

## THE MYSTERIOUS CRIME ON THE S.S. NEPTUNE

### CHAPTER XX.—Continued.

So Gerald, pitying the young man's sorrow in his kindly heart, went back to his study law papers, and Signor Jilted-in-Love looked out of the window in sulky silence. Yet not sulky, poor lad, for his heart was aching with the thought of his future life being passed without Carmela, having, with the fine, chivalrous feelings of youth, vowed he'd marry no other lady.

Soon Julian Roper arrived, and was welcomed with heartfelt joy by both gentlemen, who sprang with alacrity to their feet to greet him. He entered quietly and impressive as ever, but his sharp blue eyes took in at a glance the haggard looks of the Australian.

"You've been fretting, Mr. Monteith," he said, looking keenly at him. "Bah! don't mind me," said Ronald, peevishly; "I'm a little jaded with London gayety. Tell us all you have learned."

"I have not much to tell," said Roper, smoothly. "You read my letter?"

"Yes, we read your letter," echoed Foster, quickly; "that Mrs. Dexter said Mrs. Verschoyle had not been out of the house. Monteith saw Vassalla, who corroborated the fact, and showed me a letter from Mrs. Verschoyle, which proved Mrs. Dexter's statement to be true; but—"

"Go on," said Roper, calmly, "I like but's—there is always a chance of another step being made when 'but' comes into the question. What did you do after seeing Vassalla?" addressing himself to the Australian. "I saw Miss Cotoner," burst out Monteith.

"Humph!"—there was a world of meaning in Roper's voice, "and she said—"

"That Mrs. Verschoyle had been on board."

"I thought so."

"And afterward denied it."

"Indeed!" Roper's eyebrows went up. "At whose instigation?"

"Vassalla's," broke in Foster, hastily, before Ronald could speak.

"I thought so," said the detective, calmly.

"Why did you think so?" asked Monteith, impatiently.

"In the first place," remarked Roper, complacently, "I had the honor of coming home in the same boat with Mrs. Verschoyle; secondly, I made her acquaintance as Signor Clement, and she liked me very much. I had frequent conversations with her, and told her I was a friend of Vassalla's."

"But you don't know him," said Ronald.

"All's fair in love, war, and—detective work," observed Roper, quietly; "I told Mrs. Verschoyle—who I knew, from Mrs. Dexter's diary, was in love with Vassalla—that the Marchese wanted to marry Carmela Cotoner, her sister."

"That's true enough," said Foster; "he's engaged to her, now," whereat Ronald winced."

"The result was I aroused her jealousy, and she swore that she would prevent the marriage."

"But how?" from Ronald, eagerly; "fain to cling like a drowning man to a straw."

"That's what I could not find out," said Roper, thoughtfully; "she said she could stop the marriage, and Vassalla would have to obey her. Now, what logical inference do you draw from this?"

"That Vassalla committed the murder!" said Ronald, hastily.

"Not necessarily," replied Roper, dryly; "but this, that if Vassalla knew she was on board that night, he also knew she committed the murder, and would therefore have a power over her; but her determination to stop the marriage shows that she must have some power over him; so that either she is innocent, or he committed the murder himself, and she can force him by fear of exposure to do what she wants."

"And which of these theories do you think is right?" asked Foster.

"I am doubtful," said the detective, becoming a little agitated; "but I—I have a third theory."

"Yes?" said Ronald, in a quiet tone, looking strangely at the detective.

Roper arose to his feet, and took a walk up and down the room for a minute, then turned to the young men, who were puzzled by his curious manner.

"Of course, it's only a theory," said Roper, nervously; "but—I can only tell you what I think."

"Tell us, in heaven's name!" cried Foster, rising.

"Then I think Miss Carmela Cotoner committed the crime."

"What!" Ronald sprang to his feet and made a spring at the detective, but Foster caught him and held him back.

"Be quiet, Ronald, be quiet," he said, firmly.

"A lie, a cursed, black lie," panted Ronald, glaring at the detective, who stood quietly looking at him. "What proof, what proof—D—n you, sir, where is your proof?"

Roper took out of his pocket-book the yellow scrap of paper given by Mrs. Taunton, and the fragment of a letter written by Carmela to her sister.

"I obtained these through Mrs. Dexter," he said, quietly placing them on the table; "look!"

Ronald looked for a moment, then reeled back into Foster's arms.

"My God! my God!" he sobbed. "My God!"

The handwritings were identical in every particular.

