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—Mrs. E. H. BEAN, 625 Joseph Avenue, Nashville, Tenn.

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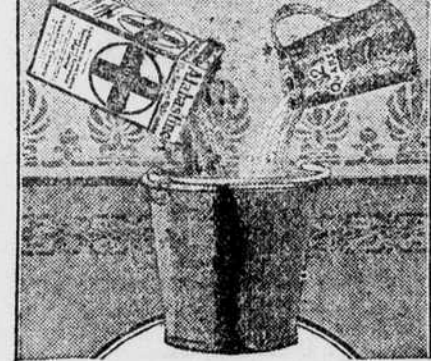
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THE GLOVED HAND

A Detective Story

By BURTON E. STEVENSON

Author of "The Holladay Case," "The Marathon Mystery," "The Mystery of the Boule Cabinet," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII—(Continued).

I reached the lawn, crossed it, and traversed the short avenue which ended at the library door. Three men were there, and Simmonds came panting up an instant later. The detectives had their torches in their hands, and I saw that they had broken one of the glass panels of the doors, and that one of them was fumbling about inside. There was a sharp click, and the hand came back.

"There you are," he said, threw the door open, and stood aside for his superior officer to lead the way.

"What's wrong?" Simmonds asked.

"I don't know—but the girl showed a light at her window."

"You heard nothing?"

"Not a sound."

Simmonds hesitated. No doubt the same thought occurred to him as to me: for the lawyer-Tartarin in me suggested that we scarcely had warrant to break our way into a sleeping room in the middle of the night.

But no such doubts seemed to disturb Godfrey. Without a word, he caught the torch from Simmonds' hand, and passed through the doorway. Simmonds followed, I went next, and the two other men came last, their torches also flaring. Three beams of light flashed about the library and showed it to be empty.

Godfrey lingered on the high-backed chair, but this time it had no occupant.

Then Godfrey switched on the light, passed into the hall and switched on the light there. The hall, too, was empty, and only the ticking of a tall clock disturbed the silence. I was frowning and ready to turn back, but to my amazement, Godfrey crossed the hall at a bound and sprang up the stairs, three steps at a time.

"Make all the noise you can!" he shouted over his shoulder, and the clatter of our feet seemed enough to wake the dead.

The upper hall was also empty; and then my heart gave a sudden leap, for the circle of light from Godfrey's torch had come to rest upon a white-robed figure, which had stolen half way down the stairs from the supper study. It was the maid, holding her nightdress about her; and her face was as white as her gown.

Godfrey sprang to her side.

"What is it?" he asked. "What is wrong?"

"I heard a cry," gasped the girl. "Down here somewhere. And a scuffle in the dark. A woman's cry. It was choked off short."

Godfrey leaped down among us, and as the light of a torch flashed across it, I saw that his face was livid.

his dripping eyes fiercely, "there against the wall—is there something there—or is it just the smoke?"

I looked, too, but at first saw nothing of a drug; and smoke rolled down and blotted out the light from Godfrey's torch. Then it swirled aside, and against the farther wall I fancied I saw something—a shape, a huddled shape—gorteseque—horrible, somehow.

I heard Godfrey's startled cry, saw his hand spring up, saw a tongue of yellow flame leap from his revolver.

And with the echo of the shot, came a scream—a scream piercing, unearthly, of terror unspeakable.

I saw the Thug spring into the air, his face distorted, his mouth open, his hands tearing at something that swung from his neck—something horrible, that clung and twisted.

He tore the thing loose—it was only an instant, really, but it seemed an age—and, still shrieking, flung it full at me.

I was paralyzed with terror, incapable of movement, staring dumbly—but Godfrey swept me aside so sharply that I almost fell.

And that foul shape swished past us, fell with a thud, and was lost in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KISMET!

Words cannot paint the nauseating horror of that moment. Fear—cold, abject, awful fear—ran through my veins like a drug; and I was clammy with the sweat of utter terror; my hands clutched wildly at some drapery, which tore from its fastenings and came down in my grasp.

Three shafts of light swept across the floor, and almost at once picked up like a bird, the Thug suppling himself, head raised, ready to strike, and I saw that one side of his hood had been shot away.

I have, more than once, referred to Simmonds as hard-headed and wanting in imagination—not always, I fear, in terms the most respectful. For that I ask his pardon; I shall not make that mistake again. For, in that nerve-racking moment, he never lost his coolness. Revolver in hand, he crept cautiously forward, while we others held our breath, and the pistol spoke, once, twice, thrice, and the ugly head fell forward to the floor.

At the same moment, Godfrey sprang to the door from which volumes of heavy, scented smoke still eddied, and disappeared inside.

I started and remembered him; I was staring at that foul object on the floor; and then I stared at Francisco Silva, motionless on the divan, his eyes fixed on the crystal sphere, undisturbed amid all this terror and tumult. It is impossible for me to remember him, as he was in that moment, without admiration—yes, and a little awe.

But Godfrey's voice, shrill with excitement, brought me around with a start.

"Lester!" he shouted. "Lend a hand here!"

Wondering what new horror lay in wait, I fought my way into the other room, stumbled over the body of the Thug, barely saved myself, my scalp prickling with terror, from falling upon it, and pitched forward to where Godfrey was bending above that huddled shape I had glimpsed through the smoke.

"Catch hold!" he panted; and, choking, suggesting, suffocating, we dragged it into the outer room. "Get a window open!" he gasped. "Get a window open!"

