The Mystery of Hartley House

By CLIFFORD S. RAYMOND

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CHAPTER IX-Continued.

-11-By this time I had my senses fully recovered. I ran to the nearest winlow and was just in time to see two Agures, one in white, the other indistinct, at the far edge of the lawn, runsing. They ran into the woods, and while I stood at the window, trying with painful consciousness of stupidity and ineptitude to decide upon a course of action, I heard an automobile engine start in the lane beyond the

woods. Out of a stupor, in which I watched the two strange figures go from the moonlight on the lawn into the derk of the oak grove, I was aroused-possibly by the sound of the engine of the automobile-with a course of agrion suggested.

It came of fears long entertained, now present with a threat of immirent consequence. I ran for the stairs. flashing the light, up the stairs and to Jed's room.

His door was open. As I have said, this wing was not wired for electricity. I turned my light about the room, saw that the feer which had caused me to patrol the house was realized and then hunted for the lamp, which I found and lighted.

Jed's room was in the disorder in which a hard-working housebreaker, intent on finding jewels he knew the room contained, might have left it. It seemed almost ripped to pieces,

On a table was a small pearl-inlaid ebony box. The lid was open; the box

As I stood in the midst of the disarray of the room, with the empty box the most significant thing in it, the marvelous unreality of Hartley house, a smiling dread, seemed to have visible

The empty box, I thought, had contained the manuscript which recorded Mr. Sidney's secret. The flash of white which I had seen in the hall indicated the method by which it had disappeared. The two figures crossing the lawn in the moonlight were further indication. There was the sound of the automobile engine. I had a sore spot on my head. The manuscript, I knew-or believed-had been in the box which stood with significant emptiness in the midst of the disordered room of Jed, who had been kidnaped. If my surmises were correct, Mr. Sidney's secret, upon which I knew the happiness of the family depended, was In the hands of men designing to make use of It.

place, had in his soom a telephone connecting with the various servants' quarters. I used it to arouse the chauffeur. It took five minutes of ringing his bell to awaken him; when he responded, I told him that the house had been robbed by a man and a woman dressed in white, who had escaped, under my sight, through the oak grove and had used an automobile waiting for them on the road beyond the grove. I told him to awaken one of the gardeners, take weapons and go as quickly as possible south by the best roads.

When this had been done, I called Mrs. Sidney's maid and told her to awaken Mrs. Sidney and tell her, if



"Oh, If We Can, We Must!" She Cried.

possible without alarming her, that I wished to speak to her on an urgent

In a few minutes the maid came back and said that Mrs. Sidney could see me. I found her in the sitting room of her suite.

"It is nothing serious, Mrs. Sidney," I said-"nothing that we need now regard as serious; and it does not concern Mr. Sidney's health. There has been an intrude: in the house. Moreover, the purpose was to oreak into Jed's room, and Jed's room has been broken into. I got a gimpse of the person who did it, a woman. I saw a man and a woman run into the oak grove and I heard an automobile engine start on the read. I have sent a chauffeur and a gradener in chase, but they are tranching against so great a start *bat : have no hope. What I tions is that bey have Mr. Sidney's home

diary. Do you know where Jed kept

"No. doctor," said Mrs. Sidney. "If there had been any chance of finding it we should have taken it away from him. In his absence we have searched his room frequently."

"These people are after the manuscript, and they are satisfied that they have it." I said. "I am sure of that. There was a small pearl-inlaid box, open and empty, in the middle of the

"We never found such a box," said Mrs. Sidney.

"Then it might have been there?" "It might."

"If it was, they have it and we must get it back."

"Oh, if we can, we must!" she cried. holding her hands so tightly clasped that the delicate bones made a crackling noise

I tried to be encouraging and consoling and, as a practical measure, gave her a bromide.

CHAPTER X.

Hartley house had a general office where the business of the estate was handled. It was to one side of the main entrance.

I had promised to be an extraordinary person in meeting extraordinary circumstances, but all I did was to go to the office and, lighting the lights, sit there. I was in the extreme dejection of a weakling when the door opened and Isobel came in.

