

The Mystery of Hartley House

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CHAPTER IX—Continued.

By this time I had my senses fully recovered. I ran to the nearest window and was just in time to see two figures, one in white, the other indistinct, at the far edge of the lawn, running. They ran into the woods, and while I stood at the window, trying with painful consciousness of stupidity and ineptitude to decide upon a course of action, I heard an automobile engine start in the lane beyond the woods.

Out of a stupor, in which I watched the two strange figures go from the moonlight on the lawn into the dark of the oak grove, I was aroused—possibly by the sound of the engine of the automobile—with a course of action suggested.

It came of fears long entertained, now present with a threat of imminent consequence. I ran for the stairs, flashing the light up the stairs and to Jed's room.

His door was open. As I have said, this wing was not wired for electricity. I turned my light about the room, saw that the fear which had caused me to patrol the house was realized and then hunted for the lamp, which I found and lighted.

Jed's room was in the disorder in which a hard-working housebreaker, intent on finding jewels he knew the room contained, might have left it. It seemed almost ripped to pieces.

On a table was a small pearl-inlaid ebony box. The lid was open; the box was empty.

As I stood in the midst of the disarray of the room, with the empty box the most significant thing in it, the marvelous unreality of Hartley house, a smiling dread, seemed to have visible tokens.

The empty box, I thought, had contained the manuscript which recorded Mr. Sidney's secret. The flash of white which I had seen in the hall indicated the method by which it had disappeared. The two figures crossing the lawn in the moonlight were further indication. There was the sound of the automobile engine. I had a sore spot on my head. The manuscript, I knew—or believed—had been in the box which stood with significant emptiness in the midst of the disordered room of Jed, who had been kidnaped. If my surmises were correct, Mr. Sidney's secret, upon which I knew the happiness of the family depended, was in the hands of men desirous to make use of it.

Jed, being a major-domo about the place, had in his room a telephone connecting with the various servants' quarters. I used it to arouse the chauffeur. It took five minutes of ringing his bell to awaken him; when he responded, I told him that the house had been robbed by a man and a woman dressed in white, who had escaped, under my sight, through the oak grove and had used an automobile waiting for them on the road beyond the grove. I told him to awaken one of the gardeners, take weapons and go as quickly as possible south by the best roads. When this had been done, I called Mrs. Sidney's maid and told her to awaken Mrs. Sidney and tell her, if



"Oh, If We Can, We Must!" She Cried.

possible without alarming her, that I wished to speak to her on an urgent matter.

In a few minutes the maid came back and said that Mrs. Sidney could see me. I found her in the sitting room of her suite.

"It is nothing serious, Mrs. Sidney," I said—"nothing that we need now regard as serious; and it does not concern Mr. Sidney's health. There has been an intruder in the house. Moreover, the purpose was to break into Jed's room, and Jed's room has been broken into. I got a glimpse of the person who did it, a woman. I saw a man and a woman run into the oak grove and I heard an automobile engine start on the road. I have sent a chauffeur and a gardener in chase, but they are travelling against so great a start that I have no hope. What I fear is that they have Mr. Sidney's

diary. Do you know where Jed kept it?"

"No, doctor," said Mrs. Sidney. "If there had been any chance of finding it we should have taken it away from him. In his absence we have searched his room frequently."

"These people are after the manuscript, and they are satisfied that they have it," I said. "I am sure of that. There was a small pearl-inlaid box, open and empty, in the middle of the floor."

"We never found such a box," said Mrs. Sidney.

"Then it might have been there?"

"It might."

"If it was, they have it and we must get it back."

"Oh, if we can, we must!" she cried, holding her hands so tightly clasped that the delicate bones made a crackling noise.

I tried to be encouraging and consoling and, as a practical measure, gave her a bromide.

CHAPTER X.

Hartley house had a general office where the business of the estate was handled. It was to one side of the main entrance.

