"It's all different to what I thought would be," she added.

Then, suddenly Geoffrey dropped his head on his arms upon the table and added to the sounds was a man's heavy sob.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Betrayed.

It was nearly an hour later before Geoffrey left the cottage. He got up, looking oddly gray and old in the light of the lamp that burnt on the round centre table, and held out his hand to Bessie.

"I must go out and think," he said; "I can't see my way—I don't know what to do. Does North know anything of all this?"

"Nothin'," said Bessie. "He got the verdict at the inquest, but he believed her guilty—I think he believes her guilty still—and I've been afraid a'most to tell him what I was doin' in case he should go against me. But he's got a soft heart, 'as the doctor, and he'd cut off his hand afore he'd do aught to harm our Hetty."

Geoffrey looked round dully. The little familiar room, clean and shining as it had been ever since he knew it first such long years ago, looked strange and unreal. Before his hot eyes Lord Fanshawe's reckless, dissolute face seemed to dance defiantly. He saw it everywhere, blotting out everything, the face of the man for whom he had sacrificed his all eight years ago.

"I don't know what is to be done," he said, turning at last. "I must try to think it out, Bessie. I suppose it would be no use seeing her tonight? Tell her I'm here in Oldcastle, and that I'm coming tomorrow, to do for her just what she wants me to do."

Bessie nodded.

"Yes, I'll tell her that," she said.

Geoffrey strode toward the door. He wanted to be out now. Perhaps in the open air he could think. Perhaps out in the night the heavy weight on his brain would lift.

He flung open the door and stood for a moment on the step, looking out. The yellow lamplight streamed out upon the little garden path and lighted dimly the tiny patch of frosty bed and border which was Davy Merrill's pride and hobby. Three or four big men, stretched at length would have covered it, but many a garden a dozen times its size could not boast such a show of flowers all the year round as this one did.

Geoffrey stood for a moment and then turned to Bessie, who had followed him. As he did so a sudden sound in the little patch of garden on his right made him pause to listen. It was almost like a footstep and a heavy body brushing against the rose bush that grew thickly close by the window. But before he had time to be sure a tram rattled round a corner and swept past, the lights flashing vividly through the fog, the bells jingling, and when the sounds had died again everything seemed quiet.

"Perhaps by tomorrow I shall know what to do," he said. "Hetty can't be fond of Fanshawe now after all he has done, and yet—Bessie, have you seen that she wears his face at her neck still?" he added, sharply. "Why does she do that?"

Bessie leaned forward and, as though she was afraid of any one overhearing, sank her voice as she spoke.

"The first thing she did when she got here," she said, "was to fling it away from her, as though it stung her. She dragged at it an' broke the chain and jest dashed it down at her feet. She tried to stamp on it, but, poor dear, she was that weak and ill she had no strength to do it or sight to see where to strike. Her foot slipped and she fell in my arms faintin' dead. An' it's a question I've asked myself many a time since I've bin watchin' her lyin' up there, why 'as she kep' it at her neck all these years? It ain't for love of him, but I can give a guess. I reckon she's bin through harder times than either of us know. There were times when she starved, and times when she tried to sell it and got suspected o' thievin'. All that has come out in her delirium this last fortnight, and you can give a guess why she had to keep the miniature. She couldn't sell it, an' I know if it had bin me I should 'a' kep' it to remind me o' what I had to pay him when the time came. And p'r'aps Hetty was of my mind. P'r'aps she kept it to remind her o' what she owed him in the great castle up there."

She jerked her thumb backward.

"That's the only reason I can think of for keepin' it," she added, "but you'll see fo' yourself. She'll tell you all about it herself maybe."

"Yes, maybe she will," Geoffrey said. "Meanwhile, I must think what to do. Fanshawe must be made to pay. I owe him a debt, Bessie, that I don't mean to forego, and the death of her father must be brought home to him. I must manage it somehow without Hetty if I can. She need not know—but 'the wages of sin is death. The wages of sin is death.'"

He repeated the words and turned away staring out into the fog. From the open door of the house Bessie watched him, her black eyes blazing, her face quivering.

And from the shadowy darkness of the little patch of garden another very different pair of eyes watched, too, peering from behind the thick busr, bright and sharp and alert.

