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## The Mystery of Rutledge Hall

"The Cloud With a Silver Lining"

CHAPTER XX.

"And yet he ran away, and Mrs. Rutledge disappeared at the same time!" the man remarked, with a smile. "Mrs. Daunt, I do not wish to distress you—on the contrary, my only object is to spare you pain and suspense. Let the matter rest; it will be better for Mr. Greville and for all concerned. He has had a wonderful escape from punishment; the inquiry and search after him must have been of a very awkward kind, or he would have been long ere this. The matter has sunk into oblivion now. Do not reopen it."

"You think his guilty," she said passionately, "but I am convinced of his innocence. Oh, sir—she stretched out her hands with a little appealing gesture—"you do not know how gentle he was, how incapable of such a crime! He was as innocent of it as you are. I cannot give up this endeavour to prove his innocence," she added so earnestly that tears rose in her beautiful eyes. "No one ever tried before; he had not one friend here to defend him. His father believed him guilty. I could do nothing then; and all these long months he has been hunted and in misery and concealment. But now I am rich, I have plenty of money, and I cannot remain passive. Will you help me? Ah, do not make up your mind to his guilt! Surely your experience has taught you how very often innocent people have been condemned, and that even proofs are not always to be depended upon! Do help me, sir; I am so powerless alone!"

"But your husband?" he said, gently, touched by her passionate distress and by the lovely appealing face.

"He will not help me," she answered weeping. "He believes him guilty; besides, was he—Frank—not my lover once?" she added passionately. "Can you expect my husband to help him?"

"An, true?" he answered, gravely.

"I had forgotten."

"Think what his life has been!" she continued, eagerly, feeling that her words had touched him.

"He is innocent, and he suffers as if he were guilty. He has no friends—no one whom every one liked once, for

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you is this, Mrs. Daunt. On what terms were you with Mrs. Rutledge?"

"I knew her but slightly."

"Before her marriage or after?"

"Both before and after."

"Was she a resident at Ashford, then, before her marriage?" She lived at Lamswood."

"At Lamswood?" he repeated inquiringly. "Is that in the neighborhood?"

"It is Mr. Daunt's residence. She was governess there in the neighborhood."

"It is Mr. Daunt's residence. She was governess there to his daughter."

"To your husband's daughter?"

"No, Sidney answered, with a faint smile at the thought—"to his sister."

"Ah, to his sister! She was a very beautiful person, I believe?"

"Yes, wonderfully beautiful."

"She was likely to have many admirers, I suppose?"

"Yes," Sidney answered slowly.

"Mr. Greville and Mr. Rutledge included?"

"Yes," was the faint reply from the flushed pale lips. Sidney was beginning to dread the questions of the detective who sat opposite to her so keenly and impassively.

"And others, I dare say. Mr. Greville's attentions could not have been very marked, however, since you tell me that he was engaged to you."

The color rose slowly in the lovely anxious face. Remembering his earnest injunction to tell him the truth, she hesitated for a moment, then said bravely—

"We were not engaged until Miss Nell was engaged to Mr. Rutledge."

"Ah!"

The monosyllable was full of meaning, for the questioner was keen enough to read on Sidney's face that there was something more to hear.

"Mr. Rutledge was a wealthy man?"

"Yes, very wealthy."

"And the young lady preferred wealth. All this seems no doubt very trivial to you, Mrs. Daunt; but we are accustomed to the fact that trifles are most important. How soon after did you become engaged to Mr. Greville?"

"Immediately," murmured Sidney.

"And you accepted Mr. Greville, then?"

"I was not very prudent; but I could not wait to be prudent," she answered, faintly. "And I am my own mistress to a great extent. But I am afraid of incurring my husband's displeasure and arousing his suspicions; he has a firm belief in Mr. Greville's guilt. Will an hour suffice, Mr. Hoppood?"

"Half that time will be sufficient; and that space will not be longer than an interview with your dress-maker or tailor," he answered—"and I believe ladies have tailors now. I need not trouble you with many questions," he added, glancing at his note book. "I can easily obtain the newspaper accounts of the murder and inquest; but, as you were intimately acquainted with the parties, I may glean some information which may be useful. You will tell me all the truth," he added, seriously, "and anything I do not ask you, but which you think it would be advisable for me to know. Pray do not hesitate. You need not look frightened," he continued, with a reassuring smile; "you are speaking in confidence and I will not make use of any information you give me against your friend."