I had promised to be an extraordinary person in meeting extraordinary circumstances, but all I did was to go to the office and, lighting the lights, sit there. I was in the extreme dejection of a weakling when the door opened and Isobel came in.

"What are you doing up?" I asked. "I'll ask the same thing of you. What are you and the whole household doing, awake and moving?"

I told her that housebreakers had been surprised at work and had escaped.

"If you have been disturbed," I suggested, "probably your father has, also. You had better go to his room and tell him that the servants had been flustered by a burglar scare, and then you had better go to your mother's room and stay with her until things quiet down."

That seemed sound enough advice, but when Isobel had gone I was left wondering again what to do next. It was out of the question to notify the authorities. The thieves had stolen something which, from what I knew of it, I preferred to have in their hands rather than in the possession of the police.

Our detective agency I could trust, but I did not want to communicate with anyone but McGuire, the superintendent, and there was no need of telephoning him until later in the morning.

The case, as I thought it over, came to this: The Spaniard and the attorney, by the aid of a confederate, a woman, had obtained possession of the diary containing the secret of Hartley house. They would soon be heard from. They would not disappear. We did not have to pursue them. They would pursue us.

There was the possibility of dealing with them by force extra-legally. Anything we did for our protection had to be done extra-legally. I thought McGuire could and would attend to that, and I intended to instruct him to consider murder the only process not to be thought of.

I tried to reconcile my ideas of Mr. Sidney's character with the facts of the family's terrible dilemma. What could a man of so just and honorable, kindly and charming a nature—as revealed in his old age—have done, even in a hot and passionate youth, which he could not face now? What crime could he have committed which not only constituted a danger to his security but remained a source of satisfaction to him?

For two hours I sat by the telephone, expecting momentarily to hear from the chauffeur who had gone in pursuit of the thieves. It was about four o'clock in the morning—there was a pale suggestion of light in the windows—when Mrs. Aldrich, the housekeeper, came to the office. She was an imperious lady of disciplinary habit and ordinarily unflinching dignity, but now she was disturbed.

"Doctor," she said, "Agnes, the new maid, cannot be found. She is not in her room. Her bed has not been touched. Most of her belongings and her suitcase are gone. I came to you with this probably unimportant domestic incident, thinking that—well, the occurrence of the night might have some connection with this girl."

"I think Agnes probably was involved in the matter," I said.

"We have always so dreaded to take a new servant," said Mrs. Aldrich, "but Agnes came recommended for the month by a very faithful girl who wanted a month's leave. Has anything of great value been taken?"

"Nothing of any intrinsic value whatever, Mrs. Aldrich. I imagine the robbers were alarmed before they found any jewels or plate."

"That's a consolation, in any event," said the housekeeper; "but we never shall be able to take in a new servant again with any ease of mind."

The chauffeur telephoned as Mrs. Aldrich went away. The chase in the night had been useless, as might be expected, and I told him to return home.

Mrs. Aldrich brought me a light breakfast, and one of the gardeners came to say that the dogs had been found in the woods. They had been fed drugged meat and were sick and even now barely able to stand.

I was preparing to go to Mr. Sidney's room when the telephone rang again. It was a call from the village of Horwich, forty miles east, a place of some repute, or ill repute, for the number and character of its drinking places and roadhouses.

The man calling me said he was the constable of the township of Horwich and asked if he were talking to a person of responsibility. I assured him he was. Then he told me that an automobile accident had occurred two miles out of Horwich and that the only identifying marks suggested Hartley house as a place to make inquiries. He asked if I could come to Horwich.

I endeavored to question him over the telephone, but he said there was little information he could give, a



I Had My Bottle of Beer.

man and a woman in a car—man past middle age, a young woman in white; the man was dead, the woman badly injured.

"I'll be over as soon as possible," I said. "Please keep the effects all together."

