

# ABYSMAL DEPTHS

OR BLINDFOLD ON THE BRINK  
OF PRECIPICES

## CHAPTER XV.

Between six and seven o'clock on the next evening, an elderly man, dressed like a gentleman farmer, hastily entered the shop of a picture dealer, situated in the West End, and asked, in a nervous, impatient manner, to inspect some very pretty water-color drawings, that were in the window. The shopman produced them. Instead, however, of examining the picture itself, the gentleman seemed chiefly interested in the back of it. It was growing dusk, but the gas was not yet lighted; so, putting on a pair of spectacles that he took from his waistcoat pocket, he carried the picture to the door, and carefully examined the blank surface at the back. In one corner was faintly inscribed in pencil the word "Clara."

With an exclamation of pleasure, and a brightened face, he went back to the counter, and asked the shopman for the address of the painter. The young man hesitated. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but it is not usual to give the addresses of the ladies and gentlemen who work for us without their permission."

These same water-color drawings were in some request at the time, from the poetical and dreamy beauty of the subjects, and an original and almost Turneresque style of treatment; and the shopman probably suspected that the snares of some opposition trader, anxious to secure the services of the artist for himself, lay hidden under the simple request.

"Let me see your master," said the man's hesitation, sharply, observing the gentleman.

In a few minutes the principal himself came forward.

"I wish to purchase all the drawings you have by this artist, and at the same time to be favored with her address."

Addressing the same motives as the man, the master was about to decline not only to give the address, but to sell more than one of the drawings, when the would-be customer stopped him.

"I am not asking this for the gratification of idle curiosity," he said, a little less excitedly. "The lady I believe to be a very near and dear member of my family, whom I have lost sight of for several years—whom I believed to be dead. A little time back I came up to London to endeavor to follow up a slight clue that I had obtained in a very singular manner. Five days ago I was looking in at the window of a picture dealer's in the Strand, when I saw exposed for sale a water-color painting, representing my own cottage town in Suffolk. I have just such a picture at home, and there was a peculiarity of touch about this one that led me to believe, wild as the thought seemed then, that it went to the work of one hand. I went into the shop and purchased the picture. I was not deceived. Inscribed in a corner at the back was the word 'Clara.' But the salesman could give me no information about the artist; they had bought it about two years ago, with several others, of a young girl whom they had never seen since. My nephew dined with me that day, and I told him of the circumstance. He at once requested the affair to be left in his hands, as, with his superior knowledge of London, he would be far more likely to trace her than I should. He came to my hotel last night to tell me that he had

inquired, and caused others to inquire of every likely picture dealer in London whether they had in their possession any drawings or paintings inscribed with such a signature; but he had not met with the slightest success. As this was my last day in London, I thought I would take a look round the picture shops myself. I have been about all day, when I caught sight of these. I thought they looked like her work, and, sure enough, here is her signature in the corner. Yet stay a moment; to make assurance doubly sure, I will show you her likeness, painted some six years ago. You will then be able to tell me whether it is the same."

He produced the identical miniature that Silas had found in Little Bethlehem, and which, it will be remembered, he had left in a pocket of the clothes deposited with Jonathan Rodwell.

The shopkeeper hesitated no longer, but at once handed over to him the required address. The gentleman purchased the pictures at a very handsome price, got into a cab that the shop boy had fetched for him, and drove away in the direction of the northwest.

He arrived at Mrs. Wilson's about eight o'clock, and knocked at the door. To his inquiries the servant replied, "Miss Clara has gone with missis to the play house; and I do not expect she will be home until late."

"Does she frequent places of amusement much? Is she often out of an evening?"

"Oh, dear, no; this is the first time I have ever known her to go; she is never out very late."

"How unfortunate! But I must see her to-night, at whatever hour she may return. I will come back at twelve."

Mary looked very much astonished at the idea of such a late visit. Mr. Jonathan Rodwell—of course the reader has long since recognized him—ordered the cabman to drive to the nearest hotel, where he engaged a bed, and waited impatiently the passing away of time.

At twelve o'clock he knocked again at Mrs. Wilson's door. They had not returned. "Would Mary permit me to come in and wait?" Mary did not like the idea of admitting a stranger at such an hour, and she

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alone in the house. "But he looks a gentleman," she thought, "and he is old enough to be my father."

"Don't be afraid; I am not a burglar, my dear," said Mr. Jonathan, smiling, and slipping a five-shilling piece into her hand.

