THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS

BY ELIZABETH N. BARROW

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SYNOPSIS.

The junior member of a private firm of detectives in New York becomes interested in a deserted house, opposite which he happens to take a room. While watching it during a convalescence from illness, the blinds of one of the windows are opened suddenly, disclosing the figure of a small man who waves his hand and disappears.

Three days later the detective receives a mysterious letter, appointing an hour to call. He looks across at the deserted house, shading his eyes with the letter. The figure reappears and repeats its signal. That evening the detective arms himself, pushes open the iron gate of the deserted house and enters a dark passageway. He is ushered into a lighted room by the same strange figure. Two men and a handsome woman in evening dress receive him, all masked. He has been mistaken for an expected messenger. He pretends that it has not been safe to bring certain papers, and is commissioned to visit the town of P—— next day. As he is about to leave, a young girl arrives with a warning. He runs downstairs, and escapes by the rear door into a yard. Climbing the fence, he overhears the conspirators, who mention Tuxedo and the name of a prominent man. He thinks that he recognizes the voice of the lady, and concludes that some great crime is under way. The house is shadowed by other detectives, and he decides to watch the train to P—— himself, in disguise. The young girl enters the station—also the lady disguised as a man. The detective eludes the latter and takes the train.

PART IV.

I followed the girl into the car and seated myself behind and near her. She had sunk into the corner of the seat in an attitude of utter weariness and discouragement. I owed her my life, no doubt, and I felt for her at the momoent, beside gratitude, a sincere pity. Yet I was on the point of asking her to risk still more than she had already done. There was no other way. I looked around at our fellow-passengers—the old woman with her basket; a boy who was audibly sleeping; and a young man who was seated in the front of the car, absorbed in a yellow-covered novel. There was not one whom I could suspect of watching us. I went, therefore, without further hesitation, to take the place in front of her and, with as much nonchalance as I could command, asked her if she could tell me the name of the man who had followed her into the station.

For a moment she seemed startled, and shrank still further back, but a glance at my cloth seemed to reassure her.

"I saw no one," she replied. "I came quite alone."

It never occurred to me to doubt her. I knew, whatever the character of those with whom she had been associated that she, at least, was innocent—an unwilling tool in their hands. I told her, therefore, in as few words as possible, who I was, and tried first of all, to thank her for what she had done for me, while she was kind enough to express pleasure in learning of my escape. I then went on to beg of her that, if she were in trouble, as I felt that she was, to let me help her. I explained without reserve my connection with the House with Green Blinds, and all I hoped to accomplish with the knowledge I had concerning it. She listened quietly while I told her, and I saw a look of wistfulness, of longing, of resolve, grow in her great dark eyes. Finally it came.

"I will tell you what I know," she said; and there were tears in her voice though her eyes were dry. "There is no other course. I had no hope of doing anything, but now you may be able to do what I cannot." And she told me the following:

Her name was Cutting, and with her father—a widower—she lived at P——. The winter before they had spent in Washington, where, at a reception given at the white house, her father first had met Madame of the White Shoulders—as I still must call her. This woman was a stranger in the cosmopolitan city, a magnificently handsome woman, part French, part Russian and was said to be a sister of one of the members of the Russian legation. Her beauty had created a sensation; Miss Cutting's father had fallen under its spell. Madame seemed to exercise a strange influence over him. He became strange, moody, irritable. He was often absent upon sudden and unexplained journeys, from which he returned dejected and, apparently, frightened and desperate. The cause Miss Cutting herself had never known until her own connection with the affair began, but a few weeks ago. At that time new aid had been needed by the gang of which she had since became cognizant, and she, as one who would not dare betray her own father, had been chosen. Since then she had been constantly employed as a messenger between the members of the organization, whenever a messenger had been needed.

