

# Not Guilty;

## Or, A Great Mistake.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Continued.)

At the first cellar he lighted a match, but the unknown had already passed through the archway, as a rustling sound warned him. At the second cellar the same thing occurred again; and at the third. However, quietly Gordon moved, his matches took some time to light and to throw their light around, and although he several times almost caught sight of the figure he pursued, either his vesta went out in the swirl rush he made, or the efforts he used to keep it alight caused him to be too slow to gain on his active quarry.

"This won't do," thought the hero of Bothville, with a grim smile, "I must try something a little slimmer than this. That fellow simply watches for me to light up and then disappears."

He considered for a moment, and then took half a dozen matches from his pocket. He could hear a heavy breathing from the next cellar, and seemed almost to feel the tension of his hidden quarry's muscles, as he stood there in the darkness, blowing quickly, but probably on tip-toe to spring away at the first faint glimmer of Gordon's match.

George made his way into the furthest corner at the side of the archway, and placed the six matches in a chain on the ground, head and tail together. Then he took off his boots and buttoned up his coat. For one moment he listened again; but it was evident that his quarry had not moved, and was waiting exactly around the corner at the opposite side of the wall of the archway. "He won't be able to see me," thought Gordon, "but he'll see the flame."

He struck a light and put it to the head of the first match of the chain. There was no draught in the cellar, and it was morally certain that the chain would burn itself out, and give Gordon time to carry out his plan. Then, softly and silently he stole from the cellar, back the way he had come, creeping along by the wall out of sight of the unknown, and leaving the light burning calmly behind him.

"If I am not mistaken, he'll watch that light until I get round the other way," thought Gordon, rubbing his hands as he got safely through the next archway, "and then there'll be a tussle."

He was right. He crept softly on his way back around through the basement, until at last a glimmer of light in the distance warned him that he was getting "warm," as the children say.

Creeping gently on, holding his breath, and with a skill born of long practice, George passed through the last archway into the cellar where the unknown watched. Before him, in the light of his little chain of matches, which still burned brightly, he saw the archway around the corner of which he had taken off his boots, and near him, in the darkest shadow, yet still plainly visible now that he was between George and the light, crouched the mysterious inhabitant of the house.

George braced his muscles for the spring, yet even while he did so, he could not help casting a rather anxious glance at his future adversary's figure. Even in the darkness of the cellar he could see that the man was huge and burly, a fellow, probably of six feet one or two, and broad in proportion; and as he crouched there in silence, motionless, but so evidently ready for a surprise, George felt that the struggle would be no child's play, and that it was quite possible that in the end the fisherman might turn out to be the fished.

He stole forward another step or two and then, even while a sudden start on the watcher's part told him that he was heard, he sprang upon him and seized him by the throat.

Gordon was, as we have said, particularly strong, but he was nothing like the weight or size of the man he attacked, and for a moment he found himself being flung about the cellar as a bull dog in the old days might have been flung about gripping the nose of a particularly ferocious bull; but like the bull dog, he had no idea of letting go, and a very good idea of what to do when his chance came; and after a short time the aspect of the struggle commenced to alter.

Gordon's spring had been a fortunate one. He had taken his adversary by surprise; and in seizing him, he had succeeded in getting an excellent grip; one of his hands being inside the stranger's collar, and the other holding firmly to his tie. When the big man first began to discover that he could not throw Gordon away, he also commenced to find out that he was suffocating. He redoubled his efforts, swinging Gordon entirely off his legs, and battering the walls with his sprawling body, but even while he struggled, his breath came thicker and more heavily; he groaned deeply, and suddenly, his legs giving way under him, he slipped to the ground.

Gordon was upon him like a flash of lightning, getting an even better grip this time, and making a most successful use of his knees, and the big man collapsed completely.

"You are too good for me," he said, weakly. "I give up."

Gordon hesitated. He had won his victory, what was he to do with it. He found himself sitting in a dark cellar upon the chest of a man whom it had

taken all his time and some luck to get the better of, who had swung him about as if he had been an Indian club, and who would doubtless do so again, if he, Gordon, let go for the time necessary to find a match and strike it; for the little chain had long ago gone out, or been extinguished by Gordon's flying body.

