

THE CABLEMAN

AN EXCITING PRESENT-DAY ROMANCE

BY WEATHERBY CHESNEY

CHAPTER XVI.—(Cont'd.)

"Was that all?"
"Yes, except a few lines directing that the manuscript was to be submitted to the judgment of Mr. Davis, and if he approved, was to be published. My mother tore it up and threw it into the sea."

"What? The note, you mean?" exclaimed Scarborough.

"The manuscript," said Elsa.

Scarborough smiled; but there was no amusement in his smile—only pity. The guilty man had spent two years over that manuscript, had made it his hobby, perhaps had dulled the gnawing of conscience by doing what he thought was useful work. His widow came, and she threw it all into the sea!

"She showed no more respect for his wishes in that than she did in another thing on which he had set his heart," said Elsa. "She read me some of his letter. It was an earnest appeal to her to keep me in ignorance of his guilt. Her answer to that appeal was a sneer and a jibe. She took away every shred of my ignorance, cared nothing that he had loved me, and laughed at me for having had the folly to believe in him. I think my mother is a wicked woman, Horace. In one part of my father's letter to her he said that she had driven him into crime. She read that to me, too, as though it were true and as though she did not care whether I knew it or not. Certainly she did not deny it. I must believe that it was true. But there was one part that she did not read. It was the part in which he told her where the diamonds were. I think she did not read that, because she knew that I would prevent her from getting them, if I could."

"One moment," said Scarborough, quickly. "How do you know that the part which she did not read contained that information? Did she tell you so?"

"No."

"Then how do you know?"

"I don't know. But she blamed me for having left the stone jar where I did. She said that if anyone else had found it, she and I might make up our minds to be paupers, and that it would be my fault. She said so more than once. The last time was when we found that someone had been watching us all the time that we spent at the Ring-Rock."

Then Elsa went on to explain that when they were drawing near to the Ring-Rock a small boat with a man in it had shot out from the opening, and that her mother had said that if the stone jar was not where Elsa had hidden it, the man must be pursued. Afterwards, in the excitement of what followed, they had both forgotten about this man, and they sailed away from the Rock without thinking of him again. However, when they were about half a mile away from it, they saw him climb down its outer flanks and get into his boat. He had evidently waited till they were inside, and had then returned, landed on the outside, and climbed up to a point from which he could watch them. The day was calm, and the movement of water against the flanks of the rock was less than usual; but even so there was a constant noise of breaking water. It was hardly likely that he could hear as well as see.

"Do you know who he was?" asked Scarborough.

"No. I thought that most probably he was a chance visitor, who was impelled by no motive more unexplain-

able than a simple curiosity to know what we were going to do there."

Scarborough shook his head, saying:

"Did Mrs. Carrington think so?"

"No," said Elsa. "Mother seemed to be afraid of him. I don't know why?"

"I think I can see why," said Scarborough. "She had a document on her possession which was valuable, and she was nervous about losing it. Also it looks as though she had some reason to think that there was someone in the island who knew enough to be dangerous. Had she read that letter which you showed me just now?"

"Yes," said Elsa.

"Then she probably interpreted it as I do. There is someone who knows about the diamonds, and has already made attempts to get hold of them."

"Do you mean the hooded woman?" Elsa asked.

"Perhaps the hooded woman will turn out to be the person I mean," said Scarborough. "I don't know. But I am sure that there was someone who was threatening your father. In his letter to you he speaks of himself as going to meet a known danger for your sake—I shall be engaged in a contest with an enemy who is well known to me; an enemy who of late has taken to using threats. Those are his words. 'What do you suppose they mean?'"

"I took them to refer to his physical weakness—the aneurism which killed him," said Elsa.

"I don't think so," the young man replied. "He speaks of that afterwards, in a different connection. I don't think the two things are the same. Besides, he hints that he is being shadowed."

"By somebody in the circus company—Margaret Ryan," said Elsa.

