#### THE MILL MYSTERY

BY ANNA KATHRING GREEN,

and going to one of the many windows that opened before me, I looked out and found I was at the very back of the mill, and in full atche of the durk and sullen stroam that in thmes of vore used to feed the great wheel and sun the machinery. Consequently I was in the last room upon the ground door. and, what abruck me atill more foreibly, near, If not directly over, that hope vat in the collar which had served so fatal a purpose only a few short days before.

The sight of a flight of stairs descending at my right into the hollow darkness beneath intensified my emotion. I seemed to be in direct communication with that some of death; and the thought struck me that here, If anywhere in the whole building, must be found the invitorious hiding place for which

It was thorofore with extra care that I die rected my glances along the uneven flooring, and I was scarcely surprised when, after a short examination of the various loose boards that rattled beneath me, I discovered one that could be shifted without difficulty. this scarcety had I stocped to raise it when an amortan of fear seized me, and I started back ators and listoning, though I was unconscious of having heard any thing more than the ordinary swash of the water beneath the windows and the beating of my own overbayed heart. And instant's hearts. oning days my the reasonmence I needed. and convinced that I had alarmed myself innecessarily, I bont again over the board, and this time succeeded in moving it aside. A long, black garmont, smoothly spread out to its full extent, caught my eye. The words of Rhoda Colwell were bene ; the mill did contain cortain articles of clothing concealed

I do not know what I expected when, a few saturbes later, I putled the garment out of the note in which it lay buried, and spread It out before me. Not what I discovered, I um sura; for when I had given it a glance, and found it was nothing more nor less than a demine, such as is worn by masqueraders. I experienced a shock that the mask, which fall out of its folds, sourcely served to allay. It was like the introduction of farce into a 6 sollde tragedy ; and as f stood in a mase and surveyed the garment before me till the Idack outline swam before my eyes, I foliamber thinking of the effect which had home produced, at a certain trial I had beard of, w the prisoner suchleady bursting into a

nounced. But presently this feeling of incongruity have way to one of hideous dread. If Dwight Pollard could explain the presonce of a domino and mask in this spot, then what nort of a man was Dwight Pollard. and what sort of a orime could it have been that needed for its perpetration such adjuncts as those ? The highwaymen of olden time, with their "Stand and deliver i" section out of place in this quiet New Kage hand town; nor was the character of any of the parties involved, of a nature to make the association of this masquerade gear with the tragedy gone by seem either possible or even probable. And yet, there they lay; and not all my wonder, nor all the speculations which their presence evoked, would serve to blot them from the floor of explain the mystery of which they were the

So impressed was fat last by this thought that I broke the spott which bound me, and brean to restore the articles to their place. I was just engaged in throwing the mask into sound of an approaching foot fall broke upon my care, startling me more than a thunder clay would have done, and filling me with a fear that almost paralysed my move ments I controlled myself, however, and pulled the board back to the after which I frantically looked about me for some means of concealment case which can down to the cellar was but a few foot off, and if I could summon courage to make use of it, would lead to a place of comparative safety. But the darkness of that spot spemed worse than the light of this, and I should hostisting on the brink of the staircase till the footstops drew so near t dured not linger longer, and plunged below with such desperate haste, I wonder I did not trip and fall headling to the cellar floor. I did not, however, nor did I seem to have made any special noise, for the footstops above did not haston. I had, therefore, the estisfaction of feeting myself saved from what might have been a very special danger, and was moving slowly away, when the fuscination which all horrible objects exert upon the human soul seized me with a power found not restet, and I turned slowly but tresistibly towards the onener where I knew

One offinious and I would have fled ; but inst at the instant I turned I heard a sound everhead that sent the current of my thoughts in a fresh direction, and lent to my failing courage a renewed atrength which made flight at that moment seem nothing there mer less than an impulse of cowardies. This was nothing more nor less than a faint creaking, such as had followed my own lifeing of the board which hid the domine and mask , a noise that was speedily followed by one yet more distinct and of a nature to come vince me beyond a doubt that my own action was being repeated by some unknown hand-Whose? Curlealty, love, honor, every immoved like a spirit towards the states. I placed my fact on one step, and then or another, mounting in allence and without four, so intent was I upon the discovery which now absorbed me. Hat just as I reached the top, just when another move ment would lift my head above the level of the theor, I paused, resitisting as in a flash what the consequences might be if the intruder should prove to be another than Schools Cok well, and should have not his back but his thee turned toward the place where I stood. The sounds I heard, feeble as they were, did not seem to indicate the presence of a wetion, emothered in the throat almost before who stood not six feet from me, handlin the objects which I had been told were in some way connected with a murder which I was by every instinct of honor bound to dis-

A man! and all, he was so quiet, so care-ful! I could not even guess what he was doing, much less determine his identity, by

ing. I had a conviction that he was g the articles out of their place of con-tent, but I could not be sure; and in a manner like this, certainty was indispensable. I resolved to risk all and took another, stop, chinging dissily to the first support that aftered. It was well I had the presence of mind to do this, or I night have had a orions full. For no sooner had I raised my head above the level of the floor than my eyes fell upon the well-known form of him I desired least of all men to see in this place my lover, if you may call him so—Dwight

> CHAPTER XIL PWHINF POLLARD.

