

The Castle of Lies

BY ARTHUR HENRY VERSEY
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CHAPTER XXXIV.—Continued.

That is not necessary," assured Starva. "Let all these candles be snuffed except those in the candelabrum that stands at the head of the staircase. Bring your man, Jacques, to that point and no farther. We shall see him; but he will not be able to see us."

Fortune was favoring us indeed. Locke and I silently bestirred ourselves. Now at last had come the moment for action. But still another rambled; and still fortune favored us.

"That is all very well," objected Ignatieff. "And perhaps a tractor may strike a blow in the dark. I for one refuse to gratify the curiosity of Kuhn in this matter."

"But Starva was determined to have his way.

"To prevent that," he answered, "each of us will lay his weapons on the table at the end of the hall."

There were cries of fierce dissent. Starva silenced them with an angry gesture.

"One moment, friends," he purred. "You do not quite understand. When we first came into this room I suggested that lots should be drawn, and he who was favored with the lucky number should fire, concealed in the gloom, that none might be sure who had been chosen to snuff out Ferdinand's little soul. But since our friend Kuhn's loyalty has been questioned, it is he who shall have that honor, and with Gornij's dagger he shall do the work. And lest an accident should happen, or lest his courage should fail him, Bratinau and I will keep our revolvers. I think there is none to question our loyalty?"

Kuhn had grown frightfully pale; he trembled. But he spoke no word.

"By this arrangement," continued Starva, "the loyalty of Kuhn of Macedonia will be established. And if he was glaring at Gingaja and Count Piteschti, there are any mad enough to dream of disloyalty at this late hour, and harbor treachery, they will be powerless.

Starva's ruse was hailed with shouts of approval. Gornij, Ignatieff, and Gortschakoff strode to the table at the end of the hall and flung down their weapons defiantly. Gingaja reluctantly followed their example. Piteschti folded his arms defiantly, standing motionless.

"This is child's play," he muttered, with pale lips.

"Nevertheless," whispered Bratinau in his ear, "you will obey, and quickly. By all the saints, Starva, I think your plan has proved a wise one. Come, sir, we are waiting. Or are you so ignorant of the rules of etiquette that you insist in taking precedence over a king?"

With a gesture of despair Count Piteschti walked slowly to the table and left his revolver there.

"Now, friend Kuhn, we are waiting only for you!" cried Starva sharply.

"I have no arms," answered the poor wretch, with a sob.

"You shall be armed presently," cried Gornij.

"Now, Jacques, you may go. Out with the candles, Gornij and Ignatieff. The rest of you remain quietly as you value your lives. You will find your man defenseless, Jacques. But if he proves troublesome, you have only to call and I will come. You have taken care of Alphonse?"

"I have put him to sleep," he chuckled.

As Jacques lifted the tapestry Locke looked him into silence. Together he carried him struggling up the hidden staircase and burst into the anteroom of the tower. Not until we had flung of him breathless into the room of the safe, and had locked the door, did we answer Forbe's frenzied questions. Locke gripped his arm for silence.

"Quick, there is not a moment to lose. Have you arms?"

"No," growled Forbe, ready for action.

"In the first room to the right of the corridor," panted Madame de Varnier. "In the drawer of the cabinet near the door."

"Then come. And you two stay here. There is man's work below. We stole silently down the stairs, Locke and myself in the lead, to the cabinet, where both Locke and Forbe chose their revolvers.

"Do you, Capt. Forbe, make your way along the gallery until you come to the spiral staircase at the end of the hall," I commanded, briefly.

"When I appear at the main stairway with Locke, reach the hall with no delay. There is a table by the little stairway; there are arms on it; let me approach that table until Locke or myself have reached your side. Now then, Locke, are we ready?"

We had fled silently into the corridor. Forbe sped with caution to his vantage ground. Locke was already approaching the main staircase when I seized him by the arm.

"I am going to fool Starva. I am going to call for help. He will think it Jacques. As he comes, I shall take care of him. Bratinau is your man. Wait till he shows himself, and mind you, aim straight!"

I raised my voice in a cry of distress.

"A moi, Starva!"

My trick succeeded admirably. Starva bounded up the staircase. As he showed himself in the light of the candelabrum I fired. He fell headlong without a groan. Locke stood at the head of the staircase waiting. I peered down in the darkness below.

Forbe's revolver rang out again and again. The uproar was terrible.

"Kuhn, Gingaja! Piteschti! To the staircase!" I cried in French.

