

The MYSTERY of HARTLEY HOUSE

by Clifford S. Raymond
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A SPANISH SAILOR

Synopsis.—Dr. John Michelson, just beginning his career, becomes resident physician and companion of Homer Sidney at Hartley house. Mr. Sidney is an American, a semi-invalid, old and rich and very desirous to live. Mrs. Sidney is a Spanish woman, dignified and reticent. Jed, the butler, acts like a privileged member of the family. The family has come from Montevideo, South America. Hartley house is a fine old isolated country place, with a murder story, a "haunted pool," and many watch-dogs, and an atmosphere of mystery. The "haunted pool" is where Richard Dobson, son of a former owner of Hartley house, had killed his brother, Arthur Dobson. Jed begins operations by locking the doctor in his room the very first night. Doctor John fires his door so he can't be locked in. He meets Isobel, daughter of the house, and falls in love at first sight. In the night he finds the butler drunk and holding Mrs. Sidney by the wrist. He interferes. Mrs. Sidney makes light of it. John buys a revolver. John overhears Jed telling Mrs. Sidney he will have his way. In reply she says she will not hesitate to kill him. Mrs. Sidney asks John to consent to the announcement of his engagement to Isobel. The young people consent to the make-believe engagement. Later they find it is to head off Jed, who would marry Isobel. Jed tries to kill John, but the matter is smoothed over. John, though "engaged" to Isobel, conceals his love. Mr. Sidney visits a nearby prison and has Dobson, the murderer, pointed out. Jed tells the story of the Dobson murder. The family go to South America for the winter. John is left at home, but the "engagement" is not broken. John hears the story of a tragedy "that might have happened in Montevideo." The family returns. A mysterious Spanish sailor appears.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

Jed may have suspected I carried a pistol. I had no more than caught a glimpse of his white, alarmed face when he sprang at me and grabbed at my hip pocket. I had a pistol in the pocket at which he reached, but I intercepted his movement before he got the weapon.

"Let me have it," he begged. "Just a minute!"

I got a hold of his wrist, which stopped him, and he whimpered. Then he broke away and showed himself at the window. At this the man on the lawn smiled with a joyousness that was a triumph. He indicated in a flash that he had found what he had sought. He smiled so that I could see the white of his teeth. He had been uncertain and puzzled when I first saw him looking up at the windows of the house. With Jed framed in one of the windows, he was triumphant and rejoicing. Whatever he wanted he had found something which pleased him.

Jed was furious, the more furious because he was helpless. He would have murdered the man on the lawn if he had had any means of doing so. He was so furious that he did not care how he revealed himself to me.

The man on the lawn stood laughing for a moment and then walked slowly



But I Intercepted His Movement Before He Got the Weapon.

away toward the brush, into which he disappeared. Jed hung out of the window watching him.

"Well, sir," I said, "I think we have you under a real restraint at last."

"I was mad that the fellow should have come up to the house that way. Some tramp!"

"And you dropped the coffee-tray and tried to get my pistol. A perfectly natural proceeding on seeing an unknown tramp!"

"We don't want strangers about here," he said.

"You don't want that man," I said. "And he is not a stranger. When he saw you, he smiled as if he had found what he was looking for."

Jed was unhappy and showed it.

"I wish you were a friend, doctor,"

he said. "I try to make you one. I will get you your coffee."

He sent in a maid to sweep up the breakage from the coffee-tray, and presently he came with another pot and cup. He had staided down, but was not tranquil.

"You know that man," I said, "and you wanted to kill him."

"I never saw him before," he said.

"You have had some sort of dealing with him. He has been hunting for you. He has found you. I think we are going to find you more interesting. Jed, the man will remain in the neighborhood; I think you are going to have some unpleasant hours. The thought does not make me unhappy."

"I wish I could find a friend in this house," said Jed.

"I wish you could deserve one," I said.

