

Greed For Gold

Or, The Sign of the Arrow

CHAPTER XLIV.

"Good-evening, Mr. Grayne. Come in; sit down."

"You asked me to call?"

"Yes. Said I had some information to give you about the Frenchman, didn't I? Help yourself to a brandy-and-soda. Burton, just push along the syphon, will you? Cigar? No? Prefer cigarette? Frankly, I do I; but they are a poison, a deadly poison. My friend here has painted me such a lurid picture of a future o'er-riden by the cigarette fiend, that I have fallen back on to a common clay."

Deane had been filling his pipe during his speech, and was now lighting it.

"Talking of poisons," he resumed, "you arrived in the middle of rather a heated discussion on the subject. My friend here has views of the deadliness of them, gathered from the pharmacopoeia; but my information is based on experience gained abroad, where I have seen a man suck a certain poison and drop rigid the next minute, beyond the reach of human aid."

The visitor shifted somewhat uneasily in his chair as if curious to know how this could concern him.

"I told my friend you yourself were wearing one of the old poison rings found more often in romance than on the human finger, and he rather doubted it. You don't think me rude, do you? Pass it to me; let me look at it for a minute, will you? Oh, do not for a moment think I would unscrew it, or meddle with it in any way, pray."

Grayne hesitated a moment before drawing the ring from his finger, and then passed it over to Deane. Deane's manner changed at once. He slipped the ring on his own finger, and instantly left the subject.

"Burton," he said, "I want no disturbers in my little conversation with Mr. Grayne. Just turn the key in the door, will you? Thanks. Now, Mr. Grayne, I told you that I had some information to give you about the Frenchman."

"Yes."

"He is as innocent of the crime he is charged with as I am."

Ashley started.

"Further, without the shadow of a doubt—the evidence I have is so clear, I know the guilty man."

The color of Ashley's face seemed to grow a shade paler, but he merely said:

"Oh!"

"For reasons I need not enter into, I am going to let him loose—give him the whole night's start. If the police get on his track in the morning it will, in a measure, be his own fault."

Ashley said nothing; he had his eyes fixed on the detective's face, and they remained so fixed during the interview.

"I will tell you the story of how I found out who was the real murderer, show you the evidence I have against him, shall I?"

"Yes."

"When I went into the study where Sir George was murdered, I took from the papers on the table the address of his lawyers in Gray's Inn Square. From the floor I took some dust—red ballast. There are no brick-fields near here, and it occurred to me that the ballast must come from the adjacent railway-line. On an ordinary carpet this clue would not have been present; the softness of the one on the study floor allows the foot to sink in, and the dust under the arch between heel and sole comes off on to it. You will remember, Burton, that I walked across the grass to the railway-line?"

Burton nodded; he was too interested to speak.

"In the Frenchman's bedroom there were traces of the peaty soil of the wood on the woodwork of the window, where the arch of the boot had rested, but no red ballast. It became my duty to find the man who had been walking on the railway-line, and if I could find that that man had a motive or benefited by the death of Sir George, then I had a clue worth following up."

Ashley started.

"The next day I went to your late uncle's solicitors. They did not hesitate to tell me the terms of the will. The whole—every farthing—of your uncle's income was to be yours; after your death, Reginald's."

Burton remembered now the reference to Reginald's wealth. Miss Westcar had evidently possessed this information, gained, probably, by searching amongst the dead man's papers. If Ashley was executed, of course Reginald—

Deane was continuing.

"That looked like a motive. I thought I would see whether you were in any financial difficulty. I found that during the last year or two you had applied for loans to Sam Lewis, Isaac Gordon, Charing Cross Bank, Carlton Bank, and half a dozen other loan offices."