"You'll think o' somethin' to do, Geoffrey Clavering," she cried. "You'll find a way yet—oh, somehow I know it. It's seemed all these years as if it only needed you to come back for all things to be put straight—I don't know how, and tonight it's seemed harder than ever to say how, but I've had the feelin' and I've got it still, as somethin' will turn up now you're here. And you won't forget to put it right atween me and Ted, will you? Things have altered tonight, and when he hears of what's happened, he'll believe at last as it wasn't Hetty. But what'll he say to me? It's that I'm afraid of. He's honest and straight, is Ted, and what'll he say when he learns how I've made up to Barker? Will he hate me? Oh, he'll surely forgive me when he sees how I did it for Hetty's sake, thinkin' to find the murderer, thinkin' as Barker were guilty? Surely Ted'll forgive?"

Geoffrey turned again.

"I'll see to it," he said, gently. "Ted shall forgive you. Yes, yes, he will forgive you. I'll see him tonight if I can, and send him to you tomorrow."

He turned abruptly and strode down the little path and out of the gate. Bessie watched him as the fog swallowed him up, and stood long after the sound of his footsteps had died away, looking out into the night. Then at last she went back into the house and shut the door, plunging the little garden into darkness once more. As she did so the watching eyes behind the rose bush shifted. The man crouching beneath the window rose stiffly and slowly, and looked around, as if the fog that was swooping down upon the Oldcastle streets was seizing and gripping and stifling him.

He stood for some time as if he had no strength or will to move his limbs. Then a sound in the cottage seemed to rouse him. He turned slowly and stumbled blindly over over Dave Merrill's neat garden, dragged open the little gate and passed out into the street.

He nearly collided with Merrill himself as he did so, and drew himself up with a start and a faint cry as he greeted him.

"Hallo, Barker," he said, "jest cum from seein' our Bess, have you? I'm late tonight. Extra work at the mill, and I shall be glad of a bite, I can tell you. Ain't you comin' to join me?"

Barker shook his head and forced his lagging tongue to speak.

"Not tonight, can't tonight," he stammered, and stumbled on, leaving Davy Merrill watching him with puzzled eyes.

"Never did like him," he observed to the empty street, "but he's precious curious tonight."

And he was not the only one who thought Fred Barker curious that evening. More than one acquaintance meeting him stopped to stare at his set gray face and wild eyes, and more than one person wondered how it was that a dandy like Fred Barker was walking through Oldcastle looking so disheveled, with patches of damp earth on his knees and boots.

He passed hurriedly through the great thoroughfares that were already beginning to be gay with preparations for the coming of the King, beneath the hissing electric lights of the big shops and along pavements that were as bright as day, without thinking or caring.

Hammering was still going on. Tall poles, wrapped round with red bunting, were being erected, and shopkeepers were busy fixing illuminated stars and crowns and E. R.'s about their buildings.

Barker saw nothing of them.

He was hurrying to the castle. He was leaving behind all the busy life that was still going on in the business part of the town and turning toward the river, and up the hill toward the castle.

The lights grew fewer as he neared the castle. The trees grew thicker. Then the walls of the park began, and he came to the great entrance gates.

He came to an abrupt standstill before them, and drew a sharp, startled breath.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Secret Out.

The great gates were open and fully lighted, and along the great drive through the park he could see the double row of lamps that were only lighted on important occasions, and he hesitated. He had forgotten that, and he remembered now, with a sort of shock, that the earl had returned from London only the day before, and that he was giving a reception and a ball tonight.

He stood gnawing his moustache. There would be no chance of seeing Lord Fanshawe for hours—yet he must, and at once.

He watched the carriages sweep up for a moment and then suddenly turned and strode over the gravel toward the terrace and the library window taht opened on to it.

It was open and the room was lighted. He peered through, and, finding it empty, passed in, and crossed to the fire that burned in one of the great open fireplaces.

He was standing staring down into it when a footman crossed hurriedly from the inner library. He touched his forehead when he saw Barker, and came to an abrupt standstill.

"Does his lordship know—" he began and stopped. Something strange in Barker's appearance checked him. Something strange in his eyes stopped his first words, and then his glance fell on his disheveled clothes, and on the mud at his knees. He was probably the only man in the castle not in evening dress at that moment, and it must be something very urgent, thought the man, that had brought him here like that.