My description of Hartley house has been so sketchy and indifferent that it may not have included mention of the formal gardens which took in the river side of the place. They were charming at all times but particularly so at sunset, when the radiance was behind the western hills two miles across the water and was reflected in the clouds back of our own eastern hills. The shore at this point was narrow, and the river was wide. Hills, river and bottom lands formed an intimate sanctuary which evening glorified.

To the north the gardens terminated at a high brick wall against which hollyhocks grew and now were in gorgeous blossom.

Jed had joined me in the garden, and we were sitting on a stone bench facing the river not fifty feet from the brick wall and the hollyhocks to the north. Jed was expected within a quarter of an hour to join Mr. Sidney. He seemed dejected and worried—in a fashion timid, I thought.

When he came to sit down beside me, I resented the intrusion for a moment; but knowing that he had only a few moments in which to impose his presence upon me, I did not make him feel any more unwelcome than ordinarily he knew himself to be.

A schooner deep in the water with brick from up the river had just come in sight around a point above, and with sails spread to the light wind was caught in the glorification of the water. A catbird was hopping in and out of the shrubbery, and even with Jed by my side I was sentient and content.

It was not a noise that attracted my attention. It must have been the sensation of being stared at. I turned my head toward the wall to the north. In line with the bench on which we sat, and just topping the wall, was the head of the Spanish sailor.

He and I looked at each other for what seemed to be at least a moment. His earrings glittered. His gaze was steady and both inquiring and purposeful. Even in inquiry it seemed malignant, with the malice which comes from a sense of injury.

I felt a decidedly unpleasant shock with the creeps which come from a good ghost story. If he had appeared suddenly at full length somewhere in the garden, walking about, it would have been different. But just his head appearing above the wall, and he perfectly unexpected, unexplained, motionless and inquiring—it gave you the shivers of a child frightened at night in the nursery.

"You're poor company," said Jed. "but I am, too, and I have to go to Mr. Sidney."

I seemed not to hear him. It was not intended to rebuff him; I was held by the Spaniard's eyes. Jed went in to a huff and said: "Oh, go to the devil!"

Then he also turned and saw the head above the wall.

He arose and stood looking at the Spaniard as intently as the Spaniard was looking at him. This situation lasted a full minute, without a movement or word from one of us. Then the Spaniard's face, given in lines of malevolent purpose, softened into a smile which expressed satisfaction with prospects. And then the head disappeared suddenly. I was in doubt whether the man's feet had gone out from under him, or whether he had jumped.

In disappearing he left the place where he had been, charged with the mystery which his presence had indicated. His disappearance intensified, thickened, the atmosphere which his presence had created. While his head was above the wall, the sensation was one of nervous astonishment. When his head disappeared, the suggestion of terror was added. So long as we saw him, it was something unexplained but embodied; when he dropped out of sight, it was as if a person going down a hall in his house upon a startling sight, and—at the moment when his perceptions and reason were struggling to explain the object and its presence and to sustain his courage—the candlelight should go out in a gust of wind and leave him blind, facing a thing he had not

explained and now could no longer see. Then, with cause, may the hairs crowning even a head with a thinking brain arise in sheer fright. The person's plight is that of black ignorance, in which superstition and childish fears ascend and dominate.

Jed took a step forward as if in pursuit, but stopped with that one movement. It broke the situation down and made it possible for me to return to animation. Seemingly my powers of movement and speech had been suspended. I looked at Jed, who was as pitifully frightened as a child in the dark. He made every demonstration of fright except wailing. Then he braced himself, recovered his courage and without saying anything went into the house to join Mr. Sidney.

CHAPTER VIII.

When I saw Mr. Sidney that evening he made a remark in joke that Jed was ill and needed my attention.

"I have not had the usual satisfaction of my wine," he said, "and I know it is because Jed is not in condition."

"I'm not well, Mr. Sidney," said Jed. "I didn't want to say anything about it, because I didn't want to interfere with your evening, but since you mention it, I'll admit it."