Ashley moistened his lips with his tongue, and there was a convulsive, nervous twitching of his hands; otherwise, he sat there calmly. He was so certain of his alibi—his com-

ing home the night of the murder by the last train. He simply said:

"Then my difficulty came in. I may tell you frankly that I suspected you; but you were seen to come down with your bicycle by the mid-night train. The station-master here saw you go up in the morning, had not seen you come back by any train, and was certain you had not travelled up by the 10.25 p. m., which you would have had to do if the murder was committed after half-past nine."

Ashley was breathing quickly, he gave no other sign.

"I fancied that when you reached London in the morning you arranged for some one to come on the station before midnight with your bicycle, that you leaped from the 10.25 upon its arrival at Waterloo, mingled with the crowd, and re-entered the train. That was so."

Never a movement on the part of the listeners.

"Your method of getting down I have no proof of. I imagine that you took train on another line, and then, on a machine you had left for the purpose, cycled across country from a distant station. 'No,' added Deane, seeming to read in the man's eyes an inquiry, 'I have no proof of that, but all the rest—yes. You picked the late-train night because you knew of the 10.25 up-train. You knew the guard of the midnight train down could prove your putting the machine in his brake—your alibi would be clear; at the same time, you dared not, after the murder, go from Grayne-wood station, or from the stations above and below where you were known. Moreover, there was not time. What did you do?"

Burton wondered. He had never heard Deane so explicit before.

"You stopped the up-train midway between Grayne-wood and the preceding station, jumped into an empty carriage from the line unperceived in the darkness, and unperceived, perhaps buried in a newspaper, passed Grayne-wood and reached London."

There was a look of fear in Ashley's eyes. He had that look which was often fixed on Deane—an inquiring look, as of one who would ask: "Are you man or devil?"

"The way you stopped that train was ingenious," went on Deane.

"But for the fact of the train being late and the entry in the signalman's book to that effect, the stoppage would not have occurred to me. That made me smell the rat, and I looked for its tail—looked for it by the signal at the end of the garden of the Hall. I found that ingenious arrangement of yours—an acetylene bicycle-lamp fastened in front of a board. I found pieces of rope cut where the wheels had gone over it. I saw that the lamp glass was covered with a pasted-on piece of red gelatine."

Ashley's nervous fingers found his pocket—his handkerchief. He wiped his forehead. He looked at the way of escape—the door, closed to him! He looked at the other way of escape he had always had in mind if things should come to this pass—It was on the finger of Deane's hand!

"I mounted the signal ladder and I saw where you had suspended the board in front of the company's lantern; you preferred your own. Their light change to green, yours was a permanent red; the board hid theirs and held yours. The train coming along, seeing your danger-signal, would slow down and pull up. Then you would let go the cord in your hand, and your whole bag of tricks would fall to the ground, the green light would be visible, and the train would go on—bearing you to London."

There was no hope left in the guilty man's eyes now, only a look of terror at what he considered Deane's supernatural powers.

"I can imagine your peering over the fence the next morning and seeing no trace of your lamp and board, and imagining some railway servant had picked it up, thinking it had dropped from a train. It almost escaped my sight. A passing train had caught the rope, dragged it a little way along, and the things had fallen into the ditch."

Ashley made as if he would struggle to his feet.

"A moment more," continued Deane, "on that table are the ropes, lamp, etc., also a plaster cast of a foot-mark which I found beneath the hedge at the bottom of Graye Hall garden. Also one of your own bicycle-shoes I took the liberty of abstracting from your bedroom, because it fitted the mould from the cast accurately. Catch him, Burton!"

But it was too late. Ashley had fallen forwards, and was huddled up on the floor senseless.

CHAPTER XLV.

"You see the advantage of a knowledge of character," said Deane, as he sat smoking and watching Burton bringing Ashley back to consciousness. "I imagined this would happen, seeing the man's nature. Your

quiet man is generally a sleeping volcano; disturb him, and—Vesuvius!"

"He is coming round now," replied the other, as he replaced a glass on the table and lifted the body back to the chair.

Presently Ashley opened his eyes, and said:

"What has happened?"