That was a guarantee of morality and good character not to be doubted. He walked into the parlor, and Mary lit the lamp. There were several unfinished paintings upon the table, some Berlin-wool work, several books and knick-knacks belonging to Clara. Examining these with loving attention, he passed away the time, still, however, listening eagerly for the sound of her return. One o'clock by his watch, and still

they had not come. He was growing uneasy; he could not stand still; he walked up and down the room, with his watch in his hand, counting the minutes. The rumble of wheels at last. He ran out to the door; the night was dark; he could not perceive any object; but faster and faster, nearer and nearer, came the roll of the wheels, until they stopped before the house.

## CHAPTER XVI.

I will now resume my personal narrative.

The reader will probably remember that Monday night had been fixed between Clara, myself, and Mrs. Wilson for our visit to the theatre. Having had to wait a very unreasonable time for the old lady to complete her toilet, we did not arrive at Drury Lane until nearly half-past seven. A magnificently mounted spectacular drama was at the time in the height of its popularity; the consequence was, that when we presented ourselves at the pit play place, we were informed that every seat was full. At the upper boxes we were received with the same intimation. Clara would have tried every part of the house, up to the stalls, but Mrs. Wilson would not hear of it; indeed, she considered she had strained a point in consenting to our application at the upper boxes. "My poor dear husband that's dead and gone, my dear, always sat in the pit, and never would sit anywhere else," she said oracularly; "but in those days there were no stalls, and only the aristocracy sat in the boxes. But if we can't get in there, there are plenty of other close by."

On the opposite side of the road was a row of bill boards of various theatres. We crossed over to read them. "Here is the play, my dear," the lady Mrs. Wilson, suddenly; "the 'Cried of Lyons.' I saw it the very first night it was performed, and a lovely play it is, too. You will be delighted with it. Let me see which house it is at. The Corinthian. Oh, that is close by. We can get there in a few minutes."

So to the Corinthian we went. The first piece was a short farce, and the house did not begin to fill until that was over; and then the theatre presented a lively appearance.

We took our seats in the pit, just as the curtain rose upon the "Lady of Lyons." I soon forgot myself in the absorbing interest of the play. The principal parts were in the hands of two admirable actresses; and as the situations gradually rose, until they attained the grand climax that terminates the fourth act, in which, to the inspiring sounds of the "Marseillaise," Claude tears himself from the arms of Pauline to join the army of the republic, the enthusiasm of the audience burst all bounds. The house rang with cheers, and bravos, and frantic applause. In the midst of the tumult I heard a faint cry close to my ear. I turned sharply round; Clara had fainted from over excitement.

When the applause had subsided, the event caused some little commotion in our immediate neighborhood, and the murmur of "A young girl has fainted!" was quickly communicated to the boxes, and the opera glasses were leveled at us. Luckily, Mrs. Wilson was provided with a smelling bottle. This partially revived her—at least sufficiently to admit of her being led out of the pit into the air.

As I was leaving my seat, with Clara leading upon my arm, I noticed a stage-box in the upper tier. There, attentively observing us through a lorgnette, was Mr. Rodwell. As quickly as possible I turned away, filled with that vague, boding fear which always oppressed me at the sight of that man.

Both Mrs. Wilson and myself were for returning home immediately, but Clara would not hear of it.

"Oh, no, no!" she cried; "I would not miss seeing the end for any consideration. I am very well now, and I will keep myself so calm during the rest of the performance."

Presently, a man came and seated himself in the rear of us. I thought I recognized him as an employe behind the scenes, and I kept my back toward him, lest he should recognize me. As the play drew toward a close, I felt a hand laid upon my shoulder, and on turning round, saw that this man had risen from his seat, and was making signs to me. Clara and Mrs. Wilson were breathlessly intent upon the scene, which was the last. I glanced at them, rose quietly, and moved away without their being conscious of my movement.

"You are wanted behind," said the man, in a whisper. "Mr. Montgomery wants you directly. If the ladies miss you, I will look to them till you come back."

"Do not tell where I have gone," I said.

He nodded his head. I passed through the pit entrance, and went round to the stage door. Mr. Montgomery had been playing an officer in the previous scene, and was still in his stage dress.

"Oh! one of the parts you copied in the new drama has been lost, and you will have to do another," he said. "Wait a moment, and I will bring you the MS."

He left me. Several minutes elapsed, and he did not return. I was becoming uneasy at my absence from my companions. Then I heard the curtain fall. I was just going to leave, when Mr. Montgomery came up to me again, dressed for the street.

