

# A GREAT SECRET;

OR,  
SHALL IT BE DONE.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Victor Fournier rode to "Les Bouleaux" as fast as his English horse, which had long been the envy of the less fortunate Gerald, could carry him. He was sorely anxious to find out who it was that had used Gerald so ill, curious as to what had become of Mr. Shaw, and just sufficiently interested in the queer little English girl whom he was to marry to feel glad that her father's house was to be the scene of his inquiries.

Delphine opened the door, and showed the ingenious surprise of a rustic servant at sight of him. He had fastened his horse to the garden-paling on the opposite side of the courtyard to save time, and he now stepped quickly, and without speaking, into the hall, whip in hand.

"Monsieur desires to see Mr. Beresford?" inquired Delphine, looking at him curiously, as she began to cross the hall toward the salon.

"Wait a minute," said he, stopping her. He did not wish to give unnecessary alarm and he thought the girl might be able to afford him some of the information he wanted.

"Is Mr. Stanton at home?" he asked tentatively.

"No, sir. He has gone to Calais with the English gentleman who came last night."

"Mr. Shaw? Are you certain of this?"

"Yes, sir. I myself saw them drive off in the carriage; I was standing at the door here with Mr. Beresford, and Miss M'Leod, and la petite demoiselle, who ran out after them to tell them to drive fast, by her father's desire."

"To drive fast? Mr. Beresford said they were to drive fast?" cried Victor excitedly, seizing the girl's strong arm, and peering with intent eyes into her face. "Were they late, or was he afraid of something? Speak out, can't you?"

But the girl began to call upon the saints and to implore the Virgin to protect them all, with irrelevant devotion which made the young man stamp his foot impatiently.

At last she exclaimed in a loud guttural whisper: "The wolf! I know it is the wolf! Oh, what has he done?"

"Be quiet a moment," said Victor authoritatively. Then having decided that the best person to ask for was the clever English clerk, he went on, "Where is Mr. Smith?"

"He is in bed, sir. He went out this afternoon soon after you and M. and Madame Fournier had left; he returned a little while before Mr. Shaw and M. Gerald went away, but he had been drinking; so Mr. Beresford, who met him on the stairs, told him to go to bed," answered Delphine, aching with curiosity and alarm, but constrained by Victor's commanding manner to confine herself to replies.

"And Mr. Beresford? Is he in bed yet?"

"No, sir. When the gentleman had gone he and Miss M'Leod went back to the salon, where he has been ever since, playing chess with M. le Cure."

Victor paused a moment, considering what he should do. Then he glanced at the door, and saying, "I will go in," he followed Delphine, who burst open the door with alacrity, and clattered over the polished floor of the first salon, which was empty, to the entrance of the second.

"M. Fournier!" she announced in a loud hoarse voice, shaking with excitement; and then she drew back to allow the gentleman to pass her, and watched the effect of his entrance without ceremony from the doorway.

Every one looked up in surprise. Mr. Beresford, with a pawn in his hand peered up from the chessboard under the green shade he wore to protect his eyes from the glare of the lamp; the Cure, his opponent, who was sitting opposite, with his back to the door, turned and examined Victor over his spectacles. Peggy and Miss M'Leod, who were sitting near the fire, the former nursing her chin, the latter knitting, both uttered exclamations of alarm, and listened to his vehement words spellbound with horror.

"M. Beresford—ladies—mon pere," he burst out in fiery haste, his eyes travelling rapidly from one to the other. "I have bad news—I do not deny it—you can see it in my face. I fear—I know—that a crime has been committed." Miss M'Leod screamed, and Peggy started up and leaned against the mantelpiece. "Gerald has been hurt and Mr. Shaw—" He paused, but no one could speak to tell him to continue.

At last Mr. Beresford signed to him to go on, with a trembling hand.

"Mr. Shaw is missing."

Not the charitable Cure, not either of the tender-hearted ladies, was it whom these tidings utterly overwhelmed. It was the philosopher, the cynic, Mr. Beresford, who sank back in a heap into his chair, muttering low cries of horror, crushed and appalled by the awful news.

