

# The Mystery of Hartley House

Copyright by George H. Doran Co.

By  
**CLIFFORD S. RAYMOND**

Illustrated by  
**IRWIN MYERS**

## ALCOTT'S STORY.

Synopsis.—Dr. John Michelson, just beginning his career, becomes resident physician and companion of Homer Sidney at Hartley house. Mr. Sidney is an American, a semi-invalid, old and rich and very desirous to live. Mrs. Sidney is a Spanish woman, dignified and retiring. Jed, the butler, acts like a privileged member of the family. Hartley house is a fine old isolated country place, with a murder story, a "haunted pool," and many watchdogs, and an atmosphere of mystery. The "haunted pool" is where Richard Dobson, son of a former owner of Hartley house, had killed his brother, Arthur Dobson. Jed begins operations by locking the doctor in his room the very first night. Doctor John fixes his door so he can't be locked in. He meets Isobel, daughter of the house, and falls in love at first sight. In the night he finds the butler drunk and holding Mrs. Sidney by the wrist. He interferes. Mrs. Sidney makes light of it. John buys a revolver. John overhears Jed telling Mrs. Sidney he will have his way. In reply she says she will not hesitate to kill him. Mrs. Sidney asks John to consent to the announcement of his engagement to Isobel. The young people consent to the make-believe engagement. Later they find it is to head off Jed, who would marry Isobel. Jed tries to kill John, but the matter is smoothed over. John, though "engaged" to Isobel, conceals his love. Mr. Sidney visits a nearby prison and has Dobson, the murderer, pointed out. Jed tells the story of the Dobson murder. The family goes south for the winter and John is lonesome.

## CHAPTER VI—Continued.

Dr. Brownell suggested the winter trip to the South. Mr. Sidney's vitality needed careful nursing. It was important to protect him from winter rigors, even as they could be modified in a sickroom. The doctor said he himself felt the need of a change. He prescribed one for both his patient and himself. He and Mr. Sidney made the arrangements. Mrs. Sidney and Isobel were to go.

Arrangements went ahead rapidly, and a sense of desolation increased within me. Romantic folly came to its accounting. The fairy story was to be ended without youth's necessary "They lived happily ever after."

The yacht came up to its mooring and lay by the landing for a week while the provisioning was being cared for. Hundreds of bottles of Mr. Sidney's fine wines were put on board—the unspeakable Jed.

Isobel was eagerly anticipatory. Mrs. Sidney, I thought, seemed merely to be resigned, with trepidation.

Doctor Brownell said he was depriving me of an interesting voyage. If he did not go, I should have been needed, but he thought it important for his efficiency that he conserve his strength over the winter, and he asked me to act as one of his assistants.

That was flattery. It was intended to be so.

Mrs. Sidney was the one who offered me the real balm.

"John," she said, "we shall want you with us. We shall miss you."

"Don't you think, Mrs. Sidney," I suggested, "that now we can consider this fiction terminated?"

"You mean your engagement to Isobel?"

"Surely."

"No, please," she said. "On the boat there will be no problems. The community is too compact and must be considered. But when we come back, I'll need you just as before."

Isobel said:

"Good-by, John. Be at the landing when we return. You'll be the first person I want to see."

I ought not to have been so disconsolate. These were fair portents, but a portent does little to console a loss. I stood on the little dock and watched the yacht go down the river. And when it had disappeared below the point of land south of the pool, all the world was sad and life had no prospects to give it value.

Charles drove me to the city. I was a bit of human driftwood for a week. It did not matter that they were coming back. They were gone; that was the disaster. It was in the present; the future is too ambiguous for consolation or comfort.

I went through a winter of ecstatic distress, trying to be efficient in my discharge of professional duties for Doctor Brownell and to be professionally composed in aspect and mind. I had an anguished delight in my experiences. My loneliness was my most acute pain and my most cherished comfort. I did not want to profane the emotional solemnity of so much unhappiness by subjecting it frequently to the banal touch of sociable life in the ordinary. It was a joy to be profoundly unhappy.

