

SILENT LIPS

BY ANNIE C. TIBBITS
Author of "The Love That Won," "The Mystery of Iris Grey," "Robes of Shame,"
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CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

A sudden cold shook him from head to foot. Suppose—suppose Hetty in a moment of passion—madness—had hurt her father! Suppose the Earl had heard and had used his knowledge to separate her and Lord Fanshawe! Suppose that was the reason why Hetty had disappeared?

But no—no. It was impossible. Hetty—his little, bright-eyed Hetty had always been open and frank and true, and God help him, he would never believe anything else.

He put up his hand to his head in an almost involuntary effort to raise his hat at the thought of her, and then stopped abruptly.

Ted Sealey was staring at him almost wildly. He had taken a step forward, was holding out his hand.

"Geoffrey—good gracious—it can't be Geoffrey Claverings!" he cried.

CHAPTER VIII.

They Call Her Guilty.

Geoffrey stood for a moment taken aback as Ted Sealey started incredulously into his face.

"It can't be Geoffrey Claverings, surely!" he repeated.

Geoffrey made a movement as though he would have shrunk back into the shadow, and then hesitated. After all, Ted had been one of the few friends he had had when he had worked at the mill, and he was honest and faithful—the could trust him. He put out his hand.

"Ted!" he said, a little huskily.

Ted looked into his eyes.

"Geoff, old chap, I'm glad to see you," he cried. "And I never thought I should again. I thought you had gone for good!"

He hesitated for a moment, then his hands clasped tightly. "What brings you back?" he asked.

"They said you would never dare to come. They said you had done bad things, and the earl spoke of it openly when they sent up a deputation to him from the coal mines the day after you went. He said he should prosecute you

whispering and talking—why there were even some said that whatever it was you had done he had probably led you into it, and he was running about all over the town with Hetty Lancaster and—well—he got a bit of a bad name after you had gone, I can tell you. And on the top of it all came that black business of the Lancasters."

Geoffrey caught his breath.

The men in the forge had opened the furnace door again, and the great piece of iron had come out red hot, rolling on its chain, rolling to the centre of the floor, where the men began sharply scraping away the shell that had formed upon it in the fire.

Geoffrey turned and began walking away from the forge, away from the patch of light into the dusky street. The twilight prevented Ted from seeing his face plainly, but he turned it from him all the same as he walked.

"What of them?" he asked hoarsely.

"What of the Lancasters?" Ted started in surprise.

"Do you mean to say that you never heard of that?" he cried. "Why, you must have been asleep, you must have been buried in the wilds all this time not to have heard of that."

"Yes, I've been in the wilds," said Geoffrey huskily, "but tell me."

Ted gave him a quick glance. His sharp eyes saw the pallor of his face in spite of the dusk. They saw, too, the drawn look of suffering about his lips, and he abruptly linked his arm in his.

"It would have hurt you years ago," he said at last, "but I reckon you've forgotten her long since while you've been knocking about the world. But if it hurts you to hear—stop me. You would have had her for you years ago. You were wrapped up in her and believed in her so and after all she wasn't worth it, Geoffrey. Many a time I felt thankful you were out of Oldcastle. She wasn't worth a minute's heartache, wasn't worth an honest man's thought."

Ted looked at him shrewdly again, and slightly shook his head. "You were right over the old pain—what he had to tell him would hurt him after all."

turned for himself? Was there nobody in Oldcastle who believed in her, just as there was nobody who believed in him?

But he had forgotten. Ted had been loyal. Ted's faith in himself had never faltered or wavered.

"There were many things against her," Ted went on. "She hadn't been seen for two days, and then on the second night she came back. Molly Byrne saw her, and Basil Merrill saw her, and a bevy of people. Bessie said she came back to get her father's pardon, but it's like her to work her imagination for any one she loves, and she loved Hetty Lancaster and to this day sticks out that I'm a fool for believing her guilty. And there's one thing I can't understand about Bessie. She was that emphatic about Hetty Lancaster's innocence, and yet, lately, she's been taken up and going about with Barker, the lawyer's clerk, who believes her guilty. I suppose it's like a woman, but it isn't like Bessie, somehow. Why, she would scarcely speak to me, she'd scarcely look at me at the time when everybody was talking about the case, and when I said that things looked black for Hetty, she declared then that if I ever doubt her she'd be taking for me herself! Yet there she is now playing about with that dandy of a clerk at Jackson's. And I've heard him say that there isn't a soul in the place who doubts that Hetty murdered her father. What can you make of women, Geoff? They're puzzlers for any man. I reckon; monkey puzzles I call 'em. Imps of Satan half of 'em, every one with a bit of devil in her, and yet, lo! Geoff, the amount of angel in 'em, too, staggers a man sometimes."