There was no doubt in my mind that the quizzing little rascal of a lawyer with his precise way and timid but controlling unscrupulousness had come to the end of his road—and at the very moment when he had success in his hand. There was no reason to doubt that the woman was the maid Agnes whom I had surprised at midnight stealing down the stairs from Jed's room with Mr. Sidney's diary.

But if we were rid of the timorous, grasping little attorney, we were in worse difficulties. With the attorney and his Spanish client, we at least knew the manner of dealing. It was disconcerting—I might almost be forgiven the exaggeration of saying it was horrifying—to consider that the diary was being handled by a constable, a sheriff or a coroner or even by any idler or resort-keeper in the village of Horwich.

If the automobile accident had disposed of one ingenious enemy only to make a half-dozen equally unscrupulous ones, or to apprise (I was tempted to think this was worse) one incorruptible officer of the condition of Hartley house—in either event, we were the worse for the change in circumstance.

One of the stablemen knew how to drive a car, and I asked him to bring out the automobile which I used when I went to town. The chauffeur, when he returned, would have been up most of the night. I did not want to impose on him. I might be gone most of the day. In a half-hour we were away toward Horwich. I never had been over the road, which ran by old farms with stone fences and was little traveled except by the people who lived along it.

Originally the place had a respectable tavern. It was called the White Owl. It was still respectable, but oddly enough, it was the success of the White Owl which had attracted the other places.

I inquired for the constable and was told that I should likely find him at the White Owl, he being a frequenter of that place and now having a case which needed a great deal of drinking and talking over.

I went to the White Owl and on entering the barroom, which really had an attractive rather than a disreputable appearance, saw a group of men about a short, broad, square-shouldered fellow who was talking to the interest of half a dozen or more fellows.

My entrance made no diversion, and judging, from what I had been told, that the squat, talkative fellow was the constable and that he was telling the story I wanted to know, I decided to remain unidentified, have a bottle of beer—from the bartender, who came half-heartedly from the constable's narration—and thus as a

converser get what I came to get in direct conversation.

I had my bottle of beer, and the bartender went back to the group, dominated by the squat, talkative fellow.

He was not the comic type of constable. He showed intelligence and decision, but evidently he was fond of a story when he had it to tell. He was saying:

"I was up late because there was a bad set at the Half Day, and Bill Dalley thought he might have trouble with them before he got them on their way. About one o'clock they had a quarrel, without anything but talk, divided into two sets and went away in two cars toward the city. Bill and I split a bottle of beer, and Bill said he'd be going himself. It was nearly one-thirty then, and I thought I'd wait up for Number Eleven at two o'clock and see if anyone got off."

"Bill gave me the keys and told me to shut the place up. I had another bottle of beer and was playing solitaire on the bar when Number Eleven stopped."

"I went to the front door of the bar and looked over toward the station. A man had got off, and he was headed toward the Half Day, which was the only place showing a light. I waited in the doorway, and when he came up, I saw he was a foreigner. He had gold rings in his ears."

"He made as if he wanted to come in. He didn't speak enough English for me to make out what he was saying. I let him in, and he went up to the bar, put down a quarter and pointed toward the whisky. I gave him the bottle, and he pointed to me and smiled. So I said I didn't mind if I did, and we had a drink together. I thought I'd like to know what this fellow wanted in town, so I didn't suggest it was closing time."

"Then I was surprised to hear a car coming along. The other fellow seemed to be expecting it. We both went to the door. The car stopped at the door, and a man helped a woman out. She was a little old shriveled fellow. He was young and pretty."

"The old fellow said something to my foreigner, and he threw his arms in the air, wriggled all over, laughed and fell on the old fellow and kissed him. The old boy struggled and kicked, but the foreigner just picked him right up and kissed him on both cheeks."

"That old boy was mad when he got loose. 'This is unthinkable,' he said. 'It is beyond expression. You human pig! Dog of a man—slobbering beast!' Then he stopped speaking English and said a lot of things the foreigner understood, but it didn't make him mad. His eyes just sparkled. He put a dollar on the bar and pointed to the whisky again."