I had letters from the enchanted party in the South. Mrs. Sidney wrote twice a week with great affection. Mr. Sidney once a week dictated to Jed a letter, cordial and jocular, for me. Occasionally Jed added a sheet for himself, kindly or rasping as the mood had him at the time.

Isobel also wrote, but with the greatest eccentricity. While they were at Palm Beach I had a letter a day from

her for four days. Then I had none for two weeks, although they remained at Palm Beach. She made the postman a tragedian for me.

In one letter this virginal imp wrote as if I were her lover, and that letter was as the song of the meadow lark from a snow-covered field in March, as the odor of lilacs on a warm night in May.

The Sidneys went to the Bahamas, but did not remain there. They wrote me that Mr. Sidney was well. Doctor Brownell was convinced that all were the better, himself included, for their experiment and that Mr. Sidney's condition would permit a longer voyage in his pleasant circumstances. Consequently they were going on to South America. Mr. Sidney wanted to revisit Montevideo.

From Montevideo I had a letter from Jed in a different tone from his sarcastic banter and taunting. I thought it was the letter of a man who had suffered a shock. I could not say why I thought so, but I thought something had disturbed him. I gathered the idea that something had changed Jed's view of life.

Early in March came letters saying that my folks shortly would be on their way home, to arrive after our uncertain spring had resolved itself securely into weather safe for a feeble man who had accustomed himself to luxurious temperatures. I then felt invigorated, as by a promise in March of hepatic. My winter was breaking up.

I met an old-time acquaintance, a dentist who had been several years in South America. His name was Alcott, Henry Alcott.

Alcott and I never had been intimate or affectionate, but we greeted each other with ardor. I was lonesome, Alcott may have been. There is a loneliness associated with a return to a place which has forgotten you and receives you as an alien.

We had dinner together and enjoyed our meeting. There was furtively, at dinner, a reminiscent attentiveness in his conversation. It suggested that he was smirking over exploits which he might relate if his restraints were broken down.

He had a talent for merely carnal stories. They gained additional carnality in his telling of them. I must have been given the record of half the amatory experiences of South America for two years. Alcott told them with gusto. The one that fascinated me he did not emphasize more than the others. As he told these stories he was trying to convey the charm of sex-adventure in Latin America. I think he wanted, by other instances, to suggest his own adventures.

A man named Sinclair—that was Alcott remembered the name, but it might, he said, have been St. John or Southgrove or Sergeant or anything else beginning with S; it was long before Alcott's time in South America, and he merely told the story because it was a standardized episode—this man Sinclair, an Englishman or a man from the States, a fairly young man, anyway, and attractive, had fallen in love with a most charming young woman of excellent family.

Alcott could not remember whether this little episode had been staged in Rio or Valparaiso or Buenos Aires or where.

"It might have been in Montevideo," he said. He did not emphasize the remark, but the remark subsequently emphasized the story for me.

Sinclair—Alcott thought we might as well agree upon Sinclair as a name—had come out of somewhere or nowhere and had made a great deal of money. When he fell in love, he was an advantageous match. The parents accepted him gladly.

Sinclair and the young lady were married, but he did not have the Latin genius for isolating and guarding a woman. Neither did he have the genius for completely interesting and absorbing a woman. He was in the shipping business. He was a very practical and business-minded man, but Alcott had heard, a genial and jovial man nevertheless.

Lovers came, as lovers will. The lady was too charming and had too much freedom. She was innocent and guileless, but her husband was not the barrier needed. Alcott said he thought she was of noble sort and was betrayed by her idea that human beings had character.

He was not precise as to the dilemma she had entered, how or why she entered it. A man of reputation for discreet gallantry, a handsome man of attractive culture, was encouraged by her frank and unchilled attitude toward him to try a desperate measure.

There was a designing servant in the house. The lover corrupted the servant and was introduced into the house. The husband was supposed to be away on a business trip. He came back ahead of time, as husbands sometimes do, and stopped at his club before he went home.

