

IT CANNOT BE.

It cannot be that He who made This wondrous world for our delight, Designed that all its charms should fade, And pass forever from our sight; That all shall wither and decay, And know on earth no life but this, With only one finite survey, Of all its beauty and its bliss.

A CLEW BY WIRE Or, An Interrupted Current.

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CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

My old nurse insisted on my remaining at her house for dinner, and left me seated on the porch while she went inside to prepare the meal. From my seat I could see the station far down the hill, through the trees. Two men were moving about on the platform, but the distance was too great to allow distinction of anything but their forms.

CHAPTER XIV.

The rest of the day was spent at Sarah's house. Here at least were quiet, calm and peace. No uncanny mysteries, no disturbing influences marred the restfulness. The old nurse herself was a certainty; no doubts and fears were produced by her society. By her absolute faith in me, by the many little expressions of devotion to my best interests, a feeling of security was inspired, so that when I started on the homeward journey the influence of Sarah's peaceful abode went with me.

As I cautiously proceeded a thrill came over me, something like that which a child feels when, impelled by curiosity qualified by fear, it is about to venture into some unknown place. I would probably have gone to my room and procured a candle had not this fear-sensation come over me. I laughed at myself for experiencing it. Testing every step before trusting my whole weight upon it, lest the timbers rotted by the dampness might give way and precipitate me headlong to the depths below, I went slowly down into the Egyptian darkness. My hand rested on the rude balustrade all the way, and when it came to the end I knew I was standing on the last step. I am probably no more of a coward than most men, and had never been afraid of darkness; but this was the blackest night I had ever been immersed in. Really there was a lesser degree of darkness when I closed my eyes, for then the sensations of the glowing western sky still lingered.

ities, and I was seized with a trembling fit. My knees smote together, and my hand shook so that the flame of the candle was nearly extinguished. The return of my fear, however, made me all the more resolved to go on. I gritted my teeth, and, advancing my pistol in readiness, slowly began the descent. Not a sound greeted my ears save that made by my own footsteps. After reaching the bottom step I held the candle aloof and gazed expectantly around. The room was about 20 feet square; the flat stones with which it was paved and the surrounding walls were slimy with moisture, and here and there reflected back the light of the candle. That was all. No human being was in sight, not a sign of one having been here. At my feet a part of the stone pavement had been removed and a plank inserted. Lying near the edge of the plank was a paper with some printing on the outside, like that on a bond or deed. I stepped down upon the plank, and again noticed that one end sank under my weight. Stooping down to pick up the paper, my ears were again assailed by the solemn admonition seeming to come from the opposite side of the cellar: "Another step means death. Pause before you take it!"



CHAPTER XV. How did the bond which was stolen from the Safety Security company over a year ago get into the cellar of an old country house belonging to a former employe of the bank? Who could have dropped it there, and where were the rest? Was it trap laid for me? Sonntag, Skinner, Jackson, the unexplained and curious relation between these three, the walled-up cellar, the underground passage undoubtedly leading to it, and so safely guarded—what could it all mean? Was it possible that my old house was the receptacle of the stolen property, and Sonntag, Skinner, even Jackson, the gang, or a portion of it, had perpetrated the robbery? If this was true, then there was an attempt being made to furnish some proof which would throw conviction upon me.

VIOLENT STORM. Awful Results of a Cyclone that Struck Three States. Scores of Human Lives Were Blotted Out and Loss to Property Foots Up More Than \$500,000.—Path of the Storm Was More Than 150 Miles in Length. Chicago, May 20.—Forty-two persons are known to have lost their lives and 28 others are reported dead as the result of the tornadoes which devastated portions of eastern Iowa, western Illinois and northern Wisconsin Wednesday night. Iowa heads the list with 19 fatalities. Fourteen deaths are reported in Illinois.

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