

The Hollow of Her Hand

by George Barr McCutcheon

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SYNOPSIS.

Challis Wrاندall is found murdered in a road house near New York. Mrs. Wrاندall is summoned from the city and identified the body. A young woman who accompanied Wrاندall to the inn and subsequently disappeared, is suspected to be the woman who murdered the victim. Wrاندall starts back for New York in an auto during a blinding snow storm. He had done her a service in riding her car, but she thought she loved him. She had caused her great sorrow, and she was in a state of mind that she had never before. Mrs. Wrاندall determines to shield her husband, but she is forced to reveal the truth to the police. She offers Hetty a home, friendship and a new life. Hetty is a girl who is very much in love with Hetty. Hetty is a girl who is very much in love with Hetty. Hetty is a girl who is very much in love with Hetty. Hetty is a girl who is very much in love with Hetty.

and oh, I shall always believe in fairies." A long time afterward the throbbing ceased, bell-buoys whistled and clanged about them; the sea suddenly grew calm and lifeless; they slid over it as if it were a quivering sheet of ice; and lights sneaked out of the fog and approached with stealthy swiftness. Bells rang below and above them, sailors sprang up from everywhere and calls were heard below; the rattling of chains and the thumping of heavy luggage took the place of that steady, monotonous beat of the engine. People began to infest the deck, limp and groaning, harassed but voiceless. A mighty sigh seemed to envelop the whole ship—a sigh of relief. Then it was that these two arose stily from their sheltered bench and gave heed to the things that were about them. The channel was behind them.

CHAPTER XV.

Rattling Old Bones.

They journeyed to Paris by the night mail. He was waiting for her on the platform when she descended from the wagon lit in the Gare du Nord. Sleepy passengers crowded with them into the customs department. She, alone among them all, was smiling brightly, as if the world could be sweet at an hour when, by all odds, it should be sleepest.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

When the night boat from Dover to Paris slipped away from her moorings that evening, Hetty Castleton and her maid were on board, with all their trunks and bags, and Brandon Booth was supposed to be completely at sea at the heart of that glittering London town. The night was fog-laden and dripping, and the crossing promised to be unpleasant. Wrapped in a thick sea-cape, Hetty sat huddled up in the lee of the deckhouse, sick at heart and miserable. She reproached herself for the scurry trick she was playing on him, reviled herself and yet pitied herself. A tall man came shambling down the narrow space along the rail and stopped directly in front of her. She started in alarm as he reached out his hand to support himself against the deckhouse. As he leaned forward, he said, "You were thinking of me, Hetty," and the man.



She Stared at Him, Transfixed. "Your door and you'll see me wither and die of sleeplessness, for one or the other of my eyes will always be open." "Oh, I am so tired, so miserable," murmured. "Poor little sweetheart!" "Who would you hate me?" "The where you are, dearest, and—forget!" "If I only could—forget!" "Rest. I will hold you tight and keep you warm. We're in for a nasty evening, but it is paradise for me. I am holding you close to me, feeling you in my arms. The wilder the night the better, for I am wild with the joy of all I love you! I love you!" He gazed her closer to him in a sort of rapturous.

can tell you no more. Why do you glare at me as if I were the meanest thing on earth? Is this love? Is this your idea of greatness? Isn't it enough for you to know that Sara is my loyal, devoted friend; that she—

"Wait!" he commanded darkly. "Is it possible that she did not discover your secret until the day you left her house so abruptly? Does that explain your sudden departure?"

"I can answer that," she said quietly. "She has known everything from the day I met her. I have not said anything, Brandon, to lead you to believe that I was in love with Challis Wrاندall, have I?"

His eyes softened. "No, you haven't—I hope you will forget what I said. You see, I knew Wrاندall's reputation. He had no sense of honor. He—"

"Well, I have!" she said levelly. "He dashed. 'I am a beast! I'll put it in this way, then: Was he in love with you?'"

"You are still unfair. I shall not answer."

"He was silent for a long time. 'And Sara's lips are sealed,' he mused, still possessed of doubts and fears."

"Until she elects to tell the story, dearest love, my lips are also sealed. I love you better than anything else in all this world. I could willingly offer up my life for you, but—well, my life does not belong to me. It is Sara's."

"For heaven's sake, Hetty, what is all this?" he cried in desperation.

"I can say no more. It is useless to insist, Brandon. If you can wrest the story from her, all well and good. You will hate me then, dearest love. But it cannot be helped. I am prepared."