A friend of the lover saw him and, knowing what was being essayed at the man's home, was aghast. He induced other friends of the lover to try to detain the husband on one jovial pretext or another while he communicated with the house. He was unsuccessful in his attempt to use the tele-

phone. The other men were unsuccessful in their attempt to detain the husband. The friend began a race with the husband to reach the house. Unluckily for him, the cab he took not only was pulled by the faster horse, but, he being conscious that it was a race and the husband being unconscious of it, his driver had reasons given him for speed.

It was unfortunate for the friend, because there was a tragedy later, and he was its victim. He arrived in time to warn the lover. The lady, appalled by the appearance of the lover, aghast to consider that she had been thought so unworthy as to attract these attentions, and suffering from a confusion which blunted her judgment, had not called her servants, but had endeavored with a dignity consciously self-compromised to assert her self-respect and recall her lover's reason.

In a turmoil of abasing emotions she was engaged in this effort of self-control and assertion of dignity when the friend destroyed all composure by his announcement. The lover went instantly out of a window. The friend, having his own dignity of innocence, would not compromise his self-respect in this fashion. The husband arrived upon a scene which could not be explained. His wife, in spite of her efforts at control, was in hysteria. The friend's presence was inexplicable. Arrangements were made to satisfy honor. The friend was killed in a fashion satisfactory to the police and wholly satisfactory to the outraged husband.

There was the situation: an innocent man dead, a wronged husband satisfied, the wife absolved by the romantic, lying statement of the man who sacrificed himself, that in the transaction he



As He Drank More He Made Them Personal.

had been presumptuous and the wife entirely guiltless—and the guilty lover gone scot-free. But the servant knew. Tremendous possibilities in this, Alcott thought.

Then Alcott went to other stories. As he drank more, he made them personal. I felt sick. It was outrageous for my recollection to emphasize his merely incidental remark:

"It might have been Montevideo."

## CHAPTER VII.

It may seem unreasonable that a story by a man incidentally met, an indifferent acquaintance, had started a solvent at work on my mysteries. I am discussing, now, matters I had tried to keep out of my consciousness. Things at Hartley had insisted upon an explanation which I did not want to find or give.

I could not kill a curiosity, although I was shamed by it. I felt indecent in my almost involuntary conjectures regarding Mrs. Sidney. Circumstances did demand an explanation. No one could perceive the strange facts of the house and not speculate as to their cause. It might be unpleasant to do so, but it was impossible not to do so. The predominant fact, however, was that my folks were coming home, and I knew that my affection for Mrs. Sidney had become a sacrament and my affection for Isobel a tragedy.

The yacht brought these dear people to the landing in the river at Hartley house. I, in the city, was called on the telephone by Isobel. There was a dynamic value in the inspiration of her voice. She was, in her greeting, cheery and wholesome. It was a glad, clean "Hullo!"—crisp and jovial.

My people came home in May, and the day after their arrival I went to Hartley house with my belongings, rejoicing, in an ecstasy, to take the well-known ride into the wonderful world of fancy and endeared companionship, by the haunted pool and into the jovial household.

Jed, I knew as soon as I saw him, was changed—not violently but in some fashion and perceptibly. Mr. Sidney was not. His geniality could not change. He made me feel that he had missed me and was rejoiced to see me again. Mrs. Sidney seemed, spiritually,

to continue to lean on me for support, a thing that I perceived in abasement and with a sense of unworthiness and unreliability. Isobel was as wholesome as the air. In the most pleasant circumstances life was resumed at Hartley house.

Jed had not wholly lost his truculence and his occasional flashes of malevolence, but he was subdued. I thought he seemed furtive.

I asked Mrs. Sidney if she had observed a change. She said it had not occurred to her to think of it as a change, but there had been a difference for which she was grateful. She remembered that when they were making their visit to Montevideo Jed had gone down to the docks and had come back obviously disturbed. She had observed the fact without giving much thought to it. She was not sure but that there had been an amelioration of Jed since then. She had regarded the event as insignificant. It might have had a meaning, but if so, it was obscured.

Our days were of pleasant routine, but nevertheless, for reasons which I have tried to make perceptible if not explicit, the expectation was touched by dread. We had, for several months, no outstanding incident or disturbing happening. Mr. Sidney's health remained exceptionally good. He created a new interest in his life; he had not forgotten his visit to the penitentiary, and he was eager to do what he could for the convicts.