"Heat," replied Deane; "heat made you a trifle faint."

And then the memory of it all flooded the man's mind. He was silent for a few moments, and then quietly—the quietness born of despair—asked:

"What are you going to do with me?"

"If you do what I want you to, keep my word, and let you go."

"Go?"

"Yes. You will have time to catch the 10.25 up; we are not three minutes from the station. London, and a night's start—Well, you ought to be able to make a long chase of it, anyway."

"You think I shall do that?"

"Well, frankly, I do not."

"You will put this, these things—the evidence, in the hands of the police to-morrow morning?"

"To-morrow morning."

"That gives me the whole of to-night—to-night?"

"Yes."

"I shall not attempt to escape."

"I did not think you would."

"No? Surely most men would."

"Not of your temperament."

"I am free to go from this room—now?"

"On one condition."

"Name it."

"I have set out your method of execution of this crime on paper. I think my narration of it was fairly correct?"

"Could not have been more so had you followed me, step by step."

"I want you to sign that confession."

"Yes; that is only right, only just to the others. I suppose you will not believe that I have suffered the tortures of the damned whilst these two men have been in prison for my crime?"

"Oh yes, I will."

"All along I have been expecting the evidence against them to break down; if they had been liberated, well and good; their continued imprisonment made my existence one long torture. I have scarcely closed my eyes since—"

"And the bromide you have taken?"

interposed Deane, "has been useless, I can see."

"This confession is the third I have held in my hand."

"The third?"

"Yes. I have drawn out two—even went to the length of signing one of them, doing it up in an envelope, and directing it to you. Somehow, I hoped on. I—I could not bring myself to—You do not suppose that I shall face the hangman?"

"No."

"Go through the torture of remand after remand as those two men have done?" There came a stifled, thin wail from his lips, an intense gleam of agonised inquiry in his eyes, and a muttered, "Oh, God! why—why did I do it?"

It moved Deane more than anything which had happened. There was no cowardly, pitiful whine for mercy, the man just grasped his nettle and faced the music. He went on:

"Prison week after week till the facing of the judge and jury; the farce of a trial, with the knowledge of the verdict before it is given; the cooping up in the condemned cell; the waiting, waiting, waiting, with only the chaplain to talk to; to hear of the God I have offended, as I know, despite the teachings of the Church, offended beyond forgiveness. The waiting for that last morning, counting the hours and hearing the clank of hammers on nail-heads as the scaffold goes up; that ghastly procession with all its theatrical tawdriness from cell to gallows, the stagginess of the bell tolling, and the man waiting, cord in hand, to hoist the black flag! Come, Mr. Deane, there was a faint smile on his white face as he asked question, 'you say you have read my temperament, do you think I am the kind of actor to take a part—a leading part—in the drama I have pictured?'"

"No," replied Deane gruffly; "no."

"May I use this pen? Thanks."

He read the confession through, line by line. He seemed to marvel at the accuracy of it. As he signed it, he said:

"Your fame, Mr. Deane, is widespread—and deserved. Somehow, my heart misgave me when I heard you were on the scene. Yet I rejoiced; I felt so sure of my alibi, and I thought you would necessarily be able to prove the innocence of the two men in custody."

He picked up his bicycle-cap, and, putting it on, said:

"Most men, I suppose, don't like to bowled out, do they, Mr. Deane? And I suppose when I tell you that these are the happiest moments I have passed since the murder you will think I am lying?"

"No," replied Deane shortly, "I don't."

"I must take the step now. I have been prompted to take it a hundred times this week; I must take it to-night. For the first time," again that pathetic smile hovered round his lips,—"for the first time since the murder I shall sleep!"

Deane had averted his head; there was that about the man who was talking it was not good to look on. Burton was so full of sympathy that in his heart he was glad the man

was to be afforded a chance of escape.

"There is still time for you to catch the train and sleep in London to-night," said Deane, a little unsteadily.