"The circus company had only just arrived, and there is no reason to suppose that he knew anything of its members. The 'Danger—circus' cable gram came only the day before, and gave only a vague warning. I think that it is obvious that there had already been some attempt to take the diamonds from him, and the expedition he speaks of was rendered necessary by that attempt. The thing which we have as yet no clue to is the object of that expedition."

"Surely to hide the diamonds," said Elsa.

"He might have done that near home, without endangering his life by making a tremendous physical effort. It seems to me that he went to meet someone. For what reason, we don't know; but it may have been to arrange a compromise, or even to pay blackmail for immunity in the future. The key to the riddle may, as you suggest, be the identity of the hooded woman."

Elsa said nothing for a moment. Then she looked gravely at the young man, and said:

"I believe the hooded woman was Margaret Ryan."

Scarborough turned to her with a stare of genuine surprise. So this was why she said that Margaret Ryan had still to prove that her hands were clean of blood!

"You believe that?" he asked.

"Yes," said Elsa.

"I think I can prove to you that you are wrong," said Scarborough, quietly. "I know that the place where she met your father—met him accidentally, I believe—was ten miles from the place where Mr. Davis saw the hooded woman following him."

"You have only her word for that," said Elsa. "And you think that because she says she was bicycling in the Furnas district, it is impossible that she should, a couple of hours later, be masquerading in capote and capello near the Sasa Davis and the Caldaeir de Morte. Why it is impossible? I believe that it is a fact. I think that she was the last person who spoke to my father in life, and I do not acquit her of responsibility in his death. He died of over-excitement or over-exertion. How do we know that it was not the excitement of his interview with her which killed him? If the diamonds can be found, I mean that she shall have them; but that does not mean that I believe for a moment what she says."

"Will you tell me what it does mean?"

"Merely, as I told you before, that since I cannot prove that my father was innocent, I will do all that I can to atone for his guilt, by giving back where I can. I used to take pride in the thought that one day I should help him to clear his name from every stain. I cannot do that now,—but though I loved him—perhaps because I loved him—I shall take pride in trying to reverse the evil that he did."

She said this with an earnestness which was almost fierce in its inten-

sity, and Scarborough recognized that she meant every word of it. Her determination to restore her property to the girl whom her father had robbed was due to a simple pride in doing the thing which she thought to be right. Presently she asked:

"Has Margaret Ryan ever explained what the mysterious business was which kept her from performing in the circus the night my father died? It must have been something more important than a simple bicycle ride. Has she said what it was?"

"She refuses to do so."

"Well, then?" said Elsa.

Scarborough shook his head. "You are wrong," he said. "Will you come with me to see her? I am off duty for the rest of the day. Will you ride to Ponta Delgada with me now?"

"What shall we gain by seeing her?"

"Perhaps she will tell us what we want to know."

"Very well. I will come."

Scarborough had a double motive in making this suggestion. In the first place he thought that if Margaret Ryan knew that they were working in her interests, she might be more ready to help them. She had refused before, but that was because she resented the implied suspicion which she thought that her questioner felt. Differently approached, she might be willing to say what she knew; and Scarborough had seen signs, in the last interview he had had with her that her attitude towards himself had changed. He remembered too that she had said that she liked Elsa, in spite of the scorn with which Elsa had treated her; and she had even wished him God speed in his wooing.

His second reason was that he remembered that when in the beginning he had himself felt inclined to suspect, Varney had angrily declared that the best cure for that folly was to know the girl herself. Varney had introduced him, and the cure had been complete. Perhaps in Elsa's case too a fuller acquaintance with the girl whom she suspected would be the best means of killing the suspicion.

Val B. Montague had taken a house in Ponta Delgada for the use of his troupe until the Sea-Horse should be ready for them again. Scarborough and Elsa went there, and asked for Mona de la Mar.

She received them graciously, and though Elsa responded to her advances coldly, she refused to see that she was snubbed. Scarborough told her shortly what had happened, explained that they were now working for her, and again put his question about her business on that night.

"I have given up all thought of recovering what was stolen from me," she told him. "Even if you could offer me those diamonds to-day, I am not sure that I would take them."