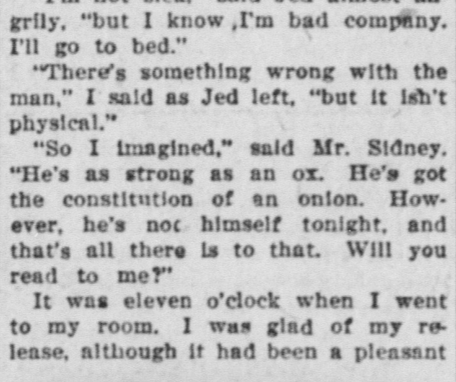
"Go on along then, Jed," said Mr. Sidney. "Go and have the doctor look you over."

"I'm not sick," said Jed almost angrily, "but I know, I'm bad company. I'll go to bed."

"There's something wrong with the man," I said as Jed left, "but it isn't physical."

"So I imagined," said Mr. Sidney. "He's as strong as an ox. He's got the constitution of an onion. However, he's not himself tonight, and that's all there is to that. Will you read to me?"

It was eleven o'clock when I went to my room. I was glad of my release, although it had been a pleasant



Just Then I Was Blinded by the Light of an Electric Flashlight Hitting Me Full in the Eyes.

evening. For a dead or a dying man—for a living and live man, for that matter—Mr. Sidney had extraordinary manners and great charm. He gave a dignity and worth to life by his very manner of leaving it. In going from it, he proved it to be worth while—which, I suspect, is the highest accomplishment of the real gentleman.

After I had gone to my room, I found myself restless and thought I might find rest in a walk. I expected to be joined by my friends the mastiffs and Alredades as soon as I was outside, but not a dog appeared. This was enough to be noticed, but not enough, at the time, to be given significance. I walked about for a while and re-entered the house with quieter nerves.

I found that I was tired. Ordinarily I liked at least an hour's reading just before bed, but this night I wanted sleep.

I was grateful for the mood and the opportunity, and I yawned once or twice as I got into my pajamas.

I do not know when I went to sleep or how soon thereafter I awakened. It was possibly only two hours later. I did not look at my watch, for the very good reason that other things at the time were more important. A bright moonlight was shining, and whatever had awakened me, the moonlight showed me good cause to be awake. In a window which the moonlight touched with full, illuminating force, was a face recognizable as that of the Spanish sailor.

Again only his head was visible, but this time he was in my bedroom window and seemingly trying for entrance into my room. This may seem a more ghastly proceeding than his appearance above the wall early in the evening, but really it was not. I had the shock of unpleasant astonishment, but I felt, to my satisfaction, the ability to handle the situation. I was not frightened by the appearance of the head in my window. I suppose it is because the appearance suggested burglars, and burglars are conventional.

I lay quietly in bed and wondered how much more than the head I should see. Just then I was blinded by the light of an electric flashlight hitting me full in the eyes.

A second later the flash was gone, the face in the window was gone and a slight movement of the gravel below showed me that my visitor was gone. I got up and looked out. Although the lawn was bright in the moonlight, no one was to be seen. The Spaniard had disappeared into the woods.

To come to an understanding of the

sailor's acts, not much reasoning was needed: it was not my room he was trying to enter, but Jed's. His flashlight had not only shown that I was awake but that he had the wrong man, and he had climbed down and run into the woods. One mystery was how he had escaped the dogs.

That was explained the next day; they had not been loose the night before; had not been released from their kennels. They were found restless from an unexpected night of confinement. They had not been out because the stableman who had charge of them had spent the afternoon and night in the village of Hartley, drunk.

It was an extraordinary and not an ordinary proceeding for this stableman, who had been a dependable character. It did not require much suspicion to conjecture that he had been tampered with in deliberate purpose to free the grounds of the dogs for the use of the Spanish sailor made when he climbed up to my room.

The stableman, proved delinquent, was so apparently contrite and innocent that it would have been an injustice to punish or discharge him. He had gone to the village in the early afternoon on an assigned mission for the house. He had used the opportunity to drink a few glasses of beer, for which proceeding no one would blame him in Hartley house. It seems that he drank two or three glasses more than he intended to and, even beer being in a fashion intoxicating, got into a condition which made him amiable to the approach of a stranger who succeeded in interesting him in the immediate prospects of life, which then to him were chiefly alcoholic.

