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THE CRIME OF THE CENTURY

BY RODRIGUES OTTOLENGUI,

Author of "An Artist In Crime," "A Conflict of Evidence," "A Modern Wizard," "Final Proof," Etc.

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"But, as a matter of fact, was he here, or was he not? What is the truth?"

"I told you he was here, didn't I? That's a fact, but that don't cut no figure with me. I'll swear the other way, and all the lawyers in town wouldn't confuse me or trip me up."

"I guess that is true. You have been well drilled in your part and well paid too."

"What do you mean? I ain't on."

"I mean that you lied on the witness stand and that you are adhering to your story now."

"You're hard to please, mister. But I ain't easy to offend. I'll swear either way you like. There; that's fair enough, ain't it?"

"Look here! Let me make myself clear. What I want is the truth. I will pay for that, whatever it is. But when you admit that you are such a liar how am I to believe what you tell me?"

"That's so, mister. You've got me there. I don't know why you should. But what can I do to help you out?"

"I cannot take your word unsupported. You tell me that Mora was here late that night. There was a dance going on, was there not?"

"A regular hummer."

"Did Mora dance with any of the women?"

"Why, sure! You don't take him for a wallflower, do you?"

"I have been told that the best dancer here that night was a girl called Lilian Vale."

This assertion was made merely to watch its effect and upon the chance that it might be true, since the barkeeper had told him that the girl frequented the hall and had expressed her intention to be at the opening soiree on the following night. This Mr. Mitchel doubted, but he had determined that in case he should fail to find her before then he would be present himself.

"Yes; she was here," said Rogers.

"Did Mora dance with her?" asked Mr. Mitchel.

"No," replied Rogers; "I don't think he danced with her; leastways I didn't see him. But then I wasn't on the watch all the time, not bein a dancin man myself, but more in the drinkin line, which just reminds me my throat is parched again. You must excuse my mentionin it, but I ain't talked so long on a stretch in years."

More beer was ordered, and Mr. Mitchel followed up his advantage.

"You say he did not dance with this girl. Then of course you know her?"

"Know the Lilly? Well, I should smile, since she was so high," indicating a stature so low that he must have known her at birth if he were correct.

"Does she know Mora?"

"That's more than I can tell you."

"Well, do you know where she can be found at present?"

"I don't know where she's livin, but I can find her for you if there's any money in it," the last part of the sentence added slyly.

"Oh, have no fear! You will be well paid. How soon can you find this girl?"

"By this afternoon, I reckon. You see, I know a woman as knows her well, sort of brought her up, as you might say. But they don't live together now, 'cause the old woman took to gin. But the girl makes it a point to see her two or three times a week, so I've only got to find out what time she's expected, and you could lay round till she shows up. And there you are, as neat as wax."

The proposition seemed to be a good one, for, even though this girl and the mysterious Mrs. Morton might be the same person, still her change of residence would in no way prevent her from visiting her old foster mother. Besides, now that he had heard of this elder woman Mr. Mitchel was more than ever pleased, for, while he might have difficulty with the girl, it would be comparatively easy to extract information from the old woman, who could be made garrulous if a little liquor were wisely administered.

"Very well, Rogers," said Mr. Mitchel. "The sooner you find out about this the better. Suppose you visit the old woman at once, and I will go with you."

"One time's the same as another with me," replied the old sot, and the two men left the room. As they were about to pass the bar Rogers slyly remarked:

"Did you speak? Yes; thanks! Gif me a whisky straight, Jack," with which he leaned against the bar with the air of an old habitue.

Mr. Mitchel handed a fifty dollar note to the barkeeper and told him that he might keep the change, which the man did. Then Mr. Mitchel followed Rogers out of the place and up town to a dingy looking house in Henry street where Rogers stopped, remarking:

"P'raps I'd better go up first and see how the land lays, eh? The old party may be drunk and not receivin visitors."

"Very well," said Mr. Mitchel, "but hurry back."

This injunction was obeyed, for within ten minutes Rogers was down stairs again, apparently excited.

"Say, mister," said he, "you've struck it rich. The old woman's sober, and the girl's with her. Go right up—second floor front, right side—and if you don't need me any more, why"—

"I can settle, eh?" said Mr. Mitchel, finishing his sentence for him. "Here is some money for you. Good day."

