THAT WOMAN'S SECRET.

CONTINUED.

66 T WILL, ma'am. Listen." The man lowered his voice, and

for ten minutes spoke very earnestly, his rough, but not unpleasant face aglow with emotion. His words produced a startling effect upon Mrs. Clayton. Her countenance underwent many changes, her being was evidently stirred to its uttermost depths. When he had finished, she uttered a low cry, and clung to his arm for support.

"Oh! if I had known this years ago, how different my life might have been!'

"If I could have found you I would have told you long ago, ma'am," the man said. "I've spent months in searching for you; but 'twas of no use, I couldn't get a trace of you. Long ago I came to the conclusion that you were dead."

"I have lived a very secluded life. It is strange that we ever met."

"It is providential! But, ma'am there is one more thing I wish to tell you. I believe that the author of all your misery still lives."
"Lives!" the woman cried; "what

do you mean, John Douglas? he died dong years ago. You are mad!"

" Ma'am, I am employed as coachman my Mr. Edward Bentley, on the Fifth avenue. This gentleman has a guest who calls himself Major Heith, who is this living image, except that he wears a heavy beard. I can't help often thinking that they are one and the same. And the more I see of the major the surer I feel "

"An idle fancy; it cannot be; And yet that note! The strange similarity of the handwriting to his! My brain whirls! Oh, this is impossible! And

She spoke the last few words below her breath. Then with sudden impetuosity she cried:

44 John Douglas, can you in some way procure me a sight of this man unknown to him ?'

"Yes, ma'am; come with me."

An hour later Mrs. Clayton and John Douglas made their exit from Edward Bentley's mansion together.

"Well, ma'am," said Douglas, "you've seen the man. Is it he?'

"Yes; I would know that face among a thousand. What can this mean? I mever thought of questioning the fact of Aris death; but he certainly lives!"

"I can't understand it, ma'am; but we'll find out all about it before long.'

"You will make what you have told me public, John Douglas ?" "Of course I will, ma'am. For years

16 has been the greatest desire of my life to see your innocence established."

"Thank Heaven I have lived to see this day!" Mrs. Clayton exclaimed. "John Douglas," she added, "say nothing of this to any one until you hear from me, which will be very soon."

"Very well, ma'am. And now, before we part, can you say that you forgive me the great wrong I have done You !"

Mrs. Oakley took his hand in hers, saying:

"I do forgive you, willingly, freely. I have suffered too much to be harsh with you or any living creature."

When Ralph Marsden left Alice Leighton, he proceeded directly to Jared Percival's. On being admitted, he hastened at once to the room where he supposed Mara Sydney to be confined. He opened the door and entered, but started back in amazement at beholding Laura Odell, who rose to her feet as he entered the apartment, and confronted him with a calm demeanor.

"Laura Odell!" he exclaimed : " you here! What does this mean ?'

"It means," she said, quietly, "that I have saved one of my sex from shame and misery such as has ruined my life."

"What do you say, woman ?" Marsden cried, grasping her arm. "Tell me. as you value your life, what you have done. Where is the girl who occupied this apartment ?"

"Ralph Marsden, I care not for your threats, though I know you to be capable of any crime. But I will tell you that the girl is beyond your reach."

There was a dangerous light in Marsden's eyes as the woman spoke, and his hands nervously opened and shut.

"Tell me what you mean," he cried

"Curse you, have you dared-

I have dared to release that young girl, and she is now with her friends. Ah 1 Ralph Marsden, when, the other evening, you felled me to the earth with that hand which once caressed me so tenderly, you thought me dead. But Heaven spared my life that through me a deed of mercy might be done. That deed, Ralph, I have been the humble means of accomplishing. I have saved a pure young girl from ruin; and now would willingly, nay, gladly, end this wretched life."

"Then, curse you-you shall have your wish!" the man exclaimed with sudden fury, drawing a stiletto from its

case. "Receive your reward for the day's work."

Almost blinded by rage, Marsden plunged the keen-edged weapon into her

Uttering a low cry she sank to the floor.

Ralph Marsden recoiled in horror, as he saw the slight form quivering in the agonies of death.

