

"Yes, sir; at the head of his bed." An officer was sent to examine the stand drawer. In a few moments he returned, bringign a small pistol which he laid down on the coroner's table, eaying, "Here it is."

Immediately everyone sprang to his feet, but the coroner, handing it over to the clerk from Bohn's, inquired if that was of the make before mentioned. Without hesitation he replied, 'Yes, Smith & Wesson, you can see for yourself," and he proceeded to examine it.

"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. It was lying in a velvet case together with a box of cartridges, one of which I bring as a

"Was the drawer locked?"

"Yes, sir; but the key was not taken Interest had now reached its climax.

A universal cry swept through the coom, "Is it loaded?" The coroner, frowning on the assembbly, with a look of great dignity, re-

marked: "I was about to ask that question myself, but first I must request order." An immediate calm followed. Everyone was too much interested to interpose

any obstacle in the way of gratifying his curiosity. "Now, sir!" exclaimed the coroner. The clerk from Bohn's, taking out the cyclinder, held it up. "There are seven chambers here, and they are all

A murmur of disappointment followed this assertion.

"But," he quietly said, after a momentary examination of the face of the dies and escorting them down. ed long. A bullet has been recently shot from one of these chambers." a "How do you know?" cried one of the jury.

"How do I know? Sir," said he, turnenough to examine the condition of this | the young ladies expecting you." pistol?" and he handed it over to that gentleman. "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. But now observe the face of the cyclinder, what do you see there?" "I see a faint line of smut near one

of the chambers." "Just so; show it to the gentlemen."

It was immediately handed down. "That faint line of smut on the edge of one of the chambers is the tell-tale, sirs. A bullet passing out, always leaves smut behind. The man who fired this, remembering the fact cleaned the barrel, but forgot the cyclinder." And stepping aside he folded him arms. "Jerusalem!" spoke out a rough,

hearty voice, "isn't that wonderful!" agape in the doorway.

tion of the stand, and its distance from the library table.

the stand in another. To reach the former from the latter, one would be bed room in a diagonal direction, pass that one apartment from the other. and-

"Wait a moment; how does this table stand in regard to the door which leads from the bed room into the hall?" rectly round the foot of the bed to the look, he struck his hand against the stand, procure the pistol and cross half way over to the passage way, without being seen by anyone sitting or standing in the library beyond."

'Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the horrified cook, throwing her apron over her head, as if to shut out some dreadful Fair, pale, proud, delicate; looking like I could find I looked around for her vision, "Hannah niver would have the a lily in the thick, creamy-tinted wrappluck for that, niver, niver!" But Mr. per that alternately clung to and sway-Gryce laying a heavy hand on the wo- ed from her richly moulded figure; with man forced her back into her seat, re- her Grecian front, crowned with the proving and calming her at the same time, with a dexterity that was marvellous to behold. "I beg your pardons," she cried, depreciatingly to those other outstretched and pointing toward around, "but it niver was Hannah, niver.

The clerk from Bohn's here being dismissed, Mr. Harwell was again called. my breath in surprise, actually for the That person rose with manifest reluc-

"Mr. Harwell," the coroner began, "we are told of the existence of a pistol belonging to Mr. Leavenworth, the supreme indignation of outraged and upon searching, we discover it in his room. Did you know of his posses sing an instrument ?"

"Was it a fact generally known in the house ?"

showed it to me."

"No sir,"—the secretary blushed—"I

"Under what circumstances?" "Gentlemen," he asked after some coment's hesitation, "will you not ex-"It is impossible," returned the

"About three weeks ago."

His face grew even more pallid and deprecatory. "I am obliged to introduce the name of a lady," said he hesi-

"We are very sorry," remarked the The young man turned fiercly upon

him, and I could not help wondering that I had ever thought him common place. "Of Miss Eleanore Leavenworth,"

"It is only this, gentlement One afternoon about three weeks since, I had occasion to go to the library at an unusual hour. Crossing over to the mantel-piece for the purpose of procuring a penkife which I had careessly left there in the morning, I heard ing that Mr. Leaveworth was out are wanted below, is it not so?" and supposing that the ladies had gone with him, I took the liberty of looking to see who was there; when what was winning, almost caressing tone. my astonishment to behold Miss Eleanore Leavenworth standing at the side of her uncle's bed, with his pistol in her hand. Confused at my indiscretion, I attempted to escape without ing me, called me by name, and upon my advancing, asked me if I would with an inquiry in their depths more not explain the pistol to her. Gentle- agonizing than the utterance of any men, in order to do so, I was obliged cry would have been. Knowing Mr. to take it in my hand; and that, sirs, is the only other occasion upon which

the next question. "She asked you to explain the pistol to her; what do you mean by that?" | in fact, and turning hastily away took "I mean," continued he faintly, catching his breath in a vain effort to ap- Gryce's hand falling on my arm stoppear calm, "how to load, aim and fire it." sample," and he laid it down beside the