"Thank you," Sidney said, timidly.

"The first question I wish to ask

you is this, Mrs. Daunt. On what terms were you with Mrs. Rutledge?"

knowing that his heart belonged to Miss Nell?"

"He was very unhappy."

"And you, as an old friend, wished to console him?" he said, the tone in which he spoke taking the sting from his words.

"It was not that exactly," she murmured.

"Will you tell me how it was, then?"

"Mr. Greville was very hurt and angry, and threatened to be revenged on Miss Nell, or—on her—lover, and when I tried to console him, he said, if I would accept him, he would forego his revenge."

"His revenge on Mr. Rutledge?"

"No," Sidney answered low.

"On Miss Nell?"

"No," Sidney answered low.

"On Miss Nell?"

"No"—in a lower voice. Then, looking up suddenly, she went on; "there was some mistake," she said, bravely. "I did not understand that Miss Nell was engaged to Mr. Rutledge; I thought it was to some one else."

"To whom?"

"The question was asked very quietly, without the slightest eagerness; but his calm exterior veiled strong excitement—her answer meant so much to the keen detective.

"To Mr. Stephen Daunt."

"Any relative of your husband's?"

"My husband," she said, faintly.

"Was he, then, among the lady's admirers?"

"Yes, he admired her. Who could do otherwise?" She was most beautiful, the girl said, with a sudden ring of pain in her voice.

"Ah, just so! But still the lady's desire for wealth was great enough to be the principal motive of her actions and she preferred Mr. Rutledge's wealth. I presume it was greater than that of either of her other suitors?"

"I suppose so, then—that is, unless Mr. Daunt had given consent to an engagement between Miss Nell and his son."

"Did Mr. Stephen Daunt seem to feel Mr. Rutledge's success as much as Mr. Greville?"

"(To be continued.)"

JUST FOLKS.

I have met the famed and mighty men of wisdom and of sense, and I never found them flatter with a vanity intense. They were simple in their manners, they were quiet, often shy, and they waved no gaudy banners to impress the passing gey.

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3.30 p.m.—"Billy" Rocco, Dean of Sports Writers, Weekly Review of Sporting Events.

4.45 p.m.—15-minute Organ Recital (Request Selections). Arthur Scott Brook, City Organist.

7.00 p.m.—Hotel Ambassador Dinner Music.

8.00 p.m.—World-Wide Excursions.

8.15 p.m.—Organ Recital, Auditorium of Atlantic City High School, Arthur Scott Brook, City Organist, assisted by Dora Davies Williams, soprano.

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## Just Folks.

By EDGAR GUEST.

LAZY.

The just lazy through and through. Shaking tasks I ought to do, Letting fruitful hours drift by Like the white clouds in the sky; Caring little what is lost, Dreaming dreams at any cost.

Duty stamps her foot and shrieks; "You've been idling here for weeks; You have health and strength and should Rise and serve your neighbourhood." But I shake my head and say: "Let me waste another day."

Even profit some would seize. Strangely has no power to please; "Come," it shouts, "I've gold for you. If your work you'll only do." But I wave the chance away Just to dream another day.

I have no excuse to give For the idle days I live; No excuse save this, that I Let the golden hours go by Seeing nothing here which seems So important as my dreams.

It is nothing but a fit. Shortly I shall come from it, And perhaps regret the cost Of the golden chances lost; But I'm lazy and it seems I have only strength for dreams.

## My Many Enemies

A GAMEKEEPER ON HIS JOB.

Some people seem to think that a keeper has nothing to do but tramp about the woods with a gun on his shoulder. Actually, his job is nearly as varied as those of the farmer. His hours are long, and his position is one of great responsibility. If he has any slack days they are just at the turn of the year, but from the time that the partridges and pheasants begin to lay there is little rest for him.

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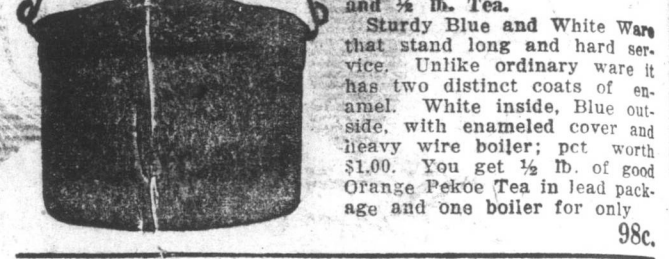
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