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The Mystery of Rutledge Hall —OR— "The Cloud With a Silver Lining"

CHAPTER XXXVI

Stephen was greatly distressed. Fully an hour must elapse before the train stopped again, and then it would only for a few minutes; and, looking at the colorless face against his shoulder, he began to fear that, if no help could be obtained before then, it would be too late to be of any use. To his eyes, inexperienced as he was in illness and its signs, Sidney's face looked like the face of a dying woman as the light from the railway lamp fell upon it, and he felt terribly helpless and despairing. Suddenly he remembered that he had his traveling flask with him, and that, on leaving Easthorpe on the previous day, the butler had filled it with sherry; he had had no occasion to use it since, and had forgotten it. Now remembered it with an almost passionate sense of gratitude; and, gently placing Sidney back in her seat, he took his bag from the netting, hastily unlocked it, and took out the flask.

"What is it?" she said, faintly, as he held the little silver cup to her lips. "Some wine. Drink it, dear child; it will do you good."

With a sudden eagerness, almost avidity, she took it from him and drained the contents of the little cup. It had contained barely a wineglassful of the wine; but, small as the quantity was, it acted like magic on her feeble frame; even a faint tinge of color came into the thin cheeks which had been so ashen-white the minute before; and she raised herself from the cushions, eager and anxious to tell him all before her strength gave way again.

Stephen went back to his seat beside her with a psalm of thanksgiving in his heart. Never had he been so glad of the thoughtfulness of his butler before.

"Now, Sidney," he said, cheerfully, "tell me all about it. What has made you leave Brighton so suddenly, without giving me any warning or bringing any attendant with you?"

She looked up into his face earnestly as she replied to his question by another.

"Were you going home to Easthorpe?"

"Yes," he answered wonderingly. "I have been to Dering on business and I am returning to Ashford; we seem doomed to meet at railway-stations, Sidney," he added, with a slight laugh which sounded forced and tuneless in the silent carriage.

"Do not go home," she said suddenly, grasping his arm with her trembling hands, burning hands. "Oh, Stephen, do not go home! Come with me, away—far away? Have you not heard?"

He looked down at her in intense bewilderment, without the remotest conception of her meaning; then a thought struck him and held him for a moment dumb with terror. Her brain had given way, he thought, and in her delirium she had left Brighton by stealth and come to Ashford. How fortunate that he had met her! Poor child! Alone and ill as she was how could she have found her way home?

He put his arm round her once more, and drew her tenderly to his side, looking down at the beautiful face with a love and tenderness he did not try to disguise; but he could not speak to her for a moment, for his lips were quivering somewhat, and there was a strange lump in his throat.

"Have you not heard?" she repeated, in husky awe-stricken tones—"have you not heard? They know—they have found out! I heard it last night at the ball, and I could not come sooner—I missed the train; but now that you are here, we can go away somewhere, and they will not know."

"My poor Sidney!" he said tremulously. "I shall not mind," she went on faintly—"not if you are safe. You will go away, Stephen, will you not? And—and I will go; you will not go without me, as you thought once—you will let me be with you?"

"My dearest, yes," he said unsteadily. "When you are stronger, I will take you away; but we must first go home to Easthorpe and let you get quite well."

"Not to Easthorpe," she cried, in intense alarm—"not there! They will be there looking for you! We will get out of the train when it stops, and go away—oh, so far away, Stephen, just you and I; and I will be such a good wife, so patient, so careful, that I will make you happy. You will trust me, Stephen?"

"My darling," he murmured, with humid eyes, touched by her pathetic eagerness and humility, "I trust you fully, and by and by we will go away together, and try to repair the mistakes of the past."

She looked up at him still; but in the sweet pleading eyes had come a look of puzzled impatience.

"Do you not understand?" she asked hastily. "Stephen, they know, and they—"

DRISCOLL—
She sank down upon her knees by his side, still clasping his arm with her little feverish hands, her eyes raised to his in wild appeal; but Stephen, who had no clew to the mystery, could only look at her in pitying compassion, and try to soothe her by a few softly spoken words and tender caresses. But she shrunk from his impatiently.

