

A GREAT SECRET.

OR,
SHALL IT BE DONE.

Gerald dashed through the plantation, broke the frail paling into the garden at the first point he came to, and made straight across the lawn for the *salon*-windows, where a light shone through the blinds. Before he could reach them, however, Delphine, planting one heavy foot in the middle of the principal rose-bed, stopped him, and pointed to the house.

"The tall lady, Madame—Madame de Lanery, has been here waiting two hours for M. Beresford, who will not see her. He is in the inner *salon* and he has locked the door, and madame waits and waits and—"

Gerald shook her off.

"In the inner *salon*! Nonsense, Delphine, I see Mr. Beresford there between the trees, walking toward the peach-wall," said he.

Even in the growing darkness under the tall trees of the garden, it was impossible to mistake the slow gait and stooping figure.

"By Jove! He's going out at the side-gate. He mustn't go into the plantation at this time of night—alone, after what Babette said."

Gerald hesitated for a moment, to see whether Mr. Beresford would come back. But the shadowy figure had passed out of sight behind the trees and did not re-appear. A conviction that there was some meaning in this solitary night-ramble grew strong upon him as he watched, and, after a few seconds' deliberation, Gerald dashed through the *salle-a-manger* by which Delphine had come out, through the kitchen and into the out-house where the guns were kept. He took his own, saw that it was loaded, and slipped out into the yard with it; he reached the grass-avenue which led to the hills, and, running a few steps down it to see whether Mr. Beresford had taken this path, saw a figure at some distance in front of him.

"It can't be Mr. Beresford. With his lame leg, he could never have hobbled half so far," thought he.

But the very next moment he trod upon something which proved to be the heavy crutch-stick by which the paralytic helped himself along, and with a hot, excited feeling that he was on the point of making some strange discovery, Gerald gave chase to the figure in front of him; he could only see it now and then, faint and shadowy in the distance; his gun impeded him and he would in his eagerness have cast it aside if it had not been for the impressiveness of Babette's warning. The animal, whatever it was, that she had pointed out to him as she uttered her last whisper, had escaped too in the direction of the higher sand-hills, to which he and the man he was pursuing were making their way.

The end of the grass-path was reached at last, the sandy road which crossed it at right angles passed, and even in the gray night before the moon had risen high, Gerald could see far before him on the open treeless hills. Was that, could that be Mr. Beresford, that man who, with his long gray hair flying, was scudding over the sandy heath as fast as Gerald himself? What motive, strong enough to make him forget his infirmity as though he had been a young, strong man, could bring him out here on these lonely hills in the chilling night-air, unless, indeed, he had as great reason to fear the police as the murderer De Breteuil himself?

Gerald could not think clearly as he hurried along, now stumbling among the weedy growths of reed and furze, now stopping for an instant as the horrible sound of a long, hungry howl broke upon his ears and made him look to left and right with a fear he could not control. Then he heard it, to the right and far ahead, the first time; nearer and straight ahead the second. He had lost ground each time that he stopped; the space between him and the man he was following had perceptibly increased by the time that a ruined cabin standing on higher ground than the uneven sandy heath they were now crossing, came in sight. The sand-dunes were to the right, the sea was to the left; the tide was rolling in quickly over the flat, dark stretch of sand, and making a little splash as each long wave broke against the reedy, sapphire-grown banks above.

Just as the man in front, who was making straight for the half-roofed hovel, got within a hundred yards of it, the echoes brought down from the hill nearest to him a panting, galloping sound which made him redouble his speed, while Gerald, who heard it also, shouted with all the force of his lungs:

"Look out!"

The warning was useless. The next moment there half fell, half sprang down the hill a shaggy beast with hanging tongue and foaming jaws, who leapt upon the gray-haired man and felled him to the ground with a growl that froze Gerald's blood. For he had heard it before; heard it six weeks ago as Mr. Shaw was dragged down from his side on the Saint Pierre road.

The young man whistled and shouted as, still holding his gun, and watching with wild eyes the struggle between man and beast as they rolled in clouds of sand, he redoubled his falling speed over the loose ground to the rescue.

