

The Last Stroke.

BY LAWRENCE L. LYNCH,

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

CONTINUED

"You see, I didn't forget the carriage, Doc. Hope Miss Grant ain't none the worse for her sad sort of journey." And then as the two walked away from the platform together, and he saw the doctor's eyes glancing from side to side, Doran went on: "Looking for Mr. Grant, Doc? Well, I guess you won't see him; not before supper-time, anyhow. Fact is, I guess he's sort of fancy struck, on that pretty-faced woman down at the Glenville house, and he's taken her out behind my eyes this afternoon. I don't know as I blame him any; she is a dainty little wid."

The doctor stared at him in amazement at his first words, and then broke into a hearty laugh over the last.

"Upon my word, Doran, you will be able to write a new dictionary of abbreviations some day! Doran's Original! A dainty wid, is very good in its way; only, is she a wid?"

"That's what they say at the Glenville. Widow and rich."

At the next corner Doran halted. "Have to tear myself away," he said, amiably. "See you later," and the two men separated.

"Well, old man, how have you fared during the lull in your business?" asked Dr. Ferrars as his man came to meet him. "You don't look overworked."

"I ain't been, neither sah. Your Mr. Grant or Ferrars, I ain't rightly got his name, I guess, he pears ter like the cooks down to the Glenville better than me. I ain't had no bother with him since you left, sir, 'cept to make up his bed."

"I know. He has found some friends there, I fancy, Jude. Any news or messages?" and the doctor became at once absorbed in his neglected business.

Ferrars made his appearance at "supper time," as Doran had described the evening meal, and the

was premeditated, and carefully planned. I have satisfied myself that the assassin, approaching from the south, made almost the circuit of that long mound, after making sure that no one was near, in order to reach the point, scarcely twelve feet from the place where the body was found, from which to fire the fatal shot."

"My God!" "It was a bold venture, but not so dangerous as might at first appear. I find that from a point half way to the top of the mound one might be quite concealed from anyone down by the lake shore while taking a long look up and down the road. And, in case of approach, there is at the south end of the mound a clump of bushes and young trees, where one could easily remain concealed while awaiting the victim or the passing of an interloper. From the town to a point not far south of the knoll or mound, as your people call it, the ground between the road and lake has been partially cleared of undergrowth for the comfort of picnickers and fishing parties. I am told."

"Yes," she sighed wonderingly. "But beyond that, a person wishing to be unseen from the lake or road could easily hide among the brush and trees. I believe all this was carefully studied, and carried out, and that, five minutes after the shots were fired, the slayer was on his way southward to some point where a

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confederate waited, with some means of conveying themselves to a safe distance.

"Ah!" she whispered. "The boat?" "Yes, the boat. It was a part of the plot, and rowed to that point by the confederate, I believe, for the purpose of misleading justice. Doran, who is an able helper, learned this morning that a farm hand, who was driving his stock across the road to drink at the lake, saw a man in a boat rowing up towards Glenville at half past seven that morning."

"Oh! And can you follow them? Is the trail strong enough?" "I think so. And there are other clues. There is much to be done here in Glenville, first of all. At the inquest the testimony was purposely left vague and uncertain at some points."

"And why?" "Because, somewhere, not far away, there is a person who is watching developments, and who may leave some track unsevered, if he can be made to think we are off the scent. I mean to know my Glenville very well before I leave it, and some of its people, too. And here you can help me as soon as you are strong enough."

"I am strong enough now. What more can I do?"

"You remember the foolish boy and his fright when questioned?"

"Of course."

"Well, as he's teacher, can you win his confidence until his fear is overcome? That boy has not told all he knows."

"He is very dull, I fear. He said he saw a ghost."

"Well, we must know the nature of that ghost, and why it has closed his lips so effectually. Seriously, I hope much from that lad."