Oh, 's is too true ! how smart A lash that speech doth give my conscience

He was standing with his back to me. and to all apports too was unconscious that he was under the surveillance of any eye. I had thus a moment in which to collect my onergies and subdue my emotions; and I availed myself of it to such good purpose that by the time he had put the board back men its place I was ready to face him. He did not turn round, however; so, after a moment of stlent suspense, I mounted the aut stair, and thinking of nothing, hoping for nothing, wishing for nothing, stood waiting, with my eyes fixed on the domine he was new rapidly folding into smaller

And thus I stood, like a pallid automaton, when the instant came for him to change his position, and he saw me. The cry that rose to his lips but did not escape them, the root which his figure gave before it stiffened into marble, testified to the shock he had received, and also to the sense of unreality with which my appearance in this wise must have impressed him. His look, his attitude were those of a man gazing upon a spectre, and as I mot his glance with mine, I was ascions of a feeling of unreality myself, as if the whole occurrence were a dream, and he and I but shadows which another moment

but alse! this was no more a dream than vere the other strange and travic events which had gone before; and in an instant we both know it, and were standing face to the with wretched inquiry in the looks we fixed upon each other across the domine which had fatten from his hands. He was

the first to speak.

"Miss Sterling!" he exclaimed, in a light tone, cruelly belied by the trembling lips from which it issued, "by what fortunate chance do I see you again, and in a place I should have thought to be the last you would be likely to vists ?"

"By the same chance," I rejoined, "which oppears to have brought you here. The testre to make sure if what I heard about the mill having been used as a secreting place for certain mysterious articles, was true." And I pointed to the mask and domine lying at my feet.

His eye, which had followed the direction "Then it was your hand-"he impetuous

Which disturbed these garments before you? Yes. And I shall make no apology for the action," I continued, "stness it was done in the hope of proving false certain in-stanations which had been made to me in your regard." "Instanations ?" he repeated.

"Yes," I declared, in an agony between my longing to hear him vindicate himself and the desire to be true to the obligations I was under to Ada Reynolds, "Institute tions of the worst, the most terrible, charac-Then, as I saw him full back, stricken in something more than his pride, I hastened to inquire: "Have you an enemy in town,

He composed himself with a start, looked at me fixedly, and replied in what struck me as a strange tone even for such an oc "Perhaps.

"One who out of revenue," I proceeded, 'might be induced to attach your name to suspicions calculated to rob you of honor, if

"Perhaps," he again returned; but this time with a florceness that almost made me receil, though I know it was directed against some one beside myself.

"Then it may be," I said, "that you have but to speak to relieve my mind of the These articles," I pursued, "have they, or have they not, any connection with the trayedy which makes the place in which we stand memorable "

"I cannot answer you, Miss Sterling," "Cannot answer me "

"Cannot answer you," he reiterated, turning haggard about the eyes and lips. "Then," I brokenly rejoined, "I had better leave this place; I do not see what more

I have to do or say here," "O (lod)" he ried, detaining me with a sesture full of agony and doubt: "Do not me so; let me think. Let me weigh the situation and see where I stand, in your eyes at least. Tell me what mine enemy has said !" he demanded, his face, his very form, flashing with a terrible rage that seemed to have as much indignation as fear

"Your enemy," I replied, in the steady voice of despair, "accuses you in so many

lexpected to see him recoil, burst forth into cursing or frenzied declamation, by which men betray their inward consternation and remorse; but he did none of these things, Instead of that he laughed; a hideous laugh that seemed to shake the rafters above us and school in and out of the caverned re-

"Acqueer me ?" he muttered; and it is not in language to express the scorn he in-

Stunned, and senreely knowing what to think, I gazed at him helplessly. He seemed to feel my glance, for, after a moment's contemplation of my face, his manner suddenly themsel, and hemistry attle. changed, and bowing with a grim politor full of sarcasm, he saked:

"And when did you see my enemy and hold this precious conversation in which I was accused of murder pro-"Yesterday districtor," I answered,

"During the time of your mother's funeral,"
I subjoined, startled by the look of stupefaction which orossed his face at my words.