"Tell me this much: When you refused to marry Leslie, was your course inspired by what had happened in—in connection with Challis Wrاندall?"

"You forget that it is you that I love," she responded simply.

"But why should Sara urge you to marry Leslie if there is anything—"

"Hush! There is the waiter. Come to my sitting-room after breakfast. I have something to say to you. We must come to a definite understanding. This cannot go on."

He was with her for an hour in that pinched little sitting-room, and left her without a vestige of rancor in his soul. She would not give an inch in the stand she had taken, but something immeasurably great in his make-up rose to the occasion and he went forth with the conviction that he had no right to demand more of her than she was ready to give. He was satisfied to abide by her decision. The spell of her was over him more completely than ever before.

Two days later he saw her off at the Gare du Lyons, bound for Interlaken. There was a complete understanding between them. She wanted to be quite alone in the Alpine town; he was not to follow her there. She had reserved rooms at the Schwelizerhof, and the windows of her sitting-room looked straight up the valley to the snow-covered crest of the Jungfrau. She remembered these rooms; as a young girl she had occupied them with her father and mother. By some hook or crook, Brandon arranged by wire for her to have them again, not an easy matter at that season of the year. Later she was to go to Lucerne, and then to Venice.

The slightest shred of hope was left for Booth. Even though he might accomplish the task he had set upon himself—the conquest of Sara in respect to the untold story—he still had Hetty's dismal prophecy that after he learned the truth he would come to see why they could not be married. But he would not despair.

"We'll see," was all that he said in response to her forlorn cry that they were parting for ever. There was a

grinness in the way he said it that gave her something to cherish during the months to come; the hope that he would come back and take her in spite of herself.

He sailed from Cherbourg on the first steamship calling there. Awake, he thought of her; asleep, he dreamed of Challis Wrاندall. There was something uncanny in the persistence with which that ruthless despoiler of peace forced his way into his dreams, to the absolute exclusion of all else. The voyage home was made horrid by these nightly reminders of a man he scarcely knew, yet dreaded. He became more or less obsessed by the idea that an evil spell had descended upon him in the shape of a ghostly influence.

The weeks passed slowly for Hetty. There were no letters from Sara, but an occasional line or so from Mr. Carroll. She had made Brandon Booth promise that he would not write to her, nor was he to expect anything from her. If her intention was to cut herself off entirely from her recent



"Hetty!" He Cried, in a Hoarse Whisper.

world and its people, as he might have done in another way by pursuing the time-honored and rather cowardly plan of entering a convent, she was soon to discover that success in the undertaking brought a deeper sense of exile than she could have imagined herself able to endure at the outset. She found herself more utterly alone and friendless than at any time in her life. The chance companions she formed at Interlaken—despite a well-meant reserve—served only to increase her feeling of loneliness and despair. The very natural attentions of men, young and old, depressed her, instead of encouraging that essentially feminine thing called vanity. She lived as one without an aim, without a single purpose except to close one day that she might begin the next.

After a time, she went on to Lucerne. Here the life on the surface was gayer, and she was roused from her state of lethargy in spite of herself. Once, from her little balcony in the National, she saw two of her old acquaintances in the chorus at the Gaiety. They were wearing many pearls. Another time, she met them in the street. She was rather quietly dressed. They did not notice her. But the prosperous Hebraic gentlemen who attended them were not so careless.

One day a card was brought to her rooms. For the next two weeks she had a true and unavoidable friend in Lucerne. It would appear that Mrs. Rowe-Martin had not been apprised of the rift in the Wrاندall lute. She had no reason to consider the exclusive Miss Castleton as anything but the most desirable of companions. Mrs. Rowe-Martin was not long in finding

out (though how she did it, heaven knows), that Lord Murgatroyd's grand-niece was no longer the intimate of that impossible person, Sara Gooch. She couldn't think of Sara without thinking of Gooch.

But at last Mrs. Rowe-Martin departed, much to Hetty's secret relief, but not before she had increased the girl's burthens by introducing her into a cold-soled cosmopolitan set from which there were but three ways of escape. She refused to marry one of them, denied another the privilege of making love to her, and declined to play auction bridge with all of them. They were not long in dropping her, although it must be said there was real regret among the men.

From Mrs. Rowe-Martin and others she heard that Mrs. Redmond Wrاندall and Vivian were to be in Scotland in October, for somebody-or-other's christening, and that Leslie had been doing some really wonderful flying at Pau.