Terror took the place of rage, and he fell upon his knees by her side.

"Laura!" he cried, bitterly. "Ralph," came from her dying lips, "I forgive you!"

A thousand memories rushed in a suffocating torrent to his mind. He thought of their first meeting in a little Long Island village, then Laura's happy home; of, a few months later, a mock marriage, followed by a year of happiness; of a terrible interview between the wronged, insulted woman and him-

self, which ended with a separation. He had tired of her, and sent her, heart-broken and despairing, out into the world.

A few years had passed, and now she lay dying at his feet, and he was her murderer. All the remorse that such a nature as his could feel he experienced at that moment. But the instinct of self-preservation soon manifested itself. He must escape!

With one more glance at the dying woman, he rushed from the room.

Hastening down the stairs, he reached the street door just as a plercing cry of Murder !" rang through the house.

A servant, entering the apartment, as was his custom at that hour, with Mara's noonday meal, had discovered the ghastly evidence of the terrible crime.

With an oath Marsden flung open the door. But his way to the street was blocked by four men, who at that moment ascended the steps. They were Mark Leighton, Henry Oakley, and two policemen.

Again the cry "Murder!" and a servant, a boy, hastened down stairs, pale with horror.

"Oh, gentlemen!" he exclaimed, "there's been a terrible murder done here, and," pointing to Ralph Marsden, there stands the murderer!'

"Secure him, men!" Mark Leighton exclaimed; and Marsden was instantly seized by the two officers.

"And now," said Mr. Leighton, "let us see what all this means. A murder, did you say, boy ?"

"Yes, sir; there's a strange lady up stairs, dead or dying. I don't know who she is, or how she came there; but Mr. Marsden just left that room."

"We are too late!" exclaimed Mark Leighton. "Oh if we had been but ten minutes earlier! But regrets are useless. Come with me, Dr. Oakley, you may be able to save this poor creature after all."

"Oh, sir, nobody can do anything for her now !" the boy cried. "I knew the minute I saw her that she was past relief. All the doctors in New York couldn't save her."

"Let us waste no more time in idle talk," interrupted Mr. Leighton; "lead the way, boy.'

At this moment Jared Percival appeared in the hall.

"What means this intrusion?" he demanded, moving toward them with an oath and a threatening gesture.

"A murder has been done in this house," Mr. Leighton said.

The gambler started slightly, but said. " Murder or no murder, you'd better leave the place."

"The less you say the better," inter-rupted one of the policemen. "We've business with you, Jared. Are you such a fool that you don't see the game's up?" Jared Percival made a sudden move-

A moment later he would have succeeded in effectually concealing all traces of the faro bank, so perfect were all the appliances of the place. But one of the officers anticipated his intention, and seized him with an iron grip, at the

same time sounding a shrill whistle. A body of police rushed into the house.

"In that door," directed the officer, pointing.

The men rushed into the room, and made a descent upon the faro bank.

A few moments later they again appeared in the hall, with a few crest-fallen prisoners and a quantity of confiscated upparatus.

While this was going on below, Mr. Leighton and Dr. Oakley had sought the room where lay Laura Odell. As they entered the apartment the poor girl breathed her last.

"Too late!" exclaimed Dr. Oakley, in a tone of bitter regret. "She is dead." " Poor creature! Who, or what could

she have been," said Mr. Leighton. "Perhaps this fellow Percival can inform us.11

Mark Leighton stepped to the head of the stairs and requested that Jared Percival might be allowed to come there for the purpose of identifying the body of the murdered girl. He was at once escorted to the apartment by a policeman.

"Laura Odell!" he exclaimed, as his

eyes fell upon the body. "Is it possi-

"You know her?" Mr. Leighton asked.

"I once knew her," the man said ; "it was when she was the reputed wife of Ralph Marsden."

"Was she really his wife?" But the fellow suddenly became reticent.

"I guess I've said enough," he remarked, and refused to give any further information.

" Poor girl !" exclaimed the old man, bending over her. "Her life has been heavily burdened with care and misery; but death, more merciful than man, has at last given her rest."