"Bring our drinks over here," said the old boy, pointing to one of the tables in a far corner of the room.

"They sat down, and the two men talked. The girl didn't seem to have the language. The foreigner was excited. The old boy kept wiping his eyes nervously as the foreigner, but he was pleased over something."

"I kept behind the bar, as near their table as I could, and pretended to play solitaire and wait for their orders, watching them as much as possible and trying to make out what they were talking about. Pretty soon they wanted another round of drinks. When I served them the old boy wanted to know if he could telephone to the city. He paid me the toll, and I showed him the telephone booth and heard him give his number. It was River 4000."

"When he got his party, he said: 'Is that you, Sim? Everything is all right. Yes, as expected. Let him go.'"

"That was all. He went back to the table. I noticed that he kept tight hold all the time on a leather case. When they got to talking again, the foreigner kept pointing toward the case and began to get more excited. As near as I could make out what was happening, as they kept on talking and motioning, it was the black leather case the foreigner wanted, and the other man wouldn't let him have it. (TO BE CONTINUED.)"

Meredith and Lady Macbeth.

Lady Butcher in her "Memories of George Meredith," recently published, gives the world not a little new information about the novelist which is both significant and extremely entertaining. Here is one of the passages she quotes from her diary which shows his amazing power to paint with words:

"Mr. Meredith went with father and me to see Irving and Mrs. Crowe (now Bateman) in 'Macbeth.' During supper he explained the acting of the sleep-walking scene to mother, and wishing to describe the way that Lady Macbeth pushed the palms of her hands from nose to ear, he said: 'My dear Mrs. Brantford, I assure you that she came through her hands like a corpse stricken with mania in the act of resurrection!'"—From "Book Gossip."

To a person, five feet tall standing on the beach at seaside, the horizon is about two and three-quarters miles away.

PARIS PLAID MAD

Fashion Land Seized With Fad for Black and White.

Color Combination Prevails in Skirts, Suits and Jackets—Laces in the Limelight.

After months of subdued colors and deepest mourning Paris has been suddenly seized with a fad for wearing plaids and plaids in black and white. Since a few dressmakers displayed some summer models with black-and-white designs in accordion plaids, the novelty has been taken up along the boulevards, and after a popular run at the races continued in favor long after the usual time for such innovations had expired.

Plaids are coming out stronger and bolder. And black-and-white check skirts and suits are now included in the models. The fabric makers are showing plaited braid, and dressmakers have accepted the patterns. The black-and-white craze has not left the male apparel untouched. Suits in black-and-white stripes and black-and-white checks are numerous in the show windows and on the streets. At the race-courses black or white jackets with black-and-white striped or checked skirts predominate.

Other combinations are in white ruffon trimmed with black embroidery or black net embroidered in big white flowers, and likewise there's any amount of black lace worn over white satin. A popular model is a white silk



Sport outfit with black-and-white wool skirt with popular checks and accordion plaids; topped with black sweater and white striped scarf.

Jersey with black lace inserts, relieved with white motifs. Coarse linens will be worn although quite expensive. Another dainty innovation is the revival of the figured parasols and organdie dresses. Painted dresses with batik flowers, will afford cheerful combinations in color with the graceful parasol.

Snakes Supplant Bluebirds.

The last season's vogue of patterned lingerie which specialized in cerulean-hued bluebirds and butterflies is on the wane—probably because our bluebird guest has been back on his native shores for some time. Whenever any pattern is used, it is some bizarre, weird creation such as a wriggling green snake, a garment-free cannibal, or a bevy of alligators.

FABRICS NAMED FOR CITIES

Origin of Names of Many Popular Materials Traced to Various Foreign Towns and Villages.

The origin of the names of popular fabrics is even more interesting than the tracing to their lingual roots of ordinary words, says a writer in the New York Evening Mail.