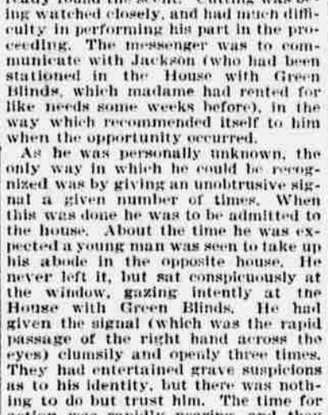
For some weeks she had known that a plot of magnitude had been silently hatching, but in what direction she could not conjecture. Her father had been silent and careworn when at home, which was rarely. She herself had been dispatched hither and yon, to deliver such messages as I had heard, at any time of day or night. She had not dared to rebel, for her father's sake. From the messages which were necessarily confided to her, she had learned that the people with whom her father had become entangled, belonged to a large society which had members and organizations in many countries. From telegrams and cables which she had been required to send (written in cipher, of which she had been able to acquire some knowledge), she had learned that the plot which was forming in this country was duplicated in many European ones, and that the consummation was near she feared from many signs which the designers had not been able to keep from her knowledge. Madame of the White Shoulders was here the leading spirit. Her brother, of the Russian legation (in the description of whom I recognized both the man who had given the note to the messenger boy and he who had assisted Jackson in his search for me about the yard), was her chief assistant. The third man, she believed, was a Russian who had escaped to this country after implication in a desperate attempt to assassinate the czar, discovered, happily, in time. Jackson was a mere tool, whose skill in the manufacture of delicate explosives rendered him of incalculable value to the others. Of the man who had traced her to the station she had no knowledge, having never seen anyone who answered to his description.

Of my own connection with the affair she was able to give me some knowledge. Two weeks before, after many desperate attempts, madame's brother had succeeded in abstracting some state papers of great value to his associates in Washington. They had

Miss Cutting's Father Had Fallen Under Its Spell.

made every effort to get them to New York undiscovered. He, however, had been obliged to deliver them at once to a trusted messenger, since it was unsafe to have them remaining in his own hands. The messenger had been no other than Miss Cutting's father, who had been peremptorily summoned to Washington to answer the needs of his confreres. The papers had been immediately missed, but, thanks to his extreme cunning, the actual thief had been able to escape detection or even suspicion. The latter, however, had fastened itself, through a succession of strange circumstances, upon Cutting himself, and it had immediately become necessary to find a new messenger to bring them to madame in New York, in whose hands they must be placed. In this predicament they had been obliged to fix upon a young man who had lately become entangled with a part of the society in England, and who had just made his escape to America. He was personally unknown to the principals here, but they had no other course than to direct Cutting, by wire, to trust him. With the extremest caution, therefore, the papers were confided to his care and a communication to that effect immediately forwarded to madame and her confederates. The young fellow was directed to proceed with the utmost secrecy, it being feared that the Washington detectives had already found the scent. Cutting was being watched closely, and had much difficulty in performing his part in the proceeding. The messenger was to communicate with Jackson (who had been stationed in the House with Green Blinds, which madame had rented for like needs some weeks before), in the way which recommended itself to him when the opportunity occurred.

As he was personally unknown, the only way in which he could be recognized was by giving an unobtrusive signal a given number of times. When this was done he was to be admitted to the house. About the time he was expected a young man was seen to take up his abode in the opposite house. He never left it, but sat conspicuously at the window, gazing intently at the House with Green Blinds. He had given the signal (which was the rapid passage of the right hand across the eyes) clumsily and openly three times. They had entertained grave suspicions as to his identity, but there was nothing to do but trust him. The time for action was rapidly nearing, and they were desirous of getting possession of the papers, if possible, before this arrived. The signal was finally returned, therefore, and an appointment made by letter. This, of course, was the communication I had received the morning before. All this Miss Cutting had learned from her father, who had returned suddenly toward seven o'clock depressed and agitated. The letters had been traced, and the young fellow to whom they had been intrusted was being closely shadowed by the police. There was fear that the detectives were also on the track of madam's brother, and it was necessary to send them a warning. This had been intrusted to



She Listened Quietly While I Told Her.

herself, with what success has already been told.