As he came up, he was shocked to see that the man lay already quite still; the beast's fangs were plainly to be seen in the faint light of the rising moon, as he held his victim firmly by the throat, shaking him from time to time with a low growl, but never for one moment losing his grip.

Gerald stopped, raised his gun, took a steady aim, and shot the brute through the body. A tremor passed over it, and Gerald, not knowing whether his shot had taken effect, was about to fire again. Then the great carcass swayed and fell over on its side, dead, without having relaxed its grip.

Gerald knew that he had succeeded, knew that the beast was powerless now to do him or any other creature harm, but he did not dare to come nearer. It was the man he feared, the figure he had pursued, lying still and stiff on the hard ground, just where the moon's rays were beginning to cast a faint line of light.

He should see a dead face, he knew, for no faintest sound or movement came from the confused heap that a few minutes before was a man. But a dread too strong, too awful, to find expression even in thought, held him back, while white beads of sweat stood on his forehead, and words which were a prayer to the God we all call upon when reason fails us came to his lips.

"God help me!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

The moon, which was growing brighter

every moment, for the time gave no more light for Gerald; the sound of the sea seemed to swell into a dull roar, which filled his ears and deafened him. Blindly he staggered away from the horrible spot, leaving his gun beside the dead man. Straight back over the rough ground he ran, as soon as he recovered the power of his limbs, without one look behind. Peggy—he must get back to Peggy, or some clumsy revelation might kill her, delicate as she still was from her recent illness.

When he got near to "Les Bouleaux," he heard men's voices, and peeping through the trees, saw that the police were still about. Afraid of being detained if he showed himself, he crept round through the plantation and came forth into the road within a few yards of the entrance to the poplar avenue. Here he paused for a moment, and looked at the sandy road before him with a momentary fear that he should not be able to reach Calais in time to be first with the news. His strength seemed falling already; the terrible scene he had witnessed not half an hour ago suddenly faded from his mind, leaving him nothing but one dim idea—Peggy! He must get to Peggy. With a strong effort, not of will but of instinct, he started forward, stumbling at first, cold and wet from head to foot with the prolonged exertion. But as he ran he gradually recovered somewhat, until he fell into a mechanical, swinging, steady pace, that he kept up almost without a break for the whole three miles of the way to the fortifications. On the drawbridge he stopped short, leaning against the rail for a few minutes with hanging head and heavy breathing. Then on again through the stony streets of the old town.

Ten o'clock struck from the big clock on the town-hall tower as he crossed the market-place: only one more street now. He staggered along through the thinning crowd, who thought he was drunk, and made way for him and laughed at him. Thud—thud, over the drawbridge that crossed the shallow, evil-smelling moat, trickling along in the darkness far below; over the open, stone-paved space between the walls and the quay. It was over now; he had nothing to do but slip through the still open door of the hotel, to drag himself up the stairs, to stagger and almost to crawl along the corridor to Madame de Lanery's sitting room. He reached the door, his fingers were on the handle; they were too weak and wet to turn, when Smith's oily voice, in confident and even threatening tones, reached his ears.

"Well, I'm her husband, and that's flat; and if you can't make it convenient to help me away, I must wait till she comes in and see what she can do. Daresay she'll want to come back to me. 'On revient toujours a ses premieres amours.' I could do with a little conjugal petting just now."

"Vilain! Scelerat!" quavered the General's voice. But he added, after a pause, "What do you want?"

"Well, say fifty pounds. You can afford it, since you're so fond of her. And make haste: I must be off."

There was a pause, and Gerald heard the snap of an elastic band, the rustle of notes, and the chink of gold.

"I have not enough here. I must write you a cheque," said the General's voice.

"Then be quick, for God's sake. Here, no, this'll do. Cheques ain't much use to me."

More rustling, more chinking: then Smith's steps came hurriedly toward the door.

"Thank yer. Good-evening. My kind regards. Glad you're good to her. I wasn't."

He reached the door, and Gerald, with a last effort of remaining strength, fell upon him and seized him by the collar.

"General, stop him! He is a murderer, a thief!" He has been telling you lies—lies!"

To the utter astonishment of Smith, who shook off the exhausted lad without much difficulty, the old General seized him in a workmanlike grip, forced him back into the sitting-room, dragged Gerald gently in, shut the door and stood with his back to it.