A flash like the glare of sudden lightning, shot across the faces of all present. "Mr. Harwell." he inquired at length have you any thing to add to the

statement you have just made ?" The secretary sadly shook his head. "Mr. Gryce," I here whispered, clutching that person by the arm and sure me, I entreat you-" but he would

not let me finish. young ladies, he quickly interposed. her eyes, she murmured: "If you desire to fulfil your duty towards them, be ready, that's all."

and upon demand being made for Miss | eyes-"is so very strange to-day." Mary and Miss Eleanore Leavenworth, advanced and said that, as a friend of the family-a pretty lie, which I hope will not be laid up against me-I begged the privilege if going for the la-

cyclinder, "they have not all been load- The permission sought, being almost beating with excitement and these words of Mr. Gryce's ringing in my ears: "Third floor, rear room, first door ing to the coroner, "will you be kind at the head of the stairs. You will find critical.

> VI. SIDE-LIGHTS.

Third floor, rear room, first door at the head of the stairs! What was I about to see there?

Pausing only long enough on the threshold to compose myself for the interview, I lifted my hand to knock, when a rich, clear voice rose from within, and I heard distinctly uttered these ominous words: "I do not accuse your hand, though I know of none other which would or could have done this; but your heart, your head, your will those I do and must accuse in my secret mind at least, and it is well that you should know it."

Struck as if by a blow, I staggered back. Good God! what depths of horror and depravity were about to open It was a countryman who had stepped | before me! Shuddering and sick, I in from the street, and now stood all cowered there, my hands over my ears, when suddenly I felt a touch on my Order being at last restored, the offi- arm, and turning, saw Mr. Gryce ger on his lip, and the last flickering "The library table is in one room and from his steady, almost compassionate

countenance. "Come, come," whispered he; "I see obliged to cross Mr. Leavenworth's you don't begin to know what kind of circumstances, Mary, at least, if not drawer, she returned, not since the a world you have got into. Rouse her less striking, though by no means day he bought it, Eleanore, and not herthrough the passage way separating yourself; remember they are waiting less interesting cousin, could never self, having the charge of her uncle's down below."

"But who is it? Who was it that spoke?

"That we shall soon see," exclaimed "One might enter that door, pass di- meet, much less answer my appealing tion of men such as I have already dedoor and flung it wide open.

Seated in an easy chair of embroidered satin, but rousing from her half recumbent position, like one who was in the act of launching a powerful invective, I beheld a glorious woman. palest of pale tresses, lifted and flashing with power; one quivering hand tive, whose suddenly assumed air of at such a time as this," was her earclasping the arm of her chair, the some distant object in the room-her whole appearance was so splendid so startling, so extraordinary, that I held woman'I beheld or some famous pythoness conjured up from ancient story to express in one tremendous gesture,

"Miss Mary Leavenworth," whispered | the self-consc that ever present voice over my shoul-Ah! Mary Leavenworth! and I felt a sudden thrill of relief. This beautiful "So it would seem.
"How was that? Was he in the abit of leaving it around where any ing of that uplifted hand, now frozen into its place by a new emotion, the demeanor in the room into its place by a new emotion, the into its place by a new emotion "So it would seem."

"How was that? Was he in the habit of leaving it around where any one could see it?"

"Turning my head, I followed the guidnances of all present. Even I, impressing of that uplifted hand, now frozen ed as I had been by her very different "We were once talking about firearms. I have some taste that way, and have always been anxious to possess a pocket pistol. Saying something of the kind to him one day, he rose from his seat and bringing this from its place in his stand drawer, Eleanore-I could as soon paint the "How long ago was that?"

"How long ago was that?"

"Some few months since."

"He has owned this pistol then for ome time?"

"Yes, gir."

"Yes, gir."

"Is that the only occasion upon which in the moment on forever.

"He was soon paint the about to beseech her to have care, when her name, called in a slow, impressive way by the coroner, roused her from her abstraction.

