



to explain himself, 'I mean,' said he, 'that if Mary dithoebes me by marry-

'Dull' Eleanor's feelings and thoughts during that anxious time, dull!

'Two days after they got there, you perceive,' Mr. Gryce explained.

'A gentleman was introduced to us to-day upon the piazza, whom I cannot forbear mentioning, first, because he is the most perfect specimen of manly beauty I ever beheld, and secondly, because Mary, who is usually so voluble when gentlemen are concerned, had nothing to say, when in the privacy of our own apartment I questioned her as to the effect his appearance and conversation had made upon her.

'The fact that he is an Englishman may have something to do with this; uncle's antipathy to every one of that nation being as well known to her as to me. But, somehow I cannot be satisfied of this. That experience of hers with Charlie Somerville has made me suspicious I fear. What if the story of last summer were to be repeated here with an Englishman for the hero? But I will not allow myself to contemplate such a possibility. Uncle will return in a few days and then all communication with one who, however elegant and prepossessing, is of a family and race with whom it is impossible for us to ally ourselves, must of necessity cease. I doubt if I should have thought twice of all this, if Mr. Clavering had not betrayed upon his introduction to Mary such intense and unstrained admiration.

'July 8. The old story is to be repeated. Mary not only submits to the attentions of Mr. Clavering, but encourages them. To-day she sat two hours at the piano singing over to him her favorite songs, and to-night—But I will not put down every trivial circumstance that comes under my observation; it is unworthy of me. And yet how can I afford to blind my eyes to the happiness of so many I love as at stake!

which they hold their consultations, if they don't want all the world to know as much as they do. Smith?' and he gave me an admortory shake of his finger while his voice took a more direct tone. 'I have done the business; the reward is mine. The assassin of Mr. Leavenworth is found, and in two hours will be in custody. Do you want to know who it is?' leaning forward with every appearance of eagerness in tone and expression.

'I stared at him in great amazement. Had anything new come to light? Any great change taken place in his conclusions? All this preparation could not be for the purpose of acquainting me with what I already knew, yet— He cut short my conjectures with a low, expressive chuckle. 'It was a long chase, I tell you, raising his voice still more, 'a tight go; a woman in the business, too; but all the women in the world could not pull the wool over the eyes of Ebenezer Gryce when he is on a trail; and the assassin of Mr. Leavenworth and—' here his voice became actually shrill in his excitement—and of Hannah Chester is found.

'How long the days are! The shadow of our late trial is upon me yet; I cannot shake it off. I seem to see Mr. Clavering's despairing face wherever I go. How is it that Mary preserves her cheerfulness? If she does not love him I should think the respect which she must feel for his disappointment would keep her from levity at least.

'Uncle has gone away again. Nothing I could say, sufficed to keep him. July 21. It has all come back. Mary has only nominally separated from Mr. Clavering; she still cherishes the idea of one day allying herself to him in marriage. The fact was revealed to me in a strange way not necessary to mention here; and has since been confirmed by Mary herself. I admire the man, she declares, and have no intention of giving him up. 'Then why not tell Uncle so?' I asked. Her only answer was a bitter smile and a short—'I leave that for you to do.'

'July 20. Midnight. Worn completely out, but before my blood cools let me write a few lines. Mary is to be wedded wife. I have just returned from seeing her give her hand to Henry Clavering. Strange that I can write it without quivering when my whole soul is one flush of indignation and revolt. But let me state the facts. Having left my room for a few minutes this morning, I returned to find on my dressing-table a note from Mary in which she informed me that she was going to take Mrs. Belden for a drive and would not be back for some hours. Convinced, as I had every reason to be, that she was on her way to meet Mr. Clavering, I only stopped to put on my hat—

'There was probably interrupted by Mary at that point,' exclaimed Mr. Gryce. 'But we have heard all we want to know. Mr. Leavenworth threatened to supplant Mary with Eleanor, if she persisted in marrying contrary to his wishes, and what other conclusion can we come to, than that he upon hearing some four or five weeks since this marriage had been entered into by her, repeated his threats, and so drew down his fate upon him?'

