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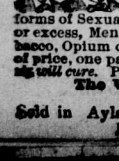

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A Woman's Crime.

A THRILLING STORY OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE.

By LAWRENCE M. LYNCH.

Author of "John Arthur's Ward," "The Diamond Coterie," "Against Odds," Etc., Etc.

Jane turned, and moved quickly toward the rear stairway. Scarcely had she disappeared when the young lady snatched up a hat and shawl that lay in readiness, and leaving her door ajar, ran lightly down the front stairs, opened the door softly, and in another instant was speeding down the path leading to a small side gate; through this she hurried, and then, casting one swift glance behind her, turned her face city-ward. Meanwhile, Jane fulfilled her bidding to the very letter; she came puffing up from the kitchen, and deposited the pitcher on the floor as directed.

"Here's the warm water, Miss Lee," said she, as she put it down, and then, without glancing within the room, or stopping for an answer, she went down by the front way and announced that Miss Lee would be down "soon." This accomplished, she marched off kitchenward, feeling that she had done her duty.

Dr. Burton and John Jacob waited nearly half an hour, and then the former began to feel surprised, and the latter uneasy.

"Really, it's unusual for Miss Lee to be so slow, or so careless," said the doctor, finally. "I'll just send her up another message." And he touched the bell once more.

"I think it is as well," said the visitor. "The fact is, I am a little pressed for time."

In a moment Jane presented herself.

"Jane, go up and see what detains Miss Lee, and be quick about it," said Dr. Burton.

Jane was quick about it. She went and came back in less than half the time she usually employed in going up and down a flight of stairs.

"She ain't there, sir," said she, bursting into the office like a comet; "she sent me for a pitcher of warm water, and told me to set it outside the door; I did so, and the pitcher is just where I left it, and her door open just the same."

"Bless me," cried the doctor; "she must have had one of her attacks again!"

"Yes; I presume she has," replied the visitor, dryly. "Jane, did you tell her that any one was with the doctor?"

"Yes, sir," replied the wondering Jane; "she asked me who was here, and I told her a young man was."

"You did? Well, I'm sorry for that. Doctor Burton, I must ask to see the room just deserted by this young lady, at once. If you have any idea where she may have concealed herself, please search for her immediately."

Doctor Burton looked more than astonished; he looked indignant.

"What, sir; what!" he cried, "you really presume too much. I do not run down my patients in this manner."

"I tell you, sir, you must search for this one with all the force you can command," cried this strange doctor's student. "Jane, conduct me to her room, instantly."

"Jane, stop," cried the little doctor. "Young man, you have no authority for this; if my patient does not choose to see you, she shall not; I believe you are an impostor."

The visitor laid a firm hand on the shoulder of the little man, and said, in a stern tone, "I am a detective, doing my duty; stand aside, Doctor Burton, and let me pass."

Then he set the doctor aside as if he had been a wooden man, and rushed out and up the stairs.

As soon as he could recover his breath, Doctor Burton scampered after him, and Jane followed at his heels.

"Sir," panted the little doctor, entering the room, which Jane's mention of the open door and the pitcher had enabled the detective to identify as the room of Miss Lee, "explain yourself; did Doctor Austin send you here? dare you say that he would bring a criminal to my house? Bless my soul!" puffed the little man, "if I don't think you are a madman."

"Doctor Austin did not send me here, sir; neither is the good man aware of the charge which stands against this girl. Jane, come here; is there anything missing from this room?" he asked, quickly.

Jane glanced about her.

"I saw her hat and shawl lying on that chair, sir, when she opened the door and sent me for the water; I expect she wore them."

"Wore them! Doctor, quick, how much liberty does this girl, this patient, have?"

"Liberty! bless my soul! she has perfect liberty; she goes in and out as she pleases."

"What! out of the grounds?"

"Yes, anywhere."

Uttering a remark not at all complimentary to the doctor and his system, the detective, without the ceremony of an adieu, rushed down the stairs and burst in among the few mild maniacs, sitting in one of the parlours.

"Ladies, I beg your pardon," he said, suddenly recovering his politeness, "did you see a young woman go out from the grounds, a little while ago?"

"Do you mean the proud woman with the yellow eyes?" asked a young girl, who was religion crazed. "She went down that path fast, very fast; and then she went out at the gate and flew up, up, up; she is in heaven by this time."

"She didn't fly up," said an elderly woman, testily; "she ran, ran, ran; I saw her."

On one point the two lunatics had not differed, and the detective, resolving to accept their testimony, dashed open the street door and hurried on to the side entrance.

"Bless my soul!" cried the doctor, looking after him. "I must write to Doctor Austin right away. Bless—my—soul."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BALL-TOSSER'S DAUGHTER.