"I den't understand you," he nurmured,
averaging his hand in a dassed way over his
brow. "You saw him then I fipoke to him?

returned, almostas much agitated as himself. "It is a woman who is your accuser, a wo-man who seems to feel that sho has a right to make you suffer, possibly because she has suffered so much hercelf."

"A woman !" was all hesaid ; "a woman !" turning pale enough now, God knows. "Have you no enemies among the wo-men!" I asked, wearind to the soul with the sition in which my cruel fate had forced

giving me a look that somehow broke down the barriers of ice between us and made my next words come in a faltering tone:

"And could you stop to bestow a thought upon a man while a woman held your secret? Did you think our sex was so long-suffering, or this special woman so generous—"
I did not go on, for he had leaped the gap
which separated us and had me gently but firmly by the arm.

manded. "What woman has my secret-if secret I have? Let me hear her name, now,

"Is it possible," I murmured, "that you do not know " his eyes ablaze, his hand shaking where it

"Rhode Colwell," I returned, looking him steadily in the eye.

"Impossible !" his lips seemed to breathe, and his hand slowly unloosed from my arm like a ring of ice which melts away. " Rhoda Colwell! Good God!' he exclaimed, and staggered back with ever-growing wonder and slarm till half the room lay between us. "I am not surprised at your emotion," I

said : "she is a dangerous woman." He looked at me with duil eyes ; he did not seem to hear what I said.

"How can it be?" he muttered; and his plance took a furtive aspect as it traveled slowly round the room and finally settled ipon tee mask and domino at my feet. Was it she who told you where to look for those?" he suddenly queried in an almost violent tone I bowed : I had no wish to speak.

"She is an imp, a witch, an emissary of the Evil One," he vehemently declared; and turned away, murmuring, as it seemed to me, those sacred words of Scripture, " Be sure your sin will find you out."

I felt the sobs rise in my throat. I could bear but little more. To recover myself, I looked away from him, even passed to a window and gazed out. Anything but the sight of this humiliation in one who could easily have been my idol. I was therefore standing with my back to him when he finally approached, and touching me with the tip of his finger, calmly re arked : "I did not know you were acquainted with

Miss Colwell." "Nor was I till yesterday," I rejoined. Fate made us know each other at one interview, if one could be said to ever know

such a woman as she is. " Fate is to blame for much; is it also to blame for the fact that you sought her? Or

any better road to a proper explanation of my conduct than the truth, I told him is a few words of the notice I had seen posted upon the mill, and of how I had afterwards app. prised Rhoda Colwell there, and what the conclusions were which I had thereby drawn; though, from some motive of delieacy I do not yet understand, I refrained from saying any thing about her disguise, and left him to infer that it was in her own

proper person I had seen her.
He seemed to be both wonder stricken and moved by the recital, and did not rest till he had won from me the double fact that Shoda Colwell evidently knew much more than she revealed, while f, on the contrary, knew much less. The latter discovery seemed to greatly gratify him, and while his brow lost none of the look of heavy anxiety which had settled upon it with the introduction of noticed that his voice was lighter, and that he surveyed me with less distrust and possibly with less fear. His next words showed

the direction his thoughts were taking. "You have shown an interest in my fate. Miss Sterling, in spite of the many reasons you had for thinking it a degraded one, and for this I thank you with all my heart. Will you prove this still further by clinging to the belief which I have endeavored to force upon you, that notwithstanding all you have seen and heard, I stand in no wise amenable to the law, neither have I uttered, in your hearing at least, aught but the truth in regard to this whole matter?" "And you can swear this to me?" I ut-

tered, joyfully. " By my father's grave, if you desire it,"

A flood of hope rushed through my heart was but a weak woman and his voice and look at that moment would have affected the coldest nature.

"I am bound to believe you," I said : though there is much I do not understand much which you ought to explain if you wish to disabuse my mind of all doubt in your regard, I would be laying claim to a cynicism I do not possess, if I did not trust of severity, for I saw his head droop lower and lower as I gazed at him and forbore to

finish my sentence.
"Hut you believe I am a villain," he

"I would fain believe you to be the best and noblest of men," I answered, pointedly. He lifted his head, and the flush of a new emotion swept over his face. "Why did I not most you two

The tone was so bitter, the regret exressed so unutterable, I could not help my heart sinking again with the weight of fresh doubt which it brought.