He broke off. Geoff was staring down the half empty street as though in the misty dusk he saw something that his companion did not. He turned suddenly at last.

"But what was there against Hetty, after all?" he said abruptly. "There was nothing only the suspicions of people. Why should she have done such a terrible thing as murder? There was no reason, there could have been no reason."

Ted shook his head. "There was plenty," he said, "and it would have been a bad look out for her if it hadn't been for Dr. North. For Mr. Lancaster had forbidden her to leave the house, had forbidden Hetty to have anything to do with him, and in a letter to the earl, which was found in his pocket, he said that it was his painful duty to have to accuse Lord Fanshawe of a crime. There was plenty of reason for the quarrel, plenty of reason for the crime."

"But," stammered Geoff, "why should that have caused Hetty to—murder him?"

Ted looked straight into his face.

"Nobody knew what the crime was that Mr. Lancaster thought Lord Fanshawe had committed, but Lord Fanshawe's name stood for everything bad in Oldcastle just then, and if it was true, as people said, that Hetty was secretly married to him, why, what was more likely than that she should try to prevent her father from speaking out?"

"But—but—murder!" cried Geoff. "And why should it have been Hetty? It might have been any one; Fanshawe, himself, perhaps. Oh, Ted, it wasn't before heaven it couldn't have been Hetty."

Ted stood silent for a moment, and then lifted his head slowly.

"You'd better forget her, and all about her," he said deliberately. "She murdered him for sure, for she was seen."

"Seen?"

"Yes, Molly Byrne, the cook, saw her, and Miss Walter, who was behind her, saw her too, saw her in the window, half in half out, just as she was getting away."

CHAPTER IX.

The Benefit of the Doubt.

A cry broke from Geoffrey's lips. He could not, would not believe it. It was impossible, horrible. He turned to Ted.

"All the same, I don't believe it," he said huskily. "I don't believe she was guilty. I don't believe she had any hand in it, and I want to find her, Ted, and prove her innocence, and I'll do it, too."

Ted stared at him dully for an instant, then thrust out his hand.

"I hope you'll succeed," he said. "With all my heart I hope you'll succeed. I hope you'll find her all you hope and wish. I hope there'll be no disappointment for you, Geoff."

"Disappointment!" He stared away down the street. How chilly it seemed, how dark! Ted, who had suffered from his pocket was a cheque book and twenty pounds in notes and gold. In London, at the Hotel Cecil, his rooms were costing him six guineas a week. He was paying his valet at the rate of double Ted's wages. Poor old Ted!

So much that I think nothing can hurt me now, he thought. I should be disappointed in her, I'd drop my body into the river tonight! If I thought I should lose my belief in her I couldn't face the morning. But I don't think I should. As I saw it eight years ago, and there was no sin or shame on it then, and I can't believe there is now. And now, I shall have to see it before I believe it, and until then—

His hand suddenly met Ted's in a warm clasp.

"Until then," cried Ted. "Whatever I can do I'll do it with a will. God grant you may be right about her, Geoff, and forgive me for doubting her a little. He could not meet Geoffrey's eyes just then, for the doubt in his own mind, the fear that Geoffrey had in his own mind, the fear that Hetty was guilty, that Hetty was guilty, turned his face gray and his lips white."

"But now," he added abruptly, "it's getting late. Where are you stopping tonight, Geoff?"