"What are you doing, up?" I asked. "I'll ask the same thing of you. What are you and the whole household doing, awake and moving?"

I told her that housebreakers had been surprised at work and had es-

"If you have been disturbed," I suggested, "probably your father has, also. You had better go to his room and tell him that the servants have been flustered by a burglar scare, and then you had better go to your mother's room and stay with her until things quiet

That seemed sound enough advice, but when Isobel had gone I was left wondering again what to do next. It was out of the question to notify the authorities. The thieves had stolen something which, from what I knew of it. I preferred to have in their hands rather than in the possession of the

Our detective agency I could trust, but I did not want to communicate anyone but McGuire, the superintendent, and there was no need of telephoning him until later in the morn-

The case, as I thought it over, came to this: The Spanlard and the attorney, by the ald of a confederate, a woman, had obtained possession of the diary containing the secret of Hartley house. They would soon be heard from. They would not disappear. We did not have to pursue them, They would pursue us.

There was the possibility of dealing with them by force extra-legally. Anything we did for our protection had to be done extra-legally. I thought Mc-Guire could and would attend to that, and I intended to instruct him to consider murder the only process not to be thought of.

I tried to reconcile my ideas of Mr. Sidney's character with the facts of the family's terrible dilemma. What could a man of so just and honorable, kindly and charming a nature-as revealed in his old age-have done, even in a hot and passionate youth, which he could not face now? What crime could he have committed which not only constituted a danger to his security but remained a source of satisfaction to him?

For two hours I sat by the telephone, expecting momentarily to hear from the chauffeur who had gone in pursuit of the thieves. It was about four o'clock in the morning-there was a pale suggestion of light in the windows -when Mrs. Aldrich, the housekeeper, came to the office. She was an imperturbable lady of disciplinary habit and ordinarily unruffled dignity, but now she was disturbed.

"Doctor," she said, "Agnes, the new maid, cannot be found. She is not in her room. Her bed has not been touched. Most of her belongings and her sultcase are gone. I came to you with this probably unimportant domestic incident, thinking that-well, the occurrence of the night might have some connection with this girl." "I think Agaes probably was in-

volved in the matter," I said. "We have always so dreaded to take a new servant," said Mrs. Aldrick, "but Agnes came recommended for the month by a very faithful girl who wanted a month's leave. Has anything

of great value been taken?" "Nothing of any intrinsic value whatever, Mrs. Aldrich. I imagine the robbers were alarmed before they

found any jewels or plate." "That's a consolation, in any event," said the housekeeper; "but we never shall be able to take in a new servant

agein with any case of mind." The chauffeur telephoned as Mrs. Aldrich went away. The chase in the night had been useless, as might be expected, and I told him to return

breakfast, and one of the gardeners came to say that the dogs had been found in the woods. They had been fed drugged meat and were sick and even now barely able to stand.

I was preparing to go to Mr. Sidney's room when the telephone rang again. It was a call from the village of Horwich, forty miles east, a place of some repute, or ill repute, for the number and character of its drinking places and roadhouses.

The man calling me said he was the constable of the township of Horwich and asked if he were-talking to a person of responsibility. I assured him he was. Then he told me that an automobile accident had occurred two miles out of Horwich and that the only identifying marks suggested Hartley house as a place to make inquiries. He asked if I could come to Horwich,

I endeavored to question him over the telephone, but he said there was little information he could give, a



I Had My Bottle of Beer.

man and a woman in a car-man past middle age, a young woman in white: the man was dead, the woman badly

"I'll be over as soon as possible," I sald. "Please keep the effects all together."

There was no doubt in my mind that the quavering little rascal of a lawyer with his precise way and timid but controlling unscrupulousness had come to the end of his road-and at the very moment when he had success in his hand. There was no reason to doubt that the woman was the maid Agnes whom I had surprised at midnight stealing down the stairs from Jed's room with Mr. Sidney's diary.

But if we were rid of the timorous grasping little attorney, we were in worse difficulties. With the attorney and his Spanish client, we at jeast knew the manner of dealing. It was disconcerting-I might almost be forgiven the exaggeration of saying it was horrifying-to consider that the diary was being handled by a constable, a sheriff or a coroner or even by any idler or resort-keeper in the village of Horwich.