"Will you not heed?" she said faintly. "Oh, listen to me, Stephen! I heard it last night at the ball—Lord de la Poer told me; it was in the newspapers."

"What was in the newspapers, dear?" he asked her gently, putting his arms around her, and holding the little trembling form in his tender clasp. "I am very stupid, Sidney; but I do not seem able to understand."

"Perhaps you do not know," she whispered, letting her aching weary head rest again his arm as she looked up into his face with miserable pleading eyes. "It has come—that which I have been dreading for so many long days. It has been long in coming; but it has come at last."

"What has come at last?" he said, in ever-increasing bewilderment, for Sidney's manner was so earnest and significant that he began to think that the delirium existed only in his fancy.

"Then you do not know?" she interrogated wearily. "Oh, Stephen, must I tell you? Will you not understand that it kills me to tell you? Oh, you must have feared it, even as I have!"

"I am afraid I am very dense," he said gently; "but I do not understand cannot even guess at your meaning, Sidney."

"Do you know?"—the little burning hands gripped and held him with a sudden fierce strength, the great passionate eyes were fixed upon his face in unutterable fear and misery—"do you know what the Earl said last night? Oh, the words have never left me for a moment since—they seem to dance before me in letters of fire! He said—the eager piteous voice sunk to a whisper, but every word was clearly and distinctly uttered—"that the mystery of the Ashford murder was likely to be solved very shortly, and

that some startling and unlooked-for revelation might be expected, that the police were on the track. He said that—Oh, Stephen, how you will understand."

In her agony of shame at the accusation she thought she had made against him—of shame for his shame—her head fell forward upon his knee, while her hands still held him; in mute assurance that, no matter what his shame was, she would cling to him through it all.

But her husband, uncomprehending until now, suddenly divined her meaning, or supposed that he divined it. She feared for Frank Greville's safety, and perhaps, knowing something of his whereabouts, she was anxious to go somewhere where her evidence could not be obtained if it were sought for. There was method in her madness then, he thought bitterly; all her terror was for this man whom, unworthy as he was, she loved still, and who would ever stand between Stephen and his heart's desire while life lasted.

His face had altered strangely as he sat looking down in silence at the stricken head resting against his knee, at the little trembling hands holding him with such a convulsive clasp. All the tenderness died out of it—not the compassion—for it was not in Stephen's nature to look at a woman in trouble without pity—and in the sudden revulsion of feeling he dropped his arm from around her and drew back a little.

"You know now?"

"Yes," he answered, in a voice, so cold and changed that had Sidney's own agitation been less, she could not have failed to notice it—"yes, I know now!"

There was a moment's silence; the train rushed onward, putting the gloaming, the snow had ceased to fall the stars were coming out one by one in the clear deep blue of the sky. They had rushed through a station just then, and Stephen had seen the lamps burning, and had caught a glimpse of the waiting travellers, which he recalled afterward, thinking how strangely in "moments" of great excitement trifles seem to fix themselves on one's mind—and memory when greater matters fade from them.

"Stephen!"—the faint, broken voice fell upon the silence sadly—"you will go now?"

"To be continued."

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The New Viceroy of India

MR. EDWARD WOOD, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE HONOURED.

The Government are giving one of their best men as Viceroy to India. It would have been difficult to make a better choice. A man of thoughtful character, with a high sense of duty and an agreeably dignified demeanour, Mr. Edward Wood has a combination of qualities which fit him for a position, both responsible and ceremonial, in which sympathetic understanding of other people as well as firmness are required.

His biography of John Kettle is an index to his mind, and shows how he has inherited interests which have distinguished his father, Lord Halifax. Through his grandfather, who was Secretary of State for India in the last Administrations of Palmerston and Russell, he claims a link with its government.

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of Commons men, and some observers have thought he might become a leading Parliamentarian.

There may be regret among friends that he abandons a career in the House for which he had a true instinct. In the course of nature, however, as the eldest surviving son of a peer, he was destined in any case to go to "the other place."