Geoffrey hesitated. He had brought a small bag which he had left the station, but he had had it packed by his valet without thinking, and in it there were no doubt things which would make Ted open his eyes. He had told his man to put in clothes only for one night, but an expensive look, and even though he might tell Ted the history of his life during the last eight years, yet he did not want any one else to hear it, or to suspect who and what he was. If he was to trace Hetty and prove her innocent, he must remain unknown. If Mr. Lancaster had been murdered then the real murderer might be found by his valet. Meanwhile Ted had given a keen glance at his clothes.

"Come home with me for the night," he suggested. "I lodge at old Mrs. Sharpe's and there's a room where you can have a dressy sea won't charge you much for it. You wouldn't mind a couple of shillings, would you? And you could share my breakfast in the morning."

"I can afford more than that," he said slowly. "I haven't been doing badly. I'll tell you all about it some day. Ted, but not now. Meanwhile, if I come with you, can I come unrecognized? I mean, will you not come unrecognized?"

Ted looked at him sharply.

"I should say it's not likely," he replied. "I've been looking at you while we've been talking and wondering how it was I recognized you at all. You're not a bit like the Geoffrey Claverings who left us. The years have altered you beyond belief."

"Well," Geoffrey looked vaguely about

the street. "I don't want to be recognized, Ted. And if I am to find out about Hetty it might ruin everything if it leaked out who I was. So I want you to keep my identity a secret and let nobody know that I am Claverings. I'll tell you all about things, presently, Ted."

"Yes, yes; that's all right," said Ted, hurriedly. "What you don't want to tell I don't want to know. I'm your friend and always have been and always shall be, and there's my hand on it."

Geoffrey laughed as he clasped it, and together they turned away and began walking down the street toward the river. As they went, a house, standing a little back, looking different to its neighbors, attracted Geoffrey's attention.

"Does Dr. North still live there?" he asked.

Ted nodded.

"Yes, and you'll be wanting to see him," he said. "He may be able to tell you something of Hetty Lancaster. He may know where she is now, and what she has been doing."

Geoffrey came to a sudden standstill.

"Then I'll see him and come on to you afterward," he said. "I shall have no peace till I've started, Ted, I'll see things going. I shall have no peace till I've found her, so I'll go to Dr. North now and see what he can tell me."

Ted nodded.

"And I'll arrange with old mother

He broke off, his face clouding a little as though painful recollections overtook him, and turned away.

"I came to see you," Geoffrey said, slowly. "Because of some of these changes, I am back here in Oldcastle for a purpose, to find Hetty Lancaster."

Dr. North started.

"Why do you come to me?" he asked, sharply.

"Because," Geoffrey replied, "I have been told that you stuck up for her when all Oldcastle was against her, because you fought for her and helped her and believed in her. I have come because I thought it possible that you might help me to find her, and prove her innocent of the thing of which she was thought guilty. I've come because all these years I haven't forgotten, because I—I—love her, and want her."

Dr. North stood without moving his eyes from Geoffrey's face. He watched him as he might have watched a patient, whom he suspected of disguising his symptoms.

"Well, what do you want to know?" he asked.

"The truth," Geoffrey answered, abruptly. "The truth, whatever it is. I have been told that at the request you gave evidence in her favor, and I have been told—that that it was possible that you exaggerated for her sake. There are some folks who believe you said that Mr. Lancaster's death was caused by heart failure on purpose, because you wanted to get her off and marry her, and I want to

have killed him by bringing on an attack."

"But—you prescribed it," Geoffrey exclaimed.

"Not in that form—not the poison in the glass," Dr. North said, "but whether he took any of it I can't tell. He might not have done, and for all I knew from the examination I made he might have died naturally enough. I did not go farther—I did not search his body for poison—I dared not."

There was a dead silence for a moment. Geoffrey sat quite still in his chair. Dr. North stopped in his walk, as though staring at the carpet at his feet as though there were puzzles in the pattern of it.

"If it had been any one but Hetty," he added abruptly at last, "I should have said she was guilty, but I could not, would not believe it of her. She must have been mad. Heaven knows, Claverings, she must have been mad! I think Lord Fanshawe bewitched her. Anyhow, she was never the same from the day you left Oldcastle until the day she disappeared."

"Where did she go?" Geoffrey asked.

Dr. North shook his head.