She informed me that, after my escape into the yard (whither, as I had conjectured, they had not at first dared to follow, for fear of attracting the attention of the surorunding houses) a hurried consultation had been held. The men had thought that, were I a detective sent to spy upon them, I would doubtless decide that my next best chance of learning their intentions would be to follow madam's directions and go the next day to P——, where I would expect further developments. Miss Cutting told me (and I had suspected as much myself) that from what she could gather, this had been merely a scheme of madam's to get me out of the way for twenty-four hours, no matter whether I were a spy or untried confederate. Madam herself, however, had disagreed with her companions. She had declared that an effort must be made to stop me, and that every train to P—— must be watched. Miss Cutting herself, whom they had never wholly trusted, and for whom, on account of her interference in my behalf, they had no greater love, they tried to intimidate further with threats. It was necessary, however, that both her father and herself, who might prove formidable witnesses against them, should things go wrong, be gotten out of the way. For this reason she could not be kept a temporary prisoner, as they had at first suggested. Her father had made all arrangements for a flight, in which she was to accompany him, and she was, therefore, taken for the remainder of the night to the hotel at which madam was staying. She was now on her way to join her father and to again depart with him. She was an important witness for my own side also, but she had saved my life. What else could I do but further her own escape? I promised to do whatever in me lay to prevent the danger which threatened our country and to aid her to my utmost ability both in shielding her father and in covering their escape. As she bade me good-bye when I left the train at the last station before P—— the tears had finally welled to her eyes. I was glad to think that partially, at any rate, they might be tears of relief.

I took the next train back to town, eagerly looking at every station for the first edition of the morning papers. When finally they arrived and I opened the one I had selected, I discovered both the headlines I had hoped to find. The first was as satisfactory as the second seemed to me conclusive. It stated that a young man had been captured in Brooklyn, while in the very act of destroying the valuable papers which had been stolen two weeks before from the state department in Washington. A few had been recaptured. They were the letters which had passed between the Russian ambassador and our secretary of state, regarding the return to the Russian government of some suspected persons now in this country. A quantity of dispatches from the said government to their ambassador at Washington, were also among the documents. The young man in whose possession they were found had been brought to New York, and was now awaiting examination. From what I could make of this article he had apparently given no information which implicated any of the people connected with the house with green blinds, and I doubted whether any such information was in his possession. It was scarcely probable that more than the barest directions had been entrusted to him.

The second headline read something as follows: "Wealth, Wit and Beauty to do Honor to Our Executives. Mr. ——'s Famous Ball Room Literally Lined with Roses. Tuxedo on the qui vive. A Brilliant Affair Tonight."

Upon these grounds, then, I was basing my case.

While I stood, listening, upon the window ledge the night before, madam had mentioned both Tuxedo and the name of the man at whose house the ball was to be given. It was to be given in honor of a great statesman and his wife. Members of the various foreign legations were to attend. During the day I had seen, in some mysterious connection with madam and her associates, the young man who had been tried and convicted of a crime which had held in England a position very similar to the way things here, as I dissected them, were tending. Madam's voice and his were strangely alike. It had been considered—no matter how I was supposed to be related to the affair—expedient to get me out of the way for twenty-four hours, and to do so without exciting my suspicion. After that I might return. Miss Cutting and her father had been ordered to escape from the country within the same time, as it was desirable that they, after that time, should not be within reach of the police. Last of all, the man Jackson, a tool in the hands of the others, had been experimenting very recently—as shown by his absent eyebrow—in chemicals of an explosive nature. And the third man at the House with Green Blinds, who had not spoken in my hearing, was wanted (together, for all I knew to the contrary, with the others), in his own country to pay the penalty of an attempt upon the life of his sovereign.

(To be concluded.)

RAILROAD NOTES.

The New Haven company intends to extend the New England line from Allyn's Point into New London, where large terminals will be established. It also proposes to build a line between Baltic and Tafeville, Conn., which will give New England an independent route from Willimantic to New London, paralleling New London Northern about twenty-six miles. Work has begun in the matter of improving New England facilities at various points. The New England management allowed its property to run down materially. In one case, the depot at a theiving manufacturing village on the Hartford and Providence line was burned and a good many months elapsed before anything was done in regard to repairing it. On the other hand, the New Haven management is creating irritation by taking off what have been considered essential trains. Even on the main line from Boston to Willimantic, there is now only one through train to New York daily.

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A company of capitalists of Spartanburg, S. C., has been formed to build a branch railroad to the Seaboard Air Line, twenty-four miles long. This will give the Seaboard Air Line a connection with Spartanburg, which is one of the principal mill cities of the South and one of the largest cotton manufacturing cities. In case the Port Royal and Western Carolina railroad is separated from the Southern system by order of the court, the new road would connect with it, giving a new independent route by the way of the Seaboard to Augusta, Ga., and Port Royal, S. C. Mayor Garvert, of Spartanburg, is president of the company and a president of one of the largest banks is included in the directory. Surveys are now being made prior to early construction.