"I am so glad, my dear," said Mrs. Rowe-Martin, "that you refused to marry Leslie. He is a cad. Besides, you would have been in a perpetual state of nerves over his flying."

Of Sara, there was no news, as might have been expected. Mrs. Rowe-Martin made it very clear that Sara was a respectable person—but heavens!

The chill days of autumn came and the crowd began to dwindle. Hetty made preparations to join in the exodus. As the days grew short and bleak, she found herself thinking more and more of the happy-hearted, symbolic dicky-bird on a faraway window ledge. His life was neither a travesty nor a tragedy; hers was both of those.

Something told her too that Brandon Booth had wormed the truth out of Sara, and that she would never see him again. It hurt her to think that while Sara believed in her, the man who loved her did not. It is a way men have.

CHAPTER XVI.

Vivian Aims Her Opinions.

Chief among Booth's virtues was his unflinching loyalty to a set purpose. He went back to America with the firm intention to clear up the mystery surrounding Hetty Castleton, no matter how irksome the delay in achieving his aim or how vigorous the methods he would have to employ. Sara Wrاندall, to all purposes, held the key; his object in life now was to induce her to turn it in the lock and throw open the door so that he might enter in and become a sharer in the secrets beyond.

A certain amount of optimistic courage attended him in his campaign against what had been described to him as the impossible. He could see no clear reason why she should withhold the secret under the new conditions, when so much in the shape of happiness was at stake. It was in this spirit of confidence that he prepared to confront her on his arrival in New York, and it was the same unbounded faith in the belief that nothing evil could result from a perfectly just and honorable motive that gave him the needed courage.

He stayed over night in New York, and the next morning saw him on his way to Southlook. There was something truly ingenious in his desire to get to the bottom of the matter without fear or apprehension. At the very worst, he maintained, there could be nothing more reprehensible than a passing infatuation, long since dispelled, or perhaps a mildly sinister episode in which virtue had been triumphant and vice defeated with unpleasant results to at least one person, and that person the husband of Sara Wrاندall.

Pat met him at the station and drove him to the little cottage on the upper road.

"Ye didn't stay long," said he reflectively, after he had put the bag up in front. He took up the reins.

"Not very," replied his master. "After a dozen rods or more, Pat tried again."

"Just seventeen days, I make it." "Seems longer."

"Perhaps you'll be after going back soon."

"Why should you think that, Patrick?"

"Because you don't seem to be takin' much interest in your surroundin's here," said Pat loftily. He delivered a smart smack on the crupper with his stubby whip, and pursed his lips for the companionship to be derived from whistling.

"I suppose you know why I went to Europe," said Booth, laying his hand affectionately on the man's arm.

"Sure I do," said Pat, forgetting to whistle. "And was it bad luck you had, sor?"

"A temporary case of it, I'm afraid."

"Well," said the Irishman, looking up at his employer with the most profound encouragement in his wink, "if it's anny help to you, sor, I'll say that I've never found bad luck to be anny thing but temporary. And, believe me, I've had plenty of it. Mary was dom near three years makin' up her mind to say yes to me."

"And since then you've had no bad luck?" said Booth, with a smile.

"Plinty of it, begob, but I've had some one besides meself to blame for it. There's a lot in that, Mr. Brandon. When a man marries, he simply divides his luck into two parts, good and bad, and if he's like most men he puts the bulk of the bad luck on his wife and keeps to himself all he can as the good for a rainy day. That's what makes him a strong man and able to meet trouble when it comes. The beauty of the arrangement is that bad luck is only temporary and a woman's luck is wid us nine-tenths of the time, whether we know it or not, and we don't have to talk about it."

This was line philosophy, but Booth discerned the underlying motive.

"Have you been quarrelling?"

"I have not," said Pat wrathfully. "But I won't say as much for Mary. The point av me argument is that I have all the good luck in havin' married her, and she claims to have had all the bad luck in marryin' me. Still, as I said before, 'tis but temporary. The good luck lasts and the bad don't. She'll be after tellin' me so before sundown. That's like all women. You'll find it out for yourself wan o' these days, Mr. Brandon, and ye'll be dom proud ye're a man and can enjoy your good luck when ye get it. The bad luck's always fallin' behind ye, and ye can always look forward to the good luck. So don't be downhearted. She'll take you, or me name's not what it ought to be."

Booth was inclined to accept this unique discourse as a fair-weather sign.

"Take these bags upstairs, Pat," said he on their arrival at the cottage, "and then come down and drive me over to Mrs. Wrاندall's."

