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your wanderings below? he asked, "No," I began, but seeing that I had made a mistake. I bungled and added weakly. "Yest after matches.
"And did you get them?"

"In the dark? You must have had

"Not at all. Only safety matches are allowed here, and they are put in receptacle at the side of each door. had but to open the kitchen door, feel along the jamb, find the recep-tacle and pull the box out. I'm well used to all parts of the house. Where did you light your first

match? "Upstairs." "Not in the kitchen?"

"No. sir." "That's a pity. I thought you might he able to tell me how so many wine

and whisky bottles came to be standing on the kitchen table." I stared at blm, dazed. Then I remembered the two small glasses on the little table across the room and Instinctively glanced at them. But no shisky had been drunk out of them. The odor of anisette is unmistakable. "You carry the key to the wine cel-

lar?" he asked. I considered a moment I did not know what to make of bottles on the kitchen table. These women and bottles! They abborred wine; they had I remembered the dinner and all that had signatized it and felt

my confusion grow The keys were given up by the janitor yesterday." I managed to stammer at last. "But I did not bring them here tonight. They are in my rooms

I finished with a gasp I had sud-denly remembered that these keys were not in my rooms. I had had them with me at Miss Cumberland's, and, being given to footing with some thing when embarrassed. I had footed with them and dropped them while talking with Adelaide and watching Carmel 1 had meant to pick them up. but I forgot and-

"You need say nothing more about it." remarked flexford "I have no right to question you at all. Let us see what there is in here." stepping into the adjoining small room, into which prored to say own to vestigation of the place

As he did so a keep blast blew in; a window in the adjoining room was open. He cast me a burried glance and, with the door in his hand, made the following remark:

"Your ladylove, the victim here, could not have come through the snow with no more clothing on her than we see now She must have worn a bat and coat or furs or something of that nature. Let us look for them "

As I followed him into the closet be pushed the door wide, pulling out an electric torch as he did so By its light we saw almost at first glance the coat and hat he professed to seek, lying in a corner of the floor, beside an

"Good!" left my companion's lips. "That's all straight. You recognize these garments?" I nodded, speech-

CHAPTER III.

HORTLY after this a fresh relay of police arrived, and I could hear the whole house being ransacked. I had found my shoes and was sitting in my own private room before a fire which had been lighted for me on the hearth. I

was in a state of stupor now. The storm, which had been exceedingly fierce while it lasted, had quieted down to a steady fall of snow. Had its mission been to serve as a blanket to this crime by wiping out from the old snow all telltale footsteps and such other records as sim-plify cases of this kind for the detectives it could not have happened more apropos to the event. While this filled me with relief in one way, it added to my care in another, for the storm which could accomplish so much in so short a time was a bitter one for a young girl to meet, and Carmel must met it at its worst in her lone-

ome struggle homeward. The door behind me opened, and I urned to face Dr. Perry, once a practicing physician and my father's intiend, now a county official of noordinary intelligence and, what was

better, of no ordinary feeling.

His attachment to my father had
not descended to me, and for the mo-

ment he treated me like a stranger.
"I am the coroner of this district," said he. "I have left my bed to have a few words with you and learn if your detention here is warranted. They have told me what you had to in explanation of your presence, bere where a crime of some nature has taken place. But I should like to hear the story from your own lips. bear the story from your own lips. You have been intending to marry

Miss Cumberland?" I looked the man directly in the eye. "Our wedding day was set."
"Did you love her? Pardon me. If am to be of any benefit to you at this crisis I must strike at the root of things. If you do not wish to answer

so, Mr. Ranelagh."
do wish." This was a lie, but "I do wish." what was I to do, knowing how dangerous it would be for Carmel to have t publicly known where my affections were really centered? "I am in no position to conceal anything from you. I did tove Miss Cumberland. We have

een engaged for a year."
"I see, and she returned your love?" "Sincerely" Was the room light enough to reveal my guilty flush? She had loved me only too well, too fealously, too absorbingly for her happiness or mine

"And the sister?" It was gently but gravely put, and instantly I knew that our secret was out, however safe we had considered This man was cognizant of it, and if he, why not others? Why not the whole town? I made my reply in these

words Her sister is ber sister I hardly think that either of us would be and to forget that Have you heard other He was prepared for equivocation.

