



you have ever seen it. "No sir," the secretary blushed...

"About three weeks ago," "Gentlemen," he asked after some moment's hesitation...

"It is impossible," returned the coroner. His face grew even more pallid and deprecatory...

The young man turned fiercely upon him, and I could not help wondering that I had ever thought him common place...

"It is only this gentleman. One afternoon about three weeks since, I had occasion to go to the library at an unusual hour...

"Where did you find this pistol?" asked the coroner of the officer. "In the top drawer of a shaving table that stands at the head of Mr. Leavenworth's bed..."

"Was the drawer locked?" "Yes, sir; but the key was not taken out."

Interest had now reached its climax. A universal cry swept through the room, "Is it loaded?"

The coroner, frowning on the assembly, with a look of great dignity, remarked: "I was about to ask that question myself, but first I must request order."

"Now, sir," exclaimed the coroner. The clerk from Bohn's, taking out the cylinder, held it up. "There are seven chambers here, and they are all loaded."

"How do I know that?" said he, turning to the coroner, "will you be kind enough to examine the condition of this pistol?"

"Look first at the barrel; it is clean and bright, you will say, and shows no evidence of a bullet having passed out of it very lately; that is because it has been cleaned."

"How do you know?" cried one of the jury. "How do I know? Sir," said he, turning to the coroner, "will you be kind enough to examine the condition of this pistol?"

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When my glance first fell upon her, she was standing by the side of a small table with her face turned toward her cousin, and her two hands resting, the one upon her breast, the other on the table, in an attitude of antagonism.

Before the sudden pang which shot through her at the sight of her beauty had subsided, her head had turned, her gaze had encountered mine; all the horror of the situation had burst upon her, and instead of a haughty woman drawn up to receive and trample upon the insinuations of another, I beheld, a pale, trembling, pale, human creature, conscious that a sword hung above her head, and without a word to say why it should not fall and slay her.

It was a pitiable change; a heart-rending revelation. I turned from it as from a confession. But just then her cousin, who had apparently regained her self-possession at the first betrayal of emotion on the part of the other, stepped forward and holding out her hand, inquired: "Is not this Mr. Raymond?"

"Is not this Mr. Raymond?" How kind of you, sir, and you?" turning to Mr. Gryce; "you have come to tell us we are wanted below, is it not so?"

"It was the voice I had heard through the door, but modulated as a sweet, winning, almost caressing tone. Glancing hastily at Mr. Gryce, I looked to see how he was affected by it. Evidently much, for the bow with which he greeted her words was lover's ordinary, but her cousin, who had met her earnest look, both deprecatory and reassuring. He did not look toward her cousin, though her deathly conscious eyes were fixed upon his face with an inquiry in their depths more agonizing than the utterance of any words.

"You are very good. I do feel the need of support, the occasion is so horrible, and my cousin there—here a little gleam of alarm flickered into her eyes—"Is so very strange to-day."

"Humph!" he thought to myself, "where is the grand, indignant pythonesque with the unpeppery wrath and menace in her countenance, whom I saw when I first entered the room?"

Could it be that she was trying to beguile us from our conjecture by making light of her former expressions? Or was it possible that she had deceived herself so far as to believe us unimpressed by the weighty accusation overheard by us at a moment so critical.

But Eleanor Leavenworth, leaning on the arm of the detective, soon absorbed all my attention. She had regained in a manner also by this time her self-possession, but not so entirely as her cousin. Her face, which had endeavored to walk, and the hand which rested on his arm trembled like a leaf. "Would to God I had never entered this house," said I to myself.

And yet, before the exclamation was half uttered, I became conscious of a secret rebellion against the thought, an emotion, shall I say, of thankfulness, that I had not another, was the one to break in upon their privacy, overhear that significant remark, and shall I acknowledge it, follow Mr. Gryce and the trembling, sweet creature of Eleanor Leavenworth down stairs.