"I shall sleep at the Hall to-night—sleep soundly for the last time."

He walked to the door as he spoke and turned the key. Then he looked round, and said:

"Make it easier for me, Mr. Deane?"

No answer. Ashley had his hand on the door handle. In the intense quietness of the room its faint rattle could be heard as his fingers gripped it. And again he said:

"Easier, Mr. Deane; make it easier?"

Deane started to his feet and strode swiftly across the room. He put a hand on Ashley's shoulder, and said:

"Man! man—"

But he got no further. They stood there, looking into each other's eyes—hunter and hunted. But there was perhaps a truer feeling of sympathy running there than often runs between close friends. Deane understood the man; Ashley knew it. He said:

"It is better so; believe me, it is better so. I have suffered enough. Let me pay the penalty my own way. It is certain it is to come; why not now as well as later? Help me. You can't stop me, you have given me my liberty. Give me back what is mine?"

Burton had never seen Deane so strangely moved before. He stood there silently watching the man pleading to him—pleading for his own. And as the pleader seemed to realise that his wish would be granted, there came over him a wave of thankfulness, and a smile—a smile of pathetic gratitude—lit up his face and made it the more difficult to look on unmoved. Huskily Deane said to him:

"Pray—pray to God to-night; before—"

And he was taking the ring off his finger and handing it back to its owner as he spoke.

"Pray—yes; for the first time for years. I will pray before—before I sleep; the last time was at my mother's knee as a child. Will God hear my prayer now?"

He slipped the ring on his finger, opened the door, and said:

"Good-night, gentlemen, and—many thanks."

A moment after the sound of his footsteps died away in the hall.

"He would have done it," muttered Deane, "some other way if I had not—There, it is better so." Then aloud he said: "Good-night, Burton I am going up to bed."

And he went—went without turning round to face his companion. Perhaps he was afraid to show the emotion displayed on that usually fixed, placid face of his. Burton was glad. He did not want his own tear-filled eyes to be seen. As the door closed on Deane he drew out his handkerchief. He found the blowing of his nose a relief.

(To be Continued.)

A CITY WITHOUT TAXES.

Expenses Are Paid by Income From Its Property.

In the Black Forest of Germany is the little city of Freudenstadt with about 7,000 inhabitants, a busy industrial place with iron and chemical works of some importance.

Small as it is, Freudenstadt is a full fledged city with a Mayor, Aldermen, half a dozen policemen, and a fire engine. The public business is conducted on an economical basis, and the total expenses do not exceed \$25,000 in a year.

Freudenstadt has the distinction of being the only city in Germany, and perhaps in the world, which does not tax the citizens a dollar for municipal expenses. The yearly net covers all the outgo.

This property consists of about 6,000 acres of fine forest, which, revenue from the public property being managed under the best forestry methods, is a permanent source of income. One or more trees are planted for every one that is cut down. No tree is cut till it can yield the maximum profit.

After deducting all the expenses of the industry the annual profit to the acre is about \$5. This is exceptional even for Germany, where the annual profit ranges from \$3 to \$3.50.

WHAT DO WE INHERIT?

It is often remarked that the children of a great genius seldom exhibit corresponding powers. Nevertheless, Prof. Karl Pearson, as the result of investigations made in England, avers that, as a general rule, ability, probity, geniality and other psychical characters are inherited from parents as truly as physical characters are. From this he draws the conclusion that although intelligence can be aided and trained by education, no schooling can create it. It is a product of breeding, and no nation which finds itself falling behind in the intellectual race can save itself merely through educational machinery; it must go back to the schools and look out for the quality of its human stock.

IN TRAINING.

Mr. Newly Riche—"We must learn how to behave, Maria, if we are going to enter society."

Mrs. Newly Riche—"We will, my dear. The new set of servants I have engaged have been in the best families."

COSTLY METAL PLATINUM.

Only a Little of It Has Yet Been Found.