"What is this, Gerald?" he asked sternly.

"De Breteuil is dead, killed by his own dog. This man was his accomplice, and must be handed over to the police."

"What, what, what!" babbled Smith, white and shaking. "I've told lies, have I? Wait till your precious wife comes back, and see what she says. She was at 'Les Bouleaux' when I got away. I don't suppose she'll be long in following me. There's some one driving up this minute!" he cried, as the sound of wheels was heard on the stones of the quay.

And he ran to the window. A little square carriage, something like a small private omnibus, had stopped at the hotel door, and Madame de Lanery got out of it followed by Miss M'Leod, and then both disappeared for the time from sight as they came in. Smith affected to grow exultingly triumphant, and the General looked at him with a troubled face. They had not long to wait before the door opened and Madame de Lanery came in alone, as dignified as usual, but very pale. She did not seem at all disconcerted by the sight of Smith, but walked straight up to Gerald, who had sunk down upon a chair, and, drawing off her gloves, placed her hand gently upon his forehead.

"Poor boy!" she said in an unusually soft voice, "you have had your revenge at last; and I have had part of mine."

She looked significantly at Smith, who hopped off the chair on which he had been defiantly sitting, and held up his finger at her with a comical mixture of anxiety and bravado.

"I suppose you know that a wife—"

"Can find out the weak places of a devoted husband's conduct, and make them speak for themselves to any judge and jury."

Smith began to look very uncomfortable. She continued:

"I have just come from 'Les Bouleaux,' where through one of the maid-servants—a girl called Delphine—a dead body has been found among the sand-hills and identified as that of Louis de Breteuil. He was killed by a wolf-hound which had been placed by him in care of Monnier the gamekeeper. The brute was doubly fierce to-day, having been kept without its food by a quarrel between Monnier and his daughter, who set it loose to day on hearing that the police were coming. She has confessed that she and her father knew something of the de-

predations of De Breteuil, but neither had any idea until to-night that he and Mr. Beresford were one and the same person."

Only the General looked surprised. Smith sat quite still, except for the twitching of his face.

"This was part—only part—of a very ingenious fraud, by which for the past six years or more Louis de Breteuil has lived a double life, and saved himself up by a quiet and economical existence for nearly two-thirds of each year, for the expenses and excesses of the remainder. Very ingenious, wasn't it?"

Nobody made any answer to this, except that Smith growled something between his teeth.

"But there was another arrangement equally ingenious, by which the Honorable Mr. Corrie, otherwise M. de Breteuil, otherwise Mr. Beresford, was able to fulfil this bold and useful design of being in two places at once. He had an accomplice—"

Smith sprang up. At once her composure gave way, and like a tigress she started forward, and leaning over the table with her right hand pointed straight at him and her eyes flashing, said in a low, imperious voice:

"Sit down!"

He hesitated and obeyed, hanging his head like a whipped cur, and only raising it from time to time to look at her out of the corners of his eyes in the manner of the same noble beast.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Beams to be Plucked Out.

Scene: a street-car in a large American city. Time: noon.

Two young women enter, each carrying a huge bundle of the coarsest kind of men's jackets. They are on their way with them to a slop-shop, where they will be paid a few cents for the making of each. The women are thin and haggard from loss of sleep and insufficient food, their fingers blue with cold, and their hungry, eager faces tell how hard has been the fight they have waged against starvation; but around their necks hang pinchbeck chains; rhine-stones dangle in their ears, and their gowns are sleek silks, bought second-hand from an old clothes' dealer.

Two shop-girls, out for their luncheon, scan the tawdry creatures with contempt.

"Did you ever see anything so absurd?" one of them says, when the women, dragging their heavy bundles, leave the car. "Silk dresses, when they earn fifty cents a day!"

A few minutes later the shop-girls are standing behind the counter, ready to wait on customers. They are dressed in showy gowns, made in the extreme of the fashion. One wears a brooch of diamonds—or paste; the fingers of the other sparkle with rings, real or imitation, sapphires, rubies and emeralds.

The daughters of one of the most influential men in the city are seated on the other side of the counter, turning over the goods. They glance at each other with a smile of amusement as they go out of the shop.