He pondered, but even while he did so his adversary came to his assistance. "Do you mind getting off my chest," he said. "If you don't I think I shall be sick. I am not so young as I was, and this little rough and tumble has made me remember that fact; besides your knees are a trifle sharp."

The tone was that of a gentleman, and Gordon saw his chance.

"Certainly if you will give your word," he said quickly.

"I give it, with all the breath you have left me," returned his adversary with a sigh of relief; and Gordon, springing to his feet, lighted up the scene.

"There's a bit of candle over there on the barrel," continued the big man, sitting up cautiously. "I blew it out when I heard you walking about upstairs. What a fool I was not to look that cellar door. I thought I could hold it."

"So did I for a long time," returned Gordon, "but, thanks, I'll certainly try that candle; matches are unsatisfactory things at best."

He soon discovered the article he was in search of—it was stuck in an empty beer bottle among the debris of the food; and, lighting it, he turned back to the stranger.

For a moment the two men remained silent, peering at one another by the light of the candle, which was better, certainly, than Gordon's vestas; but which, nevertheless, did not make a very brilliant show in the gloom of the cellar.

Gordon looked at his late adversary with an eagerness and curiosity which that worthy returned with interest. He was, as George had seen, a very big man of exceedingly powerful physique; but he was probably getting on for forty-five or forty-six, and the curve where his waist should have been, while it told of good living and ease, also explained to Gordon the reason for his sudden collapse. He had a handsome, good-humored face, though now he gazed rather ruefully about him; and George suddenly, for some unexplained cause, felt himself taking quite a fancy to him.

He shook his head as George approached. "I don't understand it," he said. "I ought to have wiped the floor with you. Why, you can't weigh more than twelve stone, at most."

"You did wipe the floor with me," said George, laughing, "and some of the walls as well."

"Yes, but you nearly choked me; that infernal hold of yours; one of your beastly police tricks, I suppose."

"Police?"

"Well, detective, if you are so particular. You're a detective, I suppose, aren't you?"

Gordon started. This was the second occasion, within a very short while, on which he had been taken for a member of the police force, and the coincidence leading him back to the Regent Street flat and the beautiful girl he had first seen there, made him start suddenly, and for a moment gasp in amazement as he stared at the big man who sat up and watched him from the floor.

"I'm not a detective," he said at last, skilfully. "I'm nothing at all to do with the police."

"Not?" said the big man quickly. "Then what the devil were you knocking me about for? But you know me? You've seen me somewhere before? There's something up, you know, or you wouldn't be here."

"I haven't seen you before," said Gordon, at last, but, by heavens, I believe I've seen someone very like you. There's a turn of the eyelid. . . . Good lord. . . . Usher. . . . her. . . . of course!"

"Usher? her? What the devil do you mean?" The big man had struggled to his feet, and came to Gordon. "What do you mean?"

"I really don't know what I mean," said Gordon, "unless your name is Gaunt."

"It is Gaunt, but, of course, you know it is, or you wouldn't be here."

Gordon looked at him. "What an extraordinary thing," he said, slowly, "but I assure you I had no possible idea you were here, or, until just this second, that your name was Gaunt."

The big man frowned and looked angrily at him for a moment; then he shrugged his shoulders and set down calmly again on the ground. "Of course, this underground existence is bad for the wits," he said. "I am a little dense, doubtless, but you must forgive me; perhaps you wouldn't mind explaining."

Gordon took no notice of the sarcasm underlying his words. "First of all let me beg you to believe that my intentions are nothing but friendly towards you," he said.

Mr. Gaunt looked at him keenly for a moment, and then nodded. "I'll take your word," he said, resignedly. "I'm only too glad to. I've given you mine, in any case, and so you can do what you like with me."

"Then I will try to explain," continued Gordon, still feeling excessively

dezed by his strange discovery. "You have been staying at the Dorian Hotel?"

"Yes."

"With your daughter, Miss Vivienne Gaunt?"

Mr. Gaunt started to his feet.

"Yes, but good heavens, what of her? where is she? What has happened to her?"

"I must beg you to be calm," said Gordon quickly, frightened by the sudden change in his companion's face.

