

THE DEVIL'S LEAD

A Thrilling Tale of the Australian Gold Diggings.

"You've left the window open," remarked Selina, looking at her mistress, "and if you are nervous it will not make you feel safe."

"It's not that," she said, plaintively, "I will go to sleep. Can't you manage to fix it up, so that I can leave it open?"

"I'll try," answered Selina, and she undressed her mistress and put her to bed, then proceeded to fix up a kind of burglar trap. Directly in front of the window, Selina set a small wood table, so that any one who tried to enter would throw it over, and thus put the sleeper on the alert.

"You must stay all night with me, Selina," she said, irritably. "I can't be left alone."

"But, Miss Kitty," objected Selina, "she's expect to be waited for, coming home from the ball."

"Well, she comes in here to go to her own room," said Madame, impatiently; "you can leave the door unlocked."

"Well," observed Miss Sprotts, grimly, beginning to undress herself, "for a nervous woman, you bestow a great many windows and doors open."

"I'm not afraid as long as you are with me," said Madame, yawning; "it's by myself I get nervous."

the chair, and looked so pale that Mme. Midas went over to her to see what was the matter. The girl, however, shrunk away with a cry as the older woman approached, and rising to her feet, moved unsteadily toward the door.

"You say she," pointing to the body, "died of apoplexy?"

"Yes," answered, curtly, "all the symptoms of apoplexy are there."

"You are wrong!" gasped Kitty, laying her hand on his arm; "it is poison!"

"Poison!" echoed Madame and the doctor in surprise.

"Listen," said Kitty, quickly pulling herself together by a great effort. "I came home from the ball between two and three, I entered the room to go to my own, pointing to the other door; 'I did not know Selina was with Madame.'"

"No," said Madame, quietly, "that is true; I only asked her to stop at the last moment. 'I was going quietly to bed,' resumed Kitty, hurriedly, 'in order not to awaken Madame, when I saw the portrait of Monsieur Vandelpout on the table; I took it up to look at it.'"

"How could you see without a light?" asked Dr. Chinton, sharply, looking at her. "I was with a lighted candle burning," replied Kitty, pointing to the fragments on the floor; "and I could only guess it was Monsieur Vandelpout's portrait; but at all events," she said, quickly, "I sat down in the chair over there and dozed."

"On seeing, doctor, she had been to a ball and was tired," interposed Mme. Midas; "but go on, Kitty, I want to know why you say Selina was poisoned."

"I don't know how long I was asleep," said Kitty, "but I was awakened by her tongue, 'but I was awakened by a noise at the window there,' pointing toward the window, upon which both her listeners turned toward it, and looking, I saw a hand coming out from behind the curtain with a bottle in it; he held the bottle over the glass on the table, and after pouring the contents in, then withdrew."

"And why did you not cry out for assistance?" asked the doctor, quickly.

"I don't know," she replied, "I was so afraid that I fainted. When I recovered my senses, Selina had drunk the poison, and when I got up on my feet and went to the bed she was in convulsions; I woke Madame, and that's all."

"A strange story," said Chinton, musingly; "where is the glass?"

"It's broken, doctor," replied Mme. Midas; "in getting out of bed I knocked the table down, and both the night-lamp and glass were smashed."

"No one could have been concealed behind the curtain of the window?" said the doctor to Mme. Midas.

"No," she replied; "but the window was open all night; so if it is as Kitty says, the man who gave the poison must have put his hand up to the open window."

Dr. Chinton went to the window and looked out; there were no marks of feet on the flower-bed, where it was so soft that any one standing on it would have left a foot-mark behind him.

"Strange!" said the doctor; "it's a peculiar story," looking at Kitty keenly.

with her had resulted in the wrong person being killed.

Mme. Midas told Calton the whole story of her life and asserted positively that if the poison was meant for her Villiers must have administered it. This was all very well, but the question then arose, was Villiers alive? The police were once more set to work, and once more their search resulted in nothing.

CHAPTER XIII. DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

ONS. Vandelpout's rooms in Clarendon Street, East Melbourne, were very luxuriously furnished, in perfect accordance with the taste of their owner, but as the satiated spot is depicted by the moralists as a miserable and gloomy place, so M. Gaston Vandelpout, though not exactly miserable, was very ill at ease.