His manner changed and showed dis-trust, and I saw that I had lost rather than made by this venturous move. "Is this your writing?" be suddenly asked, showing the a morsel of paper which he had drawn from his vest

I looked and felt that I now understood what the pines had been trying to tell me for the last few hours. That compromising scrap of writing had not been destroyed. It existed for her and my undoing But Carmel was no fool even if she had wild and demoniacal moments. This could not be my note to her-that fatal note which would make all denial of our mutual passion

una vailing "Is it your writing?" my watchful

inquisitor repeated
I looked again. The scrap was smaller than my note had been when it left my hands. If it were the same then some of the words were gone Were they the first ones or the last It would make a difference in the read ing or, rather, in the conclusions to be drawn from what remained. If only the mist would clear from before my nearer. The room was very dark. The -cbe

"Is it your writing?" Coroner Perry asked for the third time.

There was no denying it. My writ ing was peculiar and quite un mistak able. I should gain nothing by saying

"It looks like it." I admitted refuetantly, "but I cannot be sure in this light. May I ask what this bit of paper is and where you found it?"

"Its contents I think you know. As for the last question, I think you can answer that also if you will." Saying which be quietly replaced the scrap

of paper in his pocketbook.
I followed the action with my eyes I caught a fresh glimpse of a darkened edge and realized the cause of the faint odor which I had bitherto experienced without being conscious of it. The scrap had been plucked out of the remembered the fire and the smolder ing bits of paper which crumbled at my touch And this one—this, the most important, the only important one of them all-had flown, baif scorched, up the chimney and clung there within

easy reach. The whole incident was plain to me and I could even fix upon the moment when Hexford or Clarke discovered this invaluable bit of evidence. It was just before I burst in upon them from ed occasion of the remark I then over-

beard:
"This settles it. He cannot escape

During the momentary silence which now ensued I tried to remember the exact words which had composed this "Tonight-10:30 train-we will be

married at P. Come, come, my dar-

ing, my life. She will forgive when all is done. Hesitation will only undo us. Tonight at 10:30. Do not fail me. shall never marry any one but you. Was that all? I had an indistinct remembrance of having added some wild and incoherent words of passionate affection affixed to her name. Her name: But it may be that in the hur-

ry and flurry of the moment these terms of endearment simply passed through my mind and found no expression on paper. I could not be sure any more than I could be positive from the half glimpse I got of these lines which portion had been burned off-the top, in which the word "train" occurred, or the tinal words, emphasizing a time of meeting and my determination to marry no one but the person addressed. The first gone, the latter might take on any sinister meaning. The latter gone, the first might prove a safeguard, corroborating my

statement that an errand had taken me into town. It would be hard to find an alibi for Carmel if suspicion once turned her way She had not met me at the train. The unknown but doubtless easily to be found man who had hand-

ed me her note could swear to that

Then the note itself! I had destroyed it, it is true, but its phrases were pres ent to my mind. They were these-in-nocent, if she were innocent, but how suggestive in the light of her probable "I cannot. Wait till tomorrow. Then

you will see the depth of my love for you-what I owe you, what I owe I was conscious that not a look or

movement of mine had escaped the considerate but watchful eye of the "You do not relish my questions,"

he dryly observed. "Perhaps you would rather tell your story without interruption. If so I beg you to be as explicit as possible. The circum-stances are serious enough for perfect candor on your part." I took a quick resolve. I would ap-

pear to throw discretion to the winds, to confide to him what men usually hold sacred, to risk my reputation as a gentleman, rather than incur a suspicion which might involve others more than it did myself. "I will give you an account of my-self," said I. "I did love Adelaide once,

or thought so. but my feelings changed. A great temptation came into my life. Carmel returned from school and you know her beauty, her fascination. A week in her presence and mar-riage with Adelaide became impossible. But how evade it? I knew only the coward's way-to lure this inexperi-enced young girl, fresh from school, into a runaway match. This evening I had set as the limit of my endurance of the intolerable situation. During a minute of solitude preceding the din-ner at Miss Cumberland's house on the hill I wrote a few lines to her sister, urging her to trust me with her fate and meet me at the station in time for the 10:30 train. I meant to carry her at once to P., where I had a friend in the ministry who would at once unite us in marriage. I was very peremptory, for my nerves were giving way under the secret strain to which they had been subjected for so long, and she berself was looking worn with her own slient and uncommunicated conflict.