"It's all right," Barker said, huskily. "I came hurriedly, and I must see Lord Fanshawe at once. You can take him a note from me."

He stopped to take out a notebook as he spoke, and scribbled some words upon a leaf torn from it. He looked at the message when he had finished, with his teeth showing for a moment between his lips. He took an envelope from one of the desks and sealed it.

"Give this to his lordship at once, and say that I must see him. No one will come in here, will they?"

"They are not likely to," the footman replied. He gave another curious glance at Barker's clothes and face, and then went silently from the room.

Outside, the corridor was full of people. The guests were fast arriving. The reception in the great gallery was in full swing, and in but a short time now dancing would commence in the ballroom at the end of the corridor.

The man hesitated, the note in his hand. It was no use attempting to get to Lord Fanshawe unless it was something desperately important, and suppose it was not?

He looked about the crowded corridor, and then began making his way slowly toward the reception rooms. In the great hall outside the door there was more space, and the sight of another footman standing beside a bank of palms decided him. He would tell him what to do. He nudged his arm.

"I say, Roberts, what sort of a temper's his lordship in?" he asked. "There's Jackson's clerk in the library waitin' to see him and looking that odd I'm half inclined to think he's bin drinkin'! And he's given me this. Is it worth taking to his lordship?"

He held out the note as he spoke, and the other footman examined it carefully.

"He was right enough when I saw him a minute ago—as amiable as you please," he said, "but he won't want Barker foolin' 'round tonight. He upset him the last time, said he wouldn't see him again, and he's busy tonight. You'd better wait a bit. Give it to him when he comes from the reception rooms. I don't suppose there's any hurry. Barker always was one for thinking a lot of himself."

Roberts looked at him in profound surprise.

"Barker?" he cried. "That fop with mud on him? Then there must be sommat wrong. And I don't envy you bein' the one to take his lordship the news if there is. I suppose you got no idea what it's all about?"

The other shook his head.

"No, but I thought I saw over his shoulder something about Hetty Lancaster. It couldn't be, I reckon, but it looked like——"

He broke off, startled by a movement and the rustle of a woman's dress behind the palms. He peered forward and Evelyn Walter's startled eyes met his own. For an instant her face seemed convulsed. Then suddenly it steadied.

"Of course I overheard you," she said smiling. "You can give me the note if you like, and I will give it to Lord Fanshawe."

She held out her hand. It was perfectly steady, and the smile on her lips did not falter. But her heart was throbbing heavily, and for a moment threatened to overcome her. But in that moment the footman handed her the note, and her fingers clenched over it, and somehow the touch of it rallied her.

She nodded gaily.

"I will give it to his lordship at once," she said.

She rose and turned away, her face still smiling, but as she went it changed and grew hard and set.

It took her a long time to reach Lord Fanshawe. He was the centre of a group, laughing, debonair and careless as usual. She stared hard at his reckless face, and then looked down at the note she held. The writing upon it was shaky and unsteady. It might well have been the writing of a drunken man, but something told her that it was not. Perhaps it had been the mention of Hetty Lancaster that roused the feeling of suspicion. At any rate, there was upon her face a flush of excitement, and her hand was trembling a little when she put it on Lord Fanshawe's arm at last.

He looked around with a little start, and a slight shade of annoyance crossed his handsome face.

"Come away for a moment," she whispered. "I have something to give you—something important."

She saw his eyes glance about the room as though looking for some excuse to refuse, and then he yielded, holding his arm to her as he turned.

A few minutes later she dropped into a lounge shielded by a great mass of ferns and orchids, and looked up into his face.

"You deserve to be made to guess what I have," she said. "You were so reluctant to come. But perhaps I won't make you." She held out the note. "The footman couldn't get to you a little while ago, so I volunteered to give it to you, and to say that Mr. Barker is in the library waiting to see you."

She lay back, with her bold, hard eyes on his face as he glanced down at the envelope in her fingers.

"I overheard one man telling the other that it was important," she added and stopped, holding her breath a little at the sight of his face. It had clouded suddenly.

"Barker?" he said. "What the dickens does he want here tonight? He's always worrying. He is becoming an intolerable nuisance." He tore open the note. "I must put a stop to him somehow or other," he added, sinking his voice. "I——"

He stopped sharply, drawing in his breath with a harsh rattle. Evelyn's gray eyes saw the pallor spread upon his face, and her hands resting in her lap trembled a little over her fan.