"Why does not some one tell those poor creatures how to dress appropriately?" the younger girl says. "Everybody knows that no woman who has to work for wages of six dollars a week can afford to wear silk and sapphires."

The gown of this critic of the shop-girls' attire is extremely plain and quiet. She has too much taste and knowledge of fitness to wear a showy dress on the street; but the tailor-made gown is costly, nevertheless. Its wearer has her own coupe and her French maid; her dresses are made in Paris; she paid for the bull pup which is waiting in the carriage a sum which would support for weeks in something like comfort any one of these working people around her.

Yet her father is not a millionaire, but a professional man, dependent on his yearly earnings. If he were to die to-morrow, his daughter would have no means to support one of the luxurious tastes which she indulges now without stint.

This is a true description of an actual scene which occurred during the past winter.

We hear from the pulpit and the press that there is a growing want of honesty, of purity and of truthfulness in our social and domestic life. Can our readers find in this incident any clue to the cause?

Handling Bees After Dark.

This is practised to quite an extent by persons who do not understand bees properly. This is the time when farmers and old-fashioned bee-keepers go to their hives to take honey. They think they are perfectly safe at night, as the bees cannot see to attack them. In the middle of the day, when the bees are flying thickly, they would almost think it suicide to approach the bees for the purpose of handling them. Now, in our experience it is just the reverse, and if ever bees sting with a vengeance it is after dark. A bee crawling upon your flesh in the dark will insert its sting almost without exception, and when disturbed in the dark will run all over the hive, crawl upon the ground and upon your person, so that it is very unpleasant to handle them. Smoke does not appear to have the same effect on them at night as it has in the daytime. In the heat of the day, when the air is full of them on the wing, is the best time to work with them. You will receive less stings, do your work much better, and do less damage to the bees.

"The Cups that Cheer," Etc.

An interesting token of the growth of the temperance sentiment in Great Britain is furnished by a correspondent of the *St. James' Gazette*. He shows that during the past forty-seven years the average annual consumption of tea per capita of the entire population has increased from less than a pound and a quarter to nearly five pounds, and of cocoa, from about an ounce and a quarter to nearly half a pound, while the use of coffee has fallen off slightly, from seventeen ounces to thirteen ounces. The total consumption of these three leading non-alcoholic drinks has thus increased nearly three-fold; the exact figures are from 38.08 ounces to 99.04 ounces per capita annually. This may not indicate a fully corresponding decrease in the consumption of strong drink; but it must mean a considerable decrease and it proves that the people are learning to appreciate the "cup that cheers but not inebriates."—*N. Y. Tribune*.

The Queen has invited the King and Queen of Italy to visit Windsor Castle in June and they have accepted the invitation.

WEDDING COMMENT.

What You Might Hear at a Fashionable Wedding in Church.

Here she comes!
Pretty, isn't she?
Who made her dress?
Is it surah silk or satin?
Is her veil real lace?
She's as white as the wall!
Wonder how much he's worth?
Did he give her those diamonds?
He's scared to death!
Isn't she a cool piece?
That train's a horrid shape!
Isn't her mother a dowdy?
Aren't the bridesmaids homely?
That's a handsome usher!
Hasn't she a cute little hand?
Wonder what number her gloves are?
They say her shoes are fives.
If his hair isn't parted in the middle!
Wonder what on earth she married him for?

For his money, of course!
Isn't he handsome?
He's as homely as a hedgehog?
No he's like a dancing master!
Good enough for her, anyway.
She always was a stuck up thing.
She'll be worse than ever now!
She jilted Sam Somebody, didn't she?
No, he never asked her.
He's left town, anyway.
There, the ceremony has begun.
Isn't he awkward?

White as his collar!
Why don't they hurry up?
Did she say she would "obey"?
What a precious fool!
There, they are married!
Doesn't she look happy!
Pity if she wouldn't!
(Wish I were in her place.)
What a handsome couple!
She was always a sweet little thing.
How gracefully she walks!
Dear me, what airs she puts on!
Wouldn't be in her place for a farm!
I'll bet these jewels were hired.