For two or three blocks the flying girl kept on in a straight course; and then she paused and looked irresolute. She could not keep straight on like this; she could not know how soon a pursuer would be on her track. At this moment the tinkle of a bell, sounding two blocks distant, struck her ears—the street cars; if she took the first one, it would be far down toward the busy part of the city before the next would overtake it, and her pursuer had not brought a carriage.

She turned down the side street and ran swiftly; it is safe enough to run when one runs toward a street car, and her speed brought her to the track just as a down-car was passing; she hailed it, and soon, panting and breathless, was jogging along "down town."

They were a long way out as yet, and, it being too late for many people to be going down town, and too early for them to be coming home, there were only one or two passengers in the car. Nevertheless, the fleeing one drew her veil carefully over her face, and tried to look as indifferent as possible.

Where was she going? She hardly knew; if she but dared to go straight to some railroad depot; but she knew that by so doing she would incur heavy risk; besides, she did not know where to go if she left the city. Sitting there, she thought of her first ride in a street-car, and of Kate Seaton's laughing plea, "You won't disappear soon, will you, Nora?" And she had replied that she would "not ride away on a broomstick." She would break even that promise now if she could. Oh, to be able to disappear! to vanish utterly!

On the seat, not far from her, lay a crumpled newspaper, one that had been abandoned, probably, by some passenger who had no use for a paper ten hours old. She put out her hand and drew it toward her; if it would only tell her where to go!

Probably the last reader had been perusing the advertising page, for it was turned outward, and the eyes of the girl fell upon a column of wants, wanted, wanted, wanted. It was the miscellaneous column, and presently she paused, and considered this advertisement:—

WANTED IMMEDIATELY—TWENTY young ladies for the ballet. Also, private lessons given in all branches of the theatrical profession. Apply to MRS. A. HARRIS, 401 S—— street.

"I wonder where it is," mused the girl. "I could go there and rely upon chance for my next inspiration. It is the last place one would think of searching for me."

A moment later the conductor entered from the rear platform, and she leaned toward him and asked in a low voice:—

"Where is S—— street?"

"S—— street? About seven blocks away. We cross it."

"I will get off there, please."

"How fortunate," she thought; "I can't have far to walk, either." She left the car at the street designated, and after looking up and down for a moment, to ascertain how the numbers ran, she turned and walked briskly southward; three, four, five blocks, and then she paused before No. 401. Mercy, what a shabby little house it was, standing back from its loftier neighbours; and what a very muddy entrance; it looked as if people had been tramping to and from it through an ocean of mud, for ages and ages.

Miss Lee, or Lenore Armyn, as we may as well call her, became conscious at this stage in her observations that a feminine face was looking out at her through the not particularly clean window; and with a mental resolve that let come what would, no one should see her play the coward, she drew her shawl closer about her, and resolutely approached the door. More than once since her voluntary imprisonment at Doctor Burton's had she fancied herself in a position similar to this, her present one, and she was not altogether unprepared for the emergency. She had had no forewarning of the ballet mistress, of course; but she had thought it possible that she might be traced, even to a mad-house; and she had fancied herself as she was now, wandering alone, and asking for some secure hiding-place. She had even prepared her "little story," and now, with a few impromptu alterations, she must tell that story to the mistress of this, the shabbiest abode she had ever entered.

"Does Mrs. A. Harris live here?" she asked of the woman who had been looking from the window, and who now beamed on her from the half-open doorway; not quite half-open, either, for the woman's form filled up the opening, and it was a very meagre form indeed.

"I am Mrs. Harris," replied the woman, opening the door an inch or two wider, and scanning her visitor closely. "Do you want to see me?" This last, after having assured herself that the young lady's plain garments were of rich material, and that she was not one of the "profession."

"Yes, madame," and now the woman observed that the veiled stranger spoke with a slight foreign accent, "if I may talk with you alone."

"I am alone," said Mrs. Harris, stepping away from the opening; "come in, please."

Lenore was only too glad to get out of the street, and she glided in quickly.

"I understand that you want some pupils for the stage, madame?" she said, without lifting her veil.

"I take a few pupils," replied the ballet mistress, loftily, and at the same time removing some show bills and papers from the only really safe-looking chair in the room; "take a seat, miss."

Lenore seated herself and took a rapid survey of her surroundings. There was, first, a very dirty and much worn carpet; and a table, that creaked when you touched it, covered with an ink-stained scarlet cloth, and littered with old play-bills, older looking letters, two or three play-books, a quantity of photographs of the "profession," one or two shabby bound volumes, and a pile of printed business cards, that looked as if fresh from the press; pens and ink, and a big ledger completed the contents of this table. Above it hung a few cheaply framed pictures of scantily-clad actresses, and one larger than the rest, and better framed, of Mrs. Harris, herself, arrayed as the goddess of Liberty.