Foster went to a cupboard and got Ronald a glass of brandy, which he forced him to swallow; then, leaving the young man in the chair, with his face buried in his hands, he sat down at his own table, and began to speak to Foster.

"How did you make this discovery?" he asked, quietly.

"I remembered in Mr. Monteith's story," said Roper, "that both sisters loved the husband, and I wondered if it were not possible that the younger might commit the crime quite as well as the elder, though, I confess to you, I had no grounds for my suspicion. As I told you in my letter, I obtained a specimen of Mrs. Verschoyle's handwriting, and found, by comparison with this paper"—laying his hand on the yellow sheet—"that, though there was a similarity, there was also a slight difference. This began to confirm my theory, and by the kind aid of Mrs. Dexter, I obtained this letter of Miss Cotoner's, by which you will see they correspond in every particular."

"At this moment Ronald arose from his seat, and staggering to the table, produced from his pocket-book the note written to him by Carmela before the "Neptune" reached Gibraltar.

Laying this down by the other papers, with a shaking hand, at the first glance, it could be seen the handwritings were identical.

"It's true," groaned Ronald; "my God, it's true!" and he fell heavily into his chair again.

"And what is your opinion?" asked Foster.

"My theory," corrected Roper, "is this; I think Miss Cotoner saw her old lover on the boat, and committed the murder, trusting to the presence of her sister on board to shield her from the consequences of her crime. I also believe that Vassalla knows she is guilty, and has threatened to tell unless she marry him."

"Yes, but what about Mrs. Verschoyle?"

"Oh! I think she knows that Carmela's guilty, and threatens to expose her, if she will not refuse to marry Vassalla."

"It all seems clear enough," said Foster, thoughtfully.

"Yes, but it's a d—d lie, for all that," said Ronald, springing to his feet, and oh, how haggard and worn his young face looked! "Look here, you fellows. I love Miss Cotoner, and I don't believe she's guilty. I think that cursed Vassalla is at the bottom of it all. I'm going to Marlow, where Carmela is, and there I'll act a part. I'll see her, speak to her, and find out everything, but I must have your promise not to move in the matter, till I will tell you."

"We cannot promise," said Roper. "Whose servant are you?" asked Ronald, fiercely; "will you do what I tell you?"

"The law—" began Roper.

"Hang the law, and you too," burst out Ronald; "if Carmela is guilty, you can't arrest her on the evidence you have, but she's innocent—innocent! I'd stake my head on it. Give me a mouth to clear her, and if I don't do it by then, the law can take its course."

"Agreed," said Roper.

"For my part," said Foster, "I don't care if the case stops now."

"I only want a month," cried Ronald, "and I'll prove her innocence, if I have to tear the truth out of Vassalla's black heart. Because of a little superficial evidence, you believe her guilty. I don't. I love her, and I'll clear her; so help me God!"

Theatrical, no doubt, but both the men felt that the lad spoke from his heart.

"I'll have another glass of brandy, Foster," said Ronald, quietly.

He got it, and drank it.

'Tis but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

### CHAPTER XXI.

Sir Mark Trevor's family mansion, as everyone knows, is in Cornwall, but, being passionately fond of the River Thames, he had bought a place down at Hurlley, where he passed the summer months, and there entertained his large circle of friends. The idle, pleasant life of the river suited the baronet to perfection, and being a man fond of books and antiquities, he found the neighborhood quite to his taste, much preferring the unpretending house at Hurlley to his grand hall in Cornwall, and the pleasant valleys and hills of Bucks to the wild Tors and iron-bound coasts of the west country.

Bellfield, as it was called—the name being an invention of Sir Mark's happy combination of his daughter's name and the fields which surrounded the house—was not a very large place. It had originally been a farmhouse, and stood near the high road, while beyond arose the sloping hills with a fringe of trees on top, and down toward the river stretched broad fields, all yellow with waving corn.

The original portion of the house was built of flint, and Sir Mark had added to it, until the whole place looked nothing but a mass of gables covered with trelliswork and overgrown with creeping plants. But a very

comfortable house it was, the favorite apartment being a kind of smoking-room which opened on to a glass porch, and beyond, a wide lawn, a gorse hedge, yellow with blossom, and a view of tall beeches and glimpses of distant hills.

The walls of the smoking-room were covered from top to bottom with cartoons from "Vanity Fair," only leaving one space where guns, daggers, swords, and other warlike instruments were displayed. Plenty of low basket-chairs, soft fur rugs, side-tables with a generous profusion of pipes, tobacco, and cigarettes, and on the large table, near Sir Mark's writing-desk, a spirit-stand always stood ready, together with an unlimited supply of soda and seltzer for thirsty boating parties.