"I warned him, I did warn him, my God, I did!" they heard him mutter hoarsely to himself, as he bent his gray head upon his hands and shook with anguish which astonished all the rest, even at that moment of general consternation.

Victor crossed the small room to him, and reverently touched the old man's clutching quivering fingers.

"Don't give way like that, Mr. Beresford. It may be all right. We don't know anything yet. It was only a wild guess of mine; it was stupid and mad of me to tell you. Mr. Shaw may—must have got out of the carriage before it reached Calais. He will probably have turned up safe and sound by this time, and—"

But, raising his head, the old gentleman interrupted him in tones that no one present ever forgot.

"No, no. He will never turn up. He has been murdered."

Peggy sprang forward, in the midst of the awful hush which followed these words, and clung to Victor's sleeve.

"O, tell me, tell me," she begged, in a voice so broken that the young man could scarcely understand her: "Gerald—Gerald, is he—murdered—too?"

Victor shuddered.

"No, he is quite safe in my father's house, mademoiselle. And so, I hope, in spite of Mr. Beresford's fears, is Mr. Shaw also by this time."

tears, shaking as with palsy as he tried to cross the room toward the door.

"Where are you going, sir?" asked Miss M'Leod timidly through her tears.

"I—I must go upstairs. I—I must see Smith," said he, in a voice that sounded strange and broken.

"But he is asleep, and he was not sober when he went to bed. He won't be able to help you," she persisted, her tone growing rancorous at once.

"He knows something—he guesses something," murmured the old man, as the others made way for him; "he said something about Monnier when he came in, and I met him and told him to go to bed. I must see him at once."

The two went up-stairs as fast as Mr. Beresford's infirmity would allow, and after knocking some moments at the door of the spare room where Mr. Smith was sleeping at last a drowsy voice called, "Come in!" and the housekeeper left her employer to go in, and returned to the salon below, where Peggy was sitting, rigid and dumb with horror and distress, on a low chair by the fire. Victor was watching her with curious eyes which saw more than the pale little face before him, and the good Cure, with professional instincts, was improving the occasion by an unheeded homily on the ways of Heaven.

The young man started forward on the entrance of the housekeeper.

"They are up-stairs together—Mr. Beresford and Mr. Smith?" asked he hastily.

"Yes, they are in Mr. Smith's room. You must not go—you must not intrude—she added in alarm, as Victor passed her."

"I must and will know all they know—all they can suggest," said he resolutely.

And without waiting to hear more objections, he left the room, went upstairs, and, turning to the right, walked along the corridor until he came to a door on his right hand which stood ajar, and through which the weak flame of a candle threw a line of light before his feet. He could hear two voices, the one firm and hard, the other alternately piteous and angry. The former was that of Mr. Beresford, who having partially recovered his own self-control, was trying to induce the clerk to do the same.

"Come, be a man, Smith, be a man," he was saying as Victor drew near the door.

"I've been a good master to you—not too strict in the matter of perquisites, not too hard upon occasional excess. Pull yourself together for once. My very honor is concerned in this awful business—Mr. Shaw was my own guest. For God's sake leave off snivelling your wits away; dress yourself, go back with young Victor—"

"May I come in?" asked the young man, who had now reached the door, and who was losing patience with the half-audible tipsy objections of the clerk Smith, whose cleverness when sober was only equalled by his imbecility when drunk.

He gave almost a howl as Victor's voice startled him. Mr. Beresford, more collected, though even his nerves were not proof against a start at the interruption, said, "Come in."

Victor entered, grave, handsome, earnest. He glanced from the stupid-looking bullet-headed Smith, who was sitting in his night-shirt on the edge of the bed, childishly sobbing and wiping his eyes with a crocheted mat, to Mr. Beresford, who, while scarcely less affected than the other, had by this time got enough command of himself to bear the horrible catastrophe with dignity as well as grief.

"Victor," said the latter, turning to the young man, "you're a good fellow, a brave fellow, to have come back along this road in the face of what might have been danger for you too. But you shall not go back alone; since this coward will not stir, I will go back with you myself, old and infirm as I am, and, with Heaven's help, we may find Mr. Shaw breathing yet."