"I don't know," he replied; "she was seen, as you know, by Miss Walter, who had called on some trifling matter on the night of Mr. Lancaster's death. She was either in the act of coming in or going out of his library by the window when Molly Byrne opened the door to announce Miss Walter, and directly she saw them she fled—ran away, and was never seen again in Oldcastle, neither at the inquest nor

"And she?" asked Geoffrey hoarsely.

"She said she dared not," Dr. North replied. "She seemed afraid of me, as if—oh, heaven forgive me for saying it, Claverings, but she behaved just as if she had been guilty of her father's death, and knew that it had only been through me and what I had done that she had gone free. I tried not to believe it, tried to believe in her, but I could not. She looked and spoke as if she felt that I must have known her to be guilty, as if I had sacrificed my honor in defending her, as though she knew—as though we both knew—that I had lied at the inquest."

Geoffrey started up from his chair and crossed to the fireplace, standing looking down with blind eyes at the dull fire that burned in the grate.

"She isn't guilty," he said, sharply after a minute. "I won't believe it, I'll never believe it until I hear her confess it with her own lips. Where is she now, North?"

Dr. North stared at him a little queerly.

"That I don't know," he answered. "She would not tell me where she lived, and I tried to follow her and find her. I traced her to Battersea, and there lost sight of her. She managed to give me the slip, as she said she would, and I have been to London twice since then, and hunted the square, and never had even a glimpse of her."

Geoffrey turned suddenly a face that showed haggard and white in the pale light.

"North, I saw her," he cried, "saw her two or three days ago in St. James' Park, on my way to—"

He broke off, drew his breath sharply. He had better not reveal his identity yet. No one must know yet that he was Geoffrey Waring, that only a day or two ago he had been presented to the King! He turned abruptly and looked squarely into Dr. North's face.

"I saw her," he went on, "but I didn't for a moment dream it could be Hetty. I—I thought she was Lady Fanshawe. I thought he had married her, and that she was a great lady. I never dreamed of anything else." His voice broke. "I had no idea of all this. I have been ruing it these eight years. I've been out in the wilds, in Australia, India—oh, everywhere, trying to forget England and the memory of it, and now to come back and find her under a cloud, branded—it is horrible. North, and I am either going to prove her innocent or die."

He took a step forward, his hand outstretched.

"A few weeks, it may be in a few days, when I have found her. If she is guilty, you will never hear of me again. If she is innocent, I shall fight for her tooth and nail, and you'll help me, North?"

The two men clasped hands.

"You know it," said the doctor.

A few minutes later Geoffrey stood at the top of the long white steps looking down into the lighted streets. The doctor stood behind him.

"I shall wait for some sign from you," he said a little unsteadily. "If you can only prove her innocent—"

"I shall!" broke in Geoffrey.

"Heaven grant that you may," said the doctor, "but—"

He stopped. On the pavement below a man had come to a standstill and was looking up at them curiously. He was a pale, thin wisp of a man, with eyes that never looked out straight, but always from their corners; and he seemed subject to moods. For at first sight he had merely raised his hand to his hat in salute on seeing the doctor, but as his glance fell on Geoffrey he stopped and turned.

"Forgive me for interrupting you, doctor," he said, "but shall you be at the club tonight? I'm your man if you are." He did not look at North as he spoke, but at Geoffrey, and the doctor nodded abruptly.

"That is Barker, the lawyer's clerk," he said as the man passed on. "Do you remember him?"

Involuntarily Geoffrey shrank back, and he asked North a similar question to one he had asked Ted Sealey a little while before.

"I suppose he would not recognize me, would he?" he asked. "I suppose no one would?"

The doctor shook his head.

"I don't want to be known," Geoffrey said. "If I am to find Hetty, said—and clear her, I shall have to do it quietly. You understand?"

"Yes," said North; "all right, and you can rely on me. I'll not let on."

Geoffrey turned, watching the thin figure of Barker disappear before he slipped away down the steps into the street. An hour or two later, at the club Barker met North with a queer smile.

"You're in luck's way, doctor," he said.

"Why, the associate of a millionaire, I reckon."