A rusty stove that looked like an elongated barrel, and gave out a little more heat than does a refrigerator, stood nearly in the centre of the room. A piano, the smallest and oldest, and most hopelessly tuneless of its kind, stood opposite the table, and six cane chairs, all more or less disabled, were ranged along the walls. And this was the drawing-room, receiving-room, and private office of "Mrs. Harris, Ballet Mistress."

Mrs. Harris herself was a little ferret-eyed woman, with sandy hair, sallow complexion, sharp features, and figure to match; and was apparently on the border land of her fortieth year.

An observer of ordinary intelligence could hardly fail to interpret aright some of the characteristics of Mrs. Harris. Her surroundings gave evidence that she was not overburdened with riches, while Lenore, who was something more than an ordinary observer, quickly decided that she was keen, cunning, and avaricious. A woman whose affections and sympathies would be quickly drawn toward a full purse. Having taken a hasty inventory of the lady and her surroundings, Lenore began where she had left off.

"I called in response to an advertisement, madame," she said, as if duly impressed with the majesty of Mrs. Harris. "Have you—room for any more pupils?"

"I have a pretty large class on hand," she said, as if her large class were at present securely packed in sawdust, and carefully put away. "What branch do you want to study?"

"Really! I hardly know," replied Lenore, flinging back her veil, as if she had just thought of it. "I am quite ignorant regarding these matters. What do you teach, Mrs. Harris?"

"Everything!" With a comprehensive flourish of ten bony fingers. "Acting, singing, burlesque, song and dance, clog, jig, club swinging, ballet dancing, trapeze."

While Mrs. Harris was running through with this list of "branches," she had been mentally cataloguing Lenore, after this fashion:—

"Handsome, educated, no fool, little feet and hands, nice form, lovely voice, dressed awful dowdy, but rich; may have a little money, but green—one could make a fortune off her, if one could catch her."

All unconscious of this mental review foreigner. I am also an orphan, have a small fortune in my own right, and it is so arranged that no one can prevent my drawing the interest of it, so long as I retain my liberty. But my guardians, who are also foreigners, decided German in fact, have fairly lived upon my income, and have supported, and partially educated, their own son and daughter at my expense, and I have submitted, because I knew no one who could help me—had no acquaintances, in fact. They move frequently, and give me no chance to make friends; and about a month ago they came to this city. Well, last night I overheard them planning to try and make me promise to marry their son, and I found that, to put me more in their power, they had given their neighbours the impression that I was partially deranged; saying that they had only to watch me in order to be convinced of my insanity. Well, to-day I had to draw my money, and my guardian's wife came with me to get it. I had made up my mind to leave them for good, for I knew that they would shut me up if they could not make me marry their Hans in any other way, and I was very unhappy there. I had seen your advertisement, and made up my mind to come to you, and if I could become an actress I would go away somewhere where they would never find me. We

One Dose

Tells the story. When your head aches, and you feel bilious, constipated, and out of tune, with your stomach sour and no appetite, just buy a package of

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And take a dose, from 1 to 4 pills. You will be surprised at how easily they will do their work, cure your headache and biliousness, rouse the liver and make you feel happy again. 25 cents. Sold by all medicine dealers.

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Cures the worst cases of all skin diseases in sheep and cattle, has been found highly efficacious against that terrible disease, sheep scab, and quickly and permanently cures bruises, wounds, ringworm, shear cuts, gangrene, etc. Kills all insects and vermin peculiar to live stock such as ticks, maggots, lice, nits, skin worms and insects. Absolutely non-poisonous and has no drastic or irritating effects. Mr. G A Brodie, of Bethesda, Ont., says: "I used it with great success in castrating lambs, the wash healing the wounds and keeping the maggots away. I shall never be without it and heartily recommend it to farmers generally.

If your dealer cannot supply you write us direct—it pays to use the best—and we invite correspondence.

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Dr. A. W. Chase's Nerve Food Restores Weak, Sickly Women to Robust Health.

Any irregularities in the monthly uterine action is sufficient cause for women to be alarmed about their health. Whether painful, suppressed or profuse menstruation, the cause can be traced to some derangement of the nerves.

A few boxes of Dr. A. W. Chase's Nerve Food will completely build up the exhausted nerves and restore the regular monthly action which removes from the body the clogged matter that would otherwise cause pain and serious disease.

It is as a restorative for pale, weak women that Dr. A. W. Chase's Nerve Food has been singularly successful. It counteracts the debilitating diseases peculiar to women by feeding the nerves and creating new nerve fluid, the vital force of the human body.

Dr. A. W. Chase's Nerve Food has restored scores of hundreds of weak, sickly women to robust health. 50c. a box at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

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A. & R. Atkinson

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