With a sudden jerk, more like a mechanical toy just wound up than like a man stung into heroic resolution, Mr. Smith bounded off the bed and began to dress, complaining piteously and vaguely that "it was just like his luck." Victor gave Mr. Beresford his arm, and they left the unhappy clerk to shake and snivel himself into his clothes as quickly as he could. Outside the door the young man said suddenly:

"You talk of hope, Mr. Beresford, but I can see that you feel none. You have some theory about this horrible affair?"

"Yes, I have; but I warn you that, instead of explaining, it makes the outrage more mysterious. Whether poor Mr. Shaw has been killed or not I do not know; but I believe he has been attacked and robbed by the thieves who have haunted the department this winter. It's a very terrible thing, this; it points to there being a regularly organized gang in the neighborhood, to whom no one is sacred; and if they attack people in carriages, Heaven only knows whether before long they may not try their hands on us in our own homes!"

For the selfish fears which checked the current of the bolder, colder blood, Victor had little sympathy; he willingly made over his companion to the cares of old Pierre, who, more helpless than ever in his horror at the story Delphine had brought into the kitchen, gave a trembling and untrustworthy arm for his master's support. The young man had scarcely reached the bottom of the stairs when Smith, still madelin, but rather more coherent, overtook him, and linked his arm, for sympathy and steadiness, within that of the young Frenchman.

"If we must go corpse-hunting along that beastly road, let us have the priest with us, if it's only for company," muttered the clerk, directing his companion's steps toward the salon.

Smith had been brought up a Roman Catholic, and although he had impulsively professed a variety of creeds since that, and had never been particularly to a dorm or two, he still occasionally carried his sins and his remorse to the confessional, and took spiritual guidance when nothing better offered.

The Cure, though not physically fearless, was far too good a man to shrink from any call which might be taken for that of duty, and he at once consented to accompany them on their search for any trace of Mr. Shaw. Victor turned back and slipped into the inter salon for a farewell word to Miss Beresford, whom he still found sitting looking blankly and forlornly into the dying fire. He was very much in love with Madame de Lancre, and an officer's daughter with the manners of an officer's son ran this

lady a good second in his admiration; but his heart was a gallery where room could always be made for a new picture, and the young English girl who was to be his wife, with her piquant face and odd freedom of manner, might on sufferance be accorded a place there. The faithful Miss M'Leod had gone up-stairs, dutifully to worry her employer. Victor had mastered the interesting fact that English girls were allowed a great deal of liberty with their fiancés; why should he not take advantage of these circumstances to administer to the fragile-looking little lady the kiss of consolation?

There is something so dignified in sorrow quietly borne, that Victor instinctively bowed low to her as she raised her sad eyes on his entrance. He had not much time to waste over his consolation, however, and he came slowly and respectfully towards her as she spoke.

"Pardon, mademoiselle; I am intruding, I am afraid. I came to say good-bye."

Like a child she smiled up at him and held out her hand.

"Thank you; it is kind of you to remember me at a time like this."

"It is impossible not to remember mademoiselle at all times."

"You are going back, to—to—"

"To look for—Mr. Shaw; I hope we may find him safe."

"Indeed, I hope so too. And then—"

"Then I shall return to my father's house, and shall see how poor Gerald is getting on."

Her face quivered. She was standing up now, looking away from him with a subdued constrained expression which he pardonably took for the most bewitching modesty.

"Is he much hurt?" she asked, still looking away.

"I hope not, I think not. He was stunned by the jolting of the cart; he will soon be all right. We'll take good care of him."

"You are very good—all of you. I am sure you will."

She looked at him gratefully, and the young man thought her tear-stained eyes were very beautiful, and wondered why his sister Louise couldn't manage to look as well when she had been crying. No opportunity could be better than this. Her face looked delightfully innocent and inviting, and her forlorn expression and attitude were not to be resisted.

"Poor little lady! You are in need of comfort too. Let me console you."

He bent his head with an unmistakable intention; but, to his astonishment, before his lips could touch her face, she moved suddenly back, all the seductive limps gone from her attitude, and most plainly expressed indignation in her face. The young Frenchman's dismay did not last long.