"Will ye be after stayin' for lunch with her, Mr. Brandon?" inquired Pat, climbing over the wheel.

"I can't answer that question now."

"Hiven help both av us if Mary's good luncheon goes to waste," said Pat ominously. "That's all I have to say. She'll take it out av both av us."

"Tell her I'll be here for lunch," said Booth, with alacrity. From which it may be perceived that master and man were of one mind when it came to considering the importance of Mary.

Pat studied his watch for a moment with a calculating eye.

"It's half-past eleven now, sor," he announced. "D'ye think ye can make it?"

Booth reflected. "I think not," he said. "I'll have luncheon first." Whereupon he leaped from the trap and went in to tell Mary how happy he was to be where he could enjoy home cooking.

At four he was delivered at Sara's door by the astute Patrick, announced by the sedate Watson and interrogated by the intelligent Murray, who seemed surprised to hear that he would not have anything cool to drink. Sara heard word that she would be down in fifteen minutes, but, as a matter of fact, appeared in less than three.

She came directly to the point.

"Well," she said, with her mysterious smile, "she sent you back to me, I see." He was still clasping her hand.

"Have you heard from her?" he asked quickly.

"No. But I knew just what would happen. I told you it would prove to be a wild-goose chase. Where is she?"

He sat down beside her on the cool, white-covered couch.

"In Switzerland. I put her on the train the night before I sailed. Yes, she did send me back to you. Now I'm here, I want the whole story, Sara. What is it that stands between us?"

For an hour he pleaded with her, all to no purpose. She steadfastly refused to divulge the secret. Not even his blunt reference to Challis Wrاندall's connection with the affair found a vulnerable spot in her armor.

"I shan't give it up, Sara," he said, at the end of his earnest harangue against the palpably unfair stand both she and Hetty were taking. "I mean to harass you, if you please, until I get what I'm after. It is of the most vital importance to me. Quite as much so, I am sure, as it appears to be to you. If Hetty will say the word, I'll take her gladly, just as she is, without knowing what all this is about. But, you see, she won't consent. There must be some way to override her. You both admit there is no legal barrier. You tell me today that there is no insanity in her family, and a lot of other things that I've been able to bring out by questioning, so I am more than ever certain that the obstacle is not so serious as you would



Pat Met Him at the Station.

have me believe. Therefore, I mean to pester you until you give in, my dear Sara."

"Very well," she said resignedly. "When may I expect a renewal of the conflict?"

"Asked tomorrow be convenient?" he asked quaintly.

"He returned his smile. 'Come to luncheon.'"

"Have I your permission to start the portrait?"

"Yes. As soon as you like."

AUSTRIA AND SERBIA BREAK

Fear of a General European Conflagration.

FIRST CLASH ON DANUBE

Belgrade Made Almost Complete Surrender To Demands Of Dual Monarchy And Reject None Absolutely.

Getting On War Footing.

London.—The Serbian Minister here received a dispatch from Kraguyevatz stating that Crown Prince Alexander, acting as regent, had ordered a general mobilization of the Serbian Army and summoned the Skupshina to meet tomorrow in the old fortified capital city of Nish, 120 miles southeast of Belgrade.

London.—Sunday's developments appear to furnish new proofs that Austria is fully determined to make war on Serbia, and the possibilities of a general European war seem greater than have ever confronted the present generation.

The Serbian reply to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was an acceptance of almost all the imperious demands, except that Austrian officials shall participate in the investigation and fix the responsibility for the anti-Austrian propaganda.

Serbia proposed an appeal to the powers at The Hague for the settlement of that feature. Notwithstanding this humiliating surrender, which was more than Europe expected of the proud little nation, the Austrian Government today gave the Serbian Minister his passports, which may be construed as a virtual declaration of war.

Austria committed an act of war by arresting the chief of the Serbian general staff, General Putnik, near Budapest, but he was soon released by the Emperor's direct command.

No Formal Declaration.

A formal declaration of war is not expected, because Serbia is not a party to The Hague convention, which requires this. The suspension of all Parliamentary and judicial institutions has been decreed in Austria, and an ironical censorship has drawn a cordon of secrecy around the country, so that the outside world is in complete ignorance of everything happening there, except what the Government wants the world to know.

Even now the Austrian armies may be closing in upon Serbia and launching a sudden blow, as Japan did when she sent her fleet against the Russian ships without warning.

While Austria announces a "partial mobilization," the Austrian Ambassador at London has issued a significant notice to all Austrians liable for military service to remain home.