Mr. Gaunt, with an effort, clenched his hands; which, indeed, had extended themselves perilously near to Gordon's throat, but his eyes remained fierce and bloodshot, and the red flush which had risen to his brow at the mention of his daughter's name still remained.

"Be calm? Oh, I will be calm," he said, "but my daughter, for God's sake, tell me about my daughter!"

"Your daughter is safe."

"Where?"

Gordon hesitated. Where indeed was she? and what could he say to her father which could comfort him?

"Where is she? Where is Vivienne?" rejoined Gaunt.

"Till this morning she was in my house."

"In your house?"

"Yes, in my house; and perfectly safe, as she is now in all probability—but—"

"Yes, yes; go on!"

"But, to be frank with you, she left this morning, early; we knew nothing of it until it was too late; she had gone. But stay, I have her letter here in my pocket," continued Gordon, suddenly remembering. "Read it; it will tell you all that I know myself."

Gaunt read the letter which Gordon handed to him, and remained for a moment in thought. Then he turned to George.

"Still, of course, I don't understand," he said. "Will you kindly explain?"

"I must, I suppose," Gordon returned. "My story is a strange one, but you must believe it occurred exactly as I tell it. On Wednesday last, in the evening, I had been dining with a friend. After dinner I found myself in Regent Street on my way home."

"In Regent Street?"

"Yes. I stepped near a certain house to strike a match. As I was doing so, something fell on my shoulder from a window above. It was a silver pin; the kind of ornament a lady wears in her hair. I guessed the house from which the thing had fallen, and with the intention of returning it, I went into the house and upstairs. It happened that the door of one of the flats above—the one whence I imagined the pin to have come—was open; and half carelessly, hardly thinking what I did, I walked inside. I fancy—I may be wrong—that you know what must have met my sight as I passed down the passage of that flat."

Gaunt was staring at Gordon with a terrible excitement whitening his face. "Go on," he said, thickly.

"There was a dead body upon the floor in one of the rooms, the body of a murdered man. By it sat a young girl—"

"By it sat a young girl?" repeated Gaunt.

"Yes."

Doubt, amazement and horror expressed themselves vividly upon Mr. Gaunt's face, and he passed his hand across his forehead as if to wipe away the perspiration which gathered there. "Good God!" he said. "And no one else?"

"No one, but the dead man. Who should have been?"

Gaunt opened his clenched lips with an effort. "Go on," he said. "Finish your story."

And Gordon continued: "This young girl—Miss Gaunt, of course—was unnerved, prostrated, overwhelmed; she had evidently been expecting every moment to be discovered there; that every minute the police would come and discover the body. She mistook me for one of them when I came so strangely into the room where she sat. I was, myself, taken by surprise and startled; the thing was so strange, so extraordinary; but I succeeded in convincing Miss Gaunt that—that I meant her well. She was, however, as I said, terribly overwrought and—excited. In the end, in doubt as to what might be best to do, I persuaded, almost forced her to come home with me to my house, where I placed her in charge of my old nurse, the best creature in the world. I trusted that she would have recovered more or less from the fearful shock she must have experienced by the time that morning came, and that she could then decide what was best for her to do. Unfortunately, she was taken seriously ill and my doctor, whom I sent for, ordered her to keep to her bed—indeed, and it was necessary to find a trained nurse to watch her. She was getting better; she would have probably been perfectly well by now, but yesterday her fiancé called—"

"Her fiancé?"

"Her fiancé, Mr. Usher; he said he was her fiancé."

"Usher?" Yes, of course; he called, did he?"

Gordon's heart, which had leaped for a moment, sank again.

"Yes, he came to my house," he continued. "His visit did not have the best possible result, as Miss Gaunt was not so well afterwards, and this morning, early, ill as she still was, she left my house suddenly. You see her note."

Mr. Gaunt thought for a moment or two, while Gordon watched him keenly.

"I had no thought of this, no possible suspicion," murmured Gaunt, half to himself, at length. "What did it mean?"

Then he turned abruptly to Gordon. "Why did you take her to your house," he said. "Why didn't you call the police?"