Well, she's off her father's hands at last!
Doesn't she cling tightly to him, though!
She has a mortgage on him now!
Hope they'll be happy.
They say she's a awful smart.
Too smart for him by a jugful.
There, they are getting in the carriage!
That magnificent dress will be squashed!
They say she worships him!

Worship! She's only making believe!
It's kind o' nice to get married, isn't it?
No, it's a dreadful bore.
Wasn't it a stupid wedding!

What dowdy dresses!
I'll never go to another!
I'm just suffocated!
Tired to death!
Glad it's over!
Oh, dear!

Great Danger in the Kiss.

The girls are making more trouble for the boys. The boys are pretty generally expecting something of the kind, and have been ever since that historical episode in the Garden of Eden, and yet it can not be fairly assumed that the girls intend to make trouble. Designing as they may be in some particulars, it would be unjust to say that they calmly seek to make life utterly undesirable to a large and unprotected part of the human race. But the new trouble is one which can not be lightly treated, since it is having disastrous effects in some places. It is one which is going to make the kissing of some young women deadly peril, and possibly in consequence destroy one of the sweetest luxuries of life.

Several instances have recently come to public attention in which the paint or cosmetics or powder, or all, which are used by some young women have proved to be poisons which have had not anywhere near such disastrous effects upon the girl who used them as upon the boy who has fed his love with her kisses. A case of this kind occurred not long since at Reading. The young man was very ill and the physician treated him for lead poisoning, with which he was pretty badly afflicted. An examination into the cause of it revealed the fact that his best girl had singularly rosy cheeks, which she made by the use of rouge, and the difficulty was at once explained. A similar case, although less severe in its results, has been brought out in St. Louis and the physicians are now quite free in tracing instances of lead poisoning in young men to the artificial color on the cheeks of young women.

Something of course, needs to be done in a serious matter like this. For years the young women have been warned against the use of preparations for the complexion, but the caution does not avail with them. Now however, when it is ascertained that the young woman who thus poisons herself is also likely to poison her very best young man, it is time to take action. If the boys can not kiss the girls without incurring more than the natural dangers attending such event, life will not be worth much to some of them. If to the old man's boot, and the big dog, and the small brother must be added the other peril of poison, kissing can hardly be considered what it was always cracked up to be. The ordinary dangers are expected and can be defied by any young man of courage, but he can be excused if he shrinks at poison.

And what are the girls going to do about it? Are they going to ruin a most delightful home industry by persisting in a policy of poison? If they don't change, the boys will have to surrender some of their happiness in the interest of health, and when the boys quit kissing the girls will be quite sure to quit painting. The reforms which years of professional warning have failed to accomplish may thus be brought about. Why shouldn't the boys try it? They don't have to do it in Canada where painting girls would be like painting the lilies, but there are plenty of places where it might be most salutary and seems necessary.

A Case of Absentmindedness.

Merchant (buying a bill of goods of Toronto drummer)—"What is your usual time, thirty days?"

Toronto Drummer (absentmindedly)—"Yes, or ten dollars. I always pay the fine—oh—er—I beg pardon; yes, thirty days or five per cent. off for cash."

Horses and carriages can be hired cheaper in Russia than in any other civilized country. The average cost per month of a private carriage or sleigh, with one horse and coachman, is about \$70, while a pair and carriage and sleigh both cost \$1.25.

WIT AND HUMOUR.

Egotism is only a weakness of the I's. A farmer always wants the earth. With-out it he could do nothing.

Dr. John Hall, of New York, is worth \$1,000,000, and preaches to a congregation worth \$100,000,000.

In the literary circles of Chicago the old quotation is made to read:—"The pigpen is mightier than the sword."

A Colorado man has sold out his silver mine and reinvested in two Niagara Falls hacks. He hopes now to make something.

The man who is looking for something to do rarely finds anything, but if he is willing to do anything he can always find some thing.

De man dat has de po'es side ob de abugment allus talks de loudes'; jiz' ez de mule kicks' de mos' desperate dat has de leas' cause.

The baseball fever has invaded Georgia in epidemic form, and the negro women and girls in parts of the State indulge in the game.

"I declare Mrs. Squidlig is as pretty as a picture," remarked Mr. McSwilligen. "No wonder," replied his wife, "she is handpainted."