That was the last I knew of our melee.

I sank gently to my knees behind the antique rug. Bratinau's bullet had struck me.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Honor, My Sword."

I awoke to consciousness to find myself in the music room. I opened my eyes languidly. Helen was bending over me.

"What is it?" I murmured. "Yes, I remember—the fight on the staircase."

"I struggled to my feet, but sank back dizzily, my hands to my aching forehead."

"Thank God you are alive, and it is all over!" cried Helen, brokenly.

"And Ferdinand is safe?"

"Quite safe and unhurt. Already he has left the chateau. Capt. Forbe will tell you everything presently."

"I have been unconscious so long? Am I wounded? I feel no pain, only this headache and dizziness."

"A bullet grazed your temple—an eighth of an inch more—" She shuddered. "It wounded you only slightly, but you have been unconscious nearly an hour."

"My usual luck," I cried, bitterly. "It was to have been my chance; I hoped to retrieve myself; and I am winged the first shot. Fate is determined, it seems, that I shall stick to my role of coward."

"Don't, don't ever say that horrible word again!" cried Helen, passionately. "It was your shot that killed Starva. It is you who have saved Ferdinand; it is you who have saved me the honor of my poor brother so far as the world can know. How can I ever be grateful enough?"

"Helena!" I cried, passionately, "you remember at Lucerne, on the terrace, when I told you of Willoughby's death, how he had died calling me coward, it was you that pointed out to me a way of escape—you told me how I could regain the self-respect I thought I had lost forever. It was to be a life for a life, you said. When I had saved a life, for the life that was lost through my cowardice, I was to stand once more upright among men. Tell me, you despise me no longer?"

"Despise you!" she murmured. "If you knew how I honored you!"

"Ah, it is worth while to hear you say that. But you must say more, infinitely more than that now, dear, to satisfy me. Helena, I thought only a week ago that if I could win your respect I should be happy. But now I want your love."

"Don't!" she cried in pain. "How can you speak of love at such an hour?"

"Forgive me. What a selfish brute I am. But by the by—when time has softened your bitter pain—in happier days may I come to you?"

"Happier days!" She clasped her hands in quick despair, looking beyond me as if into a future that must be always dark for her.

"Yes," I said, passionately, "there shall yet be happier days for you and for me. Do you remember on the terrace the little beacon light in the far-off mountains? That was my star. It comforted me then; it bids me hope now; it tells me, Helena, you love me."

"Never!" She withdrew the hand I had held almost fiercely.

Her vehemence brought me rudely to my senses. I had been mad to hope. I turned slowly from her, groping my way toward the door; for my head was still throbbing furiously.

She stopped me with a cry of distress. She clung to me in her eagerness.

"You don't understand," she pleaded. "You have saved my brother's honor as far as the world can know,

But this shame that crushes me this disgrace, can I forget it?"

"I would help you bear it."

"Mr. Haddon, we Bretts have been a proud race. Our happiness we share with others. But disgrace we bear alone."

"Don't say that; you are bitter now, but—"

"If you had known me better," said Helena, quietly, "you would understand that I do not give to-morrow what I must deny to-day."

When I told her of Willoughby's tragic death, I had thought it pathetic that a woman should be so strong. It was her calm courage that had first awakened my love for her. I must not complain now if she was not to be moved by my entreaties. But this question I did ask:

"If I could have proved that your brother had not, after all, shown himself false to the motto of your house, 'Honor, my Sword,' would you still have refused to listen to me?"

"Ah, if, Mr. Haddon!"

For almost the first time since I had known her she smiled; and that faint smile opened the gates of paradise to me. She would not be moved to declare her love for me, but she did love me; I was sure of it.

And then suddenly I thought of the words of the Countess Sarahoff when I made my escape by the ladder of stones: "Go, and I swear by the cause I hold sacred, that, if you can save Ferdinand, the honor of Sir Mortimer shall be saved." That promise might mean little. It might mean that she would show her gratitude by refusing to make public Sir Mortimer's disgrace. Or had her words a deeper significance?

"But," I cried eagerly, "nothing is quite impossible. I repeat now what I said to you when in your grief you asked me to meet the banker, I cannot believe in your brother's guilt. I cannot conceive how a man whose integrity has been undoubted during a brilliant career should suddenly stoop to the shame of taking bribes."

A flash of hope shone in Helena's eyes.

or that she sacrificed friends and enemies if they proved obstacles to her plans.