"Why is mademoiselle so severe with me, when she has done me the honor to accept me for her affianced husband?" he asked plaintively.

"That was my father's doing, M. Fournier," she answered promptly.

"But mademoiselle consented to the arrangement?"

"After a pause—"Yes."

"The ladies of your country are not usually so chary of their kisses to the man they honor with their choice."

"But there is no honor and no choice in this case, M. Fournier; and as we have begun the 'arrangement' in the fashion of your country, we will go through with it in the same fashion. M. Durand is coming back for you. Good-night."

She gave him her hand to touch and drop very coolly; and Victor went away understanding much more clearly than before why English girls are allowed so much liberty in their engagements.

"She is a man in petticoats," he said to himself, only half disdainfully, as he left the house with the priest and Mr. Smith.

But she was not; she was only the ordinary little feminine fool fond of the wrong man, and therefore endowed with the stoniest strength of mind in her dealings with the right one. She went to bed unhappy about the fate of Mr. Shaw, unhappy about her engagement with Victor, but most of all unhappy because Gerald—good, kind old Gerald, whom a week before she had never seen, but whom circumstances had already hoisted into the place of honor in her young girl's imagination—was lying ill three miles away, and she could not tell when she should see him again.

In the mean time the three searchers had trudged together along the Calais road, and discovered, to their great relief, that they had been forestalled in their explorations. Distant cries and shouts were heard along the road soon after they had left the poplar avenue; and when, following the direction whence the noises came, they reached the spot between the copse and the deserted cottage where the attack had been made, they found that a party of police, sent out at the suggestion of the elder M. Fournier, who knew that Mr. Shaw was to be driven into Calais by young Stanton, had already reached it, and that a discovery had just been made which put a fatal end to all doubt about the occurrence.

For, following the marks of blood which were found in the middle of the road where the carriage had been stopped, which appeared also from time to time on the untidy garden-path of the deserted cottage, the police had found inside the ruined building the dead body of Mr. Shaw, with the marks of fangs at his throat, and a bullet-wound in his breast. His pocket-book, purse, watch, chain, and scarf-pin were gone, so that there could be no doubt in the mind of any one that the object of the murder was robbery. A stretcher had been hastily formed of two boards, the body of the dead man placed upon it, and the solemn procession back to Calais began. Victor, hastening ahead of his two companions, was the first to learn these details, the first to see this sight; then he stepped back again to inform the Cure and Mr. Smith of the discovery.

The clerk, on learning it, was seized with such convulsions of horror and fright that it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to continue the walk toward Calais, where Victor had made up his mind to confront him with Gerald that night. The English clerk, though clever, had the reputation of being rather a slippery fish, and his conduct this evening had raised in the mind of his employer's son the suspicion that his drinking off to bed, might have been the result of remorse, and of a wish to be out of the way of any unpleasant occurrences of which he might have got wind. So the young Frenchman was inexorable, and poor Smith had to drag his trembling and unwilling limbs toward the town, taking good care, however, to keep a considerable distance between him and the terrible freight the police were bearing in the same direction.

In turn the canal was reached, the bridge crossed, the moat and the gloomy ramparts

passed, and the quiet streets of old Calais traversed, until at last, with Victor and the priest still walking one on either hand, the clerk stood before the porte-cochère of M. Fournier's house. Victor rang the bell, and the concierge opened the little door within one half of the large one, and admitted them. As they stood just inside—Smith behind the others, as he was not in a mood to assert his personality—Victor asked: "Have you heard from M. Stanton?"

"No better, I fear, monsieur. This lady has been unable to see him," answered the concierge, indicating a tall, handsomely-dressed lady, who was at that moment crossing the courtyard toward the lodge from the front door of the house.

Victor hastened toward her eagerly, crying: "Ah, Madame de Lancre! What an unexpected pleasure!"

The old Cure glanced at her without interest: rich women dressed like modistes' pictures he had, through long absence from the world in which they live, ceased to regard as the possessors of souls.