"Would it have been better for me if you had !" I inquired. "Is the integrity which is dependent upon one's happiness, or the sympathy of friends, one that a woman can

it would stand firm with you for its safeguard and shield." Then, as he saw me draw backwith an assumption of coldness I was far from feeling, added gently; "But it was not you, but Rhoda Colwell, I met two years ago, and

An , as if he felt the stress of the interhis strength, he turned away from me and

But I, drawn this way and that by the had not been said which should be in this important and possibly final interview.

Accordingly, smothering personal feeling and steeling myself to look only at my duty, I advanced to his side, and, indicating with a gesture the garments he was now rolling up into a compact mass, remarked :

"This may or may not involve you in some unpleasantness. Rhoda Colwell, who evidently attaches much importance to her discoveries, is not the woman to keep silent in their regard. If she speaks and forces me to speak, I must own the truth. Mr Pollard. Neither sympathy nor regard could hold me back; for my honor is pledged to the cause of M: Barrows, and not ven the wreck of my own happiness could deter me from revealing any thing that would explain his death or exonerate his nemory. I wish you to understand this. God grant I may never be called upon to

for which he was wholly unprepared. He stared at me for a moment from his lowly assition on the floor, then slowly rose and mechanically put his hand to his throat, as if he felt himself choking.

"I thank you for your frankness," he arminred, in almost inaudible tones. "It s no more than I ought to have expected ; and yet ... " He turned abruptly away. 'I am evidently in a worse situation than I imagined," he continued, after a momentary

pacing of the floor. "I thought only my position in your eyes was assailed; I see now that I may have to defend myself before the world." And, with a sudden change that was almost alarming, he asked if Rhoda Colwell had intimated in any way the source of whatever information she professed

I told him no, and felt my heart grow cold with new and undefined fears as he turned his face toward the front of the building, and cried, in a suppressed tone, full of

"It could have come but in one way : I am to be made a victim if-" He turned upon me with a wild look in which there was something personal. "Are you worth the penalty which my good name must suffer?" he v.olently cried. "For I swear that to you and you only I owe the position in which I now stand!"

" God help methen!" I murmured, dazed and confounded by this unexpected re-

"Had you been less beautiful, less alluring in your dignity and grace, by brother He paused and bit his lip. "Enough!" he cried. "I had well nigh forgotten that generosity and forbearance are to actuate my movements in the future.

This allusion to Guy, unpleasant and shocking as it was, gave me a peculiar sen. sation that was not unlike that of relief. while at the same moment the glimpse of something, which I was fain to call a revelation, visited my mind and led me im-

"I hope you are not thinking of sacrificing yourself for another less noble and less generous than yourself. If such is the clew to actions which certainly have looked dubious till now, I pray that you will reconsider your duty and not play the Don Quixote too far."

But Dwight Pollard, instead of accepting this explanation of his conduct with the sagerness of a great relief, only shook his head and declared

"My brother-for I know who you mean, Miss Sterling is no more amenable to the law than myself. Neither of us were guilty of the action that terminated Mr. Barrows'

"And yet," came in the strange and unexpected tones of a third person, "can you say, in the presence of her you profess to respect and of me whom you once professed to love, that either you or your brother are guiltless of his death?" and turning simultaneously toward the doorway, we saw gleaming in its heavy frame the vivid form and glittering eyes of his most redoubtable

enemy and mine-Rhoda Colwell. He fell back before this apparition and appeared to lose his power of speech. She advanced like an avenging Nemesis between

"Speak !" she vehemently exclaimed. Are you I say nothing of your brother, who is nothing to me or to her-are you guiltless, in the sense in which she would egard guilt, of David Barrows' death?" And her fierce eyes, shining through her half-closed lashes like lurid fires partly veiled, burned upon his face, which, turning paler and paler, drooped before her gaze till his chin settled upon his breast and we could barely hear the words that fell from

"God knows I would not day I am."

CHAPTER XIII.

GUY POLLARD. I will tell you why .- HANLET. There was a silence, then Dwight Pollard ke again. "I have made a confes which I never expected to hear pass my lips. She who has forced it from me doubt-less knows how much and how little it means. Let her explain herself, then. I have no further business in this place." And, without lifting his head or meeting the eye of either of us, he strode past

"And where, then, have you business if not here? Do you not know I hold your good name, if not your life, in my hands?"
"My good name," he slowly rejoined, without turning his head, "Is already loutin the oyes I meet valued. As for my life, it stands in no jeopardy. Would I could say the same for his?" was his fierce addition.