"I had hoped," I answered, vaguely, "now that Ferdinand was saved, that she might in some way be able to show us that your brother's dishonor is not so great as it appears."

"But could she explain away his writing?" asked Helena mournfully.

"No; even if she feels remorse for her cruelty in torturing me, it is too late. I have eaten of the tree of knowledge. Mr. Haddon, and it is very bitter. Heaven has reversed my fate and yours. It is I who now have lost my self-respect, while you have gained—"

"No," I cried, bitterly, "I have failed utterly in my task. I dared hope for too much. I have dared hope too greatly in dreaming that I should find happiness in this Castle of Lies."

"But," she whispered, "I, too, have dared, Ernest, and I shall not forget."

"Helena!" I crushed her hands in mine. "Even now I refuse to despair. I will find this woman though I search the earth for her. She shall tell me everything, and perhaps even now—"

"Not even your love can bring about the impossible."

"But if it could— if by a miracle your brother's honor were shown to be stainless?"

"Ah, if you could work miracles—yes," she faltered.

The door was flung open brusquely. Locke stood at the threshold, his keen glance bent cynically on me.

"So you are quite yourself again?" He concealed his embarrassment by a gruff demeanor. "So much the better; for you must be off before the dawn, my friend."

"And where?" I demanded astonished and not a little piqued at his cool assurance.

"En route for America, if you are wise."

"You are settling my destiny in a rather high-handed manner," I cried, angrily. "And will you tell me why you dispose of me so summarily?"

"Why," replied he, with a quiet laugh, "I have promoted you—"

"Miss Bret, Capt. Forbe and myself will accompany you to your hotel presently. Will you wait here while I say a few words to Mr. Haddon?"

"But it is not possible that you still mistrust him after to-night?" she demanded with indignation.

"No, no," he assured her. "I would spare you from embarrassment; that is all."

"Come, then," I said, shortly.

When we had reached the gallery I saw to my astonishment that the hall below was empty. I listened and there was complete silence.

"What have Forbe and yourself done with your prisoners?" I demanded.

"In my perplexity I forgot to ask what Locke had meant in saying flippantly that he had promoted me."

"They are all gone but two," Locke answered coolly. He lighted a cigarette, and leaning on the gallery rail stared down into the hall. "Starva and Bratinau's bodies are in the dining-rooms, but their souls have been swiftly ferried across the Styx by old Charon. Nothing reminds us of our fight except the dark stain on the staircase carpet yonder. It was a good scrap while it lasted. Your shot-winged Starva, as you probably know, I settled Bratinau. Forbe peppered away in the dark, and had fair luck. The man called Go on or Geep, or something like that, got a shattered ankle, and the Serbian a rather nasty wound in the thigh. As for the rest of the gentry, three of them rallied to your slogan and joined me at the staircase; the other two were easily settled with. Yes, it was a good fight, but much too short—especially for you, old chap." He shook his head despondently.

"But your prisoners?" I demanded again, irritated by his superfluous comments.

"It was Prince Ferdinand who insisted on their release."

"Their release?" I interrupted, furiously. "What incredible folly!"

"You remember that Starva and Bratinau were the only Bulgars among the conspirators, and they are dead. The two ringleaders are wounded badly enough to go to a hospital. Forbe himself has accompanied them there to see that they are not discharged until one of us is told. Practically they are prisoners. Remains Kuhn, Piteschti and Gingaja, the three men who showed that they had some instincts of humanity when it came to the crisis. The other two were arrant cowards; Ferdinand prefers to consider the three his loyal friends and two others powerless. He has set them at liberty."

"By Jove, his magnanimity or his folly will cost him dear."

"I am not so certain of that," resumed Locke, thoughtfully. "It is possible that he has made five friends of five enemies. You must remember that even if he wished to punish the conspirators he is powerless to do this without advertising to the world the intended uprising of the Balkan States."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HOUSE CLEANING IN FALL.

Cellar is One Important Point to Be Considered.

The house does not get so dirty during the summer that a general upheaval is necessary for fall house cleaning, though there is one place where the greatest attention must be given, and that is in the cellar. Damp days, together with the decaying vegetables and fruits stored in the cellar and the unavoidable dirt which is certain to accumulate, makes it really necessary to hang up a red light in that apartment unless the cellar is properly cleaned during the fall. Often the cleanest house will have a cellar in the most disreputable condition with spoiled fruits, vegetables and the like, making it a hotbed of diseases. Have the cellar walls swept and liberally whitewashed, clean the floor and sprinkle with lime. Every box, cupboard and hoarding place should be thoroughly cleaned with hot water and soap. If there is any perceptible dampness, the cellar should be aired, if possible, and often this can be overcome by burning a small gas or oil stove in the cellar for one day. No difference how nicely one may prepare canned fruits and preserves, if the cellar is in a damp condition everything will mold and in many cases sour and spoil. One day's work, even though it be arduous labor, will save the summer's work represented in the canned fruits, jellies, etc.