'By dint of mulling into old secrets and following up of nice clues, I have finally come to the conclusion that not appearances against her, but another woman, beautiful as she and fully as interesting, is the true criminal. In short, that her cousin, the exquisite Mary, is the murderer of Mr. Leavenworth, and by inference of Hannah Chester also.'

'He brought this out with such force and with such a look of triumph and appearance for having led up to it, that I was for the moment dumbfounded, and started as if I had known nothing but what he was going to say. The stricture I made seemed to awake an echo. Something like a suppressed cry was in the air about me. All the room appeared to breathe horror and dismay. Yet, when in the excitement of this fancy, I had turned round to look, I found nothing but the blank eyes of those dull ventilators staring upon me.

'You are taken aback!' Mr. Gryce went on. 'I don't wonder. Everyone else is engaged in watching the movements of Eleanor Leavenworth; I only know where to put my hand made the real culprit in the whole affair. You didn't know Hannah Chester was murdered? Well, she wasn't in one sense of the word; but in another she was, and by the same hand that killed her! Look here! This scrap of paper was found on the floor of her room; it had a few particles of a white powder sticking to it; those particles were tested last night and found to be poison. But you say the girl took it herself; she did take it herself, and it was a suicide; but who terrified her into committing it? Why the one who had the most reason to fear her testimony, of course. But the proof is this: Well, this girl left a confession behind her, throwing the onus of the whole crime on a certain party, believed to be innocent; this confession was a forged one, known from three facts; first, that the paper upon which it was written was unobtainable by the girl; second, that the words used therein were printed in coarse, awkward characters, whereas Hannah, thanks to the teaching of the woman under whose care she was, could write very well; third, that the story told in the confession was not that related by the girl herself. Now, the fact of a forged confession throwing the guilt upon an innocent party having been found in the keeping of this ignorant girl, killed by a dose of poison; taken with the fact here stated, that on the morning of the day on which she killed herself the girl received from some one manifestly acquainted with the customs of the Leavenworth family, a letter large enough and thick enough to contain the confession folded as it was when found, makes it almost certain to my mind that the murderer of Mr. Leavenworth sent this powder and this so-called confession to the girl in the morning, and that she, precisely as she did, for the purpose of throwing off suspicion from the right track and of destroying herself at the same time; for, as you know, dead men tell no tales.'

'He paused and looked at the dingy skylight above us. Why did the air seem to grow heavier and heavier? Why did I shudder in vague apprehension? I knew all this before, why did it strike me, then, as something new? 'But who was this? you ask. Ah, that is the secret; that is the bit of knowledge which is to bring me fame and fortune. But secret or not, I don't mind telling you; lowering his voice and rapidly rising it again. 'The fact is, I can't keep it to myself; it burns like a new dollar in my pocket, Smith, my boy; the murderer of Mr. Leavenworth, but stay, who do you think it is? Whom do the papers point at and shake their heads over? A woman! A young, beautiful, bewitching woman! Ha, ha, ha! The papers are right; it is a woman; young, beautiful and bewitching, too. What name? Ah, that's the question. There is more than one woman mixed up with this affair; which, then, of them all, is it? Since Hannah's death I have heard it openly advanced that she was the guilty party in the murder. But she is equally dealt with by her uncle in his will. Bah! again. But folks are so without some justification for this latter assertion. Eleanor Leavenworth did know more of the matter than appeared. Worse than that, Eleanor Leavenworth stands in a position of positive peril to-day. If you don't think so, let me show you what the detectives have against her: 'First, there is the fact that a handkerchief with her name on it was found stained with pistol-blood, upon the scene of the murder; a place where she explicitly denied having been for twenty-four hours previous to the discovery of the dead body. 'Secondly, the fact that she not only knew of the murder, but was so convinced that it was hers, that she manifested a decided disposition both at this time and others, to mislead inquiry, shirking a direct answer to some questions and refusing all answers to others. 'Thirdly, that attempt was made by her to destroy a certain letter evidently relating to this crime. 'Fourthly, that the key to the library door was seen in her possession. 'All this, taken with the fact that the fragments of the letter which this same lady attempted to destroy within an hour after the inquest, were afterwards put together and were found to contain a bitter denunciation of one of Mr. Leavenworth's nieces by a gentleman we will call X—in other words, an unknown quantity—makes out a dark case against her, especially as after investigations revealed the fact that a secret under the name of Eleanor Leavenworth family, she is known to the world at large, and Mr. Leavenworth in particular, a marriage ceremony had been performed a year before between a Miss Leavenworth and the same X. That, in other words, the unknown gentleman who in the letter partly destroyed by Miss Eleanor Leavenworth, complained to Mr. Leavenworth of the treatment received by him from one of his nieces, was, in fact, the secret husband of the niece. And that, moreover, this same gentleman, under an assumed name, called on the night of the murder at the house of Mr. Leavenworth and asked for Miss Eleanor.'