He and the stranger had much talk and many drinks. The stableman lost all sense of responsibility, which was not strange, and proceeded from beer to a strong liquor, forgetting all his duties to the house. In consequence he did not get to bed that night, and the dogs were not loose.

Naturally one drew a direct line from this performance to the appearance of the Spaniard at my window, and there was natural wonder as to what kind of confederate the Spaniard could have so effectually to prepare the way for him.

The Spaniard had a confederate who was ingenious and resourceful; that was evident. He had made a deliberate play to get the dogs out of the way the night the sailor made his attempt to get into Jed's room, and had succeeded in almost getting into mine.

Two days after the strange appearance of the Spaniard, I was asked for and was told that a gentleman desired to see me. I went to the office of the house and saw a man who instantly suggested the one who had entertained the stableman so successfully.

He was so easily described that it was a crime for even a drunken stableman to have missed his distinguishing characteristics, but at that, the stableman had made identification possible. The moment I saw the fellow I thought we were nearer the solution of the mystery of Hartley house.

It was a significantly insignificant-looking man; that was his identifying mark. He seemed timid and inaction of himself, apologetic for his intrusion upon me and withal determined to do whatever it was that was in his program. I wondered how so striking an individual had played a jovial part in a village tavern with rockets at drink. His card indicated him as Phil etus M. Brown. He came directly to his subject for which I thanked him as soon as he had made a brief preliminary of commonplaces of introduction and greeting.

"I have asked for you, doctor, because I know of no one else here who will serve. I do not wish to approach Mr. Sidney directly and cannot trust the factotum you know as Jed. I would not impose upon Mrs. Sidney or her daughter except in extremity. You are here, a rational human being and interested, I am informed, in the fortunes of this family. Therefore I have come to you."

"For what purpose?" I asked.

"He smiled as if to apologize for having any purpose, and pulled at the cuffs of his coat.

"I'll be frank," he said. "I hardly know the purpose clearly myself. My client is a sailor. My practice lies considerably along the water front in the city. It has not made me rich. I have lost a good deal of egotism and have become pragmatic. I have to get along and to deal with facts. There are people dependent upon me, and I have not been much to depend upon."

"The condition of your finances or your morals cannot be of interest to me," I said. "What have you that is of interest?"

He smiled as if he was used frequently to rebuff.

"What I have, I assure you, humilitates me to present, because I humiliate that if I succeed for my client, I shall be in the way of blackmailing Mr. Sidney. My consolation is that I am only an agent and I am sure that I shall be a more considerate and honest one than any other this ignorant sailor would find. It has been necessary for me to know many languages to make my small living. My Spanish client does not know much if any English. He has been a man of precarious manner of living, and it seems that several years ago he was in the employ of Mr. Sidney."

No wonder Jed is worried.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The more money you save the more respect your heirs will have for you.

BLACK AND WHITE

Combination in One Costume Is Important Feature.

Colors Promise to Be Strong Favorite—Gowns Liberally Decorated With Embroidery.

An important style feature in the combination of black and white in one costume. It may be safely predicted that this will be a black and white season. There are white satin blouses with black satin skirts to make one-piece dresses. These are lavishly embroidered with satin beads. A great deal of jet and many paillettes are used. Dresses may be said to fairly sparkle with them.

Velvet dresses are making their appearance, and these too, are embroidered in bright-colored beads. This type of beading is much more distinctive than the ordinary beaded dresses which we became tired of long ago. Marvelous colors are blended in this beadwork, which is more on the order of that used in the finest beaded bags.

The bright-colored contrasting sash still holds a place of importance. For instance, a very brilliant green one may be used on a brown dress that scintillates with brown paillettes.