CARE OF WAXED FLOORS.

Pure Turpentine the Best Thing With Which to Clean Them.

Those who have waxed floors in their dwellings know, according to Indors and Out, how invaluable turpentine is in cleaning them. With sand-paper or steel wool, dipped in turpentine, the blackest coatings, which are apt to accumulate in winter on waxed floors not frequently polished, can be easily and quickly removed; and a washing with turpentine does much to brighten up any waxed floor, preparatory to the application of a light fresh coat of wax and polishing with the weighted brush. As with all other painters' materials, however, turpentine is shamefully adulterated, and care must be taken to get only the best and purest from some thoroughly reliable dealer. The usual adulterant is cheap benzine, and as benzine turns good floor wax a dirty white, turpentine so adulterated has an injurious effect on the floor. The floor "waxes" made with tallow show less effect from adulterated turpentine, but the wise householder will use only those floor waxes made with bees' wax and turpentine, with a little paraffine, but no tallow.

Sage and Green Tea for the Hair.

Sage and green tea make a hair tonic that has in many instances absolutely arrested the falling hair that is so noticeable in the autumn, especially if women have indulged in much sea bathing without being careful about rinsing out the salt water. This tonic is not injurious, as are so many that contain alcohol and bay rum. It has, however, one decided objection to housekeepers who have a tendency to the appearance of their beds—it will stain the linen unless the hair has been perfectly dried before rinsing.

To make this tonic take one ounce each of green tea and dried garden sage and pour over it one and a half pints of boiling water. Steep in a covered teapot until reduced one-third. Remove from the fire and let the mixture stand for 24 hours before straining and bottling.

In applying this, as in fact all tonics, see that it is rubbed into the scalp instead of being carelessly put on the hair. Massage thoroughly for at least ten minutes.

Onion Soup.

Six onions, slice them, put in frying pan with a little butter, try to a golden brown, then add a teaspoon of flour; let this get a nice brown, then pour one pint of beef or chicken broth over it. Boil four minutes, put into pudding pan. Put two slices bread on top, sprinkle with parmesan cheese, then a little melted butter over the cheese. Put in oven, let it brown, serve with a little parmesan cheese in separate dish. Fine. It must be served in dish it is baked in. Parmesan cheese comes in bottles all graded.

To Remove Medicine Stains.

Stains made by medicine and liniment are often obstinate to remove in the hands of an amateur. Iodine marks may be removed by washing the spots with strong ammonia until it fades, after which wash with tepid water and strong soap.

Ammonia is equally good for removing cod liver oil stains. Fuller's earth made into a paste and thickly applied to the spots will also remove them.

Lyonnais Potatoes.

One tablespoonful of butter, one onion chopped fine, 12 cold potatoes cut into dice, parsley, salt and pepper. To the butter and onion add the potatoes and stir quickly over the open flame for five minutes, taking care that they do not stick to the pan. Season with salt and pepper, add chopped parsley. Serve white hot.

Fairy Pudding.

One pint boiling water, stir into this three tablespoons of cornstarch, mixed smooth with a little cold water, the juice of a lemon, piece of butter the size of a walnut and one beaten egg. It will thicken up nicely in three or four minutes. Then turn into mold. To be eaten with sugar and cream or rich milk.

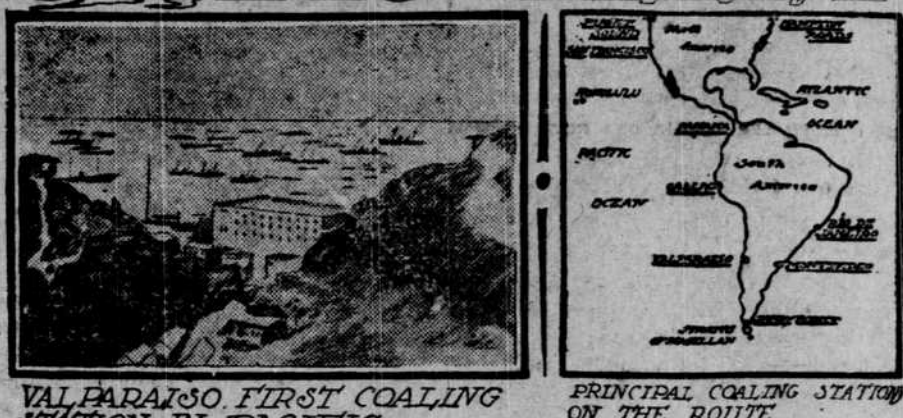
Mexican Ale.