"I can't find it now, Silas; I will bring it home with me, and you can do it to-morrow."

Vexed and annoyed at this trifling, I ran to the front of the house. I had not stood there many seconds before I saw Mrs. Wilson forcing herself through the crowd, and looking wildly about her. She had caught a sight of and recognized me in an instant.

"Where is Clara?" she cried, gasping for breath.

"Why, I left her with you!" "I have lost her in the crowd. Some men rushed between us and separated her from me; and from that moment I have lost sight of her. Look about you. She must be in the street."

Up and down, in and out, the crowd, here, there, and everywhere, I eagerly sought for her, but she was nowhere to be seen. Mrs. Wilson, standing in a doorway, trembling and wringing her hands, soon collected a small crowd around her.

"Had they seen a young lady, in a black dress, with long, golden hair?" she never ceased asking.

"Yes, I have seen a young person answering the description. She had been one among the first of the crowd to come down the passage. She looked as if she had lost some one. When she got into the street, a young man touched her upon the arm and said something which he, the policeman, had not heard; but whatever it was, she walked away with him. Then he lost sight of her."

This increased our alarm a hundredfold. Perhaps it was not Clara? But the hopeful doubt was soon removed by the man's minute description.

"I could not help taking notice of her," he said, "for I thought she was the prettiest girl I ever saw. But, depend upon it, you'll find it all right; she's gone for a stroll with some young man."

But upon this suggestion being indignantly rebuffed by myself and Mrs. Wilson, he said: "Well, if you think it's a case of abduction, you'd better come along with me to Bow street."

"What was the man like?" I asked.

"Oh, he was a youngish, smooth-faced fellow, with a cap on," was the reply.

The very man who had beckoned me out of the pit. It was a plot, then; but by whom originated, and for what purpose?

"Take a cab; go to Bow street at once, and I will follow you in a few minutes."

Back I rushed to the stage door. Had Mr. Montgomery left the theatre? He had followed out at my heels, was the answer.

Suddenly I bethought me of the public house. Away I ran thither. No; they had not been there that evening. Then I went down to Bow street, where I found Mrs. Wilson, more dead than alive, giving her deposition.

"Are you quite certain that the young lady has not gone off of her own free will?—some sweetheating case, perhaps—only for a little while—met some one she knew, and finding that she had missed you, she has taken her home?" suggested the functionary who was taking down the depositions.

"Pray disabuse your mind of such an idea; the young lady in question has no friends in London, except those you see here—knows no others—associates with no others."

The solemn earnestness of my tones seemed to convince him of his error, for from that time he gave us a more serious attention.

"Let me see; the young lady's name is Clara—what?" he said, looking over the evidence.

"It is the only name I have ever known her by," answered Mrs. Wilson, awkwardly.

"And you say she has lived with you upward of two years? That is strange! You had better tell me all you know concerning her. Circumstances that may appear insignificant to you may be the very things we want to put us on the track."

Mrs. Wilson told him all she knew, which, as the reader knows, was very little.

Mrs. Wilson expressed her intention of issuing bills early the next morning, offering a reward for her discovery. There was nothing more to be done in that place, for the cab was waiting, and I persuaded her to return home immediately. She implored me to accompany her. No; I would search the neighborhood; I might chance to get some tidings.

Finding that all her entreaties were utterly in vain, the old lady very reluctantly departed alone.

Mr. Jonathan was standing on the doorstep when the cab drove up. Before the cabman could descend from the box he had the door open. "Where is she—where is Clara?" he asked, seeing but one person within.

Too utterly terrified and bewildered to think of the oddity of such a question from a stranger whom she had never seen before, Mrs. Wilson could only gasp, "She is gone—run away with."

Ten minutes afterwards Mr. Jonathan jumped into the cab that had brought her home, and which he thought proper to stay. "To the Bow Street Police Station as fast as you can drive, and you shall have a sovereign," he cried.

All that night I wandered about in a frenzied state up and down the streets, down by the river, and not where. It came on to rain, and I was soaked to the skin. Still,

## LUNG WEAKNESS.

IS DUE TO POOR AND WATERY BLOOD

That is Why Some People, and Why Get Rid of a Cough, and What It Develops Into Consumption.