But on Smith's sight of the lady, the first sound of her voice, as she begged Victor to excuse her abruptness now, as she was anxious to get back to her husband, acted like a spell. He craned his bullet head forward with one fearful stare, then, turning sharply, he slipped through the open door, and seeing a *fiacre* standing there, jumped into it, hoarsely promising the driver a napoleon if he could drive him to the station in five minutes.

"I've taken her own cab, I believe," said Smith to himself, in feverish, tremulous exultation, as the enterprising driver drove off at what he considered a good pace, sacrificing his engagements to his avarice. "Now if I can only get a train to Boulogne and catch the night boat to London, I'll out of the way of the whole boiling tittle I've had time to think a bit."

But luck was against him. When he got to the station, he found he had twenty minutes to wait, so he went into the buffet for a *petit verre*. He had scarcely the glass to his lip when the lady whose cab he had so unceremoniously taken entered the room, which was almost empty, and walked straight up to him. He did not attempt to escape her this time; he knew it was of no use.

"I thought I should find you here," she said simply, but with a certain unpleasant suggestion in her tones of an intention to "have it out with him."

"Yes—er—I—glad to see you, Madeline," said he, without much spontaneity.

"I wish to speak to you. Will you come into my sitting-room for a few minutes? I am staying here."

"Certainly, with—with pleasure. But, I say—er—Madeline, I suppose you don't want to—have me go back, or—make it up?" said he, following submissively but coolly.

"Not exactly."

"Then aren't you—afraid of—people guessing the—the—well, in fact, that you are—were—as a matter of fact—my wife?"

"Not in the least," said she contemptuously, as she opened the door of her sitting-room, and he followed her in.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## Filial Honor.

Young people sometimes know so very much more than their elders! at least, according to their own estimate of their knowledge. They pride themselves on advanced methods of thought, and freedom from "old fogy notions," but possibly they will find, on reaching middle age, that years do bring their own peculiar teachings, which youth is not yet capable of receiving. Said an overworked mother once in a moment of bitterness:

"I'm afraid I don't enjoy my children as much as I did when they were little. Then they were merely clinging, affectionate creatures; they never judged what I did, or doubted that I was the most remarkable woman in the world. Now they seem so much wiser than I, that it appears to be natural for them to find fault with me."

"Nothing I do is considered very praiseworthy. In fact, I am almost always in the wrong. If I try to join in their conversation, they evidently think 'mother's opinions aren't worth much; she hasn't had the latest advantages.'"

"It's true I haven't. I've been too busy to become a very cultivated woman, but it seems to me affection, taken by itself, ought to count for something in this world."

Yet her children did love her; they only omitted to "honor" her in daily life. The next day after her death her son stood beside her coffin, looking at the worn, placid face, and said, through his tears,—

"I never could understand why mother wasn't happier. She had every comfort in her later years, but she always looked worn and discouraged."

Had he been of clearer vision, he need not have sought far for the reason. It is usually our own warmth or lack of tenderness which makes the faces about us bright or gloomy—a truth to be remembered before it is forever too late.

## The Truth of the Matter.

Old Mrs. Penurious is seated in her own elegant room when she receives and reads the following note:

"Dear Mrs. Penurious—We thank you so much for the beautiful present you so kindly sent us on our wedding day. Although simple and beautiful in itself we value it most for the kindly, generous and thoughtful spirit in which it was sent and shall ever treasure it as a precious memento of your regard for us."

"Very gratefully yours,  
"MR. AND MRS. J. DEWITT MONTAGUE."

In the privacy of their own home Mrs. J. DeWitt Montague is saying to her husband: "What in the world are we going to do with that abominable picture old Mrs. Penurious sent us? I honestly believe it's an old one she's had in some back room. I wouldn't have it even in a back room. Stingy old thing! I might have known she'd palm some such thing off on us if we invited her. The picture shall go to the attic."

## Beet-Root Sugar.

Claus Spreckels, the "ex-Sugar King" of the Sandwich Islands, who is now giving his attention to the encouragement of beet-sugar culture in Northern California, says that the beet-sugar industry can be established in almost every State in the Union, and that it will give a net profit of from \$50 to \$75 an acre to the farmers.

## He Muzzled.

"Must I put some muzzle on my dog?" he asked at police headquarters yesterday.