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The prospects for reorganizing the Oregon Railway and Navigation company are not very encouraging, according to the reports received from New York, and Receiver McNeil will soon return home. His plan of reorganization, it is aid, called for an assessment on the stock, which has been rejected by a sujcient number of stockholders to prevent its consummation. Whether Mr. McNeil has given up hope of accomplishing reorganization is not known, but that he has met with sufficient opposition to delay matters is no longer a secret.

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It is understood that the Northern Pacific receivership difficulty may be passed upon by the United States Supreme court within a short time. This will settle the matter to everybody's satisfaction. There is no difference of opinion between the various interests in the property who recently came to an agreement on the point. It is expected that the Supreme court would have passed upon the consolidation scheme before this.

INDUSTRIAL.

The expectation is that 50,000 cars and 600 engines will be built by or for the various railroads of the country during the next half year.

Imports of merchandise at New York for the year 1895 aggregated $519,229,913, a comparative increase of $72,698,360.

About $100,000,000 will approximate the amount to be paid out this month in dividends and interest in Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

The Reading's coal tonnage for the week ended December 28, 1895, showed a comparative increase over the same week in 1894 of 78,311 tons.

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THIS is the season for sitting in the firelight glow, with a good story to read, while the storm howls without and beats against the windows. During January our daily feast of fiction will include TALES OF

ADVENTURE LOVE and MYSTERY

A new story will occupy the columns of The Tribune the week from January 6th to January 11th, and will be from the pen of

SIR ROBERT PEEL

the brilliant son of the late speaker of the House of Commons. This young man, having made himself conspicuous in various ways, has decided that his talents lie in the direction of fiction. We have secured the serial rights of his first story, "An Engagement," a charming love story of the England of today.

Another young writer of great promise is

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

author of "The King in Yellow," and "The Red Republic." On January 13th and 14th, we shall print a story by him, entitled "The Whisper," dealing with the mysterious murder of a beautiful girl, a resident of Chinatown in New York. The scene is laid in a saloon of the quarter, and the characters embrace various striking types of its frequenters.

Few names of American authors are now better known than that of

HAMLIN GARLAND

author of "Main-Travelled Roads," "Rose of Dutcher's Coolly," and other tales of Western life. His work is perhaps the most distinctive produced in the West today, and is the subject of more comment than that of any other writer of his region. In "A Girl from Washington," which will appear on the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th, he has brought the East and West together in the meeting of the heroine with a graduate of a Western college who has taken a place on a Denver dairy farm. The course of true love runs far from smoothly, and the contrast between Eastern culture and Western honesty and merit is finely drawn.

We have obtained from

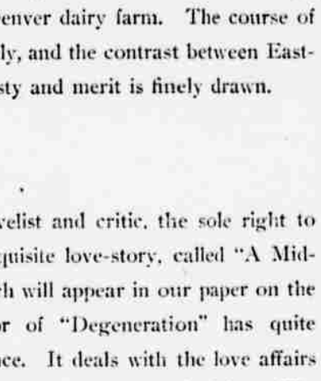
DR. MAX NORDAU

the distinguished German novelist and critic, the sole right to publish in this country an exquisite love-story, called "A Midsummer Night's Dream," which will appear in our paper on the 20th and 21st. The author of "Degeneration" has quite outdone himself in this romance. It deals with the love affairs of a beautiful American woman and a German physician. The story has been translated by Mary J. Safford.

This will be followed on the 22d and 23d by a tale of Scottish life, entitled, "A Prize Winner," by

FLORENCE WARDEN

(Mrs. James), author of "The House on the Marsh" and other favorite English novels. It recounts the story of a Scottish baronet who devotes himself to his prize cattle and neglects his pretty young wife. The folly of such a proceeding is brought home to the baronet in a very realizing way.



On the 24th and 25th there will be a rattling good story by our old friend,

DAVID WECHSLER

"The Defaulters' Protective League," describes the career of an organization of bank employes who are concealing embezzlements, and who band together to supply each other temporarily with funds whenever an examination is made. The story carries out one of Wechsler's quaint ideas in a remarkably entertaining fashion.

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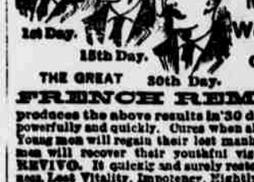

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