Authorities disagree as to the correct time when platinum was first discovered. That it was known to the ancient nations there can be little doubt.

Some authorities declare that it figured in the early history of the world and was one of the component parts used in tempering copper, and that it contributed to the Damascus blade that has been the theme of speculation for centuries. The Spaniards knew of its great utility and gave its name "Platina" (little silver) on account of its resemblance to silver in appearance and color. For several hundred years the Spanish alchemists, knowing its strong affinity to alloy with gold, and fearing its peculiar fusion qualities, retarded its powers and veiled its value and production in accordance with the bigotry that ruled that nation during the centuries when its vessels plowed every sea and its discoverers left trails of disaster and ruin in the mad search for gold and conquest.

As time rocked the cradle of events the sunlight of truth dispelled the fogs of ignorance, and a new era began amid the ruins of the most lamentable failure in history for Spanish supremacy. To the most careful reading of history the authorities now generally agree that platinum, as it is now called, had a modern definite discovery as a useful metal.

ABOUT THE YEAR 1741.

Sir Charles Wood, assay master at Jamaica, in testing the ores obtained from the abandoned Spanish mines of Choco, Peru, noted this strange, peculiar metal. It was not fully described as a distinct metal until 1749, and since that time platinum has occupied a position as the noblest of the precious metals. It is an astonishing fact that, with all the material advancement that has been accomplished in the world, the supply of platinum has remained obscure and practically unknown to the general public.

Platinum is associated with and composed of iridium, rhodium, palladium, osmium, and ruthenium. These are called the family group of platinum. Iridium is a great medicine, and ranks with radium.

Wallaston separated the platinum family and opened up the keen discovery that unearthed the rare qualities of these rare and precious metals. Ninety-seven per cent. of all the platinum sands mined in the world come from the Ural Mountains of Russia. They are transported 42 miles by horse and cart to the railroad, thence 2,200 miles by steam cars to St. Petersburg, and there treated and smelted under the watchful eye of the Russian Government.

It is worthy of especial attention to note that less than five thousand pounds (troy weight) was mined in the entire world during the year 1902, and that a platinum famine exists. The demand is constantly increasing, but the supply is not increasing.

Platinum is only found in the native state, occurring in small glittering granules of a steel gray color which always contain an admixture in varying proportions of the family group. Platinum alloys easily with other metals, for it is the supreme king of all.

THE COUPLE IN THE MOON.

Only Head and Bust of the Two Figures are Shown.

People of artistic sense and refined taste are no longer disposed to tolerate any allusions to the rotund and jocular visage of the "man in the moon." The time has gone by for that childishness. The demand of to-day is for art, and if you are bound to find art in whatever you look at, it must sooner or later appear—even in such an effete object as the moon. Strange as it may seem to such as are not on familiar terms with the fulness thereof, there is now on exhibition—on evenings when the curtain of the sky is not drawn—a very idyl of art in the centre of the silvery orb, portraying with a delicacy like that of an engraving a refined human couple whose faces are near enough to be "significant of much."

There is an aesthetic discovery worth noting, for most of the moon's familiar have never seen aught more interesting there than a lady unattended. That is because they did not use their opera glasses. From the observer's standpoint the figure on the right, which is the more prominent of the two, is unmistakably feminine, with the face of three-quarters front and eyes looking down. The figure on the observer's left, which does not stand out so plainly—for reasons best known to the owner—is distinctly mannish, with face turned anxiously toward the interesting and perhaps blushing one. Both figures show the head and bust only, and the pose of each is distinctly. As to size, the feminine figure seems nearly two-thirds the diameter of the moon's disk, from the crown of the head to the waist.

Lady (travelling in Italy)—"The brigands have stolen my husband and my pug dog." Official—"We shall have to act very delicately in the matter, madam, or the brigands may put the captives to death." Lady Traveller (excitedly)—"Toll them ransom shall be paid. Fido shall not die."