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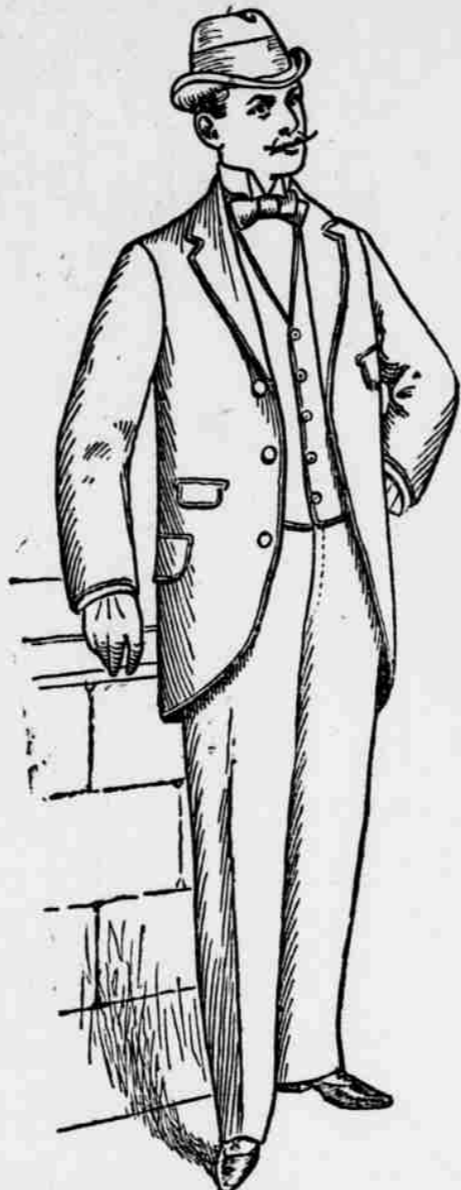
Secures choice of 500 ALL-WOOL Men's Summer Suits, sold elsewhere at \$10.00 and \$12.00; every color and design, including Black and Blue Undressed Worsteds. Remember our guarantee goes with every Suit, as to color, wear and fit.

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We Deal in Facts, Not Futures



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LACKAWANNA AVE.

LOST MAN'S LANE.

By ANNA KATHERINE GREEN.

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III.

How I found my way out of that room and how I at last stumbled into my own, is of small importance. What I would tell is that just as I crossed my darkened threshold I caught, far down the hall, a passing glimpse of Lucretia carrying a lighted candle in her hand. After that short view I remember nothing. Yet I must have undressed myself and gone to bed, for when I woke in the morning I was between the sheets and the bed was pushed back in its place against the wall.

It was a maid who woke me. I had seen this woman before, and had rather liked her appearance, which was that of a strong and kindly woman. She was building the fire when I opened my eyes, and the cheerful glow produced quite a strange effect upon me. The visions of the night seemed to recede, and for a moment I believed myself to have been merely the victim of a horrible nightmare. Her face, as she turned towards me, added to this feeling. It was so frank and cheerful.

"Ah, Miss Grant," she cried, "Miss Knollys sends her love and hopes you have passed a pleasant night."

I was dumfounded. Either her assurance was great, or my imagination had indeed played me a fearful trick. Determined to settle the matter at once I inquired as lightly as I could what had happened in the night to keep the family up. To which she responded that Miss Lucretia had been ill (a palpable falsehood, if I had really seen her passing down the hall with a lighted candle in her hand), adding, as I showed surprise in my manner, "Lucretia is often ill. Many is the night I have to sit up with her."

"But I saw her," I began, and stopped. Had I in reality seen her, or had I been laboring under an hallucination which brought her image up before me, and if her image had been an hallucination, why not that other dreadful thing which had made the night a horror to me? Changing my assertion then into a question, I asked if her young mistress was better; to which the woman replied that happily she was, and having finished her work at the hearth, she rose and with an amiable air, inquired if she could do anything for me.

I told her I wanted more light, and when she moved to arrange the curtains, I remarked on the size of the house and asked how many there were in the family.

"And was there no one else in the house last night?" I pursued.

She turned sharply, looked at me with displeasure, and quickly replied: "Why, you were here, were you not?"

"I laughed, but did not desert. "And no one else?"

She seemed embarrassed at my persistence, but answered emphatically

charmed at the beam of sunshine which at that moment poured into the room. I answered in quite a different tone of voice:

"Well, it is morning now and matters look very different by daylight. Perhaps no one did come to my door. At all events I will try to think so."