Evidently he thought of his restricted life as something not wholly alien to his comforts, to theirs. The most that he could do was to send books and occasionally to prepare a Sunday afternoon program of music to be given by a small orchestra which he had brought out from the city. He never went back to the penitentiary, but once a week Jed or I drove over and he was interested in our accounts.

Jed was beginning to wear off the fine aspects of his good behavior. Some restless ambition tortured this man, and some power he had not completely used invited him to make full use of it.

I had implored Mrs. Sidney to inform me instantly if he became obnoxious again. I understood how important it was to protect Mr. Sidney's peace of mind, but I thought I had the upper hand of Jed—although not understanding his case at all—and could manage him.

Isobel, knowing that she was pursued by the ridiculous ambitions of the man, found amusement in it. I found only moral nausea. I could see Jed's arrogance arising again, and twice a week I was awakened by his singing in the hallway as he came from drinking in Mr. Sidney's room. I was expecting something to happen; and something did, but it was certainly not what I expected. It opened up a new phase of the mystery.

One morning I was waiting for Jed to bring my coffee to the pleasant room which he early in our acquaintance had recommended. Not the least curious thing about Jed was the fact that he seldom in his sober moments was anything but a perfect servant when service was demanded. It did not matter how serious and deadly the issue might be between Jed and me as men; when the matter lay between Jed and me as servant and served, Jed was the servant. Therefore, no matter how things might stand with us when, in the morning at an early hour, I went to the room Jed originally suggested, I expected him to come with my coffee, and he always did.

It was my habit to arise at seven o'clock and be dressed and in this room by half-past seven. I usually read a book until Jed brought the coffee and the morning paper. It was a luxurious and restful experience to have this hour each day.

This morning in question I was reading placidly when looking out the window, I was startled to see a strange figure of a man on the lawn. He was close to the house, almost under my window, and I even could see that he wore earrings. He had a handkerchief around his neck. He was swarthy and black-haired. I thought he was Spanish, and I thought he was a sailor. These were only impressions, but they identified him for me later. He was passive and was looking up at the house in an interested but puzzled fashion, harmlessly, one would have said, if the wholly unexpected nature of his presence had not been in itself significant.

Men wearing earrings were not so common of sight as to allow one wearing them to be unnoticed. Strangers of any kind seldom came our way. Strangers of his kind were extraordinary. He was looking up at the windows as if he sought the answer to something that had interested if not mystified him. I knew, in every instant, that he had not come in by chance but by design.

I was looking, leaning forward, at this strange phenomenon on the lawn when a crash of metal and breaking china gave me a shock. Jed—whom I had not heard entering—had seen over my shoulder the stranger on the lawn and had dropped the coffee tray.

"You knew that man and you wanted to kill him."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Don't Read When Drowsy. To read or study when tired or drowsy is to strain the eyes to a dangerous degree, writes W. M. Carhart in Public Health. Avoid events studying whenever possible. If you are using your eyes by artificial light, be sure the light does not shine directly into the eyes, and try to have it come from behind and to the left side so as to avoid the harmful glare.

# ROAD BUILDING

PUBLIC ROADS BUREAU WORK

Plans, Specifications and Estimates Are Examined and Approved in Short Period.

Over 50 per cent of all applications for federal aid are handled in the district offices of the bureau of public roads, United States department of agriculture in an average of five days; 90 per cent of them pass the chief engineer's office in Washington to final approval in four days. The plans, specifications and estimates which the states furnish and which have to be reviewed, sometimes checked, and always reported on in detail with specific recommendations, pass the district engineer's office at about the same rate as the applications and 90 per cent of them pass the district engineer's office in three and a half days. There are at present over 3,000 active federal aid projects in the United States.