If the automobile accident had disposed of one ingenious enemy only to make a half-dozen equally unscrupulous ones, or to apprise (I was tempted to think this was worse) one incorruptible officer of the condition of Hartley house-in either event, we were the worse for the change in cir-

One of the stablemen knew how to drive a car, and I asked him to bring out the automobile which I used when I went to town. The chauffeur, when he returned, would have been up most of the night. I did not want to impose on him. I might be gone most of the day. In a half-hour we were away toward Horwich. I never had been over the road, which ran by old farms with stone fences and was little traveled except by the people who lived along it.

Originally the place had a respectable tavern. It was called the White Owl. It was still respectable, but oddly enough, it was the success of the White Owl which had attracted the other places.

I inquired for the constable and was told that I should likely find him at the White Owl, he being a frequenter of that place and now having a case which needed a great deal of drinking and talking over.

I went to the White Owl and on entering the barroom, which really had an attractive rather than a disreputable appearance, saw a group of men about a short, broad, square-shouldered fellow who was talking to the interest of half a dozen or more fel-

My entrance made no diversion, and judging, from what I had been told. that the squat, talkative fellow was he constable and that he was telling the story I wanted to know, I decided to remain unidentifiéd, have a bottle of beer-from the bartender, who came half-heartedly from the constable's currection-and thus as an away.

Mrs. Aldrick brought me a light | eavesdropper get what I came to ge in direct conversation,

I had my bottle of beer, and the bartender went back to the group, dominated by the squat, talkative fellow.

He was not the comic type of constable. He showed intelligence and decision, but evidently he was fond of a story when he had it to tell. He was saying:

"I was up late because there was . had set at the Half Day, and Bill Dailey thought he might have trouble with them before he got them on their way. About one o'clock they had a quarrel, without anything but talk, divided into two sets and went away in two cars toward the city. Bill and I split a bottle of beer, and Bill said he'd be going himself. It was nearly one-thirty then, and I thought I'd walt up for Number Eleven at two o'clock and see if anyone got off.

"Bill gave me the keys and told me to shut the place up. I had another bottle of beer and was playing solitaire on the bar when Number Eleven stopped

"I went to the front door of the bar and looked over toward the station. A only place showing a light. I waited in the doorways and when he came up. I saw he was a foreigner. He had gold rings in his ears.

"He made as if he wanted to come in. He didn't speak enough English for me to make out what he was saying. I let him in, and he went up to the bar, put down a quarter and pointed toward the whisky. I gave him the bottle, and he pointed to me and smiled. So I said I didn't mind if I did, and we had a drink together. I thought I'd like to know what this fellow wanted in town, so I didn't suggest it was closing time,

"Then I was surprised to hear a car coming along. The other fellow seemed to be expecting it. We both went to the door. The car stopped at the door, and a man helped a woman out. He was a little old shriveled fellow. She was young and pretty.

"The old fellow said something to my foreigner, and he threw his arms in the air, wriggled all over, laughed and fell on the old fellow and kissed him. The old boy struggled and kicked, but the foreigner just picked him right up and kissed him on both

"That old boy was mad when he got loose. 'This is unthinkable,' he said. 'It is beyond expression. You human pig! Dog of a man-slobbering beast! Then he stopped speaking English and said a lot of things the foreigner understood, but it didn't make him mad. His eyes just sparkled. He put a dollar on the bar and pointed to the whisky again,

"'Bring our drinks over here,' said the old boy, pointing to one of the tables in a far corner of the room.

"They sat down, and the two men talked. The girl didn't seem to have the language. The foreigner was excited. The old boy kept wiping his eyeglasses. He wasn't showing as much pervousness as the foreigner, but he was pleased over something.

"I kept behind the bar, as near their table as I could, and pretended to play solitaire and wait for their orders, watching them as much as possible and trying to make out what they were talking about. Pretty soon they wanted another round of drinks. When I served them the old boy wanted to know if he could telephone to the city. He paid me the toll, and I showed him the telephone booth and heard him give his number. It was River 4600.