There was a piano in one corner, with piles of new music, principally, it must be confessed, of the comic opera and music-hall orders, and over the piano a fox's head and brush, trophies of Miss Bell's prowess in the hunting field. Off this snuggerly was the saddle-room, which the young men, and indeed not a few of the ladies, used to vote "awfully jolly," in the expressive slang of to-day.

There were plenty of bedrooms, low-pitched and quaint, wide staircases with unexpected turnings and twistings, and an oak-paneled dining-room where Sir Mark's guests used to wax moisy at meals; but the favorite room of the house was undoubtedly the smoking-room, and in it on this bright July morning all the guests staying at Bellfield were waiting, ready to start for the Marlow Regatta.

And a very jovial party they were. Pat Ryan, having returned from the Emerald Isle, was talking his usual nonsense to pretty Kate Lester, who was stopping at Bellfield with her uncle, a gentleman who passed most of his time asleep. He had declined to go to the regatta, and was already lying in one of the low basket-chairs pretending to read the Times.

Bell was standing by Carmela, who looked pale and white as she listened to Mr. Chester's chatter, giving that brilliant youth the mistaken idea that he had made an impression. Sir Mark was moving about, from one to the other, with his grave smile, and two young ladies, arrayed in white serge dresses, with jaunty straw hats, were flirting desperately with a young Oxonian called Wellthirp, but familiarly known as Bubbles, from his effervescent flow of spirits.

"We'd better start, I'm thinking," observed Mr. Ryan to the company; "it's a mighty bad thing wasting all this beautiful morning."

"You won't come, uncle?" asked Kate, going over to her avuncular relative.

"Not to-day, my dear, I'm a little tired."

"Begin, he's the seven sleepers rolled into one," said Pat to Miss Lester, as they stepped out into the sunshine. "Come, Miss Lester, I'll race you for a pair of gloves."

"Against what?" asked Kate, as he helped her through the gate.

"A kiss," said Pat, whereupon Kate blushed, and vowed she wouldn't run; so Pat set off, like a deer, by himself along the narrow path which led through the cornfield to the village of Hurlley.

"How sad you are looking, Carmela," said Sir Mark, as he walked soberly along beside Miss Cotoner. "She wants Mr. Monteith," said Bell, mischievously.

"Nonsense," retorted Carmela, while a flush came over her pale face. "Then she'll soon be gratified," laughed Sir Mark; "for Mr. Monteith will be at the regatta to-day."

Carmela clenched her teeth. He would be at the regatta, and how would he meet her after all that had passed? The last time she saw him she was free, but now he would see her as the affianced wife of another. Well, she would wait and see. Their meeting must come sooner or later, so why not now?

The party went through the quaint village of Hurlley, past the Old Bell inn with its antique gables and wide windows—through the remains of the old monastery, which was one of the finest in England, and along by Lady Bell Place with its old walls and picturesque, red roof, under which the conspirators of 1688 met to mature their plot for driving James II. from his kingdom.

Over the bridge they went, and found the river crowded with boats, filled with men in flannels, and pretty girls in yachting costumes, all waiting for the lock to be opened. Sir Mark's boats were below Hurlley Lock, so they all went down, only pausing a moment to look in to the lock, filled

with boats, and presenting a blaze of color. A number of young fellows were leaning on the great arms of the lock gate, chattering idle nonsense to the pretty girls in the boats below. To be Continued.

## BLOOD POISONING

### FOLLOWS A WOUND IN THE KNEE CAUSED BY A PITCHFORK.

Five Doctors in Consultation Gave the Surgeon Little Hope of Recovery—How His Life Was Saved.

Brockville Recorder.

Among the old families in the township of Augusta, in the neighboring county of Grenville, there is none better known or more influential, than those that bear the name of Bissell. The Bissells were among the earliest settlers in the township and have ever since taken an active part in all moves to promote its welfare. The subject of their narrative, Mr. Silas Bissell, is one of the younger members of the family, who some years ago left Canada to make his home in the state of Nebraska. He has passed through an experience almost unique, and considers that he is fortunate in being alive to tell the tale.