Elsa smiled faintly, and Scarborough said:

"Then you still refuse to help us?"

"No. If it will help you to know what my business was, I will tell you. I would have told you at first, if I hadn't thought that you suspected me of complicity in Mr. Carrington's death. My business was with a man who had written to me that he could recover my property for me, and would do so if I agreed to the terms which he would propose. He asked for an interview."

"You gave it him?" cried Elsa.

"Yes."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards I went for a bicycle ride, and met your father."

(To be continued.)

INDIA'S 19,000 CASTES.

Most of Them Belong to Three Great Groups.

Four years ago up in the northwest of India, a child belonging to a Brahmin family fell into a well, relates the World Outlook. All the men of the family were away, and the women were helpless. The servant known as the sweeper—a very low caste man—offered to climb down the well and rescue the child. His suggestion was regarded by the women as scandalous, for his touch would have defiled the drinking water of the household and also the drowning boy. Hence the little fellow was left in the well, to be fished out dead some time later by the clean hands of a Brahmin. Rather death than defilement from the touch of an "untouchable!"

At present there are upwards of 19,000 castes and subcastes in India, most of them belonging to one of the three great groups known as Brahmins, Shudras and Outcasts. Individuals belonging to the latter of these groups are considered so impure in nature that to touch them brings defilement—hence their common designation, "the untouchables." The higher castes, though relatively tolerant of each other, must not dine together nor intermarry on pain of a social persecution which, for most individuals, is almost unendurable.

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"COUGHING IS ONLY A HABIT"

SHOULD BE AVOIDED, SAYS A NOTED DOCTOR.

Sneezing and Picking of Teeth Unwarranted Pieces of Self-Indulgence.

Dr. Woods Hutchinson, the widely known American popularizer of medical knowledge, wants people to stop coughing, whether they have colds or not. He says that the sanitariums for tuberculosis have been able to "educate coughing almost out of existence, so that visitors frequently comment on how seldom they hear one of the patients cough." A large share of the credit of this change, he says, is due to the gentle and persuasive training and the good example of the other patients. Coughing does the consumptive no good whatever, and does him much harm by exhausting his strength, breaking his sleep and increasing the danger of ulceration. If the habit can be stopped among the tubercular it is immeasurably more inexcusable among those who can complain of only an ordinary cold.

Try Not To Cough.
If you have never tried it, the next time you are tempted to cough or clear your throat, see how well you can get along without doing so, and after a little practice you will find your control complete. Coughing is for the most part a nervous habit, due to a tickling in the throat brought on by previous coughing, and also by a sort of unconscious imitation. Did you ever notice in a theatre or other place of entertainment that nobody coughs in a highly dramatic or otherwise especially interesting mo-

ment? Did you ever notice that if one person coughs a lot of others do, and that the amount of coughing in a public place depends not on conditions of throat and lungs, but upon habit, tradition and usage?

Annoyed Billy Sunday.

The despatches relate that Billy Sunday expressed himself as decidedly annoyed with his auditors at Syracuse recently because they coughed so much. He was entirely justified in this. This coughing was unnecessary. It may have reflected a languid attitude on their part which they would not have experienced had he made the occasion one of great theatrical stimulus. But beyond that they had no excuse for disturbing him—except a bad habit.

A Boston physician tells the story of a patient riding with him one day who coughed and cleared his throat incessantly. As the young man had been learning to run a motor car, the physician offered him a chance to take the wheel. So intent was the beginner on his new job that for half an hour not one sign of a cough or throat clearing occurred. When at last a light rumbling appeared the physician remarked: "You must feel that you are now familiar with the machine," and when the young man asked why, the physician answered by alluding to the resumption of something that only bore evidence of a mind not fully employed.

Much the same thing is true of sneezing. If it could become recognized that to cough and to sneeze were each alike an unwarranted piece of self-indulgence, both as much under the control of the doer as the picking of his teeth—an equally disagreeable habit—we should not only get along without coughing or sneezing, but we would take a long step toward arresting the spread of winter maladies.

Some people are willing to be good if paid for it, and others are good for nothing.

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