It was about eight o'clock at night, and Gaston was busy in his rooms packing up to go away next morning. He had disposed of his apartments to Belthorp, as that young gentleman had lately come in for some money, and was dissatisfied with his paternal roof, where he was kept too strictly tied up.

Vandelpout, seated in his shirt sleeves in the midst of a chaos of articles of clothing, portmanteaus, and boxes, was with the exception of an accomplished traveler, rapidly putting these all away in the most expeditious and neatest manner. He wanted to get finished before ten o'clock, so that he could go down to his club and show himself, in order to obviate any suspicion as to his going away. He did not intend to send out any P.P.C. cards, as he was a modest young man, and wanted to slip ostentatiously out of the country; besides, there was nothing like precaution, as the least intimation of his approaching departure would certainly bring the police on his trail, and cause trouble. The gas was lighted, there was a bright glare through all the room, and everything was in confusion, with M. Vandelpout seated in the centre, like Marius amid the ruins of Carthage. While thus engaged there came a ring at the outer door, and shortly afterward Gaston's landlady entered his room with a card.

"A gentleman wants to see you, sir," she said, holding out the card.

"I'm not at home," replied Vandelpout, coolly, removing the cigarette he was smoking from his mouth; "I can't see any one tonight."

"He says you'd like to see him, sir," answered the woman, standing at the door. "The deuce he does," muttered Vandelpout, looking at the card; "what is this person's name?"

NORTH BAY. The trustees of the public school decided to engage as headmaster a teacher holding a first-class certificate. They advertised accordingly, and as the result they have received some fifty applications from school teachers holding first class certificates. Our young town must be very popular with first class men.

It is said with good authority that the contract for the construction of the first fifty miles of the Nipponing and Barnes Bay road has been let to Chas. G. Capitani, and that the work will commence early in the spring. If our American cousin sees fit to be annexed to Canada in that way some of us at least will not forget the bonus.

The O.P.R. is very busy shipping grain east. The mammoth wheat crop in Manitoba and North West is making business lively and that means plenty of money for the employees.

We bear of great depths of snow west, but we have about one inch, and delightful weather.

We understand arrangements are being made to erect a custom smelter convenient to Sudbury on the main line of the C.P.R. If arrangements are carried out the smelter may be used by parties desiring to open up or develop mines, as they may continue to deliver their ore and deal with the company. This, it is said, will give parties with small capital an opportunity of deriving a revenue from their properties. The company may ask the Ontario Government for aid.

The presbyteries and church of England have not as yet secured settled pastors for their churches. The methodists, however, have been very kind to have shown the spirit of brotherliness. Mr. Tippett, a Methodist local preacher of rare ability, has officiated for the presbyterians a number of times, and the pastor of the Methodist church, Rev. J. Webster, preached for them last Sabbath evening. The church of England sermons have been conducted largely by Mr. Newton Williams, son of Rev. Thomas Williams who formerly preached in Oakwood, who has become quite a churchman. The methodists need more church accommodation, especially for evening services. The Sabbath school has also grown so large that the teachers find the church somewhat inconvenient.

The Epworth League gave an excellent programme on Monday evening. The service began by Mrs. Rev. J. Webster leading a prayer meeting in connection with which she read an excellent essay on "Bread from Heaven." This was followed by the literary part of the entertainment which was presented in a very creditable manner. These meetings must be productive of much good. Already the good results are manifest.

Mr. W. McKenzie, merchant, who has served two years in the council, offers his services to the electors to fill the position of mayor. Mr. Bourke, we are informed, does not seek re-election. That sounds something like what we heard last year, when it was a contest between a conservative and reformer, that Mr. Mc said that if the roman catholic would support him in '92, he would support Mr. Bourke's election for '91. It is amazing that with a majority protestant and conservative vote we cannot elect a different stamp of men. However, we hope for the best.

One of the first things Christ tells a saved sinner is, that he must keep out of bad company. Complaining about the hard times you are having, does not make it easier for anybody else.

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