"Right you are, mister. You know my address, Apollo hall; office hours from 8 a. m. to 10 p. m. Ta, ta!" And he shuffled off, holding himself a little more erect because of the money in his pocket.

Mr. Mitchel hesitated for a moment, wondering how best to effect his object. He had not expected to find the girl at this house, and he would have preferred to have a talk first with the old woman alone. But now that the girl was so near at hand the opportunity of meeting her should not be lost. He had learned from Rogers that the name of the old woman was Susan Cooper, that she had been married at one time to a soldier and that she was living upon a government pension. She was never sober, except when short of money, and this was usually near the end of the quarter, during the last weeks of which she did odd jobs, when she could get work, and so managed until the next pay day.

Mr. Mitchel very quickly decided to pretend that his business was with Mrs. Cooper, so that the girl need not be warned of his wish to meet her. He ascended the rickety stairway in the darkness, feeling his way with outstretched arms, and knocked at the door of the old woman's room.

"Come in!" cried a voice within, no effort being made to ascertain who the visitor might be.

Mr. Mitchel entered and found himself in the presence of both women or, as he would have said from his first glance, of a woman and a child. He easily recognized Lilian Vale, although she was older than she looked in her photograph. Yet she seemed more like a child than a woman. He recalled to mind the hearty laugh with which Preacher Jim had greeted his suspicions in regard to this girl, and now that he saw her he was compelled to admit that there was reason for the criminal's amusement. Nevertheless when Mr. Mitchel had once reached a conclusion by logical deduction he was tenacious of his opinion until confronted with most convincing proof that he was in error. The coincidence of this girl's stage name and the flower embroidered upon the infant's garment needed explanation. He could not accept it as a mere chance. Compelled to account for his intrusion, he addressed himself to Mrs. Cooper, saying:

"Your name is Susan Cooper, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am connected with a firm of lawyers who make a specialty of collecting pension claims."

"Thank you. I don't need any lawyers. My pension is paid very regular," said the old woman, a little suspicious. Mr. Mitchel hastened to reassure her.

"Yes, yes, of course, madam. That we know. But that only applies to the regular pension. I came to see you about the amount properly due for the time before your claim was allowed."

"I never heard of any back money due me."

"Exactly so, madam. But, you see, we lawyers look into these things pretty thoroughly. Now, we hunted up a lot of these claims, and we have worked on them till I am happy to say that we have had them recognized, and, what is better still, they have been paid."

"Then you mean there's money comin to me?" asked the old woman eagerly.

"Let me see," said Mr. Mitchel, pretending to consult a memorandum book. "Yes. Ah, here it is! Mrs. Susan Cooper, $285. The odd figures occur because of the deductions for costs of collection."

"You mean I'm to get over $200?" cried Mrs. Cooper, now greatly excited.

"That's what the gent said, mum," interjected the girl, speaking for the first time. "Sit down. Don't hop up soon as you hear of a little money coming to you. You act as though you never saw $200 in your life."

"True enough," said the old woman. "It's many a day since I've had that much in a lump. When do I get it?"

"Shall we say tomorrow?" suggested Mr. Mitchel. "There will be some papers to sign, and then you can have the amount due you. Shall I call here, or can you come to our office?"

"I wouldn't put you to the trouble of callin again, sir. Just tell me where to go, and I'll be there on time." The old lady was quite affable now, and Mr. Mitchel was pleased with his success. He had not only well accounted for his present visit, but he had arranged an opportunity to meet Mrs. Cooper alone under such circumstances as would make it possible for him to catechise her. He therefore handed her the address of his own solicitors and asked her to meet him on the following day at 11 o'clock. Then he turned to the girl.

"Pardon me, Miss Cooper, but you bear a great resemblance to a very beautiful little actress who calls herself 'The Lily of the Valley.' Have you ever been told so before?"

"Have I heard I look like the Lily? Well, I should smile," said she, laughing, but evidently pleased at the neat compliment. "Why, I'm 'The Lily of the Valley' myself. My name ain't Cooper. This is my foster mother. My name's Lilian Vale."

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" said Mr. Mitchel. "But, having seen you on the stage, I could not but notice what seemed to be such a very remarkable likeness. I hope you will excuse my making such a mistake."

"Oh, you're all right! I don't mind being told I'm good looking. Don't I know it myself? Don't you suppose I peep at my face in the glass once in awhile? Well, I reckon?"