The federal aid act is administered with three per cent of the appropriations and this fund is carefully controlled each month on the basis of actual performance under the law. As an illustration of efficient administration, district No. 8, with offices located in Montgomery, Alabama, cost the government \$78,547 from December, 1916, to April, 1920, inclusive. This is an average of \$1,916 per month. Reports from the district engineer for that district show that the bureau's engineering review and technical advice in connection with state projects submitted have resulted in large savings in road construction. A single case in one state was revised by the district engineer's office at a saving



Granite Blocks Laid and Rammed—Maintenance Cost of This Kind of Pavement is Less Than That of Any Other Kind.

of \$13,638.26. Another project was redesigned to cost \$10,000 less at the time the plans were reviewed by the bureau.

## EMPLOY CONVICTS ON ROADS

Satisfactory Results Reported From Twelve States Where Experiment Has Been Tried.

Twelve states have tried the employment of convict labor for road building thoroughly, and report that the results have been satisfactory. They are Arizona, Oklahoma, Florida, Maryland, Illinois, Louisiana, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Wyoming, Utah, Idaho and Nebraska.

Since the United States government has made its great appropriations for good roads, which the states are duplicating as the federal law requires as fast as their legislatures meet, the department of agriculture has been making a complete survey of the methods of road building in the states. Concerning the use of convict labor the conclusion from these reports is that where the convicts are well fed and housed they work well, save the state in construction costs, and themselves profit physically and mentally. —Syracuse Post Standard.

## CASH FOR IMPROVING ROADS

Total Amount for 1919 Placed at \$138,000,000 in Report by Bureau of Public Roads.

An important report, which possesses peculiar interest for all motorists, regarding good road progress during the present year, made by the bureau of public roads of the United States department of agriculture, shows that for 1919 the expenditure for hard-surfaced highways establishes a new record, in so far as the department's road program is concerned, the total amount being \$138,000,000. The indications are that the following year will exceed this record by a large margin, as the available funds for road expenditure by the bureau for 1920 amount to \$233,000,000.

## Money for Good Roads.

Thirty-seven states in this country have authorized the expenditure of \$25,641,729 for good roads in the next five years.

Cash for Lincoln Highway. An allotment of \$12,000,000 has been made for improvements to the Lincoln highway.

Highways Destroyed by War. More than 25,000 miles of highways were destroyed in France during the world war.

# HAS NO PAIN NOW

What Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Did for Mrs. Warner.

Onalaska, Wis.—"Every month I had such pains in my back and lower part of stomach I could not lie in bed. I suffered so it seemed as though I would die, and I was not regular either. I suffered for a year and was unfit to do my housework, could only wash dishes once in a while. I read an advertisement of what Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound had done for other women and decided to try it. It surely did wonders for me. I have no pains now and I can do my housework without any trouble at all. I will always praise your medicine as I do not believe there is a doctor that can do as much good in female weakness, and you may use these facts as a testimonial."—Mrs. LESTER E. WARNER, R. 1, Box 69, Onalaska, Wis.

The reason women write such letters to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. and tell their friends how they are helped is that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has brought health and happiness into their lives. Freed from their illness they want to pass the good news along to other suffering women that they also may be relieved.



# VICTIMS RESCUED

Kidney, liver, bladder and uric acid troubles are most dangerous because of their insidious attacks. Heed the first warning they give that they need attention by taking

# GOLD MEDAL HAARLEM OIL CAPSULES

The world's standard remedy for these disorders, will often ward off these diseases and strengthen the body against further attacks. Three rises, all druggists. Look for the same Gold Medal on every box and accept no imitation.

# Constipation Vanishes Forever

Prompt—Permanent—Relief CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS never fail. Purely vegetable—act surely but gently on the liver. Stop after-dinner distress—correct indigestion; improve the complexion—brighten the eyes. Small Pill—Small Dose—Small Price

**LINCOLN SANITARIUM**  
SULPHO SALINE SPRINGS

Located on our own premises and used in the Natural Mineral Water Baths Unsurpassed in the treatment of RHEUMATISM Heart, Stomach, Kidney and Liver Diseases Moderate charges. Address DR. O. W. EVERETT, Mgr., Lincoln, Neb. 84th and M Sts.

Use **MURINE** Night and Morning  
Keep Your Eyes Clean—Clear and Healthy  
Write for Free Eye Care Book Murine Co., Chicago, U.S.A.  
W. N. U., LINCOLN, NO. 37-1920.