Two tablespoonsful of blanched almonds, three tablespoonsful of rice. Grind the almonds fine first, then the rice, then mix; add a cup of sweet milk and cook in a double boiler until the mixture thickens. Add salt or sugar to taste and serve.

Sausage Roll.

Fry sausage, and take off the skin; or, if it is preferred, use sausage meat. Make rich biscuit dough; roll as thin as possible and spread on sausage. Bake brown. Use one link to a roll. It is good hot or cold.

COALING THE BIG FLEET



VAL PARAISSO FIRST COALING STATION IN PACIFIC.

PRINCIPAL COALING STATION ON THE ROUTE.

This will prove one of the most difficult and the most expensive features of the proposed practice of the Atlantic squadron from its base on the Atlantic coast around the southern point of South America and up to San Francisco.

Naval experts at work on the details of the coming cruise figure that it will cost \$3,000,000 to provide the fuel which will be needed to steam the 16 great battleships, the five or six auxiliary cruisers and the torpedo flotilla over the 13,000-mile course. According to present plans the fleet will set sail in December, and between now and that time the greatest question of all the many relating to the success of the cruise—that of fuel—must be settled and arranged for.

Five or six coaling stations at least must be touched between Hampton Roads and Puget sound during the two months and a half or more that will be required to make the momentous excursion. Certainly, there will be several colliers waiting upon the fuel needs of the battleships and those abominations of all naval officers, torpedo boats, but their supplies will by no means meet the requirements of the fighting machines. Much will depend upon the supplies ordered weeks ago by the navy department through the consular agents at the coaling stations where the fleet is expected to collect during the long and tedious itinerary.

That the extraordinary demands upon the usual fuel stores to be made at authorized stations to be found by the great fleet will result in a proportionate increase of price is admitted by the navy department, but unfortunately there is no way of obtaining cheaper coal. Hence it is known in advance that the cost per ton will be from eight dollars to \$13 on the Atlantic coast station, while from \$13 to \$17 may be the price between Sandy Point, in the Strait of Magellan, to Puget sound. As most of the warships will consume from 60 to 100 tons per day, it is readily seen how very expensive their trip from ocean to ocean will be.

Most of the men-of-war can steam between 5,000 and 8,000 miles without recoupling, so that it will be an easy matter for them to junket along between the established stations. But the torpedo boats will require the constant attention of the colliers. It is said that their average fuel endurance is between 1,000 and 1,500 miles. Besides, they will need the constant surveillance of the larger ships, being frail craft and liable to many damages. The flotilla will keep close to the coast while skirting down the Atlantic and up the Pacific, and may be the cause of numerous delays on the part of the whole fleet. Therefore it is small wonder that the entire naval force reviles this type of vessel. It is the general conviction among the older officers in the navy that the torpedo boat has demonstrated that it is utterly worthless in active warfare, and the American sea-fighter is too much of a utilitarian to tolerate the impracticable.

The first station to be drawn upon for coal by the armada will be St. Thomas, in the Danish West Indies. It will be remembered that the United States government some time ago offered \$7,000,000 for the possession of this port and the Danish possessions in the Antilles—an offer which was first accepted, to be refused later on mature consideration.

Very likely the delicate little torpedo flotilla will find it necessary to put into San Juan, Porto Rico, for fuel, this being the only port controlled by America in the Antilles, and so hamper the progress of the armada.

The next coaling station on the route is Bahia. At this picturesque and historic town several of the smaller vessels will be obliged to stop in order to amend deficiencies in their coal bunkers, although warships of the greater magnificence may be able to proceed to Rio Janeiro without taking aboard fresh supplies of fuel. The entire fleet will probably average eight knots an hour, which will enable the big ships to keep their fuel consumption at a minimum.

Fleet to Assemble at Rio.

THE WOMEN AND BASEBALL.

One of the Sex Explains Why She Doesn't Know the Game Very Well.