"To write this note was easy, but to deliver it involved difficulties. Miss Cumberland's eyes seemed to be more upon me than usual. Mine were oblig-ed to respond, and Carmel, seeing this, kept bers on ber plate or on the one other person seated at the table, her brother Arthur. But the opportunity rame as we all rose and passed together into the drawing room. Carmel fell into place at my side, and I slipped the note into her hand. She had not expected it, and I fear that the action was observed, for when I took my leave of Miss Cumberland shortly after I was struck by her expression. had never seen such a look on her face before, not can I conceive of one presenting a more extraordinary contrast to the few and commonplace words with which she bade me good evening.

"I Belther knew Adelaide por did I know the girl whose love I had so overestimated. She failed me, Dr. Perry. I was met at the station not by berself, but by a letter-a few burried lines given me by an unknown man-in which she stated that I had asked too much of her-that she could not so wrong her sister who had brought her up and done everything for her since her mother died. I have not that letter now or I would show it to you. In my raging disappointment I tore it up on the place where I received it and threw the pieces away. I had staked my whole future on one desperate throw, and I had lost If I had had a pisto!"— I stopped, warned by an easy movement on the part of the man I addressed that I had better not dilate too much upon my feelings I pulled myself together and proceeded to finish my story with greater di-

rectness. "I did not leave the station till the 10:30 train had gone. It was from sheer preoccupation of mind that I drove this way instead of straight ou by Marshall avenue. As I reached the bend in the road where you get your first sight of the buildings I saw a thin streak of smoke rising from one of its chimneys, and, antious as to its

meaning, I drove in"-"Wait, Mr. Ranelagh, I am sorry to interrupt you, but by which gate did you enter?"

"By the lower one" "Was it snowing at this time?" "Not yet. It was just before the

louds rushed upon the moon. I could

see everything quite plainly."

My companion nodded, and I went breathlessly on. Any question of his staggered me. I was ignorant of the facts at his command. I was not able the conjecture by what chance or at whose suggestion the police had raided the place and discovered the tragedy which had given point to that raid. I continued but I omitted all mention of the most serious part of my adventure said nothing of my vion of Carmel or the terrible concin-

slons which her presence there had

"There is no more to say." I concluded "I know nothing. It is all a phantas magoria to me-with no more meaning than a nightmare She dead | know that—but beyond that all is doubt—confusion. I can neither understand nor explain."

CHAPTER IV.

COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS. TOU say you were not blind to surrounding objects, even 11 they conveyed but little meaning to you," said Coroher Perry. "You must have seen, then that the room where Miss Cumberland lay contained two small cor-dial glasses, both still moist with some liqueur.

"I noticed that, yes." "Some one must have drunk with

"I cannot contradict you."
"Was Miss Cumberland fond of that

sort of thing?"
"She detested liquor of all kinds. She never drank. I never saw a wo-man so averse to wine. I spoke be-fore I thought. I might better have less emphatic, but the mystery of those glasses had affected me from the first

"There was a third glass. We found it in the adjoining closet. It had not been used. That third glass has a



"ONE OF OUR MEN SAW YOU WITH YOUR FINGERS ON HER THROAT."

meaning if only we could find it out, ter seems pure enough. cannot understand it." The phrase had become stereotyped. No

other suggested itself to me. enough if it were not for those marks on her neck. You saw those, too, I take it?"

"Yes. Who made them? Who was the man? Do you know, Dr. Perry? "There were three glasses in those rooms. Only two were drunk from," be answered steadily. "Tomorrow I may be in a position to answer your Question I am not tonight."
Why did I take beart Not a change.

not the flicker of one, had passed over his countenance at my utterance of the word "man". Either his official habit had stood him in wonderful stead or the police had falled so far to see any connection between murder and the young girl whose foot-prints for all I knew still lingered on the stairs Would the morrow reveal the fact that Adelaide's young sister had been with her in the hour of death or would the fates propitiously aid ber in preserving this secret?

Thus the hours between 2 and 7 passed, when I fell into a fitful sleep, from which I was rudely awakened by a loud rattle at my door, followed by the entrance of the officer who had walked up and down the corridor all

"The wagon is here," said he.
"Breakfast will be given you at the

To which Hexford, looking over his shoulder, added. "I'm sorry to say that we have here the warrant for your arrest. Can I do anything for you?"
"Warrant!" I burst out. "What do you want of a warrant? It is as a witness you seek to detain me, I pre-

SIIMe? "No," was his brusque reply. "The charge upon which you are arrested is one of murder. You will have to appear before a magistrate."