And Simmonds, whom nothing seemed to shake, groped along the wall until he found a window, pulled the lunge back, threw up the sash, and flung back the shutters.

"Quick!" said Godfrey. "Over there. Now hold the torch."

And as I took it and pressed the button with a trembling finger, the halo of light fell upon a bloodless face—the face of Marijole Vaughan.

Simmonds and Godfrey, with frantic fingers, was loosening her robe at the throat. My terrified eyes, staring at that throat, half expected to find a cruel mark there, but its smoothness was unaltered. The robe loosened, Godfrey snatched his cap from his head and began to fan the fresh air in upon her.

and a low moan burst from the unconscious girl. So, after a moment, he desisted and laid the hand down again.

"You understand what you're to do?" he asked the maid, and she nodded mutely. "Then come along, boys," he added, and led the way back to the hall. His face was dripping with perspiration and his hands were shaking, but he managed to control them. "And now for Senor Silva," he said, in another tone, taking the torch from my hand. "I fear he will have a rude awakening."

"He sat there like a statue, even when I shot the snake," remarked Simmonds. "He's a wonder, he is."

"Yes," agreed Godfrey, as he stepped into the entry, "he's a wonder." Then he stopped, glanced around, and turned a stern face on Simmonds. "Where's the man I left on guard here?" he asked.

"Why," faltered Simmonds, "I remember now—he helped us carry the young lady. But we were all right there in the hall—you don't mean me?"

Godfrey stepped to the inner door and flashed his torch about the room. The divan was empty.

Simmonds paused only for a single glance.

"He can't be far away!" he said. "He can't get away in that white robe of his. Come along, Tom!" and, followed by his assistant, he plunged down the stairs.

I saw Godfrey half turn to follow; then he stopped, ran his hand along the wall inside the door, found the button, and turned on the lights. His face was pale and angry.

"It's my fault as much as anyone's," he said savagely. "I might have known Silva would see the game was up, and try to slip away in the excitement. I ought to have kept an eye on him."

"Your eyes were fairly busy as it was," I remarked. "Besides, maybe he hasn't got away."

Godfrey's face, as he glanced about the room, showed that he cherished no such hope.

"Let's see what happened to Mah-bub," he said. "Maybe he got away, too," and he crossed to the inner door. The flame in the brazier had died away, and the smoke came only in fits and starts, heading for the ceiling. The Thug had not got away. He lay on the floor—a dreadful sight. He was lying on his back, his hands clenched, his body arched in a conclusion, his head drawn far back. The back lips were parted over the ugly teeth, and the tongue rolled upward till they gleamed, two vacant balls of white. At the side of his neck, just under the jaw, was a hideous swelling.

Godfrey's torch ran over the body from head to foot, and I sickened as I looked at it.

"Godfrey joined me there in a moment."

"I'm feeling pretty bad myself," he said, putting the torch in his pocket and mopping his shining forehead. "It's plain enough what happened. I caught a glimpse of Miss Vaughan on the floor there, realized that we couldn't do anything with the snake in the way, and shot at it, but I only ripped away a portion of the hood, and the thing mad with rage, sprang upon the Hindu. Nothing on earth could have saved him after it got its fangs in his neck. Ugh!"

He shivered slightly, and stood gazing at the Thug turned back to me with a smile.

"It's a good night's work, Lester," he said, "even if we don't catch Silva. I fancy Miss Vaughan will change her mind, now, about becoming a priestess of the East."

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To look one's best and feel one's best is to enjoy an inside bath each morning to flush from the system the previous day's waste, sour fermentations and poisonous toxins before it is absorbed into the blood. Just as coal, when it burns, leaves behind a certain amount of incombustible material in the form of ashes, so the food and drink taken each day leave in the alimentary organs a certain amount of indigestible material, which if not eliminated, form toxins and poisons which are then sucked into the blood through the very ducts which are intended to suck in only nourishment to sustain the body.

If you want to see the glow of healthy bloom in your cheeks, to see your skin get clearer and clearer, you are told to drink every morning upon arising, a glass of hot water with a teaspoonful of limestone phosphate in it, which is a harmless means of washing the waste material and toxins from the stomach, liver, kidneys and bowels, thus cleansing, sweetening and purifying the entire alimentary tract.

Corroborative Evidence. "History repeats itself, they say." "Yes. These war films all look much alike to me."

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BACKACHE AND KIDNEYS IN THE SPRING

Dear Mr. Editor: For the benefit of others, I gladly give this statement regarding the merits of "Anuric." Am nearly 76 years of age. I suffered from backache, weak back, rheumatism, and could not control the excretion of the kidneys. I can safely say that "Anuric," the new discovery of Dr. Pierce, of Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., has done me more good than anything I have ever taken for these ailments. Signed—Mrs. N. M. Flint.

NOTE:—A new remedy, called "Anuric," has been discovered by Dr. Pierce. It cures backache, headache and the darting pains and aches of rheumatism, kidney and bladder troubles. This "Anuric" is 37 times more potent than lithia, and dissolves uric acid, as hot water does sugar.

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Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is absolutely free from alcohol and injurious drugs. Its ingredients printed on wrapper. You can be certain it is a true blood-maker, tissue-builder, and a restorative nerve tonic and that it will produce no evil after-effect. Thousands—probably many of your neighbors—are willing to recommend "Golden Medical Discovery" because it has made them stronger in body, brain and nerve.

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