He crushed the note in his fingers and rose to his feet, standing for a moment with his face turned from her so that she could not see it. She leaned forward a little, and he turned again suddenly.

"I must go to him, after all," he said in a queer, rasping, unsteady voice. "It—it is something rather important, and I must try to see him immediately. Will you forgive me for taking you back to the reception room?"

She got up at once.

"I will come with you as far as the library," she said, a little stiffly. "Dancing will be beginning directly, and everybody will be drifting toward the ballroom. I'll go wth you."

For an instant he hesitated, and she looked at him sharply. Then her thin, white-gloved hand linked itself in his arm.

She glanced down. The note was still clenched in his hand, and the sight of it fired her afresh. Had Barker mentioned Hetty Lancaster in it? And if so, what did it mean? Why had her name come up again in this strange way after all those years? She would find out.

She loosened her hand from his arm as they reached one of the entrances to the great library and then caught him again sharply by the elbow. He turned with a jerk. The corridor was full, and as he wheeled round she managed somehow to strike the note from his hand. A crowd of people were sauntering up. A girl touched her lightly on the shoulder with her fan, and Evelyn turned to speak to her. But as she did so her bright gray eyes never left Lord Fanshawe's face, her quick wits were in two places at once, and before he had time to move her foot was planted firmly on the note as it lay on the floor. She waved her hand to him lightly.

"You can leave me now," she said. "I'll stay here. Good-bye."

Almost mechanically he turned and crossed to the library door. Mechanically, and without realizing that the note had gone from his grasp, he put his hand on the handle, and, turning it, pushed open the door and entered.

As he disappeared, Evelyn stooped swiftly, and picking up the note, slipped it in her glove. A minute later she made some excuse and ran back along the corridor until she found an empty corner. She looked round quickly. A palm hid her from the moving crowd in the corridor, and from the other end came the sound of music. Dancing was beginning. On her card was a man's name, but she cared nothing for that. He might look for her in vain. She did not care.

She sat back, and, drawing the note from her glove, looked round a little breathlessly before she opened it. Then she did so carefully, shielding it with her fan in case any prying eyes might see it, and bending forward, read it slowly.

Twice—three times, she read it before her dull wits seemed to gather in the sense of the scribbled words. Then she looked up with the last drop of blood drained from her cheeks, with the words dancing before her feverish eyes in letters of fire.

"I must see you," it ran. "The worst has happened. It's all out, and Bessie Merrill has got Hetty Lancaster here in Oldcastle, with all the truth about your marriage to her, and the murder of her father at their fingers' ends. It'll be a bad lookout if you don't take care.

"FRED BARKER."

Evelyn rose slowly to her feet. Her face was set and gray and stony—the face of a woman with her heart frozen in her breast.

CHAPTER XXVI.

One Mad Moment.

Meanwhile Barker waited restlessly. His face was deathly gray, and his narrow eyes held an angry glitter, but there was despair in them, too, and something beneath the savage cunning that was at variance with the rest of his face.

The rattle of carriages outside had ceased, and the sound of dancing had begun in the great ballroom at the end of the corridor when the door opened at last. Barker sprang to his feet as Lord Fanshawe entered, and stood, scarcely moving, waiting for him to close the door.

"Well?" he said sharply at last.

Lord Fanshawe came swiftly across the room. He looked a tall, fine figure, a handsome man people called him, but all the reckless gaiety had gone from his face, all the careless, debonair light from his eyes. He looked almost an old man as he crossed the room to Barker. Fine lines had sprung suddenly about his eyes and lips and his mouth had the drawn and haggard look of age. There was nothing handsome about him now. It had gone, leaving behind only the ugliness of his heart laid bare.

He strode swiftly across to Barker, and for a moment the little clerk shrank from him nervously.

"Well?" he said again.

"Of course I overheard you," she said smilingly, "you can give me the note if you like."

Lord Fanshawe made an odd, uncertain sound in his throat, and pulled at his collar as though it choked him.

"What does it mean?" he asked roughly. "I suppose it's one of your confounded silly lies to get me here. What do you want?"

Barker shook himself a little—like a terrier after a whipping.