Butcher: "I do not like to lose your customer. What can I do to make matters all right with you?" Customer: "Buy me a new set of teeth."

Mrs. Riley: "Are yez on calling turms wid our neighbor?" Mrs. Murphy: "Aye course I am. She called me a thafe, an' I called her another."

"I never could see that Ananias told such lies that he should be struck dead for them." "And who are you?" "I'm a real-estate agent." "Ah! That explains it."

A father has to have a good deal of experience before he finds out what a lot of things there are in this world that are directly designed to wake up a sleeping baby.

Old Taxpayer—"Well, my little man what do you expect to be when you grow up?" Little Boy—"A politician like papa." "A politician, eh?" "Yes, I hate work."

Young Man (in a loud tone of voice)—"Aw—waiter, have you quail on toast?" Waiter—"Yes, sir." Young Man (in a low tone of voice)—"Bring me some of the toast."

Countryman (to dentist):—"The tooth next to that 'un aches too, Doc." Dentist:—"Yes, it aches in sympathy." Countryman:—"Yank it out; durn sech sympathy!"

A Western baseball supply dealer places the usual array of bats and balls in his show window and then adds a large roll of court plaster, a huge bottle of arnica and a pair of crutches.

"Mrs. Smith has lost her husband." "I know it; and, only think of it, she has put on only half-mourning." "Very true; but then, you know, Mr. Smith was a very small man."

A Chicago paper claims that a woman can shop all the afternoon on 30 cents and her tour will include at least twenty stores. This statement is evidently merely a leap year dodge.

"Yes," he said, "I'm tired. I've spent the whole day practising on a type-writer machine, and it's hard work." "I thought you employed a type writer?" "Yes, but I married her."

A blind man died recently in Chichester workhouse, England, who had been an inmate of that institution for 70 years. He entered at the age of nine and passed his whole life there.

A man named Post and a woman named Stump were married some time ago by a preacher named Lockwood in a little town in Maryland. They have a boy now named James Lamp Post.

A—"How do you like your landlady?" B.—"She is a very clever woman, but she has entirely too much curiosity." "In what direction?" "She is always asking me when I am going to pay my board bill."

Dumley (proudly)—Yes, I participated in one great battle of the rebellion, and, if I do say it myself, I was one of the men who led the way. Featherly (admiringly)—What battle was it? Dumley.—(Bull Run!

Upon Downes (seated by a stranger in a car) What time is it by your watch, if you please? Stranger—I don't know. Upon Downes—But you just looked at it. Stranger—Yes; but I only wanted to see if it was there.

The Wichita man who had been sued by his washwoman for fifty cents, and the Wellington man who gave a cigar to a news-boy who found and returned to him a pocket-book containing \$15,000, have agreed to flip coppers for the belt.

Newly-arrived Irishman—"But what good do I git out av it if I join the Milaysian Mutual Biniit and Protective Association?" Acclaimed Milesian—"We bury a member ivery Sunday, an' it's a beautiful drive to the cemetery."

Guest (to Florida landlord, who has presented bill)—"Does this include the good will and fixtures?" Florida landlord—"Good will and fixtures?" Guest—"Yes; I don't want the hotel unless the good will and fixtures go with it."

Brown—"How is business with you, Dumley?" Dumley—"Slow, very slow; nothing doing at all." Brown—"How about that little bill I sent you three months ago?" Dumley—"Well, to tell you the truth, I haven't had time to look it over."

It has been computed that the strike on the Burlington, Quincy and Chicago railroad has cost the strikers \$601,000 and the road \$2,100,000. This is a total of \$2,701,000. But there is another party to the contest. The general public served by the road and its connections have also been sufferers. Who can compute how much the public have lost? And who has been the gainer by the conflict? A few hundred or thousand workmen who have taken the strikers' places, and the stockholders of the lines which are rivals of the "Q." have made something out of it. All others who have been affected in any way have lost. This state of things is not particularly consolatory to either of the two parties directly involved.

Cord and braid garnitures will be used in profusion upon the spring and summer toilets. The designs are mostly flat, and may be procured either with or without drops and fringes.

A cynic says: "If the ancients believed the earth was square they never could have got the idea from the dealings of its inhabitants with each other."