"Undoubtedly you need no one to tell you of your beauty," said Mr. Mitchel, observing her fondness for flattery.

"Well, I ain't very homely; that's a fact. But, I say, it's funny you knew me. I'm made up on the stage. I never met you before, did I?"

Mr. Mitchel thought this an opportunity to play a trick upon her as a test. She assuredly was entirely unsuspicious of his real motives. His words were:

"Oh, no! But I have seen a photograph of you that my friend Mr. Mora has."

The experiment was devoid of results, except that it seemed to prove that she did not know the name. This seemed very probable, because, however well one may be able to conceal one's thoughts and feelings, all human beings when taken by surprise must lack perfect self control. What she said was:

"Mr. Mora? Who is he? I never heard of him. If he's got my picture, you can bet your life I never gave it to him. He must have bought it, the gilly! But, then, the woods are full of them."

"Did you never hear the name before?" asked Mr. Mitchel, reluctant to admit what seemed certain.

"Let me see," said the girl thoughtfully. "Mora! Seems familiar too. Mora! Mora! Where did I hear that name? Oh, hully gee! Why, that's the name of the old fellow that was killed by his son, wasn't it?"

"You are right. Some persons still believe that my friend Matthew Mora killed his father. But I assure you he is innocent."

"Well, I hope so for your sake. Wouldn't be nice to have your friend sit in the electric chair, would it? Ugh! Let's change the subject. It makes me shiver. I must be going anyway."

"That reminds me that I am overstaying my business," said Mr. Mitchel. "But if you are walking I would be pleased to accompany you as far as we go together."

"All right. Come along. I'm going across town. Well, by-by, mum. See you again on Monday if I'm alive. Goodby."

She stooped and kissed the old woman, who looked eagerly at Mr. Mitchel and said:

"I'll be at the office in the mornin. It's sure I'll get the money?"

"Absolutely sure, madam. I will see you tomorrow. Good morning."

Mr. Mitchel and Lilian Vale walked, along through the crowded thoroughfare, an oddly assorted couple—he a gentleman of eminent social and intellectual worth and she a daughter of the slums, though a beautiful one. Mr. Mitchel glanced down at her from time to time, admiring her face, but busy also with other thoughts.

When he had first seen the photograph, he had been much surprised at finding that the face seemed somehow quite familiar to him. He had pondered over this until at length he had solved the puzzle. The photograph reminded him of a similar one in the possession of his adopted daughter Rose, the likeness of a young woman who had been a school friend. Afterward he had compared the photographs and was even more astonished, so great was the resemblance. Yet one was an actress in the dives, a slum product, and the other was the cherished idol of a millionaire and had been nurtured in the lap of luxury.

He was acquainted with this wealthy young lady, and now that the other was at his side he was more than ever puzzled, for the originals were as much alike as the portraits. It was no chance trick of the camera.

As they walked she gabbled on, expressing childish thoughts in childish language, but full of the slang of the quarter in which she had been reared. Mr. Mitchel found his problem growing in mystery. Several questions confronted him.

Could this girl be the Mrs. Morton whom young Mora had been so anxious that Mr. Barnes should not meet? Could it be that this child was the mother of the abandoned baby? Her environment was such that this at least was possible. The next logical query, therefore, was, Who was the father? Lastly, how account for the resemblance between the heiress, Perdita Maria Van Cortlandt, and the actress Lilian Vale, "The Lily of the Valley?"

Absorbed in these thoughts, Mr. Mitchel had not noted through what streets they had walked until he heard the girl say:

"This is as far as I go."

Imagine his amazement to find that they were in front of the house in Essex street from which only the day before the supposed wife of young Mora had been hurriedly removed.

"How did you know—did you know that I am married?" she stammered.

"You live here?" asked Mr. Mitchel, endeavoring not to evince unusual interest in the question.

"I did once, but I have moved."

"How long is it since you left this house?"

Something in his words or manner must have attracted her attention, for, instead of replying, she looked at him earnestly for a moment and then asked:

"Why do you wish to know that?"

Mr. Mitchel feared that she was growing suspicious of him and thought best to act promptly, giving her no time to guard against surprise. He consequently quickly answered:

"Because I wish to know where you are living now, Mrs. Morton."

These words aroused her fully, and she gazed at him with fear plainly depicted upon her features.

"How did you know—did you know that I am married?" she stammered.