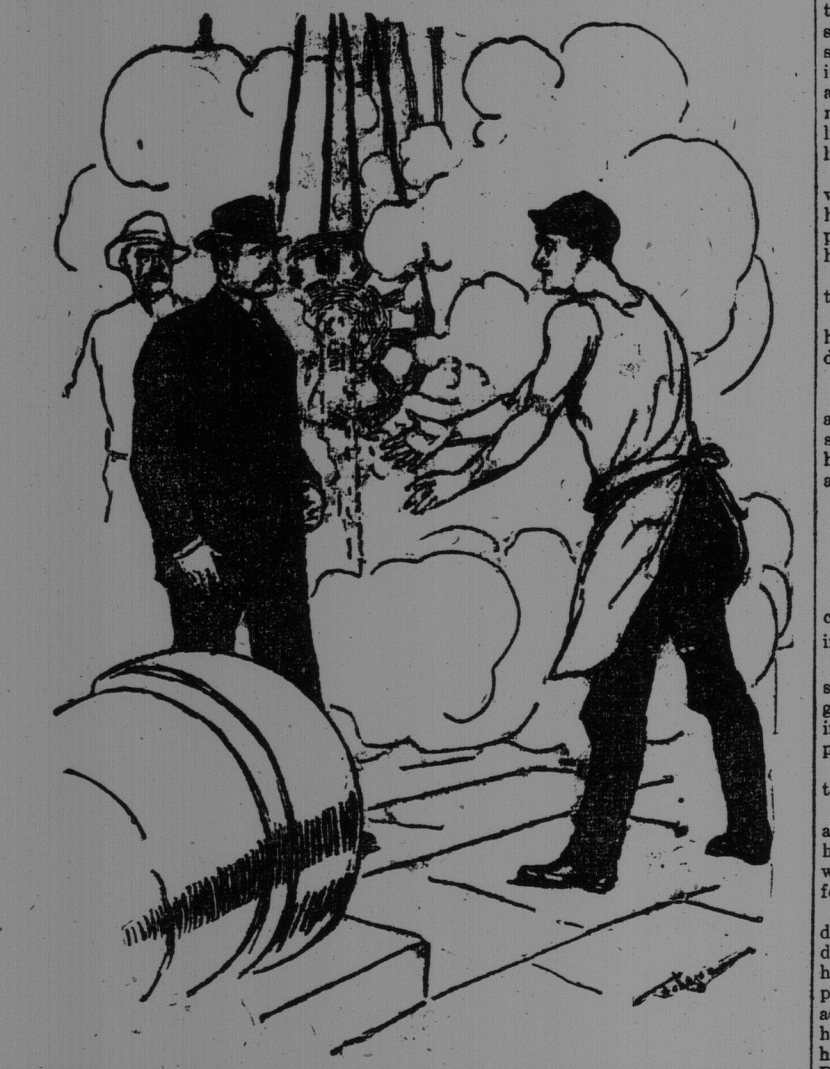
The doctor repeated the name stupidly, and for answer Barker drew from his pocket a London paper.

"Surely that was the man you were talking to when you dropped tonight," he said, and held out before him the picture of Geoffrey enshrouded on the steps of the Hotel Cecil.

Dr. North stared at it with the blood dying from his face. It was like, it was strangely like! He recovered himself with an effort.

"By Jove! What a queer likeness!" he said. "But my friend wasn't Waring, or any relation to him."

(To be continued.)



"Geoffrey—good gracious, it can't be Geoffrey Claverings," he cried.

If you ever showed your face in Oldcastle again, and that your face had tried to ruin his son."

"He said—he said that?" Geoffrey was white to the lips. "But Lord Fanshawe denied it, of course!"

Ted shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't reckon Lord Fanshawe up to much," he said, "and you know I never did. A coward he is, and never was anything else but once, and that was when he struck over marrying Evelyn Walter. But you heard about that. It was years ago; it must have happened before you went."

Geoffrey shook his head. He could not speak. The past, the ugly past was back upon him, gripping and holding him in a vice.

Ted Sealey puffed his hat back from his forehead.

"Why, there was an announcement in the Oldcastle Chronicle," he said, "saying that the earl's son was to marry Sir Arthur's daughter, and Lord Fanshawe, he just struck out about it."

"Yes—yes," said Geoffrey, sharply. "Go on."