"I believe I may go further than that, and say positively so. My uncle was in the habit of confining in me, and I had had no idea of any kind of importance to him had occurred."

Questioned in regard to Hannah, she gave that person the best of characters; knew of nothing which could have led either to her strange disappearance, or to her connection with crime. Could not say whether she kept any company with any such thing in her hand.

"I Oh, no, no; I saw nothing." "Was your uncle on ill terms with anyone?" was now asked. "Had he valuable papers or secret sums of money in his possession?"

"To all these inquiries she returned an evasive answer. "Has your uncle met any stranger lately, or received any important letter during the last few weeks that might seem in any way to throw light upon this mystery?"

There was the slightest perceptible hesitation in her voice as she replied: "No, of any such kind. I do not know of any such thing."

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house and her connection with its deceased master, she was asked to relate what she knew of the murder itself, and of its discovery by her cousin and the servants.

Lifting up a brow that seemed never to have known till now the shadow of care or trouble, and a voice that whistled low and womanly rang like a bell through the room, she replied: "You ask me, gentlemen, a question which I cannot answer of my own personal knowledge. I know nothing of this murder nor of its discovery, save what has come to me through the lips of others."

My heart gave a bound of relief, and I saw Eleanor Leavenworth's hands drop from her brow like stone, while a flickering gleam as of hope fled over her face, and she died away like sunlight leaving a table.

"For, strange as it may seem to you," Mary earnestly continued, the shadow of a past horror revisiting her countenance, "I did not enter the room where my uncle lay."

"I did not enter the room where my uncle lay. I did not even think of doing so; my only impulse was to fly from what was so horrible and heart-rending. But Eleanor went in, and she can tell you—"

"We will question Miss Eleanor Leavenworth later," interrupted the coroner, but very gently for him. Evidently the grace and elegance of this sweet woman were making their impression. "What we want to know is what you saw, say, then, that you cannot tell us of anything that passed in the room at the time of the discovery?"

"No, sir." "Open up what occurred in the hall?" "Nothing occurred in the hall," she remarked innocently.

"Did not the servants pass in from the hall, and your cousin come out there after her revival from the fainting fit that overcame her at the first sight of her uncle?"

"Yes, sir; but that was nothing." "You remember, however, that she did come out into the hall?"

"Yes, sir." "With a paper in her hand?" "Paper?" she whispered suddenly and looked at her cousin. "Did you have a paper, Eleanor?"

The moment was intense. Eleanor Leavenworth, who, at the first mention of the word paper, had started perceptibly, rose to her feet at this naive appeal, and opening her lips seemed about to speak, when the coroner, with his hand to his forehead, and sweetly lifted his hand with decision and said: "You need not ask your cousin, miss; but let us hear what you have to say yourself."

Immediately Eleanor Leavenworth sank back, a pink spot breaking out on either cheek; while a slight murmur, as if in protest, escaped her lips. "Humph!" he thought to myself, "where is the grand, indignant pythonesque with the unpeppery wrath and menace in her countenance, whom I saw when I first entered the room?"

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row; the young girls he enraptured with the halo of his love and protection, when love and protection were what their immaturity most demanded; the women who looked to him for guidance when childhood and youth were passed—these, sir, these are the ones to whom his death is a loss, in comparison to which all other losses which may come to them, must ever seem trivial and unimportant."

It was a noble reply to the basest of insinuations, and the jurymen drew back rebuked; but here another of them, one who had not spoken before, but whose appearance was not only superior to the rest, but also almost imposing in its gravity, leaned from his seat and in a solemn voice said: "Miss Leavenworth, the human mind cannot help forming impressions. Now have you, with or without reason, felt at any time a suspicion as to who the murderer of your uncle might be?"

"No; I have neither suspicion nor reason for any. The assassin of my uncle is not only entirely unknown to me, but completely unsuspected by me."

It was like the removal of a stifling pressure. Amid a universal outburst of the breath, Mary Leavenworth stood aside and Eleanor was called in her place.

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