The resurrection of ombre is worthy of note. Very gay are the dresses of chiffon showing several shades of the same color blending into one another.



A Black and White Frock.

These colors are not attained by dipping the fabric into the dye, but by applying the color with a brush. So cleverly is the material handled by designers that the frocks appear, through the deftness of their draping, as if made of different colored materials.

THINGS FOR THE WAISTLINE

Belts, Sash, Girdle or Collection of Furbelows Carry Any Dress Into Fashion.

The Gotham fashion world has announced that although a string of beads and a cheshire smirk will not suffice for a midsummer costume, all a dress needs in order to be a dress is a belt, a sash, a girdle or a collection of furbelows above, at and below the waistline, writes a New York fashion correspondent. Dame Fashion has resurrected any type of dress and put her stamp of approval upon it by hurling some kind of a waistline trinket

COLORS BLONDE CAN WEAR

Green Good Tint for Fair Complexion; Blue Harmonizes With the Golden Hair.

You know there are blondes and blondes? A fair blonde has pale skin, resembling a white rose, slightly tinged with delicate pink. She has clear, soft blue eyes and light golden hair. This is the true fair blonde. If you belong to this type, color in dress may make or mar your looks, so a hint from a color expert might help you from a color expert to bring out—Skin, hair and eyes. The complexion can be warmed, the eyes deepened and the hair enriched. Green is a good color for the fair blonde, since it imparts a reddish hue to the surfaces near it. Blue is a perfect contrast for orange, so it harmonizes with the golden hair, and also by its strong reflections, adds a depth of color to the eyes.

The colors for a fair blonde to avoid are red, orange, purple and brown. Violet is a most difficult color for any type to wear, since it gives a yellowish tone to the skin. A pale blonde, with a rose-leaf skin is not at her best in violet. Happily there are the delicate shades of lilac, heliotrope and parma that are less unkind.

Tassels. Ornamentation was never more effective nor easier for the home dress-maker to do than now, when bold, simple designs in embroidery have ousted the finely wrought wreaths of flowers and leaves. Separate large motifs, usually circular, are worked in coarse wools of mercerized cottons in daring stitch. Often, in place of

THIS IS COMFY GREAT COAT



This comfortable great coat will make a strong bid for popularity the coming season because of its smartness and warmth.

thereon, and chicness is the up-to-date's minute result.

Both Orient and Occident have hobbled in this new folderol of the erratic old dame, although the East is supposed to be directly responsible for this hobbling of the hips. Rich silk fringes in every shade of the rainbow are showered over gowns of sheerness or heaviness, according to the manner of the Spanish dancing girl. Fringe arrangement is in Cleopatra. This sad promises a revival of the good old-time vamps and serpents of the Nile.

Recently a prominent actress dined at the Ritz clad in a very slinky, modish Paris gown, about the middle part of which was draped a colorful sash of many ribbons, slashed into dozens of loops that fell to the floor and formed into a train. "Movie" studios are demanding trains on evening gowns, and it looks as if an unhappy day was coming for perambulating feet.

Smart Fifth avenue shops are making frocks of barren simplicity and then embellishing them with some confection of sash or belt worth Fifth king's ransom. Up in upper Fifth avenue a shop shows a plain silk dress of perfectly straight lines which flaunts a wedgewood buckle at the belt. With the belt it may possibly be had for a four figure price. It is no secret that several museums tried to obtain this piece of former pottery for their collections, but failed because of the higher bid of the ladies' apparel house which coveted the wedgewood.

All street dresses display the use of colored leather for belts, and the most popular fad is a combination of several weights and colors of leathers. Tan with white bound in black is very popular upon leathers and serge. The Grecian girdles made of colored chenille cords abound on light silk gowns, while the bouffant is supplied by hip puffings made of knotted cords or fringes.

When joining lace, an almost invisible union may be made by matching the pattern, laying the two edges together and buttonholing these rather loosely, but taking the stitches close together on the wrong side. When the lace is pressed there will be no thickened seam, and it will be scarcely noticeable.

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