"So! You admit that you are Mrs. Morton, then?"

"No," said the girl, regaining her composure, "I admit that I am married, since you seem to know that. But my name is not Morton."

"What is your name, then?"

"I am Mrs. Matthew Crane."

This statement astounded Mr. Mitchel as much as his questioning had surprised the girl. Two thoughts darted swiftly through his mind—Preacher Jim's mother was named Margaret Crane; secondly, in his interview with her she had once alluded to her son as "Matthew."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TEST OF NATURE.

"You tell me that you are Mrs. Matthew Crane?" repeated Mr. Mitchel.

"Yes, I do," said the girl. "Do you find anything strange in that?"

"I find it very strange," replied Mr. Mitchel, "because it happens that I am acquainted with Matthew Crane, though I did not know that he was married."

"You know him? You know my husband?" cried the girl, evidently much disturbed.

"Yes. I know him very well."

"Oh! You won't tell him, will you? Please don't tell him that I told you about our being—being married!"

"Why should I not tell him? Where is the harm of telling a man that you have met his wife?"

Mr. Mitchel spoke thus to alarm the girl, if possible, and to make her more apt to betray herself, for he was sure that there was deception.

"Oh, no, no!" she cried vehemently. "You don't understand! You must not tell him! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I've been a fool to talk to you—a fool, a fool!" With these words she burst into tears, woman's usual resource when she wishes to soften the heart of a man.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Mitchel, putting one arm about her caressingly. "Don't cry, little woman! I'm not an ogre. I won't tell if you don't wish me. There, there! Stop crying!"

She was easily calmed and hastily wiped away her tears with a tiny handkerchief. Whenever I see one of these diminutive appendages to a woman's toilet the thought occurs to me that they are more fitted for the eye than the nose. They are soft and sheer and do not redden the eyes when used for mopping up tears.

Lilian was so anxious to be reassured as to Mr. Mitchel's promise that she did not notice that she dropped this handkerchief after wiping her eyes nor that Mr. Mitchel stooped and picked it up. He held it mechanically in his hand while she spoke.

"Oh! You won't tell him?" she cried. "Mind, that's a promise! You see, I didn't know you knew him, or I wouldn't have told you."

She pouted her lips and tossed her head pertly, while her eyes, sparkling through their moisture, made her look like a pretty spoiled child. Yet she claimed to be a wife!

"I promise not to repeat what you have told me, but only on condition that you tell me more," said Mr. Mitchel.

"Tell you more?" exclaimed Lilian, again alarmed.

"Yes. You must tell me why you do not wish me to speak of your marriage to Matthew Crane."

"Oh, no! I can't tell you that."

"Very well. Then I cannot promise to keep it a secret."

"Well, then," said Lilian in desperation, "the reason is because"—she hung her head and lowered her voice as she completed her sentence, and the hot blood surged to her face, mantling it in a blush which extended to the tips of her ears—"because we're not married!" She paused for just a moment. Then, with uplifted eyes, lighted up with a beam of hopefulness that was piteous in its trustfulness, she added:

"But we are going to be!"

"Poor child! Poor stray lamb!" said Mr. Mitchel, laying his hand reverently on the girl's head and gazing into her dark eyes, wherein he saw reflected naught but innocence.

"If ever sin was guiltless, it is here in the heart of this child," he thought, then added aloud:

"I want to have a talk with you, my girl, a long, long talk. Let us ride on the elevated railroad and have our chat."

"You don't mean me any harm?" she asked doubtfully.

"Harm! No, indeed, my girl! I only wish to be a friend to you. I would not harm a hair of your head. Will you come?"

He extended his hand, and she looked at him a full minute hesitatingly. Then, with a sudden impulse, she placed her pretty soft hand in his and exclaimed:

"Yes, I'll risk it. I'll go with you."

They were soon comfortably seated in a Harlem train, in one of the double seats in the first car, which is usually the least crowded.

"Now, then," began Mr. Mitchel, "tell me all about it."

"All about what?" asked Lilian.

"About how you happened to be married."

She blushed again and looked out of the window. Mr. Mitchel did not press his question, but was content to let her decide for herself. But he had retained her handkerchief, with which he was toying, twisting it about his fingers, and now he noted something which aroused his curiosity. There was a bit of embroidery in the corner, a tiny spray of lily of the valley. Mr. Mitchel glanced from the handkerchief to the girl beside him. Could it be, or was this merely a coincidence? She called herself "The Lily of the Valley." Therefore it was natural that she should so mark a handkerchief. But, then, was it probable that any other person would do the same and that this other was the mother of the infant?