"When he got his party, he said: 'Is that you, Sim? Everything is all right.

Yes, as expected. Let him go.' "That was all. He went back to the table. I noticed that he kept tight hold all the time on a leather case. When they got to talking again, the foreigner kept pointing toward the case and began to get more excited As near as I could make out what was happening, as they kept on talking and motioning, it was the black leather case the foreigner wanted, and the other man wouldn't let him have it. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Meredith and Lady Macbeth. Lady Butcher in her "Memories of

George Meredith," recently published, gives the world not a little new information about the novelist which is both significant and extremely entertaining. Here is one of the passages she quotes from her diary which shows his amazing power to paint with

"Mr. Meredith went with father and me to see Irving and Mrs. Crowe (nee Bateman) in 'Macbeth.' During supher he explained the acting of the sleep-walking scene to mother, wishing to describe the way that Lady Macbeth pushed the palms of her hands from nose to ear, he said: 'My dear Mrs. Brandroth, I assure you that she came through her hands like a corpse stricken with mania in the act of resurrection'!"-From "Book Gos-

To a person, five feet tell standing on the beach at senside the horizon is about two and three-quarters infes

WAS WEARY OF LIFE'S BURDEN

Despondent Mother Drowns Child to Save It From Life of Toil.

TRIES SUICIDE

Never-Ending Cares, Heavy Labor, and Lack of Sleep, Had Driven Mother to Welcome the Thought of Death.

Cleveland,-Life had dealt harshly with Mrs. Katherine Mikulic, Years of hardship and suffering made her wish to end it, and it was to save her daughter from a similar experience that she threw her five-year-old cliffld into the water and tried to drown herself in Lake Erie.

With a sigh and a shake of her head, she sat on her cot in the prison ward at City hospital and told the reasons which prompted her act.

"Yes, my baby's gone," she said. "Now she won't have to suffer and struggle as I have. Please give me something so I can go to my baby.

"I want to die. Please let me die." she plended as she pressed her hands to her temples. "This headache will never go." As if in a daze, Mrs. Mikulic sat,

clasping her hands about her knees. man had got off, and he was headed and sighed again. Her eyes were red toward the Half Day, which was the from tears, and she stared long at the Her hands were coarse, bruised and

swollen. Her long black hair glistened as if still wet from the waters of Although she says she is twenty-

nine, Mrs. Mikulic seems nearer forty. "John? He can take care of himself bye and bye," she said when asked why she had not taken her twelveyear-old son with her to the lake. "Eight years I have this headache."

she said, again pressing her hands to her temples. "Oh, I so want to die, "Four years I have worked every night, and every day I can't sleep. This headache never goes away. All

day I walk the floor until it's time to

go to work again. Never do I sleep." "Husband No Good to Me." "My husband? He was no good to me. He worked a little, and then he won't work again. He spent all the

money drinking." Mrs. Mikulic stared at the spoon which she took from a tray of food. "Ten years ago my husband came here. He left me in Croatia with my

bables. Two years I did not hear



Threw Her Child Into the Water.

from him. Then I worked and saved and afterward I came here, too. I had \$5.

"He worked sometimes in a butcher shop. But all the time he's drinking, and then he lost his work.

"Four years I worked every night. In the day time I could not sleep. Last winter he go sick and so did L. I did not see him when he died. Yes, I cried a little; but he was no good

Had Often Wished to Die. Continuing in her broken English.

she said she went back to work to pay for her husband's funeral, but did not want to leave her baby. "I worked last night, but again I could not sleep and still I had this

headache. I walked the floor, up and down, and then I said: 'I will die,' "Please let me die and go to my baby," she sighed again,

Samuel White, 8106 Medina avenue N. E., was working near the foot of East Seventy-second 'street when he heard a woman was in the lake.

Plunging in fully clothed, he swam to where she had disappeared. He dived and brought her to the surface. When she regained consciousness she cried: "Why don't you let me die?" "My baby's in the lake," she said,

'please let me die. too." White swam for some time before he recovered the child's body. Mrs. Mikulic was taken to Mount

Sinai hospital and later to the City



-if you catch me!

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