The story as told in Mr. Bissell's own words, is as follows:—"In the autumn of 1893 I sustained a serious injury through having the tines of a pitchfork penetrate my left knee. The wound apparently healed, but I did not enjoy the same health I had previous to the accident, and it was but a short time before I was compelled to take to my bed on account of excruciating pains in my limbs and stiffness in my joints. A doctor was called in, and he lanced the knee three times, and then told me the trouble was blood poisoning. He treated me for some time, but I steadily grew worse, and finally five physicians were called in for consultation. My entire system seemed to be affected, and the doctors said the trouble had reached one of my lungs, and that they could hold out but little hope of my recovery. After remaining in bed for eleven weeks, I decided that I would return to my old home in Canada. I was so much run down, and so weak that it was a question whether I would live to reach there, but I was nevertheless determined to make an effort to do so. After a long journey under these most trying circumstances, I reached my old home. I was so used up, and presented such an emaciated appearance that my friends had no thought that I would recover. I continued to drag along in this condition for several months, when one day a cousin asked me why I did not try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I was willing to try any medicine that was likely to cure me, and I sent for a supply of the pills. After I had been using the pills for about three weeks I felt an improvement in my condition. From that time I gradually grew better, new blood seemed coursing through my veins, the stiffness in my joints disappeared, and the agonizing pains which had so long tortured me vanished. I took in all ten or twelve boxes of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I have no hesitation in saying that I believe they saved my life, for when I returned to Canada, I had no hope of recovery.

Mr. Bissell has since returned to his old home at Lincoln, Neb., but the statements made above can be vouched for by any of his friends in this section, and by all of the neighbors in the vicinity of his old home. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure such apparently hopeless cases as Mr. Bissell's because they make new, rich, red blood, and thus reach the root of the trouble. These pills are the only medicine offered the public that can show a record of such marvellous cures after doctors had failed. If you are at all unwell, this medicine will restore you to health, but be sure you get the genuine with the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People" on the wrapper around each box.

### A MUSICAL TOWN.

The most melodious town in the world is Andreasberg, in the Hartz Mountains in Germany, where every year 250,000 canaries are reared. Of this great output no less than four fifths come to America. Of the remaining 50,000 England gets 27,000, Russia 10,000 and other European countries outside Germany 3,000. But the flower of the flock, numbering 10,000, are kept at home to gladden the homes of the Fatherland, for the German is even fonder of a singing canary than he is of a china dog. The canary industry and its secrets have been handed down from father to son in Andreasberg.

## AN HONORABLE MEDICINE

That Appeals to the Best Judgment of the Best  
People and Gets Right Down at the Cause  
of Disease is

### Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills.

Why is it that in nearly every home in the land you find some of Dr. Chase's family remedies? Why is it that Dr. Chase is honored and esteemed as a true physician of undoubted skill? Why is it that Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are kept in the family medicine chest as indispensable for everyday ills which arise from constipation and sluggish action of the liver and kidneys?

It is because Dr. Chase's remedies are all honorable medicines. Medicines that have been tried in the severest cases and proven to be of most unusual value. They are immensely successful, because everybody has learned to have confidence in them and confidence in their discoverer. Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills have for nearly a quarter of a century taken the lead as the greatest seller which medicine dealers handle, and this enormous sale is entirely due to the downright merit which they possess. They cure when others fail.

It is when there is a bitter taste in the mouth, heaviness about the stomach, headaches, pains in the shoulders and limbs, and depressed, languid feelings, that people turn to Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. Torpid liver, inactive kidneys and irregular bowels are the cause of at least seven tenths of human ills. Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills invigorate these organs as no other preparation was ever known to do; and what is best

of all they not merely afford relief but strike deeper and make thorough and lasting cures.

Mr. Walter Booth, Consecow, Prince Edward County, Ont., states: "I was troubled for some years with kidney and liver disease and pains in my back, and my stomach was so bad I could not eat hearty food and had difficulty in keeping any food in my stomach. I was so nervous that I could scarcely take a drink of water without spilling much of it, my hand trembled so, and I had lost flesh until my weight fell from 155 to 133 pounds.

"Hearing of a similar case that was cured by Dr. Chase's Remedies, I commenced by taking Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, six boxes of which entirely cured my kidney and liver troubles. I then began Dr. Chase's Nerve Food for my nervousness. It strengthened my stomach and whole system, and I gained in flesh. I cannot speak in terms of too great praise for Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills and Nerve Food, besides curing me they did my father, who is an old man, a great deal of good. I have every confidence in recommending these remedies."

Mr. J. J. Ward, J. P., certifies that he knows Mr. Walter Booth, and that this statement of his cure is perfectly correct."

The chances are that your neighbors have used Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. Ask them. One pill a dose, 25 cents a box, at all dealers, or Edman-son, Bates and Co., Toronto.