Whom should I mean but the base and unnatural wretch who, for purposes of his own, began gathering up the toggery that lay has made you the arbitrator of my destiny upon the floor. and the avenger of my sin-my brother, my vile, wicked brother, whom may Heaven

> do with this. Do you suppose I would stoop to take information from him? What it. Dwight Pollard ! And now what do you and she held out those two milk-white hands of hers with a smile such as I hope never to see on mortal face again.

He looked at them, then at her, and drew back speechless. She burst into a low but ringing laugh of immeasurable triumph. "And you thought such a blow as this could come from a man! Dullard and fool you must be, Dwight Pollard, or else you have never known me. Why should he risk his honor and his safety in an action as dan gerous to him as ungrateful to you? Because he admires her ? Guy Pollard is not so loving. But I-I whom you thought to be a woman, only to fling aside like a weed-An, that is another thing! Reason for waiting and watching here; reason for denounce ing, when the time came, the man who could take advantage of another man's fears! Ah,

you see I know what I am talking about." "Speak !" he gasped. How do you know? You say you saw. How could you see? Where were you, demon and witch in

She smiled, not as before, but yet with a ense of power that only the evil glitter of sidelong eye kept from making her

"Will you come into the cellar below?" said she. "Or stay; that may be asking too much. A glance from one of these windows will do." And, moving rapidly across the room, she threw up one of the broken sashes before her, and pointed to a stunted tree that grew up close against the wall. "Do you see that limb?" she inquired, indicating one that branched out towards a window we could faintly see defined beneath. "A demon or a witch might sit there for a halfyour and see, without so much as craning her neck, all that went on in the cellar be low. That the leaves are thick, and, to

those within, apparently hang like a curtain between them and the ou er world, would make no difference to a demon's eyes, you know. Such folk can see where black walls intervene : how much more when only a fluttering screen like that shuts off the view." And, drawing back, she looked into his dazed face, and then into mine, as though she would ask: "Have I convinced you that I am a woman to be feared?"

His white cheek seemed to answer Yes, but his eyes, when he raised them, did not quail before her mocking glance, though I thought they drooped a little when, in another moment, they flashed in my direc-

" Miss Sterling," he inquired, "do you understand what Miss Colwell has been

I shook my head and falterd back. I had only one wish, and that was to be effaced from this spot of misery. He turned again to her

"Do you intend to explain yourself further?" he demanded. She did not answer : her look and her attention were fixed upon me.

"You are not quite convinced he is all that I have declared him to be?" she said. moving towards me. "You want to know what I saw and whether there is not som cophole by which you can escape from ut terly condemning him. Well, you shall have my story. I ask nothing more of you than that." And with a quiet ignoring of his presence that was full of contempt, she drew up to my side and calmly began : "You have seen me in the streets in the garb of my brother?"

"Your brother?" cried a startled voice. It was Dwight Pollard who spoke. He had sprung to her side and grasped her fiercely by the wrist. It was a picture ; all the more that neither of them said any thing further, but stood so, surveying each other, till he thought fit to drop her arm and draw back, when she quietly went on as though no interruption had occurred.

"It was a convenient disguise, enabling me to do and learn many things. It also made it possible for me to be out in the evening alone, and allowed me to visit certain places where otherwise I should have been any thing but welcome. It also satisfied a spirit of adventure which I possess, and led to the experience which I am about to relate. Miss Sterling, my brother has one peculiarity. He can be intrusted to carry a message, and forget it ten minutes after it is delivered. This being generally known in town, I was not at all surprised when one evening, as I was traversing a very dark street, I was met and accos by a muffled figure, who asked me if I would run to Mr. Barrows' house for him. I was about to say No, when something in his general air and manner deterred me, and I changed it into a half-laughing, half-eager assent which my brother uses on such occasions. The man immediately stooped to my ear and whispered :
"'Tell Mr. Barrows to come

thrown from his carriage and is dying there. He wants Mr. Barrows' prayers and con-

solation. Can you remember?' "I nodded my head and ran off. I was fearful, if I stayed, I would betray myself; for the voice, with all its attempted disguise, was that of Guy Pollard, and the man injured might for all I knew be his brother. Before I reached Mr. Barrows' door, however, I began to have my doubts. nystery, and as Guy Pollard had never been any thing but a favorable interpret did not stop, though, because I doubted.
On the contrary, I pushed forward, for if there was a secret, I must know it; and

swer to my summons was fortunately Mr. Barrows himself; fortunately for me, that is; I cannot say it was altogether fortuna-tely for him. He had a little book in his nd, and seemed disturbed when I gave him my message. He did not hesitate, however. Being of an unsuspicious nature, he never dreamed that all was as I said, especially as he knew my brother well, and

To do continued.

### Whom do I mean?" he retorted. Sign of the Mill Saw, South side Kent st.

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