"He refused to have it, and there was a scene at the castle. It appeared that the earl had had the announcement put in the paper himself, or at least the people said so and he was about as mad as could be when Lord Fanshawe refused to abide by it, and try as he might he couldn't get him to marry Evelyn Walter. The rumor was that the next week, and then it was that people began to say things about Lord Fanshawe."

"What sort of things?" Geoffrey asked, hoarsely.

"Why, that he was more than harem scarum. People don't mind a chap being a little devil-may-care, but they began to say that he was more than that! Rumors began to get about that he was going a bit too far. A fellow may go into debt and all that—he might even gamble, but he had been persisting in it if he's got any grit in him, and he doesn't do other worse things. They said that Lord Fanshawe was leading other young men on, young men who were in inferior positions to himself and couldn't afford to live his life, and there was Giles clerk—you remember Giles clerk—John Andrews? He was found by the river one night and they said he had left a letter behind to Lord Fanshawe, but no body ever saw it, and there were some queer things whispered then, for he had embezzled over £500 of Giles' money, and it was known that he had been playing high with Lord Fanshawe a few nights before he was found drowned. And there were other things, and people were

turned for himself? Was there nobody in Oldcastle who believed in her, just as there was nobody who believed in him?

But he had forgotten. Ted had been loyal. Ted's faith in himself had never faltered or wavered.

"There were many things against her," Ted went on. "She hadn't been seen for two days, and then on the second night she came back. Molly Byrne saw her, and Basil Merrill saw her, and a bevy of people. Bessie said she came back to get her father's pardon, but it's like her to work her imagination for any one she loves, and she loved Hetty Lancaster and to this day sticks out that I'm a fool for believing her guilty. And there's one thing I can't understand about Bessie. She was that emphatic about Hetty Lancaster's innocence, and yet, lately, she's been taken up and going about with Barker, the lawyer's clerk, who believes her guilty. I suppose it's like a woman, but it isn't like Bessie, somehow. Why, she would scarcely speak to me, she'd scarcely look at me at the time when everybody was talking about the case, and when I said that things looked black for Hetty, she declared then that if I ever doubt her she'd be taking for me herself! Yet there she is now playing about with that dandy of a clerk at Jackson's. And I've heard him say that there isn't a soul in the place who doubts that Hetty murdered her father. What can you make of women, Geoff? They're puzzlers for any man. I reckon; monkey puzzles I call 'em. Imps of Satan half of 'em, every one with a bit of devil in her, and yet, lo! Geoff, the amount of angel in 'em, too, staggers a man sometimes."

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"I saw her," he went on, "but I didn't for a moment dream it could be Hetty. I—I thought she was Lady Fanshawe. I thought he had married her, and that she was a great lady. I never dreamed of anything else." His voice broke. "I had no idea of all this. I have been ruing it these eight years. I've been out in the wilds, in Australia, India—oh, everywhere, trying to forget England and the memory of it, and now to come back and find her under a cloud, branded—it is horrible. North, and I am either going to prove her innocent or die."

He took a step forward, his hand outstretched.

"A few weeks, it may be in a few days, when I have found her. If she is guilty, you will never hear of me again. If she is innocent, I shall fight for her tooth and nail, and you'll help me, North?"

The two men clasped hands.

"You know it," said the doctor.

A few minutes later Geoffrey stood at the top of the long white steps looking down into the lighted streets. The doctor stood behind him.

"I shall wait for some sign from you," he said a little unsteadily. "If you can only prove her innocent—"

"I shall!" broke in Geoffrey.

"Heaven grant that you may," said the doctor, "but—"

He stopped. On the pavement below a man had come to a standstill and was looking up at them curiously. He was a pale, thin wisp of a man, with eyes that never looked out straight, but always from their corners; and he seemed subject to moods. For at first sight he had merely raised his hand to his hat in salute on seeing the doctor, but as his glance fell on Geoffrey he stopped and turned.

"Forgive me for interrupting you, doctor," he said, "but shall you be at the club tonight? I'm your man if you are." He did not look at North as he spoke, but at Geoffrey, and the doctor nodded abruptly.

"That is Barker, the lawyer's clerk," he said as the man passed on. "Do you remember him?"