"Gordon started. "Call the police?" Gaunt nodded. "It would have been the most natural thing to do, surely. You enter a house; you find a murdered man; there is a girl sitting by the body, a girl who expects that every moment the police will come and see her ever-wrought, distracted. She has done nothing; she has not moved, or screamed, or called for help—yet you take this girl to your home; you say nothing of

this murder! You look surprised; it is my daughter I speak of, yes, but I am putting the matter to you plainly; what were your reasons?"

"I did not think her guilty," said Gordon quickly, "I did not believe that she had anything to do with the crime. I could not believe her a murderess though—though she called herself one."

"Ah, she called herself one?"

"In that moment, yes. Shattered in nerves, hysterical, frightened, she uttered some wild words which I would not listen to. I did not believe them. I do not believe them. I determined to save her from herself, from a possible repetition of an hysterical outburst, and I will save her yet. I need not tell you how impossible I know the accusation to be. She could not have committed that crime—she did not, and—"

"She did," said Gaunt.

"Good God! What do you say?"

Gaunt bowed his head to his breast, and for a moment his voice trembled so that he could not utter the words he wished. "She did it," he said, at last. "My God, yes, she killed him!"

(To be continued.)

## About the Farm

### WEEDS ON THE FARM.

In popular language, any homely plant which is not noticeable for the beauty of its flowers, nor entitled to respect by a reputation for medicinal or other useful qualities is designated by the epithet weed. In an agricultural sense the term is used with a more restricted meaning and is applied to those intrusive and unwelcome plants that will persist in growing where they are not wanted—in short, the best definition that has yet been given of a weed is the old one, "a plant out of place."

Most of the weeds troublesome in our agriculture are immigrants either from the old world, or the warmer portions of this continent. The number of plants indigenous to our country that are entitled to rank as pernicious weeds is comparatively small.

As the aborigines disappeared with the advance of the whites, so do the native plants generally yield their possession as cultivation extends and the majority of the plants to be met with along the roadsides, and upon farms are naturalized strangers, which appear to be quite at home, and are kept under control with difficulty.

The labors of the agriculturist are a constant struggle; on the one hand by creating the most favorable conditions possible he endeavors to make certain plants grow and produce to their utmost capacity; while on the other hand he has to prevent the growth of certain other plants which are always ready to avail themselves of these favorable conditions.

The farmer is interested in two points concerning weeds: How they get into his lands and how to get them out. As cultivation is all the more profitably carried on if the farmer knows something of the nature and character of the plants he would raise, so, if he would successfully operate in the other direction and stop plants from growing, he can do so all the better if he knows what are the peculiar habits of the species with which he has to contend, and it is quite as important to be familiar with the manner of growth and the mode of propagation of a weed as it is to be with that of a useful plant. A plant which spreads itself entirely by the seed must, of course, be differently treated from one that multiplies by the root also; whether we would propagate or destroy.

Weeds are introduced upon a farm in a variety of ways. Many have their seeds sown with those of the crops; this is particularly the case where the seeds of the weeds and of the grain are so nearly alike in size that their separation is difficult. Proper care in procuring and preserving clean seed will often save much future trouble and vexation.

The observing farmer will notice the means which nature has provided for the scattering of seeds and he will find that the most pernicious weeds seem to have been especially furnished with contrivances to facilitate their dispersion. The burdock, hounds-tongue and others have barbs or hooks by which they adhere to clothing and the coats of animals, and are widely distributed by this agency. All of the thistles and many others of the same family have a tuft of fine, silky hair attached to the seed by which they are buoyed upon the air and wafted from place to place. So numerous are the ways by which seeds are dispersed that however careful a farmer may be upon his own premises, a slovenly and neglectful neighbor may cause him infinite annoyance by furnishing him with an abundant supply.

The vitality of seeds particularly if buried in the earth below the reach of influences which promote germination, in some cases endures through many years; hence, an old field after deep plowing has often a large crop of weeds from the seeds thus brought to the surface. Weeds which have been cut or pulled after they have flowered should not be thrown on the manure heap, for they will frequently ripen much of their seed, which will be distributed when manuring the land. In all weeding it is of the greatest importance that it should be done before the plants have formed seed. This should be regarded equally with animal and perennial weeds.