"Then, be sure, I will do my best." "You see, I am taking you at your word. And there's one more thing. I have been told that strangers go often to the Glenville when in town. Now it behooves me to know the latest comers, and the newcomers there, and chance having given me the opportunity to break the ice by being polite to Mrs. Jamieson, I have improved the moments. I don't mean that I am studying the lady for any sinister purpose, but one can see that she is quite a social leader in the house, and through her I have already come to know several of the other inmates. Mrs. Jamieson very much desires to know you, and if you will allow her to call, as under the circumstances she desires to do, and if you will return that call—in short put yourself upon the footing of an acquaintance—it will really help me greatly."

For a long moment Hilda did not speak, then "I will do as you wish, of course," she said, but the note of eager readiness had gone out of her voice. "But I cannot even think of that woman without living over again our first meeting and the awful blow her news dealt me. Will I ever outlive the hurt of it?"

"It hurt her, too; I am sure of that. She is a keenly sensitive woman. She went from your school room really ill, so her friend has told me."

"I can well believe that. She looked ill when she came to me. And who can wonder?" her tone softening. "Mrs. Jamieson is certainly kind, and why should we not be friends? She is a lady, refined and charming. Don't think me unreasonable, Mr. Ferrars. I shall be pleased to receive her, of course."

"Thank you, and remember, that for the present Francis Ferrars becomes Ferris—Ferris Grant. You'll not forget your part?"

"I will not forget," she answered. And when he was gone, she smiled a sad little womanly smile. "After all, a detective is but a man; and that pretty, soft-spoken, dainty blonde woman is just the sort to fascinate a big-hearted, strong man like Francis Ferrars."

CHAPTER XIII.

"Has Doran been here, doctor?" These were the detective's first words when he entered the sanctum upon his return from the Marcy cottage, and before his host could do more than shake his head, Ferrars dropped into a seat beside him and went on in a lower tone.

"The fact is, doctor, I've got myself interested in a thing which, after all, may lead me astray. Do you take the 'Lake County Herald'?"

"Upon my word!" ejaculated the doctor. "I do. Yes. Want to peruse the sheet?"

"I don't suppose you file them?" went on Ferrars.

"File the 'Herald'! No, I fire them, or Jude does."

"I wish you had not. The fact is I want very much to get hold of a copy dated November last, the 27th. Do you recall the bit of paper I took from Charles Briery's desktop to demonstrate that something had been hastily pulled from the letter file by that clever boy of whom Mrs. Fry could tell so little?"

"Yes, surely." The doctor now began to look seriously interested.

"Well, the stolen paper was a newspaper clipping, cut from the 'Herald' of November 27th, last."

"Upon my word! But there I won't ask questions."

"You need not. Did you not observe me looking over the papers in the rack?"

"Possibly you saw me with a paper in my hand soon after?" The doctor started and shook his head. "I've no eye for slight-of-hand," he grumbled. "Decidedly not, for I folded up that paper and thrust it in a breast pocket before your very eyes. I kept that tiny bit, too, which I picked up on my forefinger. It fitted into a column from which a piece had been cut, and that's how I know that the stolen article came from that paper. Very simple, after all, you see?"

"For you, yes." "The fact that the clipping was thought worth stealing, makes me fancy it worth a perusal. I tried for it here in town, in a quiet way, but failed. Then I appealed to Doran, and he has written to Lake, to the editor, whom he happens to know."

"It would be hard to find hereabouts a man of any importance whatever whom Sam Doran does not know. He grew up in Lake County, and has held half the offices in the county's gift."

"There may be a clue for us in that clipping. I discovered another thing in that room. The dead man wrote, or began, a letter to his brother. I learned this from a scrap dated and addressed, which I found in the waste basket, and I am led to believe the letter was rewritten, or rather begun anew, and sent from the fact that a fresh blotter showed a fragment of Briery's name, and the city address. That letter, if mailed, must have passed him as he came down. Did he mention getting it?"