"I don't see that it's much wonder if women don't know a great deal about that game of base ball," remarked a Cleveland woman in the role of an abused wife the other day. "If all men were like my husband it would be a fine chance any wife would have to learn anything besides household drudgery. I think it's absolutely absurd the way some men seem to lose all control of their senses and all idea of ordinary courtesy when they get within sight of a crowd of men knocking a ball about a big pasture."

"I've always been so bored to death by base ball games the few times my husband has persuaded me to go, because I never could tell who was winning, that I told my husband I wouldn't go to any more of the old games with him. Then the other day he told me that if I'd go he would just make it his business for that one day to explain the game to me."

"Well, he started in to explain things to me, and his mood lasted just until some one hit the ball, and then he began to shout and jump up and down as if some one had hooked an electric wire to his seat. I thought something very unusual must have happened and I tried to get him to tell me what he was acting so foolish about, but he just snapped out, 'This is too good a game. I'll tell you all about it when we get home.' And that was all I could get out of him during the rest of the tiresome old game. I'll never go to one with him again."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Otter Almost Stole His Salmon.

An unusual incident of particular interest to fly fishermen is narrated in a letter to the London Daily Mail from W. Arthur Williams of Bodmin. "A gentleman residing at Dunmere, near Bodmin, was fishing in the River Camel on Wednesday night," Mr. Williams writes. "He hooked a fine salmon on a fly, but immediately a large otter darted from under the bank and seized the fish. The fisherman thus had a fish and an otter on his line at the same time, and having stout tackle he was able to engage in a few minutes of exciting sport. The otter, however, caught sight of the fisherman and dashed up stream. When the fish had been landed by the angler the marks of the otter's teeth were plainly discernible on the shoulders of the fish."

Radium as a Curative.

The growing importance of radium as a therapeutic agent has led the management of the Imperial Uranium works, in St. Joachimsthal, Bohemia, to construct a special laboratory for the industrial production of radium compounds. The uranium ores of Bohemia contain higher percentages of this mysterious element than any other known deposits thus far investigated. The ores and the residues from the uranium extraction have hitherto been treated chiefly at Paris, where the method of isolating the minute traces of radium was perfected by Mme. Curie and her lately deceased husband. There will be manifest advantages in carrying out the extraction at the place of origin, in view of the enormous amount of rock required for the production of a bit of radium.

Overfeeding.

If I should name the greatest danger of childhood I would unhesitatingly say, Overfeeding. More babies are drowned in milk than sailors in salt water.—Dr. Oswald.



He Fell Headlong Without a Groan.

rible word again!" cried Helen, passionately. "It was your shot that killed Starva. It is you who have saved Ferdinand; it is you who have saved me the honor of my poor brother so far as the world can know. How can I ever be grateful enough?"

"Helena!" I cried, passionately, "you remember at Lucerne, on the terrace, when I told you of Willoughby's death, how he had died calling me coward, it was you that pointed out to me a way of escape—you told me how I could regain the self-respect I thought I had lost forever. It was to be a life for a life, you said. When I had saved a life, for the life that was lost through my cowardice, I was to stand once more upright among men. Tell me, you despise me no longer?"

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"Never!" She withdrew the hand I had held almost fiercely.

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She stopped me with a cry of distress. She clung to me in her eagerness.

"You don't understand," she pleaded. "You have saved my brother's honor as far as the world can know,

Story of South Sea Shark

He Swallows an Alarm Clock, with Most Unusual Results.

While crossing among the South Sea islands 30 odd years ago on our private yacht, the Haute Flyer, we were much annoyed by a large Irish setter shark that persisted in following the ship, says a writer in the Minneapolis Journal. During the night the shark would often climb up on deck and tip over the garbage can. At one time Henry Williams, a sailor before the mast, was bitten on the leg by the brute. He aimed a kick at the brute, who growled, showed his teeth, and sunk his fangs into Williams' limb before leaping over the rail into the sea.

One day the cook, annoyed at his

alarm clock—which persisted in going off furiously at all hours of the night—threw the timepiece overboard. The shark, always on hand for dainty tidbits from the galley, took the time of day at one gulp. For two days after that we heard the clock going in a muffled way from the interior of the surprised shark, who was often seen with one fin on his head and the other on the pit of his stomach, evidently trying to diagnose his clock case.

We were standing on the stern of the ship one evening watching the shark, who was evidently feeling pretty sick. Suddenly the clock went off on him and the sailors, counting the strokes, noticed that it struck 23. When the shark heard this, he turned up and died before our eyes.