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heart, when I saw so come a beautiful... to tell you that alone—there will be with that news no pleading, no groveling, no my tongue, you say, you say, but just now, whether you have not seen my brother's murderer standing before you, whether the kiss of Cain has not been upon your lips. You have reproached me for my silence, you have cast me off, unless I can prove myself not an assassin. Well, so be it! By the blessing of heaven, I will prove it—but for the love which you have withdrawn from me I will ask no more. You say it is to be mine again conditionally, I will not go back, either with or without condition. It is restored to you; it would be best that henceforth you should keep it.

Then, with but the slightest inclination of his head, he left her, and went out from the house. And Ida, after once endeavoring to make her lips utter the name of Gervase, fell prostrate on the couch.

"He will never come back to me," she wailed, "he will never come back. I have thrown his love away for ever. God forgive and pity me."

CHAPTER XV.

"I knew him intimately," Señor Guffanta said, "it is about him and his murder that I have come to talk."

These were the words with which he had responded to Lord Penlyn's reception of him; and, as he uttered them, a hope had sprang up into the young man's breast that, in the handsome Spaniard who stood before him, some one might have been found who, from his knowledge of his brother, would be able to throw some light upon, or clue to, his death.

"I cannot tell you," he said, "how welcome this information is to me. We have tried everything in our power to gather some knowledge that might lead towards finding—first, some one who would be likely to have a reason for his death; and, afterwards, the man who killed him. If you knew him intimately, it may be that you can assist us."

The Señor had taken the seat offered him by Penlyn, and from the time that he had first sat down, until now, he had not removed his dark piercing eyes from the other's face. But, as he continued to fix his glance upon Penlyn, there had come into his own face a look of surprise a look that seemed to express a baffled feeling of consternation.

"Caramba," he said to himself while the other was speaking, "Caramba, what mystery is there here? I have never seen this man before."

"He, at least, did not think so. Read this." He took from his pocket a letter written by Walter Cundall during the few days he had been back in England, and gave it to Penlyn. It ran:—

"MY DEAR COROT, I am delighted to hear you are in England, and have got an appointment as agent for Don Rodriguez in London. Perhaps, now, I shall have some respite from these fearful throes which, at intervals, from your boyhood you have hurled at me, at Juanna, and every one you can, only come as late as possible as I am out much; and we will have a talk about the old place and old times."

"P. S.—I wish poor Juanna could have lived to know of your good fortune."

"Do you think I should murder that man, Lord Penlyn?" Señor Guffanta asked quietly. "That man who, when he heard of his good fortune, could be so happy that he would have made my beloved sister—she who is now in her grave."

"I am perfectly sure. And before long I shall stand face to face with him. Then his doom is certain!"

subtler, a NEW WAS MADE... her legally his wife, and making us... a high-minded, noble woman—too much; she fell ill and died. Then the old man, Cundall, seeing that it was his friend's evil-doing that had led to our being orphaned, said that henceforth we should be his heirs. So we grew up, and I had learnt to look upon myself and my sister as his heirs, when one day there came another who, it was easy to see, had supplanted us. It was the English lad, Walter Cundall.

"I begin to see," Penlyn said. "At first," Señor Guffanta went on, "I hated him for spoiling our chances, but at last I could hate him no longer. Gradually, his gentle disposition, his way of interfering for me with his uncle, when I had erred, above all his tenderness to my poor sister, who was sick and deformed, won my love. Had he been my brother I could not have loved him more."

"But the disgrace was to her—she committed a fault, and the old man cast me off for ever. Another man tried to take from me the woman I loved—she was a vile thing worth no man's love; but—no matter how—I avenged myself. But from that day the old man turned against me, and would neither see nor hear of me again."

"A year or two passed and then I heard from Walter, for my sister and I had left Los Torres (the town where we had all lived) and had gone elsewhere. He had left everything to me, Walter wrote, and there is no mention of you nor Juanna, but he assured neither of you shall ever want for anything."

"Slop," Lord Penlyn said, "you need tell me no more. I know the rest." "You know the rest?" Señor Guffanta said, looking fixedly at him, "You know the rest?" "Yes, you are Corot."

A bewildered look came over the Spaniard's face, and then, after a second pause, he said: "Yes, I am Corot. It was the name given me by the Mestizo—amongst whom I played as a boy, and it kept to me. It is you, then, Lord Penlyn, who has set this Dobson to look for me?" "Yes; we found your letters to him, and from one of them we believed you to be in England. We thought that—"

"That I killed him?" "You threatened him in one of your letters. We were justified in thinking so."

"He, at least, did not think so. Read this." He took from his pocket a letter written by Walter Cundall during the few days he had been back in England, and gave it to Penlyn. It ran:—

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"I am perfectly sure. And before long I shall stand face to face with him. Then his doom is certain!"

Again Lord Penlyn noticed the self-contained calm of the man, and again he told himself that he spoke with such an air of certainty that it was impossible to doubt him. For one moment the thought came to his mind that this apparent calmness, this certainty of finding the murderer, might be a role assumed by Guffanta to prevent suspicion falling upon him. But on reflection that thought fled. Had he seen the murderer he would never have allowed it to be known that he was Corot, a man against whom circumstances had looked so black. And Cundall's letter was sufficient to show that which the Señor had told him, about the friendship that had existed between them, was true.

"You must know more than do of us Señor Guffanta, as no doubt you do to inspire you with such confidence of finding him. Had he any enemy in Honduras, who may now be in England, and have done this deed?" "To my knowledge, none. He was a man who made friends, not enemies."