Before I was quite dressed Miss Knollys came for me. She looked tired, but not so careworn as I expected; indeed there seemed to be a slight lifting of the shadow that had been on the brow the day before. Seeing it, I became puzzled again and resolving to ignore the night entirely, I greeted her pleasantly and scarcely changed color when she said:

"Mattilda tells me you did not sleep well in spite of my assurances. Is that so, Miss Grant?"

"It is so and it isn't so," I laughed; "I slept some and I was awake some, but that was to be expected in a strange house. But I feel very well this morning, better than Lucretia, I fear. I hear that she was quite ill in the night."

"Lucretia has her complaint," answered Miss Knollys, with a curious tone of decision in her voice. "But you will find her sitting in her usual place at table this morning."

And I did.

I had determined on rising to cut my visit short and leave the house before the day was out. But as the hours went by I found this becoming more and more difficult. The girls showed me so much kindness, and the brother such a new interest, that common gratitude kept me from showing the extent of my feelings by a sudden departure. Besides, these feelings had become much modified by the sunny aspect of the day and by a long drive which Lucretia had given me in the early forenoon. The man whom they called Big Bob had brought round the horse, and the family alive and well, it felt sure that the horror of the night had indeed been but a dream and that it would be both unwise and ridiculous to dwell any longer on what a perfectly sane mind would dismiss at once.

Yet when the shadows began to lengthen and I found that no change had been made in my apartment, and that I was likely to sleep again in that remote room, I felt a decided return of yesterday's apprehension.

Miss Knollys, whose face had grown graver as the evening advanced, showed that she appreciated my secret dread, and, with a glance at her sister, put her arm round me as she led me down the hall, saying that on the morrow she would be able to make different arrangements, if I would only excuse her for this one more night.

I returned her embrace and answered as suitably as my fears would allow; and making a great effort over myself, did succeed in falling asleep much more quickly after her departure than I had anticipated.

But I was not to rest. The horrors of my short stay in this house were not yet over, and sometime in the night, I never knew at what hour, I was again awakened by the sound of a gilding step, a hand on the lock, and the turning of the key, which, for the second time made me a prisoner.

So that I had suffered the night before had not been a dream! Something strange, something which they feared to have me witness, was going on in this house of seemingly innocent young people. What could it be, and what connection would the events of

this night have with those of the one before?

Listening intently, I heard first the tramping of several feet down the corridor, then a prolonged silence, and then a second tramping, measured in its tone, as when several men carry a heavy burden. Instantly I seemed to see again that outstretched form and clay-cold face I had touched the previous night, and with my hair rising on my forehead, I hearkened to the diminishing sounds till they finally ceased in what seemed to me to be the direction of the staircase.

Horrified beyond all precedent, and feeling myself involved in the perpetration of some unknown crime, I sank back on the edge of the bed, asking myself whether I should light my little stump of candle or no. But just then a stir somewhere below me drew my attention to the window, and abandoning all thought of a light, I sprang to the curtains and drew them, only to find my view shut out by two blank shutters. Desperate now, and convinced more and more that there was something to be seen from this window, I pulled at the fastenings with my whole strength, and finally succeeded in unclosing one of the shutters, which fell slowly back. Immediately a wide scene opened before me of stark black trees and white wastes of new fallen snow. Nothing else, strain my eyes as I would, till suddenly warned by a slight sound from the corner of the house, I leaned out as far as I dared, when I saw the moving shadows of four people (only the shadows, the people themselves were not visible) staggering under a load, the size and shape of which were sharply delineated on the snow. The burden was a coffin and the bearers—you can understand my terror when I say this—were not all men. Two had skirts on, and I was not greatly mistaken in the slight and delicate form of the hindmost, it was Miss Knollys herself who thus helped to carry an unknown body to its probable burial.

Overwhelmed by this confirmation of my strange experiences of the night before, and yet enough mistress of myself to wish to gain all the information I could on this mysterious subject, I watched the shadows as they wound their dreary way into the leafless forest, and never moved from my station till they had all disappeared in the obscurity. Then I sank back into the room winding the heavy curtains about me to keep out the deathly chill both of my thoughts and outside air, waiting and watching for their return. It came in about an hour. First the delicate form of Miss Knollys appeared, then the heavier one of the maid who had visited my room, and then those of two men, one very large and one slighter. In other words, Big Bob and young Mr. Knollys. Lucretia evidently had not accompanied them. They came back more quickly than they went, for they had left their burden behind them. Before they entered the house I was already again in bed, and not ten minutes after the front door had closed I heard the sly step again at my door and that light turning of the lock which proved that the business of the night was over.

[To Be Continued.]



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