Twenty minutes before the appointed time, Walter Elmore reached Pier-East River. But, early as he was, a man had, for half an hour previous to his arrival, been impatiently pacing the wharf. This individual's face was muffled in such a way as to almost entirely conceal his features. But the night air was cold and biting, which might have accounted for this. As Walter approached, this man advanced towards him, and asked: "Are you Mr. Elmore?"

"I am," Walter replied. "And you are the person who sent me the note, requesting me to meet you here tonight ?"

" Yes."

"Your note gave me to understand that you possess a secret of Importance regarding my parentage."

"It is true that I possess such a seeret."

"And you will impart it to me," Walter said, his voice trembling with emo-

"I will. I have a boat here; enter it with me. We will row to the Long Island shore. When there, you shall know it."

A sudden suspicion of treachery entered Walter's mind.

"Why can you not tell me here?" he asked.

" For reasons satisfactory to myself," the stranger replied coldly. "It is immaterial to me whether you go or stay. You are the one to be benefitted, not I.'

"But," Walter persisted, "of what advantage will it be to me to go to Long Island with you?"

"By doing so you will meet your parents. "Can this be true?" Walter exclaim-

"If you doubt my word you need not accompany me; but it is true that on the opposite shore your parents await you."

"Enough!" cried the young man, "I

will accompany you." " Here is the boat."

Walter entered the boat. The stranger unfastened the painter, seized the oars, and pulled out into the stream. The night was unusually dark, the sky being overcast; and Walter could scarcely see his companion, the man's dark form being so closely identified with the gloom surrounding it. Walter sat silently and impatiently waiting her arrival at their destination, when suddenly the regular plashing of the oars ceased, and a crushing blow descended upon his head, not however, depriving him of his senses. He sprang to his feet, his companion doing the same, and in an instant the two men were engaged in a

terrible struggle. " Ha!" Walter exclaimed, tearing the muffler from the man's face. "Major

Heith !" At that instant the man having succeeded in disengaging one hand, dealt Elmore a blow on the head with the butt of a pistol. With a low moan the young man sank to the bottom of the boat. Major Heith lifted him in his arms and threw him as far as possible from the boat into the dark waters. Then, seizing the oars, he rowed with fierce energy in the direction of the New York shore.

On this same evening, shortly after eight o'clock, Mrs. Clayton appeared at Dr. Oakley's office, as she had agreed to.

"Good evening, madam," the doctor said, politely. "I expect a carriage at the door every moment; it should have been here before.

" If we should be too late!" the woman exclaimed.

"Compose yourself, madam, there is no occasion for such agitation."

"Doctor Oakley!" cried Mrs. Clayton, "if anything should happen him now, it would kill me. Since I saw you this morning, I have heard an important secret, a secret, the possession of which will probably enable me to acquaint Walter Elmore with all he desires to know regarding his parentage. "Is it possible."

"Thank heaven it is true! I have endeavored to see Walter to-day to tell him this; have called at his hotel several times, but he was absent. Oh, God grant that I meet him to-night! If we be too late!"

"We have abundance of time, Mrs. Clayton; compose yourself. The carriage will be here directly."

The minutes passed, and half-past

eight arrived, but the carriage did not

"I can wait here no longer!" Mrs. Clayton exclaimed, springing to her feet. " Let us go at once."

"Hark!" exclaimed the doctor. "I hear the rattle of the wheels; the coach is at the door."

" I fear we shall be too late!" Mrs. Clayton exclaimed, as they hastened to the vehicle.

"We have abundance of time, I think, madam," the doctor replied.

But he had miscalculated the distance. The City Hall bell was striking nine when they arrived in sight of Pier No. -. They descended from the car-

"Oh, doctor, no one is there!" Mrs. Clayton exclaimed. "We are too latetoo late !"

" Have courage," the doctor said. "Ha! who is this?"

A man approached them. " Can you tell me where to find a doctor?" he asked. "It's a matter that must be attended to at once, and I don't want to lose time. A gentleman has been nearly or quite murdered. I don't know, whether he's alive or not. I want assistance right off."