"Well, no; not now."

"Dot's how I believe it was myself. Can I do something with a boy?"

"What for?"

"Vhell, a few days ago a boy comes by my place. My big dog has out doors. Dot boy haf a dog about so high. My dog chaws him oop in two minutes. Dot boy comes in und says if I doan't put some muzzle on my dog he haf him shot."

"I see."

"I puts dot muzzle on. To-day my dog vhas out doors. Dot boy comes along mit his small dog. When he sees dot muzzle he shria out: 'Seek him, Tiger!' und dot small dog licks my big dog until he can't stand oop no more. Vhas dot some conspiracy or what? Do I haf some false pretense on dot boy, or vhill he walk around und tell eberybody dot it vhas a big shake on Snyder?"

## Woman's Modesty.

Many women are prevented by feelings of delicacy from consulting a physician in those disorders arising from functional derangement of her peculiarly delicate organism, and the most serious results are often caused by this neglect. To such persons Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is an especial boon, as it offers a sure and safe cure for all those distressing disorders to which women are peculiarly subject, while it saves a modest girl or woman from the embarrassment of a personal consultation with a physician. "Favorite Prescription" is the only medicine for woman's peculiar weakness and ailments, sold by druggists, under a positive guarantee from the manufacturers, that it will give satisfaction in every case, or money will be refunded. See guarantee on bottle wrapper.

Failure in a good cause may yet be honorable; whilst success in a bad cause can only be infamous.

Jack and Jill each took a pill,  
Old-fashioned kind of full grain;  
Jack went down—but with a frown—  
Jill died from "cause unknown."

Smiles will supersede many frowns, and many discomforts will be unknown when Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets entirely supersede, as they bid fair to do, the arge and less efficient pill of our forefathers. Every day they gain new laurels! Most popular when most ill!

The worth of a state, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it.

## Symptoms of Catarrh.

Dull, heavy headache, obstruction of the nasal passages, discharges falling from the head into the throat, sometimes profuse, watery, and acrid, at others, thick, tenacious, mucous, purulent, bloody and putrid; the eyes are weak, watery, and inflamed; there is ringing in the ears, deafness, hacking or coughing to clear the throat, expectoration of offensive matter, together with sores from ulcers; the voice is changed and has a nasal twang; the breath is offensive; smell and taste are impaired; there is a sensation of dizziness, with mental depression, a hacking cough and general debility. If you have all, or any considerable number of these symptoms you are suffering from Nasal Catarrh. The more complicated your disease has become, the greater the number and diversity of symptoms. Thousands of cases annually, without manifesting half of the above symptoms, result in consumption, and end in the grave. No disease is so common, more deceptive and dangerous, or less understood, or more unsuccessfully treated by physicians. Five hundred dollars reward is offered by the manufacturers of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy, for a case of catarrh which they cannot cure. Remedy sold by druggists, at only 50 cents.

Without elevation of character capacity is worthless and worldly success is naught.

People who are subject to bad breath, foul coated tongue, or any disorder of the stomach, can be relieved by using Dr. Casson's Stomach Bitters, the old and tried remedy. Ask your Druggist.

Two venerable citizens of Chillicothe, Mo., died recently, Isaiah Austin, who was 95 years of age, and Zanty McKinney, who was 90.

Hus! Cough! Cure! in one minute.

At the donation day ceremonies at the Philadelphia Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Persons, John Gibson opened the celebration with prayer, although he is 87 years of age.

CONSUMERS HAIR RESTORER restores grey and faded hair to its natural color and prevents falling out.

It is the fundamental law of the world in which we live that truth shall grow.

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Symptoms—Molasses; intense itching and stinging; most at night; worse by scratching. It allowed to continue tumors form, which often bleed and ulcerate, becoming very sore. SWAYNE'S OINTMENT stops the itching and bleeding, heals ulceration, and in many cases removes the tumors. It is equally efficacious in curing all Skin Diseases. DR. SWAYNE & SON, Proprietors, Philadelphia. SWAYNE'S OINTMENT can be obtained of druggists. Sent by mail for 50 cents.

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