New Viceroy of India.
Born on April 18, 1867, Mr. Wood was educated at Eton and Christ Church, and was a fellow of All Souls, Oxford. He is the only surviving son and heir of Viscount Halifax, the veteran President of the English Church Union. He served with the Yorkshire Dragoons in France during the Great War. As Under-Secretary for the Colonies (April, 1921, to October, 1922), he visited the West Indies to investigate conditions of life and the machinery of government on the spot.

A Happy Marriage.
He married Lady Dorothy Onslow, daughter of the Earl of Onslow, in 1909, and has three sons and a daughter. In 1904 he inherited the immense Ingram estates in the West Riding of Yorkshire, including the fine mansion of Temple Newsum, near Leeds, under the will of his aunt (Mrs. Meynell Ingram). The historic seat is the Templestone of "Yanboe," and within its walls was born Lord Dartley, husband of Mary Queen of Scots. The mansion was acquired by the Yeomanry in France during the Great War. As Under-Secretary for the

time, presented to the city many of the valuable pictures which the building contained.

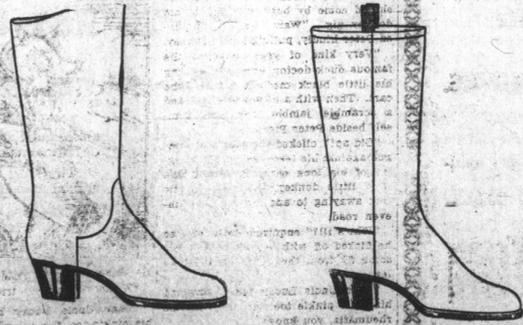
Mr. Wood is heir to his father's large property in the East and West Ridings. He is a freeman of Leeds and an honorary Doctor of Laws of Leeds University. His Yorkshire seat is at Garrowby, Bishop Walton.

Who Will Succeed Him?
Though the new Viceroy will not take up his duties till the spring (writes a political correspondent) he will at once give up his post as Minister for Agriculture and his seat in the House of Commons. A new writ will be moved for Ripon soon after Parliament reassembles on November 16th, and his successor will be appointed before that date. It is probable that

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Mr. Baldwin may make his choice from among the Ministers outside Cabinet, particularly as the rank in which Mr. Wood vacates there is a more than usually exceptional party, all with a special reputation, and especially as next year the Government tends to carry out the agricultural policy on which Mr. Wood has been actively engaged ever since he took office.

The post at the moment is more important than usual, as the Prime Minister in several of his speeches has recognized. He might, it is thought, promote Mr. Walter Guinness who has achieved a considerable reputation as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, a post which is always regarded as being the stepping-stone to Cabinet rank. The announcement of the name of the Minister for Agriculture will be long delayed.—Liverpool Post.

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Woman's 300ft. Cliff Falls

TWO KILLED ON BEACHY HEAD IN A WEEK.

Although rescued alive after a fall from the top of Beachy Head, Eastbourne recently, Mrs. Allen, Darley Road, Battersea, S.W., died of the Eastbourne hospital.

The tragedy occurred at almost the same spot where Mrs. Elizabeth Kenzie, of the School House, Beachy Head, was killed the previous week.

Mrs. Allen was one of a party of London visitors who went to Beachy Head for the week-end. The party went to Beachy Head by motor-car and shortly after alighting at the edge of the cliff, when she stepped to pitch forward and fell over.

At this point the cliff is 400ft. high. Crowd Looks On.

Coastguards and police were immediately summoned, and Petty Officer Hartfield and Signalmen Charles Smith and Hanford, and Mr. W. H. Fothergill, of Eastbourne, descended the cliff, watched by a large crowd of people.

Mrs. Allen was found stretched on the ground, and to this day was strapped a perilous task on narrow ledges, and then lowered down the cliff by ropes, to a number of people who were waiting on the beach to receive her. Mrs. Allen was conscious when she reached the top. On the cliff edge was found a bag containing, it is stated, a note.

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