The testimony of Mary Leavenworth was short. After some few questions mostly referring to her position in the his bosom in the helplessness and sorthal moment on forever.

small table with her face turned to-ward her cousin, and her two hands resting, the one upon her breast, the other on the table, in an attitude of antagonism. But before the sudden pang which shot through me at the sight of her beauty had subsided, her head had turned, her gaze had encountered mine; all the horror of the situa-

tion had burst upon her, and instead of a haughty woman drawn up to receive and trample upon the insinua-tions of another, I beheld, alas! a trembling, panting human creature, ous that a sword hung above her nead, and without a word to say why it should not fall and slay her.

It was a pitable change; a heartrending 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? How kind of you, sir. And you?" turning to Mr. a noise in the adjoining room. Know- Gryce; "you have come to tell us we It was the voice I had heard through

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 lower :han ordinary, and the smile with which being observed, but in vain, for just he met her earnest look, both deprecaas I set my foot on the threshold of the tory and reassuring. He did not look door, she turned around and, detect- toward her cousin, though her deathly conscious eyes were fixed upon his face Gryce as I did, I felt that nothing could promise worse or be more sig-I ever saw or handled the pistol of Mr. | nificant than this same transparent dis-Leavenworth." Dropping his head he regard of one who seemed to fill the room with her terror. And, struck with waited in indescribable agitation for pity, I forgot that Mary Leavenworth had spoken, forgot her very presence one step toward her cousin, when Mr.

> ped me. "Miss Leavenworth speaks," said he. Recalled to myself, I turned my back upon what had so interested me even while it repelled, and forcing myself to make some sort of a reply to the fair creature before me, offered my arm and led her toward the door.

Immediately the pale, proud countenance of Mary Leavenworth softened almost to the point of smiling-and here dragging him down to my side; "as- let me say there never was a woman appeal, and opening her lips seemed sin. Similar in tone, it lacked its exwho could smile and not smile like about to speak, when the coroner, with Mary Leavenworth. Looking in my a strict sense of what was regular, "The coroner is about to ask for the face with a frank and sweet appeal in lifted his hand with decision and said:

"You are very good. I do feel the need of support, the occasion is so hor- yourself." Fulfill my duty! The simple words rible, and my cousin there"-here a recalled me to myself. I slowly rose little gleam of alarm flickered into her sank back, a pink spot breaking out

menace in her countenance, whom I than the forms of law adhered to. The permission sought, being almost guile us from our conjecture by making a witness, the coroner repeated his limit disposed to be easy with so charm- children as we were, upon the world ing a witness, the coroner repeated his limit and disposed to be easy with so charm- children as we were, upon the world ing a witness, the coroner repeated his limit disposed to be easy with so charm- children as we were, upon the world ing a witness, the coroner repeated his limit and the coroner repeated his limit in the hall; my face aflame, my heart | Or was it possible that she had deceived herself so far as to believe us unimpressed by the weighty accusation cverheard by us at a moment so

But Eleanore 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 step faltered as she endeavored to walk, and the hand which rested on his arm trembled like a leaf. "Would to God I had never this mystery?" entered this house," said I to myself. break in upon their privacy, overhear she hastened to add that significant remark, and, shall I acknowledge it, follow Mr. Gryce and ore Leavenworth down stairs.

VII.

MARY LEAVENWORTH. of these two beautiful ladies. Possessed the house. Finally, when asked when this reply so clearly betokened. conspicuous in all places and under all Leavenworth always kept in his stand have entered any assemblage without apartments. drawing to herself the wondering attention of all present. But heralded as here by the most fearful of tragedies, ne shortly. And without waiting to what could you expect from a collecscribed, but overmastering wonder and incredulous admiration? Nothing, perhaps, and yet at the first murmuring sound of amazemnet and satisfaction,

I felt my soul recoil in disgust. Making haste to seat my now trembling companion in the most retired spot cousin. But Eleanore Leavenworth, weak as she had appeared in the interview above, showed at this moment neither hesitation nor embarrassment. Advancing upon the arm of the detecpersuasion in the presence of the jury nest reply. was anything but reassuring, she stood for an instant gazing calmly upon the scene before her. Then, bowing to the ate, when suddenly his ponderous colcoroner with a grace and condecention that seemed at once to place him on moment doubting if it were a living the footing of a politely endured intruder in this home of elegance, she took the seat which her own servants hastened to procure for her, with an ease and dignity that rather recalled the triumphs of the drawing room, than as that in which we were. Palpable acting though this was, it was not without its effect. Instantly the murmurs ceased, the obtrusive glances fell, effect this look might have upon those about us, I hastily seized her hand, which, cienched and unconscious, hung which, clenched and unconscious, hung to over the edge of her chair, and was about to be seech her to have care, when her name, called in a slow, impressive way by the coroner, roused her from her abstraction.