Doctor Barnes shook his head. "He said nothing about such a letter," he replied. "Does he know about this—this newspaper business?"

"Not a word. No one knows it but yourself. If it should prove to be a clue in my hands, it may be better, it will be better, I am sure, to keep it at present between us two. I think, however, that I may decide to show Miss—my cousin—that anonymous letter, and tell her something about that mysterious boy and his visit to her lover's rooms. And then Ferrars turned from this subject to explain to the doctor his present plans. How he had determined to continue his masquerade, and to remain for a time in Glenville; and though Mrs. Jamieson's name was not uttered, the doctor found himself wondering, as had Hilda Grant, if the detective had not found the place attractive for personal as well as business reasons, and if a detective's heart must needs be of adamant after all."

Next morning Samuel Doran, who knew the detective only as "Hilda Grant's cousin and a right good fellow," drove ostentatiously to the door to take "Mr. Grant" for a drive.

"I've had a line from Joe Howlett," he began the moment they were upon the road. "He was just setting out for a run out of town but he says he told the boys to look up that paper and send it along. So, I guess we'll see it soon, if it's in existence." And Doran chirruped to his team and promptly changed the subject. He did not know why this man beside him so much wished to obtain a six-months old copy of a country newspaper, and he did not trouble himself to worry or wonder.

"It was none of his business," he would have said if questioned, and Samuel Doran attended to his own business exclusively and was by so much the more a reliable helper when, his aid being asked, the business of his neighbor became known. Ferrars was learning to know this man, and he knew that the time might soon come when Doran would be his closest confidant and strongest assistant in Glenville.

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A Way Out of It

A company of select colored artists were rendering a version of "Othello."

The scene between the Moor and Desdemona has been reached wherein Othello demands the handkerchief which he has given his wife as a wedding anulet. The actor who had been intrusted with the title role confused vociferousness with impressiveness.

"Desdemona!" he cried, "fetch me dat han'kerchief!"

But the doomed lady only babbled of Cassio, and her liege shouted again: "I ast you fo' de second time to gi' me dat han'kerchief."

Still the fair one parried the issue with talk of Cassio, and the lordly Othello, now thoroughly incensed, bel-lowed:

"Woman, fo' de third and las' time Othello demands the handkerchief Away!"

And as he was just about to open his mouth again a big leather-lunged patron in the top gallery shouted down at him:

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, nigger, why doan yo' wipe yo' nose on yo' sleeve an' let de show go on?"

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His Parable.

An old dorky, anxious to be a minister, went to be ordained. He was questioned thus:

"Can you write?"

"No, sah!"

"Read?"

"No, sah!"

"How do you know about the bible?"

"Ma niece reads it to me!"

"Know about the Ten Commandments?"

"No, sah!"

"The twenty-third Psalm?"

"Nebber heard of him, sah!"

"Know the beatitudes?"

"No, sah!"

"Well, what part of the bible do you like best?"

"Parables, sah!"

"Can you give us one?"

"Deed, yes, sah!"

"Let us have it, then."

"Once w'en the Queen of Sheba was gwine down to Jerusalem she fell among thieves. First they passed by on de oddah side, den dey come ova and dey say unto her, 'Fro down Jezebel!' but she wouldn't fro her down; and again dey say unto her, 'Fro down Jezebel!' but she wouldn't fro her down; and again dey say unto her for the fird and last time, for I ain't gwine to ax vo' no mo', 'Fro down Jezebel!' and dey fro'd her down for seventy times and seven, till de remaint were 'seven baskets; and I say unto yo', whose wife was she at de resurrection?' By-stander."

"Were half the power that fills the world with terror,

Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,

Given to redeem the human mind from error,

There were no need of arsenals or forts.

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!

And every nation, that should lift again—

Its hand against a brother, on its forehead

Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain!"

—Longfellow.