About the year 1329 the woolen trade of England became located at Wrosted, about fifteen miles from Norwich, and it was at this place that the manufacture of the twisted double thread woolen, afterward called worsted, was first made, if not invented.

Linsay-woolsey was first made at Linsay, and was for a long time a very popular fabric.

Kerseymere takes its name from the village of Kersey, and the mere close by it, in the county of Suffolk.

We have to thank Gaza, in Palestine, the gates of which Sanson carried away, for gaza or gauze. Gaza means "treasure." Voltaire, wishing to describe some intellectual but drowsy woman, said: "She is an eagle in a cage of gauze."

Muslin owes its name to Mossoul, a fortified town in Turkey in Asia. Tulle obtains its name from that of a city in the south of France. Travelers by rail in Brittany often glide past Guingamp without remembering that it was here that was first produced that useful fabric, gingham.

Lamask derives its name from the city of Damascus; calico from Calicut, a town in India formerly celebrated for its cotton cloth, where also calico was printed; cambrie from Cambrai, a town in Flanders, where it was first

GOWN OF NAVY BLUE SATIN



Navy blue satin with attractive side ruffings and a colorful flower at the belt makes this an attractive fall frock.

SIMPLE FROCKS FOR KIDDIES

Children of Different Types Require Styles That Suit, but Not Fancy Clothes.

Simple frocks and plenty of them is the best possible guide to the mother who would have her small daughters well dressed. Children's styles change very little from season to season, and the youngster who is clean and well groomed is always attractive looking. Elaborately trimmed dresses are never in good taste for children. Another point that should be considered when planning clothes for members of the younger generation is the matter of type. There are plain tailored children and fluffy-ruffles children, just as there are different types of grown-ups, and certainly the blue-eyed cherub with golden curls and the dark-eyed youngsters with straight, dark hair, bobbed just below the ears, do not require the same styles in clothes.

For warm weather organdie has had a great vogue this season, sharing honors with dotted swiss. Voiles have rather gone a-begging, although some dainty little voile frocks have been brought out. Voile does not generally launder quite as attractively as organdie, which probably accounts for the leaning to the latter fabric.

For next season, in cotton fabric frocks, plain colors will predominate as at present. Where checks are used they will generally be rather small. The striking Scotch plaid gingham have not been very popular for several seasons with designers of very high class frocks for children.

Autumn's Hats Are Gay.

Feminine New York says that autumn hats must cover the eyebrows and that the brim must not be even. These hats will be properly covered with fruits, and no somber colored hats will be seen. Leading colors are copper, royal and Algerian blue, mahogany, cerise, jade green, chow brown and canary yellow. Gaudy embroideries in soutache, wool,insel, metallic threads and celluloid or wooden beads carry out the Eastern effect.

made; and tweed from a fabric worn by fishermen upon the River Tweed.

Drapery Fabrics.

Each season marks an advance in the beauty and variety of curtain fabrics, and adds to the number of those which may be safely ironed after washing, rather than stretched. While we shall probably always have fine lace curtains which necessitate stretching, lovely effects may be secured by the use of filet nets, fine swisses, voiles, scrim, silk gauze, English case-mat cloth and Scotch madras, all of which may be ironed. When selecting materials with the ironing qualities in view, it is safest to try a sample first. If this is not convenient, a reliable guide is the mesh and edge, especially in net. If the mesh is square instead of round, and the edge straight, rather than scalloped, it will be almost sure to iron without pulling askew.—Good Housekeeping.

Scrim Curtains.

A very effective curtain is made of scrim and is put on curtain rods, both top and bottom. Stretch the curtains tight; they can be washed and hung when wet. This stretches and dries them at the same time. It saves time and doesn't make curtain washing a burden. This kind of curtain is especially attractive when a draping of some kind is hung with it.

Lingerie Set.

An effective and practical lingerie set suggested for a trossieu is of orchid gorgette, devoid of lace, but trimmed daintily with tiny ruffles of self material and narrow, ribbon in orchid and blue.