The testimony of Mary Leavenworth was about Africa and Mary Leavenworth was about to say:

When my glance first fell upon her, house and her connection with its de-she was standing by the side of a ceased master, she was asked to relate small table with her face turned to- what she knew of the murder itself, and of its discovery by her cousin and

Lifting up a brow that seemed never to have known till now the shadow of care or trouble, and a voice that whilst 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

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

"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 even think of doing so; my only impulse was to fly from what was so horrible and heart-rending. But Eleanore went in, and she can tell you-" the door, but modulated to a sweet,

"We will question Miss Eleanore 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. You say, then, that discovery?"

"No, sir." "Only 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 was sufficient warranty in itself against there after her revival from the fainting fit that overcame her at the first sight of her uncle?" Mary Leavenworth's violet eyes open-

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

"Yes, sir." "With a paper in her land?" "Paper?" and she whelled suddenly and looked at her cousn. "Did you

have a paper, Eleanore? The moment was interse. Eleanore Leavenworth, who, at the first mention of the word paper, had started perceptibly, rose to her feet at this naive "You need not ask your cousin, miss; but let us hear what you have to say

Immediately Eleanore Leavenworth on either cheek; while a slight mur-"Humph!" thought I to myself, mur testified to the disappointment of where is the grand, indignant python- those in the room who were more anxess with the unspeakable wrath and lous to have their curiosity gratified saw when I fist entered the room?" | Satisfied with having done his duty, our uncle, we should have been thrown, Could it be that she was trying to be- and disposed to be easy with so charm-"Tell us, if you please, if you

saw 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 equal negative. "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

There was the slightest perceptible And yet, before the exclamation was hesitation in her voice as she replied: half uttered I became conscious of a "No, not to my knowledge; I don't secret rebellion against the thought, an know of any such." But here, stealing emotion, shall I say, of thankfulness, a side glance at Eleanore, she evidently that I and not another, was the one to saw something that reassured her, for

"I believe I may go further than that, and say positively no. My uncle was in should have known if anything of importance to him had occurred."

Questioned in regard to Hannah, she gave that person the best of characa the sunlight bursting suddenly upon led either to her strange disappearanca of a loveliness that would have been she had last seen the pistol which Mr.

It was the only thing she had said, which, even to a mind freighted like mine, would seem to point to any private doubt or secret suspicion, and this uttered in the careless manner in out comment, if Eleanore herself had first glimpse you had of his body?" not directed at that moment, a very much aroused and inquiring look upon

the speaker. But it was time for the inquisitive juror to make himself heard again: Edging to the brink of his chair, he drew in his breath with a vague awe of Mary's beauty, almost ludicrous to see, and asked her if she had properly considered what she had just said. "I hope, sir, I consider all that I say

The little juror drew back, and 1 looked to see her examination terminleague of the watch chain, catching the young lady's eye, inquired:

"Miss Leavenworth, did your uncle ever make a will?" Instantly every man in the room was in arms, and even she could not prevent the slow blush of injured pride from springing to her cheek. But her answer was given firmly and without

any show of resentment: "Yes, sir," she returned simply. "More than one?" "I never heard of but one." "Are you acquainted with the tents of that will?"

"I am. He made no secret of ntentions to any one." The juryman lifted his eye-glass and ooked at her. Her grace was little to im, her beauty or her elegance. "Peraps, then, you can tell me who is the one most likely to be benfited by his death?"

row; the young girls he enshrined with the halo of his love and protection, when love and protection were what heir immaturity most demanded; the women who looked to him for guid-ance 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 rivial and unimportant."

It was a noble reply to the basest of nsinuations, and the juryman 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 imosing in its gravity, leaned from his eat and in a solomn 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 ancle is not only entirely unknown to,

but completely unsuspected by me." It was like the removal of a stifling pressure. Amid a universal outgoing of the breath, Mary Leavenworth stood aside and Eleanore was called in her place.

> VIII. CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

And now that the interest was at its height; that the veil which shrouded you cannot tell us of snything that this horrible tragedy seemed about to passed in the room at the time of the be lifted, if not entirely withdrawn, I felt a desire to fly the scene, to leave the spot, to know no more. Not that I was conscious of any particular fear that this woman was going to betray herself. The cold steadiness of her now fixed and impassive countenance

The coroner, upon whom the blonde loveliness of Mary had impressed itself to Eleanore's apparent detriment, was the only one in the room who showed himself unaffected at this moment. Turning toward the witness with a look which, while respectful, had a touch of austerity in it, he began: "You have been an inmate of Mr.