Glory Everywhere

A Methodist minister was much annoyed by one of his hearers frequently shouting out during the preaching: "Glory!" Praise the Lord!" and the like. Though often reproved, the happy member persisted in expressing himself.

One day the minister invited him to tea, and to take his mind from thoughts of praise, handed him a scientific book, full of dry facts and figures, to pass the time before tea.

Presently the minister was startled by a sudden outburst of "Glory!" "Hallelujah!" and "Praise the Lord!"

"What is the matter, man?" asked the minister.

"Why, this book says the sea is five miles deep!"

"Well, what of that?"

"Why, the Bible says my sins have been cast into the depths of the sea and if it is that deep I need not be afraid of their ever coming up again. Glory!"

The minister gave up hopes of reforming him.

Its Very Queer

When you call a girl a kitten

You are sure to get a pat;

So why should you get the mitten

When you say she is a cat?

But you do.

If you say a girl's a vision,

It will fill her with delight;

So there should be no collision

When you say she is a sight.

But there is.

You call a man a sly old dog;

He asks you in to sup;

Why should it set his wrath agog

When you say he is a pup?

But it does.

—Selected.

A certain prominent lawyer of Toronto is in the habit of lecturing his office staff from the junior partner down, and Tommy, the office boy, comes in for his full share of the admonition. That his words were appreciated was made evident to the lawyer by a conversation between Tommy and another office boy on the same floor which he recently overheard.

"Wotcher wages?" asked the other boy.

"Ten thousand a year," replied Tommy.

"Aw, g'wan!"

"Sure," insisted Tommy, unabashed.

"Four dollars a week in cash an' de rest in legal advice."

Wanted for Evidence

An Irish soldier on sentry duty had orders to allow no one to smoke near his post. An officer with a lighted cigar approached, whereupon Pat boldly challenged him and ordered him to put it out at once.

The officer, with a gesture of disgust threw away his cigar, but no sooner was his back turned than Pat picked it up and quietly retired to the sentry-box.

The officer, happening to look around observed a beautiful cloud of smoke issuing from the box. He at once challenged Pat for smoking on duty.

"Smoking, is it, sorr? Bedad, and I'm only keeping it lit to show to the corporal when he comes, as evidence agin you."

The small son of an electrician was spending his first summer in the country, at the home of his grandparents. One morning, while playing in the garden, he found a small yellow "bug," and, as his grandfather had promised to take him fishing that afternoon, he decided to catch it to use as bait. A few seconds later a most astonishing commotion, considering the size of the cause thereof, arose in the garden, and grandmother hurried out from the house. "Why, what is the matter, child?" she asked, taking the little fellow in her arms. He raised a tear-stained face. "I don't know," was the reply. "I was catching a pretty yellow bug, an' must have touched a live wire."

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PSALMS.

Psalm 20.

2 Sent thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.

3 Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.

4 Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.

5 We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners; the Lord fulfil all thy petitions.

6 Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.

7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

8 They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright.

9 Save, Lord, let the King hear us when we call.

PROVERBS.

Chapter 11.

20 They that of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished; but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

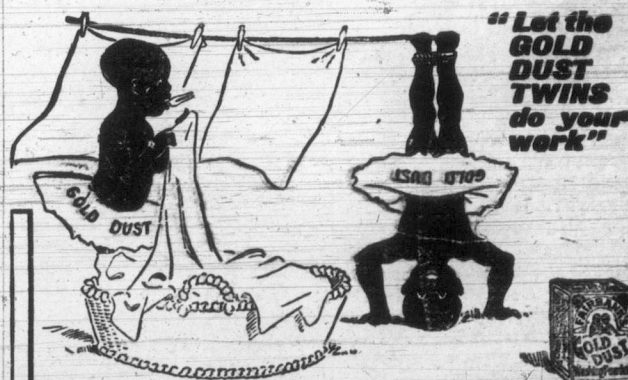
23 The desire of the righteous is only good; but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than he meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

25 The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

TO BE CONTINUED.



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