"It's no lie," he said sullenly, "and I shouldn't have come here like this for nothing. What I wrote you just now is true. It's all out, the whole blessed thing, Bessie Merrill's done it all; she's fooled me, curse her! Made me think she was fond of me and going to marry me, and all the time she's been playing her own game, curse her! It only remains now for them to get hold of Brooks, that little drunken chemist, who got you the poison, for them to be able to hang you."

"Be quiet!" Lord Fanshawe's voice sent Barker shrinking backward. "Be quiet, you cur! Where is Brooks?"

Barker shrugged his shoulders.

"You ought to know that," he said. "Drinking himself to death at your expense, I suppose, in the place where you put him. It's a bit of bad luck for you that he hasn't done it before this. Eight years! It looks as though he had been kept alive on purpose to hang you." He laughed weakly and then looked uncertainly about the great room.

"'Be quiet!' Lord Fanshawe's voice sent Barker shrinking backward. 'Be quiet, you cur! Where is Brooks?'"

Lord Fanshawe looked at him with hard desperate eyes.

"Don't be a fool," he cried. "Tell me what it all means. How can it have come out?"

Barker shrugged his shoulders.

"Heaven knows," he said, "I didn't hear enough for that. I only know that the whole blessed cat is out of the bag. I only heard a little. I'd just come back from Merrill's cottage. I went there thinking to see Bessie again, and I was just about to knock when I heard a man's voice inside."

He broke off.

"I've been fool enough to lose my wits over Bessie Merrill," he added abruptly, "and the sound of a man's voice in there sent me crazy. I jumped back behind a bush just in time. The door opened, and Bessie came out and stood on the step with the man. He was Geoffrey Clavering."

Lord Fanshawe started.

"Geoffrey!" he cried. "Here?"

"Yes, here; and with one thought in his mind, one object in life, and that is the clearing of Hetty Lancaster. I heard enough for that, I heard enough to prove that they probably have proofs of it. They know that you married Hetty years ago, and that you committed the crime she was suspected of, and Geoffrey Clavering, who loved her years ago, loves her still, and means to prove her innocent."

He broke off to look up at Lord Fanshawe, his narrow gray eyes brightening viciously.

"And I hope they do," he added. "Upon my word, you'd deserve for them to prove it all, and they'll catch you yet. Sins come home to roost, they say. Well, yours will hang you yet."

He laughed harshly. His narrow face seemed to have sharpened and lengthened. He looked like a rat caught in a hole, ready to spring at the first throat that offered. He stood with his shoulders hunched and his head sunk between them and his hands hanging loosely at his side. He looked vicious, cruel, but in spite of that there was something tragic in his mean little face too.

He threw up his hands with a queer abrupt gesture.

"Heavens knows," he cried, "if Bessie had only cared—if it had only been true that she cared as I thought she did, I—" He stopped with an odd jerk. His voice broke and died harshly in his throat. He turned away. Outside through the open library window the park lay dark and silent. He took a step toward it, with his face gray and set and desperate, with upon it for the first time a look of real misery. The depth of his own tragedy was coming home to him. The bit of real heart in his breast that Bessie had awakened to life was beginning to stir. The pain shot through him, stabbing him like a knife. He reached the window, and without a word stepped out into the park, turning his gray and desperate face toward the fires that flamed and leaped and beckoned in the black night.

At the same instant Lord Fanshawe realized with a start that his hand was empty. He gave a cry of dismay and began hurriedly looking about the library floor. The bit of paper might spell ruin to him. How was it he had been fool enough to drop it? Where was it now?

He stared round wildly, the last drop of blood gone from his face, and at that moment he could not even remember through which door he had entered the library. Was it through the outer or inner one?

He passed his hand across his forehead. He had no time to wait to think, no time to lose. He must get the note at once.

Without stopping to think, he dragged open the door nearest to him. As he did so Evelyn Walter, crouched on the floor, her ear against the keyhole, fell forward into the room.

For a moment he stared at her in dumb astonishment. Then he drew his breath sharply. "Evelyn," he said.

She lifted herself up, and rose to her feet with her eyes as desperate and her face as gray as his own.

"I have heard everything," she cried, "but it isn't true, Claude, it isn't true that you married Hetty Lancaster? Say it isn't true?"