"How then, do you hope to find the man who killed him, Lord Penlyn, for I am sure to find him. What will you say when I tell you that I have seen his murderer's face?" "You have seen his face? You know it!" The other exclaimed, springing to his feet. "Oh, let me at once send for the detectives and the lawyers, so that you may describe him to them, and let them endeavor to find him. But," he said suddenly, "where have you seen him?"

There was an almost contemptuous smile upon the Señor Guffanta's face as he said: "Send for no one—at least, not yet. If by the detectives you mean Dobson, the heavy man, he will not assist me, and of the lawyers I know nothing; and as present I will not tell you when and where I have seen this man. But, sir—but, Lord Penlyn, I know one thing. When that man and I once more stand face to face, Walter Cundall, who shielded me from my uncle's wrath, who shielded me as a brother to my beloved Juanna, will be avenged."



avenger of his brother's death. So terrible did he look, that the other wondered how that murderer would feel when he should be in his grasp.

He stepped forward to Guffanta and held out his hand to him. "Sir," he said, "I thank you that you are here to assist me in your search? May I not tell the detectives what you know?"

"You may tell them everything I have told you; it will not enable them to be of any use. But what I have to do is to be by myself." He paused a moment; then he said: "It may be that when you do tell them, they will still think that I am the man—"

"No, no." "Yes, it may be so. Well, if they want to know my actions, if they want to know what I do and where I go, I am to be found at the Hotel Lepanto—that is when I am not here in this house, for I must ask you—I have a reason—to let me come to you as I wish."

Penlyn bowed, and said some words to the effect that he should always be freed of the house, and the other continued: "My business here as agent for Don Rodriguez will not occupy me much at present, the rest of my time will be devoted to the one purpose of finding that man."

"I pray that you may be successful." "I shall be successful," the Spaniard answered quietly. "And now," he said, "I will ask you to do one thing."

"Ask me anything and I will do it." "You have a garden behind your house?" "Yes, a garden, and how is admission obtained to it?"

Lord Penlyn stared at him wondering, not knowing what this question might mean, and then he said: "There is an entrance from the back of the house to the side street. But why do you ask? no one ever goes into it. It is damp and even the paths are partly overgrown with weeds."

"There are keys to those entrances?" "Yes." "And in your possession?" and as he spoke, his dark eyes were fixed very intently on the young man.

"They are somewhere about the house but they are never used." "I wish them found. Then, when they are found, I must ask you to pretend that your word of honor that no living creature, not even yourself, will enter that garden without my knowing it. Will you do this?"

"I will do it," Penlyn said. "But I wish you would tell me your reason." "I will tell you nothing more at present. But remember that I have a task to perform and that I shall do it."

Then he left him, and walked away to the neighborhood of Leicester square. "What I have seen to-day," he said to himself, "would have baffled many a man. But you, Miguel, are different from other men. You are not baffled, you are only still more determined to do what you have to do. But who is he—who is he? Caramba! he is not Lord Penlyn!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"The story about this Spaniard, Guffanta, is a strange one," Philip Smerdon wrote from Oclevie Chase to Lord Penlyn, who had informed him of the visit he had received and the revelations made by the Señor, "but I may as well tell you at once that I don't believe it, although you say that the lawyers, as well as Stuart and Dobson, are inclined to believe it. My opinion is that that though he may not have killed Mr. Cundall, he is still telling you a lie—some reason of his own, as to the friendship that existed between them; and he probably thinks that by pretending to be able to find the man, he will get some money from you. With regard to his having been face to face with the murderer, why, if so, does he not say on what occasion and when? To know his face as that of the murderer, is to say, that he had either known he was about to commit the act, or that he had witnessed it. It admits of no other interpretation, and consequently what becomes of the avowed love for Cundall, if he knew of the contemplated deed and did not prevent it, or having witnessed it, did not at once arrest or kill his aggressor? You may depend upon it, my dear Sir, that this man's story is nothing but empty braggadocio, with, as I said before, the probable object of extracting money from you as he previously extracted it from your brother."

As to the locking up of the garden and allowing no one to enter it, I am inclined to think that it is simply done with the object of making a pretence of mysteriously knowing something that no one else knows. And it is almost silly for your garden would be greatly exposed to be visited by the murderer as a place to visit, and what object could he have in so visiting it? However, as it is a place never used, I should gratify him in this case, only I would go a little further than wish to never allow it to be opened—net even when he desires it."

Senor's statement, and looking upon it as a mere vulgar attempt to extort money from him, almost led him also to doubt whether, after all, he had not too readily believed the Spaniard.

Yet, he reflected, his actions, as he stood before him foretelling the certain doom of that assassin when once they should again be face to face, and his calm certainty that such would undoubtedly happen, bore upon them the impress of truth. And his story had earned the belief of the others—that, surely, was in favor of it being true. Stuart had seen him, had listened to what he had said, and had formed the opinion that he was neither lying nor acting. Dobson also, the man who to the Señor's mind was ridiculous and incapable, had been told everything, and he, too, had come to the conclusion that Guffanta's story was an honest one, and that, of all other men, he who in some mysterious manner, knew the murderer's face, would be the most likely to eventually bring him to justice.

Only, he thought that the Señor should be made to divulge where and when he had so seen his face; that would give him and his brethren a clue, he said, which might enable them to assist him in tracking the man who had killed Stuart. He had seen him, had listened to what he had said, and had formed the opinion that he was neither lying nor acting. Dobson also, the man who to the Señor's mind was ridiculous and incapable, had been told everything, and he, too, had come to the conclusion that Guffanta's story was an honest one, and that, of all other men, he who in some mysterious manner, knew the murderer's face, would be the most likely to eventually bring him to justice.

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