Leavenworth's family from childhood, they tell me, Miss Leavenworth?" "From my tenth year," returned she. It was the first time I had heard her voice, and it surprised me, it was so like and yet so unlike that of her coupressiveness, if I may so speak, sounding without vibration on the ear and

ceasing without an echo. "Since that time you have been treated like a daughter, they tell me?" "Yes, sir, like a daughter indeed; he was more than a father to both of us." "You and Miss Mary Leavenworth are cousins, I believe. When did she enter

the family?" "At the same time that I did. Our respective parents were victims of the same disaster. If it had not been for breaking into a half tremble-"but he, in the goodness of his heart, adopted us into his family and gave us what we

had both lost, a father and a home." "You say that he was a father to you as well as to your cousin-that he adopted you. Do you mean by that, that he not only surrounded you with present luxury, but gave you to understand that the same should be secured to you after his death; in short, that he intended to leave any portion of his

property to you?" "No, sir; I was given to understand from the first, that his property would be bequeathed by will to my cousin." "Your cousin was no more nearly related to him than yourself, Miss Leavenworth; did he never give you any reason for this evident partiality?"

"None but his pleasure, sir." Her answers up to this point had been so straightforward and satisfactory the trembling, swaying figure of Elean- the habit of confiding in me, and I that a gradual confidence seemed to be taking the place of the rather uneasy doubts which had from the first, circled about this woman's name and person. But at this admission, uttered as Have you ever observed the effect of ters; knew of nothing which could have it was in a calm unimpassioned voice, not only the jury, but myself, who the earth from behind a mass of heav- or to her conenction with crime. Could had so much truer reason for mistrustcer was requested to describe the posi- standing close beside me with his fin- ily surcharged clouds? If so, you can not soy whether she kept any company ing her, felt that actual suspicion in have some idea of the sensation pro- or had any visitors, only knew that no her case must be very much shaken shadow of a flying emotion fading duced in that room by the entrance one with any such pretensions came to before the utter lack of motive which

Meanwhile the coroner continued, "If your uncle did for you all that you say, you must have become very much attached to him?" "Yes, sir," her mouth taking a sud-

"His death, then must have been a great shock to you?" "Very, very great." "Enough of itself to make you faint away, as they tell me you did, at the

den determined curve.

"Enough, quite." "And yet you seemed to be prepared or it?"

"Prepared?" "The servants say you were much agitated at finding your uncle did not make his appearance at the breakfast table '

"That is not so strange. My uncle was a very methodical man; the least change in his habits would be likely to awaken our apprehensions. "You were alarmed, then?" "To a certain extent I was."

habit of overseeing the reg tion of your uncle's private apartments?" "I am, sir."
"You are doubtless, then acquainted with a certain stand in his room con-

"Miss Leavenworth, who is in the

taining a drawer?" "Yes, sir." "How long is it since you had occasion to go to this drawer?" "Yesterday," visibly trembling at the

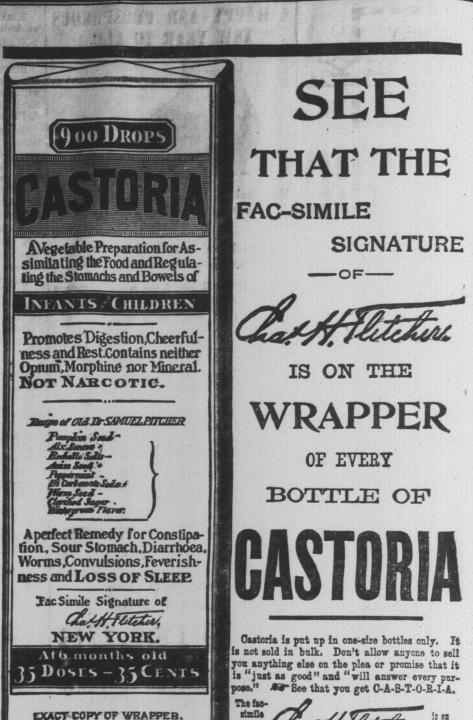
"At what time?" "Near noon, I should judge." "Was the pistol he was accustomed to feep there, in its place at that time?" "I presume so, I did not observe." "Did you turn the key upon closing

"Take it out?" "No, gir." "Miss Leavenworth, that pistol, as death?"

The brutalit yor this question was too marked to pass unchallenged. Not a man in that

If he had meant to startle her by the sudden action, he amply succeeded. At quickly suppressed shriek burst from her lips. "Oh, no, no," she moaned flinging out her hands before her.

To be Continued.)



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