A terrible thought occurred instantaneously to both Mrs. Clayton and Henry Oakley.

"I am a physician," the latter said. "Then come along with me, sir, and you may be able to save a human life." "Go at once and I will accompany

you," Mrs. Clayton said, in a low tone. "I fear-I am almost certain it is he." "I will go with you," Dr. Oakley said. "Lead the way."

"You see, sir," the man explained, as they hastened along, "I live in a little cabin right by the water's edge, at the foot of - street, where I keep a few boats which I let out by the hour. This evening a man, a suspicious-looking customer, came to me, and wanted to hire a boat for a few moments. I let him have one, but somehow I suspected that all wasn't right-in fact, I was afraid he was going to make off with the boatso when half an hour was up I just stepped out to see if he was coming. 'Twas so dark that I couldn't see anything of the boat; but I heard the splashing of oars. All of a sudden they stopped; then I heard a heavy blow; then the sound of voices, then a low cry, and a splash in the water, and then the noise of the oars again. I saw that something was wrong; so I took one of my boats and rowed out to the place where, as near as I could judge, the noise came from; and there I found a man clinging to a log, half stunned, his face covered with blood. He fainted dead away as I dragged him into my boat, and he's been insensible ever since; and I don't know but he's dead."

"Could you identify the man who hired the boat of you?" Dr. Oakley

"I'm afraid I couldn't, sir. His face was all muffled up so that I couldn't see a single feature-in fact, it was that circumstance which made me suspicious of him in the first place. If he'd came back with my boat I'd have secured him; but he didn't, and I don't sup he will. But here we are at my cabin."

He knocked, and the door was opened by an elderly woman. Dr. Oakley and Mrs. Clayton entered. Their companion followed them, closing and locking the door, after which he ushered them into an inner apartment.

"Here's the gentleman," he said, in a low voice; "but I'm afraid it's too late to do anything for him."

They advanced into the room. A man lay, white and motionless upon the bed. Mrs. Clayton gave but one glance at his pale face and then fell upon her knees, murmuring a prayer to heaven for succor.

The man who lay there so silently

was Walter Elmore. "Do not give way to your emotion, madam," Dr. Oakley said. " Much depends upon you. Do not unfit yourself for the task before you."

"I will not," the lady said, rising to her feet; "but if you knew what I have suffered and endured for his dear sake. and with what terrible vividness it all comes back to me now, you would not blame me. Tell me, doctor, that he lives; that there is hope!"

"Do not fear, madam," Dr. Oakley said. "He lives, but as yet I cannot tell what the consequences of the night's adventure may be. A fever may attack him. Of late he has been much troubled in mind, and subject to severe headaches and the shock he has received to-night may cause a severe illness.

'If so, my place, night and day, shall be by his side. He must live now to know the truth. Tell me, dodctor, can he be removed to my home with safety?" "Yes, madam, presently," Henry

Oakley replied. "You will keep what has happened to-night a secret for the present, sir, will you not?" Mrs. Clayton said, addressing the boatman. - Continued next

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Yours truly.

W. H. CLARK.

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derful curative qualities of Vegetine as a thorough cleaner and purifier of the blood.

Mr. H. R. Stevens.

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By what I saw and heard I gained some confidence in Vegetine.

I commenced taking it soon after, but felt worse from its effects; still I persevered and soon felt it was benefitting me in other respects. You I did not see the results I desired till I had taken it faithfully for a little more than a year, when the difficulty in the back was cured; and for nine months I have eployed the best of health.

I have in that time gained twenty-live pounds of fiesh, being heavier than ever before in my life, and I was never more able to perform labor than now.

During the past few weeks I had scrotulous swelling asiarge as my lirst on another part of

life, and I was never more able to perform labor than now.

During the past few weeks I had scrofulous swelling as large as my first on another part of my body.

I took Vegetine faithfully, and it removed it level with the surface in a month. I think I should have been cured of my main trouble sconer if I had taken larger doses, after having become accustomed to its effects.

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With great obligation I am.

Yours very truly.

G. W. MANSFIELD.

Pastor of the M. E. Church.

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