"I don't know why I should tell you my story," at last she said, turning frankly toward him, "yet something tells me to do it. The fact is I haven't been very happy lately, and I've wanted somebody to talk to about it all, somebody that wouldn't blame me too much and wouldn't scold, but would just help me. But there wasn't anybody like that. Once on a time I would have gone to mum, but these days she's mostly full of gin, and you couldn't look for sympathy in a gin bottle, could you, now?

As she talked she gradually regained her composure, and there was a merry twinkle in her eyes as she asked the question.

"Why, no, of course not," said Mr. Mitchel quite seriously. "But then, you know, I never take gin. Honor bright!"

He talked to her as a schoolboy might have talked to a schoolgirl, his very intonation inviting friendship and confidence, both of which she gave him readily.

"Why, I never thought of you that way. I was talking of mum," she said. "You was in luck to find her sober today, and you'll be luckier still if she's able to meet you tomorrow. But this ain't telling you my story, is it?"

"No, it is not."

"Where'll I begin?"

"At the beginning."

"Well, then, once upon a time I was born." She began with a light laugh, which was instantly checked when Mr. Mitchel interrupted, asking:

"When and where was that?"

"The Lord only knows," she answered, "and he won't tell; leastways he's never let on to me. I've tried hard enough to find out, too, but I never could. I think mum knows a little, but she's close about it. All I could ever get out of her was, 'Your folks didn't care enough to keep you, so you needn't bother your head about them.'"

"So you have never known your father or your mother?"

"No; never a hide nor hair of either one did I see. So we may as well skip that, I reckon, and come down to what I do know about. The first I remember was when I was 6 years old."

"What happened then?"

"I went on the stage."

"On the stage at 6 years?"

"Yes. I played Little Eva in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' There was a fellow seen me on the street one day by our house—that is, mum's house, you know. I lived with her ever since I could remember. Well, he took a fancy to me, and he found mum, and he offered her $10 a week to let me go with a company he had. You can bet mum jumped at the chance. So the man got me, and we went all over the country. Everybody was good to me, the men and the women. But I'm sorry now I ever started in the stage business, at least so young."

"Why?"

"Well, I can't exactly complain, but then, you see, it made me old while I was still little. You might almost say I never was a child at all, just a baby for a few years and then a woman. Do you understand what I mean?"

"Only too well, I fear. Go on."

"Well, I did the Eva business off and on for four seasons. One of the actors taught me to sing and dance, and when he left the company he offered mum more money for me, so I went with him a couple of seasons. We used to do a sketch together. He played the part of a blind Irishman, and I was his little girl, and he used to find his way home by hearing me sing, and a lot more like that. Then I got to be 12 years old, and I branched out for myself."

"Branched out for yourself? What do you mean?"

"Well, you see, I found out about things, and I caught on that mum was getting $15 a week for me when the man I was with got $40, 'cause, you see, I was a sort of a genius. Honor bright I was. Don't you believe it?"

"Indeed, I do," said Mr. Mitchel heartily.

"You'd better say so!" she continued, with a grave shake of her head, which once more made her appear extremely youthful. "If you didn't, I might shock the people in the car by cutting a pigeon wing for you. Well, I was what they call an instantaneous success. I went about it in a big way, I tell you. I just marched into one of the up town agents, and I got into a talk with him and told him my scheme. I offered him 25 per cent to look out for me, and he made the bargain with me. He got out those beautiful lithographs of me. You've seen them?"

"Yes. Was it he who called you 'The Lily of the Valley?'"

"No. That was my own idea. You see, I used to be 'Little Lilian' when I played Eva, but now I was going to be a star I wanted my full name. Lilian Vale sounded kind of tame, and first off I thought I'd just put an accent on the 'e' and call it Vallee. Then it struck me all of a sudden like, and I wrote it down, 'Miss Lilian Vale—The Lily of the Valley.' That way, you see, I got in The Lily and the Vallee, only in a prettier way."

"This was when you were 12, you say?"