Involuntarily Geoffrey shrank back, and he asked North a similar question to one he had asked Ted Sealey a little while before.

"I suppose he would not recognize me, would he?" he asked. "I suppose no one would?"

The doctor shook his head.

"I don't want to be known," Geoffrey said. "If I am to find Hetty, said—and clear her, I shall have to do it quietly. You understand?"

"Yes," said North; "all right, and you can rely on me. I'll not let on."

Geoffrey turned, watching the thin figure of Barker disappear before he slipped away down the steps into the street. An hour or two later, at the club Barker met North with a queer smile.

"You're in luck's way, doctor," he said.

"Why, the associate of a millionaire, I reckon."

The doctor repeated the name stupidly, and for answer Barker drew from his pocket a London paper.

"Surely that was the man you were talking to when you dropped tonight," he said, and held out before him the picture of Geoffrey enshrouded on the steps of the Hotel Cecil.

Dr. North stared at it with the blood dying from his face. It was like, it was strangely like! He recovered himself with an effort.

"By Jove! What a queer likeness!" he said. "But my friend wasn't Waring, or any relation to him."

(To be continued.)

"Why do you come to me?" he asked, sharply.

know the truth—the truth—whatever it is."

Dr. North turned abruptly and began pacing up and down. Once he stopped and looked Geoffrey full in the face, as though he was weighing deliberately how much and how little he should tell him.

When he spoke at last his voice seemed a trifle unsteady.

"She was never for me," he said huskily, "and I might have known she never could be, but there are some men who are born fools, where women are concerned, and I was one, Claverings, and I went on hoping against hope that she would have me at last, that when everybody had said she would fall back on me. For that reason I was glad when you had gone out of Oldcastle. I was even brute enough to be glad when people began to say bad things of Lord Fanshawe, and that was the reason why I fought for her tooth and nail at the inquest. And it was no good. Fanshawe came first, you next. I'm a bad third."

Geoffrey was clutching at the arms of his chair.

"But at the inquest, North, your evidence was true, it was what you believed," he cried hoarsely. "You said you had attended him for heart disease. For heaven's sake tell me that that was true."

Dr. North paced slowly up and down before he replied. Then at last he came to a standstill and looked down into Geoffrey's eyes.

"Yes," he said, "that much was true. He had got heart disease very badly."

"Thank God!" cried Geoffrey.

"Very badly," the doctor repeated. "But there was no need for me to die then."

"What do you mean by that?" Geoffrey cried, hoarsely.

"I mean," said Dr. North with strange deliberation, "that I, I didn't know, that I wasn't sure if it was a natural death, and that I, I lied when I said I believed it was."

He turned away abruptly and then as he walked he said to himself, "To this day the thought of it haunts me like a nightmare, a hideous thing that I can't shake off. To this day I can't make up my mind, whether Hetty was guilty or not."

He flung out his hands with a sudden abrupt gesture.

"But," cried Geoffrey, "but it was heart failure that killed him, heart disease?"

"Yes, that was true, but," Geoffrey sprang to his feet as he paused.

"But what?" he cried passionately.

"But the poison in the glass might have done that," the doctor answered.

during the weeks that followed. She had disappeared. The police tried to find her, but failed, and for years I heard nothing of her. She might have been dead for all I know, until one day, about two or three years ago, I saw her in London."

"In London?" Geoffrey gave a startled cry as he remembered the girl so like his sister, who had been in St. James' Park as he drove through to Buckingham Palace.

"Yes," she was getting her living in a factory there," Dr. North said, "packing biscuits or something of the sort. Heaven knows it went to my heart to see her—all the bloom gone out of her face, all the light from her eyes. Do you remember, Claverings, what bright wide eyes she had? And her hair, it always seemed to have the sun in it in Oldcastle, but London had taken it out. London is a brutal, cruel place for a young girl, and when I saw her I thought it was killing her. I met her by accident, came once to notice with her in a West End square after I had searched for her in vain for years. She looked quite poor and utterly changed, but she was the same Hetty to me, and I told her so, and begged her to let me take care of her—to come back with me to Oldcastle as my wife."

CHAPTER X.

If This Should Be?

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