"But I am innocent, absolutely innocent" I protested, the perspiration
starting from every pore as the full
meaning of the charge burst upon me.
What I have told you was correct. I
myself found her dead"—
Hexford save me a look

Hexford gave me a look.
"Don't talk," he kindly suggested.
"Leave that to the lawyers." Then, as the other man turned aside for a moment, he whispered in my ear: "Its no go. One of our men saw you with

our ungers on her throat. He had clambered into a pine tree, and the shade of the window was up. You had better come quietly. Not a soul be-

This, then, was what had doomed me from the start-this and that partly burned letter. I understood now the kind hearted coroner, who toved my father, had urged me to tell my tale, hoping that I would explain this act and give him some opportunity to indulge in a doubt And I had fall ed to respond to the hint he had given me I had been seen fingering my dead betrothed's throat, and nothing I

could now say or do would ever convince people that she was dead before my hands touched her, strangled by another's clutch One person only in the whole world would know and feel how false this accusation was. And yesterday that one's trust in my guiltessness would have thrown a ray of light upon the deepest infamy which could befall me. But today there had settled over that once innocent spirit cloud of too impenetrable a nature or any light to struggle to and fro be-

ween us. I could not contemplate that cloud. could not dwell upon her misery or oflows such impetuous acts. And It had been an impetuous act, the resul of one of her rages. I had been told of these rages. I had even seen her in When they passed she was her lovable self once more and very penitent and very downcast. If all I fear-

Turning to the officer next to me, I out the question which had been burn-

ing in my mind for hours: "Tell me how you came to know there was trouble here. What brought you to this house? There can be nothing wrong in telling me that."

"Well, if you don't know"- he began. "I do not," I broke in. "I guess you'd better wait till the

chief has had a word with you." Where was Carmel, and how was she enduring these awful hours? Had repentance come and with it a desire to own her guilt? Did she think of me and the effect this unlooked for death would have upon my feelings? That I should suffer arrest for her crime could not have entered her mind. I had seen her, but she had not seen me in the dark hall. No intimation of my dubious position or its inevitable consequences had reached her yet. When it did what would she do? I did not know her well enough to tell. The attraction she had felt for me had not been strong enough to lead her to accommodate herself to my wishes and mary me offhand, but it had been strong enough to nerve her arm in whatever altercation she may have had with her jealous minded sister. It was the temper and not the strength of the love which would tell in a strait like this. Would it prove of a generous kind? Should I have to combat her desire to take upon herself the full blame of her deed, with all its shames and penalties, or should I have the still deeper misery of finding her

callous to my position and welcoming any chance which diverted suspicion from herself? All communication be-tween us, in spite of our ardent and ungovernable passion, had been so casual and so slight. Looks, a whispered word or so, one furtive clasp in which our hands seemed to grow together, were all I had to go upon as tests of her feeling toward me. Her character I had judged from her face, which was

What would relieve my doubts? Hexford drew near me again on our way to the head of the staircase I

way to the head of the summoned up courage to ask:

"Have you heard anything from the hill? Has the news of this tragedy been communicated to Miss Cumberland's family, and, if so, how are they bearing this affliction?"

His lip curied, and for a minute he hesitated; then something in my appect or the straightforward look I gave him softened him, and he answered frankly, if coldly:

"Word has gone there, of course, but only the servants are affected by it far. Miss Cumberland, the younger, is very ill, and the boy-I don't know his name—has not shown up since las evening. He's very dissipated, they say, and may be in any one of the joints in the lower part of the town."

I stopped in dismay, clutching wildly at the railing of the stairs we were descending. I had hardly heard the latter words. All my mind was on what he had said first.

"Miss Carmel Cumberland III," I stammered, "too ill to be told?" I was sufficiently master of myself to put it this way. Yes," he rejoined kindly as he urged me down the very stairs I had seen her descend in such a state of mind a

few hours before. "A servant whe had been out late as she was pass-ing Miss Cumberrushing in, found she called her, lying on the floor near the open fire. Her face bed struck the bars of the grate in falling, and she was

that was not all. She was delirious with fever

AWAY FROM THE DOUGHT ON, they think, by anxiety about her sister, about her sister. hose name she was constantly repeating. They had a doctor for her, and the whole house was up before ever the

word came of what had happened I thanked him with a look. I had no opportunity for more. Half a dozen officers were standing about the front door, and in another moment I was

bustled into the conveyance provided and was being driven away from the Continued on page 8)

Children Cry for Fletcher's

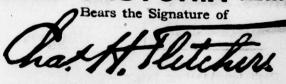
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