"Yes. My! Don't that seem ages ago? But it ain't. I'm only past 16 now. Well, as I said, I made a hit from the jump, and pretty soon I was getting my $30 a week in the Bowery and more when I went on the road. That wasn't bad, was it?"

"Not at all. But now tell me when you first met your husband."

"Oh! You want to know most about that? Well, now that I'm started I may as well give you the whole thing. I met him the second season I was a star. I was singing in the Bowery, one of those places where they let the audience drink in the theater. There was a box that opened on the stage, and one night a young man in that box threw me some flowers. I picked them up, and without thinking I threw him a kiss. That began it."

Alas, how many of life's tragedies begin with a kiss!

"He came behind," she continued, "and spoke to me. The next night he came again, and he brought me candy, and I let him walk home with me. After that we got to be great friends, and then—then I got to love him. Do you know, I loved him so it made my head ache to think about it, because I always thought I wasn't good enough for him. That was when he wasn't with me. But then he'd come again and be nice to me and bring me flowers and candy, and he'd kiss me, and then I'd be happy again."

"Poor child!" muttered Mr. Mitchel.

"What did you say?" asked Lilian.

"Nothing, nothing!" hastily replied Mr. Mitchel.

"Oh! I thought you spoke." Then she went on: "You see, he was very good to me those days. Then the summer came, and he took me to picnics and excursions, and we had a good time together. He always called me his little sweetheart and told me how much he loved me. One day I asked him something. I didn't mean to, but it just slipped out. My heart was so full of it that it just spilled over, like. He was talking about loving me, and he kissed me. Then I asked him, 'Are you going to marry me some day?' He looked at me a minute, and then he said, 'Do you think you love me enough for that?' I answered that very quick. 'It isn't a question about my love,' I said. 'The question is, Do you love me enough? I'd lie down in the dirt and let you walk over me.' 'Well, then,' said he, 'you can be happy, for I mean to marry you some day.'"

"I want you to tell me when your baby was born!"

She paused here for a moment and then added, with a sad cadence in her voice:

"That was when I was 14, and I've never been real happy since that day."

"So! He accepted your love and gave you a promise in return?" asked Mr. Mitchel. "That was all?"

"That was all, but he has often repeated the promise, and I still believe he'll keep his word some day."

"Now, then," said Mr. Mitchel, speaking softly, "I want you to tell me when your baby was born!"

It was cruel to take her thus by surprise, but Mr. Mitchel thought himself justified, even though he was unwilling to give her pain. She looked up at him, with horror depicted upon her countenance, and was obliged to put her hand over her mouth to suppress the cry that sprang to her lips.

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

"Just what I said. When was your baby born?"

"But—but—I have no baby!" she blurted out desperately.

"Oh, but you have!" persisted Mr. Mitchel.

Then he saw the girl in a new aspect. A different side of her character was revealed to him. She turned upon him defiantly and exclaimed:

"So that's your game, is it? You think you are smart, don't you? But you can't play tricks on me. If you've found a baby, you'll have a hard time trying to prove it's mine. I tell you I haven't any."

"Suppose that the infant of which I am speaking was abandoned by its parents?"

"What of it? That happens every day in the year. What does that prove?"

"But suppose it was found in a graveyard?"

"In a graveyard?" she repeated, and her eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"Yes, in a graveyard. A strange place for a baby, is it not?"

"Well, I should say so. How did it get there?"

"Let me tell you the story. This baby was found in a graveyard without any clothes on—not any at all, you understand?"

"The poor little dear!" she said softly.

"It had been crawling among the tombstones for several days when it was discovered."

"But how did it get there?"

"Ah, that is the question! We know that it was placed there at night by a man. We think that the man was the child's father."

"Impossible! No man could be such a monster. Somebody stole that baby, I'll bet, and then didn't know what to do with it."

"No. In that case he would have left it where it would be found. This man wished the child to die. That is why I say it was the father who wished to get rid of the child."

"But why should a father wish to kill his own child?"

"Perhaps because he had not married the mother."

She shuddered and remained silent. The words evidently aroused unpleasant thoughts, yet her manner throughout had been such that Mr. Mitchel was assured in his own mind that at least she had no guilty knowledge of the

"I told you in the car the story of an infant that was found in the graveyard. Do you remember?"

"Yes," said she, wonderingly, her eyes intent upon the bundle in Mr. Mitchel's arms. He drew down the shawl, exposing the face to view, and said:

(To be continued.)