The only possibility of averting war at the eleventh hour which Austria recognizes is that Serbia shall reconsider her reply to the Austrian note and bow to all the demands. Even then Austria proposes to exact payment for all her expenses in connection with her military measures.

JUST BORAX PREVENTS FLIES.

Simple Household Hint By Department Of Agriculture.

Washington, D. C.—Discovery of an effectual method for preventing the breeding of the common household and typhoid fly and thereby assuring the complete extermination of this species of insect was announced by the Department of Agriculture. The simplicity of the method, consisting only of the sprinkling of a small amount of ordinary borax daily upon household and stable refuse, is said to guarantee its success and greatly reduce the number of diseases originating from the germ-carrying fly.

KILLED IN VIRGINIA DUEL.

M. C. Pendleton Fired Five Shots At John Powell, Then Died.

Lynchburg, Va.—At the Piedmont manganese mines, six miles east of here, John Powell, the watchman shot and killed M. C. Pendleton, a young man who lived in the neighborhood. Powell gave himself up to a justice and was bailed. He stated that Pendleton had been making himself offensive at Powell's home and they quarreled. Pendleton fired five shots at Powell and missed him, then Powell fired.

STRIKE FUND PROBE ON.

Miners' Million, Rumors Said, Was Used By Leaders.

Denver.—Investigation of charges that a fund of \$1,000,000 raised to conduct the strike of the copper miners in Michigan was not used for that purpose but diverted to the advantage of those in charge of the strike, was begun at the convention of the Western Federation of Miners. It was said that charges were circulated throughout the country, particularly in Butte.

HUERTA IS RESTING.

Declares He Will Watch Mexican Affairs From Europe.

Kingston, Jamaica.—General Huerta has passed his time quietly at his hotel since his arrival here from Puerto, Mexico. He declares that when the other members of his family arrive he will proceed immediately to Europe, whence he will watch the course of events in Mexico. The former dictator has displayed a strong desire to make the acquaintance of the local military authorities.

BELIEVE PIECEWORK IS BEST

Employers of Labor Bring Strong Arguments to Bear in Favor of That System.

The point is often made that the trade union with its day-rate minimum assumes that all of its craftsmen are equally efficient and that they should be paid accordingly. Employers are not likely to admit this allegation, but sometimes they act as if they also believed in a dead level among workmen.

The president of a large electrical railway system is consistently opposed to piecework or premium systems, not because of any fear of labor troubles or the special conditions of electric railway maintenance, but simply on the assumption that no shopman can possibly be worth more than \$2 to \$2.50 a day. The shop superintendent of this railway has been able to strengthen his argument for a piecework system by making a careful study of practices in other shops, and he has determined that a large increase in the production of some jobs could be brought about by some form of premium system. In fact, he has calculated that the abolition of the day rate would produce a net saving of about twenty per cent. in labor cost. He is also convinced that the piecework system would actually result in better workmanship because the present day rates are too low to appeal to good shopmen.

This has been the result on most roads where the piecework system has been introduced. But it seems to take a long time to overcome the prejudice against a workman earning more than the ordinary wages of his craft even when his production is correspondingly greater. After all, the prime con-

cern of an economical management as related to shop accounts should not be the wages of individuals but the total cost of maintenance per car mile.—Electric Railway Journal.

Tobacco Fools Bears.

As a safeguard against attacks from angry bears, a veteran trapper recommends tobacco in the pockets.

He ran into a big cinnamon, coming down the trail at full speed. The bear struck him in the pit of the stomach with his head, hurling him into the underbrush and sinking his teeth into his thigh. The bear's teeth were setting deeper, and he had about given up when the bear suddenly let go, sat up on his haunches and began to stifle, much like a dog with a bone in his throat. He continued the performance for a few seconds, then rose to his feet and started up the mountain as fast as he could travel.

The trapper discovered a plug of chewing tobacco in his pocket had been ground to a pulp and wet with the animal's saliva. The tobacco had evidently made him so sick that he was glad to let go.

Lower Animals That Weep.

Among the creatures that weep most easily are the ruminants. All hunters know that the stag weeps, and we are also assured that the bear sheds tears when it sees its last hour approaching.

The giraffe is not less sensitive, and regards with fearful eyes the hunter who has wounded it. Dogs weep quite easily. The same is true of certain monkeys. As for the elephant, there is abundant evidence of the ease with which it weeps. It sheds tears when wounded, or when it sees that it cannot escape; its tears roll from its eyes like those of a human being in affliction.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)