She caught at his sleeve with trembling hands. A hundred times in the last eight years she had told herself she would be prepared for Lord Fanshawe to marry; a hundred times she had been convinced that she could bear it without a cry. But now that she was face to face with it, now that she felt it to be true, it seemed different. She had lost in a moment all control of herself. She was only a woman, after all, the woman who had loved Lord Fanshawe stubbornly, faithfully, all these years, standing before him now with her heart stripped and bare.

He shook off her clinging hands.

"For heaven's sake don't be stupid," he cried roughly. "What if it is true? What is it to do with you? I'm too busy to think just now. I've mislaid a note, an important note, and I must find it at once."

He stopped and brought back his wandering eyes to her face, remembering suddenly that she had been with him when he dropped it.

"It's the note you gave me," he added harshly. "For goodness sake try and think if you saw me drop it anywhere. Don't look like that. Try and think. What the dickens is the matter with you, Evelyn? Why are you staring like that? I might be gone mad."

She gave a queer, broken cry, and then drew herself up, steadying herself, mastering herself, as she met his eyes. They were hard and brutal. All the evil in him was uppermost now, wiping out the handsomeness of his face, and everything that had fascinated her these past eight years. She saw him, perhaps for the first time, as he really was; but even that would not have alienated her. It was the thought of Hetty Lancaster, the burning jealous rage against her old rival that turned her traitor now.

"You need's look for that note," she said, with her eyes glittering. "It is safe enough." She drew a little quick breath between her teeth. "I have put it in a safe place, where no one will think to look for it, except myself, and when I want it I can find it."

He wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Why the dickens didn't you say so before?" he cried. "I was in a funk, I can tell you. It—it's important. Get it for me, Evelyn."

She shook her head.

"No, I intend to keep it myself," she said coolly.

"It may be useful to me."

"To you," he repeated. Their eyes met, and suddenly she put out her hand toward him. He had played with many women. Fresh faces always drew him irresistibly. A debutante always fell to him by her side, and sometimes his flirtations had got so near an engagement that Evelyn herself had almost expected and had waited nervously for the announcement.

But he always came back to her, always drifted back to their old understanding. The fresh face had palled. Lord Fanshawe had tired, and generally a few weeks found him back flirting desperately with Evelyn again. And she had been content with that for eight years.

Now she was roused. Now, for the first time she was realizing that there was something behind his life that she did not understand, something she did not know, a secret she had not shared.

"Yes; it may be useful to me," she said, "and I intend to keep it. When you are good I may give it to you."

"Oh, come, Evelyn, get it for me now. You—you don't understand how serious it is."

"Oh, yes I do," she replied, without a quiver in her voice. "I read it, and I quite understand, and I'll keep it for you until—"

"Until when?" he cried, hoarsely.

She looked at him steadily. Her breath was coming quickly. The color wavered in her face. She was nearing 30; her chances were going, and she had lost more than one through the man before her, and now she was going to risk everything on the one throw. Until now she had believed that there was nothing in Lord Fanshawe's life that she did not know. Now she had been suddenly confronted with a secret that he had kept for eight years, and her passionate heart refused to believe it, fought stubbornly and obstinately against it. It could not be true!

"I'll keep it until your wedding day," she said, almost under her breath. "It shall be my wedding present to you."

He stared at her stupidly.

"But—but—have you read it?" he stammered, hoarsely.

She nodded.

(To be continued.)

LADIES' RIDING COAT.

The coat shown in the above sketch is just the style to complement a skirt of the same material. This style of habit is generally made of fine black kersey, though it also looks well of tan or gray covert. It is double-breasted, fitting very snug, and comes about 14 inches below the hips. Two rows of stitching down each seam give a fine tailored finish. The collar is of velvet. Two rows of buttons are placed down the front.

Fourteen miles of crimson rambler rose bushes are in blossom at Dreamwold farm at Scituate. It is probably the greatest rose show in the world.

Better Than Spanking

Spanking does not cure children of bed-wetting. There is no constitutional cause for this trouble. Mrs. M. Summers, Box W. 70, Windsor, Ont., will send free to any mother successful home treatment, with full instructions. Send no money but write her today if your children trouble you in this way. Don't blame the child, the chances are it can't help it. This treatment also cures adults and aged people troubled with urine difficulties by day or night.

You Can't Cut Out

A BOG SPAVIN or THOROUGHPIN, but

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