The prolific character of some weeds is astonishing; each head of an ox-eye daisy for instance, is not a simple flower, but a collection of a great many flowers, each one of which produces a seed; and as a single plant bears a great many heads, the number of seeds that a single individual is capable of supplying in a season is astonishing.

Annual weeds are much more readily kept in check than the perennials, which, especially those multiplying extensively by their underground root stocks, often become truly formidable. In their case not only has the propagation by seed to be prevented, but the underground shoots also, have to be kept down. It is very important that agriculturists should understand the way in which these plants grow that he may know how to direct his efforts to control them. A perennial weed like couch grass or the sow-thistle is during the early stage of its existence easily destroyed; but later in the season it makes strong underground stems and roots which have great tenacity of life and which have within them an accumulation of nourishment which enables them to throw up several successive crops of herbage; plowing such weeds generally aggravates the trouble, for, unless every fragment be removed from the ground, a thing very difficult to accomplish, each piece that is left makes a separate plant. In the case of weeds of this description, the necessity for early eradicating them is easily apparent, for if once well established, and an underground provision depot formed, the farmer and the plant are in the position of besieger and besieged forces—so long as the provisions hold out the latter can maintain its ground. It then becomes a question of endurance, for the underground supply must be eventually exhausted in the attempt to produce new stems and leaves, and if the farmer, by persistently cutting these away, prevents any new accession to the stock of provisions, the enemy must at length succumb. Repeated cuttings at short intervals, will at length, exhaust the vitality of any plant and cause its death.

The farmer will do well to keep in mind two rules. Do not let weeds blossom, and do not let them breathe. The leaves may be considered the lungs of the plant and without the aid of these it cannot long maintain itself.

### CENTURY-LONG TREASURE HUNT

Another Attempt Will Be Made to Recover \$5,875,000 from Hold of Lutine.

The news that yet another attempt is to be made to recover the remainder of the gold from the hold of H.M.S. Lutine, recalls memories of one of the most protracted treasure hunts of modern times—a hunt that has lasted, off and on, for considerably over a hundred years.

The Lutine sailed for Holland on October 8th, 1799, having on board some £1,350,000 in bullion and coined money, wherewith to pay the English troops then serving in the "Low Countries," and for other purposes. She had scarcely cleared the Downs when a terrific gale sprang up, and twenty-four hours later she foundered off the island of Terschelling. Only one member of the crew was saved, and he died before reaching England.

Attempts, authorized and unauthorized, were at once made to get at the sunken treasure. Some of the latter were undoubtedly partially successful. Indeed, it was said that some months afterwards English guineas were in regular circulation amongst the fishermen and smugglers of that wild coast.

There was also a Scotch master-mariner named Sanderson, who, unless rumor lies, sailed away with £22,000 worth of bar gold, after a visit to the scene of the wreck of less than a week's duration. He converted an iron water-tank into a diving-bell, and utilized as an air-pump a small hand fire-engine he had brought with him for the purpose.

A Dutch salvage company, working on scientific lines, also succeeded in recovering £93,833, of which sum £22,162 was handed over to Lloyds. The ship's rudder, recovered in 1859, was likewise sent to Lloyds, and a table and a chair were fashioned from it for the use of the members.

Since then several attempts have been made to save the £1,175,000 remaining, but without success. Whether the present one will fare better remains to be seen. But great confidence is expressed by its promoters, who are relying principally on a novel kind of submarine boat, worked by compressed air stored in its interior.

### THE KILLERS.

It happened that once a man ran past Socrates armed with an axe. He was in pursuit of another who was running from him at full speed.

"Stop him! Stop him!" the pursuer cried.

Plato's master did not move.

"What!" cried the man with the axe; "couldn't thou not have barred his way? He is an assassin!"

"An assassin! What meanst thou?"

"Play not the idiot! An assassin is a man who kills."

"A butcher, then?"

"Old fool! A man who kills another man!"

"To be sure! A soldier!"

"Dolt! A man who kills another man in times of peace."

"I see—the executioner."

"Thou ass! A man who kills another in his home."

"Exactly—a physician."

Upon which the man with the axe fled—and is running still.

Better an ounce of example than a pound of advice.