'Now you see, with all this against her, Eleanor Leavenworth is left if it cannot be proved, first, that she is the murderer of Mr. Leavenworth, and secondly, that she is the murderer of her husband. And you see, she has even a stronger reason than she has for wanting Mr. Leavenworth's death at this time. 'Smith, 'What do you mean?' I cried. 'Did you plan all this?'

'I never saw such a look of mortal triumph on the face of a man as that which crossed the countenance of the detective. 'Well, that's the best day's work I ever did! Your congratulations Mr. Raymond, upon the success of the most daring game ever played in a detective's office. 'I looked at him in amazement. 'What do you mean?' I cried. 'Did you plan all this?'

'Well,' said he; 'there has always been one thing that plagued me even in the very moment of my strongest suspicion against this woman, and that was, the pistol-cleaning business. I could not reconcile it with what I knew of womankind. I could not make it seem the act of a woman. Did you ever know a woman who cleaned a pistol or who even knew the object or use of doing so? No. They can fire them and do; but after firing them they do not clean them. Now it is a principle which every detective recognizes the truth of, that of a hundred leading circumstances connected with a crime, ninety-nine of these are acts pointing to the suspected party with unerring certainty, but the hundredth equally important act, one which that person could not have performed, the whole fabric of suspicion is destroyed. Recognizing this principle, then, as I have said, I hesitated when it came to the point of arrest. The chain was complete, the links were fastened, but one link was of a different size and material from the rest and this I regarded as a break in the chain. Summoning Mr. Clavering, and Mr. Harwell, two persons whom I had no reason to suspect, but who were the only individuals beside herself who could have committed this crime, being the person of intellect who were in the house or believed to be at the time of the murder, I notified them separately that the assassin of Mr. Leavenworth was not only found but was about to be arrested in my house, and that if they wished to hear the confession which would be sure to follow, they might have the opportunity of doing so by coming here at such an hour. They were both too much interested, though for very different reasons, to refuse; and I succeeded in inducing them to conceal themselves in the two rooms from which you saw them issue, knowing that if either of them had committed this deed, he had done it for the love of Mary Leavenworth, and consequently could not bear her charged with crime, and threatened with arrest, without betraying himself. I did not hope much from the experiment; least of all did I anticipate that Mr. Harwell would prove to be the guilty man—but live and learn, Mr. Raymond, live and learn.'

'I am not a bad man; I am only an intense one. Ambition, love, jealousy, hatred, revenge—transitory emotions with some, are terrific passions with me. To be sure they are quiet and concealed ones, cooled passions that make no stir till aroused, but then, deadly in their spring and relentless in their action. Those who have known me best, have not known this. My own mind was more frequently clouded than hear her charged with crime, and threatened with arrest, without betraying himself. I did not hope much from the experiment; least of all did I anticipate that Mr. Harwell would prove to be the guilty man—but live and learn, Mr. Raymond, live and learn.'

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