The lungs are just like any other portion of the body—they need a constant supply of pure, rich blood to keep them sound and strong. If the lungs are not strong they are unable to resist disease, and that is the reason why an apparently simple cold clings until the patient grows weaker and weaker and finally fills a consumptive's grave. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills never fail to strengthen the lungs, because they make the new, rich, red blood which alone can do this work. The most emphatic proof that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills build the lungs and cure consumption in its earlier stages, is given in the case of Miss Blanche Durand, of St. Edmond, Que. Miss Durand says:—"In the month of September, 1901, I was visiting at the home of an uncle at L'Assomption. One day we were out boating, I got my feet wet and caught cold. The cold seemed to cling to me, and when I returned home about the end of September, I was quite ill. I was quite feverish, had no appetite, and the cough seemed to exhaust me. I began doctoring, but did not get any better, and in January, 1902, the doctor told me that my lungs were affected, and that I was in consumption. At this time a friend who had come to see me advised me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I sent for six boxes. The pills soon began to help me, as little by little the cough grew less severe, my appetite became better, my strength returned, and I began to have a healthy color. I used eight boxes of the pills, and was then fully recovered. I am sure that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills saved my life, and I shall always speak gratefully of them."

Such cases as these tell better than mere words the power of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. They cure all constitutional weakness because they go right to the root of the trouble and build up the blood. That is why they never fail to cure rheumatism, lumbago, kidney and liver troubles, headaches, backaches, indigestion, biliousness and all other blood diseases. Sold by all dealers or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont. Substitutes are sometimes offered, but you can always protect yourself by seeing that the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People" is printed on the wrapper around every box.

hour after hour, I lingered about the same spot; the dawn broke and merged into broad daylight, and the bustle of the day began, yet still I could not tear myself away; the passers-by shrunk from me as they must have thought me an escaped lunatic. At last I felt that nature could hold out no longer; that I must fall down upon the pavement if I walked about any longer. Then, and then only, did I crawl to the top of a Camden Town omnibus.

I can remember dragging myself down in my wet clothes upon the bed, and then—all is a blank.

(To Be Continued.)

## FINES FOR MURDER.

Fines have been often imposed for very serious offences, but it would not be easy to find a modern parallel for a recent case in the State of Maryland, where a man convicted of murder was fined \$5,000, the money to be paid to the widow and children of the murdered man. Some such law obtained in England until the early part of the nineteenth century, enabling the relatives of the murdered man to sue the murderer. It is said that in Tunis the family of a murdered man may claim damages in lieu of execution, and there is something in Mohammedan law corresponding with this extraordinary state of things.

## A MOTHER'S CARE.

Every mother knows the constant care a little child requires, and to the young and inexperienced mother who is caring for her first baby there is no other period in her life more trying. In the little ills that are certain to come to all infants and young children, the mother—especially the young and inexperienced mother—scarcely knows what to do. It is to meet emergencies of this kind that Baby's Own Tablets are offered to all mothers. These Tablets are an absolute cure for all the minor ailments of little ones, and should constantly be kept in every home where there are young children. Sickness comes quickly—with Baby's Own Tablets at hand the emergency is promptly met. Mrs. R. H. LaRue, Mountain, Ont., says—"I can recommend Baby's Own Tablets to all mothers who have cross or delicate children. I do not know how I could get along without them." The Tablets are guaranteed free from opiates or harmful drugs, and crushed to a powder may be administered with absolute safety to a new born babe. Sold by all druggists or sent by mail at 25 cents a box by writing to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

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Hence the Backaches, Rheumatic Pains and Lumbago—Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills Prompt to Relieve and of Lasting Benefit.

It is not only the lungs that suffer during the cold, damp seasons. The kidneys are almost equally susceptible to sudden changes of temperature, and many a serious case of kidney disease has its beginning with a cold, which settles on the kidneys. Persons working out of doors are most likely to be victims of such troubles and suffer from backaches, lumbago, rheumatism and crippled, aching limbs, but anyone is liable to sit in a draught or expose his back to a current of cold air.

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Because of their direct and combined action on these organs, Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are of most prompt and most lasting benefit for such derangements. They are positive in their effects and are back-

ed by the experience and integrity of Dr. A. W. Chase, the famous Receipt Book author.

Mr. Wm. Boyne, of 19 McGee St., Toronto, says: "I was afflicted severely with kidney disease, stone in the bladder, incontinence, deposits in the urine, severe pains in the back, and strains over the loins. I was so bad that I had to get up two or three times in the night and could then only make water with great pain."

"Though long a sufferer and unable to work, I was confined to my bed for three weeks, and during that time thought I could not possibly endure greater misery. It was then that I began to use Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills. It is with gratitude that I say that they have freed me of all these symptoms, and made me a well man."

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